A Room with a View

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF E. M. FORSTER

E.M. Forster was born in London on January 1st, 1879. His father died when he was young, and after school he went to King's College, Cambridge in 1897. There, he became a member of the Cambridge Apostles, an exclusive intellectual society. After finishing university, he started writing novels, completing his first in 1905. He traveled throughout Europe and also spent some time in India. In his writings, he explored early 20th-century English society and its contradictions, as he does in *A Room With a View*, published in 1908. Forster found greater success, though, with his novel *Howards End* in 1910. During World War I, Forster volunteered in Egypt and afterwards spent more time in India. While in England, he was a member of the Bloomsbury Group, a group of London writers and intellectuals including Virginia Woolf. In 1924, drawing on his own experiences in India, Forster published perhaps his best known novel, *A Passage to India*, which explores the experiences of British colonists and Indians during the British colonial occupation of India. Forster spent his later years in England, continuing to write short stories and essays (but no more novels) until his death in 1970. He garnered much fame and recognition as an author during his lifetime, and was even offered a knighthood (he declined) and awarded the Order of Merit. Today, he is remembered as one of the most important British novelists of the 20th century.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Forster's novel was likely influenced by his own travels abroad in Italy and Europe. Additionally, the novel is set in the Edwardian period of English history, during the first decade of the 20th century. This was a transitional moment for Great Britain, as the nation moved gradually from the strict, somewhat repressive norms of Victorian society toward the full-blown modernity of the 20th century. The conflict between old and new in this historical moment is a prevalent tension throughout the novel.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

While the novel is not significantly influenced by any one particular work, Forster's narration repeatedly refers to classical Greek mythology. The novel can also be seen in relation to the popular genres of travel writing and romance novels. *A Room With a View* offers a more critical, literary take on these kinds of writings.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *A Room with a View*
- **When Written:** 1901-1908
- **Where Written:** Italy and England
- **When Published:** 1908
- **Literary Period:** The Edwardian period, modernism
- **Genre:** Novel, romance.
- **Setting:** Florence, Italy; England.
- **Climax:** After breaking off her engagement with Cecil but still not acknowledging her love for George, Lucy runs into Mr. Emerson in the church, and he convinces her to follow her heart and realize her true feelings for George.
- **Antagonist:** Cecil Vyse; traditional British society.

EXTRA CREDIT

A View of the Big Screen. In 1985, Forster's novel was adapted into an Academy Award-winning film, starring Helena Bonham Carter as Lucy Honeychurch.

PLOT SUMMARY

A young British woman named Lucy is visiting Florence with her older cousin and chaperon, Charlotte. They are staying at the Pension Bertolini, and are disappointed to find that they have been given rooms without a **view**, contrary to what they have been promised. At dinner, two men—Mr. Emerson and his son George—overhear the ladies' complaints and offer to switch rooms. Charlotte is flabbergasted by this bold suggestion from these lower-class men and politely declines, but later a British reverend named Mr. Beebe mediates between the Emersons and Charlotte and, vouching for the good intentions of Mr. Emerson, allows Charlotte to accept the offer, so that Lucy and Charlotte end up staying in rooms with a **view**. The next day, Lucy goes to see a church with another British woman staying at the Pension Bertolini, a novelist named Miss Lavish. Miss Lavish abandons Lucy in the middle of Florence, and she finds herself alone at the church, where she sees the Emersons. George tells Lucy that his father has good intentions but lacks manners and tact, and Mr. Emerson tells Lucy that George is suffering from a strange kind of depression and "world-sorrow." Back at the Pension, Lucy plays piano and talks with some of the other guests, most of whom dislike the Emersons.

On another day, Lucy goes on a walk through Florence and sees two Italian men get into a fight in a piazza. One of the men is stabbed and bleeds profusely right next to Lucy. She faints, and

George—who happens to be nearby—catches her. Lucy is embarrassed but grateful to George, who picks up some photographs of hers that she dropped. They take a boat along the river back to the Pension, and George suddenly throws Lucy's photographs into the water, because they have blood on them. He tells her mysteriously, "I shall probably want to live," and asks her not to tell any of the gossiping ladies at the Pension about what has happened. The next day, Lucy and Charlotte spend time with another British clergyman, Mr. Eager, who dislikes the Emersons and even claims that Mr. Emerson murdered his wife. Lucy and Charlotte join Mr. Eager, Miss Lavish, the Emersons, and Mr. Beebe for a day-trip into the hills outside of Florence. Once they arrive, everyone walks around and Lucy ends up on her own. She happens upon a terrace with flowers all around, and come upon George. George impulsively kisses Lucy, and Charlotte walks onto the terrace just as this happens. When everyone prepares to go back to Florence, George is nowhere to be found, and the carriage takes off without him, leaving him to walk home in a storm. Lucy is distraught and promises to Charlotte that she is not to blame for what happened. Charlotte consoles her, and then back at the Pension Bertolini she chides Lucy for her carelessness. She apologizes for not being a better chaperon, and persuades Lucy to promise not to tell anyone—including her mother—about the kiss. Charlotte decides that they will leave Florence immediately the next morning, and head for Rome, where Lucy's family friends the Vyses are staying.

The novel then jumps forward in time, to when Lucy is back at her England home, Windy Corner, after her Italy trip. Mrs. Honeychurch, Lucy's mother, and her brother Freddy are eagerly awaiting the result of Lucy being proposed to by Cecil Vyse. This is actually the third time he has proposed to her (he proposed twice in Italy, when she stayed with his family in Rome). Lucy accepts the proposal after having rejected the first two, and Mrs. Honeychurch is delighted. Freddy, though he doesn't completely like Cecil, is excited for the engagement, as well. Soon after, Mrs. Honeychurch takes Lucy and Cecil to a garden party to show off her daughter's fiancé. Cecil is snobbishly bored and fed up with the country society around Windy Corner. On the way back home, they ride by a villa whose owner—Sir Harry Otway—wants to rent out. Lucy suggests that the Miss Alans—two old spinster sisters who stayed at the Pension Bertolini—might want the place, and Sir Harry likes this idea. Cecil is annoyed with Sir Harry, seeing him as indicative of the pretentious but not truly upper-class society of the country. Lucy and Cecil walk home alone together through some woods, and Cecil says that he worries Lucy only imagines him **in a room with no view**. Lucy admits this is true, and Cecil says that he wants Lucy to think of him in the open air. They walk by a little pond that Lucy and Freddy bathed in as children and nicknamed **The Sacred Lake**. Cecil asks Lucy's permission to kiss her (which she grants), and the two share an awkward embrace. Cecil feels embarrassed for not simply taking her and kissing her romantically without asking.

One day, Lucy learns from Freddy that Cecil has arranged for someone other than the Alans to move into Sir Harry's villa, someone by the name of Emerson. Worried, Lucy goes to talk to Cecil, who says that he ran into two somewhat lower-class men in the National Gallery in London and encouraged them to move into the villa to spite the snobbish Sir Harry. The Emersons eventually do move in, and arrive just as Lucy happens to be staying with Cecil and his mother Mrs. Vyse in London. There, Lucy receives a letter from Charlotte in which she expresses her concerns about the Emersons living so close to Windy Corner. She suggests that Lucy tell her mother about her history with George. Annoyed and furious, Lucy pens a cold reply to Charlotte expressing her resolve to keep her history with George a secret. Lucy attends a dinner party with Cecil and his London friends, and Cecil admires how she seems to be adjusting to London society. Mrs. Vyse enthusiastically tells Cecil, "make Lucy one of us," and comments that she is "purging off the Honeychurch taint."

Back near Windy Corner, one Saturday afternoon, Mr. Beebe and Freddy pay a visit to the Emersons. In their conversation, Mr. Emerson insists on the equality of the sexes and says that "when we no longer despise our bodies," mankind will discover a utopian existence like that of the Garden of Eden. George, Mr. Beebe, and Freddy decide to go for a swim in **The Sacred Lake**. On the way, they discuss the coincidence of the Emersons meeting Lucy in Florence and then ending up here. George says that it is all because of fate. They arrive at the pond and are taken with the natural beauty of the water and its surroundings. They disrobe and then swim, frolic, play, and run around wildly until they encounter Cecil, Mrs. Honeychurch, and Lucy coming through the wood and hide until they are presentable.

At dinner at Windy Corner, Mrs. Honeychurch asks Lucy about the letter she received from Charlotte. She suggests that they invite Charlotte to stay with them, which both Cecil and Lucy don't want to do. But Mrs. Honeychurch insists, and so Cecil and Lucy at last relent and agree to invite her. Charlotte accepts the invitation, and in addition George accepts Freddy's invitation to come to Windy Corner and play some tennis. George makes Lucy nervous, and the narrator comments that while it is easy for a reader, from an external point of view, to see that Lucy loves George and not Cecil, it is not so easy for Lucy herself to realize this. When Charlotte arrives, she asks Lucy if she has told her mother about George. Lucy is annoyed with Charlotte and says that she will not tell anyone about her history with George. The next Sunday, George visits Windy Corner after church to play tennis. Cecil refuses to play, so Lucy fills in for him. Afterwards, Cecil reads aloud from a comically bad novel he is reading. Lucy realizes it is written by Miss Lavish, under a pseudonym, and is amused. Lucy talks with

George about the **view** from Windy Corner, and George says that his father has told him the only perfect **view** is "the view of the sky straight over heads." Lucy is fascinated by this, but realizes she is paying more attention to George than to Cecil, so she asks Cecil to read more of his book. He reads a passage in which the novel's heroine is sitting on a riverbank in spring and is suddenly kissed by a man. Lucy immediately realizes that the scene is modeled on her kiss with George. She stops Cecil, and they walk with George back toward Windy Corner. However, Cecil has to go back to get his book, which he left on the ground, leaving George and Lucy alone among some bushes for a moment. George seizes the opportunity to kiss her, shocking Lucy.

In her room, Lucy discusses this kiss with Charlotte, and also accuses Charlotte of telling Miss Lavish about the first kiss. Charlotte admits to this, and apologizes. Lucy decides to talk to George, and tells him that he must leave immediately. George insists that he loves Lucy, that Lucy does not really love Cecil, and that Cecil is controlling and patronizing toward her and all women. After George leaves, Lucy looks at Cecil and suddenly realizes that he is "absolutely intolerable." Later that evening, she breaks off her engagement. Cecil is stunned, and Lucy explains that she wants to "choose for myself what is ladylike and right," and doesn't want to be controlled or stifled. Cecil comments that "a new voice" seems to be speaking through Lucy. Lucy insists to Cecil that she is not in love with someone else, and she resolves not to marry anyone. The narrator comments that Lucy has "sinned against passion and truth," in denying her love for George. Soon after, Mr. Beebe pays a visit to Windy Corner and learns about what has happened. He is sympathetic to Lucy and tells her about a trip the Miss Alans are planning to Greece. Lucy desperately wants to join them on this trip, to escape from her problems at home. Mr. Beebe talks this over with Charlotte, and the two agree that the trip would be good for Lucy. They help convince Mrs. Honeychurch to let Lucy go to Greece.

Lucy and her mother visit the Miss Alans in London to make arrangements for the trip. The Alans talk as if Cecil and Lucy are still engaged, and Lucy doesn't correct them. On the way home, Lucy and her mother stop at the church to pick up Charlotte. Charlotte says she wants to stay for a service, so Lucy waits in Mr. Beebe's study. There, she finds Mr. Emerson, who apologizes on behalf of his son. Once he learns that Lucy is no longer engaged to Cecil, though, he realizes that Lucy really does love George, and he urges her to accept her feelings and act on her love. Lucy feels strengthened and emboldened by Mr. Emerson's encouragement. The novel then jumps forward to find Lucy and George, married, staying together in Florence at the Pension Bertolini. They are in the same room that Lucy stayed in last time—with a **view**. They are happy together, but Lucy is somewhat sad that Mr. Beebe, her mother, and Freddy are all upset with her for eloping with George. Lucy comments on how fortunate it is that Charlotte wanted to stay at the church that day, so that Lucy ran into Mr. Emerson, and George wonders if Charlotte actually set up the meeting intentionally. He wonders if Charlotte had actually always wanted Lucy and him to end up together, from the very beginning. Lucy says that this is possible, and she and George rejoice in their love, while also "conscious of a love more mysterious than this."

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Lucy Honeychurch – Lucy begins the novel as a young, somewhat naïve British woman abroad in Italy. She is under the care of her older cousin Charlotte, but eager to break out on her own and lead a more independent life. When George kisses her outside of Florence, she herself is shocked, and follows Charlotte's guidance in promising not to tell anyone about it. Back in England, she becomes engaged to Cecil, and gradually convinces herself that she loves him, denying her real feelings for George. This becomes more difficult, though, when the Emersons move into a villa near her home, and she has to see George again. George kisses her a second time at Windy Corner, and Lucy is furious with him. When she tells him to leave, he delivers an impassioned speech about how Cecil does not respect her or any woman as an equal, and not long after she does end her engagement. However, Lucy still denies her love for George—and plans to run away to Greece to escape her true feelings—until Mr. Emerson convinces her to be honest with herself. Over the course of the novel, Lucy becomes more independent and assertive, and disregards both her own family and social expectations and norms when she finally marries George and elopes with him to Italy.

Charlotte Bartlett – Charlotte is Lucy's older cousin, who chaperons her trip to Italy. From a slightly older generation than Lucy, she believes in the traditional social norms of the Victorian period and is aghast when George kisses Lucy. She is genuinely concerned for Lucy and looks out for her, but Lucy becomes increasingly irritated with her, and by the later parts of the novel she outright dislikes her cousin. Lucy is especially upset when she learns that Charlotte has actually told Miss Lavish about Lucy and George's kiss. Charlotte seems to be against George for the entire novel, but it is possible that she actually helps Lucy run into Mr. Emerson at the end of the novel, so that he can convince her to pursue her love for George. In the last chapter, George even suggests that Charlotte may have been a proponent of Lucy and George being together from the very beginning, and there is an implication that Charlotte may have herself denied her feelings and love, as Lucy almost does.

George Emerson – George is a young man who has been brought up by his father to be critical and skeptical of

traditional social norms. He believes in the equality of the sexes and shares in his father's optimistic hope for a kind of utopian future of freedom and equality. George is perhaps the most modern character in the novel—his depression and abstract, lofty concerns with whether the universe "fits" or not foreshadow the kind of overly self-conscious characters of high modernist fiction. George loves Lucy and twice acts on his impulse to kiss her, even once while she is engaged to Cecil. George delivers a stirring speech to Lucy about Cecil's sexism and essentially makes her realize that Cecil is not right for her, but it is only after speaking to Mr. Emerson that Lucy finally accepts her love for George, and the two marry and run off together to Italy.

Mr. Emerson – George's father, Mr. Emerson is an intelligent, thoughtful man who comes from a somewhat lower-class background. He has little regard for social niceties and perhaps lacks tact, but he means well and is a kind person. He encourages George to trust in love and follow his heart, not realizing that George is in love with Lucy. When he learns that George has kissed Lucy twice, he apologizes to her, but once he realizes that Lucy also has feelings for George he is a major force in urging and persuading Lucy to follow her own heart and be with George.

Mr. Beebe – A reverend from Lucy's hometown who happens to be in Florence at the same time as her. He is a kind, if somewhat reserved, person, who helps Lucy throughout the novel. He dislikes Cecil, and so is relieved when Lucy breaks off her engagement to him. Together with Charlotte, he helps convince Mrs. Honeychurch to let Lucy go to Greece with the Alans. However, Mr. Beebe does not approve when Lucy runs off with George.

Miss Lavish – A British woman staying at the Pension Bertolini, who somewhat arrogantly thinks that she is finding the "real" Italy in contrast to naïve tourists. She is also a novelist, and writes a novel under a pen-name that Cecil later reads. In the novel is a romantic scene that is obviously based on George and Lucy's kiss outside of Florence, and this causes some trouble when Cecil reads this scene aloud to Lucy and George.

The Miss Alans – Two old spinster sisters staying at the Pension Bertolini in the beginning of the novel. Lucy later invites them to move into a villa nearby Windy Corner, but Cecil ruins this plan by inviting the Emersons to take the villa instead. The Alans are offended, but later agree to take Lucy with them on a trip to Greece (though Lucy never ends up going).

Mr. Eager – A British clergyman at the Pension Bertolini who dislikes the Emersons and tells Lucy that Mr. Emerson murdered his own wife. It is later revealed that Mrs. Emerson died after becoming sick with depression and regret when George was sick as a baby. Mr. Eager encouraged Mrs. Emerson to believe that the sickness was the result of George's not being baptized, and this may be what Mr. Eager means by saying that Mr. Emerson murdered his wife.

Mrs. Honeychurch – Lucy's mother, who adheres to traditional Victorian social norms and ideas about gender roles. (For example, she bristles at learning that Miss Lavish is a novelist, thinking that women shouldn't be writers.) Mrs. Honeychurch is a kind and rather supportive mother, but doesn't quite understand what is happening with Lucy when she breaks off her engagement to Cecil. At the end of the novel, she is angry with Lucy for eloping with George to Italy.

Cecil Vyse – A family friend of the Honeychurches, with whom Lucy and Charlotte stay in Rome. Cecil proposes to Lucy twice unsuccessfully in Italy, and then proposes a third time at Windy Corner, where Lucy finally accepts. Lucy gradually convinces herself that she loves Cecil, despite his snobbery and rude attitude toward Lucy's family and the country society around her home. Cecil is intelligent but doesn't have the same sensibility for beauty that George and Lucy share. He is somewhat of a chauvinist and takes a patronizing attitude toward Lucy and other women, as George complains to Lucy and as Lucy herself tells Cecil when she leaves him. When Lucy leaves Cecil and explains the reasons why, he seems at first astonished and then accepting, and seems at least slightly changed.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Freddy Honeychurch – Lucy's good-natured, easy-going brother, who annoys Cecil somewhat. Freddy is fond of Lucy, but ends the novel upset at her (like Mrs. Honeychurch) for running off to Italy with George.

Mrs. Vyse – Cecil's mother, with whom Lucy and Cecil stay in London. Mrs. Vyse is happy that Lucy appears to be losing some of the less sophisticated habits of her upbringing during her stay in London.

Minnie Beebe – Mr. Beebe's young niece, who spends some time at Windy Corner.

Sir Harry Otway – Sir Harry owns the villa near Windy Corner that the Emersons eventually move into. He is originally enthusiastic about Lucy's plan to have the Miss Alans move into the place, but is persuaded by Cecil to let the Emersons move in, instead.

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.

SOCIETY, MANNERS, AND CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS

The novel takes place at a transformative and transitional moment in British society, as the strict social manners, class hierarchy, and codes of behavior typical of the Victorian period give way to the greater freedom and liberality of modernity in the 20th century. This results in numerous tensions between new and old ways of thinking and doing things, evident in the contrast between young and old characters. Lucy, for example, has very different ideas about proper behavior for a lady than does Charlotte or Mrs. Honeychurch. And even the progressively minded Mr. Emerson doesn't quite understand George's abstract ponderings and concern with grand ideas about the universe fitting or not fitting together (the kind of thinking that might define the very modernist characters of authors like James Joyce or Virginia Woolf). The younger characters in the novel, as well as those who support more progressive social ideas (like Mr. Emerson) want to move away from strict social hierarchies, prejudiced snobbery against the lower classes, and patronizing, sexist attitudes toward women—in contrast to those like Mrs. Honeychurch or Mrs. Vyse, who place great importance on maintaining traditional social norms.

This desire to break out of restrictive Victorian social structures and move toward greater freedom finds two major symbolic manifestations in the novel. The first is the recurrent motif of indoor and outdoor spaces. The openness of the outdoors suggests a kind of utopian freedom, as epitomized by the carefree romp of Freddy, George, and Mr. Beebe at the Sacred Lake (temporarily reminiscent of the primal Garden of Eden). Moreover, it is significant that both of Lucy's kisses with George take place outside, while she can only think of Cecil in relation to an inside room without a view—a sealed-off space within the structures of society. By contrast, she finds with George a room with a view out onto the freedom of the outdoors. The second important motif is the idea of travel. Lucy starts to think beyond the narrow social sphere of Windy Corner after being exposed to more of the world in Italy, and later thinks that she will travel to Greece to escape her troubles at home. Finally, she and George elope and find their own personal freedom in Italy. These foreign lands offer a possibility of literal, physical escape from England, as well as from the social structures there.

Both of these motifs, though, also suggest that getting beyond the restrictions of traditional society is no simple matter. Ecstatic outdoor scenes are short-lived in the novel, and afterwards the characters have to resume their normal lives and habits. Moreover, while Lucy ends up with George in a room with a view of the outside, this is still an interior room. This may subtly hint that Lucy is not entirely free from society, or perhaps doesn't even desire the absolute state-of-nature freedom that the Sacred Lake might symbolize. And as for travel, it is doubtful whether Lucy's trips outside of England really allow her to escape her homeland. The Pension Bertolini is run by a British woman, after all, and is populated by a mostly British clientele of tourists and expatriates. Through the social dynamics of the novel, Forster is thus able to critique and satirize the upper classes and the fading social codes of the Victorian era, while simultaneously showing that one may not be able to escape this kind of society entirely.

SEXISM AND WOMEN'S ROLES

Throughout the novel, many of Lucy's experiences are dictated and limited by the fact that she is a woman. The novel takes place at a time when women had few rights and opportunities outside of the home, and rarely stepped outside of traditional, prescribed roles like that of a dutiful wife or mother, but also at a time when people were starting to speak up for greater gender equality and women's rights. We see how strict gender roles oppress and constrict Lucy, and over the course of the novel, we see her gradually gain some independence and assert her ability to make her own decisions.

But, Forster's novel shows that this move toward greater gender equality is not as simple as Lucy simply standing up to oppressive male figures. For one thing, it is not only men who perpetuate sexism or gendered stereotypes. Mrs. Honeychurch and Charlotte both have traditional, old-fashioned ideas about the proper behavior and conduct of a woman, and seek to uphold these ideas both in their own lives and in Lucy's. Additionally, Lucy comes to assert her independence largely through the help and persuasion of three men: Mr. Emerson, George, and Mr. Beebe. To what degree might their attempts to help Lucy be the same as Cecil's controlling desire to "rescue" her? Lucy herself raises this point when George tells her to leave Cecil because Cecil only wants to tell her what to do. She retorts that George himself is doing the same thing by telling her to leave Cecil.

Probably the most detailed statement about women and gender issues comes from George, when he speaks out to Lucy against Cecil, deploring Cecil's treatment of women. When Lucy later leaves Cecil, she repeats George's accusations, such that Cecil feels someone else is speaking through Lucy. The fact that Lucy's articulation of her own independence as a woman comes from a male character may be a way for Forster to hint that he understands the paradox of a male author writing a female character's journey toward empowerment. Even if Lucy stands up for her power as a woman, it is a man (Forster) who is ultimately speaking through her. This does not negate Lucy's journey toward greater independence or the novel's critique of sexist and patronizing attitudes in figures like Cecil. Rather, it shows that issues involving gender, sexism, and equality are not as simple as one group (men) oppressing another (women). There are complex entanglements between both groups, and

moving toward greater equality may involve combating entrenched attitudes on both sides, while finding allies on both sides, as well.

HONESTY

In Florence, when Lucy is trying to explain her kiss with George to Charlotte, she tries as hard as she can to be absolutely honest about everything. And throughout the novel, Lucy insists to herself that she must not lie. But, over the course of *A Room with a View*, simple black-and-white distinctions between truths and lies start to blur. Often, Lucy does not quite lie, but leaves out the whole truth, omits certain things from stories, or doesn't tell certain people certain things. She doesn't tell Charlotte, for example, about George throwing her (blood-stained) pictures into the river in Florence, and later promises not to tell her mother about George kissing her. Later in the novel, she keeps her history with George a secret from her fiancé Cecil, as well as from her mother. Despite the importance Lucy places on absolute honesty, these kinds of half-lies can often be seen as justifiable—for example, they can be a necessary means to an end (Lucy doesn't tell her mother about the kiss in order to protect Charlotte), or can be understood as in the best interest of those involved (Lucy doesn't tell Cecil about George so as not to hurt him or make him unnecessarily jealous).

But while the novel reveals the ambiguities that almost always surround issues of lying and truthfulness, it also suggests that there is one kind of lie that no one can get a way with: lying to oneself. Lucy is greatly concerned with not lying to others, but for much of the novel she doesn't realize that she is deceiving herself in pretending not to have feelings for George. She tries to suppress and stifle her love for him, and lies to herself about how much she loves Cecil—but in the end, her true feelings come out, and she is only able to find happiness when she embraces this truth and stops lying to herself about her own feelings. Thus, while one cannot always be absolutely honest in all facets of life (and perhaps would not necessarily want to be), Forster displays through the character of Lucy the ultimate importance of being honest at least to oneself.

EDUCATION AND INDEPENDENCE

When the novel begins in Florence, Lucy is a young, rather naïve woman and—while she is not exactly old by the end—the novel follows her growth from a child to a more mature, independent adult. Along the way, Lucy undergoes various processes of education, as she learns more about the world, social interactions, and herself, taking lessons from her own experience as well as from other people such as Charlotte, Cecil, and George. In fact, one could see the entire plot of the novel as the process of Lucy shifting from one guide or teacher to another. at the beginning of the novel, she listens to and learns from Charlotte. Throughout the middle of the novel, she learns about art, literature, and London society from Cecil. And finally, she learns from George, Mr. Emerson, and Mr. Beebe to respect her own feelings and desires.

This process of learning, maturing, and awakening allows Lucy to become more independent, standing up to her mother and the rest of her family, for example, by eloping with George. However, Lucy only acts on her own wishes at the encouragement of others. This may raise the question of whether one can be taught by someone else to think and act for oneself. If Lucy is to some degree taught by George and Mr. Emerson to be independent, does this detract from such independence, since she is in a sense still dependent on their very teaching?

For much of the novel, it seems that characters cannot escape their own upbringings, and live lives that are in many ways predetermined by the educations they have had. Even George is in a sense only so critical and progressively minded because he was raised that way by his father. When speaking to his mother, Cecil says that he wants to bring up his own children just as Lucy was raised, suggesting that someone's character is (at least mostly) dictated by how they are raised and educated. But even if Lucy does not achieve absolute independence from her various authority figures and, so to speak, teachers, she certainly does undergo a transformation toward greater autonomy and self-determination. At the end of the novel, she may in some sense still be learning from George, but is in a much more equal relationship than she was in with Cecil. Much of her life has been determined by her upbringing and various form of education from older family members and friends, but this very education gives her the ability to break free, to some extent, from the limited life offered to her at Windy Corner.

LOVE

A Room with a View can be seen as a romance novel, revolving around the romantic plot of Lucy and her decision between George and Cecil. Through Lucy's relationships with these two men, we see two different kinds of love. With Cecil, Lucy has a rational relationship with gradually growing affection, of which her family approves. He is from a respectable social background, and her mother is pleased at the match between Lucy and him. By contrast, Lucy's relationship with George is confusing to her and irrational. It grows out of sudden moments of immediate attraction in ways that traditional society finds inappropriate. Whereas Cecil politely asks for Lucy's hand in marriage three times, and asks her permission to kiss her once they are engaged, George impulsively embraces and kisses Lucy twice—once when she is already engaged to Cecil.

Lucy herself is unaware of her own feelings for George for most of the novel. She gradually convinces herself that she loves Cecil and denies any affection for George until the very end of the novel. At last, though, her true feelings come to the

surface, and she realizes how she feels. Forster thus shows that one cannot force or engineer love, as Cecil and Lucy try to do. True love is more of an unintentional, irrational experience that often surprises those who feel it. Through Lucy's experiences, the novel seems to suggest that one can try to stifle or suppress love, but never entirely get rid of it. Lucy can only ignore her true feelings for George for so long.

But, even once Lucy realizes that she does not love Cecil and starts to acknowledge her feelings for George, she doesn't immediately pursue her love, and only ends up with George because she coincidentally (or perhaps with Charlotte's help) runs into Mr. Emerson, who then convinces her to follow her heart. As George opines at the end of the novel, many people and things help Lucy and him end up together (including, for example, Mr. Emerson and Mr. Beebe). While Forster may be accused of sentimentality in his championing the inevitable victory of true love, he is at least realistic insofar as he shows that such love—while it may seem fated or destined to be—doesn't simply come about by itself. George has to take the initiative to kiss Lucy, while Lucy has to take the bold step of breaking off her engagement to Cecil. It is only when George, Lucy, and other characters take deliberate action that love can triumph.

BEAUTY

Aside from the characters and plot of *A Room with a View*, one might first notice that Forster's novel is filled with beautiful things. Characters gaze at Renaissance frescoes, admire springtime foliage and flowers, see the rolling hills of Italy, walk through scenic woods, and enjoy classical piano music. These aesthetic experiences—taking in artistic or natural beauty—hold an almost mystical power in the novel, often speaking to the inner feelings of characters like Lucy that cannot be put into words. By playing Beethoven, for example, Lucy comes to understand and experience parts of her own personality that she otherwise wouldn't.

In the novel, beauty stirs those who experience it, and offers brief transcendent moments of escape or freedom from the strictures and stresses of society. Experiences of intense beauty also spur characters to act impulsively on feelings. Both times that George kisses Lucy inappropriately, he is partly spurred on by the scenic natural environment surrounding him. But Forster also takes care to demonstrate that there is a difference between admiring or appreciating beauty in a detached way and being truly moved by it. Cecil is intelligent enough to appreciate fine art and music, but is never really inspired by these things. He attempts to remark upon the beauty of the countryside, but finds himself fumbling to say the "correct" things about a landscape. By contrast, Mr. Beebe, Freddy, and George do not simply admire or praise the beautiful Sacred Lake, but are moved to an exuberant scene of careless revelry.

For some, then, experiences of beauty hold tremendous, transformative power. And if one steps out of the prescribed guidelines of which frescoes are supposed to be admired, or what piece of music is most fitting for a party, Forster's novel shows that such experiences can be found almost anywhere and take many different forms—from classic paintings to rolling Italian hills, from a secluded wood to a moving piece of music, from a stunning view to the object of one's affection.

SYMBOLS

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

INDOORS, OUTDOORS AND VIEWS

Forster often launches into lyrical descriptions of natural scenery, suggesting that this kind of physical background to the novel's action may be more than simply background. The outdoors repeatedly evokes a sense of both beauty and freedom. Both times that George kisses Lucy, they are outside, and Forster's descriptions make it seem as if the natural scenery around them encourages George to act on his feelings. The outdoors is thus associated with freely following one's feelings, regardless of the restrictions of society. Another example of this is when Freddy, George, and Mr. Beebe have a brief, carefree time playing around **The Sacred Lake**, an outdoor area that has its own symbolic associations of freedom and innocence.

THE SACRED LAKE

In contrast, indoor spaces are generally symbolic of enclosure, restriction, and even oppression. In a conversation with Cecil, Lucy admits that she can only imagine him in a room with no windows. This suggests that Lucy associates Cecil (and her relationship with him) with a kind of closed-off restriction, even imprisonment, as she is trapped in the relationship and the relationship itself is trapped within the structures and expectations of traditional society. Given the importance of interior and exterior spaces in the novel, the motif of a view becomes equally important—as one might guess from the novel's title, as well as from the mentions of views at the beginning and end of the novel. The idea of a room with a view represents a comfortable existence with some access to the immense freedom of the outdoor world. Lucy begins the novel desiring such a room, and successfully ends the novel at last in one with George. But the idea of a view can be read in a different way, as well. At the end of the novel, Lucy is still indoors, and can only look out at the open, free outdoors—thus, one could argue that she does not fully escape the constraints

of mainstream society and only attains partial independence or freedom.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Penguin Classics edition of *A Room with a View* published in 2000.

Chapter 1 Quotes

I think he would not take advantage of your acceptance, nor expect you to show gratitude. He has the merit—if it is one—of saying exactly what he means. He has rooms he does not value, and he thinks you would value them. He no more thought of putting you under an obligation than he thought of being polite. It is so difficult—at least, I find it difficult—to understand people who speak the truth.

Related Characters: Mr. Beebe (speaker), Mr. Emerson, Lucy Honeychurch, Charlotte Bartlett

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 8

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the Emerson family--George and Mr. Emerson--has offered to do a favor for the far wealthier and more well-to-do group of Lucy and Charlotte. The Emersons overhear Lucy and Charlotte moaning about how their rooms don't have a nice view; they offer to exchange rooms with the two women, an offer that's appalling to both Lucy and Charlotte. Neither woman wants to be in a lower-class man's debt. But as Mr. Beebe, a friendly reverend, explains, the Emersons aren't trying to gain a favor for themselves--they're just trying to be nice.

Lucy and Charlotte are so sheltered and "well-mannered" that they look a gift-horse in the mouth--they wonder why on earth two strangers are offering them anything, and conclude that the strangers must have poor intentions. Beebe has to explain what, from a 21st reader's perspective, seems perfectly clear: the Emersons are just trying to be friendly. Manners and customs act like a veil between Lucy and the Emersons, obscuring the natural goodness of all the characters.

About old Mr. Emerson—I hardly know. No, he is not tactful; yet, have you ever noticed that there are people who do things which are most indelicate, and yet at the same time—beautiful?

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch (speaker), Mr. Emerson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 10

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Lucy thinks about the offer she's received from the Emerson family. Lucy is too reserved to accept the offer upfront, and yet she's strangely charmed by the fact that the Emersons made it in the first place: she's so used to people who refuse to speak their minds (out of supposed politeness) that she can scarcely believe that the Emersons would voice their intentions so clearly.

The passage could be considered a satire of the severity and strictness of late-Victorian / Edwardian manners, but it's also meant to signal that Lucy stands somewhat apart from her culture. Where others would be irritated by the Emersons' frankness, Lucy now starts to like the Emersons, and recognizes that they're just good people, even if they're not speaking the same "language."

Chapter 2 Quotes

Buon giorno! Take the word of an old woman, Miss Lucy: you will never repent of a little civility to your inferiors. That is the true democracy. Though I am a real Radical as well. There, now you're shocked.

Related Characters: Miss Lavish (speaker), Lucy Honeychurch

Related Themes:

Page Number: 16

Explanation and Analysis

Tom Wolfe coined the term "radical chic" to define well-to-do people who like to "dabble" in progressive ideas (socialism, anti-colonialism, gender equality, etc.) without ever really committing to them, mostly because they want to distinguish themselves from their stuffier peers. Miss Lavish, based on this passage, could easily qualify as an exemplar of radical chic: she's a wealthy, successful woman, but she likes to brag about being radical to her other

wealthy friends. Lavish makes a big show of greeting random people in the street, but we get the sense that she does so not because of her commitment to democracy or humanism, but because she wants to distinguish herself from people like Lucy, whom she's supposed to be guiding through the city. Lavish continues to blab to Lucy as she shows her Florence. (Notice the way that Lavish calls the people she greets "inferior" without so much as a second thought--which isn't exactly "progressive" of her.)

Of course, it contained frescoes by Giotto, in the presence of whose tactile values she was capable of feeling what was proper. But who was to tell her which they were? She walked about disdainfully, unwilling to be enthusiastic over monuments of uncertain authorship or date. There was no one even to tell her which, of all the sepulchral slabs that paved the nave and transepts, was the one that was really beautiful, the one that had been most praised by Mr. Ruskin. Then the pernicious charm of Italy worked on her, and, instead of acquiring information, she began to be happy.

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch

Related Themes:

Page Number: 19

Explanation and Analysis

After a time, Lucy is abandoned by Miss Lavish, and ends up all alone in a church. Lucy has heard that the church is famous for its beautiful Giotto frescos (Giotto was a famous early Renaissance painter), but she's so ignorant of art that she's unable to determine which paintings, exactly, are by Giotto. Lucy is a fish out of water. Her proper English education and excellent manners don't prepare her for her time in Italy, unless she has someone there to tell her which art she is supposed to find the most "beautiful."

And yet Lucy's lack of familiarity with Giotto and art actually *help* her get more out of the visit. Instead of treating Florence like a specimen, to be analyzed and critiqued, she lets the city wash over her, dazzling her with its mysteries. She doesn't just appreciate the art she's supposed to (because it's famous), but starts to appreciate *all* the beauty around her.Lucy begins to move away from her strict upbringing and simply be happy.

I think that you are repeating what you have heard older people say. You are pretending to be touchy; but you are not really. Stop being so tiresome, and tell me instead what part of the church you want to see. To take you to it will be a real pleasure.

Related Characters: Mr. Emerson (speaker), Lucy Honeychurch

Related Themes:

Page Number: 21

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Lucy runs into her old "benefactors," the Emersons. The Emersons are looking around the same church that Lucy's exploring, and when a reverend makes a misstatement about Giotto, Mr. Emerson, the elder of the two, calls the reverend out for his error. Lucy, shocked that Emerson could have been so tactless, tells Emerson that he should have been more polite. Emerson fires back that politeness itself is overrated--why not say what's on one's mind?

Emerson's monologue in the passage is a great example of how tact can be overrated. Emerson is clearly a kind, likable person, even if his manners are sometimes lacking (he offers to show Lucy around the church, which is certainly very helpful). Emerson's behavior could be said to stand for Forster's sometimes romanticized view of the lower classes: they lack specific social training, but their overall "spirit" is good.

Chapter 3 Quotes

It so happened that Lucy, who found daily life rather chaotic, entered a more solid world when she opened the piano. She was then no longer either deferential or patronizing; no longer either a rebel or a slave. The kingdom of music is not the kingdom of this world; it will accept those whom breeding and intellect and culture have alike rejected.

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch

Related Themes:

Page Number: 28

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Lucy escapes from the overwhelming nature of day-to-day life by playing the piano. Music is always an important theme in Forster's novels, and the passage is a

great example of how music helps Forster's characters escape from reality for a while. Lucy lives in a strict, repressive world, in which her tiniest mannerisms are policed for "properness." When she plays the piano, however, no such restrictions apply: she feels that she can be free and open with herself--she's not obeying anyone, or following anyone's orders, and indeed is able to inhabit an altogether different plane of existence. In one sense, then, the passage is a confirmation of the strictness of Lucy's world--if something as simple as playing music can free her for a moment, then her world must be very repressed indeed. (Note also that the piano is an Italian invention--once again Forster links Italy to freedom from repression.)

❝ All his life he had loved to study maiden ladies; they were his specialty, and his profession had provided him with ample opportunities for the work. Girls like Lucy were charming to look at, but Mr. Beebe was, from rather profound reasons, somewhat chilly in his attitude towards the other sex, and preferred to be interested rather than enthralled.

Related Characters: Mr. Beebe, Lucy Honeychurch

Related Themes:

Page Number: 31

Explanation and Analysis

Mr. Beebe is a shy, religious man, who takes a great liking to Lucy and her friends. Beebe seems to be very proper in his manners, and yet here, it's suggested that he has no real desire for the opposite sex: he can take an interest in their souls, and he can form friendships with them, but he can't love them. One could argue that Beebe's relative disinterest in women is a manifestation of his condescending priestly attitude, or of a virtuous adherence to his priestly vows. But it's also been suggested that Mr. Beebe, at least in this passage, is something of a self-portrait by Forster himself (who was homosexual).

❝ "Mr. Beebe—old Mr. Emerson, is he nice or not nice? I do so want to know."

Mr. Beebe laughed and suggested that she should settle the question for herself.

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch (speaker), Mr. Beebe, Mr. Emerson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Lucy asks Mr. Beebe for his opinion of the Emerson family. Lucy is interested in the Emersons, especially after spending time with them in the churches of Italy. And yet she's not really confident enough in her own opinion to conclude that the Emersons are either "nice or not nice" (additionally, the fact that she divides all of humanity into two vacuous categories, nice and not nice, suggests her emotional immaturity).

Mr. Beebe has already claimed that he doesn't like the Emersons because of their socialist views: Beebe is a more traditional English figure, a friendly reverend who has duties to his congregation--as a result, he distrusts political radicals. But Beebe is also friendly and open-minded to encourage Lucy to figure things out for herself: he wants her to grow into a mature woman, rather than relying on authority figures.

Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ This she might not attempt. It was unladylike. Why? Why were most big things unladylike? Charlotte had once explained to her why. It was not that ladies were inferior to men; it was that they were different. Their mission was to inspire others to achievement rather than to achieve themselves. Indirectly, by means of tact and a spotless name, a lady could accomplish much. But if she rushed into the fray herself she would be first censured, then despised, and finally ignored. Poems had been written to illustrate this point.

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch, Charlotte Bartlett

Related Themes:

Page Number: 37

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Lucy tries with some difficulty to rebel against the strictness of her environment. She's just sat through a boring conversation, and now she wants to do something fun--she considers riding a tram. But then she checks herself--such an activity would be inappropriate for someone of her social station.

Lucy's thought process in this scene reflects how thoroughly she's been educated in "ladylike" ways (even as

Forster presents the restrictions of being "ladylike" in darkly sarcastic terms). She's been trained to think that women should be calm and docile at all times, rather than pursuing their own selfish desires. Lucy's conception of women and femininity reflects the sexism of English society, but it also reflects the strength of English tradition and world-famous English manners.

❝ There is much that is immortal in this medieval lady. The dragons have gone, and so have the knights, but still she lingers in our midst. She reigned in many an early Victorian castle, and was Queen of much early Victorian song. It is sweet to protect her in the intervals of business, sweet to pay her honour when she has cooked our dinner well. But alas! the creature grows degenerate. In her heart also there are springing up strange desires. She too is enamoured of heavy winds, and vast panoramas, and green expanses of the sea. She has marked the kingdom of this world, how full it is of wealth, and beauty, and war—a radiant crust, built around the central fires, spinning towards the receding heavens. Men, declaring that she inspires them to it, move joyfully over the surface, having the most delightful meetings with other men, happy, not because they are masculine, but because they are alive. Before the show breaks up she would like to drop the august title of the Eternal Woman, and go there as her transitory self.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 37

Explanation and Analysis

Forster continues to expound on the notion of a medieval lady--i.e., the kind of woman that Lucy has been trained to be. For centuries, English women were taught that they should be docile and obey men at all times, allowing men to attain happiness for themselves while women watched and "inspired" them from the sidelines.

And yet Forster makes it clear that the notion of a calm, docile, obedient woman is breaking down in Lucy's lifetime, if indeed it was ever stable. Women like Lucy don't just want to be obedient--they want to explore the world, love men, see nature--to essentially allow themselves to be human beings rather than ideals. Women have strange, romantic desires just like men, and they should be able to explore such desires.

Chapter 5 Quotes

❝ "How wonderfully people rise in these days!" sighed Miss Bartlett, fingering a model of the leaning Tower of Pisa. "Generally," replied Mr. Eager, "one has only sympathy for their success. The desire for education and for social advance—in these things there is something not wholly vile."

Related Characters: Charlotte Bartlett, Mr. Eager (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Charlotte and Mr. Eager, another British clergyman, have a conversation about the Emerson family. Charlotte notes that the Emersons have risen in British society very quickly: with hard work and a strong desire for education, they have made a fortune for themselves. Charlotte and Mr. Eager are both impressed with the Emersons' progress in society--up to a point. While they offer reserved compliments for the Emersons, they also qualify their compliments, suggesting a kind of wariness. Charlotte, a proud resident of the upper-classes of British society, sees something threatening in the progress of the working classes: if the poor are getting richer, then how much longer will the rich be around? (Note also the potentially erotic way that Charlotte strokes a phallic model of the Tower of Pisa--a sign, some critics have argued, for the repressed sexual desires of the British elite.)

Chapter 6 Quotes

❝ At this point Mr. Emerson, whom the shock of stopping had awoke, declared that the lovers must on no account be separated, and patted them on the back to signify his approval. And Miss Lavish, though unwilling to ally him, felt bound to support the cause of Bohemianism.

Related Characters: Mr. Emerson, Miss Lavish

Related Themes:

Page Number: 57

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the Emersons, Lucy, Charlotte, Mr. Eager, and Miss Lavish are in a carriage. The carriage driver has picked up a young woman, whom he tries to kiss as he drives

the carriage (causing the horses to lurch from side to side). Mr. Eager, upset with such an open display of sexuality, asks the driver to dismiss the young woman, but Mr. Emerson insists that the driver should be able to show his love for his girlfriend. Miss Lavish, who's less committed to progressivism than Emerson, but loves to *seem* to be progressive (or "Bohemian"), agrees.

The humorous passage illustrates some of the political and cultural differences between the English characters. Despite coming from the same country, Mr. Emerson and Mr. Eager illustrate two opposing views of how people should behave--either with freedom or with "good manners." Miss Lavish doesn't really care either way, but because romantic freedom is "hip" these days, she goes along with Mr. Emerson. Miss Lavish, the tie-breaking vote, suggests that England is moving, however slowly, in the direction of sexual frankness.

> Fifty miles of Spring, and we've come up to admire them. Do you suppose there's any difference between Spring in nature and Spring in man? But there we go, praising the one and condemning the other as improper, ashamed that the same work eternally through both.

Related Characters: Mr. Emerson (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 59

Explanation and Analysis

Mr. Emerson, upset with Mr. Eager's prudishness concerning the romantic carriage driver, mutters about the universality of human freedom. He notices the beautiful spring weather, and the natural beauty that spring creates. He wonders aloud why human beings try to censor the "spring" of the soul, even as they celebrate the literal spring of nature.

Mr. Emerson's analogy is interesting because it suggests that liberty--sexual, moral, etc.--in an inevitable, even cyclical, part of the human experience. There's no virtue in trying to repress what is natural and god-given--and yet that's exactly what the late Victorian society symbolized by Mr. Eager has done.

> Miss Bartlett had asked Mr. George Emerson what his profession was, and he had answered "the railway." She was very sorry that she had asked him. She had no idea that it would be such a dreadful answer, or she would not have asked him.

Related Characters: Charlotte Bartlett, George Emerson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 60

Explanation and Analysis

Here Charlotte asks Mr. Emerson about his job, and Mr. Emerson answers, simply, "the railway." Charlotte, a long-time member of the English elite, is shocked that anyone she knows could have such a horrible, down-to-earth profession. She's sorry she asked Mr. Emerson about his job at all.

From a modern perspective--and probably from Forster's, as well--there's nothing wrong with Charlotte's question, or Mr. Emerson's answer: he's a working-class guy, and proud of it. But the passage illustrates the assumptions that go into upper-class English manners. The reason that Charlotte feels comfortable asking Mr. Emerson a question like, "what do you do?" is that she's expecting an answer--whenever she asks that question of her wealthy friends, they say they're lawyers, doctors, bankers, etc. In short, Charlotte's system of politeness and manners rests on the assumption that all people are basically the same; i.e., they come from the same class. Charlotte doesn't like to "mix" with the Emersons because she becomes conscious of the limits of her manners.

> She did not answer. From her feet the ground sloped sharply into view, and violets ran down in rivulets and streams and cataracts, irrigating the hillside with blue, eddying round the tree stems collecting into pools in the hollows, covering the grass with spots of azure foam. But never again were they in such profusion; this terrace was the well-head, the primal source whence beauty gushed out to water the earth. Standing at its brink, like a swimmer who prepares, was the good man. But he was not the good man that she had expected, and he was alone.
> George had turned at the sound of her arrival. For a moment he contemplated her, as one who had fallen out of heaven. He saw radiant joy in her face, he saw the flowers beat against her dress in blue waves. The bushes above them closed. He stepped quickly forward and kissed her.

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch, George Emerson

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 63

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, we're reminded of the link between spiritual, personal spring and literal, natural spring--it's natural beauty and vitality that inspires George in his "scandalous" action here. George suddenly shows his feelings for Lucy by kissing her, and she seems to kiss him back. Notice that it's George who kisses Lucy, not the other way around: not only is George the man (and therefore, in a late 19th century novel, the one who'd make the move), he's also the lower-class lover, suggesting that he's less restricted by the rigid manners and social norms of the aristocracy. Lucy has been shown to be equally energetic and imaginative, and yet her energy has been repressed for most of her life--and even here, she is shocked and scandalized by George's kiss, refusing to admit her own feelings.

Chapter 9 Quotes

❝ Beware of women altogether. Only let to a man. . . . Men don't gossip over tea-cups. If they get drunk, there's an end of them—they lie down comfortably and sleep it off. If they're vulgar, they somehow keep it to themselves. It doesn't spread so. Give me a man—of course, provided he's clean.

Related Characters: Mrs. Honeychurch (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 97

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Miss Honeychurch tells Lucy that she prefers men to women in almost every way. Women, she claims, are persistently troublesome. Men, on the other hand, are troublesome, but only in the short term--they have a way of getting over their problems quickly and efficiently.

Miss Honeychurch's monologue illustrates her internalized misogyny. Honeychurch is the most primly Victorian character in the novel (no small feat), and thus she sees the world in the most repressive terms. Women, she believes, should be proper and polite at all times, and try not to make trouble (which, she assumes, is in their nature). Of course, Miss Honeychurch isn't just a sexist. As she suggests when she insists that men be "clean," Honeychurch is almost something of a classist, reluctant to admit any of the "coal-dusted masses" into her life.

❝ No, Lucy, he stands for all that is bad in country life. In London he would keep his place. He would belong to a brainless club, and his wife would give brainless dinner parties. But down here he acts the little god with his gentility, and his patronage, and his sham aesthetics, and every one—even your mother—is taken in.

Related Characters: Cecil Vyse (speaker), Lucy Honeychurch, Sir Harry Otway

Related Themes:

Page Number: 98

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Cecil tells Lucy that he finds Sir Harry Otway to be insufferable. Harry, Cecil argues, has horrible taste: he's loud and aggressive, and doesn't know how to tell beauty from ugliness. Cecil also seems to resent that everybody else like Harry, even Lucy's mother, Miss Honeychurch.

The passage is significant because it shows Cecil to be a pretentious and rather hypocritical person. Cecil is an upper-class character, too--he just doesn't have as much land or property as Sir Harry. Cecil is a snobbish aesthete, who looks down on people because they don't have any taste. Cecil's mistake, of course, is to ignore the fact that taste is largely a product of one's class, as well. Cecil would probably look down on most of the working-class families of England, as well as Sir Harry--he'd continue sneering at their bad taste.

On a subtler level, Forster here also critiques the very idea of "taste." As elsewhere in the novel, he contrasts having good taste--that is, knowing what is "supposed" to be beautiful--versus really engaging with beauty on an emotional or spiritual level. Cecil knows how to appreciate art and beauty in theory, but he never really connects with or is moved by it.

"I had got an idea—I dare say wrongly—that you feel more at home with me in a room."
"A room?" she echoed, hopelessly bewildered.
"Yes. Or, at the most, in a garden, or on a road. Never in the real country like this."
"Oh, Cecil, whatever do you mean? I have never felt anything of the sort. You talk as if I was a kind of poetess sort of person."
"I don't know that you aren't. I connect you with a view—a certain type of view. Why shouldn't you connect me with a room?"
She reflected a moment, and then said, laughing:
"Do you know that you're right? I do. I must be a poetess after all. When I think of you it's always as in a room. How funny!"
To her surprise, he seemed annoyed.
"A drawing-room, pray? With no view?"
"Yes, with no view, I fancy. Why not?"
"I'd rather," he said reproachfully, "that connected me with the open air."

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch, Cecil Vyse (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 99

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Cecil shows that he's a good observer, if not necessarily a good man. He correctly recognizes that Lucy, whom he loves, thinks of him as existing in a closed room without a view. Cecil further deduces that Lucy thinks of him as being in a closed room because they considers him stuffy, unimaginative, and generally repressive.

Cecil's existence stands apart from that of the Emerson family. Cecil is an aesthete, and his arrogant emphasis on style and taste are purely self-referential: he's more interested in his own tastes and styles than he is in the world itself. Other characters in the novel, such as the Emersons, are more open and free in their thinking, reflecting their genuine love and fascination with the world (and thus suggesting they have a "connection with the open air"). Lucy strives to be free and unrepressed, and so she's less attracted to Cecil than Cecil would like.

Chapter 14 Quotes

It is obvious enough for the reader to conclude, "She loves young Emerson." A reader in Lucy's place would not find it obvious. Life is easy to chronicle, but bewildering to practice, and we welcome "nerves" or any other shibboleth that will cloak our personal desire. She loved Cecil; George made her nervous; will the reader explain to her that the phrases should have been reversed?

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch, George Emerson, Cecil Vyse

Related Themes:

Page Number: 132

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, the narrator addresses a "wrinkle" in the text: why doesn't Lucy accept the obvious truth that she's in love with George Emerson? Can it be possible that Lucy is so divorced from her own feelings that she deludes herself into thinking that she's in love with Cecil, an arrogant, thoroughly unlikable man?

According to the narrator, this is exactly the case. The strange thing about repression, we've been told, is that it encourages people to lie to themselves. Lucy doesn't *know* how unhappy she is until she meets George Emerson: she's been so conditioned to think in class terms and mirror the politeness of her peers and elders that rebelling against her society's rules is almost impossible. Lucy prepares for a life with Cecil, not entirely aware of what a huge mistake she's making. The narrator further suggests that the function of novels like this one is to enlighten readers--to alert them to their own blindness and repression by telling them stories.

I am no match for you in conversation, dearest. I blush when I think how I interfered at Florence, and you so well able to look after yourself, and so much cleverer in all ways than I am. You will never forgive me.

Related Characters: Charlotte Bartlett (speaker), Lucy Honeychurch

Related Themes:

Page Number: 136

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Lucy confronts Charlotte about her interference in Lucy's life. Charlotte thinks she's looking out

for Lucy and ensuring that she marries the best suitor available; thus, when Charlotte catches Lucy kissing George, she pressures Lucy to move on. Here, Lucy gets irritated with Charlotte for meddling in other people's business. She wants to make her own choices--and to Lucy's surprise, Charlotte apologizes for interfering.

Charlotte's apology to Lucy is interesting because she admits that Lucy is a more confident, independent person than Charlotte. Charlotte was supposed to be Lucy's chaperone--i.e., she was supposed to use her superior skills and experience to help Lucy make the right choices. Charlotte seems to realize that her "greater experience" doesn't mean anything--Charlotte has just been indoctrinated into English customs for longer than Lucy.

> The scales fell from Lucy's eyes. How had she stood Cecil for a moment? He was absolutely intolerable, and the same evening she broke off her engagement.

Related Characters: Cecil Vyse, Lucy Honeychurch

Related Themes:

Page Number: 157

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Lucy has just had a long conversation with George. George tells Lucy the plain truth: Cecil isn't a particularly good man, despite the fact that he and Lucy and engaged to be married. He lists all the examples of Cecil's condescending behavior towards women--if he were to marry Lucy, George argues, he'd treat Lucy like a child, never letting her make up her own mind about anything. While Lucy isn't convinced of George's argument at the time, she begins to see that George was right all along; Cecil really is a condescending, sexist fool.

To emphasize the suddenness of Lucy's epiphany, Forster makes a Biblical allusion: in the Bible, when Saul (later the Apostle Paul) embraced Christianity, his temporary blindness was instantly healed, and the "scales" fell from his eyes. In other words, Lucy feels as if she's been blind her entire life, and can only now see Cecil for what he is. The fact that it's George's speech that prompts her epiphany suggests that, deep down, Lucy may have always found Cecil a little irritating, but she put up with him because her family and her culture demanded that she do so (in other words, her culture demanded that she play the part of submissive fiancee).

Of course, the irony of this is that Lucy only escapes one man (Cecil) telling her what to do by listening to another man (George) tell her what to do. In this way, Forster perhaps subtly critiques himself, and acknowledges that although he has created an empowered female character in Lucy, he is still a man speaking through her voice.

Chapter 19 Quotes

> But I cannot see why you didn't tell your friends about Cecil and be done with it. There all the time we had to sit fencing, and almost telling lies, and be seen through, too, I dare say, which is most unpleasant.

Related Characters: Mrs. Honeychurch (speaker), Lucy Honeychurch, Cecil Vyse

Related Themes:

Page Number: 179

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Miss Honeychurch talks to her daughter about her broken engagement to Cecil. Honeychurch doesn't really understand why Lucy has broken off the engagement, but she wants she news of the broken engagement to get out anyway. Mrs. Honeychurch is, as one might expect, a master of public relations: she knows that the best way to avoid a scandal is to be open and honest about the engagement; otherwise people will assume that Mrs. Honeychurch and her family are hiding something.

Mrs. Honeychurch's stated reasons for breaking the news of the broken engagement are fascinating: she suggests the danger of "being seen" as frauds. Respectability is the basic currency of the English upper-classes, and to be deceptive or devious in anything is the easiest way to lose respectability.

> "I want more independence," said Lucy lamely; she knew that she wanted something, and independence is a useful cry; we can always say that we have not got it. She tried to remember her emotions in Florence: those had been sincere and passionate, and had suggested beauty rather than short skirts and latch-keys. But independence was certainly her cue.

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 181

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Lucy proves how repressed and sheltered she is, even after she discovers her feelings for George Emerson. Lucy knows that she wants to break away from her strict English society, and yet she doesn't really understand how to go about doing so. Lucy remembers Italy as a place where she could be free of her social control: it was in Italy, after all, where she fell for George.

The tragedy of the passage is that Lucy has a hard time articulating her feelings of rebellion. She's been so conditioned to believe in the necessity of proper behavior that she can't think of any other way to conduct herself. All she can do is turn back to the word "independence," even though it doesn't really encapsulate what she truly wants.

"I taught him," he quavered, "to trust in love. I said: 'When love comes, that is reality.' I said: 'Passion does not blind. No. Passion is sanity, and the woman you love, she is the only person you will ever really understand.'"

Related Characters: Mr. Emerson (speaker), George Emerson

Related Themes:

Page Number: 183

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Mr. Emerson talks to Lucy Honeychurch about her upcoming engagement to Cecil, and Lucy doesn't bother to correct him. Mistakenly certain that Lucy is engaged to Cecil, and therefore will never end up with George, Emerson mourns that he told his son to trust in his love for other people. Emerson feels that by raising George to be open and honest about his feelings, he encouraged George to fall for people of all kinds--including Lucy, a woman far outside George's class.

The passage is a great reminder of the social and psychological differences between George's family and Lucy's. George--perhaps because of his lower class situation, it's suggested--has been raised to believe in the importance of honesty and sincerity. Lucy has been trained to be proper and reserved about her feelings--to the point where she can't even tell Mr. Emerson that she's no longer engaged to Cecil.

Chapter 20 Quotes

Youth enwrapped them; the song of Phaethon announced passion requited, love attained. But they were conscious of a love more mysterious than this. The song died away; they heard the river, bearing down the snows of winter into the Mediterranean.

Related Characters: Lucy Honeychurch, George Emerson

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 196

Explanation and Analysis

In this happy, lyrical ending, Lucy and George end up together, having journeyed through Italy once again and reunited. George and Lucy are thrilled to be with each other again: they confess their love for one another, and embrace tenderly. It would seem that they've finally escaped from repression and the control of English proper manners.

And yet, what will George and Lucy's "happy ever after" look like? Forster doesn't tell us what's going to happen, should Lucy and George get married. He leaves the possibilities open, characterizing George and Lucy's love as mysterious and foreign--and also intimately associated with freedom and nature. If Cecil was like an enclosed room, then George is a "room with a view"--one connected to the wildness, freedom, and unpredictability of nature, but still enclosed and sheltering (Lucy doesn't end up totally free, after all).

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

A young English woman named Lucy is vacationing in Italy with her significantly older cousin Charlotte. They are staying together at the Bertolini Pension in Florence, and the novel opens with the two at dinner, complaining that they had been promised rooms with a **view**, but have been put in rooms looking into a courtyard. Lucy adds disappointedly that the Signora in charge of the Pension is English, and remarks, "It might be London."

As a young woman, Lucy cannot travel by herself. Even in another country, Lucy and Charlotte cannot get away from the British society they know so well at home: even the Signora of their Pension is English. Lucy's room without a view could represent her constrained life, without much independence or passion.

Lucy and Charlotte talk back and forth about which of them will take the first room to open up with a **view**, and are interrupted by a man at another dinner table. The man, named Mr. Emerson, says that he and his son George are willing to exchange their rooms (which have a **view**) with Lucy's and Charlotte's. Lucy and Charlotte are taken aback at the evidently lower-class man's boldness in interrupting their conversation, and politely decline the offer.

Even though they want rooms with a view, Lucy and Charlotte decline the Emersons' offer because Charlotte finds it to be a presumptuous offer that could perhaps make them indebted to lower-class strangers. The lower-class Emersons evidently don't care about the social manners and norms that Charlotte values so much.

Charlotte tells Lucy that they will find another place to stay, but just then a young clergyman named Mr. Beebe enters. He has worked in Lucy's parish, and Lucy recognizes him excitedly and tells Charlotte that they must stay. The two cousins talk with Mr. Beebe, who advises Lucy on what to see in Florence, and then a number of other guests at dinner offer their own advice on the subject.

Lucy and Charlotte trust Mr. Beebe because he is familiar and of a closer social class than the Emersons. At this early point in the novel, Lucy is taking advice from all her elders, including both Mr. Beebe and Charlotte.

Charlotte and Lucy leave dinner and talk with Mr. Beebe in another room. Charlotte asks about the Emersons, and says that she could not put Lucy and herself under any obligation to them by accepting their offer of the rooms, and adds that she is acting as Lucy's chaperon. Mr. Beebe agrees with Charlotte's decision to decline the offer, but says that Mr. Emerson likely had no ulterior motive and was simply being polite. He says that the Emersons are nice, but socialists, and says that he differs from Mr. Emerson "on almost every point of any importance."

Charlotte is wary of putting Lucy under any obligation to a man. Of a very traditional mindset, she regards a young woman like Lucy as very vulnerable and in need of supervision. As (according to Mr. Beebe) socialists, the Emersons have strongly progressive views that contradict the social stratification of traditional British society.

Charlotte worries that she was rude in rejecting the Emersons' offer and asked Mr. Beebe if she should apologize, but he says she doesn't need to, and then leaves. Lucy tells Charlotte that she thinks Mr. Beebe is nice and sees "good in everyone." She says that he seems like "an ordinary man," not a clergyman. An old lady comes and sits where Mr. Beebe was to "chatter gently about Italy." The old lady says that Mr. Emerson ought to have been "more tactful" at dinner, and says she felt sorry for Lucy and Charlotte's embarrassment.

The old lady shares Charlotte's concern for manners and propriety, and agrees that Mr. Emerson's offer lacked tact. In being so concerned with proper manners though, Charlotte is only making it more difficult for Lucy and her to get what they want (new rooms), and overlooking the honest generosity of the Emerson's offer.

Slightly defending Mr. Emerson's kind offer, Lucy agrees that he is not tactful but asks, "yet, have you ever noticed that there are people who do things which are most indelicate, and yet at the same time—beautiful?" Mr. Beebe enters the room and informs Charlotte that he has spoken to Mr. Emerson and has encouraged him to make the offer about the rooms again, so that Lucy and Charlotte can accept. Charlotte tells Mr. Beebe to tell Mr. Emerson that she will accept the offer, and Mr. Beebe goes and brings back George Emerson, who says that his father is bathing, but promises to relay the information.

While still under Charlotte's influence, Lucy shows a hint of a desire to break out of societal norms, finding beauty in some things that contradict proper manners. This also suggests that Lucy is able to appreciate a kind of beauty that cannot be boxed in by social customs. Charlotte has to some degree wanted to be able to accept the offer all along, and now takes the opportunity to accept it in what she deems a proper way.

Lucy and Charlotte move into the Emersons' rooms, and Charlotte explains to Lucy that she has taken the room George was in, so that if Lucy is under any obligation it is to Mr. Emerson, and not to his young son. Lucy does not entirely grasp the significance of this, and goes to her room, where she admires her new **view**. Charlotte looks around her new room and finds a sheet of paper with a huge question mark written on it. She wonders what it could mean, and it gradually seems to become "menacing, obnoxious, portentous with evil." She almost throws it away, but realizes that it belongs to George Emerson, and goes to bed.

Again seeing Lucy as a vulnerable young woman, Charlotte takes care not to put her under an obligation to a young man. George's question mark represents the abstract questioning and thinking that consumes much of his time, marking him as a very modern character—one that the traditional Charlotte doesn't understand.

CHAPTER 2

The next morning, Lucy wakes up, admires her **view** of the Arno river, and looks at various Italian men working on the other side of the river. Charlotte comes into the room and tells Lucy to hurry and get up, before "the best of the day" is gone. Charlotte wants to stay at the Pension and get acclimated to Florence, but Lucy wants to go out and see the city on their first day there. At breakfast, Charlotte insists on accompanying Lucy into the city, but then a lady interrupts to say that she is going to Santa Croce and Lucy is welcome to accompany her, so that Charlotte can stay at the Pension.

Lucy can appreciate the beauty of her view of the river, which may also suggest the first glimpse she gets in Italy of independence and the larger world outside her home and upbringing. Lucy is certainly not independent yet, though, as she must still be looked after, whether by Charlotte or by another older woman.

Lucy excitedly looks for information about Santa Croce in her Baedeker travel guidebook, and the woman, who introduces herself as Miss Lavish, tells Lucy that they will discover "the true Italy," beyond what is mentioned in guidebooks. Miss Lavish and Lucy walk around Florence, and Miss Lavish greets everyone they encounter. She tells Lucy, "you will never repent of a little civility to your inferiors," and confides to Lucy that she is a "Radical."

Miss Lavish arrogantly claims to know about "the true Italy," even while staying at a Pension whose tourist guests replicate British society. She identifies herself as a radical, wanting to act as if she rebels against traditional society, though she retains a patronizing attitude toward her "inferiors."

Lucy tells Miss Lavish that her father has always been a Radical, as well, and assures her that she is not too aristocratic. Busy in conversation, the two lose their way. Lucy wants to ask for directions or look in her Baedeker book, but Miss Lavish forbids her and says that they are now in "an adventure." The two drift and wander through streets until they finally find themselves at the church of Santa Croce. There, they happen to see Mr. Emerson and his son George.

Learning to maneuver through social situations, Lucy claims to be a radical and assures Miss Lavish that she is not too aristocratic in order not to seem snobby or pretentious. But both Miss Lavish and Lucy come from rather privileged backgrounds, as can be seen by comparison with the Emerson, and seem to be play-acting rather than authentic.

Miss Lavish looks down on the Emersons and jokes that she would like to give British tourists "an examination paper at Dover, and turn back every tourist who couldn't pass it." Suddenly, Miss Lavish sees a familiar face and runs off to talk to an old man. Lucy waits for ten minutes before deciding to try to find Miss Lavish. She can't find her, though, and is upset at being abandoned without knowing how to get home. She decides to go into the church.

Despite her claims to be a radical and sympathetic to her "inferiors," Miss Lavish snobbishly looks down on the Emersons. When Miss Lavish abandons Lucy, Lucy is at last alone and not under anyone's watch or care. This glimmer of independence is frightening for Lucy, though, left alone in a foreign city.

Inside the church, she looks around but has no one to show her which frescoes are by the famous Giotto and thus worthy to be appreciated. But eventually, "the pernicious charm of Italy worked on her, and, instead of acquiring information, she began to be happy." She sees a little Italian boy trip over the feet of a statue of a bishop, and goes to help him. Mr. Emerson also goes to the boy and says, "a baby hurt, cold, and frightened! But what else can you expect from a church?"

Rather than experiencing the beauty of the church, Lucy is at first preoccupied with trying to figure out which frescoes are the "right" ones to admire—she is more concerned with being correct than following her own taste. Mr. Emerson is critical of established religion, as well as traditional society. Again his focus seems to be on helping and connecting to people, not on social rules.

An Italian woman comes and helps the boy up. Mr. Emerson tries to talk to her, but she does not speak English. Lucy explains to Mr. Emerson what has happened to her, and George suggests that she join him and his father. Lucy politely declines, and Mr. Emerson says that she is only repeating niceties she has heard older people say. He insists that she join them, and the three walk around the church, viewing the frescoes.

Lucy behaves according to the manners and social customs she has learned from her family and others like Charlotte. But, as the Emersons encourage her to realize, such things often only get in the way. In joining the Emersons, Lucy takes a small step away from all the social norms she's used to.

Elsewhere in the church, a reverend is showing a congregation the church, and lectures about the Giotto frescoes. Mr. Emerson disagrees with what the reverend is saying, and loudly corrects him. The reverend awkwardly says that the church is not big enough for two parties, and leads his congregation outside. Lucy recognizes the reverend as an Englishman named Mr. Eager. George tells Lucy that his father has driven Mr. Eager out of the church, and often has that sort of effect on people despite his good intentions.

Mr. Emerson says what he thinks, with little regard for tact or manners. He does not seem to get along well with traditional authority figures, like Mr. Eager. But, as George assures Lucy, Mr. Emerson is not intentionally rude—one could even see his behavior as simply being honest about what he is thinking or feeling, rather than masking his thoughts behind politeness.

Lucy suggests that Mr. Emerson could have been more tactful, and George balks at the idea of tact. For a brief moment, Lucy regards George and thinks he is "healthy and muscular," but with "the feeling of grayness, of tragedy that might only find solution in the night." Lucy and the Emersons walk around the church, and Mr. Emerson tells Lucy that George is very unhappy. He asks if Lucy might understand George better than he can, since she is also young.

Lucy still believes in values like tact. Like his father who raised him, George couldn't care less about such a thing. George fascinates Lucy, and this may be the beginning of more serious feelings between them. Meanwhile, Mr. Emerson feels cut off from his son because of their generational difference, as times have changed since he was young.

Mr. Emerson tells Lucy that he knows what is wrong with George. He says it is "the old trouble: things won't fit." He quotes some poetry and then says that he doesn't believe in the "world-sorrow" that George does. He asks Lucy to make George believe in a grand "Yes." Lucy is uncomfortable and not sure what to think of all this abstract talk. George walks up and spots Charlotte in a nave of the church. Lucy joins her cousin and thanks the Emersons for "a delightful morning."

George's vague "world-sorrow" is an affliction typical of a self-consciously modern character. Lucy is of George's same generation, but doesn't understand him, as she still adheres in many ways to the traditional society of her family and of Charlotte. After her brief time with the Emersons, Lucy is back under the care and watch of her cousin.

CHAPTER 3

The narrator describes how Lucy likes playing the piano, as music offers her a momentary escape from "the kingdom of this world," and its concerns. One rainy afternoon at the Bertolini Pension, Lucy plays the piano. Looking on, Mr. Beebe recalls seeing her play before, in England, at "one of those entertainments where the upper classes entertain the lower." She had played some Beethoven and Mr. Beebe had been so taken with the music that he asked someone to introduce him to her.

Lucy's aesthetic experience of beauty through music offers her an escape from the restrictions of society. The beautiful music also draws people together, as it makes Mr. Beebe curious about and interested in Lucy.

Upon meeting Lucy, Mr. Beebe had found her less interesting than her music playing would suggest. He made a comment to Lucy's mother that "if Miss Honeychurch ever takes to live as she plays, it will be very exciting both for us and for her." Now, in the Pension, he makes the same remark to Lucy herself. Lucy and Mr. Beebe discuss Charlotte, who has gone into the city with Miss Lavish. Mr. Beebe jokes that Miss Lavish "hopes to find the true Italy in the wet." He informs Lucy that Miss Lavish is writing a novel about modern Italy.

Mr. Beebe's remark hints that Lucy is not yet living up to her full potential, but is being held back and constrained by both societal and familial expectations and her own inclination to give in to those pressures. Mr. Beebe pokes fun at Miss Lavish, who snobbishly looks down on tourists, but whose attempts to find the "true Italy" can be seen as just another form of tourism.

Mr. Beebe is puzzled by the surprising friendship between Charlotte and Miss Lavish. He wonders whether Italy is moving Charlotte away from "the path of prim chaperon." The narrator says that Mr. Beebe has always "loved to study maiden ladies," and "preferred to be interested rather than enthralled" by women. Miss Alan, another guest at the Pension, comes up to Lucy and says that she heard the piano even from her room with the door closed. She says that there is no privacy in Italy, and Mr. Beebe agrees.

Mr. Beebe suggests that the foreign country of Italy has the power to move people away from the normal, "prim" roles of British society. Mr. Beebe is kind, but his attitude of "studying" ladies like Charlotte or Lucy can be seen as patronizing.

Miss Alan tells Lucy about how Miss Lavish lost the entirety of a novel she was working on, and took up smoking "in despair" afterwards. Miss Lavish has apparently forgotten what she had written in the old novel, but is now at work on another, about modern Italy and "all the local colour." Miss Alan is sympathetic to Miss Lavish, but admits that she finds her a bit "unwomanly," and shares an anecdote: Mr. Emerson had once warned a woman in the Pension about drinking too much lemonade because of the acidity in her stomach, and Miss Lavish had applauded Mr. Emerson's plain speaking, whose crass mentioning of the digestive system alarmed Miss Alan.

Miss Lavish can be somewhat snobbish in her own right, but Miss Alan looks down on her as rude. Miss Alan has very strict, conservative ideas about what is womanly or unwomanly, as well as what is appropriate to talk about. Forster satirizes Miss Alan by showing how troubled she is over the mere mention of someone's stomach. By contrast, Mr. Emerson says what he wishes without regard for what he sees as dated notions of propriety, and yet he is always trying to help people.

An older woman at the Pension had left the room after Mr. Emerson's rude remark, and Miss Lavish had exclaimed, "Tut! The early Victorians." Miss Alan goes on to describe how Miss Lavish later invited her to go into the smoking-room with the Emersons, which she regarded as "an unsuitable invitation." Miss Lavish then went and spent time alone with Mr. Emerson. Lucy asks Mr. Beebe whether Mr. Emerson is "nice or not nice," and he tells her to make up her own mind about him. Miss Alan insists that the Emersons are not nice.

Miss Lavish sees herself as modern and progressive, denouncing the older generation of "early Victorians" as prim and repressed. Miss Alan finds Miss Lavish's behavior unladylike, thinking that a woman shouldn't spend time alone with a man. Not confident enough to think for herself entirely, Lucy asks Mr. Beebe's opinion on the Emersons before offering her own.

Lucy says that she thinks the Emersons are nice people, and Miss Alan tells her that the Emersons shouldn't spend time with her and "must find their level." As evening approaches, Lucy decides to go out on the town in a tram. Miss Alan and Mr. Beebe are alarmed at the prospect of her walking around alone, and Lucy decides not to ride the tram, but just to go for a walk. As she leaves, Mr. Beebe opines that her boldness is because of "too much Beethoven."

While Miss Alan believes in a rigid social hierarchy, Lucy is sympathetic to the Emersons, and seems to care less about the Victorian values espoused by Miss Alan. Her bold plan to walk alone through town shows that she can be somewhat independent, and doesn't share Miss Alan's restrictive ideas about the proper place of a lady.

CHAPTER 4

Lucy is bored with the conversation she just had with Miss Alan and Mr. Beebe. She desires "something big," and wants to ride the tram, but decides not to because it would be "unladylike." She remembers that Charlotte advised her that women's "mission was to inspire others to achievement rather than to achieve themselves." The narrator says that this traditional idea of a "medieval lady" has lived on in Victorian society, but that women now have "strange desires" and want to see the world and take action just like men.

While Lucy reacts to some degree against the sexism of traditional society, epitomized by Miss Alan, she is no rebel: she is still held back by considerations of proper female behavior, as Charlotte has taught her. The narrator suggests, though, that times are changing, and young women like Lucy are starting to rise up out of the narrowly prescribed roles that they have been traditionally given.

The narrator reflects that while Lucy is impatient with the restrictions put on her because of her gender, she doesn't have "any system of revolt," and simply occasionally transgresses restrictions. On this occasion, she avoids the tram and walks to a shop where she buys some photographs of famous Italian artworks. She walks into a Piazza, thinking, "nothing ever happens to me," and then starts to head home.

Caught at a transitional moment in society—especially for women—Lucy is conflicted. She is impatient with the restrictions she faces as a woman, but doesn't systematically revolt against mainstream society; rather, these restrictions lead her to boredom and frustration.

Just then, two Italian men near Lucy get into a fight. One of them is stabbed and, turning toward her, bleeds profusely. Stunned, Lucy looks around and happens to see George Emerson not too far away, before fainting. When she comes to, she is in George's arms. She thanks him for catching her when she fainted, but tells him that she can return to the Pension by herself.

Lucy here fulfils the stereotypical role of a romantic heroine, fainting and being rescued by a man. Once she regains herself, she reasserts her independence in wanting to return to the Pension alone—though also because Charlotte has taught her to be wary of male strangers.

Lucy suddenly thinks of her photographs, which she dropped when she fainted. George goes to pick them up and Lucy tries to walk off without him, but he stops her and insists on accompanying her back to the Pension. As George finds her photographs, Lucy looks around and sees "creatures with black hoods, such as appear in dreams." Discussing the fight they witnessed, Lucy and George go to the river, where they refuse a cabman who signals to them from his boat.

George's refusal to let Lucy go back to the Pension on her own can be seen as a generous act of kindness (she has, after all, just fainted) or as somewhat patronizing, as he assumes that she needs his help to get back.

Suddenly, George throws Lucy's photographs into the river. Lucy is shocked, but George explains that they were covered in blood. George then tells Lucy that he feels "something tremendous has happened," and that "it isn't exactly that a man has died." Lucy tells him that the ladies at the Pension are horrible gossipers, and asks him not to mention her behavior to anyone. George agrees, as Lucy gets lost in her thoughts about the "something" that "had happened to the living." George tells Lucy, "I shall probably want to live," and she doesn't know what he means.

George behaves impulsively and boldly, throwing the pictures away without any warning, and talking without any regard for conversational manners. Lucy is confused by his vague, modernist thoughts about the "something" that has happened (which seems may be that George has fallen in love with Lucy).

CHAPTER 5

Upon returning to the Pension, Lucy is surprised when Charlotte is not troubled by Lucy's adventure in the piazza. The next morning, Mr. Beebe invites Lucy and Charlotte to accompany the Emersons and him on a day trip. Charlotte declines, but says that Lucy might like to go. Lucy politely declines the invitation, and walks with Charlotte instead through the city. In the same piazza where Lucy had fainted the day before, Lucy and Charlotte encounter Miss Lavish, who is reading about the stabbing in a newspaper, and plans to work the story into her novel.

Lucy is surprised, because Charlotte is normally overly concerned and protective of her. The murder the previous day was a violent interruption into Lucy's protected, civilized world, but now she re-enters her privileged social life with Charlotte and Miss Lavish. Lucy follows Charlotte's lead in declining Mr. Beebe's offer with proper politeness.

Miss Lavish describes her planned novel, about "love, murder, abduction, revenge," and including "a deal of local colouring," about Florence. She hints that she is also going to skewer British tourists in Italy, modeled after the Emersons. Lucy and Charlotte leave Miss Lavish and Charlotte tells Lucy that she admires Miss Lavish. Lucy and Charlotte then run into Mr. Eager, who invites them to join him on a ride into the nearby hills, to get a **view** of Florence.

While Miss Lavish considers herself a radical in comparison to people like Miss Alan, she looks down on those of the lower classes, like the Emersons, who she denigrates as common tourists. She is a bit of a hypocrite, despising the snobbery of Miss Alan while showing plenty of her own.

Charlotte is pleased to receive Mr. Eager's invitation, because she sees him as someone who is in touch with the real Florence, beyond what mere tourists see. The narrator says that Lucy would have been equally pleased only a few days earlier, but now had different priorities. Nonetheless, she eagerly accepts the invitation, and is even more excited when she learns that Mr. Beebe will be coming along, as well.

The British travelers are obsessed with finding the authentic Italy or Florence, because such a thing would offer a real alternative to or brief escape from the British society they are used to. Lucy's new priorities are ambiguous but may suggest that she has the beginnings of romantic inclinations for George.

Mr. Eager mentions that in this very piazza the day before, "the most sordid of tragedies," occurred. Charlotte says that Lucy witnessed it, and claims responsibility for not chaperoning Lucy at the time. Mr. Eager asks Lucy if the man who died did so very near her, and Lucy thinks to herself that "respectable people" like Mr. Eager are more interested in gory details about the matter than someone like George Emerson.

Charlotte sees Lucy as in need of her protection, and takes responsibility for letting her go off alone. Lucy sees that manners and respectability can often be just a façade: the supposedly more noble Mr. Eager is actually more interested than George in the salacious, gory details of the murder.

An Italian vendor tries to sell Mr. Eager some photographs, but he ignores him. Lucy, Charlotte, and Mr. Eager go shopping and buy "many hideous presents and mementoes." By the end of the morning, Lucy realizes that she has "ceased to respect" both Mr. Eager and Miss Lavish for some reason. Charlotte and Mr. Eager talk about the Emersons, and Mr. Eager says that Mr. Emerson has written for the "Socialistic Press." Mr. Eager says that Mr. Emerson is "the son of a labourer," and he and Charlotte both agree that there is "something not wholly vile," in the way Mr. Emerson has climbed the social ladder.

Lucy is beginning to question more significantly her elders and social superiors, losing her respect for the social norms that no longer seem to always apply in modern times. In doing so, she is asserting her own thoughts against what she has been taught. Mr. Eager and Charlotte are very patronizing in the way they refer to Mr. Emerson's rising up the socio-economic ladder, looking down at the laboring classes.

Mr. Eager mentions Mr. Emerson's wife, who is dead, and after some hinting finally says that Mr. Emerson murdered his wife (though he supplies no proof). He asks Lucy if the Emersons had said bad things about him when they were with her in Santa Croce, and Lucy assures him they did not. Mr. Eager thinks that Lucy is defending the Emersons, but she insists she isn't. Mr. Eager leaves.

For someone supposedly concerned with manners and gentility, Mr. Eager has no qualms with slandering Mr. Emerson with an unsubstantiated rumor, and seems overly interested in gossip.

Charlotte realizes that Mr. Beebe is planning to take Miss Lavish with him on the ride and worries about who will sit with whom, since Mr. Eager dislikes Miss Lavish. Meanwhile, Lucy is lost among the "questions rioting in her brain," after experiencing such strange things in the "magic city" of Florence. As Lucy thinks over the murder she saw and the murder accusation against Mr. Emerson, Charlotte continues to figure out seating arrangements for the upcoming drive.

Charlotte's worries over the trivial matter of who will sit where in the carriage shows how silly concerns with manners and proper social behavior can be. Lucy, meanwhile, is pondering more significant things—since coming to Florence, she has already had her eyes opened to a variety of new, strange people and experiences.

Charlotte and Lucy go to the bureau and receive letters. Lucy's mother has written to tell her that their family friends, the Vyses, are in Rome. Lucy suggests that they both go to Rome the next day, and Charlotte laughs at her "unpractical suggestion." The narrator notes that the statues in the piazza they are walking through seem to have "done or suffered something," and specifically suggest "not the innocence of childhood. . . but the conscious achievements of maturity."

The narrator's description of the statues hints at Lucy's own transition from the "innocence of childhood" to maturity. They are also foreboding, in their suggestion of having "done or suffered something," suggesting that Lucy's transition towards maturity and independence may involve a loss of innocence.

CHAPTER 6

In the afternoon, Lucy and Charlotte go for the ride with Mr. Eager. A young Italian man drives their carriage, and stops to pick up a young Italian woman. The narrator compares both of the Italians to mythological figures. In the carriage are Mr. Beebe, Mr. Eager, Miss Lavish, the Emersons, Lucy, and Charlotte. Mr. Beebe had invited the Emersons along without asking Mr. Eager first, a "dreadful thing," that put a damper on Mr. Eager's plans.

The young, relatively carefree Italians are so different from the stuffy, mannered British tourists like Mr. Eager, that the narrator compares them to marvelous mythological characters. The narrator satirizes Charlotte's excessive concern with trivial matters by mock-seriously calling Mr. Beebe's inviting the Emersons a "dreadful thing."

Lucy thinks about George Emerson, who she thinks is eager to "continue their intimacy." She is cautious "not because she disliked him," but because she doesn't feel she understands what has happened between George and her on the river, when they had intimately discussed the murder they saw and contemplated "the shadowy stream."

Lucy is curious about George; though she doesn't yet understand her feelings, she is beginning to develop romantic feelings for him, propelled by their shared experience by the river.

Mr. Eager asks if Lucy is in Florence as a student of art, and she tells him that she is simply a tourist. He says that he often pities tourists, who are "unconscious of anything that is outside Baedeker," and Miss Lavish agrees. As the party rides by various villas, Mr. Eager tells Lucy all about the British and American expatriates that live in them. Meanwhile, the carriage driver puts the horses at a full gallop, and lurches the carriage from side to side as he tries to kiss the young woman he has brought along.

Miss Lavish and Mr. Eager insist that they have the real or correct knowledge about Italy and art, in contrast to tourists. They are more concerned with having the correct knowledge about beauty than appreciating or experiencing it. The Italian driver is much more carefree than the British and seemingly less constrained by manners, as he kisses his girlfriend.

Mr. Eager stops the carriage and tells the driver that his female friend will have to leave. Mr. Emerson, though, says that "the lovers must on no account be separated." Mr. Eager speaks to the two young Italians in Italian, and they both appeal to Lucy. Lucy is confused as to why they should seek her support. Finally, the young woman leaves, to the delight of Mr. Eager. Mr. Emerson counters that Mr. Eager has "parted two people who were happy."

Mr. Eager imposes his (British) sense of values and manners on the Italian driver—even though he just claimed to respect the "real" Italy. Mr. Emerson, by contrast, doesn't care about traditional manners, and is upset that Mr. Eager has interfered with two people's happiness.

Mr. Emerson talks with Miss Lavish and regrets the way that Mr. Eager treated the young driver, whom he associates with the youth and vivacity of spring. Looking around at the natural scenery, he asks, "Do you suppose there's any difference between Spring in nature and Spring in man?" Mr. Eager ignores Mr. Emerson.

Mr. Emerson is upset with Mr. Eager's prudishness, and sees it partially as the result of a generation gap between him and the young driver. He uses the beauty of spring in nature to justify the beauty and naturalness of the driver's expression of love.

At last, the group reaches their destination of Fiesole, in the hills outside Florence, the setting that had inspired the Renaissance painter Alessio Baldovinetti. Mr. Eager and Miss Lavish wonder, "where exactly had he stood?" The party walks around the hills together for a bit, and then split into groups. Mr. Beebe and Mr. Eager go off together, the Emersons return to the carriage to talk to their driver, and Lucy, Charlotte, and Miss Lavish form a third group.

The characters find themselves in a beautiful, scenic setting, but Mr. Eager and Miss Lavish are more interested in finding exactly where a famous painter stood and worked than in experiencing the landscape for themselves.

Charlotte tells Miss Lavish that she asked Mr. Emerson what his profession was, and he answered "the railway," which she found "such a dreadful answer." Miss Lavish laughs and says that Mr. Emerson looks like a porter. Miss Lavish and Charlotte encourage Lucy to go off and join Mr. Eager's group, but Lucy doesn't want to. They sit for a few minutes, and then Lucy finally goes to find Mr. Eager. She goes back to the carriage and, unable to speak Italian, tries to ask the driver where Mr. Beebe is.

Charlotte and Miss Lavish look down snobbishly on Mr. Emerson's profession, rather than judging him on his character. Miss Lavish certainly doesn't seem like much of a "radical," here.

The driver misunderstands Lucy and directs her over to where George is. Lucy walks through a wooded area and then stumbles onto a terrace with flowers all around in "rivulets and streams and cataracts, irrigating the hillside with blue, eddying round the tree stems collecting into pools in the hollows, covering the grass with spots of azure foam." Immediately upon seeing Lucy amid all the flowers, George kisses her, and almost as suddenly Charlotte arrives on the scene, sees what has happened, and calls out Lucy's name.

The lush, beautiful spring flowers and natural setting are very important in helping George to act on his impulsive feelings and kiss Lucy. Lucy, who doesn't yet understand her own feelings for George, is shocked by the sudden kiss. The kiss occurs out in nature, outside of the restrictions of society, but Charlotte arrives just in time to see and to impose the judgment of traditional society on George and Lucy.

CHAPTER 7

The narrator sums up the events of the afternoon, which had played out like "some complicated game." The driver says that bad weather is coming in, and wants to hurry, so everyone leaves without George, who has wandered off on his own, leaving him to walk back. A storm begins as the party rides back into Florence, and two close lightning strikes cause Miss Lavish and Lucy to scream.

The fact that George walks back alone could symbolize a separation from mainstream society. It also gives Lucy a chance to try to make sense of her confused thoughts on George. George alone in the storm also seems to connect him with the storm and passion.

Worried, Mr. Emerson asks Mr. Eager to ask the driver where George is. Charlotte, meanwhile, slips some money to the driver, who saw the kiss earlier, and asks him not to tell anyone about it. Ahead of the carriage on the road, lightning strikes the wire of a tramline, and a support falls. The carriage stops in time to avoid being hit by it, and everyone feels "the floods of love and sincerity," at coming so close to a disaster.

Charlotte is willing to sacrifice a little honesty and integrity—bribing the driver to keep quiet about the kiss—in order to protect her younger cousin. She doesn't think that Lucy is able to handle the situation entirely on her own. And Charlotte thinks that gossip about Lucy's involvement in such a kiss could ruin her in society.

Emotional, Lucy apologizes to Charlotte and says that Charlotte warned her to be careful, but she simply thought she was "developing." She tries to explain what had happened on the river with George, and then assures Charlotte that she is "not to blame," for the kiss. But then she admits that she is "a little to blame," and says that when she saw George among the flowers she thought he looked like something out of a book of mythology. She tells Charlotte that she wants to be truthful and says, "It is so hard to be absolutely truthful."

Lucy attempts to be "absolutely truthful," and honest but is unable to put her feelings and experiences into words. She doesn't actually lie, but still feels guilty about not being able to tell the entire truth. She concedes that she is a little bit to blame, but does not admit—even to herself--that she actually does have feelings for George.

Charlotte consoles Lucy and tells her that everything is okay. The storm calms down as the carriage enters Florence. Back at the Pension, Lucy thinks of "how she should describe," what has happened with George and her—"all her sensations, her spasms of courage, her moments of unreasonable joy, her mysterious discontent." She hopes to "disentangle and interpret" all her feelings.

Charlotte acts like a protective maternal figure toward Lucy. Lucy again finds herself unable to put her feelings into words, which prevents her from being entirely honest. The fact that she has such difficulty expressing her thoughts about George suggests that her love for him is irrational, and even unintentional.

Lucy talks with Charlotte in her room, and Charlotte asks her "what is to be done?" She asks how they are to "silence" George, and Lucy says that she is sure George will not say anything about the event to anyone. Charlotte says that George does not seem like the type to keep quiet about his "exploits," and says that he is not wicked, but is "thoroughly unrefined." Lucy suggests that she speak to George to settle the matter.

Although Lucy calls George "unrefined," she still thinks highly of him and trusts him. Lucy wants to be entirely honest, but now she has another secret that she must keep. Charlotte treats this as a very serious matter, showing how significant a mere kiss can be in the social world of Edwardian England.

Charlotte is reluctant to agree to Lucy's plan, since Lucy is "so young and inexperienced," that she doesn't "realize what men can be." Charlotte asks what Lucy would have done if Charlotte had not happened upon George and her, and Lucy has no answer. Charlotte wishes that a "real man" like Lucy's brother were present, to help them with the situation. Charlotte tells Lucy that they will take a train to Rome the next day.

Charlotte doesn't think Lucy can handle the situation herself, because she is so young but especially because she is a young woman, and doesn't have experience with men. Charlotte takes control of the situation, but still doesn't think she can manage it as well as a man could. Charlotte thinks the best way to deal with the situation is to avoid it, to literally go to a place where George isn't.

As Charlotte and Lucy start to pack their things, Lucy feels inexplicably compelled to embrace Charlotte. Charlotte returns the gesture, and then apologizes for vexing Lucy "at every turn." She says she is "too uninteresting and old-fashioned," and has failed Lucy, as well as failing Lucy's mother in not protecting her.

At this point, Lucy still relies on Charlotte and listens to her. Charlotte notes that there is a significant generational gap between Lucy and her, but still insists on the importance of protecting Lucy.

Lucy insists that Charlotte is not to blame for anything, and promises that she will not tell her mother about what has happened. The narrator comments that Charlotte had "worked like a great artist," and taken advantage of Lucy's "craving for sympathy and love." George finally returns to the Pension and Lucy considers saying goodbye to him, but Charlotte finds him first and has a talk with him. From her own room, Lucy cries out, "I want not to be muddled. I want to grow older quickly." Charlotte suggests she go to bed.

Charlotte is in a sense not being entirely honest, as she manipulates Lucy. Lucy wants "not to be muddled," and isn't exactly sure what to think about all that has happened. She wants to grow up, be more mature, and understand complicated things, but for now Charlotte continues to handle matters for her and to make herself look like the responsible party here while making Lucy see herself and her feelings for George as products of her naiveté.

CHAPTER 8

The story resumes in England, after Lucy has returned from her Italian trip to her home, called Windy Corner. There, Lucy's brother Freddy is examining a bone and reading an anatomy manual, while Lucy's mother Mrs. Honeychurch is writing a letter in the drawing room. They are discussing Lucy and a man named Cecil Vyse, who is about to propose to Lucy for the third time. Mrs. Honeychurch is glad that Cecil is trying again, while Freddy says he feels uncomfortable with the situation, since Lucy has already tried to reject Cecil.

Unlike the sudden kiss with George, Lucy's relationship with Cecil doesn't exactly happen naturally—he has to propose to her three times. While Mrs. Honeychurch and Freddy let Lucy make her own decision, she is not completely independent of them, as they eagerly look on and await her decision. Cecil's last name—Vyse—suggests the way that he constrains Lucy.

Mrs. Honeychurch is writing to Cecil's mother—Mrs. Vyse, of the same family that Lucy visited in Rome—and comments on how she was surprised that Cecil had asked her permission to propose to Lucy, because she always thought of Cecil as unconventional. Freddy says that Cecil also asked his permission, which Mrs. Honeychurch finds odd. She peers out a window to spy on Cecil and Lucy, who are talking outside.

From the aged Mrs. Honeychurch's perspective, Cecil is unconventional, but from the point of view of Lucy or Freddy this may not be the case. Cecil is very deliberate about his proposal, asking permission, unlike George who acted impulsively on his feelings and kissed Lucy without warning.

Freddy tells his mother that when Cecil asked his permission for the proposal, he also asked Freddy if he thought the marriage would be a good thing. Freddy answered honestly, saying no. This irritates Mrs. Honeychurch, who reminds Freddy of "all that has passed between them [Lucy and Cecil] in Rome," and says she likes Cecil, because "he's good, he's clever, he's rich, he's well connected." Freddy says that he doesn't like Cecil, but can't quite figure out why. He says it might have something to do with something Mr. Beebe said, about Cecil being "detached."

Freddy answered Cecil honestly, even though it meant a bit of social awkwardness. Mrs. Honeychurch would have preferred him to prioritize manners over the truth in this case. She thinks of Cecil as a good husband for Lucy because of his wealth and social status, not considering whether Lucy actually loves him or not.

Freddy tries to discern what it is about Cecil that he dislikes, as Mrs. Honeychurch looks over her letter, in which she tells Mrs. Vyse that she would be pleased for Lucy and Cecil to marry. But, she says to Freddy, "in these days young people must decide for themselves." In the letter, Mrs. Honeychurch tells Mrs. Vyse that Lucy likes Cecil. As she is finishing her letter, Cecil enters the room. The narrator describes Cecil as "medieval" and "like a Gothic statue."

Mrs. Honeychurch wistfully realizes that times have changed, and that young people now have greater power to make their own decisions in terms of love. But times haven't changed completely—Cecil, for example, is a somewhat old-fashioned character, as Forster's description of him suggests.

Cecil informs Mrs. Honeychurch (first in Italian, then in English) that Lucy has accepted his marriage proposal, and both she and Freddy congratulate him. Lucy enters and Cecil suggests that she go into the garden with her mother and brother to tell them about the proposal. As they leave, Cecil thinks over his history with Lucy: he saw her when she came to Rome and thought she was "a typical tourist—shrill, crude, and gaunt with travel." But gradually, he became interested in her and thought she "was like a woman of Leonardo da Vinci's."

The relationship between Cecil and Lucy is a stark contrast to her past sudden, passionate relationship with George. Cecil is careful and deliberate, and only became interested in Lucy gradually. Cecil admires Lucy's beauty, but his comparison of her to a painting is also subtly sexist: he does not recognize her as a full person, but sees her as an object of art.

In Rome, Cecil hinted to Lucy that they should marry, and she declined. He proposed again "among the flower-clad Alps," and she again rejected him. But this time, she accepted his offer, and Cecil happily plans to write a letter to his mother. He thinks about Lucy's country society around Windy Corner, and decides that "he ought to introduce her into more congenial circles as soon as possible."

Again, Cecil is very deliberate and cautious in his approach to Lucy, unlike George. Just like George's kiss, his attempt at a romantic scene takes place among beautiful natural scenery, though Cecil seems to admire that beauty too as a kind of picture rather than truly feeling its natural beauty. Although Lucy's family is well-off, Cecil still looks down on the rural society around their home.

Mr. Beebe arrives and tells Cecil that he has come "for tea and for gossip." He shares the news that a man named Sir Harry Otway has bought two nearby villas. Cecil is uninterested in such "local affairs." Mr. Beebe asks what Cecil's profession is, and Cecil says he has none. (Because he is so well-off, he doesn't need one.) The two men continue to make small-talk and finally bond a bit over joking about the bad service provided by the servants at Windy Hill.

Cecil continues to look down rather snobbishly at the country society around Windy Corner. He is so wealthy he doesn't need a job—a type becoming less and less common as the 20th century moves forward. Mr. Beebe is less conceited than Cecil, but he is also privileged enough to make fun of the servants.

Mr. Beebe and Cecil talk about Lucy. Mr. Beebe says that he made a drawing in Florence, with Lucy represented by a kite and Charlotte holding the string. He says the symbolic string of the kite never broke, and Cecil says, "It has broken now." He tells Mr. Beebe of his new engagement. Mr. Beebe apologizes for talking about Lucy "in this flippant, superficial way." He says that he knew in Florence that Lucy would eventually "take some momentous step," and now she has taken it.

Mr. Beebe's drawing straightforwardly symbolizes how Lucy was under the control of Charlotte in Florence. He and Cecil see Lucy's engagement as a step toward independence, but in becoming engaged to Cecil, Lucy may simply be entering under someone else's control and influence, breaking free of one string only to be tied to another.

Freddy and Mrs. Honeychurch enter, and both are excited about the engagement. The narrator quips that "an engagement is so potent a thing that sooner or later it reduces all who speak of it to this state of cheerful awe." Everyone at Windy Corner cannot help but feel happy about the engagement, and they sit down for "a very pleasant tea-party."

Freddy has his reservations about Cecil, but he and Mrs. Honeychurch show good manners in being so cheerful about the matter. Freddy is not so much lying as simply being carried away with the excitement of the long-standing tradition of marriage.

CHAPTER 9

A few days after the engagement, Mrs. Honeychurch takes Lucy and Cecil to a garden party, to show off the "presentable man" her daughter is marrying. At the party, a cup of coffee is spilled on Lucy's dress, and she and Mrs. Honeychurch have to leave the room to deal with it, leaving Cecil alone with a group of old women. Afterwards, in the carriage ride back home, Cecil asks if such a party is "typical of country society," and then tells Lucy that he found the party "perfectly appalling, disastrous, portentous."

The interactions between Cecil and the Honeychurches show how relative societal judgments can be. Mrs. Honeychurch moves in a well-off social circle in the country, but to Cecil such society is "appalling," and a pathetic imitation of real high society. Cecil is again George's opposite: he cares an inordinate amount about social class.

Cecil tells Lucy that he thinks of an engagement as a private matter, and hates how everyone was congratulating them on the engagement, as if it were "public property." Cecil interlaces Italian phrases in his conversation with Lucy, who thinks that he has "taken to affect a cosmopolitan naughtiness which he was far from possessing," after spending only one winter in Rome. Cecil tells Lucy that there are "certain irremovable barriers," between him and the old ladies of country society.

Cecil wants the engagement to be something he owns, that is private—not an expression or sharing of joy. He continues to be haughty and pretentious, dropping Italian phrases after just vacationing in Rome. He sees societal and class barriers as "irremovable," unaware that these barriers are slowly beginning to come down at this time.

Cecil criticizes Mr. Beebe to Lucy, who then says that she dislikes a different clergyman, Mr. Eager. She says that Mr. Eager claimed someone at the Pension Bertolini had murdered his wife. She can't remember Mr. Emerson's name, and thinks the accused was a Mr. Harris. She says that she absolutely hates Mr. Eager. Cecil is amused by Lucy's rant, but wants to tell her "that a woman's power and charm reside in mystery, not in muscular rant." He makes conversation by praising the nature all around them in the carriage.

Lucy does not lie about Mr. Emerson, but mistakenly spreads a false rumor about a Mr. Harris—this will later trouble her, as she tries her hardest to be completely honest. Cecil shares the traditional ideas about women of Charlotte, Mrs. Honeychurch, and other older characters—he has specific ideas about proper female behavior, including not speaking out about opinions, and wants to impose these on Lucy. He talks of nature from within the carriage, but does not leave the carriage to experience it.

The carriage goes by the two villas that Sir Harry Otway has recently bought, and as it goes by, Sir Harry stops them to talk He describes the architecture of the villas, and says he is upset because there is "an old lady, so very vulgar" in one of the villas, who will not move out. Cecil suggests that he "turn her out," and rent the place, but Sir Harry says that the rent is too high "for the peasant class," and too low for "any one the least like ourselves." Annoyed with Sir Harry's snobbery, Cecil suggests that he rent the villa to a bank clerk (which he knows Sir Harry would never want).

Once again, social class distinctions are very relative. Sir Harry is a snob toward "the peasant class," but Cecil sees him as not truly upper-class. Cecil is annoyed by Sir Harry's snobbery not because he believes in equality, but because he thinks Sir Harry doesn't truly have the right to be so pretentious. Cecil's dislike of Sir Harry thus does not signal any larger questioning of social hierarchy.

Realizing that Cecil is playing with Sir Harry, Lucy suggests that he rent the place to some gentlewomen spinsters, and says that she knows two such women from Florence—the Miss Alans. Sir Harry loves this idea. Mrs. Honeychurch says she would rather have men live there than women, because men "don't gossip over tea-cups." Cecil decides that he and Lucy should walk back the rest of the way to Windy Corner, letting Mrs. Honeychurch take the carriage.

Mrs. Honeychurch continues to be a source of stereotypical generalizations about women, showing that such ideas are deeply entrenched in many areas of society. They are not only enforced by males against females, but can be championed also by very traditionally-minded women.

After they leave Sir Harry behind, Cecil tells Lucy that he dislikes him. He says that Sir Harry "stands for all that is bad in country life." He says that in London, Sir Harry would simply "give brainless dinner parties," but in the country he is pretentious and "acts the little god with his gentility, and his patronage, and his sham aesthetics." Cecil is sick of "gentlefolks." With Cecil disliking both Mr. Beebe and Sir Harry, Lucy worries about what he will think of Freddy, or other people she is fond of.

Cecil continues to look down pretentiously on Sir Harry and the countryside generally. He approaches beauty and aesthetics as a matter of social positioning: Sir Harry's poor taste and "sham aesthetics" signal his real class, for Cecil. Lucy has concerns about Cecil; their relationship is far from an instant success, and Lucy has to continually think it over.

Lucy and Cecil walk through a wooded area, and Cecil says that he thinks Lucy only imagines him "in a room," or "in a garden, or on a road," but never "in the real country." Lucy concedes that this is true, and that when she thinks of him, it is always in a room with no **view**. Cecil says that he would like her to associate him "with the open air." They come to a clearing in the woods, with a little pool Lucy and Freddy used to bathe in as children, which they called **The Sacred Lake**. Cecil thinks that Lucy reminds him "of some brilliant flower that has no leaves of its own, but blooms abruptly out of a world of green."

Lucy can only imagine Cecil in a closed room with no view, because she feels trapped and hemmed in by their relationship, and because their relationship fits into prescribed social boxes. Cecil compares Lucy's beauty to a flower, moved by his natural surroundings. But this comparison also robs Lucy of agency as a person, making her nothing but a pretty object to be admired.

Cecil tells Lucy that he wants to ask her something he has never asked her before, and finally asks if he may kiss her. She says yes, and he kisses her in an awkward embrace. Cecil is embarrassed that he had to ask for the kiss, and imagines that he should have simply rushed up to Lucy in the clearing and kissed her so that she would admire him "ever after for his manliness." They leave the clearing, and after a long silence Lucy finally says that she has remembered the man's name from Florence and it is not Harris, but Emerson.

Unlike George, Cecil asks for permission to kiss Lucy—even though they are already engaged. It is indicative of the forced, uncomfortable nature of their relationship and the way that following Victorian customs can rob people of their ability to act on feeling (something even Cecil regretfully feels, though he doesn't express it in those terms). The awkward kiss hints that Lucy and Cecil do not really love each other, or are not well-suited for each other. Indeed, all the kiss does is bring back Lucy's memory of her passionate kiss with George, marked by her realization of Mr. Emerson's name.

CHAPTER 10

The narrator describes "the society out of which Cecil proposed to rescue Lucy." Lucy's father had been "a prosperous local solicitor," who built Windy Corner and then moved in. Nearby neighbors from London assumed that the Honeychurches were "the remnants of an indigenous aristocracy," and by the time people found out that Lucy was not as noble as they thought she was, "they liked her, and it did not seem to matter."

Cecil patronizingly thinks that Lucy is in need of his rescuing from what he pretentiously deems a dreary local society. At this transitional time, the Honeychurches have been able to pass off as aristocracy, showing the growing possibilities for social mobility.

For Lucy at Windy Corner, life "was a circle of rich, pleasant people, with identical interests and identical foes." Only after her trip to Italy did she start to think that one could jump over and transgress "social barriers," and that this could be a pleasant thing. Time in Italy had changed Cecil, as well, who now sees "local society" as narrow and insignificant. He seeks a better society, but fails to realize that Lucy really wants "not a wider dwelling-room, but equality beside the man she loved."

Growing up, Lucy saw no real problems with her immediate social circles. But the experience of leaving British society and seeing more of the world has educated her, so that she is more inclined to transgress class barriers now. By contrast, Italy has only made Cecil more pretentious. He attempts to be generous to Lucy, but doesn't realize what she really wants: equality.

One day, outside Windy Corner, Lucy is playing a made-up game with some tennis balls with Freddy and Mr. Beebe's niece Minnie, while talking to Mr. Beebe. Mr. Beebe says that he has written to the Miss Alans, the spinsters Lucy thought could move into Sir Harry's villa, and they are going to come. But then Freddy tells Lucy that he has heard someone else is moving into Sir Harry's place. Freddy says that Cecil just recently told him that he has gotten someone by the name of Emerson to move in.

Cecil appears to have gone behind Lucy's back and disregarded her efforts to get the Alans to move in, in order to carry out his own plan, showing a lack of concern for Lucy's opinions.

Lucy tries to ascertain if this is the same Emerson family from Florence, and Mrs. Honeychurch says that she hopes the new tenants are "the right sort of person." She says that Lucy is probably annoyed by her snobbery, but insists that "there is a right and a wrong sort, and it's affectation to pretend there isn't." Freddy says that the new tenants are friends of Cecil, and Lucy is annoyed that her own fiancé would ruin her plans to have the Miss Alans move in.

Mrs. Honeychurch continues to offer forth traditional sentiments, insisting that class distinctions are natural and true. Lucy is annoyed with Cecil, but is probably more troubled by the prospect of seeing the Emersons again, showing that she has strong feelings regarding them that she's like to avoid, and for George in particular.

Lucy says that these Emersons are probably not the same ones as were in Florence, and Mr. Beebe agrees. He calls the Florentine Emersons "the oddest people! The queerest people!" He says that there was a rumor Mr. Emerson killed his wife. Mrs. Honeychurch comments that this makes two accused murderers in the Pension Bertolini, as there was also an accused murderer named Harris. Realizing that she never corrected her mistake about the name Harris to her mother, Lucy thinks to herself that she must take care not to tell any more lies.

Lucy is worried about seeing the Emersons again, because she has unresolved feelings for George. Mr. Beebe sees the Emersons as odd because they disregard social conventions. The unsubstantiated rumor about Mr. Emerson killing his wife now circulates even further. Lucy realizes that she has unintentionally spread a bit of a lie about someone named Harris—try as she might, she can't help but not be entirely honest in her life.

Lucy goes inside to see Cecil, and chides him for ruining her plan about the Miss Alans. Cecil describes the Emersons he has met, and says that he ran into them in the National Gallery in London, and that they are not his friends, but strangers. He is excited for these commoners to move in, because he is fed up with Sir Harry's snobbery. He tells Lucy that he thinks "the classes ought to mix," and "there ought to be intermarriage." He tells Lucy he believes "in Democracy," and Lucy snaps that he doesn't know the meaning of that word. Cecil chalks Lucy's temper up to snobbishness at the lowly Emersons moving in, instead of the gentlewomen Alans.

Cecil is fed up with Sir Harry's snobbery, but not because he disapproves of class snobbery in principle. Rather, he simply thinks that Sir Harry is too full of himself and is not truly upper-class enough to hold such judgments. He claims to believe in equality to some degree, but this does not seem truthful, as he doesn't exhibit such values—especially not in his relationship with Lucy, where he makes decisions by himself without consulting her.

CHAPTER 11

Cecil's plans for the Emersons to move into Sir Harry's villa are successful. The Alans are offended and write Lucy "a dignified letter." Not long after, Sir Harry dies. Lucy gradually settles into the idea of the Emersons living nearby, but is nonetheless glad when she happens to be in London visiting Cecil's mother when the Emersons finally move in. In London, Lucy becomes fonder of Cecil.

Lucy is glad she isn't there when the Emersons move in, but she doesn't realize why—she is relieved not to have to confront her feelings for George. She is gradually convincing herself to like Cecil, whereas her connection with George was more automatic and sudden. Apparently Cecil is less unpleasant when he's in his own social circle and not always critical of his inferiors.

Lucy receives a letter from Charlotte. Since the two parted after their trip to Italy, "a coolness had sprung up," between them. In the letter, Charlotte says that Miss Lavish recently stopped by Lucy's neighborhood and happened upon the Emersons. Charlotte says that she is worried and warns Lucy that she should tell Mrs. Honeychurch about her history with George Emerson.

The coolness that's appeared in Lucy and Charlotte's relationship seems to be a result of Charlotte's interference in Lucy's relationship with George. Lucy seems not to realize that as the source, though. Meanwhile, Charlotte shows concern for Lucy here, but it will be revealed that Charlotte's concern is in fact an effort at self-preservation. Charlotte's efforts to help Lucy are actually hypocritical.

Lucy is annoyed by Charlotte's letter, and writes a reply in which she says that she promised not to tell her mother about the kiss, and will keep that promise. She reiterates that she thinks the Emersons are "respectable people," and says that she will not complain about them. Lucy is unsure whether the secret of George kissing her is "a great thing which would destroy Cecil's life if he discovered it," or a "little thing which he would laugh at." She thinks again about how she mistakenly told Cecil and her mother about a Mr. Harris that was actually Mr. Emerson.

Lucy's changed relationship with Charlotte shows her increased maturity and independence, as she no longer listens to Charlotte's every word and is willing to defend the Emersons to her. Despite Lucy's attempts at honesty, she is now caught keeping a secret from her family and fiancé, and has also unintentionally spread a lie about a fictional Mr. Harris.

In London, Lucy attends a dinner party "consisting entirely of the grandchildren of famous people." She is surprised by their world-weariness and jaded attitude, so different from the atmosphere at Windy Corner. She plays some music on the piano, and Cecil requests to hear Beethoven, but she declines and plays only Schumann. After the party, Lucy goes to bed and Cecil talks with his mother.

Lucy is now introduced to Cecil's London high society. Music offers Lucy a small realm of autonomy, where she is in control of what she plays, and is able to produce beauty while being absorbed in her own temporary world of music.

Mrs. Vyse tells Cecil, "Make Lucy one of us," and enthusiastically says that Lucy is "purging off the Honeychurch taint," and becoming more and more acceptable. Cecil agrees and exclaims that Lucy was entirely right not to play Beethoven. He says that he wants all his children "educated just like Lucy": first in the country, followed by a trip to Italy, and only then London. As Lucy falls asleep, she cries out at a nightmare. Mrs. Vyse goes to her room and comforts her, telling her Cecil, "admires you more than ever."

The Vyses' comments reveal the importance of upbringing and education in maintaining social hierarchy, suggesting that Lucy can be taught to be "one of us," and that Cecil's children will need to be brought up properly. Lucy's ominous nightmare just at the moment when she and Cecil seem to be moving closer together bodes ill for her forced romantic relationship with him.

CHAPTER 12

On a "Saturday afternoon, gay and brilliant after abundant rains," Mr. Beebe and Freddy pay the Emersons a visit. They go into the Emersons' villa, looking for them, and examine the Emersons' things, including many books. Mr. Beebe asks Freddy how Lucy enjoyed her stay in London, and Freddy says that Lucy is closer than ever to Cecil.

The beauty of the natural world sets the stage for a scene of freedom and glee to follow (at the Sacred Lake). As Freddy says, Lucy and Cecil are gradually becoming closer, though their relationship lacks the immediate spark that was evident between Lucy and George.

Freddy tells Mr. Beebe that Cecil "is teaching Lucy Italian," and that he is worried Lucy will become smarter than he is, as "she will read all kind of books," with Cecil. George enters, looking like his "face wanted washing," and Freddy asks if George wants to go for a swim. Mr. Beebe laughs at this quick invitation to "have a bathe," and says that it would only happen between men. He adds, "And yet you will tell me that the sexes are equal."

Lucy is no longer under the tutelage of Charlotte, but is still not independent, as Cecil is now educating and influencing her. Mr. Beebe still believes in prevalent traditional notions about the differences between the sexes, which for him preclude equality between men and women.

Mr. Emerson, just entering the room, says that men and women will be equal, and says that the Garden of Eden "is really yet to come." He says that "when we no longer despise our bodies," when the sexes are equal, and when people truly discover nature, mankind will attain a kind of utopian existence like that of the Garden of Eden.

By contrast, Mr. Emerson represents a new wave of progressivism, believing in equality for women. His utopian vision of future society is centered around the beauty of the natural world, suggested by the Biblical image of the Garden of Eden.

Freddy tells Mr. Emerson that he will call on him later (a long-standing social tradition of visiting someone and leaving a calling card), and Mr. Emerson laughs at the old-fashioned custom, calling it "drawing-room twaddle." But Mr. Beebe insists on the practice, and tells Mr. Emerson to return calls within a ten-day window. Freddy, George, and Mr. Beebe leave to go to the **Sacred Lake** for a swim.

Mr. Emerson again shows his distaste for what he sees as senseless social customs. In his disagreement with Mr. Beebe, one sees the conflict of old and new ideas at this moment in British society. Having just discussed the Garden of Eden, Freddy, George, and Mr. Beebe now make for their own miniature natural paradise.

On the way, Mr. Beebe comments on the coincidence of the Emersons meeting Lucy in Florence and then ending up so near to Windy Corner. George says that it is fate, as "everything is fate." Mr. Beebe disagrees, and says that George first met Lucy in Florence, and then ran into Cecil at the National Gallery, looking at Italian art. He says that an interest in "things Italian," has brought the Emersons together with the Honeychurches. The three men arrive at the Sacred Lake, and Freddy and George disrobe and prepare to swim.

While George believes in fate, Mr. Beebe suggests that the Emersons and the Honeychurches have been brought together essentially by aesthetic means: by shared interests in the beauty of art and "things Italian." Freddy and George's disrobing may represent leaving behind the conventions of society and rejoining a state of nature.

Mr. Beebe stays out of the water at first, but both George and Freddy tell him that the "water's wonderful." Mr. Beebe sees no one else around and notices "water, sky, evergreens, a wind." Admiring all the nature around him, he takes off his clothes and jumps in the water. The three start to play, splash each other, and run around the pond and through "the willow-herbs and in the bracken." Freddy and George are "delirious," with fun.

The beauty of the outdoors around him spurs Mr. Beebe to drop his worries and experience careless freedom and fun. This scene, reminiscent of the Garden of Eden, suggests a kind of utopia free from the restrictions of society.

Suddenly, Mr. Beebe alerts George and Freddy that people are coming by. Mrs. Honeychurch, Cecil, and Lucy happen to be walking through the woods. They see the three men, who then run off into the woods or back into the water. Cecil leads Lucy and her mother away, feeling "that he must lead women, though he knew not whither, and protect them, though he knew not against what."

The men's beautiful, natural utopia is short-lived, though, and after a brief escape from the constrictive norms of society, they must return to their normal social lives. Cecil feels an obligation to protect women, without seeing if they really need protection first.

Mrs. Honeychurch is not shocked, though, and tells the three to dry off before coming inside, so as not to get a cold. After putting some clothes on, George, "barefoot, bare-chested, radiant and personable against the shadowy woods," says hello to Lucy, and Mrs. Honeychurch tells her to bow in return. She bows awkwardly. That night, the pool—which had swelled to a greater size with rainwater—"shrunk to its old size and lost its glory," becoming again nothing but a little pond.

Despite Cecil's attempt to protect Mrs. Honeychurch, she needs no such help. George continues to disregard social norms, greeting Lucy without a shirt on. For Lucy, this may associate him with the freedom and beauty of nature. Her socially conditioned bow is an awkward response to his carefree greeting. The shrinking of the Sacred Lake represents the fleeting nature of brief escapes from society.

CHAPTER 13

At the home of a family friend, Mrs. Butterworth, Lucy thinks about her awkward bow earlier, and how she wasn't prepared to encounter George outside on such on occasion, where he greeted her "with the shout of the morning star." Cecil is bored with talking to Mrs. Butterworth, and behaves difficultly. Back at home, Mrs. Honeychurch comments on how rude Cecil can be to people around Windy Corner, where "nothing appears to please him."

Lucy can't stop thinking about George, but doesn't realize why she might be so interested in him. She associates him with the freedom and beauty of nature signified by the "shout of the morning star." As Mrs. Honeychurch notes, Cecil is continually rude and snobbish toward those he deems lower-class than he.

Lucy tries to defend Cecil's haughtiness, but can't find the right words. She feels that "two civilizations had clashed," Cecil's London society and the Honeychurches' country community. Lucy goes to change for dinner and stops to look out a window, where there is not much of a **view**. She runs into Freddy, who says that he wants to invite the Emersons to play tennis on the next Sunday.

The petty differences between London society and country society are magnified in Lucy's mind to a great clash of civilizations. More constricted than ever by societal and familial expectations, as well as by Cecil, Lucy is not able to find much of a view onto the open outside world.

Lucy and Mrs. Honeychurch talk about the letter Lucy received from Charlotte. Mrs. Honeychurch asks about Charlotte's boiler, which needed to be fixed. At dinner, Freddy asks Lucy about George, and Mrs. Honeychurch asks her how well she knew George in Florence. Lucy says that she didn't really know him, and that Charlotte knew him better. Mrs. Honeychurch then asks what Charlotte talked about in her letter. Lucy simply says, "one thing and another," trying hard not to lie.

Lucy's changed perspective toward Charlotte shows how much she has grown and changed since Florence. Now, she doesn't care for her cousin, and doesn't want to talk about her letter. Charlotte's broken boiler may symbolize her lack of passion. Lucy takes great care not to lie to her family, but is forced to omit the whole truth about her history with George and what Charlotte wrote her about.

Lucy says that Charlotte mentioned Miss Lavish, a novelist, knowing that this will cause Mrs. Honeychurch to go on about female writers. Indeed, her mother speaks at length about how, "if books must be written, let them be written by men." Meanwhile, Lucy feels as though she is surrounded by the ghosts of her past, especially "the original ghost—that touch of lips on her cheek." Mrs. Honeychurch suggests that they invite Charlotte to stay at Windy Corner, since her boiler is not working.

Mrs. Honeychurch holds traditional, sexist ideas about the proper place of a woman, showing that sexism in society can be upheld and enforced by women as well as men. Increasingly under pressure to lie and deceive her family, Lucy is overwhelmed by her past. She still does not acknowledge, or realize, though, why the memory of George's kiss has such a hold on her.

Lucy tries to think of an excuse not to invite Charlotte, saying there is no room for her. She admits that both she and Cecil don't like Charlotte, and calls her "tiresome." Mrs. Honeychurch chides them both for not taking pity on Charlotte, and says, "you are young, dears, and however clever young people are, and however many books they read, they will never guess what it feels like to grow old." Lucy and Cecil finally relent.

In Florence, Lucy was mostly obedient toward Charlotte and fond of her. Now, she is more independent (though still under Cecil's influence). Mrs. Honeychurch's comment shows that the novel's central tension between new and old ideas and values is also a tension between young and old people.

CHAPTER 14

To Lucy's distress, Charlotte accepts the invitation to Windy Corner, and George Emerson accepts Freddy's invitation for tennis, as well. The narrator says that Lucy faces "the situation bravely," but does not deal with her inner feelings. George makes her nervous, but she is convinced that this does not mean anything significant. The narrator says that it may seem obvious to the reader that Lucy loves George, but that it is easier to come to such a conclusion from an external perspective. As far as Lucy knows, she loves Cecil and is only made nervous by George.

Lucy still does not realize that she loves George, and her effort to convince herself that she loves Cecil instead can be seen as a form of lying to herself. Through Lucy's experience, Forster shows that love can be unconscious, or at least unintentional, but still exert a powerful force on someone, as Lucy's suppressed feelings make her nervous around George.

After the encounter near the **Sacred Lake**, Lucy had run into George again along with Mr. Beebe at the rectory. She feels that she managed the meeting well, and at the time noted to Mr. Beebe that George seemed "in better spirits," than when she saw him in Italy.

The very fact that a meeting with George is something Lucy feels she has to manage carefully shows that she is wary of what might happen between them, and is maybe aware on some level of her true feelings toward him.

When she finally arrives, Charlotte goes to the wrong station, and has to pay for a cab. She offers to pay for the cab, but Lucy and Freddy try to tell her not to, as she is a guest. She insists, but then finds that she needs change. A long, confusing exchange of coins ensues, and everyone disagrees over who should give whom what coins. Lucy is irritated—and even more so when Charlotte asks if Lucy has told Cecil about her past with George.

The scene with the exchange of coins as Charlotte tries to pay for the cab and make correct change is a comic example of the potential absurdity of manners. Charlotte is so concerned about doing the right, polite thing that the minor issue of paying for a cab turns into a complicated operation.

Lucy tells Charlotte that she has promised not to tell anyone about the kiss with George, and plans to keep her promise. Charlotte says that it would be even more dreadful if Cecil should find out about the incident from someone else. Lucy says that there is no one else who could tell George, and says that Cecil probably wouldn't mind anyway. Charlotte concedes, "perhaps gentlemen are different to what they were when I was young."

In Florence, Charlotte had to tell Lucy what to do about George. Now, the tables are turned and Lucy insists on her own plan of action, disregarding her former guardian. Charlotte comments on how the behavior of not only women, but gentlemen as well is changing with the times. Again it is worth noting that Charlotte appears to be trying to help Lucy act "properly" but is in fact trying to protect herself from the consequences of her own un-generous actions toward Lucy (as it will be revealed that Charlotte actually told Miss Lavish about the kiss after telling Lucy to keep it secret).

Fed up, Lucy says Charlotte was the one who told her to keep quiet about the kiss, and now is saying she should tell people. Charlotte apologizes for interfering with Lucy in Florence, and tells Lucy that she is "so well able" to look after herself. Charlotte calls George a cad (a bad man), and Lucy says that Cecil told her there are two kinds of cads—conscious and subconscious. She says that George "lost his head" amid the violets that day in Florence and didn't consciously decide to kiss her. She tells Charlotte that she doesn't want to talk about Italy anymore.

Not only is Lucy no longer under Charlotte's influence and control, but she is almost rude to her, and clear in her dislike of her. Lucy insists on her ability to look after herself now, but to what degree is she really in control of her life, as she is engaged to a patronizing, somewhat controlling man? Lucy defends George not as someone who tries to harm others but as someone who was moved by passion, though it's interesting that Lucy uses Cecil's definitions of a cad to make this distinction.

CHAPTER 15

The next Sunday, a very sunny day, Lucy, Mrs. Honeychurch, Charlotte, and Minnie Beebe are all preparing to go to church. George, Freddy, and Cecil are not going. Lucy sees a book that Cecil has been reading, called "Under a Loggia." She thinks of how Cecil knows so much more than her, as when recently he corrected her when she mixed up two Italian painters.

Lucy has broken free of Charlotte's influence, but is now under Cecil's, as she thinks of him almost as a teacher. He is overly concerned with getting the names of painters right, but lacks the aesthetic sensibility and ability to take in beauty that George and Lucy share.

As the ladies prepare to go to church, Minnie doesn't want to go, wondering why she can't stay with the men. Mrs. Honeychurch speaks up in favor of church, and insists that Minnie come. After church, Mrs. Honeychurch and Lucy stop by the Emersons' home. Mr. Emerson meets Mrs. Honeychurch and tells her that he likes his new home, but feels bad for ruining the Miss Alans' plan to move in there.

The issue of church reveals the cultural schism between young and old and between men and women, as the more traditional of the group go to church. Religious devotion is another aspect of culture that is changing with the move into the 20th century. Emerson again shows his concern for other people.

George doesn't feel any regret for taking the Miss Alans' place, and talks about how "there is a certain amount of kindness," in the world. Mrs. Honeychurch thinks she agrees but doesn't quite grasp what he's saying. She says that Freddy is eager to play tennis with George today, and so George joins the Honeychurches in their carriage to go back to Windy Corner.

George again has elaborate, vague, quasi-philosophical ideas about the world. The older Mrs. Honeychurch thinks she agrees, but doesn't quite understand his modern, youthful ponderings.

In the carriage, George greets Charlotte. Something in his eye suggests to Lucy that George has not told anyone about their kiss, and she is relieved. She thinks to herself, "He does not love me. No. How terrible if he did!" Back at Windy Corner, everyone has lunch.

Lucy convinces herself that she does not want George to love her, but this is merely a lie she is telling herself. Her excessive concern about and interest in George shows that she has other feelings toward him.

After lunch, Lucy plays the piano. Cecil requests a particular song, but she stops playing instead. Then, George walks over, and she starts playing it. Embarrassed that it seems like she would play piano for George but not for Cecil, Lucy stops, and the men decide to play tennis. Cecil declines to play, though, so Lucy fills in for him. While playing tennis, Lucy remembers when she fainted after the man's death in Florence, and how George talked to her on the riverboat. She looks around the outdoors and thinks how beautiful the landscape is.

Another issue of beauty and art—in this case music—separates Lucy and Cecil, but brings George and her together, as she will play music for George but not for her own fiancé. As Lucy's real feelings for George threaten to come to the surface, she is more inclined to notice the natural beauty of the landscape around her. Her love and her appreciation of beauty seem to be connected.

After tennis, Cecil reads aloud to George and Lucy from the novel he is reading, which he finds comically bad. The novel is set in Florence, and before long Lucy realizes that it is actually Miss Lavish's novel, written under a pseudonym. Cecil says that all modern books are bad, and doesn't want to read anymore of it aloud. Lucy thinks that Cecil is behaving annoyingly this afternoon.

That Cecil expresses disdain for all modern books suggests that he is a traditional, old-fashioned man. There is also a bit of irony in the comment, since he is a character in precisely a modern book. The more time Lucy spends around George, the more she realizes that she may not really love Cecil.

Lucy asks George what he thinks of the **view** from Windy Corner. George says that all **views** are alike, "because all that matters in them is distance and air." He says that his father says the only perfect **view** is "the view of the sky straight over heads." Lucy finds this fascinating and pays more attention to George than to Cecil, who becomes frustrated. Lucy tries to make it up to him by asking him to read more of the novel.

Lucy and George again bond over an aesthetic matter—the appreciation of views. George's notion of a perfect view suggests absolute freedom with the open expanse of the sky. Lucy is becoming more and more interested in George and less and less interested in Cecil.

Cecil flips to a passage from the novel, in which the heroine is sitting on a riverbank in spring covered in violets. A man comes up to her, embraces her, and kisses her. Realizing what this scene was modeled on, Lucy is shaken, and suggests that everyone go inside for tea. Cecil, George, and Lucy walk together through a shrubbery, but then Cecil realizes he has forgotten the book by the tennis court. He goes back to get it, leaving George and Lucy in the bushes. George kisses Lucy, before Cecil rejoins them.

The scene in the novel shocks Lucy because she thought that the kiss was a secret, but it may also shock her because it reminds her of her feelings for George. Unlike Cecil, George acts impulsively—almost involuntarily—on his passion and kisses Lucy, again outside. The outdoor setting may suggest a brief freedom from societal constraints.

CHAPTER 16

Lucy goes to her room, determined to stifle "love felt and returned, love which our bodies exact and our hearts have transfigured, love which is the most real thing that we shall ever meet." The narrator says that Lucy's aim is "to defeat herself." She calls for Charlotte, and then tells Charlotte about Miss Lavish's novel. She asks Charlotte if she told Miss Lavish about the kiss, and Charlotte confesses that she did.

Lucy has been dedicated to trying to be honest, but in stifling her love for George she is only lying to herself. Despite Lucy's efforts, she cannot completely get rid of love, which the narrator describes as a powerful force.

Upset, Lucy now realizes why Charlotte encouraged her to tell Cecil about the kiss earlier and warned of Cecil finding out from someone else. Charlotte wonders what is to be done, feeling that she is "a visitor, not a chaperon." Lucy asks if Charlotte can talk to George as she did in Florence, but Charlotte doesn't think she can help. Lucy resolves to speak to George herself.

Lucy realizes that Charlotte has not been entirely honest with her—and has been using her advice about how to act properly to hide her own improper actions! The customs of society, it is clear here, can be manipulated to hide lying or other unkind actions. In other words, propriety does not equal goodness. In great contrast to the beginning of the novel, it is now Lucy who must act on behalf of both herself and Charlotte, showing how much more independent and mature she has become.

Lucy and Charlotte go down to the dining room, where George is. Lucy tells George that she doesn't want a long, dramatic discussion, and simply tells George to leave Windy Corner immediately. George asks if she is really going to marry Cecil, and says that Cecil is fine with books, but doesn't know how to handle people. He describes how snobbish Cecil is.

Lucy continues to deny her love for George. George points out how snobbish Cecil is, in contrast to himself, as he has repeatedly shown how little he cares about social conventions and class.

George goes on to say that Cecil doesn't treat women well. For example, when they encountered George near the **Sacred Lake**, George tells Lucy that Cecil was "teaching you and your mother to be shocked, when it was for you to settle whether you were shocked or no." He says that Cecil "daren't let a woman decide," and tells Lucy what to think. George refuses to apologize for kissing Lucy, saying that he loves her.

George offers an impassioned critique of Cecil's sexism and patronizing attitude towards women. Unlike Lucy, George is honest about his feelings, and straightforwardly tells Lucy that he loves her.

Lucy retorts that George is criticizing Cecil for telling her what to think, when he is essentially doing the same thing now. George actually agrees and says, "this desire to govern a woman—it lies very deep, and men and women must fight it together." But, he says, he loves Lucy "in a better way" than Cecil does. George finally says that he has "been into the dark," and is "going back into it," unless Lucy will be with him. Lucy and Charlotte do not say anything, and George leaves. Charlotte compliments Lucy on her bravery in dealing with George, telling her she is "so unlike the girls of my day."

Lucy's reply gets to the problem with George telling her about Cecil's sexism: he is also a man telling a woman what to do and think. To George's credit, he admits this is true, proving himself to be forthright and honest again. Charlotte compliments Lucy on her bravery, exceptional for a woman of her own generation, but this is ironically at the moment in which Lucy is least honest and perhaps least worthy of such a compliment, as Lucy is still lying to herself about her feelings for George. (Incidentally, there is a suggestion in Charlotte's comment that perhaps Charlotte at some time in the past was too passionate in love and was damaged in some way, leaving her in her present spinster state and motivating her actions up to this point).

Freddy enters and tells Lucy there is time for another set of tennis. She says that George has had to leave, so Freddy asks Cecil to play. Cecil again declines, saying that he is not an athlete and is "no good for anything but books." Suddenly, Lucy realizes her true feelings and wonders how she has ever put up with Cecil. She concludes that he is "absolutely intolerable," and later that very evening she breaks off her engagement to him.

At long last, Lucy realizes that she does not love Cecil. George's speech has sunken in. But, she still does not acknowledge or deal with her possible feelings for George. Lucy is becoming more honest with herself, but is not entirely truthful to her inner feelings yet.

CHAPTER 17

When Lucy ends the engagement, Cecil is stunned. Lucy says they are simply too different, and Cecil says she is probably just tired. Lucy snaps back that he is always thinking "women don't mean what they say." She says that the last straw was when he selfishly refused to play tennis, but that she has often wondered "if I was fitted for your wife."

Cecil arrogantly assumes that Lucy doesn't know best, and is only tired, continuing his pattern of patronizing sexism. Lucy admits that her breaking off the engagement is not so much a sudden change of heart as an honest acknowledgment of what she has long felt.

Cecil is shocked and confused. For the first time in their relationship, he sees Lucy as "a living woman, with mysteries and forces of her own," rather than as a beautiful work of art. He protests that he loves Lucy and that she loved him. Lucy says that she did not love him, but only thought she did. Cecil asks why she does not love him.

Cecil had previously seen Lucy as beautiful but as a kind of object, not a fully fledged person with desires, feelings, and opinions. Love is a confusing matter in the novel: both Cecil and Lucy were confused over the degree to which she really loved him.

Lucy answers that she doesn't want to be protected and wants to "choose for myself what is ladylike and right." She angrily says that she doesn't care about "a woman's place," and that Cecil tries to "wrap up" her like an art object. She says resolutely, "I won't be stifled." Cecil admits that Lucy is right, and simply says that she should've warned him about her feelings earlier. He says, "this evening you are a different person: new thoughts—even a new voice." Lucy angrily asks what he means, and he says "a new person seems speaking through you."

Lucy stands up for herself in telling Cecil that she wants to be able to make up her own mind, but ironically in saying this she is essentially repeating what a man (George) has told her. Cecil's comment about her speaking with a "new voice" picks up on this irony, which may also apply to the fact that Forster is a male writer speaking through a female character. Nonetheless, this does not negate the content of Lucy's earnest speech to Cecil.

Lucy thinks that Cecil is suggesting that she is leaving him for someone else, which upsets her. She says she is not in love with anyone else, and angrily says that Cecil thinks a woman can't break off an engagement "for the sake of freedom." Cecil politely says that Lucy is right, and tells her, "You have taught me better."

Lucy is not necessarily lying to Cecil, since she does not think she is in love with George, but she is lying to herself *about this. Lucy has now broken free of Cecil's influence: before, he taught her, whereas now he remarkably says that Lucy has educated him.*

Cecil says that the engagement couldn't have worked, because he is "bound up in the old vicious notions," while Lucy is "splendid and new." Cecil and Lucy say goodnight politely. Lucy resolves never to marry anyone, thinking that she must be the sort of woman she mentioned to Cecil, who breaks off an engagement only for freedom and independence. The narrator comments that Lucy has joined the ranks of those who have "sinned against passion and truth," in pretending to George that she did not love him and pretending to Cecil that she did not love anyone else. The narrator compares Lucy to Charlotte thirty years ago.

Cecil does seem genuinely affected by what Lucy is saying, but describes himself as stuck: he now sees his understanding of the world as old and "vicious," but the possibility of himself becoming "splendid and new" seems entirely beyond his comprehension. Although Lucy has finally been honest about her lack of love for Cecil, she is still denying her true feelings for George. The narrator compares Lucy now to the older Charlotte, whose opportunities for love seem to have passed her by (and again suggesting that Charlotte may have done something similar to what Lucy seems about to do now—to throw away love).

CHAPTER 18

The next day, Mr. Beebe comes to Windy Corner "with a piece of gossip," unaware of what has happened with Lucy and Cecil. Mr. Beebe's gossip is that the Alans are planning a trip to Greece, and he thinks that Lucy will find this news amusing. He is curious as to whether Lucy will see "anything beautiful in the desire of two old ladies to visit Athens," thinking that since Lucy plays the piano, she must have some appreciation of beauty.

Mr. Beebe thinks that Lucy shares some of his sensibilities because she has an appreciation for beauty in music. Again, opinions on beauty and taste have the potential to bring like-minded people together.

When Mr. Beebe arrives at Windy Corner, he runs into Cecil, who is just leaving. He notices that Cecil seems kinder than usual. They discuss the Alans, and then Cecil leaves. Freddy tells Mr. Beebe about the broken-off engagement, and Mr. Beebe is relieved, saying "what a glorious riddance!" He is glad that Lucy is now "cut off forever from Cecil's pretentious world."

Mr. Beebe had noticed Cecil's rude and snobbish behavior, and so is relieved to hear that Lucy will not be marrying him. However, while he is glad that Lucy is no longer under Cecil's influence, it is unclear whether he wants her to be truly independent, or just under a better influence.

Mr. Beebe goes into the house and sees Lucy playing Mozart on the piano. He decides to let her be, and goes to find Mrs. Honeychurch at work in her garden with Minnie, Charlotte and a servant. He goes inside and invites Lucy to join all of them at tea. Mr. Beebe tells Lucy that he has heard what has happened, and says that he is sure she did the right thing. He tells her about the Alans, and Lucy wishes she could go along with them on the trip. Rather abruptly, she decides, "I simply must go away. I have to." Mr. Beebe is sympathetic to Lucy's desire to escape Windy Corner.

Playing the piano and entering into the world of music offers Lucy some privacy and a brief escape from her social world, which is full of trouble now. Lucy's immediate desire to go to Greece is a desire to escape her local society, through which rumors of her split with Cecil will surely soon spread, but is also an attempt to run away from George and from her feelings for him. It's like running into a picture to escape from the real world.

Mr. Beebe talks with Charlotte, who is worried about gossip spreading regarding Lucy and Cecil. She says that Freddy shouldn't even have told him about the matter, and begs Mr. Beebe to keep "absolute secrecy." He agrees, and then comments on how funny it is that so many guests from the Pension Bertolini keep encountering each other. Over tea, Mr. Beebe tells Charlotte about Lucy's desire to go to Greece with the Alans. Charlotte thinks that such a trip would be an excellent idea. She says that it is "absolutely necessary," for her to go, and the two of them agree to help Lucy go to Greece.

Charlotte attempts to keep the news of Cecil and Lucy's broken engagement a secret. While this does not necessarily involve lying, it is an example of how telling the absolute truth may not always be the best course of action, despite Lucy's earlier insistence on being absolutely honest and truthful.

Mr. Beebe doesn't "quite understand the situation," but nonetheless feels compelled to help Lucy, and feels "spurred . . . into knight-errantry," to help "place her out of danger." He and Charlotte go back to Windy Corner and convince Mrs. Honeychurch to let Lucy go to Greece with the Alans. Mr. Beebe then sees Lucy playing the piano and singing a song that Cecil taught her.

Mr. Beebe is helpful to Lucy, but he does so out of a false sense of masculine bravado, of "knight-errantry," as if Lucy is a damsel in distress. Lucy continues to try to use music as a kind of escape—or at least distraction—from her current problems.

Mrs. Honeychurch goes to Lucy and tells her that she will allow her to go to Greece. Lucy is glad, and continues to sing. Looking around at Lucy's friends and family, Mr. Beebe is puzzled as to why she should want to leave home for Greece. Lucy keeps singing; the song lyrics tout the benefits of safely avoiding love and passion.

Mr. Beebe does not understand Lucy's decision, because he doesn't realize that she is suppressing her love for George and is desperate not to be near him. Lucy's song sadly touts the benefits of avoiding passion: she is committed to ignoring and stifling her love.

CHAPTER 19

Mrs. Honeychurch and Lucy go to visit the Alans in London, in preparation for the Greece trip. The Alans think that Cecil and Lucy are still together, and Lucy doesn't correct them. Afterwards, Mrs. Honeychurch says that Lucy should tell her friends about what has happened, but Lucy says that both the Alans are "such gossips," and that she doesn't want the news spreading. Mrs. Honeychurch doesn't understand why Lucy wants to keep the news a secret (in reality, Lucy doesn't want George to find out), but Lucy insists.

Lucy does not explicitly lie to the Alans, but fails to tell them the whole truth. She does, however, lie to her mother about why she doesn't want news of her broken engagement spreading. The fact that she doesn't want George to know that she is no longer engaged to another man may suggest that, on some level, she realizes she does have romantic feelings for him.

Mrs. Honeychurch is sad that Lucy is leaving Freddy and her for the Alans, and comments that Lucy must be tired of Windy Corner. Not wanting to reveal the truth about George, Lucy does not provide any reason for her trip, and she tells her mother that she may move away from home within a year. This brings tears to Mrs. Honeychurch's eyes. Lucy tries to explain by saying that she wants "more independence," and to see more of the world. She apologizes and says, "perhaps I spoke hastily." Mrs. Honeychurch says that Lucy now reminds her of Charlotte, always taking back her own words.

Lucy continues to keep the truth from her mother. Lucy claims that she wants independence from her home and from her family, but—while this may be true—the real reason she wants to get away from home is to put distance between George and her. Again, the very fact that she thinks spending time near George is dangerous or risky suggests that she does sense there is a romantic connection between them without fully realizing it.

Lucy and her mother talk little on the way back home, and they head to pick up Charlotte from the church. On the way, they pass the Emersons' home and see that it is locked up and has no lights on. They learn from a servant that the Emersons have moved out. As Lucy and Mrs. Honeychurch go to the church to get Charlotte, Lucy thinks of what a wasted effort the whole Greece trip is, now that George is no longer around Windy Corner.

The real reason for Lucy's eagerness to go to Greece is revealed as her desire to run away from George. Try as she might to deny her love for him, it still exerts a strong unconscious power over her, driving her to leave her home for a foreign country.

At the church, Charlotte wants to stay for a service, so Lucy waits in Mr. Beebe's study while Charlotte and Mrs. Honeychurch go into the church. There, Lucy is surprised to find Mr. Emerson, who immediately apologizes on behalf of George. (George has apparently told his father about what happened with Lucy.) Mr. Emerson is apologetic and says that he always taught George to follow his heart and "to trust in love." He is still under the impression that Lucy is going to marry Cecil, and Lucy does not correct him.

As with the Alans, Lucy does not tell an outright lie, but does not divulge the entire truth about Cecil and her. Mr. Emerson presents George's behavior as the result of his upbringing, as he has taught George to believe in love. This is in stark contrast to Lucy, who is expending all of her effort in resisting her true feelings, who has been taught that propriety and following traditional custom is most important.

Mr. Emerson says that George has "gone under," and is in a sort of depression, just as his mother was when George was a baby. The Emersons had not baptized George, and then George got typhoid. Mr. Eager convinced Mrs. Emerson that the typhoid was the result of George's not being baptized, and she felt so guilty that she became severely depressed, and eventually sick, so much so that she died. Lucy realizes that this was what Mr. Eager had meant by saying that Mr. Emerson had murdered his wife.

Mr. Emerson's story reveals Mr. Eager's rumor as essentially a deceptive and slanderous falsehood. Lucy already disliked Mr. Eager, but this is further evidence that social class does not guarantee virtue. Religion here is presented as vicious and narrow-minded, prioritizing following strict rules rather than focusing on promoting kindness and good works.

Lucy feels bad and tells Mr. Emerson that he doesn't have to leave his home, since she is going to Greece. But Mr. Emerson says that he must go to London to take care of George. He again mentions Cecil, and speaks as if Cecil and Lucy are still engaged. Lucy evades the topic, and acts as if the engagement is still on. Just then, Mr. Beebe comes in, and before leaving makes a comment that makes it clear that Cecil is not going to Greece. Mr. Beebe exits, and Lucy finally admits to Mr. Emerson that she is no longer engaged to Cecil.

Lucy is finally completely honest and forthright to Mr. Emerson, but only because she is forced to be by Mr. Beebe. While no longer deceiving Mr. Emerson, she is still deceiving herself in thinking that she can run away from her love for George.

Lucy tries to explain to Mr. Emerson that she left Cecil for her own reasons, but he tells her that she is "in a muddle," and says, "You love George!" He says that this is clearly why she broke off her engagement, and says that she must marry George, or else her "life will be wasted." He says that even if Lucy should go to Greece, she won't be able to forget about George, since "love is eternal." Lucy is overwhelmed and starts to cry. Mr. Beebe re-enters the room and Mr. Emerson tells him that Lucy has deceived him and pretended not to love George, but really does.

Mr. Emerson doesn't care about politeness, and speaks his mind to Lucy. He confronts Lucy with what he knows is the truth about how she feels. Mr. Emerson is a firm believer in the power and importance of love, which for him transcends any issues of social class or pride. Mr. Beebe accuses Lucy of lying in pretending not to love George, but she was lying to herself, as well, and may have convinced herself that she didn't love him.

Lucy still thinks that she cannot marry George, and she stammers, "I have misled you—I have misled myself." Mr. Beebe tells Lucy to marry George, saying, "he will do admirably." Lucy looks to Mr. Emerson and thinks that his face is "the face of a saint who understood." Mr. Emerson tells her to remember "the mountains over Florence and the **view**." He encourages her to fight not only for love, but for truth. She feels as if Mr. Emerson has strengthened her and "shown her the holiness of direct desire."

Lucy finally admits her feelings for George. But, she does not think that she can follow her heart and marry George because of their different social backgrounds. Mr. Emerson helps persuade her by invoking both love and truth, but also by reminding her of the beautiful view she once shared with George, perhaps symbolic of their potential freedom together.

CHAPTER 20

The story now jumps forward in time. The Alans ended up going to Greece by themselves, touring Athens and Delphi before going to Constantinople. The novel turns to Florence, and the Pension Bertolini, where George and Lucy are in the very room that Lucy stayed in so long ago. They are happy together, and look out the window onto a pleasant **view**. George thinks of all "the forces that had swept him into this contentment," thinking of "the people who had not meant to help," but nevertheless did, like Miss Lavish, Charlotte, and even Cecil.

George and Lucy have found their happy ending together, and it is fitting that they have found it in Italy (away from the constraints of British society) and in a room with a view onto the expansive, open outside world. After so many hurdles and so much denial, the power of love has at last won out. It is interesting that this scene takes place in a room with a view and not out in nature, though, which suggests that Lucy and George's love—now made official through marriage—is one of both passion and society, and perhaps which also captures the way that Lucy is now both independent and dependent on George as her husband and love.

The narrator notes that while George is absolutely happy, Lucy's happiness is not complete, as her family has not forgiven her for eloping with George. George reads an upset letter from Freddy, and wishes that Freddy and Mr. Beebe would forgive Lucy and him. He also comments that he wishes "Cecil had not turned so cynical about women." He asks, "why will men have theories about women?" Lucy and George look out the window together, and the narrator comments, "Ah! it was worth while."

While true love has triumphed, Lucy is not absolutely happy. She has achieved joy to a large degree, but at a significant cost (though one the narrator thinks is worth it): the society for which she is now too "radical" has not accepted her choices. Meanwhile, losing Lucy has intensified Cecil's tendencies to hold forth theories about women, as if they are mysterious creatures to be studied.

Lucy says that the room reminds her of Charlotte, and she shudders at the thought of "how horrible" it would be to grow old alone like her. She comments on how lucky she was to wait in Mr. Beebe's office when Charlotte wanted to attend the church service.

Now that she has found love, Lucy shudders to think of living without it, even though not too long ago she was determined to run away from it and live on her own, by fleeing George.

George, though, thinks that Charlotte planned the event intentionally, so that Lucy would run into Mr. Emerson. He wonders if Charlotte had actually always hoped that Lucy and him would end up together, from the very beginning. Lucy doesn't think this is possible, but then admits, "it is just possible." The two rejoice in their "passion requited, love attained," but are both somehow "conscious of a love more mysterious than this," as they listen to the river flowing along out beyond their window.

There have been many hints in the novel that Charlotte may have thrown away love in her youth, in contrast to Lucy. Here George suggests that Charlotte had—either consciously or subconsciously—actually wanted Lucy and George to end up together, that Charlotte was in fact moved by the possibility of love just as George and Lucy were. The novel ends with the happy conclusion of Lucy and George's love story, but also expands out to consider the "love more mysterious" that binds all *people together.*

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