The Leopard

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF GIUSEPPE DI LAMPEDUSA

Giuseppe di Lampedusa was a member of the Sicilian nobility—the last Prince of Lampedusa. This title traced back to the 17th century, when it was first granted to Lampedusa's ancestor by Charles II of Spain. Giuseppe grew up an only child who was strongly influenced by his mother and grandmother. Lampedusa was multilingual and well-read, and he was especially fond of French literature. After studying briefly in Rome, Lampedusa was drafted to fight in World War I, during which he spent time as a prisoner of war in Hungary. All his life, he was known for preferring solitude, except for the company of his beloved wife, Alexandra "Licy" von Wolff-Stomersee, a Baltic German noblewoman. Lampedusa thought about *The Leopard* for 25 years, basing the novel on his great-grandfather, who lived during Garibaldi's period. However, he didn't start writing it until he was 60, finishing it only a few months before he died. Lampedusa was spurred to write in part by the Allied invasion during World War II, during which the Lampedusa palace in Palermo was damaged, a grievous event in his life. At the time of his death, Lampedusa had been told that his book was not publishable. Though he had no children, Lampedusa had adopted a young cousin of whom he was especially fond, Gioacchino Lanza Tomasi, who assisted in finally getting *The Leopard* published after Lampedusa's death.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Leopard is set during a period of Italy's history known as the *Risorgimento*, or "resurgence." The Risorgimento, beginning in 1848, led to the consolidation of various independent Italian states into a unified Kingdom of Italy in 1861. An Italian nationalist and general named Giuseppe Garibaldi was key to this effort. In May, 1860, Garibaldi led about 1,000 volunteer soldiers in an invasion of Sicily, which was then ruled by King Francis II of the Two Sicilies. Upon his landing, Garibaldi gathered scattered groups of rebels from across Sicily; on May 14, he declared himself Sicily's dictator. Garibaldi's volunteers, the "Garibaldini," were known as Red Shirts because of their characteristic simple red uniforms. With backup troops from Naples, Garibaldi's men attacked and overtook Palermo, Sicily's capital city, by the end of May, 1860. Later that summer, Garibaldi, to the welcome of many Italians, returned to the Italian peninsula and marched northward with his army, easily overtaking Naples. He later yielded his dictatorship to King Victor Emmanuel, who assembled Italy's first Parliament at Turin in 1861 and was declared the first king of the united Italy.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, set in Russia in the mid-19th century, touches on intergenerational and class conflict comparable to that roiling Sicily at the time. It also touches on the interplay of progress and tradition that's central to *The Leopard*. In an American context, Henry James's *Washington Square* likewise explores questions of class, wealth, leisure, and marriage in an up-and-coming nation. Like Lampedusa, Umberto Eco (*The Name of the Rose*) is a fellow recipient of Italy's prestigious Strega prize for literature (though Eco became prominent several decades after Lampedusa). Additionally, Italian *Risorgimento* figure and poet Aleardo Aleardi and sentimental novelist Giulio Carcano (*Angiola Maria*) are mentioned in the book as being read by members of the Salina family.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** The Leopard (Il Gattopardo)
- **When Written:** c. 1954–1956
- **Where Written:** Sicily
- **When Published:** 1958
- **Literary Period:** Modernism
- **Genre:** Historical Fiction
- **Setting:** Sicily, Italy
- **Climax:** Prince Fabrizio dies.
- **Antagonist:** Revolution; change; cultural decline
- **Point of View:** Third Person

EXTRA CREDIT

Feral Feline. *The Leopard*'s original title, *Il Gattopardo*, actually refers to the serval—a North African wild cat that appeared on the Lampedusa coat of arms.

Salinas on Screen. The 1963 film *The Leopard*, directed by Luchino Visconti and starring Burt Lancaster as the Prince of Salina, was based on the novel. The film was distributed in both Italian and American (English-dubbed) versions.

PLOT SUMMARY

In May 1860, the Salinas—a Sicilian noble family who lives in a palace outside Palermo, Sicily—have just finished their daily Rosary recitation. The ceiling of the ornate drawing room is painted with ancient Roman deities holding the family shield, which displays a **leopard**. The head of the family, Dom Fabrizio,

Prince of Salina, is feeling discontent. He perceives that his family, and the entire Sicilian noble class, are sliding into decline—but he feels powerless to stop this.

After the Rosary, the Prince ponders the political changes that are imminent in Sicily. Most nobles oppose the rumored revolution (led by Italian nationalist Garibaldi), and the Prince shares their allegiance to the King and the Catholic Church. But he also believes that the monarchy fails to live up to its ideals. That night, the Prince visits his favorite prostitute. He justifies this to himself with the excuse that his wife, Princess Maria Stella, can no longer satisfy him—though he pities her once he returns home.

The next morning, Tancredi, the Prince's beloved nephew, visits and talks about Garibaldi's "Red Shirt" rebels, whom he plans to join. Tancredi explains that if the nobility wants things to remain the same, then some things must change. This moves the Prince, yet he's also annoyed by his employees' optimism about the revolution. He believes that "liberals" are greedy and self-interested; there will be no sweeping changes in Sicily. Meanwhile, the Prince's friend and household priest, Father Pirrone, is primarily concerned with how the revolution will impact on the Catholic Church.

Later that summer, the Salina family travels to their rural estate at Donnafugata, the Prince's favorite place. Tancredi is with them, having fought with the Red Shirts in May. The Prince is glad to escape Palermo, which is still in an uproar over Garibaldi's invasion and the ensuing revolution. However, he still believes that Sicily will remain the same. The traditional greeting at Donnafugata further reassures him; everything is the way it has always been. However, when the Prince invites the villagers to visit the Salina estate, everyone is startled—the Prince has never sounded so democratic before. From this moment forward, Donnafugata's people think less of the Prince.

That afternoon, the Prince is troubled to learn that his daughter Concetta is in love with Tancredi. Later, Donnafugata's new mayor, Don Calogero Sedàra, arrives for dinner dressed extravagantly. The mayor's teenage daughter, Angelica, makes an even more stunning entrance, quickly catching Tancredi's eye. Over dinner, Tancredi tells Angelica a bawdy story from his time as a soldier, which deeply offends Concetta. The next day, the Prince notices that Tancredi has made a romantic call on Angelica.

Two months later, Tancredi sends a letter to the Prince confessing his love for Angelica and asking his uncle to negotiate a marriage. The Prince discusses the Sedàras with his friend Tumeo: despite the family's checkered past and Tumeo's horror at a possible marriage alliance, the Prince convinces himself that the class disparity between Tancredi and Angelica will actually benefit the Salina family politically. Later that day, Don Calogero and the Prince agree on Tancredi's and Angelica's engagement.

In November, Tancredi and Angelica begin spending a lot of time at the Salinas' palace. Tancredi and Angelica spend hours exploring, stealing kisses, and resisting the temptation to have sex. These are the happiest days of their relationship—their future marriage proves to be a great disappointment. Around the same time, a government official named Chevalley visits the Prince and invites him to join the newly formed Italian Senate. The Prince immediately declines, explaining that it's too late for the long-isolated and foreign-dominated Sicily to participate in a modern State. He recommends Don Calogero Sedàra for the role instead.

A year later, in November 1862, the Salinas go to a ball in Palermo. The Prince wanders through the party, feeling out of place in every group and sensing that the beauty of palaces like these will soon fade away. As the Prince walks home at dawn, he longs for death, an end to perpetual change and decline.

Twenty-five years later, the Prince is dying. He reflects on his family: none of his offspring, he decides, will truly carry on the Salina legacy. Such a legacy resides in tradition and memory, and his children's and grandson's experiences have become blandly middle-class—suggesting that Garibaldi has won after all. After receiving the last rites, the Prince tries to calculate how much of his life has consisted of true happiness, and the mental effort causes him to have a stroke. A short time later, as his weeping family gathers at his bedside, the Prince has a vision of death as a beautiful young woman who gently leads him away.

In 1910, several decades after the Prince's death, a group of clerics gathers in the elderly Salina sisters' house to question the authenticity of their religious relics. Concetta, Carolina, and Caterina are all strong-willed spinsters renowned for their devout Catholicism; they are especially famous for these relics. Concetta is upset because she knows that this will be the last nail in the coffin of the Salinas' reputation—they no longer have property or wealth, only piety.

The next day, a Vatican expert visits the Salina chapel and determines that only a handful of their relics are authentic. Feeling numb, Concetta goes to her bedroom. Suddenly, she can no longer stand the presence of a certain rug, which is actually the preserved skin of the Prince's old favorite dog, Bendicò. She orders a maid to discard the rug. As the rug is flung across the courtyard, its mid-air shape briefly resembles a leopard. Then, it collapses on the garbage heap.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra – The Prince of Salina is the head of an ancient noble lineage in 19th-century Sicily. His armorial symbol is the **leopard**, and he is frequently described as "leonine," fierce, dignified, and aloof. The Prince is 45 years old

at the start of the novel and is married to Princess Maria Stella, with whom he has seven children. The Prince has a temper and occasionally rages at people around him. The son of a German princess, he has an authoritarian and morally rigid streak and is more inclined to abstract thought than to pragmatism. His main hobby, for instance, is astronomy; he has even discovered two small planets. The Prince also prefers other solitary pursuits like hunting. Both these hobbies—focused on the **stars** and the ancient Sicilian wilderness, respectively—allow the Prince to maintain the illusion that his world is stable. The Prince is perceptive: he knows the noble class is falling into decline even before the Revolution comes to Sicily, but he feels powerless to act on or to change his circumstances. The Prince is also a philanderer and cannot resist the charms of any beautiful woman, regardless of age or class—and regardless of his own married status. The Prince loves his nephew and ward, Tancredi, (whom he rescued from orphanhood and poverty) even more than he loves his own children. Though Tancredi is an eager partisan of Garibaldi's revolution, the Prince remains convinced that nothing is going to change in Sicily. After arranging Tancredi's marriage to Angelica, daughter of Don Calogero Sedàra (the socially ascendant mayor of Donnafugata), the Prince begins to change his mind. Nevertheless, he declines a position in the new Italian Senate, believing that he is too trapped in Sicily's past to be of use in shaping its future. When the Prince dies in his seventies, he looks back on his life and believes that he can only add up a year or two of real happiness. He also realizes that the Salina family legacy is dying with him—his descendants are blending into the Italian middle class. The Prince welcomes the oblivion of death, having sensed its approach, alongside the decades-long death of the noble class.

Tancredi Falconeri – Tancredi, the Prince of Falconeri, is the Prince of Salina's nephew. He's the son of the Prince's sister and a spendthrift father who died when Tancredi was 14. Tancredi is now the Prince's ward, and the Prince loves him like a son, even wishing that Tancredi could be his heir. Tancredi has a lively and fun-loving personality marked by occasional seriousness. He joins Garibaldi's rebel Red Shirts and sustains a mild injury at the battle of Palermo. After that, he fights for Victor Emmanuel's Piedmontese (Italian) army. At the convent in Donnafugata, he makes a veiled, fumbling attempt to propose to Concetta, which she misunderstands and coldly rebuffs. After that, Tancredi turns his romantic attentions to the alluring Angelica Sedàra, who is richer than him despite a lack of noble blood. After the Prince arranges their marriage, Tancredi and Angelica enjoy a highly sensual engagement that actually proves to be the high point of their relationship, as their marriage is loveless and disappointing. However, by the time of the Prince's death in 1888, Tancredi has built a successful political career. After Tancredi's own death, Concetta learns that Tancredi always loved her.

Father Pirrone – Father Pirrone is a Jesuit priest, the Salina family chaplain, and the Prince's friend. He disapproves of the new liberal politics that are becoming popular in Sicily—especially because he believes that the Italian State will seize the Catholic Church's properties, thus disrupting the Church's traditional role as benefactor to Sicily's poor. Father Pirrone is portrayed as unfailingly faithful to the Salinas, as well as a sincere and devout Catholic. He is often concerned about the Prince's spiritual welfare but still overlooks some of the Prince's sexual misbehavior, especially when distracted by their shared hobby of astronomy. Father Pirrone also disapproves of Tancredi's marriage, aware of Tancredi's history of sexual indiscretions—but he doesn't interfere in the arrangement. Father Pirrone comes from a humble peasant village, and his outsider perspective gives him unique insight into the character of the noble class. He believes that no matter what happens politically, the nobility will always renew itself in different forms, because nobility has more to do with attitude than blood. Father Pirrone also negotiates a peaceful outcome within his family after his niece is impregnated by a cousin. This event leads him to observe that both peasant and nobility are susceptible to the same kinds of misdeeds—they just manifest differently.

Concetta Salina – Concetta is the Prince and Princess's second-oldest daughter and the Prince's favorite of the girls. She is King Ferdinand's goddaughter. Concetta has a submissive attitude toward her father but is also capable of great stubbornness. She is in love with her cousin, Tancredi. After the revolution, however, she is offended by Tancredi's coarseness and heartbroken when he falls for Angelica instead. Though Tancredi makes an indirect attempt to propose to her—trying to gain admittance to the convent that only Salina men may visit—she misunderstands it and coldly rebuffs him. After the Prince arranges Tancredi's marriage to Angelica, Concetta spends the rest of her life nursing a grudge against Tancredi and her father. In old age, Concetta, unmarried, inherits the Salina villa along with Caterina and Carolina. Her prideful, authoritarian air is the only surviving trace of the Salina legacy, as the Prince had always predicted. When Tancredi's old friend Tassoni tells her that Tancredi always loved her, Concetta throws away a rug made from Bendicò the dog, the only family relic she had ever liked. This marks her realization that her Salina pride has been her undoing.

Don Calogero Sedàra – Don Calogero is mayor of Donnafugata and a newly rich landowner. He is Donna Bastiana's husband and Angelica's father. Because of his involvement in the liberal cause, he is also a rising political figure. During the Salina family's 1860 visit to Donnafugata, Don Calogero surprises the Prince by appearing in fancy (albeit ill-fitting and awkward-looking) evening wear. Despite Don Calogero's rough manners, cynicism, and naked ambition, the Prince negotiates the marriage of his nephew Tancredi with

Angelica, believing the Salinas' best hope lies in such an alliance. According to Tumeo, Calogero tampered with the people's votes during the Plebiscite. Don Calogero becomes politically prominent after the Prince recommends him for a Senate seat, knowing that Calogero is more practical and in touch with the times than the Prince can ever be.

Angelica Sedàra – Angelica is the teenage daughter of Don Calogero Sedàra (mayor of Donnafugata) and Donna Bastiana. Though she was somewhat neglected as a child (her mother is rumored to have mental disabilities), she makes a stunning impression after returning home from school in Florence. Beautiful, poised, and ambitious, she quickly catches Tancredi's eye and also charms the Prince. She gives off an air of sensuality wherever she goes. After engagement and a steamy courtship, Angelica and Tancredi's marriage is romantically unsuccessful, as the two never truly love each other. Angelica is nevertheless a valuable partner in Tancredi's political rise and continues honoring his memory and working for patriotic causes after his death.

Princess Maria Stella – Princess Maria Stella is the Prince of Salina's husband and the mother of their seven children. The Princess is a tiny woman inclined to hysterical fits who yearns for her husband despite his frequent infidelity. The Princess affectionately dominates her seven children. She is also a deeply devout Catholic, with a fervor and accompanying prudishness that the Prince finds off-putting.

Paolo Salina – Paola is the duke, heir, and eldest son of the Prince and Princess. He mostly cares about horses and does not appear much in the story. In fact, he dies after being thrown from a runaway horse while he's still a young man. Paolo is not to be confused with his younger brother, Francesco Paolo. Later in life, he has a son, Fabrizietto.

Bendicò – Bendicò is the Prince's faithful, beloved Great Dane; the Prince sometimes appears to be fonder of the dog's company than of his family's. After Bendicò dies, he is made into a rug. Concetta keeps the rug for most of her life but ultimately throws it away in a fit of disillusionment.

Giuseppe Garibaldi – Garibaldi was a historical figure, an Italian nationalist and accomplished general who was prominent in the *Risorgimento* movement. In particular, he led the Red Shirt volunteer army in the invasion and annexation of Sicily, then marched through Italy in a successful campaign to unite the Italian kingdoms into a single state. He later ceded power to Victor Emmanuel. Tancredi is a Garibaldi partisan, and many cheer Garibaldi's arrival in Sicily, to the chagrin of the Prince and most of the nobility.

Aimone Chevalley di Monterzuolo – Chevalley is the Secretary of the Prefecture of Sicily, sent to Donnafugata in the fall of 1860 on a failed errand to invite the Prince to join the new Italian Senate. Chevalley is well-meaning but timid, easily frightened by stories of backward and violent Sicilians. Chevalley's visit gives the Prince the opportunity to speak at length about Sicily's weaknesses and its inability to change or improve.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Giovanni Salina – Giovanni is the Prince and Princess's second and most beloved son. He ran away from home to live a modest life in London, working in the coal and diamond industries. Giovanni writes his family occasionally.

Francesco Paolo Salina – Francesco Paolo is the Prince and Princess's 16-year-old son, not to be confused with his older brother, Paolo.

Carolina Salina – Carolina is the Prince's and Princess's eldest daughter. She's 20 years old when the story begins. A spinster in old age, Carolina lives with her sisters, Concetta and Caterina, and collects religious relics. She suspects that she is more even devoutly Catholic than the Pope.

Caterina Salina – Caterina one of the Prince and Princess's daughters. She's confined to a wheelchair. In old age, Caterina lives with her sisters, Concetta and Carolina.

Màlvica – Màlvica isthe Prince's brother-in-law and friend who always stands up for the ideals of the monarchy. He flees Sicily after Garibaldi's invasion, a move that the Prince chides as cowardly.

Mariannina – Mariannina is the Prince's favorite prostitute in Palermo.

Don Ciccio Ferrara – Don Ciccio Ferrara is the Prince's accountant who is sympathetic to the revolution.

Russo – Russo is the Prince's agent who is sympathetic to the revolution.

Don Onofrio Rotolo – Don Onofrio Rotolo is a famously faithful and attentive steward of the Salinas' palace at Donnafugata.

Don Ciccio Tumeo – Don Ciccio Tumeo is the church organist in Donnafugata and the Prince's faithful friend and hunting companion. When the Prince questions him in private, Tumeo irately admits that Mayor Don Calogero Sedàra changed his Plebiscite vote from "no" to yes." Tumeo also scorns the idea of a Salina-Sedàra intermarriage.

Count Carlo Cavriaghi – Count Carlo Cavriaghi is a 19-year-old count and friend of Tancredi. Tancredi brings him home to Donnafugata in quickly-thwarted hopes of pleasing Concetta. Cavriaghi is good-humored and enjoys sentimental poetry.

Donna Bastiana Sedàra – Donna Bastiana is Angelica's mother and Don Calogero Sedàra's wife. She is rumored to be beautiful but also suffers from serious mental deficiencies—therefore, she's kept hidden away and is rarely seen.

Fabrizietto Salina – Fabrizietto is Paolo's son and the Prince and Princess's grandson. He's the youngest of the Salina family

at the time of the Prince's death. The Prince loves Fabrizietto but regards him as disappointingly middle class and therefore not a viable carrier of the Salina legacy.

Don Pietrino – Don Pietrino is an old herbalist and friend of Father Pirrone's. When Father Pirrone visits his birthplace, he talks with Don Pietrino about the changing political situation and the nature of the nobility.

Sarina – Sarina is Father Pirrone's sister, Vicenzino's wife, and 'Ncilina's mother. Father Pirrone sorts out a family drama centered around her daughter.

'Ncilina – 'Ncilina is Father Pirrone's niece and Sarina and Vicenzino's daughter. Her full name is Angelica. 'Ncilina is said to have been seduced by Santino and then gotten pregnant. She agrees to marry Santino after Father Pirrone visits to sort matters out.

Vicenzino – Vicenzino is Father Pirrone's brother-in-law, Sarina's husband, and 'Ncilina's father.

Santino Pirrone – Santino is Father Pirrone's cousin. He seduces his niece 'Ncilina, instigated by his father, Turi.

Turi Pirrone – Turi is Father Pirrone's uncle and Santino's father. He's an unscrupulous man who carries a decades-old grudge against Father Pirrone's father. It's this grudge that motivates Turi to encourages Santino to seduce his cousin 'Ncilina in order to regain some old family property through her dowry.

Colonel Pallavicino – Pallavicino is a veteran and politician who attends the Ponteleone ball. He is famous for having shot Garibaldi in the foot.

Senator Tassoni – Tassoni is a close friend of Tancredi who fought with him at the battle of Palermo. As an elderly senator, he visits Concetta and informs her that Tancredi always loved her.

King Ferdinand – Ferdinand II, Sicily's second-to-last Bourbon king, is the Prince's friend and Concetta's godfather. He is anxious about his popularity, suspecting that his dynasty will soon be overthrown.

Victor Emmanuel – Victor was a historical figure, the first king of the unified Kingdom of Italy.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

CULTURAL SURVIVAL AND DECLINE

The Leopard follows the decline of the Salinas, a Sicilian noble family, following Italian nationalist General Garibaldi's revolution in 1861—also called the *Risorgimento*, or "resurgence." This movement succeeded in incorporating the historical monarchy of Sicily into a unified Italian state, and it resulted in a decline of the historic nobility and its associated culture. Lampedusa considers this decline both directly, through the reflections of Dom Fabrizio, Prince of Salina, and indirectly, through aspects of Sicilian culture portrayed as superficial. This is especially true of Catholic practices, which (at least among the nobility) reflect social status more than sincere religious belief. Lampedusa suggests that Sicilian culture has primarily been a mode of resisting outside influences and preserving Sicilian identity. And because this culture is isolated, uninterested in the outside world, and therefore stagnant, it fails to improve itself and undercuts its own survival in the long run. Lampedusa argues that when a culture becomes narrowly focused on survival, it becomes insular and loses the ability to adapt to a changing world; the resulting stagnation ends up leading to decline from within instead of self-preservation.

In the effort to preserve itself against outsiders, Sicily has become insular and stagnant. When the Prince is asked to join the new Italian Senate, he explains to the government representative, Chevalley, that Sicilians are their own worst enemy when it comes to reacting to change: "[W]e Sicilians have become accustomed, by a [...] hegemony of rulers who were not of our religion and who did not speak our language, to split hairs. If we had not done so we'd never have coped with Byzantine tax gatherers, with Berber Emirs, with Spanish Viceroys. Now [...] we're made like that." In other words, because Sicilians have frequently been ruled by outsiders, they've have always had to accommodate other cultures. This, the Prince implies, has had a stagnating effect on their own culture. The Prince further suggests that the burden of colonization—the effort to simply survive under outsiders' rule—has prevented Sicilians from developing their own culture. He laments, "For more than twenty-five centuries we've been bearing the weight of a superb and heterogeneous civilization, all from outside, none made by ourselves, none that we could call our own. [...] I don't say that in complaint; it's our fault. But even so we're worn out and exhausted." Centuries of living under a succession of foreign conquerors has led to a kind of cultural decay and stagnancy—Sicilians are no longer progressing. The Prince concludes that "this continual tension in everything [...] all those rulers who landed by main force from every direction [...] their only expressions works of art we couldn't understand and taxes which we understood only too well [...] all these things have formed our character, which is thus conditioned by events outside our control as well as by a terrifying insularity of mind." Sicilian survival has depended

upon managing outsiders' demands, conforming to those cultures, and enduring oppression. Sicilians have resultantly become weakened and withdrawn; they're unable to build a culture that can sustain such pressures and are content to keep to themselves instead.

Because Sicilians have been so preoccupied with survival, even surviving cultural institutions like Catholicism become symbols of prestige—they've been drained of their underlying meaning. The novel begins and ends with expressions of outward religious devotion that are more about the Salina family's social position than about faith. After the family finishes their daily recitation of the Rosary, the narrator suggests that religion recedes into the background of life by personifying the figures on the room's ornate ceiling: "meanwhile the major gods and goddesses, the Princes among gods, thunderous Jove and frowning Mars and languid Venus, […] were amiably supporting the blue armorial shield of the **Leopard**. They knew that for the next twenty-three and a half hours they would be lords of the villa once again." The narrator associates the ancient Roman gods with Prince Fabrizio ("the Princes among gods," holding his ancestral shield). This association ties the Prince to the region's ancient history, suggesting that he is an exemplar of its culture. But this also suggests that the Rosary recitation, even if it expresses genuine religious feeling, is an outward gesture that is overshadowed by the Prince's greater allegiance to Sicily. In other words, the daily ritual, above and beyond its religious significance, helps confirm the Prince's rootedness in Sicily's history and reassure the Prince that his status in Sicily will survive. At the end of the novel, when religious authorities determine that the now-elderly Salina daughters' famous collection of religious relics is largely fake, Concetta Salina's biggest fear is the accompanying loss of social status: "the Church's esteem meant much to her. The prestige of her name had slowly disappeared; the family fortune, divided and subdivided, was at best equivalent to that of any number of other lesser families […] But in the Church, in their relations with it, the Salinas had maintained their pre-eminence. […] Would that happen now?" Fifty years after the start of the novel, the Salinas are no longer well-off or respected because of their inherited status alone—but they maintain a reputation as devout Catholics because of their religious objects, which are now proven to be inauthentic. While this doesn't mean that the family has entirely faked its religious devotion, it does suggest that religious practice has largely been used to reinforce the family's status over the years, especially as their fortune has dried up. This outward display has proven to be unsustainable, suggesting that the family's status won't survive much longer, either. Though the Salinas (and Sicily at large) have used religion as a tool for cultural survival, it has actually undermined the survival of the culture that they hold dear.

Just before his death, the Prince reflects that his family will fail to carry on his noble legacy and that anything distinctive about the Salinas is about to die with him. The Prince's death also symbolizes the passing away of anything distinctive about the old Sicilian ruling class and, by implication, of Sicilian culture more broadly. Now that Sicily has been absorbed into the unified kingdom of Italy, Lampedusa suggests, its tendency toward insularity and inaction is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Rather than protecting Sicilian culture as intended, this tendency has led the country to destroy itself from within.

THE INEVITABILITY OF CHANGE

Change is a constant undercurrent in *The Leopard*. When the novel opens, a revolutionary vanguard is preparing to sweep through Sicily. However, the Prince repeatedly convinces himself that change won't happen—or that, if it can't be completely ignored, it can be manipulated to his own ends. The Prince assumes that by marrying his nephew Tancredi to a member of the rising class, and by displaying superficially democratic attitudes in order to placate the lower classes, he can stay ahead of social changes and even turn them to his own advantage, thereby avoiding *real* upheaval. By showing how the Prince stubbornly ignores change—maintaining an illusion of stability while trying to postpone change through empty gestures—Lampedusa argues that societal change is inevitable; in fact, people's very efforts to resist change often end up facilitating it instead.

The Prince is stubbornly resistant to change, escaping from his troubles through hobbies and memories that focus on the unchanging. The Prince has a special love for astronomy because of its reliance on precise calculations: "Supported, guided, it seemed, by calculations which were invisible at that hour yet ever present, the **stars** cleft the ether in those exact trajectories of theirs […] a triumph of the human mind's capacity to project itself and to participate in the sublime routine of the skies." The Prince, in other words, escapes his changing environment by "projecting" his mind as far away as possible: into the skies, which seem to be controlled by predictable, never-varying mathematical formulae. Additionally, when the Prince and his friend Tumeo go hunting in the wilderness, the Prince finds comfort in the ancient landscape of Sicily: "the scrub clinging to the slopes was still in the very same state of scented tangle in which it had been found by Phoenicians, Dorians, and Ionians when they disembarked in Sicily […] They saw the same objects, their clothes were soaked with just as sticky a sweat, the same indifferent breeze blew steadily from the sea[.]" The Prince chooses not to think about Sicily's uncertain future; instead, he projects himself into the past, associating himself and his physical environment with his ancient ancestors. Much like his fascination with astronomy, this is just an illusion—but nevertheless, these diversions allow the Prince to distance himself from the present political instability in Sicily.

The Prince's self-deluding resistance to change extends to the

marriage alliances he supports, which undermine his own noble status in the long run. When the Prince talks with Tancredi about the revolutionary undercurrent in Sicily, Tancredi tells his uncle, "Unless we ourselves take a hand now, they'll foist a republic on us. If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change. D'you understand?" Tancredi attempts to make change palatable to the Prince by paradoxically describing revolutionary action as the only way to ensure that life in Sicily remains the same. For the time being, the Prince accepts Tancredi's statement at face value. Later on, however, the Prince agrees to marry Tancredi off to the daughter of an up-and-coming politician who isn't from the nobility. He justifies this move to himself by claiming that it won't taint the Salina family line, but will in fact be strategically useful—"perhaps good tactics to insert himself into the new [political] movement, make at least part use of it for a few members of his own class." He even goes so far as to tell himself that "this marriage was not the end of everything, but the beginning of everything. It was in the very best of traditions." The Prince, in other words, sees Tancredi as he chooses to see him—as an extension of himself and thus as a representative of his own desire for things to stay the same. However, Tancredi, aided by his politically calculating wife Angelica, will ultimately become a major figure in a new generation of Italian politics, not a perpetuation of the old Sicilian noble class. The Prince's efforts to bring about their marriage, despite his self-assurances to the contrary, end up undermining his own noble status—as well as the entire Salina family legacy.

Despite his resistance to change, the Prince's—and his family's and social class's—place within history is ultimately out of his hands. When the Salina family arrives at their summer palace at Donnafugata, their entrance into town is marked by a time-honored greeting: "Beyond the short bridge leading into the town the authorities, surrounded by a few dozen peasants, were waiting. […] 'Thanks be to God, everything seems as usual,' thought the Prince as he climbed out of his carriage." A short time later, the Prince extends a general invitation to those gathered on the town square: "'And after dinner, at nine o'clock, we shall be happy to see all our friends.' For a long time Donnafugata commented on these last words […] for never before would he have issued so cordial an invitation; and from that moment, invisibly, began the decline of his prestige." What the Prince intends as a passing gesture, a vague concession to the more democratic social customs of the day, the townspeople interpret as more. This leads to the undermining of the Prince's revered position as powerful benefactor of Donnafugata. It marks a subtle decline of the Salina family's noble status in the minds of the villagers, which takes hold more firmly as the nobility exercise less and less political power in the coming years. This proves that the Prince doesn't have control over others' perceptions of his or his family's reputation, nor can he determine Sicily's future. The Prince's efforts to ignore change only highlight the fact that change is inevitable.

Later, a resigned Prince reflects, "I belong to an unfortunate generation, swung between the old world and the new, and I find myself ill at ease in both. […] We of our generation must draw aside and watch the capers and somersaults of the young around this ornate catafalque." The Prince suspects that the ways of his generation are coming to an end, regardless of his efforts to conceal this truth even from himself. The younger generation is not invested in things remaining the same (belying Tancredi's earlier words about changing for stability's sake) and will obliviously celebrate the decline of the dying generation.

CLASS CONFLICT AND REVOLUTION

The most obvious transformation in *The Leopard* is the decline of Sicily's noble class, as the narrator sums up the Salina family's plight: "poor Prince Fabrizio lived in perpetual discontent […] watching the ruin of his own class and his own inheritance without ever making […] any move toward saving it." Lampedusa cannot easily be identified with a single class perspective, however—he's critical of the fading nobility, the revolutionists, and the emerging modern Italian state. His critique is rooted in the fact that, despite the redistribution of power under different class and political structures, human nature remains the same. By looking at social transformation from the perspective of various social classes, Lampedusa suggests that revolution and class upheaval are always fueled by the desire for wealth—and that the abolition of one powerful class just gives way to the rise of another in a self-perpetuating cycle.

From a noble perspective, revolution looks like a grasping for privilege, not fundamentally changing society. The Prince himself suspects that the revolutionaries' motives aren't as destructive as they appear. After talking with one of his estate's dependents, Russo, the Prince concludes that so-called "liberals" aren't really agitating for major change—they're just after more money for themselves: "Much would happen, but all would be playacting; a noisy, romantic play with a few spots of blood on the comic costumes. […] He felt like saying to Russo, but his innate courtesy held him back, 'I understand now; you don't want to destroy us, who are your "fathers." You just want to take our places. Gently, nicely, putting a few thousand ducats in your pockets meanwhile.'" In other words, people are creating a big disturbance for alleged change when, in fact, what they really want is simply to occupy the place traditionally held by the gentry. The Prince's suspicions appear to bear out when Donnafugata's mayor, a newly moneyed social climber named Don Calogero, learns how to function as a member of the gentry. "Gradually Don Calogero came to understand that a meal in common need not necessarily be all munching and grease stains; that a conversation may well bear no resemblance to a dog fight; […] he did try to shave a little better and complain a little less about the waste of laundry soap […]

from that moment there began, for him and his family, that process of continual refining which in the course of three generations transforms innocent peasants into defenseless gentry." The Prince's observation—from "innocent peasants into defenseless gentry"—suggests that Don Calogero's painstaking transformation will set his descendants up to be just as vulnerable as the Prince and his fellow nobles currently are. It wasn't a fundamental change, in other words; it was only a shift in superficial social norms.

From the perspective of an outsider to the nobility, revolution merely looks like the perpetuation of a cycle, not a bottom-up class reversal. The observations of Father Pirrone, the Salinas' household priest, support the Prince's instincts about the rise of the new moneyed class: "[The nobility is] a class difficult to suppress because it's in continual renewal and because if needs be it can die well [...] it's differences of attitude, not estates and feudal rights, which make a noble. [...] if, as has often happened before, this class were to vanish, an equivalent one would be formed straightaway with the same qualities and the same defects; it might not be based on blood any more, but possibly on...on, say, the length of time lived in a place[.]" In other words, Father Pirrone observes that the potential always exists for the nobility to renew itself in different forms. A key to this renewal is the fact that nobility doesn't have to be based on ancestry (as is the case for rising families like Don Calogero's) but on other forms of hierarchy that simply take the place of the older ones. This suggests that human beings naturally seek out such hierarchical justifications for power. Whatever its origins and aims, then, the revolution will likely end up perpetuating what has happened before, only in a somewhat modified state.

The Prince observes that this upheaval is a form of historical continuity in its own right: "All this shouldn't last; but it will, always [...] We were the **Leopards**, the Lions; those who'll take our place will be little jackals, hyenas [...] we'll all go on thinking ourselves the salt of the earth." The Prince means that the nobility will always remain in some form. In his view, it may be in a weakened and less desirable form compared to the nobility of old (predatory jackals and hyenas instead of magnificent leopards and lions), but it will be the same continuum of reshuffling classes.

LOVE VS. SENSUALITY

The Leopard's characters often display frank sexual passion that competes with stable, monogamous love. In fact, it's not clear that such enduring love exists in the world of the novel. That's because love is presented as being dependent on selflessness—something that's rare in characters' romantic relationships. The Prince is known for his interest in women besides his wife and even for resorting to prostitutes. His self-serving excuses for this behavior set the tone for the story of Tancredi's and Angelica's romance, which, once physical passion subsides, is primarily motivated by social ambition and is therefore doomed to unhappiness. The novel's characters primarily experience love as the pursuit of self-satisfying goals like sexual gratification and material wealth which, according to Lampedusa, cannot sustain happiness. Through such turbulent and ill-fated relationships, Lampedusa argues that sensuality is ultimately a counterfeit expression of love, and that real love is marked by unselfish care for another person.

The Prince's notorious self-indulgence, despite an outwardly successful marriage, sets the tone for romantic behavior in the novel. Though the Prince claims to truly love his wife, Maria Stella, he also indulges in regular visits to a prostitute. "Oh well, the Lord knows how much I've loved [Maria Stella]; but I was married at twenty," he reflects self-pityingly on his way to the prostitute's house. "And now she's too bossy, as well as too old [...] how can I find satisfaction with a woman who makes the sign of the Cross in bed before every embrace [...] seven children I've had with her, seven; and never once have I seen her navel. Is that right? [...] Why, she's the real sinner!" The Prince professes love for his wife while simultaneously offering excuses and self-justifications for his infidelity—telling himself he's entitled to greater satisfaction than his pious, prudish wife can give him, even blaming her for his straying behavior. Even if he has real affection for Maria Stella, the Prince allows his own sensual desires to come first, thereby demonstrating a lack of real love for his wife. With this, Lampedusa makes the implicit argument that genuine, committed love and unrestrained sensual desire are not compatible.

Tancredi's engagement to Angelica further demonstrates that sensual desire and social ambition can't take the place of real love. Angelica, the daughter of a newly risen member of the liberal gentry in Donnafugata, primarily seeks social advancement through Tancredi, though she is genuinely attracted to him. The narrator states, "Anyone deducing [that Angelica] [...] loved Tancredi would have been mistaken; she had too much pride and too much ambition to be capable of that annihilation, however temporary, of one's own personality without which there is no love; [...] although she did not love him, she was, then, in love with him, a very different thing; [...] for the moment she yearned for him to seize her." The narrator suggests that real love involves a certain forgetting of one's self in order to love another. Without this selflessness, all that's left is sensual passion (which is equated with being "in love" as opposed to loving). Pride and ambition make real love impossible, because they are primarily focused on oneself—not on the object of one's love.

Indeed, for Angelica, Tancredi is mostly a means to self-fulfillment. The narrator explains, "In Tancredi [Angelica] saw her chance of gaining a fine position in the noble world of Sicily, a world which to her was full of marvels very different from those which it contained in reality; and she also wanted him as a lively partner in bed [...] there was always amusement to be

had[.]" Besides being sexually attractive and "amusing," Tancredi is primarily a tool to help Angelica gain a higher social position. And, importantly, this goal is based on an illusion—the life of the nobility isn't as enticing as Angelica believes it to be, meaning that her relationship with Tancredi is fundamentally based on an illusion too. On the topic of Angelica and Tancredi's heavily erotic, teasing courtship, the narrator remarks, "Those were the best days in the life of Tancredi and Angelica [...] But that they did not know then; and they were pursuing a future which they deemed more concrete than it turned out to be, made of nothing but smoke and wind [...] they had been days when [...] the sensual urge, because restrained, had for one second been sublimated in renunciation, that is into real love. Those days were the preparation for a marriage which, even erotically, was no success[.]" Ironically, then, the couple's engagement was the happiest part of their life together, because resisting of sexual desire forced them to act somewhat unselfishly toward each other. The narrator equates such restraint with "real love," which was eclipsed once Angelica and Tancredi married. Though the details of the couple's unsuccessful marriage aren't given, it appears that once they gave into sexual desire, the couple's lack of genuine love for one another surfaced. Their marriage subsequently unraveled, and the socially ascendant future they'd imagined wasn't enough to sustain their happiness.

In a brief interlude outside the world of the nobility, Father Pirrone helps secure a "respectable" marriage for his niece, who's been seduced by a distant relative for the sake of desired property. On his way back to the Salina estate, he reflects, "that brutish love affair [...] that wretched half almond grove reacquired by means of calculated courtship, seemed to him the rustic poverty-stricken equivalent of other events recently witnessed. Nobles were reserved and incomprehensible, peasants explicit and clear; but the Devil twisted them both around his little finger all the same." The circumstances of his niece's marriage aren't really that different from what Father Pirrone witnessed between Angelica and Tancredi. Even if the affairs play out in subtler ways depending on the class of the people involved, the triumph of sensuality (or the desire for material advancement) over real love is the same. In fact, Lampedusa suggests that contrived, self-serving love doesn't change much from one generation to the next or from one class to another.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

LEOPARDS

The leopard is the heraldic symbol of the noble Salinas family and especially of its Prince, Don Fabrizio Corbèra. In the novel, the leopard more generally symbolizes the nobility's unchallenged rule over the lower classes in pre-revolutionary Sicily. A leopard should be able to sweep away social and political changes "with a wave of his paw." But as Italian society reorganizes, the Prince discovers that he cannot do this. He sometimes pictures himself as a leopard about to destroy an irritating lesser beast like a jackal (an animal that symbolizes the rising, new-moneyed class). But the Prince learns that predatory creatures like jackals and hyenas are destined to replace the reign of the noble, magnificent, and seemingly immovable animals like leopards and lions. The leopard is not as powerful or enduring as he had always believed, just as the nobility realizes that their position of power is fragile in the wake of the revolution. At the end of the novel, Concetta throws away the preserved coat of the Prince's beloved dog, Bendicò, who briefly floats in a leopard-like shape before collapsing in a useless heap on the ground. This image indicates that the reign of Sicily's "leopards," and even their memory, is truly over.

STARS

Stars symbolize the eternal and unchanging, particularly in contrast to rapid societal changes that individuals can't control. The Prince's favorite hobby is astronomy, and he is an accomplished amateur scientist. The stars' obedience to mathematical calculations reassures the Prince that he is in control of his life even in the midst of political upheaval in Sicily. He often wishes that he could escape social and familial problems by becoming "a pure intellect" like the stars and escaping into the eternal heavens. However, the idea that the stars obey his mind is an illusion—as is the idea that the Prince can avoid the changes happening around him. But just before the Prince dies, he's comforted by the vision of a lady—a personification of the planet Venus—who finally leads him beyond the troubles of earthly life. Stars and planetary bodies, then, ultimately represent the fact that it's possible to find comfort even amid great change and upheaval.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Pantheon Books edition of *The Leopard* published in 2007.

Chapter 1. Introduction to the Prince Quotes

The divinities frescoed on the ceiling awoke [...] the major gods and goddesses, the Princes among gods, thunderous Jove and frowning Mars and languid Venus, had already preceded the mob of minor deities and were amiably supporting the blue armorial shield of the Leopard. They knew that for the next twenty-three and a half hours they would be lords of the villa once again.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 6

Explanation and Analysis

The Salina family, whose ancestral crest includes the image of a leopard, has enjoyed noble status in Sicily for centuries. On the ceiling of their palace drawing room, images of ancient Roman deities surround the leopard insignia, displaying the prominence the Salinas occupy within their society.

This quote, occurring just after the family has completed their daily recitation of the Rosary, personifies the painted deities as if they reign over the household. The reference to Jove, Mars, and Venus as "Princes" among the gods associates Dom Fabrizio, head of the family and Prince of Salina, with these deities—especially his self-importance and his sense of rightfully ruling over the lesser "mob." In addition, the dominance of ancient pagan deities over the devoutly Catholic household suggests that Catholic religious rituals like the Rosary (despite the sincere devotion of individuals) are hollow displays that are primarily meant to support the Salinas' social status in the public eye. It also bolsters their self-perception as devout and therefore deserving of their status.

Suddenly he was swept by a gust of tenderness toward himself. "I'm just a poor, weak creature," he thought as his heavy steps crunched the dirty gravel. "I'm weak and without support. Stella! Oh well, the Lord knows how much I've loved her; but I was married at twenty. And now she's too bossy, as well as too old [...] seven children I've had with her, seven; and never once have I seen her navel. Is that right?" Now, whipped by this odd anguish, he was almost shouting, "Is it right? I ask you all [...] Why, she's the real sinner!"

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra (speaker), Princess Maria Stella

Related Themes:

Page Number: 24

Explanation and Analysis

One evening, after losing his temper with his family, the Prince comforts himself with a visit to a favorite prostitute in Palermo—but he feels guilty about his actions. On the way, he engages in a series of self-justifications for his infidelity. His primary excuse is that he and the Princess, Maria Stella, have been married for a long time, and that her personality has become distasteful to him over the years. In addition, she is prudish, despite having had many children with him, and she can't satisfy his desires. The Prince twists this excuse in order to exonerate himself from blame for seeking satisfaction elsewhere—even casting Maria Stella as the true offender in their marriage, not himself.

This quote is an example of the contrast between love and sensual lust throughout the novel. Through the Prince's infidelity and his attempts to justify his wrongdoings to himself, Lampedusa implicitly argues that real love is characterized by selflessness and concern for another person—qualities that the Prince seemingly lacks. When these things are lacking, a person can only fall back on lust, which can't sustain happiness in the long run. The Prince's love for his wife is thus fundamentally distorted and weakened by his uncontained lust.

The lad had one of those sudden serious moods which made him so mysterious and so endearing. "Unless we ourselves take a hand now, they'll foist a republic on us. If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change. D'you understand?"

Related Characters: Tancredi Falconeri (speaker), Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Giuseppe Garibaldi

Related Themes:

Page Number: 28

Explanation and Analysis

The Prince has just been discussing Sicily's political situation with his nephew, Tancredi, who is sympathetic to the "Redshirts." This rebel group is led by Garibaldi, an Italian nationalist seeking to annex Sicily and consolidate it into an

emerging unified Italian state. The Prince, on the other hand, dreads the possibility of change—particularly what social and political revolution would mean for him and other Sicilian nobility.

Tancredi's paradoxical statement serves as the foundation for the Prince's outlook throughout the first half of the novel. He interprets Tancredi's words at face value in order to reassure himself that limited support for the Revolution will actually help him maintain his position of power. In other words, the war will be a lot of noise but won't lead to *permanent* societal transformation. This self-justifying outlook becomes the basis for some of the Prince's consequential decisions, like agreeing to marry Tancredi off to a rising politician's daughter despite the outward class disparity.

In time, however, the Prince reconciles himself to the fact that change is inevitable—and that his own actions have helped promote it. Once the lower classes begin to gain a voice and greater economic mobility, his own family's and his class's dominance in Sicily cannot endure, no matter what comforting interpretations they apply to events.

❝ Now he had penetrated all the hidden meanings: the enigmatic words of Tancredi, the rhetorical ones of Ferrara, the false but revealing ones of Russo, had yielded their reassuring secret. Much would happen, but all would be playacting; a noisy, romantic play with a few spots of blood on the comic costumes. […] He felt like saying to Russo, but his innate courtesy held him back, "I understand now; you don't want to destroy us, who are your 'fathers.' You just want to take our places. Gently, nicely, putting a few thousand ducats in your pockets meanwhile. […] For all will be the same. Just as it is now: except for an imperceptible shifting about of classes."

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra (speaker), Russo, Don Ciccio Ferrara, Tancredi Falconeri

Related Themes:

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

This quote is another example of the Prince's self-justifying outlook on political change in Sicily. After a single morning spent among his family and working in his estate office, the Prince convinces himself that he has understood the underlying meaning of current "liberal" rhetoric. The Prince's nephew Tancredi, the Prince believes, is fighting with the rebels in order to ensure noble stability. Meanwhile, he thinks that his accountant, Ferrara, and his agent, Russo, both support the liberals out of self-interest—particularly the desire for economic advancement. In Sicily's current context, such advancement simply means that the underclass will rise up to take the places of the noble class. In other words, the revolution will be a superficial display, and its only results will be "imperceptible"—both relatively unthreatening for the Prince's noble status. The Prince's obliviousness to the situation is an example of how resistance to change can actually help bring it about, which proves to be the case in Sicily.

❝ Supported, guided, it seemed, by calculations which were invisible at that hour yet ever present, the stars cleft the ether in those exact trajectories of theirs. The comets would be appearing as usual, punctual to the minute, in sight of whoever was observing them […] their appearance at the time foreseen was a triumph of the human mind's capacity to project itself and to participate in the sublime routine of the skies.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 40

Explanation and Analysis

After an unsettling morning of pondering political questions, the Prince retreats to the palace observatory, his refuge from reality. The Prince loves astronomy because—unlike managing his family, estate, or social status—studying the stars is abstract and follows patterns that can be readily grasped by the human mind. Unlike the political upheaval in Sicily, in other words, the stars' actions can be neatly predicted and can be relied upon to remain the same.

In this way, the distant stars and their calculations feel more real to the Prince than his everyday estate dealings and human relationships, which defy categorization and change constantly. Of course, the idea that the stars are unchanging and perfectly predictable is an illusion. Extraterrestrial bodies are always in flux, and the light-years distance between stars and the Earth means that human beings are seeing an image of the past when they observe the night sky. But, sensing instability and uncertainty all around him,

the Prince finds comfort in such an illusion. He would rather "participate in [a] sublime routine," pondering seemingly eternal realities, than face what's happening around him on Earth.

Chapter 2. Donnafugata Quotes

❝ At the bottom of the steps the authorities took their leave, and the Princess [...] invited the Mayor, the Archpriest, and the notary to dine that same evening. [...] And [the Prince] added, turning to the others, "And after dinner, at nine o'clock, we shall be happy to see all our friends." For a long time Donnafugata commented on these last words. And the Prince, who had found Donnafugata unchanged, was found very much changed himself, for never before would he have issued so cordial an invitation; and from that moment, invisibly, began the decline of his prestige.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra (speaker), Giuseppe Garibaldi, Don Calogero Sedàra , Princess Maria Stella

Related Themes:

Page Number: 62

Explanation and Analysis

Donnafugata, the Salinas' country estate, is the Prince's favorite place—a refuge where life continues much as it always has. At least, that's how it has always seemed to the Prince. When he and his family arrives in the late summer of 1860, it's on the heels of Garibaldi's invasion of Sicily. Yet it seems like things will remain comfortingly familiar, as the town dignitaries greet the Salinas with traditional music and festivity.

However, to everyone's surprise, the Prince himself injects a note of change into the typical courtesies: instead of limiting the first evening's dinner to a handful of dignitaries, the Prince extends the invitation to anyone who wishes to drop by the palace. While the Prince probably intends this to be an offhand remark—an understated acknowledgment of the social shifts underway in Sicily—the people of Donnafugata hear something more. To them, it sounds like the Prince's outlook has become much more democratic.

Consequently, the Prince's reputation as a distant, inaccessible member of the nobility begins to quietly decline. The fact that the Prince sets this decline in motion himself suggests two things: first, that change takes root in people's thinking before they consciously accept its reality. Second, that people are often responsible for their own decline, even as they outwardly resist it.

❝ No laugh [...] came from the Prince, on whom, one might almost say, this news had more effect than the bulletin about the landing at Marsala. That had been an event not only foreseen but also distant and invisible. Now, with his sensibility to presages and symbols, he saw revolution in that white tie and two black tails moving at this moment up the stairs of his own home. Not only was he, the Prince, no longer the major landowner in Donnafugata, but he now found himself forced to receive, when in afternoon dress himself, a guest appearing in evening clothes.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Giuseppe Garibaldi, Don Calogero Sedàra

Related Themes:

Page Number: 76

Explanation and Analysis

The Prince's first evening at Donnafugata is a great shock to him, especially when the town's new mayor, Don Calogero, arrives for dinner. When the Prince's son announces that the mayor has arrived wearing a tailcoat, the effect on the Prince is more startling than Garibaldi's invasion a few months ago.

This quote suggests that political revolution has its most significant effects not on a sweeping historical level, but on an interpersonal level. As long as the Prince was simply hearing about the invasion from a distance, he could continue to delude himself that nothing was really going to change in Sicily. But when he perceives, face-to-face, that Don Calogero has become a rival, he realizes that class conflict is going to change his life firsthand. This is why Donnafugata, the Prince's comfortable refuge, becomes a place of unsettling change relative to the more sheltered Palermo—class differences are starker in the rural village, making Don Calogero's rise much more threatening.

The soul of the Prince reached out toward them, toward the intangible, the unattainable, which gave joy without laying claim to anything in return; as many other times, he tried to imagine himself in those icy tracts, a pure intellect armed with a notebook for calculations: difficult calculations, but ones which would always work out. "They're the only really genuine, the only really decent beings," thought he, in his worldly formulae. "Who worries about dowries for the Pleiades, a political career for Sirius, matrimonial joy for Vega?"

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra (speaker), Tancredi Falconeri, Concetta Salina

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 83

Explanation and Analysis

After his harrowing arrival at Donnafugata, where he's been greeted with alarming signs of social change, the Prince once again takes refuge in astronomy. The stars cannot be touched, but neither do they change nor make any demands on the Prince's life. Instead, they are manipulated through mathematical calculations that the Prince can master through intellect. Not only does he not have to worry about the stars' fates (like he has to worry about his daughter Concetta's marriage or his nephew Tancredi's future political career)—but he can imagine that the stars, unlike his children, are within his own power to understand and control.

For the Prince, such abstractions provide a respite from the haunting perils of change—but they also absolve him of the responsibility that's inherent to human relationships. The Prince is more comfortable dealing with parts of the universe, like animals and stars, that don't make demands on him and that don't require the risk of real love. In a way, this parallels the Prince's preference for affairs over marital love—the former allow him to dodge the demands that marriage makes on him.

Chapter 3. The Troubles of Don Fabrizio Quotes

[T]he scrub clinging to the slopes was still in the very same state of scented tangle in which it had been found by Phoenicians, Dorians, and Ionians when they disembarked in Sicily […] Don Fabrizio and Tumeo […] saw the same objects, their clothes were soaked with just as sticky a sweat, the same indifferent breeze blew steadily from the sea, moving myrtles and broom, spreading a smell of thyme. […] Reduced to these basic elements, its face washed clear of worries, life took on a tolerable aspect.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Don Ciccio Tumeo

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 101

Explanation and Analysis

The Phoenicians, Dorians, and Ionians were all ancient colonizers of Sicily, some of the island's earliest settlers. When the Prince goes hunting with his friend Tumeo in the Sicilian wilderness, he imagines that its vegetation looks the same as it did when those peoples arrived many centuries earlier. In fact, everything the Prince detects with his senses—the heat, the Mediterranean breeze, the smell of the trees—lets him imagine that he has stepped out of his time and into a distant, less complicated era.

This view of Sicily's landscape is similar to the Prince's attitude about the stars: in both of these phenomena, he sees what he chooses to see. In both, he finds an atmosphere in which his worries about the future can safely vanish, and he can simply exist. Of course, his daydream of ancient Sicily is just as illusory as his daydreams of the stars—he can't truly escape to the past any more easily than he can escape to outer space. And in both of these places, time inexorably moves forward—no matter how hard the Prince tries to avoid this fact.

Don Ciccio's negative vote, fifty similar votes at Donnafugata, a hundred thousand "noes" in the whole Kingdom, would have had no effect on the result, would in fact have made it, if anything, more significant; and this maiming of souls would have been avoided. Six months before they used to hear a rough despotic voice saying, "Do what I say or you'll catch it!" Now there was an impression already of such a threat being replaced by the soapy tones of a moneylender: "But you signed it yourself, didn't you? Can't you see? It's quite clear. You must do as we say, for here are the IOUs; your will is identical with mine."

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Don Ciccio Tumeo

Related Themes:

Page Number: 112

Explanation and Analysis

In late October 1860, a plebiscite, or referendum, was held in order to confirm the annexation of Sicily into the new Kingdom of Italy. The annexation was confirmed by an overwhelming majority; in fact, in Donnafugata, the vote was unanimous. The Prince has his doubts about the vote, however—and on his hunting trip with Tumeo, he presses his friend about his vote.

When Tumeo reveals that he actually voted "no" and that Don Calogero nullified his vote, the King realizes that the plebiscite involved a systematic crushing of the people's voice in order to make the (already high) popular support for the Kingdom look more overwhelming than it was. The Prince sees this as the exchange of one form of despotism for another. While under the nobility-dominated Kingdom of Sicily, open threat could force people's will, the outwardly democratic Kingdom of Italy resorts to more manipulative methods. The Prince suggests that the latter is actually more sinister. In this regard, at least, the Prince's belief that the revolution wouldn't actually change anything (especially the human tendency toward corruption) was accurate.

Don Calogero's heraldic impromptu gave the Prince the incomparable artistic satisfaction of seeing a type realized in all its details [...] [Don Calogero] was accompanied through two of the drawing rooms, embraced again, and began descending the stairs as the Prince, towering above him, watched this little conglomeration of astuteness, ill-cut clothes, money, and ignorance who was now to become almost a part of the family getting smaller and smaller.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Don Calogero Sedàra

Related Themes:

Page Number: 131

Explanation and Analysis

The Prince's negotiation with Donnafugata's mayor, Don Calogero, regarding the marriage of his nephew to the mayor's daughter, is an ambivalent experience. In many respects, it's humiliating, as Don Calogero is a self-made landowner and politician who's managed to rise to the level of rivaling the Prince of Salina. Just a generation ago, their children wouldn't have been considered an appropriate match.

But if the Prince has to give in to new social realities, he finds rueful consolation in the fact that Don Calogero lives up to the Prince's worst stereotypes of the rising class: he's obsessed with his family's standing, he's calculating, and he doesn't know how to dress well or how to conduct himself in a world traditionally dominated by noble manners and traditions. The picture of the mayor descending the stairs while the Prince watches him grow smaller is a mirror image of the underlying social situation. As the Prince is beginning to realize, it's he himself who is shrinking in importance within his society, while men like Don Calogero are rising to the top—no matter how ill-suited they appear to the Prince.

Chapter 4. Love at Donnafugata Quotes

Gradually Don Calogero came to understand that a meal in common need not necessarily be all munching and grease stains; that a conversation may well bear no resemblance to a dog fight [...] that sometimes more can be obtained by saying "I haven't explained myself well" than "I can't understand a word"; and that the adoption of such tactics can result in a greatly increased yield[.]

It would be rash to affirm that Don Calogero drew an immediate profit from what he had learned; he did try to shave a little better and complain a little less about the waste of laundry soap; but from that moment there began, for him and his family, that process of continual refining which in the course of three generations transforms innocent peasants into defenseless gentry.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Angelica Sedàra, Tancredi Falconeri, Don Calogero Sedàra

Related Themes:

Page Number: 137

Explanation and Analysis

As Don Calogero spends time with the Prince following Tancredi's engagement to Angelica, he begins to change. He absorbs certain characteristics of the nobility that will help him get along better in Italy's changing society. For example, he comes to understand meals are strategic social events, not just about eating and that conversations aren't just conquests to be won. Additionally, Don Calogero realizes that sometimes subtlety is more effective than open conflict.

Notably, however, Don Calogero merely uses what he's learned as a means to an end—ways of getting more power. The changes are also strikingly superficial. That is, becoming a passable member of the moneyed class doesn't result in any deep or meaningful changes to Don Calogero's character—suggesting that the differences between classes are much more external than intrinsic. The process is a cyclical one. When his family becomes gentry, they are "defenseless"—suggesting that, like the Salina family now, the Sedàras will someday be the vulnerable targets of those beneath them. Because class differences don't run as deep as people pretend they do, social revolution is really a self-perpetuating cycle, not something that produces enduring change.

> Anyone deducing from this attitude of Angelica that she loved Tancredi would have been mistaken; she had too much pride and too much ambition to be capable of that annihilation, however temporary, of one's own personality without which there is no love; [...] but although she did not love him, she was, then, in love with him, a very different thing; his blue eyes, his affectionate teasing, certain suddenly serious tones of his voice gave her, even in memory, quite a definite turn, and in those days her one longing was to be gripped by those hands of his; presently she would forget them and find a substitute as she did, in fact, later, but for the moment she yearned for him to seize her.

Related Characters: Don Calogero Sedàra , Tancredi Falconeri, Angelica Sedàra

Related Themes:

Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

Angelica, like her father Don Calogero, is a social climber. She understands that marrying Tancredi will earn her a place among Sicily's nobility, a position that her relatively humble birth didn't assure her. However, this ambitious outlook doesn't mean that she has no affection for Tancredi—she does feel affection for his charms and longs for him sexually. At the same time, the author suggests that this limited affection doesn't rise to the level of genuine love. Love, that is, suggests a genuine forgetting of oneself and one's concerns, instead focusing on care for the other person. Because Angelica is ambitious above all else, she isn't capable of an emotion like love—love and ambition compete with each other when they're both present within a person. This is the difference between love and being "in love"—the latter is fundamentally about desire and thus has a selfish element; the former is about generosity and therefore forgets the self.

> Those were the best days in the life of Tancredi and Angelica [...] But that they did not know then; and they were pursuing a future which they deemed more concrete than it turned out to be, made of nothing but smoke and wind. When they were old and uselessly wise their thoughts would go back to those days with insistent regret; they had been days when desire was always present because it was always overcome, when many beds had been offered and refused, when the sensual urge, because restrained, had for one second been sublimated in renunciation, that is into real love. Those days were the preparation for a marriage which, even erotically, was no success[.]

Related Characters: Tancredi Falconeri, Angelica Sedàra

Related Themes:

Page Number: 162

Explanation and Analysis

During their engagement, Tancredi and Angelica spend hours exploring the intricacies of the Salina palace. This exploration is a kind of replacement for a true exploration of each other's minds and souls. The absence of true affection and desire for each other—they share only a counterfeit, superficial love and desire—helps explain why their marriage doesn't end up succeeding, though the novel doesn't give a full account of what transpires in their relationship. The author presents real love as something

that's tied to renunciation—meaning denial of one's desires for the sake of the other person. The closest Tancredi and Angelica ever come to such selflessness is their refusal to give in to physical passion during these breathless days at Donnafugata. This quote suggests that while the couple had the opportunity to let their relationship blossom into full, mature love, they settled for passion—something they always regretted.

"In Sicily it doesn't matter whether things are done well or done badly; the sin which we Sicilians never forgive is simply that of 'doing' at all. We are old, Chevalley, very old. For more than twenty-five centuries we've been bearing the weight of a superb and heterogeneous civilization, all from outside, none made by ourselves, none that we could call our own. We're as white as you are, Chevalley, and as the Queen of England; and yet for two thousand and five hundred years we've been a colony. I don't say that in complaint; it's our fault. But even so we're worn out and exhausted."

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra (speaker), Aimone Chevalley di Monterzuolo

Related Themes:

Page Number: 177

Explanation and Analysis

A government secretary named Chevalley visits the Prince, inviting him to become a senator in the new Italian government. The Prince immediately refuses and then gives Chevalley an elaborate explanation for why he, like his country, can never fully participate in a modern Italy. A major reason is that Sicilians hate and resist action. Sicilians have spent centuries being colonized by others; even their culture is a mix of elements (Byzantine, Islamic, and Spanish, among others) that they did not create themselves.

The Prince suggests that it's exhausting to live under the weight of others' rule, and within a culture that's been imposed upon from outside influences. Having done this for millennia, Sicilians no longer have the desire or strength to contribute to something new. After centuries of colonization and the way this has shaped the people's character, such work is foreign to them. It's therefore useless for the Italian state to expect much of Sicily, or for the Prince to pretend he has anything to offer as a politician—it is too late for change.

"This violence of landscape, this cruelty of climate, this continual tension in everything, and these monuments, even, of the past, magnificent yet incomprehensible because not built by us and yet standing around like lovely mute ghosts; all those rulers who landed by main force from every direction, who were at once obeyed, soon detested, and always misunderstood, their only expressions works of art we couldn't understand and taxes which we understood only too well and which they spent elsewhere: all these things have formed our character, which is thus conditioned by events outside our control as well as by a terrifying insularity of mind."

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra (speaker), Aimone Chevalley di Monterzuolo

Related Themes:

Page Number: 179

Explanation and Analysis

The Prince continues to explain Sicily's unique history to government secretary Chevalley. He argues that Sicily's landscape and climate, as well as its long history of colonization by foreign nations, has shaped its people's character unchangeably. For example, Sicily is ruled by a climate that's either brazenly hot or tormented by rain—there's no moderation. People have had no choice except to react to these forces bigger than themselves. The same is true of history: outsiders have repeatedly taken over the island, built monuments that did not represent the people, and levied taxes that took the people's resources elsewhere.

These events robbed Sicilians of the opportunity to build their own culture and enjoy the fruits of their own labor. A Besides denying people of this fulfillment, these events also caused Sicilians to withdraw within themselves, becoming resistant not only to change but to participation in the outside world. This combination has made Sicilians inactive and narrow, unresponsive to big changes like the revolution and unwilling to participate in their own society.

I belong to an unfortunate generation, swung between the old world and the new, and I find myself ill at ease in both. And what is more, as you must have realized by now, I am without illusions; what would the Senate do with me, an inexperienced legislator who lacks the faculty of self-deception, essential requisite for wanting to guide others? We of our generation must draw aside and watch the capers and somersaults of the young around this ornate catafalque.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra (speaker), Aimone Chevalley di Monterzuolo

Related Themes:

Page Number: 180

Explanation and Analysis

The Prince brings his speech about Sicily's past to a close by narrowing from sweeping historical events to his own life. He explains to Chevalley why he personally, not just Sicily as a whole, is unsuited to political life: the Prince has lived his life according to the old ways, while uncomfortably aware of the growing pressures of the new. As a result, he can understand both perspectives without feeling comfortable in either.

Because of this unstable condition, the Prince knows that he isn't suited to the work of a Senator. Ironically, he understands himself too well; if he were less self-aware, he might feel capable of imposing his viewpoint on others. But because he has spent his life constantly reexamining his place in the world, he knows that the role of legislator belongs to those more confident in themselves—even if that confidence is an illusion. His world is dying (*catafalque* refers to a coffin), and his only role is to watch the young—those who've known only the newer world—celebrate the death of the old.

Chevalley thought, "This state of things won't last; our lively new modern administration will change it all." The Prince was depressed: "All this shouldn't last; but it will, always; the human 'always,' of course, a century, two centuries...and after that it will be different, but worse. We were the Leopards, the Lions; those who'll take our place will be little jackals, hyenas; and the whole lot of us. Leopards, jackals, and sheep, we'll all go on thinking ourselves the salt of the earth."

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Aimone Chevalley di Monterzuolo (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 185

Explanation and Analysis

Despite the Prince's attempts to explain Sicily as he sees it, young Chevalley doesn't grasp the situation—thereby illustrating the Prince's point. Chevalley is confident that modern methods can overcome Sicily's poverty and backwardness—it's just a matter of applying the right policies and techniques.

But the Prince looks at the very same circumstances and believes the opposite: that nothing can change an underlying flaw in people's nature. In his view, that flaw is pride, a form of blindness that renders Sicilians incapable of desiring change, much less acting to bring it about. Because of this, he believes that Sicilians will continue to go on devouring one another like animals, even if the kinds of "animals" change—from noble leopards (the symbol of the Salina family) to greedy, predatory jackals, for example. All these creatures have self-destructive pride in common, and for that reason, Sicily will never change for the better. Outsiders may act upon it, but Sicilians will only continue to withdraw, resist, and revel in their own decline.

Chapter 5. Father Pirrone Pays a Visit Quotes

"It's a class difficult to suppress because it's in continual renewal and because if needs be it can die well, that is it can throw out a seed at the moment of death. [...] I say as before, because it's differences of attitude, not estates and feudal rights, which make a noble [...] And I can tell you too, Don Pietrino, that if, as has often happened before, this class were to vanish, an equivalent one would be formed straightaway with the same qualities and the same defects; it might not be based on blood any more, but possibly on . . . on, say, the length of time lived in a place, or on greater knowledge of some text

Related Characters: Father Pirrone (speaker), Angelica Sedàra, Tancredi Falconeri, Don Pietrino

Related Themes:

Page Number: 199

Explanation and Analysis

Not long after Tancredi and Angelica's engagement, Father Pirrone travels to his home village, a rural peasant community. This visit gives him the opportunity to reflect on his long immersion in the world of the nobility and to compare and contrast these very different worlds.

As an insider, the Prince is obsessed with the nobility's decline. However, Father Pirrone, as an outsider, believes the nobility will eventually revive. That's because, in his view, "nobility" isn't really about money or property—more than anything else, it's an attitude. Specifically, it's a desire for dominance that's expressed through social hierarchy.

Such dominance can take the form of ancestral roots or even membership in the intelligentsia. If one form of nobility dies out, another will sooner or later fill its place, even if it looks quite different. Father Pirrone doesn't condemn this tendency toward self-renewal. He regards it as a natural part of human nature, suggesting that different classes benefit one another in various ways. In any case, class conflict never really stops; it just perpetuates itself as historical circumstances change around it.

Two days later Father Pirrone left to return to Palermo. As he was jolted along he went over impressions that were not entirely pleasant; that brutish love affair come to fruition in St. Martin's summer, that wretched half almond grove reacquired by means of calculated courtship, seemed to him the rustic poverty-stricken equivalent of other events recently witnessed. Nobles were reserved and incomprehensible, peasants explicit and clear; but the Devil twisted them both around his little finger all the same.

Related Characters: Don Calogero Sedàra , Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Turi Pirrone, Angelica Sedàra, Tancredi Falconeri, Santino Pirrone, 'Ncilina, Father Pirrone

Related Themes:

Page Number: 209

Explanation and Analysis

While Father Pirrone visits his family, he must adjudicate a dispute between his sister's family and his uncle's family. His uncle Turi made Santino, Turi's son, pursue his cousin 'Ncilina, and Santino ends up getting 'Ncilina pregnant. Turi's ultimate goal is to force the young people to marry, thereby gaining a certain almond grove through 'Ncilina's dowry. He believes he was cheated out of this land by Father' Pirrone's and his sister's father many years ago.

After Father Pirrone sets things straight—securing 'Ncilina's and Santino's engagement—he goes home and thinks about what he's learned. The sordid affair, he realizes, is not too different from Tancredi and Angelica's engagement, even though the latter looked more decorous and tastefully arranged on the surface. Tancredi's uncle, the Prince, and Angelica's father, Don Calogero, were both still concerned with social status (through property) over love. Neither marriage is motivated primarily by the mutual devotion of the parties involved. In other words, even if the methods and attitudes are a little different, the same greed and manipulation are present in both peasant and noble marriages—love occupies a token role, if any at all.

Chapter 6. A Ball Quotes

They were the most moving sight there, two young people in love dancing together, blind to each other's defects, deaf to the warnings of fate, deluding themselves that the whole course of their lives would be as smooth as the ballroom floor, unknowing actors made to play the parts of Juliet and Romeo by a director who had concealed the fact that tomb and poison were already in the script. Neither of them was good, each full of self-interest, swollen with secret aims; yet there was something sweet and touching about them both; those murky but ingenuous ambitions of theirs were obliterated by the words of jesting tenderness he was murmuring in her ear, by the scent of her hair, by the mutual clasp of those bodies of theirs destined to die.

Related Characters: Princess Maria Stella, Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Angelica Sedàra, Tancredi Falconeri

Related Themes:

Page Number: 225

Explanation and Analysis

At a ball in Palermo, about a year after Tancredi and Angela's engagement, the Prince feels more alienated than ever within noble Sicilian society. He doesn't fit into either the old world or the new, and this gives him a unique perspective as he watches events unfolding around him. This is especially true as he watches Tancredi and Angelica dance—a spectacle that fills him with both pity and wistfulness. Throughout the novel, the Prince has shown himself to be an unfaithful husband, incapable of sustaining genuine selfless love for his wife, Princess Maria Stella. He senses what Tancredi and Angela don't yet know yet: that the world they've maneuvered into will leave them unfulfilled. He also knows from his own marriage to Maria Stella that a marriage motivated by lust and greed, without true love to fall back on, cannot sustain happiness.

In comparing Tancredi and Angela to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet (whose passionate relationship leads them both to tragic fates), the Prince suggests that Tancredi and Angela's relationship is doomed from the start—and indeed, they go on to have an unfulfilling marriage. This is both due to their preoccupation with "self-interest" and sensuality and to Sicily's political and social climate, which is rapidly changing amid the revolution. Their "murky but ingenuous ambitions" lead them to marry for social status and political gain rather than for love—something that the novel implies is unsustainable, as political regimes and social hierarchies are constantly in flux.

Chapter 7. Death of a Prince Quotes

It was useless to try to avoid the thought, but the last of the Salinas was really he himself, this gaunt giant now dying on a hotel balcony. For the significance of a noble family lies entirely in its traditions, that is in its vital memories; and he was the last to have any unusual memories, anything different from those of other families [...] the meaning of his name would change more and more to empty pomp [...] He had said that the Salinas would always remain the Salinas. He had been wrong. The last Salina was himself. That fellow Garibaldi [...] had won after all.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra (speaker), Fabrizietto Salina, Giuseppe Garibaldi

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 248

Explanation and Analysis

This quote describes some of the Prince's dying thoughts. The novel jumps directly from the Ponteleone ball to the Prince's last hours, some 25 years later—suggesting that the Prince has spent many years waiting for death as his noble status has gradually declined. Now that it's here, he acknowledges the truth: in spite of his descendants, the Salinas will die with him. That's because there's no longer a distinct noble class in Italy, showing that Garibaldi's revolution has succeeded in the long run.

The Prince's grandchildren haven't shared the class traditions and assumptions that made life meaningful for him; instead, their lives are mostly indistinguishable from middle-class Italians'. The Prince's recognition of this fact indicates that he is finally, fully accepting the inevitability of change. He had long believed that the pride of his family crest, the Leopard could not be overcome, and that the forces of change could be placated by mere surface acknowledgment. But now the Prince knows that change has caught up to him once and for all—and the Salinas will soon be no more.

Chapter 8. Relics Quotes

To her the removal of those objects was a matter of indifference; what did touch her, the day's real thorn, was the appalling figure the Salina family would now cut with the ecclesiastical authorities, and soon with the entire city. [...] And the Church's esteem meant much to her. The prestige of her name had slowly disappeared; the family fortune, divided and subdivided, was at best equivalent to that of any number of other lesser families and very much smaller than that of some rich industrialists. But in the Church, in their relations with it, the Salinas had maintained their pre-eminence. What a reception His Eminence had given the three sisters when they went to make their Christmas visit! Would that happen now?

Related Characters: Father Pirrone, Concetta Salina

Related Themes:

Page Number: 267

Explanation and Analysis

At the end of the novel, in 1910, the Salina family is reduced to three elderly spinsters, Concetta chief among them. The Salinas no longer have much money or property; Italian society has changed, and upstart industrialists, not historic nobles, possess the greatest wealth. The Salinas have managed to hang onto a shadow of their former stature by collecting religious relics and thereby retaining prominence and esteem among Sicily's Catholic hierarchy. (This proves Father Pirrone right that the nobility always finds ways of renewing itself around different forms of hierarchy). Yet, now that the sisters' relic collection is suspected to be inauthentic, Concetta knows that her family's legacy is on the brink of final destruction. If the relics are fake, the Salina name will be regarded as fake too. Concetta's reflections suggest that when people base their significance in external forms of meaning—whether noble status, wealth, or even religious objects—that significance will eventually prove to be inauthentic, destined to fade.

Until today, on the rare occasions when she thought over what had happened at Donnafugata that distant summer, she had felt upheld by a sense of being martyred, being wronged, of resentment against a father who had neglected her, of torturing emotion for that other dead man. Now, however, these secondhand feelings which had formed the skeleton of her whole mode of thought were also collapsing. There had been no enemies, just one single adversary, herself; her future had been killed by her own imprudence, by the rash Salina pride[.]

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Angelica Sedàra, Senator Tassoni, Tancredi Falconeri, Concetta Salina

Related Themes:

Page Number: 273

Explanation and Analysis

Concetta has just learned the truth about what happened between her and Tancredi 50 years ago. Though Tancredi had been clumsy and wrong-headed in his attempts to woo her—telling crude jokes and trying to gain entrance into the family convent—the real break between them was due to Concetta's own pride. That pride has sustained her over the decades since, as she has clung to the self-righteous belief that she was wronged by both Tancredi (for pursuing Angelica instead) and her father (for facilitating Tancredi's marriage). Now that Tassoni has told Concetta the truth about Tancredi's lifelong feelings for her, Concetta recognizes that the way she's conceptualized her past is a collapsing "skeleton"—a fake relic, rather like the religious objects that have just been discredited in her home. As her father predicted and experienced in his own failed efforts to resist social change, Concetta learns too late that pride is a Sicilian noble's worst enemy.

❝ As the carcass was dragged off, the glass eyes stared at her with the humble reproach of things that are thrown away, that are being annulled. A few minutes later what remained of Bendicò was flung into a corner of the courtyard visited every day by the dustman. During the flight down from the window his form recomposed itself for an instant; in the air one could have seen dancing a quadruped with long whiskers, and its right foreleg seemed to be raised in imprecation. Then all found peace in a heap of livid dust.

Related Characters: Prince Don Fabrizio Corbèra , Bendicò, Concetta Salina

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 279

Explanation and Analysis

Out of all the family mementos Concetta has kept, Bendicò (her father's beloved dog, preserved as a rug) is the only one she doesn't hate. But after Concetta finds out that her life has been based on a lie (she wasn't actually wronged by Tancredi and her father but thwarted her own happiness through pride), she can't stand the memory of Bendicò anymore. She thus orders him to be thrown away.

The discarding of Bendicò represents the final abandonment of the Salina legacy. As the Prince believed, a noble family's legacy lies in the memory of its traditions. Now that Concetta has discovered the truth about her memories, she decides to be rid of them once and for all, meaning that the Salina legacy is as lifeless as the dog's pitiful corpse. The dog's momentary mid-air shape is meant to resemble the leopard, the family's armorial symbol, looking as if it's uttering a curse. Besides symbolizing the death of the Salinas, this suggests that pride has always poisoned the Salina legacy from within and has finally brought about its demise. The pathetic rejection of the dead dog shows just how far the family has fallen. It also suggests that the Salina legacy, because it's been based on class superiority, has always been a matter of self-deception—it has never really been worth preserving.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PRINCE

In May 1860, the Salina family has just finished reciting the Rosary and are now going their separate ways. The household members depart the ornately decorated drawing room, where there are mythical figures painted on the ceiling. Deities like Jove, Mars, and Venus hold up the armorial shield of the **Leopard**.

The life of the Salinas, a noble Sicilian family, is marked by seemingly timeless religious rituals. Yet the traditional Catholic observance is overshadowed by images of ancient Roman gods that surround the family symbol—suggesting that the Salinas' primary allegiance is to their ancient family lineage.

As the Salina children and the small, domineering Princess depart, the huge Prince, Fabrizio, towers over them all. He is tall and strong with a fair complexion, owing to his half-German parentage. He got his authoritarianism, his rigid morals, and his abstract mind from the same source. The culture of Palermo, Sicily, has slightly relaxed the latter tendencies, making the Prince arrogant, unusually scrupulous, and contemptuous of his more pragmatic family and friends. His hobby is astronomy, and he almost believes the **stars** obey his mathematical calculations.

The Prince is a paradox: he is deeply loyal to his Sicilian heritage, yet he isn't fully Sicilian. He is strict and intellectual, yet Sicilian culture has softened these "German" traits, making him both markedly Sicilian and someone who feels like an outsider among other Sicilians. This "in-between" characterization will shape the Prince's reactions to Sicily's social changes throughout the novel.

The combination of his pride and intellect (from his mother) and a sensual and irresponsible streak (from his father) have combined to make Prince Fabrizio discontent. He is watching his class and his family fall into decline, but he feels powerless to stop it.

The Prince's personality is an unstable combination of competing traits, which mirrors the political instability in Sicily at this time. The Prince is perceptive enough to see that Sicily is changing and that this will hurt his family's prestige, but being entangled in Sicilian culture himself, he cannot change the course of events.

The Prince follows his excitable Great Dane, Bendicò, into the enclosed garden. The garden has a muted, dreamy atmosphere and a pungent aroma. The delicate French roses droop in the heat. The Prince is reminded of an occurrence a month ago, when a soldier crawled into the garden to die after being wounded in a skirmish with rebels. The soldier's face often haunts the Prince's thoughts, seeming to wonder what purpose he died for. The Prince isn't sure.

The palace garden like Sicily in miniature: it's hazy, half-asleep, and a place where plants and even people die. The soldier's death is the novel's first example of the Prince's lifelong obsession with change and the death of his own family and class. The dead soldier's face reflects the Prince's own ambivalence about Sicily's changing political situation.

The Prince's brother-in-law, Màlvica, who often speaks for their circle of friends, would claim that the soldier had died for the King. The King represents "order, continuity, decency, honor," the Church, and everything that "The Sect" rejects. These ideals stir the Prince's heart, and yet, something about these words doesn't ring true to him. He believes that recent kings have not lived up to the monarchy's ideals, which in turn makes him question the legitimacy of the monarchy.

Just as the Prince doesn't fully fit into Sicilian culture, he also doesn't completely align with his fellow nobles' views. In 1860, Italian nationalists and sympathetic rebels were gathering to annex and unify several Italian kingdoms, including Sicily. ("The Sect" was a catch-all term referring to liberals and Freemasons.) The King is sympathetic to the Sicilian monarchy, yet he also questions whether the monarchy truly lives up to the ideals that his peers take for granted.

The Prince thinks about his frequent audiences with King Ferdinand. He recalls a particular meeting with the King at Caserta when, from behind a mountain of official papers, Ferdinand made small talk about Fabrizio's family and scientific achievements and then questioned him about popular sentiments regarding the Viceroy of Sicily. The Prince declines to give specifics, having never heard either liberals or royalists say anything good.

Ferdinand II was King of the Two Sicilies from 1830 until his death in 1859, a member of the Bourbon dynasty; he was known for resisting revolutionaries and dissidents. From Ferdinand's conversation with the Prince, the king seems to be nervous about changing popular sentiments. Wanting to stay on his king's good side, the Prince refrains from telling the him that nobody, liberal or conservative, favors him—the monarchy's position is precarious.

The Prince recalls that on another visit, King Ferdinand had been less cordial and had scolded him to keep his nephew Tancredi in line. Even then, the Prince could see that the monarchy was in decline—but even if the Piedmontese took power, the Prince couldn't see what would really change, beyond the dialect spoken. Therefore, the Prince is confused about where his loyalties should lie. He knows that supporting the status quo would probably lead to more violence.

The Prince's young nephew is sympathetic to the Sicilian rebels, and the Prince hasn't stopped him from joining revolutionary activities. Yet the Prince doubts that revolution (which would unite Sicily with the Piedmontese, or mainland Italy) will create any lasting changes. He neither supports change nor desires to resist it—again, he's caught between stability and change.

That night, the household (14 people, including children, governesses, and tutors) has a typically grand, albeit slightly shabby, dinner. As the Prince ladles out soup for his family, his hand shakes; his 16-year-old son, Francesco Paolo, arrived late, and the Prince is angry. Though the Prince doesn't explode, his anger smolders throughout dinner. At one point, the Princess strokes his hand soothingly, and the Prince feels a surge of desire. However, this prompts him to picture Mariannina and to order a carriage to town. The Princess, tearful, tries to dissuade the Prince from going into Palermo in these violent times, but the Prince irritably rebuffs her. As the carriage departs, his priest Father Pirrone accompanying him, the Prince hears his wife having a hysterical fit upstairs.

The condition of the Salinas' dining room shows their unstable position—they uphold a noble lineage, yet their riches aren't what they used to be. Prince's projects his discomfort with the political situation onto his family, while his habit of sexual unfaithfulness is a way of avoiding uncomfortable realities at home. The tension between married love and sensual lust, itself a source of instability, will trouble the Prince and other characters throughout the book. The Princess's reaction and the family priest's presence imply that the Prince's behavior is an open secret.

As they travel to Palermo, they pass the Falconeri villa, property of the Prince's nephew Tancredi. Tancredi is the son of the Prince's sister; Tancredi's father had squandered the Falconeri fortune before his death. At that point, Tancredi became the Prince's ward, and the Prince developed a fondness for the fun-loving yet thoughtful young man, who's now 21. He wishes that Tancredi could be his heir instead of his eldest son, Paolo, who's only interested in horses. Nevertheless, Tancredi has become sympathetic to the "Sect" and the Prince, who funds the young man out of his own pockets and has had to go to some lengths to keep him out of trouble with the royal authorities. The Prince, blinded by fondness for the boy, blames "the times."

Tancredi's situation shows that some Sicilian families were already suffering the results of decline, which the Prince tries to patch up as best he can. Tancredi's enthusiasm for liberalism is a source of tension for the Prince; he doesn't approve, but he's also invested in Tancredi's personal success, since Tancredi seems more likely to live up to the family legacy than the Prince's own sons are. "The times" are an abstract entity onto which the Prince can project blame for Tancredi's political activities, again avoiding interpersonal tension. The abstraction of "the times" also suggests that the political upheaval happening in Sicily still doesn't seem real to the Prince.

As the carriage approaches Palermo, Father Pirrone points out the rebel campfires on a nearby mountain. As they enter the city, dozens of convents and monasteries come into view, giving Palermo a gloomy atmosphere. After they pass through a soldiers' patrol, Father Pirrone is dropped off at the Jesuit house, and the Prince arrives at his city palace. From there, he walks through "a quarter of ill repute" toward Mariannina's house, all the while thinking that he needs to confess to Father Pirrone tomorrow. He justifies his behavior to himself on the grounds that if he didn't satisfy his nagging lust, he'd end up sinning worse. How, after all, can he find satisfaction with his devoutly religious wife these days? Her prudishness is the *real* sin, the Prince thinks.

Rebel activity is right on the edges of Palermo, its tension contrasting with the unchanging solidity of the city's religious institutions. The Prince largely ignores this tension, however, preoccupying himself with internal tensions instead—namely, his choice to have sex with a prostitute even though he is married. The Prince exonerates himself on the grounds that his wife is too religious—a self-deluding technique that parallels the Prince's delusion of stability in Sicily.

Two hours later, the Prince and the priest head home. Father Pirrone has heard a rumor of an impending Piedmontese invasion of Italy and is worried. The Prince, meanwhile, feels physically satisfied but a bit disgusted with himself. When they get home, the Prince is touched by the sight of his sleeping wife. Troubled and unable to sleep himself, he has sex with Maria Stella before dawn.

It's the eve of Sicily's revolution—Garibaldi's troops (known as The Thousand, or the Redshirts) landed on Sicily on May 11, 1860. The fact that the Prince spends this evening indulging his own desires suggests that he's oblivious to the reality of approaching change; his relations with the Princess also indicate that he's experiencing confusion between love and lust.

The next morning Tancredi comes in while the Prince is shaving. Having seen the Prince in Palermo last night, Tancredi teases his uncle, which the Prince ignores. Tancredi reveals that he's preparing to join the rebels in the hills, and the Prince, concerned, pictures the soldier's corpse in the Salinas' garden. Tancredi explains that now is the time to act—after all, if they want things to remain the same, some things must change. Moved by these words, the Prince gives Tancredi some money.

Tancredi takes a very different view of the Redshirts than the Prince does. While the Prince downplays change, Tancredi affirms that it's a good thing. He even makes the idea of change palatable to his uncle by describing it as something that will reinforce existing social structures—an interpretation that the Prince favors.

The Prince goes to his estate office. Paintings of the several Salina estates decorate its walls. The cheerful paintings reveal mostly superficial details, giving an impression of ornamental luxury but little substance. Pushing aside unappealing mounds of business papers, the Prince begins reading an astronomy journal. He's soon interrupted by his accountant, Don Ciccio Ferrara, who is a liberal. When Don Ciccio makes an optimistic remark about the likelihood of revolution, the Prince is dismayed. He sees Ferrara as representing the rising class, and he thinks the man is stupid for believing that a new Sicily is about to be born.

The superficial details of the paintings suggest that the state of the nobility has little substance either—it has a veneer of luxury but little power or identity of its own. Typically, the Prince pushes aside tangible reality in favor of abstract ideas. But he can't avoid it for long—political change, through his employees, comes to find him whether he likes it or not. The Prince responds in a defensive manner, believing that Ferrara represents the underclass's ignorance.

A bit later, the Prince's agent, Russo, comes in. To the Prince, Russo, too, seems representative of the up-and-coming class. Like Don Ciccio, he's optimistic about revolution and doesn't believe there will be much violence. When Russo refers to the better times that are coming for "poor folk" like himself, the Prince smiles, knowing that Russo is in the process of purchasing an estate. The Prince feels that all these "petty little local liberals" are just looking for the opportunity to make more money. This series of conversations—with Tancredi, Don Ciccio, and Russo—confirms the Prince's suspicion that the revolution will be mostly display and playacting. All the liberals really want is to take the place of the gentry. Everything else will mostly remain the same.

Like the previous visitor, Ferrara, Russo gives The Prince insight into the lower classes' mindset during the revolution. While Ferrara seemed simply ignorant, Russo seems like a hypocrite in the Prince's eyes because he's striving to gain wealth while supporting more democratic political aims. This combination of perspectives confirms the Prince's self-serving view of the political situation—that is, that nothing will really change. Class conflict, he thinks, is just a self-perpetuating cycle of jockeying for position and property; therefore, Sicily's social structure will remain intact.

A few minutes later, the Prince escapes into his garden with Bendicò. He can't help worrying what will become of the often despised monarchy, yet he knows that other countries, like France, are now thriving under supposedly "illegitimate" rulers. The Prince decides to distract himself with astronomy. He climbs to the estate's observatory and finds Father Pirrone, who assumes that the Prince has come for confession. When the Prince points out that his priest already knows what he did last night, Father Pirrone huffily returns to his astronomy calculations.

The Prince still feels nagged by political questions—he has always been loyal to the monarchy, yet he sees evidence of other countries surviving after dynasties have been toppled. The Prince seeks comfort in something that never seems to change: the stars. When his priest tries to remind him of a glaring inconsistency in his life—his indulgence of his sexual appetites—the Prince shirks this reality too.

The Prince, feeling calm and reassured by the morning's political conclusions, looks down at the Sicilian countryside. He tells Father Pirrone that it would take a lot of Victor Emmanuels to change the magic of Sicily, but the priest is not reassured. Father Pirrone argues that the gentry will compromise with the liberals and the Masons while Church property is seized and divided up, leaving many poor dependents destitute. The Prince is silent for a while. Finally, he points out that, unlike the Church, the gentry have not been promised perpetual existence—they will take whatever extension of life they can get. Father Pirrone is just relieved that the Prince isn't angry with him, and he reminds his friend to come to confession on Saturday. The two men are soon happily absorbed in their work on an astronomy paper, and these abstractions make the Prince feel much more connected to reality than his everyday life does.

Victor Emmanuel was the first king of the unified Italian state, supported by Garibaldi. After taking Tancredi's words at face value—that revolution will allow things to remain the same—the Prince tells himself that Sicily is stable. Father Pirrone, who is not a member of the nobility, thinks that he's deluding himself. But the Prince argues that no matter what the revolutionaries might do to the Catholic Church, God has promised that the Church will never be overcome. The nobility have no such guarantee. In a way, then, both the Prince and his priest are placated by their belief in stability, regardless of evidence that the world is changing. Their absorption in astronomy, studying extraterrestrial bodies that have remained constant for billions of years, is further proof of this.

At lunch, the Prince is calmer, and the meal has a more relaxed and cheerful air than usual. Only his daughter Concetta appears worried about the missing Tancredi, and the Prince realizes that she must have feelings for her cousin. The meal concludes with a giant rum jelly (the Prince's favorite) in the shape of a castle, and he delights in watching his family demolish it. Back in his office after lunch, the Prince receives some cheeses, slaughtered lambs, and chickens from his tenants. He is revolted by the blood spilling from the lamb carcasses.

Concetta's feelings for Tancredi, which the Prince takes in stride for the time being, will become more important to the Salina family as the story develops. Meanwhile, the family's devouring of the castle jelly is ironic: it symbolizes the nobility's oblivious self-destruction in the midst of rapid social change. The Prince's disgust at the sight of blood also suggests his hatred of the suffering and death that comes along with violent revolution.

Later, the Prince finds his son Paolo in his study, clearly having worked up his courage to speak to his father. Paolo wants to know how they should treat Tancredi when they next see him. The Prince is annoyed, sensing that personal jealousy is in play more than political disapproval. He tells Paolo that Tancredi is fighting for the family's future, and that Paolo should go back to his horses. He dismisses the boy and takes a nap. When he wakes up, he receives a newspaper and a note from Màlvica. The Piedmontese have landed, under Garibaldi's command, and Màlvica's family is fleeing Sicily. The Prince thinks that his brother-in-law is panicking foolishly. He gathers with his family in the drawing room and leads them again in the Rosary.

Like most members of the nobility, Paolo doesn't approve of the revolution and assumes that this will affect the family's treatment of Tancredi for joining the rebels. The Prince is irritated by his son's response because, in his eyes, Tancredi is doing something proactive to help secure the family's future, whereas Paolo—typical of most Sicilians—isn't. Similarly, because the Prince doesn't believe the revolution is really changing anything, he interprets his brother-in-law's behavior as mere cowardice, not a meaningful response to events. The chapter ends as it began, with the customary Rosary. A revolution has taken place, yet in the Prince's eyes, everything should go on as before.

CHAPTER 2. DONNAFUGATA

In August, a parade of dusty carriages moves toward a line of eucalyptus trees; sweating inhabitants peer hopefully out the windows. The Salina family had set out early that morning and spent hours trudging through the blazing-hot hills. The trees are the sign that they're within a few hours of their destination. They alight from the carriages and refresh themselves at the wells before lunch. The Prince is excited to be nearing Donnafugata, a place he loves. Tancredi is among the group, now sporting an eyepatch from a wound suffered at Palermo.

A few months after Garibaldi's invasion, the setting shifts to rural Sicily, allowing another perspective of the revolution's impact. For the Prince, the country estate of Donnafugata symbolizes the endurance of the best things in life, letting him escape the upheaval in Palermo. As elsewhere in the book, the events of the revolution are seen mainly through their effects, like Tancredi's injury.

An hour later, as the family continues through familiar lands, the Prince is still beaming. He always enjoys spending three months at Donnafugata, but especially now, with Palermo in an excited uproar of welcoming Garibaldi. It all seems rather petty to the Prince now, as he believes that the economic and social situation in Sicily hasn't changed, just as he'd predicted. The Piedmontese, or Garibaldini, had visited their Palermo estate in June, with enough warning from Tancredi to let him remove a portrait of King Ferdinand. The soldiers behaved with such courtesy that the Prince was reassured. They were even invited back for dinner, and the Piedmontese general arranged to get Father Pirrone an exemption from the expulsion of Jesuits and granted permits for the family's annual trip. The three-day journey had been grueling. The roads were rutted and the inns filled with bugs. The Prince couldn't help comparing the monotony of the journey to his own middle-aged position in life.

A few months after the initial invasion, the Prince persists in his belief that the revolution does not mean much—it's just a lot of noise, with no real change having occurred. The revolutionary soldiers' visit confirms the Prince's belief, though it doesn't occur to him that he's actually seeing a carefully selected slice of the revolution. These soldiers know how to appeal to the nobility (behaving courteously, granting special privileges and permits) in order to appear nonthreatening to the status quo. In other words, nothing the Prince has seen has unsettled his belief that life will go on as before. Meanwhile, the Prince feels discontented with his everyday life, and Donnafugata ironically seems to offer the promise of desirable change.

At the entrance to the town, Donnafugata's authorities and a group of peasants stand waiting. As the carriages appear, the band strikes up a song from one of Verdi's operas, and church bells ring. Everything seems reassuringly typical. Among the dignitaries, the Prince is greeted by the new town mayor, Don Calogero Sedàra, who's wearing a tricolor sash. The cathedral organist, Don Ciccio Tumeo, who is the Prince's friend and hunting partner, has also brought the Prince's favorite hunting dog, Teresina.

The Salinas' arrival in the village of Donnafugata is a good example of how the Prince has been sheltered from societal change. The townspeople give their noble patrons the traditional festive welcome, which reassures the that, for the most part, his life will go on as before. This is in spite of reminders of the revolution (the red, green, and white sash) appearing here and there.

The Prince is in high spirits, and the crowd of peasants looks on without hostility—the Prince has always been kind to them, overlooking their small rents. Tancredi draws attention as well; everyone knows about his wounding in battle, and he charms the crowd with his jokes and approachability. Before entering the palace, the family proceeds to the cathedral for a *Te Deum*. On houses, fading slogans like "Viva Garibaldi" and "Death to the Bourbon King" are still visible.

To the people of Donnafugata, the Prince and Tancredi represent two different kinds of heroes: the Prince is a benefactor who's not involved much in their everyday lives, while Tancredi is a brave rebel soldier, accessible and relatable. This contrast fits with the transitional moment in Sicily's history, as do the faded slogans in the midst of an otherwise traditional setting.

After the service, the Princess invites the Mayor and a couple of other dignitaries to dinner; everyone is amazed when the Mayor invites along his daughter Angelica. Before the family departs the town square, the Prince turns to the crowd and says that, after dinner, the family will be happy to see all their friends. For a long time, the people of Donnafugata discuss this remark. The Prince has never issued such an invitation before, and his prestige begins to decline from that moment forward.

The mayor inviting his daughter would be seen as a bold, ambitious, and even presumptuous gesture for someone who isn't the Prince's social peer. Yet his gesture is overshadowed by the Prince's own: simply by inviting the crowd in general, the Prince strikes a more democratic note than the townspeople are used to hearing. The gesture, therefore, subtly undermines his status as an aloof, untouchable member of the nobility.

The Salina palace in Donnafugata is massive, located just off the square and composed of numerous buildings grouped around three big courtyards. Don Onofrio Rotolo, the steward, solemnly greets the family and welcomes them back to the estate, which is in the exact condition in which they had left it. (Don Onofrio is renowned for once having left the Princess's liqueur sitting untouched for an entire year.) The Prince takes an approving tour of the palace, looking as it always has, and praises Don Onofrio, who is surprised and touched.

As the Prince gets reacquainted with his beloved estate, most things still seem unchanged—almost to the point of parody, like a congealed drink left sitting for a whole year. Such gestures demonstrate the steward's almost worshipful regard for the Salina family. Yet the Prince's warm praise suggests that his *attitudes have softened, even if superficial things are the same.*

Over tea, Don Onofrio catches the Prince up on local news—chiefly, Don Calogero's rise in fortunes. Through land acquisitions and profitable grain sales, Don Calogero's income has risen to rival the Prince's. Through his activity in the liberal cause, he has also gained political influence. The family puts on airs, Don Onofrio complains, especially now that Angelica is back from school in Florence. The Prince acknowledges that, while *some* things have clearly changed in Donnafugata, this is the price that must be paid in order for things to stay the same.

The mayor, Don Calogero, is a member of the newly moneyed class that has been ascending in Sicily since the revolution, gaining both property and political clout. The change is so radical that someone like Don Calogero can rise from obscurity to great wealth within a generation—whereas it took the Salinas centuries to gain theirs. This shows how delusional the Prince is—Sicily's social structure is clearly not staying the same, no matter what he tells himself.

The Prince proceeds upstairs for his bath, savoring the peace of the house. Just as he's about to doze off in the tub, the Prince's valet brings an urgent message from Father Pirrone; he must speak to the Prince at once. Trying to dress before the priest enters, the Prince emerges naked from the tub just as Father Pirrone walks in, to their mutual embarrassment. The Prince dries himself with as much dignity as he can muster. Father Pirrone hesitates over his news, but at the Prince's impatience, admits that Concetta is in love and has asked the priest to tell her father. The Prince, though he is only 45, feels old at once.

The interruption of the Prince's bath illustrates that he won't be able to keep dozing in oblivion to the outside world—things are developing faster than he is aware of. Though the awkward scene with Father Pirrone has a comical touch, it also symbolizes how much the Prince is caught off guard by changes within his own family. Though he'd suspected Concetta's feelings before, he didn't believe it was serious—now, he realizes that life is getting away from him.

The Prince knows without being told that Concetta loves Tancredi, and he is annoyed that his arrival at Donnafugata will be ruined by this silliness. He asks Father Pirrone for advice, and the priest struggles; he has always found Tancredi charming, yet he dislikes the young man's political allegiances. He explains that a proposal hasn't yet come. The Prince is surprised when the idea of a proposal strikes him as a "danger." The Prince loves and admires Tancredi and believes he'll lead the nobility in a counterattack against the State someday, if he gets enough money. The Prince can't picture Concetta accompanying an ambitious husband in a demanding political role. He tells Father Pirrone that they'll discuss all this later. As the Prince gets dressed, he hears the church bell tolling a death knell, and he envies the deceased.

The Prince is uncomfortable with the idea of a marriage between Tancredi and Concetta, though he isn't sure why. (For dynastic reasons, marriage between cousins wouldn't have been considered strange at this time.) Implicitly, the Prince senses that Tancredi will be part of further political changes and can't imagine his daughter participating in the decline of her own noble status. Furthermore, Tancredi isn't rich, so the marriage wouldn't suit Concetta's status. With all this running through his mind, the reminder of death is a relief to the Prince. Perhaps on an unconscious level, death symbolizes his family's decline—and in the midst of so much upheaval, it sounds like an appealing escape.

Later the Prince visits the garden, where Tancredi catches him gazing at a sensual-looking sculpture, lost in memories. Tancredi teases him about his interest in the statue; the Prince brushes off his annoyance and joins his nephew in admiring the succulent peaches that are ripening in the orchard. Tancredi jokingly contrasts decorous, fruitful love with illicit love, making the Prince uncomfortable as they head back to the palace.

Tancredi's racy jokes bother the Prince, perhaps because of lower-class overtones and an implication that he and the Prince are on the same level. Tancredi's joke about the peaches is hard to interpret, but it implies breaking out of carefully restrained social norms—something that the Prince resists.

Later that evening, Francesco Paolo bursts into the room with the announcement that Don Calogero has arrived—and he's dressed in tails. The Prince is rattled—it's not typical for guests to wear evening clothes at Donnafugata. Obviously, Don Calogero is making a statement. The Prince's discomfort is soothed when he sees that Don Calogero's suit is ill-fitting and that his boots don't match the outfit.

Because dressing in formal evening clothes isn't the custom at Donnafugata, Don Calogero's tailcoat issues a clear statement and challenge—it's a declaration that he belongs among the nobility and refuses to be looked down upon. The Prince takes comfort in the mayor's imperfect attempt, but he's also bothered by the social upheaval that the outfit represents.

Five minutes later, Don Calogero's daughter Angelica makes a breathtaking entrance. Her height, creamy complexion, striking eyes, and self-confident movements make an impression on everyone there, especially compared to the unkempt 13-year-old of a few years ago. The Prince, attracted, uses gracious tones as he greets her. Though Tancredi says little, he is enchanted.

Angelica's appearance among the Salinas makes an even bigger statement than her father's. Her father wants to show off his daughter's beauty and good breeding, befitting his ambition to break into the higher classes. Don Calogero is also calculating—he wants Angelica to snare a member of the noble Salina family as her husband. Characteristically, the Prince can't resist the charms even of a young girl.

As everyone tucks into the delicious dinner, a calm, accompanied by a "whiff of sensuality," fills the house. Only Concetta doesn't feel this; her heart is breaking, as she senses that Tancredi, despite his best efforts to pay them equal attention, is more attracted to Angelica than to her. She watches for every sign of "ill breeding" in Angelica's looks and behavior and clings to these hopefully. Tancredi notices these characteristics too, but mostly he sees a beautiful, wealthy girl—and he is intoxicated.

Like her father, Concetta looks for any sign that her rival doesn't deserve her new elevation in status. But for her, the jealousy is deeply personal, as she watches Tancredi's affection for her slipping away. Tancredi is poor himself, so he is less mindful of status and more susceptible to the draw of Angelica's wealth, perhaps even identifying with her ambitions.

After dinner, Tancredi tells Angelica the story of the battle of Palermo, which he describes as great fun. In particular, he describes a night at the end of May when the soldiers broke into a convent in order to secure a lookout post on its roof. He laughs about the elderly nuns' fear of the young men and a friend, Tassoni's, impertinent joke that the men would return when the nuns had some young novices available. When Angelica appears to be titillated by this story, Tancredi makes a coarse joke about her, too, and she laughs. Concetta, however, is offended. With tears in her eyes, she tells Tancredi that such stories should be confessed to a priest, not told to young ladies.

The battle at Palermo was Garibaldi's victorious invasion of Sicily's capital city, after which he was acclaimed as dictator. Tancredi assumes a suave, boastful air to impress Angelica—as though the battle was just another adventure for him. Tancredi's joking story about the vulnerable nuns is intentionally provocative, and the differing reactions of the two young women is telling: Angelica seems accustomed to coarse humor, while Concetta has been raised to disdain such offensive stories. She is hurt both by Tancredi's flippancy and his obvious attempt to woo Angelica instead of her.

That night, the Prince gazes toward the **stars** from his bedroom balcony, longing to be "a pure intellect" engaged in calculations guaranteed to work out. Stars, after all, don't have to worry about marriage dowries. Between Don Calogero, Concetta, Tancredi, and Angelica, today has been a bad day—and the Prince feels that it's a warning of worse to come.

The Prince takes refuge is the seemingly unchanging beauty of the stars. Donnafugata is normally a refuge for him, but today it has disappointed him, as he's been unable to escape the pressures of a rapidly changing world.

On the second day in Donnafugata, the Salina family customarily visits the Convent of the Holy Spirit to pray at the tomb of the Prince's ancestor Blessed Corbèra, who founded the convent. The Prince is the only man permitted to enter, a privilege he's proud of, and he always looks forward to visiting. As the family waits in the parlor for admittance, Tancredi insistently asks the Prince to get him permission for a visit as well, since the rule technically permits the Prince to bring a guest. At this, Concetta icily jokes that she saw a wooden beam outside—perhaps Tancredi could use it to break down the convent's door, she says, just as he did in Palermo. Tancredi falls silent, blushing, and spends the visit pacing outside.

Tancredi's urgency about entering the convent is puzzling at this point in the story (though the meaning and consequences of this scene later become clearer). More than anything, he seems determined to identify as a Salina man. Unfortunately, Concetta is still thinking about Tancredi's dirty story from yesterday and can't see beyond that offense to anything more significant. Tancredi is wounded by her cold rejection.

After an otherwise successful visit, the family returns home, and when the Prince paces on the library balcony, he catches sight of Tancredi, wearing what Tancredi calls his "seduction color" of dark blue. A servant follows carrying a box filled with fresh peaches. The pair walks to the Sedàras' door.

Tancredi is clearly courting Angelica; somehow, the scene at the convent changed things between him and Concetta. The peaches—which he'd associated yesterday with indecorous relationships—suggest that he's aware that a relationship with Angelica will look suspicious to some.

CHAPTER 3. THE TROUBLES OF DON FABRIZIO

By October, the rainy season has come and gone, bringing milder weather. The Prince goes hunting daily with his friend Don Ciccio Tumeo, savoring the early morning solitude and the escape from the palace bustle. To him, the unchanging landscape of rural Sicily feels remote from everything else in both space and time.

For the Prince, the atmosphere of rural Italy is rather like the stars: an environment onto which he can project his imagination and find solace in the illusion that things don't change.

The Prince has been consumed by worries over the past two months—worries about the political situation, the young people's passions, and his own reactions to situations. Daily, he tries to resolve these worries, which didn't bother him so relentlessly while the family was staying at Donnafugata. Though the arrival there was normal, change rushed at him, and he hasn't been able to resist it "with a wave of his paw" as a **leopard** should do.

The Prince finds that Donnafugata no longer provides a respite from the concerns of the wider world or his anxiety about his own status. This suggests that the outside world is bringing about more far-reaching changes than the Prince has been willing to admit. He's used to a world in which worries seldom touch him, where he can sweep change aside and remain aloof and unaffected.

Tancredi is gone now, staying in apartments at the King's palace at Caserta. He regularly sends letters with fond greetings for Concetta. Angelica visits often and asks after Tancredi, which provokes an odd mixture of pride and jealousy in the Prince; he always responds with measured caution. The Prince also feels ashamed of his lust and, at the same time, frustrated by the moral scruples that prevent him from acting on it. These scruples also reflect his discomfort with the social situation in which he's helplessly caught up.

The Prince is proud of Tancredi's ability to win Angelica's affections, yet also envious. This exemplifies the conflict within his personality—his characteristic lust wars against his nagging moral conscience. But there's another layer as well: Tancredi feels more free to pursue a woman from outside the nobility, and this sparks ambivalence and frustration in the Prince's mind. He has never enjoyed that freedom.

Last night, the Prince received an especially neat and carefully worded letter from Tancredi. In formal words, Tancredi informs his uncle that he has been unable to shake himself free of his love for Angelica Sedàra. He begs his uncle to speak to Don Calogero on his behalf, even though Tancredi has nothing of his own to offer. Tancredi even argues that old families need new blood, and that from a class perspective, intermarriage can have an equalizing effect. The Prince is dizzied by this letter—he feels that society is changing too fast. He's proud of his nephew yet humiliated by the necessity of undergoing marriage negotiations with the likes of Don Calogero. Yet when the Princess protests the match, the Prince sternly informs her that his mind is made up.

Things have progressed between Tancredi and Angelica: he isn't simply attracted to her but desires to marry her, something unthinkable to a prince of past generations. Tancredi is in a delicate position because, as a penniless orphan, he doesn't have the goods to offer a bride that other members of his class would. He also has to persuade his uncle that marrying the daughter of a social climber like Don Calogero is a good idea. The Prince doesn't like the idea, yet he also senses that Tancredi is the family's best hope, so he can't deny him. The Prince is caught between his class anxiety and his ambitions (and love) for his nephew.

The Prince goes to the countryside with his friend Tumeo to escape from all this. There, the scrubby hillsides are in the same condition as they were many centuries ago, when peoples like the Phoenicians, Dorians, and Ionians first came to Sicily. This sense of sameness comforts the Prince. After shooting a rabbit, the two men rest and eat lunch under some trees. As the Prince watches a swarm of ants attacking the remains of their lunch, he's reminded of the recent Plebiscite for the Unification. The vote left the Prince with many unanswered questions.

This scene is a striking juxtaposition of ancient and very recent events. The wilderness provides an illusion of sameness (the environment supposedly hasn't changed since the ancient Phoenicians first colonized Sicily), while the Prince ponders major political changes. The Plebiscite was a nationwide vote that was intended to confirm the Sicilian people's will to unite with the Italian state.

The Prince asks Tumeo how he voted in the Plebiscite, startling his friend. When Tumeo recovers, he points out that Donnafugata's outcome was unanimous. The Prince already knew this. Before the vote, many people had approached him for advice, and he'd encouraged them to vote "yes"—he hadn't known what else to say; he didn't want Donnafugata to suffer for its resistance to the new regime. The Prince himself had voted "yes" and then drunk a reluctant toast with the mayor, Don Calogero, who already had portraits of Garibaldi and the new King, Victor Emmanuel, on his office walls. Later that night, the mayor had announced that all 512 voters had voted "yes."

Even though the Prince clings to sameness, he senses that change is beyond his control—that's why he encourages his own dependents not to resist the new political regime. At the same time, he dreads change, sensing that even as he votes for the new Italian state and its king, he is participating in his own, his family's, and his noble class's undoing.

So Italy had become a nation that night; the Prince accepted this. Yet he was bothered by a vague sense of unease, as if something had been lost forever. Finally, Tumeo, in a burst of passion, admits that he voted "no" against the Prince's advice. The Town Hall officials had simply altered his vote, annulling his first opportunity to have a voice. The Prince finally understands what's been bothering him. Good faith, he now understands, was killed at the birth of the new nation. No matter how many people had voted "no" throughout the Kingdom, the outcome would have been the same. The Prince is impressed by Tumeo's response and wonders if he actually behaved more nobly during the Plebiscite than the Prince himself did.

The Prince learns that there have been corrupt dealings behind the plebiscite, and that Don Calogero was involved. Though the revolution has been portrayed as an opportunity for the common people to finally have a voice, it's actually a betrayal: the votes of resisters to the new regime were simply annulled. This accounts for the Prince's nagging discomfort with the regime. Confirming his suspicions, it turns out that the new political regime is as corrupt as the old one; they simply use different rhetoric. Change has been external only.

As the men resume hunting, the Prince is troubled by another question. Thinking of the upcoming conversation about Tancredi's marriage, he encourages Tumeo to tell him what local people really think of Don Calogero. Tumeo explains that Don Calogero is a clever and able politician whose career is only beginning; before long, he'll be the province's biggest landowner. The Prince wonders if alliance with such a newly moneyed family could have benefits for his own class. He asks to hear more about the Sedàra family.

By marrying Tancredi off to Don Calogero's daughter, the Prince permanently ties his family's fortunes to those of the rising class. He is open to the possibility that this could be a good thing for his own family, whose fortunes he's sensed are in decline. Even though he's just heard how corrupt Don Calogero is, the Prince is desperately looking for a reason to accept him—showing that he's more concerned about his family's status than he's let on.

Tumeo explains that Don Calogero's wife has seldom been seen over the years. She is a beautiful woman, yet she's said to be animalistic and barely able to talk or reason—therefore, her husband keeps her hidden away. Tumeo points out a distant, decrepit village where Donna Bastiana's father, a "savage" man, is from; he was found shot to death two years after Don Calogero and Donna Bastiana eloped. Though the Prince has heard this story before, he feels shaken—how, he wonders, can Tancredi be associated with such people? He asks Tumeo about Angelica's reputation. Unsuspecting, Tumeo praises Angelica's beauty and newfound "lady" status, speaking with lyricism and a touch of sexual innuendo.

The Sedàras' origins are embarrassingly low compared to those of the Salinas: they come from the impoverished peasantry, and violence and rumors of mental disability cling to them. Even Don Calogero tries to hide the evidence. These details take on new significance now that the Prince is considering intermarriage between the two groups. The story of the Sedàras will inevitably reflect on Tancredi and therefore on the Prince himself. Unaware of the possible marriage, Tumeo feels free to objectify Angelica—he assumes that she isn't the type of woman who could ever become linked to the Salinas.

The Prince tells Tumeo to restrain himself and reveals that Tancredi is seeking Angelica's hand. He tells Tumeo that he'll have to lock him up in the gun room during the impending conversation with Don Calogero, so that there's no risk of the news leaking out prematurely. Tumeo is horrified by this news and throws restraint aside; he says that while Tancredi's seduction of Angelica was an admirable conquest, marriage is "unconditional surrender"—the end of the Salinas family. The Prince instantly flares up in rage. This marriage, he thinks, is not the end, but "the beginning of everything." Seeing the Prince's anger, Tumeo cringes with regret at his words, but the Prince drops the matter and calmly suggests that they head home.

Tumeo is so shocked by the idea of Tancredi and Angelica marrying that he speaks more openly than he would have dared to do otherwise. In his eyes, it would be okay for Tancredi to view Angelica as a mere sexual conquest. To marry her, though, is an admission that the Salinas are no better than the Sedàras—an affront to the Tumeo's pride in the nobility. His reaction illustrates the depth of perceived class differences in conservative Sicily. The Prince, though, continues to tell himself that the marriage is a step forward for his family; he refuses to believe that his actions will contribute to their decline.

Later that afternoon, the Prince takes care in dressing before he meets with Don Calogero, trying to imagine that he's a **leopard** about to destroy a jackal. However, instead, he is irritated when he remembers a picture of elegant Austrian forces surrendering to a squat, unimpressive Napoleon. In his study, he finds Don Calogero dressed in unsuitable black clothes, looking small but expectant and slyly intelligent. Father Pirrone sits in a corner, trying to look oblivious.

As the Prince thinks about the historical example of Napoleon's victory, he likens his own situation to a cultured army surrendering to a scruffy upstart—a far cry from a dignified lion destroying a small predator. Again, he suspects that unstoppable changes are in motion, though things seem to be fundamentally out of balance.

The two men quickly get to the point: The Prince admits that he received a letter from Tancredi, in which the young man declared his love for Angelica. Don Calogero says he isn't surprised—he saw the two kissing in the Salinas' garden, and he now wishes to ask the Prince what his intentions are. The Prince feels a flash of sensual envy and also annoyance that he was unable to break the news himself, and that events have been developing behind his back. Nevertheless, he pulls himself together and explains that Tancredi seeks Angelica's hand in marriage. Don Calogero replies that, being a modern parent, he will have to ask Angelica's consent—but he is sure she will agree. The Prince feels relieved that the worst is behind him.

As a member of the nobility, the Prince finds it humiliating to have to approach the mayor of Donnafugata for his daughter's hand. After his conversation with Tumeo, it feels like the beginning of the end for the Salinas. On top of this, the Prince discovers that Don Calogero already has the upper hand in this situation: though the Prince makes the first move, the mayor already knows more about the couple than he does. His sense of control over his circumstances continues to decline.

The two men embrace awkwardly, the mayor's short legs lifted off the floor. The Prince moves the discussion forward: the Falconeri family has a long and honorable history in Sicily, which he is sure that Angelica will help to perpetuate. Becoming uncomfortable again, he then admits that the family's present fortunes are poor, and that Tancredi no longer has great estates to his name, just a single villa. Nevertheless, Tancredi is an extraordinary boy who understands the times and should go far.

The conversation continues to be awkward—even the men's physical stature is uneven, mirroring their disparity in social class. The Prince also finds himself in the uncomfortable position of admitting that, financially, Tancredi doesn't bring much to the table, despite his noble status. For all intents and purposes, then, Tancredi's nobility is merely a title.

Don Calogero (though privately sorry to detect real affection in Angelica toward Tancredi) claims that love is all that truly matters. Since he's "a man of the world," however, he then lists the large estate, the groves and vineyards, and the sacks of gold that will be bestowed on the couple on their wedding day. Despite the mayor's vulgarity, the Prince is amazed by this dowry. Don Calogero adds that the Sedàras, too, are an old noble family, which he can prove as soon as he gets the papers in order. The Prince feels depressed as Don Calogero fulfills his "type" precisely. He brings the visit to a close by falling into a hostile silence. On his way to his wife's room to break the news, the Prince receives the courteous smiles of his household—except for Concetta, who remains bent over her embroidery and doesn't turn to acknowledge him.

Don Calogero's cynicism runs deep—he'd actually prefer that Angelica pursue Tancredi out of social ambition alone, not out of affection. Nevertheless, he puts on a façade about "love" even as he ticks off the riches that his daughter will bring to the marriage—riches that vastly outweigh Tancredi's. Though the Prince is duly impressed by this, he is annoyed by Don Calogero's faux pas *in drawing attention to his family's supposed noble history—a person with true class would leave things like that unsaid. In doing so, then, Don Calogero confirms his lower-class status. As the matter draws to a conclusion, the Prince senses that he's betrayed Concetta, as her withdrawn demeanor suggests.*

CHAPTER 4. LOVE AT DONNAFUGATA

By November, 1860, the Prince has developed a grudging admiration for Don Calogero—particularly his intelligence, which is unencumbered by the limitations of good manners and courtesy. Don Calogero easily sees solutions to the Prince's financial difficulties—but these lead to a reputation for treating dependents harshly, and the consequent decline of the Salinas' reputation and prestige. Meanwhile, Don Calogero appreciates the Prince's good breeding and grace, which rub off on him in turn.

In the coming months, the Prince and the mayor spend more time together, a symbolic mingling of a nobility with lower-class social climbers. Because the mayor is lower-class, he isn't used to limitations or manners traditionally observed by the nobility, like treating one's dependents with restraint and kindness. While this allows him to accomplish more, the advice he gives leads to the Prince's reputation taking a hit.

Over the course of the two men's meetings, Don Calogero begins to develop better manners, greater subtlety in conversation, and more softness toward women—all of which prove to be more productive for himself. From this point forward, Don Calogero and his family start to become more refined, which in turn starts the Sedàras' transformation from peasantry to gentry.

Though Don Calogero softens through the Prince's influence, he sees better manners mainly as tools for personal gain. This suggests that there's more to nobility than property and money—being a nobleman also includes a certain grace toward other people. Bare cynicism, in other words, isn't noble. The transformation process is cyclical, suggesting that peasants who become nobles will someday be vulnerable to others' ambitions too.

When Angelica visits the Salinas for the first time as Tancredi's fiancée, it's obvious that she has been carefully coached in advance. She wins the Prince's heart by warmly embracing him and calling him "Uncle mine," and she is received with equal warmth by the rest of the household. The Prince and Princess tell flattering stories of Tancredi. When praise of Tancredi happens to mention other women, Angelica's eyes flash with envy. However, this comes from pride and ambition, not genuine love, which is self-forgetting. Angelica longs for Tancredi's embrace, but she doesn't love him.

Angelica is much like her father, Don Calogero. She even more successfully absorbs lessons of conduct in a noble setting and is resultantly able to charm others. Her jealousy and possessiveness toward Tancredi especially illustrates this. Additionally, the young lovers' passionate yet shallow relationship suggests that real love is primarily concerned about other people, not oneself. Because Angelica is mainly a social climber seeking higher status through Tancredi's influence, she can't truly love him.

Hints about Tancredi's political future don't mean much to Angelica—though one day this will change, as she will become a "venomous string puller" in Italian politics. Neither does she care very much about his boasted cleverness. For her, he is mainly a ticket to a position within the nobility; any amusement he offers is secondary. In any case, the Sedàras' first visit following the engagement is a success.

For Angelica, Tancredi is just a means to an end, with the added benefit of being an amusing plaything. In later years, his political career will give her an additional outlet for her ambition. Again, according to the author's view of love, Angelica's attitude leaves no room for genuine, lasting affection to grow between the two.

In the evenings before dinner, the Prince reads novels aloud to his family, though he chooses and censors them carefully, avoiding any "filth" that might offend the Princess or his young daughters. One rainy day, while reading *Angiola Maria*, a servant rushes in with the news that Tancredi has arrived. Concetta cries, "Darling!" but in the uproar, her exclamation isn't heard. The family rushes downstairs to find a soaked Tancredi in a Piedmontese Cavalry uniform. After the joyful greetings have subsided, Tancredi introduces his guest, Count Carlo Cavriaghi. The Prince sends the young men off to dry and change, and Tancredi sends an enticing note across the square to Angelica.

Angiola Maria *is a moralistic novel by Italian author Giulio Carcano. The reading material contrasts with the sensual heat soon to be generated by Tancredi's arrival, especially in his rendezvous with Angelica. As Tancredi arrives, Concetta is immediately lost in the shuffle—a position that she will occupy for the duration of his visit. She clearly still has feelings for Tancredi, to which he appears oblivious.*

Within minutes, the family is regathered in the warmth of the drawing-room. Tancredi and Carlo are the first military officers the Salina girls have seen close up. Puzzled, the Prince asks the young "Garibaldini" why they aren't wearing red shirts. The men respond with shock—they're no longer rabble Redshirts but now serve in Victor Emmanuel's *real* army. Sitting slightly apart, Carlo flirts with Concetta and gives her a poetry book as a gift, but she responds coolly. Meanwhile, Tancredi shows off the engagement ring he's bought for Angelica.

Italian political affairs are constantly changing, and it's evident that the Prince is unable to keep up—the young Garibaldi partisans now wear the finer uniforms of the unified Italian army, no longer the characteristic shirts of the volunteer rebels. Meanwhile, Concetta has been relegated to the corner of Tancredi's life, while she remains unmoved by attempts at romantic distraction.

Suddenly, Angelica appears shyly at the door, wrapped in a damp peasant's cape and looking anxious. Tancredi jumps up and kisses her in front of everyone, showing her the ring. Another kiss makes him feel as if he is invading and possessing Sicily once again.

Angelica's arrival in the peasant's cape is a momentary reminder of her class status, contrasting with the fancy engagement ring, a reminder of her social ascendance. The thoughts accompanying Tancredi's kiss—invasion and possession—are also a disturbing reminder of Angelica's role as a tool in Tancredi's own social climb.

The family had been planning to return to Palermo by now, but Tancredi's visit postpones the trip. The rain subsides, revealing Sicily's most pleasant season, called St. Martin's summer, blue and mild. During this time, sensuality fills the palace, seeming to awaken the spirits of long-ago inhabitants. The atmosphere, which touches everyone from Caterina and Carolina (the younger Salina daughters) to the elderly governess, revolves most of all around Tancredi and Angelica, the latter visiting almost constantly.

Tancredi's and Angelica's sensual courtship pervades the old palace, seeming to draw from its history while also pointing to the family's future. There's a sense of new life and potential being revived among the Salina household, though it reminds to be seen whether this is an illusion or a promise of genuine renewal.

Tancredi wants to show Angelica the tangled maze of the massive palace complex, corners of which even the Prince has never seen. The two always set off with a chaperone, whether Cavriaghi or the girls' governess. But it's easy for the couple to slip away, enjoying the solitude, the pleasant frights offered by the secretive palace, and the chance to hold hands—or occasionally steal kisses. Among their many explorations, one day they find a nest of rooms in the old guest wing. In one of these rooms, Tancredi finds a collection of strange paraphernalia, including whips with silver handles. He won't let Angelica see them, realizing he's found the core of the palace's strange sensual energy. His kisses are subdued for the rest of that day.

The palace tour is a way of inducting Angelica into the Salinas' noble history—though the intricate, secretive exploration has an inescapably sensual feeling as well. Their young lovers' in the palace are not all benign: the collection of strange whips is confusing, but it suggests that even the Salinas' noble history is entangled with illicit sexual desires and practices. It seems that despite their outward devout piety, this sensuality surrounds the family to this day. Even Tancredi feels the need to shield Angelica from these dark secrets, sensing that they're shameful.

The next day, Tancredi and Angelica discover a different kind of whip, this one in the so-called Apartment of the Saint-Duke. It dates to the mid-17th century, when a Salina ancestor had a kind of private monastery. The humble room contains little besides a massive crucifix and a leather whip; the old Salina used to whip himself while overlooking his estates. Tancredi, realizing that these estates now belong to Angelica, notices a parallel between Angelica and the whip—they're both "used for the same ends."

In contrast to the implements discovered yesterday, the Saint-Duke's scourge is meant for religious purposes—and yet it also suggests something troubling about the Salinas' history. The ancestor's fortune seemed to require payment by means of penance. Tancredi's obscure comment suggests that Angelica is a tool in her own way—she's a means to the "end" of acquiring land. Tancredi is honest in his cynical recognition of this fact.

The more the Tancredi and Angelica explore the palace, the greater their desire to consummate their relationship. But despite many temptations, the two lovers never give in. Ironically, these are the best days of their relationship—their renunciation of sexual desire is the closest thing they experience to real love. Their marriage turns out not to be successful, never fulfilling the future that was so tantalizingly hinted at.

Tancredi and Angelica's secretive, flirtatious courtship is actually the most sensual part of their life together, and the least selfish. Once they are able to indulge their passion, in other words, they discover that there's no enduring love between them. The vitality of their relationship exists in its potential, which is never fulfilled—sensuality is not enough to sustain passion. This also implies that from a class perspective, their marriage alliance was a dead end from the start.

Whenever Tancredi and Angelica emerge from the labyrinth of rooms, everyone teases them. As Angelica washes dust from her hands, she resolves that she won't be drawn into the game again by Tancredi's gaze and touch—but when the next day comes, she always changes her mind. Over dinner, though, the two are always filled with virtuous resolutions, and they muse on the relationships of others. Tancredi has brought Cavriaghi along in the hope that his friend might replace him in his cousin's affections, but it hasn't worked out; Concetta looks on Cavriaghi with contempt. Tancredi can't understand why Concetta turned on him that day at the convent—he assumes that it was out of pride in the **Leopard**. Meanwhile, Concetta's sisters, Carolina and Caterina, keep making eyes at Cavriaghi.

This is the first clue that Tancredi has misunderstood Concetta all along. He attributes her seeming rejection of him to family pride, which is partly true. However, he also misread Concetta : his clumsy joking genuinely offended her, and his obscure attempt at reconciliation (trying to get access to the family convent) backfired, causing her to turn on him for good. Tancredi's reflections suggest that a marriage between the two might have been better for the Salinas' future, but that because of their disastrous argument, it's too late.

Meanwhile, in the privacy of the smoking room, Cavriaghi admits his failure to Tancredi—Concetta is too pure and beautiful for him, and she doesn't love him. Tancredi consoles his friend that Concetta is too reserved and proud, too "Sicilian" to ever want to leave this isolated place. Then, the conversation turns back to Angelica: Cavriaghi asks when he'll have a chance to meet the mother of the "Baroness." Tancredi is startled, not used to thinking of Angelica bearing a noble title.

Tancredi's joke about Concetta is also an expression of Italian unity—he shows Cavriaghi that he's connected to the times by looking down on Sicilian provincialism. Angelica, meanwhile, actually does have noble ancestry as well. But Tancredi thinks of her mainly as a property-holder with social aspirations, not someone with noble status.


Around this time, the Prince receives an official letter announcing the visit of the Secretary of the Prefecture, a man named Aimone Chevalley di Monterzuolo. He wants to talk to the Prince about a governmental matter. The Prince is surprised and sends Francesco Paolo to meet the visitor. The timid bureaucrat has come from the mainland and isn't used to Sicilian ways. Worse, Sicilians keep telling him awful stories about brigands, making him paranoid. As Chevalley waits at the post station, he finds it hard to believe this backward place is really part of his own nation. He cringes when Francesco Paolo approaches him, but the fair-haired young man soon reassures him.

Tancredi's implications about Concetta's "Sicilian" ways transition to the Prince's extended musings on this subject. Chevalley's reactions to Sicily as a mainland Italian are humorous, but they also show how Sicilians are viewed by those who've annexed them: they're backward, dangerous, and best avoided. They're so different from Italians, in fact, that it's hard to believe they belong within that newly unified nation.

At the Salina palace, Chevalley is once again thrown off balance by the luxury of the house, and he emerges for dinner feeling pulled between fear of primitive Sicilians and awkwardness at being a guest in such a fine place. However, the pleasantness of the meal, as well as the evident friendship between Tancredi and Cavriaghi—a Sicilian and a Lombard—convinces him that he's probably not about to be killed.

Though Chevalley's exaggerated reaction shows his prejudice against Sicilians, the luxury of the palace also indicates that the Salinas' lifestyle is much different from that of most Sicilians. He even finds it surprising that men from such different parts of the kingdom could really be friends.

The next morning, Tancredi and Cavriaghi take Chevalley on a tour of the palace and frighten him with more brigand tales—like the story of a baron's son who was returned "in installments" (starting with his index finger) when his family couldn't afford the ransom. Chevalley, horrified by the ineptitude of the police under the Bourbons, promises that the Carabinieri will soon come to put an end to this sort of thing. When Chevalley starts trembling at the story of a local priest whose Communion wine was poisoned, Tancredi finally takes pity on him and starts talking about Verdi instead.

It's hard to tell the extent to which Tancredi and Cavriaghi are just pulling Chevalley's leg and trying to frighten him, though that's the overall effect. In any case, Chevalley naïvely assumes that Sicily's backwardness can be fixed just by sending the Italian police. Chevalley's woodenly patriotic views set him up as a contrast to the more cynical Prince in the coming scene.


That afternoon, Chevalley joins the Prince in his study. He immediately begins explaining the reason he was sent. "After the happy annexation, I mean after the glorious union" of Sicily and Sardinia, he begins, the government at Turin wants to nominate Sicilians as Senators of the new kingdom. Chevalley gives a flattering little speech listing the Prince's qualifications, from his family history to his scientific achievement to his "dignified and liberal attitude" during the recent political developments. He has come to seek the Prince's approval before putting his name forward. The Prince, used to being flattered, doesn't respond at first. He is already a Peer of the Kingdom, so it's not as if Chevalley is offering him a great new distinction. He doesn't know much about senators, but he can't help thinking of Caligula, who made his horse a senator. He asks Chevalley to explain more.

Chevalley's slip of the tongue about Sicily's "annexation" suggests that the new unified Kingdom wasn't viewed happily by all. Nevertheless, he glibly flatters the Prince as an ideal, progressive fit for the nation's new senate. The flattery is rather condescending, basically praising the Prince for not resisting the Revolution that's contributing to his family's decline. The Prince, on his guard, doesn't fall for it, wryly thinking of the dubious honor of "Senator" the way the title has been used in the ancient past. (The ancient Roman emperor Caligula was said to have named his horse as a Senator to mock the uselessness of the real ones.)

Chevalley eagerly describes the Senate's functions: it will deliberate and approve legislation and help heal Italy as it emerges into the modern world. Finally, the Prince says that if this were simply a title of honor, he'd be happy to accept it. When Chevalley asks why he won't, the Prince speaks at length about Sicilian history and culture. Sicilians, he explains, have long been accustomed to foreign rulers, and so they're used to splitting hairs; while he is glad to *support* the new Italian State, he doesn't believe he can participate. After all, the Sicilian nobility wasn't consulted during Garibaldi's invasion—why should they be now?

Chevalley's enthusiastic invitation sets up the Prince's meditative speech on Sicily's culture and history. The Prince first rejects the senatorial nomination, explaining that just because he might support Italy (what other choice does he have?) doesn't mean he will participate in its governance. Sicily was invaded without regard for the views of its traditional rulers, the nobility. Now, the Prince doesn't believe that the Italian government is truly interested in his input.

Chevalley must understand, the Prince explains, that Sicilians never forgive the sin of "doing." Sicilians are old: for 2,500 years, they've been living in a civilization that's been made by outsiders, not by themselves. They're a colony, and they're tired. Though the intention of making Sicily part of a free State may have been good, it comes too late. Sicilians, he says, just want to sleep, and they'll hate anyone who tries to wake them.

The Prince's objection is rooted in the Sicilian character: Sicily, having never had freedom, is used to being colonized. Therefore, Sicilians are ill-suited for the task of governance now and would rather just be left to themselves. The Prince's remarks also hearken back to his leisurely bath upon his arrival in Donnafugata—he just wanted to doze in oblivion to the outside world, but fast-changing circumstances wouldn't allow this.

Anyway, the Prince doubts that the new Italian Kingdom offers gifts worth having. Sicilians' sensuality, violence, and laziness is all a part of their desire for death and oblivion, he claims. This is why the culture lags, why novelties attract after they're already dead, and why myths take hold. Even more than foreign domination, the climate and landscape of Sicily reinforce all this. It's a landscape that knows no moderation between drought and rain. All these things have formed the Sicilian character, resulting in inertia and insularity.

The Prince continues describing the Sicilian character in terms of its resistance to change. He also seems to regard the Sicilian character in terms of his own—that is, sensual and violent. Deep down, it doesn't want to be bothered with the troubles of existence—like the Prince, it would rather spend itself in a burst of passion. Such weariness and disdain for change is reflected by Sicily's unforgiving landscape, which in turn shapes its people.

Chevalley is disturbed by this lecture and tries to interrupt, but the Prince keeps going. There are exceptions to the rule, of course; but by the time a man has spent his youth on the island, it's too late for his character to be any different. He is grateful, he tells Chevalley, for the government's offer. However, he is a member of the old ruling class and will therefore always have ties to the Bourbon regime. He is comfortable neither in the old world nor the new. He also has no illusions that he could really be of use; only the self-deceived believe that they can guide others. It's time for the old to withdraw and watch the young in their "capers and somersaults." He suggests, however, that Calogero Sedàra be considered in his stead. Sedàra has power; he is practical and clever.

Here, the Prince acknowledges the reality he has been resisting through the first half of the novel: that his time has passed. Tancredi's engagement seems to have pushed him to this understanding; no matter what becomes of the Salina line and Sicily's nobility as a whole, it's too late for the Prince to play a meaningful role in what's basically a young person's game. The world has changed, and the young can no longer be expected to play by the old rules. A cynical, ambitious man like Don Calogero, however, is just right for the part.

Chevalley quietly pities the Prince's hopelessness, much as he pities the poverty and squalor he's witnessed since arriving in Sicily. Surely, he tells the Prince, the people here must want to improve their lives. And if honest men don't try, then unscrupulous men like Sedàra will fill the void, and things will go on as before. In response to this plea, the Prince smiles and tells Chevalley a story: just before Garibaldi's invasion, some British naval officers asked the Prince if they could use his roof terrace for reconnaissance. While delighted by the scenery, the young soldiers expressed dismay about the poverty they'd seen. The Prince knows that these two things are related. He told the soldiers that the Italians were coming in order to teach the Sicilians "good manners," but that they will fail, because Sicilians believe themselves to be gods.

Chevalley sees the Prince's attitude as another reflection of Sicily's backwardness. He doesn't understand why the Prince, or Sicilians more broadly, won't take the initiative to change their lives. The Prince believes the answer lies in Sicilian pride. People won't change if they don't believe there is any need for change. He suggests that this is why Sicily has been susceptible to colonization and inclined to poverty. Despite their outward circumstances, people's pride keeps them from trying to change anything. The Prince is also talking about himself: in the same way, he also understands that he has been partly responsible for his own family's decline.

The Prince tells Chevalley the same thing: Sicilians will never improve their lives, because they believe they're already perfect. Their vanity, their independence, and their belief in a grand past prevents them from desiring improvements or participation in the wider world. The Prince also doesn't believe that feudalism is entirely at fault. Other countries, after all, have emerged from feudal systems, and their outcomes have been better. The difference is the Sicilian pride, which is really blindness. The Prince ends the conversation—he must dress for dinner and "act the part of a civilized man."

In short, the Prince's point is that Sicilians are too prideful to be of use to themselves, much less to the wider world. It's not simply a problem of poverty or repressive government systems, which other countries have been able to overcome. Pride is responsible for this hostility to change, because it makes people unable to see their faults. The Prince includes himself in this blindness: deep down, he hints, he's uncivilized just like his people.

The next morning, the Prince and Tumeo accompany Chevalley to the post station at dawn. Donnafugata's town square is filled with refuse and stray dogs; weary men are beginning to emerge from their houses in search of day labor. Chevalley is sure that the new, modern government will change all this. The Prince, however, believes all this will last. The "**Leopards**" and lions will be replaced by jackals and hyenas, and all will continue to think themselves the best of humanity.

As Chevalley leaves Donnafugata, Sicily's poverty is on display. Chevalley still believes that the right modern systems can overcome Sicily's problems. The Prince, however, doesn't believe this is the case—no political revolution can modify human nature, and Sicilians' nature is particularly prideful. Even if future Sicilians are degraded to the level of predatory creatures like jackals and hyenas—instead of beautiful, dignified leopards—they will repeat the same old story of pride.

CHAPTER 5. FATHER PIRRONE PAYS A VISIT

Father Pirrone is from a tiny village that's four or five hours from Palermo by cart. The priest's father had been the overseer of two abbey properties there, a position that left his widow and three children fairly well off upon his death. At that time, he had owned a small almond grove and a small, square, blue-and-white house near the village's entrance. Father Pirrone left at age 16 for seminary, but he visits every so often. In February 1861, he returns for the 15th anniversary of his father's death.

After the turning point of the Prince's speech to Chevalley, the scene shifts to Father Pirrone's humble roots. This contrast in environments further illustrates the Prince's claims about the Sicilian character, albeit in a very different setting: peasant instead of noble.

The journey takes five hours by horse-cart, and Father Pirrone arrives to a joyful reunion with his mother, sisters, and nephews. He's annoyed, however, by his nephew's tricolor cockade. The place is filled with warm childhood memories, the aroma of tomato sauce, and peace. After Mass and a tearful visit to Father Pirrone's father's tombstone, the family returns to a cozy macaroni dinner. Afterward, Father Pirrone and a handful of his friends gather in his old bedroom to talk. The friends include the two Shirò brothers and an old herbalist named Don Pietrino.

Remnants of revolution are visible no matter where one goes in Sicily, even though Father Pirrone's old village looks largely unchanged. In this way, Father Pirrone's reunion with his family is quite similar to the Prince's arrival at Donnafugata. Both men find their beloved villages unchanged on the surface, though change is stirring underneath.

The talk quickly turns to politics, and the villagers are dismayed by Father Pirrone's news from his life among the nobles. He warns them of an atheistic and greedy new Italian State that will take away what little they have. The herbalist is upset because he must now pay 20 *lire* per year in order to sell his potions—made from herbs that God made, which he harvests himself. As the conversation goes on, Father Pirrone says that church properties will be confiscated, and that the abbey's benevolence to the village's poor will inevitably dry up.

Father Pirrone's view of the revolution is a little different from the Prince's. For him, its main offense is upsetting the social order, trying to erase the traditional role of the Catholic Church in guiding the people and providing for their poor. His village friends see the new government as too invasive, interfering in traditional pursuits in which the government previously had no role.

Before Don Pietrino heads off to harvest rosemary under the new moon, he asks what the Prince of Salina has to say about all these new developments. Father Pirrone finds it a difficult question to answer. He tells the herbalist that nobles live in a world of their own. It's different from the world of either priests, who are concerned about eternal life, or herbalists, who are concerned with the natural world. Nobles, unlike them, have so many earthly goods that they have become indifferent to such things. They're concerned about different matters than those that concern villagers, and they have fears that the priest and the herbalist don't share. But Father Pirrone says that they're neither better nor worse than other people; they'll be lost or saved according to the rules of their own world.

Father Pirrone is an outsider to the nobility—but after watching the Salinas closely for years, he has a unique insight into their mindset. He believes that the nobility are essentially different from the clergy, or from simple village folk. Their lives have not been concerned with bare survival, like the herbalist's, or with eternity, like the priest's. Rather, their efforts focus on the accumulation and maintenance of wealth. But Father Pirrone doesn't condemn this, instead seeing it as just another mode of human life. In his view, each station of life has its own strengths and its own susceptibilities.

Don Pietrino falls asleep at this point, so Father Pirrone takes the opportunity to keep talking. He muses that the nobility also do a lot of good—for example, they shelter the homeless without asking anything in return. The grandeur of their homes and parties gives them a kind of intrinsic generosity. After all, the Prince sheltered Tancredi, an orphan who would have been helpless otherwise. It's true that the nobles are contemptuous toward those who are lower than themselves. But this is a universal fault—priests, for example, look down on the laity, and herbalists look down on tooth-pullers.

Because of the nobility's excess wealth, they're in a position to do good in ways that other classes aren't—being able to shelter the poor, for instance. Father Pirrone implies, in other words, that traditional Sicilian society is structured in such a way that different classes may benefit one another. But this implies that when this structure is disrupted, the balance is undone, and people fall through the cracks.

The nobility, furthermore, will always be around because the class constantly renews itself just when it seems to be dying. This is also because nobility has more to do with attitude than with property. If all Sicilian nobles disappeared tomorrow, they'd soon be replaced by an equivalent class with similar characteristics, even if the new nobility were based on something besides blood.

Father Pirrone goes on to predict that, even if it's true that the nobility is currently in decline, that won't be the case forever. The nobility will just reappear in a different form; social hierarchies, he suggests, are self-renewing, naturally finding new ways to reorganize themselves. Hierarchy, no matter what the revolution says, is natural.

Soon after, Father Pirrone wakes the sleeping herbalist and accompanies him out into the chilly night. He sums up the foregoing speech by telling Don Pietrino that the Prince of Salina thinks there has been no revolution, and that life will continue as before. The herbalist thinks this is absurd. Obviously, the world *has* changed if the mayor is forcing him to pay for the herbs God created.

The Prince's noble status makes him blind to the effects of the revolution in ways that the poor are not. The herbalist can't help seeing change, because the government's demands impact his livelihood. The Prince, by contrast, is more insulated from such demands and is therefore able to delude himself that things are the same—at least for a while.

The next morning, Father Pirrone finds his sister, Sarina, in tears. She explains that her 18-year-old daughter, 'Ncilina, has gotten in trouble with a lover. Sarina fears that her husband, Vicenzino, will kill the couple. Father Pirrone coaxes the story out of his sister: 'Ncilina was seduced and is now pregnant, Sarina explains, by Santino Pirrone, a cousin of theirs whose father is their uncle Turi. Santino did this out of spite—the two branches of the family are estranged after a brotherly quarrel 20 years ago. The quarrel took place because Turi claims that he rightfully owns half of the almond grove belonging to Gaetano Pirrone, their father, but only Gaetano's name appears on the deeds. Father Pirrone realizes that this is all vengeance with no real passion involved. He promises Sarina that he will fix things.

The priest's reflections on the nature of nobility shift to a domestic matter. 'Ncilina and Santino's affair is meant to be a pointed contrast to Angelica and Tancredi's. It looks very different on the surface: Santino allegedly got 'Ncilina pregnant, and there was no carefully orchestrated courtship and engagement. Yet Santino's father, Turi, seems to have had similarly ambitious aims (though on a smaller scale), which are carried out in a cruder way than Don Calogero's or the Prince's aims for their children.

After Mass, Father Pirrone goes to his uncle Turi's house, a wretched-looking shack. Father Pirrone says that he is happy to hear of Santino and 'Ncilina's engagement, which will end the family quarrel. Turi gives a look of fake surprise and says that he's heard of no such engagement. When Father Pirrone mentions the supposed dowry of half the almond grove, though, Turi's look turns greedy, and he yells for Santino, who comes in looking shamefaced. Father Pirrone invites the men to come to his sister's later that evening.

Despite his impoverished surroundings, Turi Pirrone is savvy, clearly having had his eyes on the almond grove from the beginning of the affair and using the children in order to assert what he believes is his rightful place in the world. The same could almost be said of the Prince and Don Calogero's arrangement, though their properties are greater, and their negotiations were carried out with more subtlety and charm.

When Father Pirrone gets home, he finds Sarina's husband, Vicenzino, already there. When he takes his brother-in-law aside to explain the situation, Vicenzino shows little concern for his daughter's honor but becomes enraged at the mention of the almond grove as dowry. Father Pirrone calms him by promising to send along his own inheritance as a contribution to Angelica's settlement. Later that day, Turi and Santino make the promised visit. Santino and 'Ncilina appear to be pleased with themselves, and everyone accepts the situation.

Though 'Ncilina and Santino don't seem to be in love, they are happy enough with an arrangement that will at least ensure their material prosperity—which is also true of Angelica and Tancredi. Peace is restored within the family, on the basis of a property transfer. This affair suggests that, no matter the class, people are easily motivated by money—love is seldom the sole reason for marriage and can even be done without.

Father Pirrone returns to Palermo two days later. During the journey, he reflects that the affair between 'Ncilina and Santino isn't that different from something else he's witnessed recently. Things play out differently in the peasant and noble worlds, but the devil's influence is the same. When Father Pirrone gets home, he visits the Archbishop in order to get a dispensation for the wedding.

Though Father Pirrone has argued that the nobility are different from other groups in Sicilian society, in some ways, human nature makes them all quite similar. "The devil's influence"—pride and greed, in other words—is at work everywhere, shaping the decisions that govern people's happiness. (A dispensation refers to special church permission to marry, since Santino is 'Ncilina's first cousin once removed. This was technically forbidden by the church, but dispensations weren't hard to gain with the right connections.)

CHAPTER 6. A BALL

In November 1862, the Salinas are headed to a ball. The Prince, Princess, Concetta, and Carolina cram into a carriage. Now that outbreaks of revolutionary violence have faded, Palermo society can't get enough of parties, as if to congratulate one another "on still existing." This ball, the Ponteleones', is one of the biggest of the season, and Angelica will be presented there for the first time. Normally, the Salinas wouldn't show up as early as 10:30 P.M., but the Sedàras don't understand society's rules and will take the invitation literally.

A year after Angelica and Tancredi's engagement, and some 18 months after the revolution, life in Palermo is getting more or less back to normal. The nobility, at least, are still able to persuade themselves that life remains as it has always been. The ball is an opportunity for noble families to reassert their class standing, even if nobody but themselves cares about it. This is new territory for the Sedàras, however, and they don't understand the unwritten social rules.

The Prince looks forward to the impression Angelica will make, but he also dreads seeing Don Calogero's outfit—he knows Tancredi has taken his future father-in-law to a good tailor. Suddenly, the carriage stops to make way for a priest walking past with the Blessed Sacrament, on his way to a person's deathbed. The Prince gets out of the carriage and kneels on the street until the priest passes out of sight. Then the carriage continues its journey, and a short time later, the Salinas arrive at the ball.

The Prince continues to feel insecure about Don Calogero's rise in society. Yet his thoughts are disrupted by the passing of a priest (the Eucharist is being carried to a dying person). The contrast between worldly concerns and death is a common pattern in the Prince's life, as he is haunted by the inevitability of his own death—and, by implication, that of the nobility. His insecurities about the rising class, in other words, are pointless, because his death is already guaranteed.

The family approaches the entrance of the beautiful Ponteleone palace and are greeted by Don Diego, Prince of Ponteleone, and Donna Margherita. They find Tancredi just inside, eagerly watching for Angelica's arrival. The hosts mention that Colonel Pallavicino is also expected. The Colonel shot General Garibaldi in the foot at Aspromonte, and the Prince perceives that Ponteleone approves of the Colonel's actions because they maintained the compromise between old and new. Colonel Pallavicino circulates through the party, charming ladies with emotional tales of the battle.

The Battle of Aspromonte took place in the late summer of 1862, just a few months before the ball. The Italian army defeated Garibaldi's volunteers, who at the time were advancing toward Rome with the aim of annexing it into the Kingdom of Italy. Though Rome was now officially Italy's capital, the Pope remained in control of the city. Garibaldi was determined to secure Rome for the Kingdom, but King Victor Emmanuel intervened, sending the army to stop him. However, Garibaldi was still a national hero, and nobody really wanted to fight him. After a brief battle, Garibaldi was mildly injured and taken prisoner, putting an end to the matter.

Don Calogero and Angelica arrive late, Don Calogero looking respectable if inelegant. (The military medal he's mistakenly worn soon disappears into Tancredi's pocket.) Angelica is modest and restrained, having been coached by Tancredi in advance that spontaneity doesn't suit a future princess. She is an immediate hit, making young men regret that they hadn't discovered her for themselves—but it's common knowledge that she was the Prince of Salina's to bestow. Angela also fits in smoothly with the other ladies and soon moves through the party at ease. As she tours the palace, she praises the furniture and art with a careful reserve, showing that she's tasteful but not provincial.

Don Calogero is still figuring out how to move among his new noble peers—wearing a military medal is considered to be bad form. Angelica is fitting in much more naturally, not only following Tancredi's directions about proper princess behavior but making a name for herself as an art critic. Angelica's resourcefulness, besides being another sign of her ambition, suggests that class position is more changeable in Sicily than has been thought in the past.

The Prince wanders through the house, his mood worsening. The décor seems outdated, and when he sees a few old mistresses among the women, he feels regret at spending his best years pursuing them. The Prince finds the young women unimpressive too, attributing this to poor nutrition and too much intermarriage; they mostly sit around giggling. Annoyed by their high-pitched chatter, the Prince soon withdraws to the room occupied by the older men. He has never had many friends among them, as he's considered eccentric for his interest in astronomy and has a rather forbidding demeanor.

The Prince, for his part, feels out of place in what once would have been his natural environment. Unlike Don Calogero, who is beginning to find his footing in his world, and Angelica, who is beginning to thrive in it, the Prince feels less and less a part of it. The suggests that the change he once resisted is becoming impossible to overlook.

Regretting that he came at all, the Prince finally wanders into the ballroom. The muted colors remind him achingly of Donnafugata, and the deities painted on the ceiling look like they will reside there forever (though a bomb will disprove this in 1943). Don Calogero joins the Prince and admires the pricy gold leaf. The Prince feels a jolt of dislike, knowing that Sedàra is thinking of the room's value instead of its charm—it's because of men like him, the Prince thinks, that palaces like these have an air of foreboding about them. But then, he shifts his attention to the lovely sight of Tancredi and Angelica gliding by, gazing into each other's eyes. They are both motivated by self-interest, yet the beauty and tenderness of the moment obscures this.

Every once in a while, Lampedusa inserts jarring details from the future that underline the fact that the world, as it exists in the present, is dying. Here, the narration alludes to a World War II bomb that later destroys the seemingly permanent Ponteleone palace (this is likely a reference to Lampedusa's own family estate, which was destroyed during the war). To the Prince, though, the source of decline is the lack of appreciation shown by new-moneyed men like Don Calogero—they don't understand noble tradition, only monetary worth. Tancredi and Angelica, meanwhile, are still able to maintain the appearance of real love, even though wealth is their real motivation.

Sensing the death awaiting them all, the Prince feels compassion for everyone present—they are savoring what enjoyments they can before being snuffed out forever. Even if he despises them, he also has to admit that the nobility are the only kinds of people among whom he can be truly at ease. He feels himself to be superior to them in intelligence and breeding, yet he senses that they share a common cause. With Don Calogero distracted, the Prince quietly slips away.

The idea of death haunts the Prince—not just his own, but the sense that a whole world is passing away. This world of all-night balls and noble manners, as well as weaknesses and intrigues, is passing away. This is happening in spite of the Prince's conviction that none of this could ever change.

It is two o'clock in the morning, and the Prince is growing tired. He finally finds comfortable solitude in the library, gazing at a painting, Greuze's *Death of the Just Man*. The elderly man in the picture is dying in a clean bed surrounded by weeping grandchildren. The Prince wonders if his own death will be similar; the thought is strangely calming to him. He is more disturbed by others' death than his own, knowing that his own will mean the "death [...] of the whole world."

It's uncertain which painting Lampedusa is alluding to here; it seems to be a reference to Women and Children Mourning a Dead Man *(1778) by Greuze. In any case, the Prince does not resist the truth that he will someday leave behind everything he has loved. In fact, just as he's accepted the decline of the world he knows, he also finds peace in accepting his own death—an escape from constant change.*

Just then, Tancredi and Angelica stroll in, needing a break from the dance. They gaze indifferently at the painting—death is abstract to them, not real. Angelica has a request for the Prince: she's heard of his reputation as a dancer and wants him to dance the next mazurka with her. The Prince feels suddenly youthful but requests a calmer waltz instead.

Tancredi and Angelica's youth contrasts with the Prince's dark musings and with the sorrowful theme of the painting. In fact, Angelica's invitation temporarily removes the Prince from his morbid train of thought, letting him regain a bit of his youthful glory.

The Prince and Angelica make a beautiful couple; his niece-to-be chatters warmly as they dance. The Prince feels a twinge of sadness when Concetta crosses his mind, but it passes quickly. He soon feels 20 again. The Prince remembers dancing with Maria Stella in this same ballroom, before he grew disillusioned and bored with life. As the waltz ends, he notices that the rest of the couples have withdrawn from the dance floor and are looking on in admiration. Angelica then invites the Prince to eat supper with her and Tancredi, but he declines, knowing that his presence would be a bore to the young people.

Deep down, the Prince is aware that he had a role in Concetta's heartbreak, but he seems to push this out of his conscience. The dance distracts him from his musings on death and indeed from the disappointments of his own life. For a few moments, he regains his prowess as the admired leopard, standing out from everyone else.

Soon after, the Prince heads into the supper room, where mountains of cakes and delicacies are piled beneath an elaborate chandelier. He chooses some cakes from the dessert table and wanders in search of a seat. He ends up sitting next to Colonel Pallavicino and, from his conversation, soon finds that the man is very intelligent. The Colonel talks about the difficulty of firing on Garibaldi when faced with a large mob of agitated men. If he hadn't done so, he says, then ultimately the newfound Italian Kingdom would have collapsed. The Colonel claims that it also freed Garibaldi from flatterers—lesser men than those who'd followed him in his invasion of Sicily. Afterward, Garibaldi thanked the Colonel, who kissed his hand with respect. The Colonel says that Garibaldi is really just an adventurous little boy.

Having felt ambivalent about Garibaldi ever since the revolution began, the Prince now has a chance to hear about Garibaldi's defeat. Pallavicino is responsible for putting an end to Garibaldi's ambitions, though this doesn't impact many Italians' esteem for Garibaldi. Pallavicino regards Garibaldi as a respectable general but also as an idealistic adventurer who took things too far. The shooting was an attempt to preserve what Garibaldi had already won—in a way, this echoes Tancredi's earlier claim that in order for things to stay the same, other things must change.

As the men continue drinking together, Colonel Pallavicino complains of conditions on the Italian mainland. He says there has never been as much disunity as there is now, as the cities fret and maneuver—Turin doesn't want to give up its position as capital to Rome, for instance. The Colonel predicts that someday, the red shirts will return. They're like Italy's fixed **stars**—but even these, as the Prince knows, only *appear* to be permanent. The Prince feels chilled by these words.

The revolution has not yet brought stability to Italy, as rival cities jockey for prominence; Pallavicino thinks that disgruntled rebels will someday shake things up again. Such rebels are a fixture in Italy, representing something enduring about the national character. But, he adds, nothing really *stays the same—a statement that confirms the Prince's worst fear about the world.*

The ball continues until six in the morning. Ladies' dresses are disheveled, men are pale from vomiting, and dirty dishes litter the tables—but nobody wants to be the first to leave. Instead of taking the carriage home with his family, the Prince decides to walk home to enjoy the fresh air. He also wants to look at the one or two remaining **stars** in the sky. Their distance and seeming unchangeable nature comforts him as always. He watches a wagon filled with recently slaughtered bulls pass by, blood dripping onto the street. The Prince sighs, looks up at Venus again, and wonders when he will be allowed to join the stars, far away from death, in eternal certainty.

The reluctant leave-taking from the ball symbolizes a way of life in decline, which people continue to stubbornly cling to. The Prince looks to the stars, as he has always done to find reassurance that some things never change. The dead bulls' gruesome reminder of death makes the Prince long to escape from a world where change is accompanied by suffering and doubt. With the familiar world fading away, the Prince doesn't feel he has much left to live for.

CHAPTER 7. DEATH OF A PRINCE

It is July 1888. For the past 12 years or more, the Prince has felt life ebbing out of him slowly, like grains of sand slowly falling down an hourglass. The awareness is constantly with him. At first, it doesn't bother him; it feels like his personality is slowly fading away in order to be rebuilt elsewhere. The Prince even feels contempt for others who don't seem aware of their decline. His daughters imagine an afterlife just like this one, and Maria Stella clung to the present life even while suffering from diabetes.

A quarter-century has passed. Though this is quite a jump from the scene at the ball, the long gap suggests that, even over the course of many years, nothing major has changed for the Prince—he has spent his life watching his world change and decline, powerless to do anything about it. Now, life is leaving him behind too. The Prince feels that other people cling to this life too obsessively instead of accepting loss and letting go.

Once, Tancredi wryly told the Prince that his uncle was "courting death." The Prince believes the courtship is over and that death has said "yes"—it's just a question of when their elopement will take place. Now, his body is catching up to what he has known for years. He can feel life flowing out of him in waves, like a great waterfall. Presently, the Prince is sitting on the balcony of a hotel, overlooking the sea of Palermo. He had arrived that morning, after traveling to Naples to see a specialist; the homeward journey had been slow, with 40-year-old Concetta and his grandson Fabrizietto accompanying him. The railway journey was been slow, dreary, and humiliating. The Prince forced to ask his grandson for help with basic necessities.

The elderly Prince waits for death, overlooking his beloved Sicily. In a way, death is welcome; he views it as a bride, and the "wedding" will finally sweep him away from a world to which he can no longer relate, and in which he can no longer fend for himself like the strong, prideful leopard he once was. Nowadays, he needs help with the most basic things.

When the Prince sees the forced, cheerful faces of his family on the arrival platform, he suddenly realizes what the doctor's diagnosis had really been—and at that moment he hears the crashing of the waterfall. When he returns to consciousness, he is lying in the carriage with Tancredi, who smiles at him tenderly; the family is consulting outside. Tancredi explains that they're going to the Trinacria hotel instead of making the long journey to the villa.

Though it seems everyone has been trying to conceal the truth from him, the Prince realizes that his diagnosis is fatal. Though this is what he's been expecting, the Prince then suffers some kind of collapse or perhaps even a stroke. Even for someone who's been "courting death," such a transformation is shocking.

At the hotel, a haggard-looking doctor prescribes camphor drops, and soon the Prince feels a little stronger. He gazes at himself in the mirror: he looks withered and unkempt, with three days' beard growth—"a **Leopard** in very bad trim." He wonders why God never lets anyone die looking like oneself. The Prince thinks of that soldier in the Salina garden, and even Paolo, after being thrown from his horse. The roar of the waterfall must have been much louder for those young men.

In his last hours, the Prince doesn't really look like himself, which hints at how thoroughly death changes a person. This makes the Prince think of the sight of a dead soldier that disturbed him more than 25 years ago, which now seems to have been a sign of decline for the Prince personally and for the world as he's known it.

A servant comes in and undresses and bathes the Prince, washing off layers of railway soot. Bothered by the stale smells of the hotel room, the Prince orders that a chair be brought onto the balcony and is laboriously helped into it. He is tired, but taking a nap right before death seems silly, a waste. He smiles at this thought. The Prince slowly takes in the view of Sicily's hills, beyond which lies his home, with its observatory, its paintings, and the bed in which Stella had died. Thinking about the loss of his beloved possessions, the Prince forgets about his own death.

Instead of sleeping, the Prince would rather spend his last hours admiring Sicily and thinking about the things he's loved. Indeed, things more than people occupy the Prince's mind, perhaps because they best symbolize his status, which has been so important to his identity. Astronomy, property, and his marriage are all tied to his noble status.

The Prince thinks of his sons. Giovanni is the only one who resembles him; he sends occasional greetings from London, where he works in the diamond industry. His absence from the family has been a kind of living death. Meanwhile, there's young Fabrizietto: he is handsome and loveable, but the Prince also finds him "odious," with middle-class tastes. The Prince realizes that he is really the last of the Salinas. That's because a noble family's survival lies in its traditions and memories; none of his offspring have memories that aren't typical and bland, the same as their peers'. The Prince's Salina name will become emptier and emptier—he was wrong to think it would endure. Garibaldi, he thinks, has won after all.

Overall, the Prince's family, rather than carrying on the status so precious to him, has been a failure. Giovanni didn't even try to carry on his father's legacy, cutting it off at the root. And the most recent generation is not recognizable as part of the nobility anymore. This makes the Prince the last of his family and indeed of his class, in terms of having experienced the distinctive traditions of the Sicilian nobility. These experiences will not continue—change is inevitable, no matter how hard people try to resist it.

The Prince hears Concetta talking in the next room; she's fussing about sending for a priest. Fleetingly, he thinks of refusing, but realizes that the Prince of Salina must die with a priest by his side. Why should he resist the comfort that most dying people seek? Soon, he hears the familiar tinkle of the bell accompanying the priest as he carries the sacrament from the church across the street. Tancredi and Fabrizietto help the Prince back into the hotel room, and he gestures his kneeling family members away so that he can confess. But when he tries to speak, his sins seem both too petty and too overwhelming to say aloud—his whole life has been sinful. Seeing the contrite look on the Prince's face, the priest absolves him and gives him the sacrament.

In death, everyone has the same basic needs; even the leopard needs the consolation of a priest at his bedside. The priest's arrival recalls the priest whom the Salinas passed on the street on the way to the ball in the previous chapter. Even then, the Prince sensed that he was on the road to death. When he has the chance to confess his sins, it feels impossible to sum up his whole life in such a way. As the last of the Salinas and of his noble legacy, the Prince seems to be symbolically absolved on behalf of his family and class too.

Tancredi and Fabrizietto come back into the room and hold the Prince's hands. His grandson looks at him with frank curiosity; Tancredi chats gaily about work and politics. The Prince is grateful for the noise of gossip, although he doesn't listen to it. While his nephew talks, the Prince is busy making a balance sheet of his life. He tries to pick out the truly happy moments: the weeks just before and after his marriage; Paolo's birth; talks with Giovanni before he left; hours spent in the observatory. As Tancredi shoos off a noisy organ grinder who's playing on the street, the Prince adds Tancredi to the list of his joys, as well as the dogs he has loved throughout his life.

The Prince reflects on what has been really meaningful in his life. He finds that most of those things—even when they involve other people—tend to be fleeting, always disappointing in the end. Because people inevitably change, they seldom live up to the expectations people (especially spouses and children) place on them. That's why the Prince has often found greater comfort in abstractions (like astronomy) that don't vary, or even in animals, from whom he expects less.

The Prince thinks of other bits of satisfaction in his life, which are just "grains of gold mixed with earth." He remembers realizing that Concetta is the true Salina in looks and character. The Prince also thinks of a few moments of passion and of receiving a public award for his astronomy work. The beauty of women also brought him joy, of course—including a woman in a brown dress and suede gloves whom the Prince had seen at the train station yesterday. She'd seemed to be looking for him through the crowd. The Prince tries to calculate how much time he has truly lived. The calculation, difficult for him now, comes out to no more than a year or two, out of more than 70.

Most of the other bits of happiness in the Prince's life have been fleeting moments that only briefly satisfied him. These moments only add up to a very small proportion of the years he has lived. This suggests that the same is true of history: cultures and classes of people don't endure either. At the same time, their significance lies in small, personal things, not in the biggest moments that people tend to label as historically significant.

The Prince realizes that Tancredi has hurried from the room; the waterfall noise has given way to an ocean roar. He must have suffered another stroke. The Prince sees the reflection of the sea and hears a death rattle, not realizing it's his own. His frightened family gathers around him; they are all weeping, even Tancredi. Then, among them, he sees the young woman in the brown dress—she's wearing a hat with a veil, through which he glimpses her charming face. She works her way gently through the crowd of mourners, and the Prince realizes that she is the person he's always yearned for. When she reaches his side, she lifts her veil, and her modest yet lovely face surpasses his expectations; she is more beautiful than she had looked among the **stars**. The crashing waves subside.

The effort of thinking about all this causes the Prince's condition to take a turn for the worse. Yet when his death is imminent—the moment he's anticipated for most of his life—he almost doesn't realize it's happening. He has a vision of a woman he saw at the train station yesterday, implied to be the personification of Venus (mentioned at the close of the last chapter). She has finally come to release him from the painful impermanence of the world. The implication is that every time the Prince has studied the stars, it's her he has been looking for.

CHAPTER 8. RELICS

If someone visited the Salina sisters in 1910, they would probably find a priest's hat sitting on one of the hall chairs. They are all strong-willed spinsters struggling for household dominance, and each insists on having her own confessor. They also have a private chaplain who celebrates daily mass in their home chapel, a Jesuit who oversees the ladies' spiritual direction, and regular visits from other alms-seeking priests and monks.

The story jumps ahead more than 20 years, to the fading years of the Prince's offspring. His daughters have not married, symbolizing the death of the family legacy. Just as the novel began with religious observance (the family Rosary), it concludes with a much expanded expression of Catholic devotion—an almost comically excessive one, in fact.

One afternoon in May, there are more hats than usual. An official from the Archdiocese of Palermo is there, along with his secretary, two Jesuits, and the chaplain. The Pope has recently ordered that the archdiocese's chapels be inspected. This is to ensure that the priests are up to par, that the liturgy is being celebrated properly, and that the relics venerated are actually authentic. The Salina sisters' chapel is renowned in Palermo, and it's the first in the Archdiocese to be visited. Rumors have circulated concerning a particular image and dozens of relics, and the chaplain has been reprimanded for not alerting the sisters to possible problems.

Though famously impressive, the Salina sisters' chapel has also sparked controversy, suggesting that everything isn't as it seems. Catholic relics typically include such things as portions of a saint's bone or clothing, which are believed to retain a portion of that person's holiness and are therefore worthy of veneration. Because these objects play such an important role in devotion, their historic authenticity is considered to be very important. These items are believed to stay the same, in other words, even after their original possessors are long dead.

The meeting is taking place in the villa's drawing room, the one with the ornate decorations. Concetta sits on a couch with the Monsignor, while Carolina and Caterina (the latter in a wheelchair) and assorted priests sit nearby. The sisters are all over 70. Though not the eldest, Concetta is the most formidable and still has traces of youthful beauty, as well as an authoritarian demeanor. The conversation takes an hour. Carolina is offended that the Salina chapel will be examined first, and a reference to the Pope doesn't placate her; she quietly suspects that she is more pious than him. The Monsignor and the priests, smiling, praise the sisters' childlike faith and the holy atmosphere in which they were raised, thanks to the saintly Father Pirrone.

The meeting takes place in the same room in which the Salina family once prayed the Rosary together, bringing the novel full circle. These days, the sisters' lives revolve around their devotion. Little else of their noble upbringing seems to have survived, and the world around them has changed. Catholicism, in addition to being a matter of sincere personal belief (especially for Carolina), is the one enduring connection to their culture and class—which perhaps explains why they express it in such an over-the-top fashion.

After the Prince's death, the villa had become the property of the three sisters. They decided to establish an oratory in the drawing room, because its columns made it look a bit like a basilica. (They got rid of the pagan fresco on the ceiling.) When the Monsignor goes inside, in order to preview the chapel's contents for the Archbishop, he immediately sees the subject of some of the rumors: a painting above the altar. It features an attractive brunette woman with bare shoulders gazing heavenward, holding a crumpled letter in her hand, in front of an Italian landscape. There's no infant Jesus, or any other symbols normally associated with the Virgin Mary. The Monsignor praises the painting's beauty but refrains from crossing himself. Carolina claims that the painting is miraculous: it shows Mary holding a holy letter invoking Christ's protection over the people of Messina. She says that miracles during a recent earthquake prove the existence of this protection.

In the Prince's day, the painting of the gods on the ceiling had been a symbol of the Salina pride and dominance. Now, the "pagan" images have been unceremoniously painted over, showing both the inevitability of change and the fact that the Salina family no longer exists in its earlier dominant form. But, rather like the Prince's association of the paintings with his own prowess, the sisters now attribute special power to their religious art—though, from the Monsignor's reaction, it appears that even this significance is questionable.

The Monsignor then turns to the 74 relics covering the walls beside the altar. Each is framed along with documentation of its authenticity. The sisters, especially Carolina, have spent years collecting them, dealing with a woman named Donna Rosa who collects the relics from old churches and families and then re-sells them; she always provides meticulous proof of authenticity written in Latin or (she claims) Greek or Syriac. The Monsignor hurriedly praises the collection and leaves with the other priests. The Monsignor rides in a carriage with Father Titta, the chaplain. After a while, the Monsignor asks the chaplain if he has truly been saying Mass in front of that painting, which he *must* know is not a holy image. The chaplain defends himself that it isn't easy to go against Carolina.

The Monsignor's hurried appraisal suggests that, to a knowledgeable eye, the relics are evidently fake—suggesting that the one remaining source of Salina pride is also empty. What's more, in their desire to cling to some aspect of their upbringing and culture, the sisters have apparently been duped. This is similar to the way the Prince deluded himself that his way of life would never change. When threatened with the loss of what feels most meaningful to them, people are especially vulnerable to such self-deception.

Concetta retreats to her neat, orderly bedroom. Though a visitor wouldn't notice, Concetta feels that the room is stuffed with "mummified memories." Four big cases contain Concetta's unused wedding trousseau, now grown yellowed and damp. The paintings and photographs show people and places no longer known or loved, including properties sold off. And the ragged rug on the floor, if one looks closely, is actually the stuffed remains of Bendicò, who died 45 years ago. The servants have been begging her to throw it out, but she won't—it's the only family artifact with no upsetting associations.

Concetta's life appears to be stuck in the past. Some of her dreams were never realized, and some of her memories cannot be erased even if she wants them to be. Most of her family associations bring her no happiness; like her father, she finds innocent animals easiest to relate to. In short, Concetta lives among the remains of the past, unable to move on.

Concetta understands the Monsignor's implications. It doesn't really bother her if the relics are removed; she'd always bought them to appease her more devout sisters. But she knows that this will mean a decline in the Salina family's reputation in the eyes of the Church and the whole city. Her name no longer has prestige, and the family no longer has much money, but the Salinas had held onto their reputation for piety.

Because religion is the only thing left to the Salina name, the examination of the relics is personally threatening to Concetta. If the relics are proven to be inauthentic, the Salinas will face a final, permanent decline. The inauthenticity would also suggest that the sisters' attempts to squeeze meaning out of the remaining family legacy has also been inauthentic.

A maid informs Concetta that the Princess Angelica has arrived for a visit, so Concetta gathers herself and greets her friend and cousin warmly. Angelica, almost 70, is still beautiful and vibrant. She tells Concetta about her service on the committee to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the March of the Thousand, in Tancredi's memory. She has gotten Fabrizietto to agree to march in the parade, representing the Salinas. Angelica also has an invitation for a grandstand seat, which she gives to Concetta, since she was Tancredi's favorite cousin.

Half a century has passed since Garibaldi's volunteer army, including Tancredi, invaded Palermo, helping bring about modern Italy. Even though their marriage has been described as a failure romantically, Angelica has found meaning in preserving Tancredi's memory. Rather like the religious relics, the parade and celebration are a way of hanging onto some semblance of the past.

Angelica says that Senator Tassoni, Tancredi's old friend and fellow soldier, is visiting for the festivities; he wants to stop by to meet Concetta, since Tancredi spoke of her so often. Concetta falls silent, remembering Tassoni's presence at the dinner table in Donnafugata. He'd been mentioned in Tancredi's crude joke about breaking into the convent—what she considers to have been the turning point in her life.

Tassoni was the friend of Tancredi's who joined him in the alleged convent break-in during the battle of Palermo. Concetta has hung onto that story for all these years— in her mind, it represents her break with Tancredi and the start of his relationship with Angelica instead.

Soon after, Senator Tassoni arrives, a handsome, energetic, wealthy old man who's never lost his soldier's bearing. He greets Concetta warmly, saying that meeting her is a dream come true; he feels he already knows her, since Tancredi spoke of her so often. Shyly, Concetta asks what sorts of things Tancredi used to say. Tassoni says that, to Tancredi, Concetta was the very image of love. In fact, 10 years ago, Tancredi had confided in him an "unpardonable sin" he'd once committed against her—telling her a made-up war story. Concetta's indignation, Tancredi had said, made him want to kiss her.

Tassoni and his story are relics from the past too—and the story Tassoni tells reveals that the resentment Concetta has been clinging to is an inauthentic "relic" in its own way. It turns out that Tancredi's provocative story wasn't true—it was simply a foolish attempt to get a reaction from her. In other words, Concetta's perception of her past has been based on a lie.

The conversation goes on, but Concetta remembers little of it. Slowly, the story begins to sink in, and her heart suffers as a 50-year-old wound reopens. Since that summer at Donnafugata, she had always felt wronged and resentful. Now those feelings collapse; it was *she* who had been wrong because of her Salina pride. If this is true, she's spent her life resenting the Prince and hiding pictures of Tancredi for no reason. Concetta had misunderstood Tancredi's desire to enter the convent—he'd been making a loving overture to her, but she'd been blind to it.

Concetta realizes that she's been living her life based on a willful misunderstanding of what happened at Donnafugata, resulting in decades of unnecessary suffering. In the past, the Prince lamented that pride was Sicilians' downfall, and he himself suffered for his inability to accept social change. On a more intimate level, Concetta's undoing is pride too.

The Cardinal of Palermo, a holy man, is not a Sicilian. He has struggled for years against the abuses he finds in Palermo. Eventually, he realizes that his efforts are for nothing; it's foolish to try to change the stubborn, sluggish Sicilian character, which he finds constantly resistant to change or effort. He has become disillusioned. When the Cardinal visits the Salina villa, the sisters are disappointed by his cold politeness; they can tell that he doesn't respect their devotions. After a quick examination of the chapel, the Cardinal informs Concetta that it must be reconsecrated, and the painting removed. He leaves behind his secretary to study the rest of the relics collection. Concetta takes the news calmly, while Carolina is enraged and Caterina grows faint.

Rather like the naïve government official Chevalley, the Cardinal has tried to transform conditions in Sicily. But he has given up, confirming the Prince's argument that Sicilians are too self-satisfied to accept change. The Cardinal sees the Salina sisters as another manifestation of this stubborn pride. Their chapel has centered around a pseudo-religious painting, suggesting a hollowness at the core of their lives too. While the other sisters react with anger and shock, Concetta, after her conversation with Tassoni, is just confirmed in what she already knows.

The cardinal's secretary, Don Pacchiotti, is a scholar of paleography. He takes his time examining the relics and their documentation, emerging hours later covered with dust and looking satisfied. He carries a basket filled with the inauthentic relics, which have no value; five of these, he says, are legitimate.

When studied by an impartial outsider, the sisters' acclaimed collection is quickly shown to be mostly fake. Their reputation for piety has been based on lies. This is another example of the hollowness of prideful attempts to hold onto the past.

After the priest leaves, Concetta retires to her room, feeling numb. A little later, she receives a warm letter from Angelica, conveying Tassoni's greetings. Still feeling blank, Concetta summons her maid. The smelly, moth-eaten remains of Bendicò are bothering her as never before; she tells the maid to get rid of the thing at last. Soon, the rug is flung into a corner of the courtyard. Mid-air, it briefly looks like a whiskered **leopard** with one foreleg raised, as if cursing someone. Then it falls at last into a heap of dust.

Now that her own perception of the past has been proven false, and the last remaining vestige of the Salina legacy has been demonstrated to be fake, Concetta no longer clings to the past. The discarded "leopard" symbolizes the final collapse of a family legacy that once appeared formidable and unchanging. This rather undignified conclusion suggests that efforts to resist change by upholding an idealized past will ultimately fail. Change is inevitable, and even the proudest legacies decline and die.

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