Silas Marner

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE ELIOT

Mary Anne Evans grew up on Arbury Estate in Warwickshire, England, where she grew up on one of the estate's farms. Her father was the estate's land agent, received a good education during her youth. After she finished school at age sixteen, she continued learning by reading: she had access to the library at Arbury Hall, and her knowledge of Classical literature deeply affected her later writing. Her writing was also impacted by the diverse lives and lifestyles she observed on the Arbury Estate, from those of the wealthy landowners to those of the poorer workers farming the land. When Mary Anne moved to Coventry at age twenty-one, she befriended Charles Bray at whose home she was exposed to a circle of intellectuals and freethinkers. She decided to move to London and begin a career as a writer. In London, she started working as an editorial assistant for *The Westminster Review*. She began publishing essays, writing under the pen name George Eliot in order to escape the stereotype of her day that women wrote romances. Her personal life received attention and gossip due to her relationship with a married man named George Henry Lewes with whom she lived for more than twenty years. She published her major works during Lewes's lifetime, including *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1857), *Adam Bede* (1859), *Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), *Middlemarch* (1872), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876). Lewes's death in 1878 left her devastated, and while she married John Cross in May of 1880, she died later that year after a brief illness.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As mentioned above, the Victorian Era, with its emphasis on Christianity, morality, and social values provides a backdrop to Eliot's novel. The setting of the novel is critical. Silas Marner, as a weaver, lives during the early years of the 19th century when individual weavers made profits in England. By the 1830s and 1840s, the Industrial Revolution and the economic changes it caused were prevalent throughout England. The Industrial Revolution is the time period in which the production of basic goods transitioned from hand production methods to production by new machines. The advancing technology allowed goods, such as woven cotton products, to be produced more quickly and on a larger scale. This transition resulted in the development of mills and manufacturing towns throughout England. At the end of *Silas Marner*, the Industrial Revolution has transformed the village of Lantern Yard into a fast-paced manufacturing hub. Silas Marner and Eppie are able to retreat from the business of Lantern Yard to the quiet, unchanged world of Raveloe. But the change in Lantern Yard points to coming change all over England, as well as a complete change in weaving and Silas Marner's own profession.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

While individual books are not known to have directly inspired or impact George Eliot's creation of *Silas Marner*, her academic studies did influence her understanding of literature and writing. In particular, scholars have noted, Greek tragedies directed her literary choices. The novel *Silas Marner* also clearly responds to George Eliot's awareness of the religious ideology of her time period. Silas Marner's early devoted faith and subsequent questioning of this faith, allowed Eliot to explore the role faith played in Victorian Society. In the Victorian Era, many people believed Christian values and morality secured one's own happiness, a concept Eliot explores throughout the novel.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe*
- **When Written:** 1860-1861
- **Where Written:** London
- **When Published:** 1861
- **Literary Period:** Victorian Period / Realism
- **Genre:** Novel / Realistic fiction
- **Setting:** The villages of Lantern Yard and Raveloe in England, early 1800s
- **Climax:** Eppie decides to stay with her adoptive father, Silas Marner, despite her biological father, Godfrey Cass, finally revealing his past secret marriage
- **Antagonist:** William Dane / Dunstan Cass
- **Point of View:** Third-person omniscient

EXTRA CREDIT

Biblical Namesake. Eppie's full name is Hephzibah after Silas Marner's mother and sister. Marner notes that the name is from the Bible. In the Bible, Hephzibah refers both to the wife of a man named Hezekiah and, in one passage, to God's chosen people. The name means "my delight is in her."

Adaptations. *Silas Marner* has been adapted for radio, stage, and screen, including several movie versions, a *Wishbone* episode, and a 1961 opera version of the novel.

PLOT SUMMARY

In the early 1800s, when spinning wheels were still popular in every household, solitary men traveled from village to village in the rural English countryside seeking work as weavers. Rural villagers, fearful of any change in their lives, often made negative assumptions about anything unusual, or even infrequent, such as the visit of a farrier or a weaver. Any special skill or intelligence was particularly frowned upon as evidence of one's communion with evil forces, for how else was any unique ability to be gained?

One such rural weaver facing the suspicion and distrust of his neighbors is Silas Marner, a lonely figure who lives on the outskirts of **Raveloe**, in a cottage near the **Stone Pits**. The Raveloe villagers perceive Marner as strange, because of both his lonely occupation and his strange condition in which he periodically falls into a trance-like state, or fit. Marner's isolation is due to his unfortunate youth in the distant town of **Lantern Yard**. In Lantern Yard, Marner was believed to be a young man of great promise among the local congregation who had once witnessed one of his fits during a service and believed it to be the mark of God's intervention. However, Marner's happiness is interrupted when his friend William Dane frames him as a thief. The congregation decides to draw lots to determine Marner's fate. Marner is convinced that God will demonstrate his innocence only to find that the lots declare his guilt. Having lost his faith, Marner flees Lantern Yard.

For fifteen years, Marner lives in Raveloe, withdrawn from the community, but making a fair sum of money from his constant weaving work. He is fascinated by the **gold** he earns and begins to hoard it. He works for the gold itself and treasures a store of it under his floorboards. Every night, he takes out his gold to admire it, and the gold takes the place in his heart of any human affection.

Meanwhile, in Raveloe, the older son of Squire Cass, the community's most prominent man, is dealing with a dark secret. The older son, Godfrey, has married a woman named Molly Farren of lowly birth and they have a young daughter. Their marriage is a secret from everyone, including the Squire, and only the younger son, Dunstan, knows the truth. Godfrey regrets his foolish marriage and has long loved a respectable young woman named Nancy Lammeter. Dunstan uses his knowledge to bribe Godfrey into doing whatever he wants, including giving Dunstan a sum of money Godfrey collected from one of the Squire's tenants. In order to repay this money, and to keep his secret, Godfrey allows Dunstan to take his horse, Wildfire, and sell him at the hunt. After securing a price for the horse, Dunstan rides the hunting course only to have the horse fall and die. Embarrassed by his predicament, but unconcerned for his brother's fate, Dunstan decides to walk home through the misty evening. On this walk, he passes by the Stone Pits and Silas Marner's cottage. Remembering talk of the weaver's wealth, Dunstan decides to speak with him and considers forcing him into making a loan. However, he finds the door of the cottage unlocked and the place deserted. He quickly deduces where the gold is hidden, and, taking both bags, stumbles off into the darkness.

Silas Marner returns home to find his gold gone and is thrown into panic and despair. He goes to the Rainbow, the local pub, for assistance. The men gathered there help Marner, but half of them believe that the robbery must have been committed by a supernatural force, and the other half are unable to discover anything about the thief. The villagers begin to reach out to Marner in his misfortune, and one woman in particular, Dolly Winthrop, is very generous. Godfrey Cass learns of Dunstan's disappearance and Wildfire's death and decides that he must at once confess the full story to his father. However, despite his deliberations and anxiety, he backs out of this course of action and tells his father only the problem of the loaned money. Dunstan Cass does not return home. No one connects his disappearance with Marner's robbed gold.

On New Years Eve, a large party is hosted at Squire Cass's home, the Red House. Nancy Lammeter and her sister, Priscilla, wear matching outfits, and while Nancy's beauty outshines her sister's, Priscilla is admired for her cooking, good sense, and generally pleasant acceptance of her own appearance and her lot in life. Nancy has determined to never marry Godfrey as he has behaved unusually to her, by ignoring her or by paying her close attention in a whimsical matter. Godfrey and Nancy dance together and Godfrey decides to get as much joy from the brief evening as possible. Unknown to Godfrey, his wife, Molly, is walking through the snowy evening to the Red House, carrying their child and bitterly intending to expose her connection to Godfrey. Molly is addicted to opium and she cannot resist taking a dose as she travels. From the cold, weariness, and the drug, Molly collapses near Silas Marner's cottage.

Molly's daughter totters away from her mother and follows the light to the open door of Silas Marner's cabin. The weaver is frozen in one of his fits at the open door, and the child moves past him and falls asleep on the warm **hearth**. Marner returns to his senses only to see what he thinks is his gold returned to him. The gold is revealed to be the hair of the sleeping child and Marner is baffled as to how she appeared there, until he finds her dead mother in the snow. Marner rushes to Squire Cass's party seeking Dr. Kimble, and Godfrey, in great agitation, returns with the doctor and Mrs. Winthrop to see the woman, realizing that her life or death will greatly impact his future. Molly is dead, and Marner fixes upon keeping the child himself. Godfrey returns to the party realizing that the way has been cleared for him to find happiness with Nancy.

Silas Marner's care for the child, who he names Eppie, reconnects him with the people and community around him. He learns much about childcare from Dolly Winthrop. He begins

attending church and has Eppie baptized. He takes her on journeys and deliveries and receives kind smiles and attention from everyone. Through seeking what is best for his daughter, Marner regains trust and faith in other humans and connections throughout Raveloe.

Sixteen years pass and Eppie grows into a lovely young woman. Aaron Winthrop proposes to her and the two plan to marry and to live with Silas Marner, so that Eppie need not leave her father. Godfrey and Nancy are married, though they are faced with the difficulty of having no children of their own. Godfrey has proposed adopting a child, namely Eppie, but Nancy firmly believes that to adopt a child is to disobey the fate given to one by Providence.

One Sunday afternoon, a draining project in the fields causes the Stone Pits to empty of water, and, at the bottom, Dunstan Cass's body is discovered, accompanied by Marner's stolen gold. Godfrey's horror at his brother's crime causes him to finally confess all to Nancy. Nancy's reaction is one of regret that she didn't know earlier the true reason behind his interest in adopting Eppie. The pair resolves to adopt Eppie at that point and to give her more comfort and security, as well as the life of a lady. Godfrey and Nancy visit Marner and Eppie at the cottage and make their offer of adoption. Eppie refuses, saying she could never leave her father, and Godfrey, frustrated, reveals the truth of her parentage. Eppie is unimpressed by Godfrey's insistence and his treatment of Silas Marner, as well as what she supposes about his connection with her biological mother. Again, she turns away the offer of adoption, reaffirming her commitment to the father who has raised her. Godfrey feels that it must be part of his punishment for past wrongs for his daughter to dislike him.

Eppie and Aaron are married and the villagers celebrate, happy to see someone like Silas Marner be so blessed after the good deed he did for a young orphaned girl. Godfrey Cass has helped expand the cottage for Marner's growing family, and Eppie has a beautiful garden as she desired. Eppie exclaims that she and her father must be the happiest people in the world.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Silas Marner – A weaver by occupation, Silas Marner's move from **Lantern Yard** to **Raveloe** creates the back-story for the novel. In Lantern Yard, Marner was a devoted participant in the local church. He is near sighted and prone to strange fits in which he becomes still for a portion of time, after which he can never remember what has occurred. He was seen as a young man of great promise, but after being framed for a crime of thievery actually committed by his friend William Dane, Marner moves to Raveloe. Marner's betrayal causes him to become withdrawn and socially awkward, focused solely on the gold he earns. He does not seek out others' company, but commits himself fully to his weaving work. The villagers perceive him as strange due to his isolation, his fits, and his pale and quiet appearance. Marner is transformed from a miserly recluse into a loving and thoughtful father after he adopts Eppie, a young girl who appears on his hearth one night. He finds friends in Dolly Winthrop and her son Aaron, and regains interest in life and community through his love for Eppie.

Godfrey Cass – The eldest son of Squire Cass, the most prominent man in **Raveloe**. Despite Godfrey's good family, he makes poor choices and marries a lowly woman named Molly Farren. Together they have a daughter, Eppie. While Godfrey keeps his wife and child a secret from his father and the village, Godfrey's younger brother Dunstan uses his knowledge of the secret marriage to manipulate Godfrey. Molly also threatens to reveal the marriage in order to convince Godfrey to support her, and her opium addiction. Godfrey battles within himself about whether or not to reveal his secret. Naturally a good man, he is irresolute and indecisive. His fearful circumstances cause him to maintain silence and to keep appeasing Dunstan and Molly. After Molly's death, Godfrey is free to marry his true love, the respectable Nancy Lammeter. He tries to provide for his daughter, Eppie, by supporting Silas Marner who has adopted her. Years later, after Dunstan's drowned body is found alongside the gold Dunstan stole from Silas, Godfrey confesses all to Nancy and the two attempt to adopt Eppie. Nancy and Godfrey are unable to have children of their own, but Eppie prefers to stay with Silas Marner. Godfrey views this unhappy outcome as part of his punishment for past wrongs.

Eppie – The young daughter of Godfrey Cass and Molly Farren, Eppie wanders into Silas Marner's cottage during a snowstorm in which her mother perishes. Eppie is a beautiful, golden-haired child and her hair color is linked to the **gold**, which had been recently stolen from Silas Marner. She is mischievous as a young girl, primarily because Marner refuses to discipline her in any way. Eppie grows into a sweet tempered, lovely young woman who is devoted to her father. The love between Silas Marner and Eppie reestablishes Marner's interest in the village of **Raveloe**, in faith, and in community. Upon discovering that Godfrey is her true father, Eppie is unimpressed by his willful desire to take her away from the company and father she has always known. She stands up to Godfrey and refuses his offer. Eppie and the son of the Winthrops, Aaron, fall in love and are married at the end of the novel.

Nancy Lammeter – An elegant young woman who lives in **Raveloe**, Nancy inspires Godfrey's love and affection despite his unfortunate secret marriage. Nancy is a strong-minded woman who is committed to her ideals. For example, she refuses to adopt a child, although she cannot have children, because she believes such an act willfully disregards the fate given by God. She is precise, tidy, and hardworking. Her elegant appearance does not extend to her hands, which show the

marks of her labor. Once married to Godfrey, she becomes a good mistress of the Red House, although she reflects frequently on her and Godfrey's lack of children and Godfrey's unhappiness.

Dunstan Cass – Squire Cass's lewd younger son, Dunstan prioritizes drinking and gambling. He is unconcerned for others' interests. He manipulates his brother, Godfrey, into giving him money to pursue his various pastimes. He sells Wildfire, Godfrey's horse, only to later kill the horse while riding it through a difficult jumping course. He is unconcerned with the horse's death, and Godfrey's fate, and walks home, only to pass by Silas Marner's cottage. He is struck by a memory of talk of the weaver's wealth and decides to rob him. Years later, Dunstan's body, along with the stolen gold, is found at the bottom of the **stone pit** by Silas Marner's cottage.

Dolly Winthrop – A village woman who befriends Silas Marner, Dolly is a persistent friend to Marner, and the person to whom he turns for help and advice after he adopts Eppie. Dolly is overflowing with kindness and local wisdom. She frequently admits to how little she knows, and how little any human can known, of divine plans for all people. Dolly is selfless with her time and energy in helping others. She is also a formidable mother to little Aaron and attempts to teach Marner how best to discipline Eppie.

Squire Cass – The head of the most prominent family in **Raveloe**, Squire Cass gives himself airs in claiming the title of "Squire" in the small village. His home and management of the estate is extravagant at times, lacking the presence and guidance of his wife who passed away. He enjoys throwing dances and parties for the neighbors. He is slovenly, yet authoritative. He lords over his sons and is a brusque man who does not like to be disagreed with. Godfrey believes his father would disown him for his choice to marry Molly Farren. Unaware of the real situation, Squire Cass tries to force Godfrey into becoming engaged to Nancy Lammeter.

Molly Farren – Godfrey's first, secret wife and the mother of Eppie, Molly is from a lower class family background than Godfrey. Molly is addicted to opium, and while she tries to blame her problems on her husband's neglect, she recognizes her responsibility for the control opium has over her life. She dies of an overdose during a snowstorm while traveling through the snowstorm to the Red House, where a New Years party is occurring, in order to spitefully reveal herself as Godfrey's wife in front of his family and many villagers.

William Dane – A friend of Silas Marner's in **Lantern Yard**, William Dane is more confident and self-assured than Marner. The two appear to be inseparable friends, but William Dane is harsher on those who are less devoted than himself. Dane also expresses assurance of his salvation, whereas Marner only feels fearful and hopeful when the friends discuss the afterlife. William Dane frames Marner for the theft of the church's gold. His reasons for this betrayal are unclear other than the fact that very soon after Marner's disgrace, William Dane becomes engaged to Sarah, who had once been engaged to Marner.

Sarah – Silas Marner's fiancé in **Lantern Yard**, Sarah begins to turn away from Marner after he has one of his fits during a church service. Marner asks if she wants to break off their engagement, but they are officially engaged in the eyes of the church, and Sarah refuses. After Marner is framed as a thief, Sarah will not see him and later marries Marner's once-friend and betrayer, William Dane.

The Osgoods – A prominent family in the town of **Raveloe**, the Osgoods are often compared to Squire Cass's family. Like the Squire, the Osgoods host parties during the winter months. Mrs. Osgood is the aunt of Nancy and Priscilla Lammeter, and Mrs. Osgood and Nancy are of similar temperaments. Mrs. Osgood hosts two young ladies, the Miss Gunns, at Squire Cass's New Years party.

Priscilla Lammeter – Nancy Lammeter's less attractive sister, Priscilla is likeable for her good sense and strong character. She seems happily resigned to a life of caring for Mr. Lammeter, their father, and she encourages Nancy's marriage and happiness. Nancy wishes that Priscilla's clothes and her own always match because they are sisters, and Priscilla unselfishly has them dress in the colors that will favor Nancy, rather than herself.

Aaron – Dolly Winthrop's earnest son, Aaron meets Silas Marner when he is very young. Dolly hopes to help Marner by visiting him after the loss of his **gold**, and she brings her son to help raise the weaver's spirits. The little boy sings and accepts cake offered by the weaver, who is unsure how else to interact with the child. Once he has grown into a young adult, Aaron falls in love with Eppie and the two plan to marry and to live with Marner, so that Eppie doesn't have to leave him.

Sally Oates – A woman in **Raveloe** whom Silas Marner helps when he sees that she is suffering from heart disease and dropsy. His mother had suffered from the same diseases, and he offers Sally Oates relief with a foxglove mixture. This act of kindness occurs during Marner's troubled early years in Raveloe, but it does not reconnect him to the people around him. The villagers pester him for more natural remedies, but he turns them away from his cottage door because he does not always have a remedy and does not want to be pestered.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Jem Rodney – Silas Marner accuses a young man in **Raveloe**, Jem Rodney, of stealing his gold as he once asked Marner about the money. Jem also once happened upon Marner in one of his fits and spread the story to whole village.

Mr. Macey – A **Raveloe** villager who serves both as a tailor and as the senior parish clerk. An elderly man, Mr. Macey entertains the other villagers and occupants of the Rainbow with stories

from earlier days.

Mr. Tookey – Mr. Macey's young deputy clerk. Mr. Tookey and Mr. Macey squabble from time to time, when both the youthful man and the elderly man are convinced that he is in the right.

Ben Winthrop – A friendly and fun-spirited villager. He is the husband of Mrs. Dolly Winthrop and the father of Aaron.

Mr. Lammeter – An established man in **Raveloe** society, and the father of Priscilla and Nancy. Priscilla cares for Mr. Lammeter as he ages.

Mr. Snell – The levelheaded landlord of the Rainbow, **Raveloe**'s local pub. Mr. Snell often settles disputes among his guests at the Rainbow.

Mr. Dowlas – A fiery man who works as the village farrier, making horseshoes and shoeing horses.

Master Lundy – Another passionate individual, Master Lundy is the local butcher. He frequently argues with Mr. Dowlas, the farrier.

Mr. Crackenthrop – The rector of the **Raveloe** church. He presides over the investigation of Silas Marner's robbery.

Dr. Kimble – The village doctor. He is a lively and social man, and Squire Cass's in-law.

Mrs. Kimble – The wife of the village doctor, and the aunt of Godfrey and Dunstan Cass.

The Miss Gunns –Two young ladies who attend Squire Cass's party, as Mrs. Osgood's guests.

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.

FAITH

Silas Marner describes nearly thirty years of Silas Marner's life, in which the protagonist loses his faith in God and in human society, and then slowly regains his faith years later when he adopts a loving orphan girl named Eppie. Silas Marner's early faith is distinctly different from the faith he regains in later years. As a young man, Marner lives in **Lantern Yard** and his faith depends on the community and worship there. Marner believes in an unseen, benevolent God and in following only those practices that reflect faith in this God. Marner has acquired some knowledge of herbal remedies from his mother, but he refrains from using these, believing that prayer, without medicine, is a sufficient remedy. Marner loses his faith in a benevolent God when his friend William Dane falsely accuses him of stealing church funds. Upon being accused, Marner believes God will reveal his innocence, but when the church draws lots to make a decision, the lots declare his guilt. Marner lashes out at William Dane, accusing him of framing him, and accusing God of being a God of lies.

After this blasphemy, Marner moves to the simple village of **Raveloe** where he withdraws from his neighbors, hoarding and coveting his money, disenchanted with all human relationships. When Marner discovers Eppie, an orphan who wanders into his home, he cares for her and raises her. Through his love for her, Marner rediscovers an interest in human connection. As he seeks what is the best for Eppie, he again attends church and he makes friends in Raveloe. Marner again gathers medicinal herbs as he once enjoyed doing, and he feels light return to his life through the love Eppie has for him.

MORALITY

In *Silas Marner*, the author George Eliot presents a universe in which characters' personalities and actions determine their fates. This authorial morality secures justice for Silas Marner and for Godfrey Cass, as well as for several secondary characters. While Marner is initially wrongly accused of a crime in **Lantern Yard**, his later generosity toward Eppie determines his ultimate happiness. At the ending of the novel, the neighbors at Eppie and Aaron's wedding discuss Marner's choice to adopt a small orphan girl. The general consensus is that such an act of kindness will secure his future blessings.

The novel ends with Eppie's declaration of her and Marner's happiness after she refuses to live with her biological father Godfrey Cass. Cass is a morally ambiguous character. He is kind and considerate, but also makes selfish and wrong decisions when he abandons his daughter, Eppie, to another's care. Godfrey's fate is an appropriate combination of punishment and reward for his choices. While Godfrey marries the love of his life, Nancy, his happiness is incomplete, as he and Nancy can't have any children. Despite Godfrey's later repentance, Eppie chooses to ignore Godfrey's attempts to adopt her because he has neglected her for sixteen years. For her part, Nancy believes that divine providence determines one's fate. She strongly resists Godfrey's interest in adopting a child because adoption is an attempt to circumvent the life given by God.

In this way, moral outcomes in the novel are linked to the power of divine influence. Other secondary characters receive similar moral treatment. Godfrey's first wife, Molly, dies in a snowstorm after consuming opium. The drug had been ruining her life and her relationship with her husband for some time. Godfrey's brother, Dunstan, dies in the **stone pit** directly after he robs Silas Marner. His body and Marner's gold are discovered years later.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Two societies are at the heart of *Silas Marner*: **Lantern Yard** and **Raveloe**. These societies are drastically opposed to each other. By the end of the novel, Lantern Yard is a large town filled with factories, busy men, strangers, and travelers. It has experienced the transformative force of the Industrial Revolution. Raveloe is rural and intimate and changes very little from generation to generation. The inhabitants of Raveloe all know each other and are resistant to new or dramatic events in their small village.

The theme of society encompasses both the nature of life in these very different places and Silas Marner's own changing relationship to his neighbors in Raveloe. Marner's exclusion from Lantern Yard's society, his initial willful distance from Raveloe's society, and his eventual inclusion in this society cause his losing and regaining of faith. The loss of Marner's money and his finding of Eppie are both presented in terms of his connection with those around him. After he is robbed, Marner is more open to help from others because he feels alone and directionless. Marner is changed from a miserly, isolated weaver into a caring father as he seeks what is needed for his adopted daughter, Eppie. By caring for Eppie, Marner adjusts to Raveloe society, acquiring the customs and beliefs of his new home.

The social conventions of Raveloe dictate what the town's inhabitants perceive to be right and wrong. Social events, such as the New Years' Eve dance at Squire Cass's home, occur according to tradition. Such traditions define Raveloe's unique identity and society over generations. At the end of the novel, Marner and Eppie travel to Lantern Yard. The village has transformed into a great manufacturing town, made more unsettling by the strong contrast it presents to the intimate village of Raveloe. Men on the streets of Lantern Yard are too busy to stop and assist Marner and Eppie, and both characters long to return to the familiar comforts of Raveloe. Similarly, Eppie is uninterested in Godfrey and Nancy's offer to adopt her, as this would separate her from the society of those "lowly" folks who she knows and cares for. Eppie and Marner are both happy at the end of the novel because of the connections they have formed with each other and with Raveloe society.

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

An irrational fear of the unknown characterizes the attitudes of the people of **Raveloe**. This fear of the unknown is a key factor in Silas Marner's initial separation from the society of the village. On the first page of the book, the wary perspective of these people is described. The basis of their xenophobia is their narrow circle of acquaintances and the limited travel that would occur in any individual's lifetime. The villagers of Raveloe are used to interacting with the same circle of people because the same families have lived in the village for multiple generations.

After Silas Marner is robbed, the local men discuss a peddler who carried a tinderbox like the one found by Marner near his house after the robbery. The highest element of suspicion in the peddler's appearance and character was his "foreignness," which is described by the villagers as evidence of his dishonesty. Marner also exhibits fear of the unknown. His return to **Lantern Yard** is marked by fear and distrust of the transition that has occurred in his old home. An anxiety with "the new" pervades the book, which ends with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, an increase in manufacturing, which was soon to rapidly change lives throughout England.

THE LIMITS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

While characters in *Silas Marner* may influence their own future through their choices and actions, certain key events depend upon inexplicable good or bad fortune appearing in characters' lives. Such events may be attributed to chance or to the will of a divine being. Regardless of chosen explanations, these events are beyond the control and rational understanding of George Eliot's characters.

While the reader is presented with the full account of Dunstan's theft and Eppie's appearance in Silas Marner's cottage, to Marner both the loss and gain are of a magical, mysterious nature. Upon Eppie's appearance on his heath, Marner assumes that her presence must be the result of a divine act because he cannot imagine an ordinary way by which this child might have appeared. Later, Marner can only explain this mysterious event in terms of an exchange from an unknown source: the money is gone to an unknown place and Eppie has arrived from an unknown place.

Similarly, Marner is never able to resolve the false accusations leveled against him in **Lantern Yard** because the town is completely replaced by new buildings and new townsfolk when he returns there thirty years later. When Marner recounts this story to Dolly Winthrop, she describes the reasons behind events as "dark" to human perception. Dolly Winthrop's character presents the viewpoint that human knowledge is limited and omniscience belongs to higher powers. Mrs. Winthrop's acceptance of the restricted scope of human knowledge is expressed as she discusses why Silas Marner was falsely accused in his youth at Lantern Yard. She believes that the true good behind all events is known only to some divine being. The country wisdom of the men at the Rainbow, the local pub, follows a similar pattern. While the local folks are strongly influenced by superstition, cringing from fears of ghosts or other unexplained phenomena, they don't seek answers to their questions, but instead admit that there are explanations beyond human knowledge.

SYMBOLS

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

LANTERN YARD

The town of Lantern Yard symbolizes the change that Silas Marner undergoes when he is betrayed and loses his faith in his home community and in God. Early in the book, the parish at Lantern Yard is a tight-knit, devote community, representative of the type of faith Silas Marner exhibits. He is committed to his belief in a benevolent God and trusts his safety and innocence to this God. Once he is falsely accused, his flight from Lantern Yard symbolizes his emotional separation from others with a literal physical separation. At the end of the novel, Marner returns to Lantern Yard a changed man, only to find that Lantern Yard has changed too and is virtually unrecognizable. Marner has a new faith that is no longer centered on a God who he thinks he can understand. The church community in Lantern Yard has vanished. The advance of manufacturing in Lantern Yard represents the change that is so feared by the villagers of **Raveloe**, and serves as an ominous indication that the Industrial Revolution will cause great changes across England.

RAVELOE

The village of Raveloe is strongly contrasted to **Lantern Yard** both because of its homely appearance and because of the simple lives and perspectives of the people who live there. In Raveloe, practicality takes precedence over faith and church attendance. Community and familiarity are preferred to change and innovation. Raveloe's community represents Silas Marner's new faith, which he discovers through Eppie: a faith in humanity and love. Raveloe is a haven for Silas Marner, an unchanging world in which he and Eppie live happily together; a world that has not yet been affected by industrialization.

STONE PITS

The stone pits near Silas Marner's home in Raveloe appear only a few times in the novel, but they serve the key role of hiding the body of Dunstan Cass and Silas Marner's stolen **gold**. The stone pits are a strange geographic detail near Marner's cottage, with water filling their hidden depths. The stone pits represent the "unknown," the elements of nature and fate that cannot be understood or explained by humans. When Marner loses his gold and finds Eppie, he can only understand this transition in terms of an exchange from the unknown. In reality, Marner's gold has disappeared into the stone pits, and Eppie has wandered out of the wilderness from the edge of the stone pits. Only by draining the stone pits and revealing their hidden depths does the truth become clear: Marner's gold and the thief are found, and Eppie's true parentage is revealed directly afterward.

GOLD

Silas Marner becomes obsessed with the acquisition and hoarding of gold after he losses his faith in God and in other people. Gold, as an object, becomes the recipient of all the human love and affection that he once directed toward his friends and community. Marner not only saves and hides his gold, but he admires it lovingly. He gives it attention and care worthy of a child. The gold symbolizes Marner's isolation and his exclusion from human love and affection. His heart is directed toward the cold and unfeeling gold, and he appears cold and unfeeling to those around him. Only through Eppie's appearance does Marner begin to love and cherish other human beings again. Eppie's golden hair allows her to resemble the gold, creating a strong connection between Marner's reactions to his gold and to his adopted child. His love for gold isolates him; his love for Eppie re-connects him to the community.

THE HEARTH

Silas Marner's cottage and his hearth are the setting for several key events in the novel. Marner discovers Eppie on the hearth, sleeping, and at first mistakes her for his lost gold. The cottage and the hearth become the center of Eppie and Marner's relationship. Eppie refuses Godfrey's offer to adopt her because she wishes to stay with the father she has grown up with. When Eppie and Aaron marry, they move into Marner's cottage. The cottage and hearth represent the center of love and family for Eppie and Marner. It is the place where Eppie appears in Marner's life, a place of warmth and familiarity, and it remains the center of their home throughout the novel.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Dover Publications edition of *Silas Marner* published in 1996.

Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ In that far-off time superstition clung easily round every person or thing that was at all unwonted, or even intermittent and occasional merely, like the visits of the peddler or the knife-grinder. No one knew where wandering men had their homes or their origin; and how was a man to be explained unless you at least knew somebody who knew his father and mother?

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 1

Explanation and Analysis

Silas Marner is primarily set in the rural village of Raveloe in England in the early 1800s. This setting defines the character of the people who inhabit Raveloe—inclined to suspicion of differences, uneasy with change, and entrenched in their regular lives. Because travel is difficult and social circles are small, the unfamiliar is rare, but when it appears—even in the form of a traveling peddler or knife-grinder—it is met with suspicion. This passage captures the mood of the people of Raveloe toward outsiders and explains why Silas Marner, who moves there from Lantern Yard, is a social outcast and an oddity. Silas Marner's job as a weaver leads to a solitary existence consumed by work, and his limited interactions with the other villagers categorize him as the type of "intermittent" visitor who is regarded with suspicion.

This thinking among the villagers is explained by their sedentary lives over generations. In this small community, every person is accounted for because their home has always been in Raveloe, as was their parents' before them. A man is "explained" when his parentage is known. This sentiment is partly humorous, as Eliot asks these rhetorical questions ironically, but she also emphasizes that one's parentage defines one's situation and identity in a small village like Raveloe. Social classes and occupations are taken for granted and passed on through the generations, leaving little room for individuality or escape.

> "...there is no just God that governs the earth righteously, but a God of lies, that bears witness against the innocent."

Related Characters: Silas Marner (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 9

Explanation and Analysis

Silas Marner's grim beginnings in Lantern Yard explain his move to rural Raveloe. In Lantern Yard, the young man was a respected and well-loved member of his community and congregation until he was accused of stealing church funds. His accuser was his closest friend William Dane. Despite this false accusation, Marner holds faith that God will reveal the truth. The church "draws lots," a technique used to single out one individual, and Silas Marner is declared guilty. Marner's faith is crushed by this outcome. He believes that the drawing of lots—a seemingly "chance" event—should be controlled by God to protect the innocent if He is a righteous God. It does not occur to Marner that the odds may have been manipulated against him by his suspicious friend.

Marner's angry renouncement of God as "a God of lies" causes him to lose popularity among the congregation, who also believes him to be a thief. Effectively cast out from his community, Marner sees no choice but to find a new place to live. However, when he settles in Raveloe, he does not rejoin a community, but keeps to himself. His faith in God connected him to other humans. It gave him something to live for and made him happily seek fellowship with others, so without faith, Marner becomes a loner.

> His life had reduced itself to the functions of weaving and hoarding, without any contemplation of an end towards which the functions tended. The same sort of process has perhaps been undergone by wiser men, when they have been cut off from faith and love—only, instead of a loom and a heap of guineas, they have had some erudite research, some ingenious project, or some well-knit theory.

Related Characters: Silas Marner

Related Themes:

Page Number: 15

Explanation and Analysis

Isolated from his fellow human beings, Silas Marner's life consists of working and hoarding his gold, but without any long-term goal in mind. The actions themselves consume him, and he covets his gold, not because he has dreams of things to buy or build, but because he takes satisfaction in the gold itself. This process is described as an unhealthy one. His life has been "reduced" from something better.

This passage also universalizes Marner's experiences by commenting that this same process has been "undergone by wiser men" who have latched onto "some erudite research." "Erudite" means "highly studied," and so Eliot is here referring to scholars who have committed themselvesexclusivelyto research andstudy. This has isolated them from the world, a life they have chosen when they have been "cut off from faith and love." This shows that faith and love are what connect humans to others. Without

these things, one focuses intensely on isolating projects, be they research or labor.

Throughout the novel, Marner's relationship with others in his community is key. He is ostracized from his community in Lantern Yard, and that separation from others is directly linked to a loss of both faith in God and faith in the goodness of other people. This passage highlights this cause and effect relationship: loss of love and faith leads to isolation. The novel demonstrates that the reverse is also true: finding love and faith connects an individual with others.

Chapter 3 Quotes

"I might tell the Squire how his handsome son was married to that nice young woman, Molly Farren, and was very unhappy because he couldn't live with his drunken wife, and I should slip into your place as comfortable as could be."

Related Characters: Dunstan Cass (speaker), Squire Cass, Godfrey Cass

Related Themes:

Page Number: 20

Explanation and Analysis

Godfrey's younger brother Dunstan is aware of Godfrey's secret: Godfrey is married to an unsuitable woman from a low social class, and the two have a little daughter. Dunstan holds this information over Godfrey's head and repeatedly threatens to reveal his secret. In this way, he is able to blackmail Godfrey and control Godfrey's actions. In this passage, Dunstan points out that if he were to reveal Godfrey's secret, he would "slip into" Godfrey's "place as comfortable as could be." Dunstan, as the younger brother, is not the primary heir of his father's estate and fortune. Social class and societal traditions have strongly influenced Dunstan and Godfrey's relationship, because of the legal and cultural practice of making the firstborn child the primary heir. Dunstan's power over Godfrey is not only social, but financial. Godfrey be shamed and embarrassed if Dunstan revealed his secret (and prevented from marrying Nancy, who he loves), and he would also lose his source of income and inheritance.

This power dynamic between the brothers shows how society impacts the lives of individuals. Losing the good opinion of society could change Godfrey's life. One reason why Godfrey would lose the respect of others and his inheritance from his father if his secret were revealed is that he has married an "unsuitable" woman. Molly Farren's unsuitability for Godfrey is defined by the expectations of society, who assumes Godfrey will marry a rich and fashionable woman of his class. Molly is unsuitable because of her low social class and "drunken" behavior.

His [Godfrey's] natural irresolution and moral cowardice were exaggerated by a position in which dreaded consequences seemed to press equally on all sides, and his irritation had no sooner provoked him to defy Dunstan and anticipate all possible betrayals, than the miseries he must bring on himself by such a step seemed more unendurable to him than the present evil.

Related Characters: Godfrey Cass, Dunstan Cass

Related Themes:

Page Number: 21

Explanation and Analysis

Godfrey's character and his circumstances contribute to his problematic moral dilemma. He is torn between defying Dunstan (in which case Dunstan would reveal his secret marriage and child) and obeying Dunstan (because the consequences of that reveal would be "unendurable"). This passage characterizes Godfrey as having "natural irresolution," meaning he is bad at making and sticking with decisions, and "moral cowardice," meaning that he is afraid of doing what's right if this will hurt him. His character is not solely to blame for this indecision. His situation is one in which "dreaded consequences seemed to press equally on all sides." This means that Godfrey sees both his alternatives—defying Dunstan and obeying Dunstan—as horrible. He describes defiance as bringing about miseries and his current situation as "the present evil." Therefore, he isn't inclined to choose one way or the other.

This passage shows how Godfrey's personality, which is one of irresolution, is exacerbated by his situation, which has no happy options. Throughout the novel, characters' lives and situations are impact by their personalities and moral choices. Godfrey's situation is made worse by his indecisive personality, which seems to have led him into such a predicament to begin with. He isn't able to acknowledge Molly as his wife, and he isn't able to cast her out of his life completely. This moral irresolution causes him to remain in a situation in which he lives in fear of his secret being discovered.

Chapter 4 Quotes

If the weaver was dead, who had a right to his money? Who would know where his money was hidden? *Who would know that anybody had come to take it away?* He [Dunstan] went no farther into the subtleties of evidence: the pressing question, "Where *is* the money?" now took such entire possession of him as to make him quite forget that the weaver's death was not a certainty. A dull mind, once arriving at an inference that flatters a desire, is rarely able to retain the impression that the notion from which the inference started was purely problematic. And Dunstan's mind was as dull as the mind of a possible felon usually is.

Related Characters: Dunstan Cass (speaker), Silas Marner

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 30-31

Explanation and Analysis

Dunstan arrives at Silas Marner's cottage with a plan to ask the weaver for a loan because he has heard tell of the man's wealth. When he arrives, however, the door is unlatched. Dunstan wonders if Marner could have slipped into the stone pits outside his hut, as the weather is so foggy. Immediately, his mind jumps from speculation about Marner's death to questions about his money. This progression of thinking is here attributed to Dunstan's "dull mind." The narrator argues that a dull mind is inclined to latch onto an inference if this inference "flatters a desire." In other words, if an inference, or guess, is made that seems favorable, the dull-minded thinker doesn't stop to question the guess, but runs with that hypothetical situation. It is easy for Dunstan to forget that he only "guessed" Marner might be dead. The questions that follow from this guess help Dunstan justify taking the money.

This is an interesting moral dilemma. Dunstan is not acting in full awareness, as he doesn't take the money while certain that Marner is alive. Instead, he convinces himself of the reasonableness of taking the money, forgetting that Marner might not be dead. This is attributed to his "dull mind" which is "as dull as the mind of a possible felon usually is." This shows a consistency among a type of person—a possible felon—someone who might be capable of small scale crime and cruelty, but isn't always a criminal. In other words, Dunstan's weakness inclines him to criminal activity, if the opportunity presents itself.

Chapter 5 Quotes

Was it a thief who had taken the bags? Or was it a cruel power that no hands could reach, which had delighted in making him [Silas Marner] a second time desolate?

Related Characters: Silas Marner

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

Silas Marner is robbed of all the gold he'd hidden beneath the floorboards. Although the way this happens is traced by the plot of the novel and revealed to the reader, Marner is at a loss to explain how his gold has disappeared. This robbery seems particularly mysterious to Marner because his gold is well-concealed, yet someone went directly to the spot, removed the floorboards, and cleared away all the gold. Marner first wonders if it was a thief who took the gold, and then wonders if it was "a cruel power" set against his unhappiness. This procession of thinking, from practical explanation to fantastical explanation, shows what happens when something unbelievable occurs. Marner is quick to believe in God or god-like beings when something beyond rational explanation occurs. Human knowledge is limited, in the time period of this novel and today.

Marner repeatedly experiences events beyond his understanding and reaches for a supernatural explanation. He loses his faith in a benevolent God, but continues to ask, as he does here, about the existence of a cruel power that is negatively targeting him. This understanding of "morality" is one that is unpredictable and irrational. Marner doesn't believe he has done anything to deserve his two losses—his lost position in Lantern Yard and his lost money—therefore, it must be some cruel power that is targeting him without reason. Actually, in both cases, another person has taken advantage of Marner—William Dane who accused him and Dunstan who robbed him—and yet it could also be argued that these humans were just the instruments of Fate or God.

Chapter 8 Quotes

Mr. Snell gradually recovered a vivid impression of the effect produced on him by the peddler's countenance and conversation. He had a "look with his eye" which fell unpleasantly on Mr. Snell's sensitive organism. To be sure, he didn't say anything particular—no, except that about the tinder-box—but it isn't what a man says, it's the way he says it. Moreover, he had a swarthy foreignness of complexion which boded little honesty.

Related Characters: Mr. Snell (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 50

Explanation and Analysis

In a rare appeal to his fellow men, Silas Marner goes to the local pub for help after he is robbed. The villagers of Raveloe offer their advice, which ranges from suggestions of supernatural interference to suspicion of an unknown peddler who traveled through Raveloe. In this passage, Mr. Snell remembers several things about this peddler that make him an object of suspicion in the eyes of the villages. These suspicious traits reveal the xenophobia of the villagers, who are particularly afraid of anyone or anything that is different from themselves. These traits include a suspicious "look with his eye" and a "swarthy foreignness of complexion which boded little honesty." The suspicion cast on this peddler is very insubstantial. The argument against him is the way he made Mr. Snell *feel*, and this is quickly attributed to his foreignness and the darkness of his skin. The villagers of Raveloe never feel good about foreignness.

Mr. Snell goes so far as to acknowledge that the peddler didn't say anything particularly suspicious, so there is no real evidence against him. Furthermore, he must "gradually recover" the impression the man made on him, which shows that he is talking himself into his suspicions the longer he contemplates the peddler's foreignness. The villagers are much happier to suspect a foreigner than one of their own.

Chapter 9 Quotes

He [Godfrey Cass] was not likely to be very penetrating in his judgments, but he had always had a sense that his father's indulgence had not been kindness, and had had a vague longing for some discipline that would have checked his own errant weakness and helped his better will.

Related Characters: Godfrey Cass, Squire Cass

Related Themes:

Page Number: 59

Explanation and Analysis

Godfrey Cass reflects on his father's indulgent treatment of him, and the fact that it's difficult for Godfrey to imagine confessing the truth about his marriage because of this upbringing. The Squire won't hesitate to punish his son if he learns the truth, but his treatment of his older son has always been without regular discipline and according to the anger and whims of the father.

In this passage, Godfrey's character, one of "weakness," is attributed to the failings of his father in raising him without discipline. The narrator assigns blame to Squire Cass as a poor parent. A good parent understands that indulgence is not kindness, and that discipline is required for healthy development. This idea of parenting is considered and reworked later in the novel when Marner and Dolly Winthrop discuss Eppie's upbringing. Notably, Godfrey is also blaming his father. Godfrey, because of his weak character, always looks outside himself for solutions to his problems. He blames his father, rather than taking responsibility for his actions. He wants to marry Nancy because she will keep him on the right track in life through her focus and goodness. His weakness of character is key in bringing about his unfortunate marriage, which continues to impact him for years.

Favourable Chance, I fancy, is the god of all men who follow their own devices instead of obeying a law they believe in. Let even a polished man of these days get into a position he is ashamed to avow, and his mind will be bent on all the possible issues that may deliver him from the calculable results of that position.

Related Characters: Godfrey Cass

Related Themes:

Page Number: 60

Explanation and Analysis

This passage universalizes Godfrey's experience as he hopes for a resolution to his terrible marriage to Molly. Because Godfrey is ashamed of his secret relationship, and he cannot resolve this situation through his own actions either by confessing or persuading Dunstan to keep the

secret, he hopes for a chance occurrence that will rescue him. The voice of the narrator appears in this passage with an "I" voice and an opinion. Normally, *Silas Marner* focuses on the thoughts and actions of the characters, but occasionally it pauses to provide more universal reflections from the narrator.

In this universal reflection, the narrator points out that it naturally follows that if a person is in an undesirable situation, he will focus irrationally on events that could allow him to escape without consequences. This is notable because it presents a counterpoint to the idea highlighted in other parts of this novel that one's character determines one's fate. In much of this book, good characters bring happiness into their lives through their kindness, and weak characters make mistakes and poor choices that continue to haunt them. This passage acknowledges that even a "polished man"—one of wealth, good social standing, and (presumably) good character—would rely too much on chance if he were in a situation like Godfrey's. Even good characters are inclined to look outside themselves for help, to rely on chance, when their poor circumstances seem beyond their control.

❝ Formerly, his [Silas Marner's] heart had been as a locked casket with its treasure inside; but now the casket was empty, and the lock was broken. Left groping in darkness, with his prop utterly gone, Silas had inevitably a sense, though a dull and half-despairing one, that if any help came to him it must come from without; and there was a slight stirring of expectation at the sight of his fellow-men, a faint consciousness of dependence on their goodwill.

Related Characters: Silas Marner

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 67

Explanation and Analysis

When Silas Marner loses his gold, the loss shakes him out of a routine pattern for his daily life. This change is described with the simile of a locked casket. Marner's heart was "locked" because it was focused only on the gold inside. Without the gold, the casket (his heart) is empty. The gold is described in this passage as Marner's "prop," the thing he relied on every day. Because of this dramatic shift in his focus from the gold to the absence of the gold, Marner thinks for the first time about his fellow humans. He feels that "if any help came to him it must come from without." Therefore, the loss of Marner's gold is not a bad thing, although Marner sees it that way. The reader definitively learns in this passage that the gold was blocking Marner from focusing on connection with other people.

Marner now begins to feel "expectation" at the sight of others and has a sense of "dependence on their goodwill." This shows that his faith in other people has never been completely lost. Despite his anger and bitterness after his dramatic departure from Lantern Yard, he is still somewhat inclined to believe in the goodness of others. Without his gold blocking his view, he is able to see the importance of other people in his life.

Chapter 12 Quotes

❝ Molly knew that the cause of her dingy rags was not her husband's neglect, but the demon Opium to whom she was enslaved, body and soul, except in the lingering mother's tenderness that refused to give him her hungry child. She knew this well; and yet, in the moments of wretched unbenumbed consciousness, the sense of her want and degradation transformed itself continually into bitterness towards Godfrey. *He* was well off; and if she had her rights she would be well off too.

Related Characters: Molly Farren, Godfrey Cass

Related Themes:

Page Number: 90

Explanation and Analysis

Molly Farren sets out one winter night to find Godfrey and reveal the truth of their connection. She is motivated by bitterness, because Godfrey is enjoying an extravagant lifestyle at his father's house and she is living in poverty. This passage captures both Molly's rational understanding of her situation and her emotional understanding of her situation. From a rational point of view, Molly knows that she is poor because of her opium addiction. Her money goes toward acquiring the drug. But when she is sober, when she feels wretched "unbenumbed consciousness," she feels bitter toward Godfrey because she sees her poverty in contrast to his wealth.

Her bitterness is not without some foundation, however, as she points out that "if she had her rights" she would be wealthy like Godfrey. By this she means that if Godfrey were to acknowledge her as his wife, she would be entitled

to his wealth. Although Godfrey provides for wife and daughter, Molly sees that this is different than how he would treat a different woman. Her bitterness is a rebellion against social classism. She wants to be treated the same way as any other woman married to Godfrey would be treated. Molly's situation is partly in her control and partly beyond her control, but her choice to link herself to Godfrey leads to her perpetual unhappiness.

❝ [Silas Marner] was stooping to push his logs together, when, to his blurred vision, it seemed as if there were gold on the floor in front of the hearth. Gold!—his own gold—brought back to him as mysteriously as it had been taken away!

Related Characters: Silas Marner

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols:  

Page Number: 93

Explanation and Analysis

In this scene, Silas Marner finds the baby Eppie sleeping on his hearth. The proximity of the sleeping child to the place he used to hide his gold, and the similar color between the gold and the hair of the child leads to his confusion. This reaction shows Marner's focus on his gold, which he immediately thinks of when confronted with the same color on his hearth. Marner's mistake strongly links Eppie and the gold in more ways than one, however. In addition to their similarities, and the precious role they play in Marner's life, both the gold and Eppie disappear and appear without an easily understandable explanation. The child appears "as mysteriously" as the gold was "taken away." As with the disappearance of the gold, the appearance of Eppie is explained to the reader, but not to Marner. Although it seems unlikely that the child would have been left near Marner's cottage and would have wandered inside, it is possible. To Marner, however, it seems impossible that this child could have appeared without some influence from a divine power. Therefore, the mysterious nature of the gold's departure and the child's arrival further contributes to Marner's sense that Eppie has replaced the gold in a spiritual sense.

Chapter 13 Quotes

❝ Godfrey felt a great throb: there was one terror in his mind at that moment: it was, that the woman might *not* be dead. That was an evil terror—an ugly inmate to have found a nestling-place in Godfrey's kindly disposition; but no disposition is a security from evil wishes to a man whose happiness hangs on duplicity.

Related Characters: Silas Marner, Molly Farren

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 96

Explanation and Analysis

Silas Marner finds Molly's body outside his hut and rushes to Squire Cass's party in search of the doctor. Godfrey overhears the news and hurries with the doctor, Mrs. Winthrop, and Silas Marner to inspect the woman. Godfrey waits outside Marner's hut in great agitation as the doctor cares for Molly. He wonders as he waits if she is really dead, and he feels terror at the thought that she might not be. This passage explains Godfrey's terror as the natural consequence of his circumstance, which has twisted his heart and mind enough that he wishes for another person's death. His wish arises from a desire to protect himself and his happiness. If Molly is dead, Godfrey's secret dies with her.

This passage describes how such a cruel thought could arise from the mind of a man like Godfrey, who is weak of character, but kind. Eliot universalizes Godfrey's experience, pointing out that any man who is living a duplicitous life will succumb to evil when it is necessary to maintain the duplicity his happiness is based on. For Godfrey to be happy, he must wish for Molly's death. If he had never gotten himself into this situation, Godfrey would never have been the type of person who wished any ill on another being.

❝ Thought and feeling were so confused within him [Silas Marner], that if he had tried to give them utterance, he could only have said that the child was come instead of the gold—that the gold had turned into the child.

Related Characters: Silas Marner, Eppie

Related Themes:  

Related Symbols: 

Page Number: 103

Explanation and Analysis

As seen before, Silas Marner sees a strong connection between the gold he has lost and the child he has found. Their physical similarities (gold color and golden hair), their mysterious disappearance and arrival, and their location near his hearth, link the two in his mind. The timing of the loss of one and discovery of the other also leads Marner to have many confusing thoughts and feelings. He is devastated by the loss of his gold, which was the only thing he held dear to his heart. The child fills the gap left by the gold, and, as the novel shows, takes up her place in Marner's heart in a more meaningful way.

In this passage, Marner understands the loss of the gold and the arrival of the child as less of a replacement and more of a transformation. He thinks, "the gold had turned into the child." This transformation is his way of explaining something that is beyond his ability to understand. Instead of thinking about a cruel power that is bringing him unhappiness, Marner is considering a fantastical transformation that isn't one of loss and gain, but one of change. He is reworking his bitter understanding of the loss of his gold, as he grows to believe that he hasn't lost the gold, only that it has changed into something far better.

> "...the little child had come to link him [Silas Marner] once more with the whole world."

Related Characters: Silas Marner, Eppie

Related Themes:

Page Number: 110

Explanation and Analysis

When Silas Marner takes in the little orphaned child, the villagers of Raveloe gain a new interest in Marner and grow to see him in a new light. The once-frightening weaver is approachable with the little girl at his side. Mothers from the village come to Marner with help and advice. The child gives the people of Raveloe a reason to reach out to Marner, in addition to a new understanding of him as a kind-hearted, if lonely, soul. Therefore, it is through Eppie that Marner is once again "linked" with "the whole world." This transition presents a parallel (yet opposite) transition to Marner's departure from Lantern Yard. There Marner severed ties with the world because others saw him as a threat. He was seen as a thief and a liar and he was cut off from his community.

The people of Raveloe's dramatic change shows that the opinions of society play a critical role in the relationship between society and the individual. If the individual is mistrusted, he is cast out. If the individual is well-liked, he is embraced as part of the group. This can be either logical or illogical. Marner deserves the respect of the villagers for taking care of Eppie. On the other hand, Marner was falsely accused in Lantern Yard and public opinion turned against him without good reason.

> By seeking what was needful for Eppie, by sharing the effect that everything produced on her, he [Silas Marner] had himself come to appropriate the forms of custom and belief which were the mould of Raveloe life; and as, with reawakening sensibilities, memory also reawakened, he had begun to ponder over the elements of his old faith, and blend them with his new impressions, till he recovered a consciousness of unity between his past and present.

Related Characters: Eppie, Silas Marner

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 118

Explanation and Analysis

Silas Marner loves Eppie and seeks out everything that is best for her, and, in the process, his personality changes from one of cold isolation into one who participates in the "forms of custom and belief" in Raveloe. This has the effect of helping Marner fit into Raveloe and become a part of the community. It also has the effect of restoring Marner to something like the person he was before his first hardship (his expulsion from Lantern Yard). This earlier person was a man of faith, and faith is one thing Marner regains as he raises Eppie and becomes part of Raveloe society. Marner must recover elements of his "old faith" and "blend them with his new impressions." This integration of the old and the new is important because it allows Marner to see his episode as an isolated weaver as an interruption in a connected past and present. He is not meant to be that sad and isolated person forever. He regains his natural care for others and the faith he had as a young man.

Notably, part of Marner's transformation involves taking on the "mould of Raveloe life." Not only does he become part of a community, but he adjusts himself to specific traits and ideas of that community. This is later very apparent when

Eppie and Marner visit Lantern Yard. Both miss the ways of life in Raveloe to which they are accustomed.

Chapter 18 Quotes

"Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later. When God Almighty wills it, our secrets are found out."

Related Characters: Godfrey Cass (speaker), Nancy Lammeter

Related Themes:

Page Number: 135

Explanation and Analysis

Godfrey finally finds the strength to confess the truth about Molly and Eppie to his wife Nancy. This strength is born of the shame he feels when Dunstan's body is found at the bottom of the stone pits with Silas Marner's stolen gold. As he begins to explain his secrets to Nancy, he starts with this proclamation: that everything hidden is at some point revealed. He sees the hand of God in what has happened to Dunstan. Despite the long time his brother was missing, the truth of his cruelty in robbing a lonely man is finally revealed. The chance events that led to this secret coming to light convince Godfrey that all secrets are eventually revealed, and he had better not tempt fate by continuing to lie.

This is a change for Godfrey, who once struggled to confess his secrets, but always failed. Godfrey has clearly grown as a person, although he has not entirely changed. His willful plan to adopt Eppie, regardless of Marner's wishes, shows that he is still self-focused. But he has a new faith and understanding of God, and he sees events as the products of God's will. Where once he relied on chance to save him, knowing no other way, now he actively engages with the idea of a God who controls events. Nancy has a very strong faith and seems to have influenced her husband's thinking and character, as Godfrey once hoped that his father could have more positively shaped his character.

"...then, sir, why didn't you say so sixteen year ago, and claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o' coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body? God gave her to me because you turned your back upon her, and He looks upon her as mine: you've no right to her! When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in."

Related Characters: Silas Marner (speaker), Godfrey Cass

Related Themes:

Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

Godfrey and Nancy explain the biological connection between Godfrey and Eppie to Silas Marner and the girl. They state their wish to adopt Eppie and to give her a better (that is, upper-class) than the life she has with Marner. Marner is very upset by this, because he loves Eppie as his own child. He speaks of losing Eppie as the same as taking his heart out of his body. His emotions show clearly how much he cares for the girl, especially in contrast to Godfrey's measured arguments.

Marner is upset because he loves Eppie, but he also offers compelling arguments for why Godfrey doesn't ethically deserve to take his child. Marner points out that Godfrey "turned his back upon her" with full knowledge of the identity and whereabouts of his daughter. This means that Godfrey has no right to her. In contrast, Marner has taken her in and cared for her, and, therefore, she is his in God's eyes. Marner's faith is an important part of his claim on Eppie, because he believes her to have come into his life through God's will. Marner expands his point to say that any blessing a man turns from his door can be claimed by anyone who will take it in. This is a sort of "finders keepers" argument. The language of ownership in this passage may be startling to a modern reader, as each man claims Eppie is "his." Marner argues that belonging is defined by care, and Godfrey argues that belonging is defined by biological connection.

"...but repentance doesn't alter what's been going on for sixteen year."

Related Characters: Silas Marner (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

Godfrey says that he wants to adopt Eppie to repent for his past wrongdoings, but Marner argues that repentance cannot change the past. Godfrey has ignored Eppie and his responsibility to her every day for sixteen years. At any point he could have chosen to care for his daughter. He does finally do so, but it happens sixteen years too late.

Forgiveness and repentance are important concepts in religious faith. Marner, unlike God, is not interested in granting forgiveness for Godfrey's wrongdoing. He sees the choice that Godfrey made as irreversible. And in many ways he's right: there is no way Godfrey can turn back time and spend sixteen years devoted to his growing child. During that time, Eppie has found a family in Silas Marner and in the villagers of Raveloe who move in different social circles than the wealthy Godfrey and Nancy.

This passage shows that choices have long-term consequences, and also that the novel as a whole provides moral justice. Characters suffer or benefit from choices they make, and repentance does not always alter these outcomes. Godfrey continues to suffer because he ignored his daughter for sixteen years, and he cannot change his past choices through present action.

Chapter 20 Quotes

"She thinks I did wrong by her mother as well as by her. She thinks me worse than I am. But she *must* think it: she can never know all. It's part of my punishment, Nancy, for my daughter to dislike me."

Related Characters: Godfrey Cass (speaker), Molly Farren, Godfrey Cass, Eppie, Nancy Lammeter

Related Themes:

Page Number: 146

Explanation and Analysis

After Godfrey and Nancy fail to convince Eppie to live with them, Godfrey reflects on Eppie's dislike of him. He is troubled by Eppie's refusal, which is the reason the couple agrees to leave the girl with her adoptive father. Godfrey says that he knows Eppie blames him for what he did to her, as well as to her mother. He thinks that Eppie's opinion of him is too harsh, but resigns himself to this fact because it is part of his "punishment." Godfrey's odd opinion shows both his inherently selfish nature, as well as the ways he has begun to repent for his past actions. He is reluctant to think ill of himself, and, as usual, pushes the blame off onto another person. He thinks Eppie is too harsh because she "can never know all" of what he's been through. But, at the same time, he is more willing to accept Eppie's opinion than he once would have been. He sees her opinion as fate, or the will of God. It is inevitable that she dislike him because of his past actions.

At one point, Godfrey would have been happy to escape scot-free from any blame for his misdeeds. Now, he is more willing to bear the burden of living childless after having chosen to reject a biological child. Despite this new understanding of God's will, Godfrey is as ready as ever to play the victim, rather than to take responsibility. His imperfect character ends the book in imperfect happiness, a prime example of the book's "moral" lesson.

Chapter 21 Quotes

"It's gone, child," he [Silas Marner] said, at last, in strong agitation—"Lantern Yard's gone. It must ha' been here, because here's the house with the o'erhanging window—I know that—it's just the same; but they've made this new opening; and see that big factory! It's all gone—chapel and all."

Related Characters: Silas Marner (speaker), Eppie

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 148

Explanation and Analysis

Even though Silas Marner's life has been changed for the better because of Eppie, he still feels unease about his past in Lantern Yard. He wonders if his name was ever cleared from the crime for which he was blamed. Seeking answers to these questions, Marner and Eppie visit Lantern Yard, only to discover that the town has grown into a city and has been completely transformed by the Industrial Revolution. A big factory has replaced the local chapel and the community where Marner lived. Despite these changes, Marner recognizes the location by a house with a distinct overhanging window. This confirms for him that the place he once knew, and the people he knew there, are gone.

This dramatic change shows a contrast between Raveloe and Lantern Yard. In the rural village, little has changed over the course of the book, but Lantern Yard is transformed. This transformation heralds the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, which will affect even rural places like Raveloe. This historical context for the novel hints at the changes that England will face in the near future, which exist ominously in relationship to the villagers of Raveloe's fear of change.

Although Marner once defined himself in relationship to society in Lantern Yard, this society is gone—and Marner remains. Society is not more permanent than the individual,

but is always in flux. Yet the consistency and familiarity of Raveloe also offers comfort and security to both Marner and Eppie. Marner is eager to return home after visiting Lantern Yard—similarly, Eppie didn't want to live with Godfrey and Nancy because it would mean leaving the comfort of Marner's familiar society.

"It's the will o' Them above as a many things should be dark to us; but there's some things as I've never felt i' the dark about, and they're mostly what comes i' the day's work. You were hard done by that once, Master Marner, and it seems as you'll never know the rights of it; but that doesn't hinder there *being* a rights, Master Marner, for all it's dark to you and me."

Related Characters: Dolly Winthrop (speaker), Silas Marner

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 149

Explanation and Analysis

Marner discusses the changes he saw in Lantern Yard with Dolly Winthrop after he returns to Raveloe. He worries that he will never know whether the truth of his false accusation was uncovered. Mrs. Winthrop comforts Marner by pointing out that there are some things that will never be known to humans, but this shouldn't impact the things that are certainties in our lives. Mrs. Winthrop speaks of the will of "them above" that keeps humans in the dark. This attributes omniscience to God (or gods), while pointing out that some things will always be mysterious to humans. This view encourages Marner to accept those things he cannot know about or change. On the other hand, Mrs. Winthrop says that she never feels confusion about what "comes in the day's work." She knows the things in her daily life and she feels contented with what she knows. This furthers her argument that there is value in accepting the limitations of human knowledge. It is enough to know small-scale things.

Mrs. Winthrop also points out that just because Marner doesn't know something doesn't mean that the right thing hasn't happened in the world. Only "them above" can see and understand the big picture, and "the right thing" may be happening in the big picture even if Marner cannot see and understand how it is happening. Perhaps God has a reason for Marner never discovering the truth about his past in Raveloe, even if this reason isn't clear to Marner.

"Since the time the child was sent to me and I've come to love her as myself, I've had light enough to trusten by; and now she says she'll never leave me, I think I shall trusten till I die."

Related Characters: Silas Marner (speaker), Eppie

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 149

Explanation and Analysis

Marner tells Mrs. Winthrop that Eppie has changed his life because she brought light enough for him to "trusten by." This idea of light and trust is two-fold. First, Marner is continuing a metaphor Mrs. Winthrop began earlier in their conversation when she referred to some things that are "dark" to humans: things we cannot explain or understand. On the other hand, those things that are "light" to us are so clear and obvious that they will never be questioned. Silas Marner feels this way about his love for Eppie. Marner also gains a newfound trust in God and in humanity because of Eppie's presence in his life. Her love showed him the value of companionship and the value of being part of the society of Raveloe, and seemed to show him that a benevolent God brought Eppie to him in the first place.

Part 2, Conclusion Quotes

"...he [Silas Marner had brought a blessing on himself by acting like a father to a lone motherless child."

Related Characters: Silas Marner

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 151

Explanation and Analysis

The villagers of Raveloe praise Marner for his kindness in taking in Eppie years earlier. This praise directly links Marner's act of kindness to his own good fortune years down the road. Because he was a father to an orphaned child, he has "brought a blessing on himself." This statement supposes that one's actions have direct and long-term consequences in one's life. As a whole, this novel upholds this idea, as good characters meet good ends, bad characters meet bad ends, and morally ambiguous characters have mixed ends to their narratives. This gives the novel a moral tone, as it presents a lesson about the way decisions continue to influence one's life for years to come. It also relies on a sense of trust that, despite bumps along

the way, people who hold onto their faith and act out of kindness are blessed. The world of this novel is not a world of chance occurrences—actions and character traits are rewarded or punished according to moral standards.

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

In the early 1800s, when spinning wheels were popular in farmhouses and prosperous houses alike, solitary men traveled across the English countryside, seeking work as weavers. Inhabitants of small towns were wary of strangers such as these weavers, suspicious of anyone or anything from a world not within their direct experience. Any intelligence or skill possessed by a man was seen as further evidence of his foreignness, or, worse, communion with evil forces.

The occupation of weaving is shown to be both a job and a way of life that separates the weaver from regular society. The weaver often must travel during a time period in which traveling was difficult, and, therefore, rare. Rural villagers mistake hard-earned skills for evil powers, which emphasizes the backwardness and isolation of these communities.

One linen weaver, named Silas Marner, resides in a cottage near the village of **Raveloe**, beside a **Stone Pit**. Local boys are both fearful of and fascinated by Marner and often peek in at his windows, only to receive a gaze of disapproval from the weaver, who dislikes their intrusion. The boys had heard their fathers and mothers hint of Marner's abilities to cure sickness, no doubt acquired through demon worship. The villagers of Raveloe, who led lives of hard work and possessed little imagination, could not suppose that the same person could possess uncommon skill and benevolence.

Silas Marner's occupation as a weaver requires him to spend long hours in solitary employment. His already suspicious occupation is reinforced by his ability to use herbs to cure sickness, which was a "magic" different from prayer to God. Marner's interaction with the local boys and his ability to help others with natural remedies demonstrate how the villagers misconstrue his natural goodness.

At the beginning of the story, Silas Marner has lived in **Raveloe** for fifteen years. His appearance and lifestyle, fifteen years earlier, had discouraged his neighbors from befriending him. To the young women of the village he resembled a dead man come to life again with his pallid skin and large, near-sighted eyes. He never invited callers into his home, visited no one else, and never spent time drinking at the local pub, the Rainbow. Marner's strangeness had been further confirmed when Jem Rodney discovered Marner leaning against a stile in a trance: unresponsive, eyes staring, limbs frozen. Suddenly Marner regained his movement and voice, said "good night," and departed. Some villagers claimed Marner had been in a "fit," while Mr. Macey, the parish clerk, argued that one in a fit always fell down, whereas Marner's soul had temporarily come loose from his body.

Jem Rodney's experience with Marner's fit both functions as an anecdote of how strange Marner appears to his fellow villagers and demonstrates how the villagers respond to things they don't understand. Marner's fits, while they could be explained medically or scientifically today, are given a spiritual explanation: his soul is loose from his body. Marner's characterization as a dead man returned to life, as well as his reluctance to make friends, show his dispassionate attitude, his loneliness, and his total lack of connection with other people at this point in the book. His faith and his interest in life have died.

Despite the suspicions of his neighbors, Marner's weaving services continue to be popular in **Raveloe**, and little changes in public opinion of Marner, or in Marner's personal habits, over fifteen years of life near the village. Marner's inner life, however, has taken a negative turn. Before living in Raveloe, Marner lived in **Lantern Yard**, where he had been surrounded by the activity and fellowship of his community. In this community, Marner had been respected as a young man with great promise after he had fallen into one of his "fits" during a church service. Marner held a strong respect for mystery and for the power of prayer. He had learned the skills of healing with herbs from his mother, but he was reluctant to apply these skills because he believed prayer alone was sufficient for healing.

For fifteen years, Marner's lifestyle and actions change very little, but his inner life in Raveloe is severely reduced from the thriving spiritual life he enjoyed in Lantern Yard. The community in Lantern Yard respected and admired Marner. Like the villagers of Raveloe, those in the church community at Lantern Yard attributed Marner's fits to spiritual causes. But instead of finding these fits strange, the churchgoers felt Marner must be blessed. Marner's reluctance to use his herbal remedies demonstrates his early faith in the power of a benevolent God.

In **Lantern Yard**, young Marner had a close friend named William Dane, another promising young man who was somewhat severe with those less pious than him. The two friends frequently discussed whether or not they felt assured of their salvation after death: where William Dane was certain, Silas was only hopeful and fearful. Marner was engaged to a young woman named Sarah, and he was thankful that this engagement didn't interfere with his continued friendship with William Dane. After Marner's "fit" during a church service, however, William responded that such a fit might be a visitation from Satan, and Sarah started to behave oddly around Marner, exhibiting signs of dislike.

William Dane's friendship with Silas Marner helps show Marner's character clearly. William Dane, unlike Marner, is completely confident, both in his pious behavior and in his assurance of salvation. Marner's tentative nature is shown in contrast. Sarah is fearful of Marner's fits, and William Dane questions their divine nature. Sarah and William's reactions show that Marner's fits may inspire not only awe, but fear and concern.

When the senior deacon of **Lantern Yard** became ill, the young men and women of the community took turns sitting by his bedside. Marner and William Dane often traded off around two in the morning, splitting a night shift of sitting with the old man. On one such night, Marner realized that the deacon had died during his shift. Marner wondered if he had briefly fallen asleep, and looked at the clock to discover that it was four in the morning and William Dane had not appeared for his shift. Marner sought help. At six in the morning, William Dane and the minister arrived and summoned Marner to a meeting with the church members.

Marner and William Dane's decision to share shifts looking after the senior deacon demonstrates their close friendship, and Marner's continued perception that they function as a team. William Dane's betrayal is first evident when he doesn't appear for his shift. When the senior deacon dies, Marner worries that he may have fallen into a fit, rather than fallen asleep. Again, Marner's fits are presented as a possible source of danger or error.

At the meeting, the minister brought out Marner's pocketknife, which had been found in the deacon's bureau, where the church money was stored but was now missing. Accused of the robbery, Marner insisted, "God will clear me." He permitted a search of his dwelling, and William Dane discovered the bag of money behind the chest of drawers in Marner's chamber. Marner, suddenly overwhelmed, remembered that he had loaned his pocketknife to William Dane and never received it back.

William Dane frames Marner using only his borrowed pocketknife and the bag from the stolen money. Because Marner remembers loaning the pocketknife to William Dane, the real criminal could be apparent, but the church looks for divine answers to form accusations. Marner is likewise confident that divine answers will prove his innocence.

To determine Marner's fate, the church community drew lots: an ancient practice used in The Bible of casting stones, straw, or objects to determine an outcome. While Marner relied on God to demonstrate his innocence, the lots pronounced him guilty. Shaking in anger, Marner accused William Dane of framing him and renounced God, accusing God of being a liar. The community was horrified by this blasphemy. Marner's trust in God and in other humans was broken. Sarah broke off their engagement, and, in less than a month, Sarah married William Dane, and Marner left **Lantern Yard**.

While drawing lots relies primarily on chance, the church community believes the outcome will be divinely directed. When the truth of Marner's innocence is contradicted by this practice, Marner loses his faith in any divine power. Marner's public rebuke of William Dane turns the community against him. William and Sarah's subsequent marriage makes Marner even more of an outcast in his hometown (while also indicating Dane's motive in framing Marner).

CHAPTER 2

Silas Marner discovers that his new home in **Raveloe** is vastly different than **Lantern Yard**. The familiar figures, church, minister, and doctrine of Lantern Yard had been the basis of Marner's faith and the presence of religion in his life. Raveloe seems to Marner to be a world of country abundance in which the villagers do not know of nor need the faith that Marner had relied on when he lived in Lantern Yard. Therefore, Marner feels little connection between his past life and his new present.

The physical details of Raveloe reveal the community's insular nature, as well as its relationship with faith. While details describing Lantern Yard include primarily the people and the religious practices, Raveloe is a farming society, where people prioritize work, money, and local gossip over church attendance. It is as if Marner has moved to a new world.

Marner's first response to his shock at his false accusation had been to commit himself fully to his weaving work. Once settled in **Raveloe**, he wove without thought, as if from instinct, like a spider. Upon completing his first project, Marner was paid in **gold**, and the five guineas shone brightly in his hand. Money, in the past, had been the means to an end for Marner. But now, when any end he had sought was no longer attainable, the money itself became desirable.

Marner's commitment to weaving is described as spider-like, a comparison which emphasizes the incessant nature of Marner's weaving, and the way in which weaving is necessary to his survival. His soul has grown greedy and animalistic, and he desires only money, as a shiny object to hoard.

One day, Marner sees the cobbler's wife, Sally Oates, suffering from heart disease and dropsy, which had also afflicted Marner's mother. He brings her some foxglove to ease her pain, and through this act of charity, Marner feels emotions that he has not experienced since his departure from **Lantern Yard**. Soon other villagers come to Marner's cottage seeking charms and herbs to cure sicknesses. Marner turns each visitor away, disinclined to do anything false as he has limited ability to provide assistance with herbal remedies. The villagers resent his willful withholding of the skills he used to help Sally Oates, despite their dislike of skills they believe are acquired through devil worship.

Marner's generous act for Sally Oates is a solitary kindness that nearly reminds Marner of what is missing in his life since his departure from Lantern Yard. However, this kindness does not improve Marner's relationship with his neighbors. Marner is unwilling to offer other medical services, or to deceive his neighbors and take their payments by pretending he could help. Once again, his attempt to do right by others results in their increased dislike.

Marner's stash of money grows, and, with it, his desire for more **gold**. He stashes his money beneath some loose bricks in the floor under his loom. In the evenings, when his work is done, he takes out the money to admire it. He begins to feel that it is aware of him, like a conscious being, and he would not have willingly given up those specific coins. He rarely fears robbery, as hoarding one's money was a common practice among country villagers where everyone knew everyone, and no one was inclined to run away from their village after robbing a neighbor.

The frequent, detailed descriptions of the gold reflect Marner's obsession that has replaced his faith. His practice of taking out the coins to admire them, and the mutual awareness between him the coins, establishes their relationship as the type normally existing between two people rather than between a person and an object. The theft of Marner's money is foreshadowed.

Marner's life has withered to the solitary practices of weaving and hoarding his **gold**. After twelve years in **Raveloe**, he is fetching water from the well one day when he stumbles and drops his earthenware pot, which breaks. The broken pot saddens Marner, and he reassembles the pieces, and stores the broken pot in his cottage as a memorial. Likewise, Marner treasures his growing pile of coins. At night, he takes them out, counts them, spreads them out in piles, and runs his hands through them. His thoughts linger on his coins when he ventures outside to deliver his woven products.

The brief story of Marner's broken pot shows that Marner's heart has not hardened beyond sympathetic feelings. However, these feelings are directed at an inanimate object. Marner's obsession with things has replaced any connections with human beings. He treats objects, primarily his gold, with the sentimentality, respect, and attention normally reserved for people.

CHAPTER 3

The most prominent family in **Raveloe** is that of Squire Cass. Squire Cass is one of several occupants of Raveloe who own land, but he alone possesses the title of a squire and keeps tenants on his land who work for him. During the winter months, the richer inhabitants of Raveloe have time and leisure to feast and celebrate freely and are invited to the Red House (Squire Cass's home) for long periods of time before moving to Mr. Osgood's home for further celebration.

The Cass family, the Osgoods, and the Lammeters are wealthier families with a different lifestyle than those of the lowly villagers. Their extravagance is often contrasted to Silas Marner's humble existence. Their lifestyle is not more inclined to happiness, however, as Eppie's choice at the end of the novel demonstrates.

Squire Cass's wife died years earlier, and the Red House has lacked a woman's touch. Likewise, Squire Cass's two sons appear to the people of the village to have gone astray from the properness of the Squire's family. In particular, Squire Cass's second son, Dunstan Cass, spends his time betting and drinking, having been kept at home in leisure all his life. Recently, Godfrey Cass, the elder son, has appeared troubled and perhaps is taking after his younger brother's bad ways. The village folk feel that such behavior on Godfrey's part will cost him the heart of a young woman, Nancy Lammeter, who has looked favorably upon him for the past year.

At this time period, and especially in a small village like Raveloe, one's reputation was of the utmost importance. One's social class determined whom one could marry. Godfrey Cass, as the son of the Squire, is an excellent match for Miss Lammeter, however, a bad reputation could cause Nancy to refuse any offer of marriage from him. As the second son, Dunstan will not inherit as much as Godfrey (if anything at all) and his reputation is less important to maintain.

Godfrey and Dunstan confront each other in the parlor of the Red House one November afternoon. Dunstan is drunk, but has appeared at his older brother's summons. One of Squire Cass's tenants, Fowler, paid his rent to Godfrey, and Godfrey loaned this money to Dunstan. Now their father is short of cash and demands that the tenant pay him. Godfrey insists that Dunstan should pay him back, so he can deliver the rent money to the Squire. Dunstan tells Godfrey to get the money himself or, he threatens, he'll reveal Godfrey's secret marriage to a drunken, low-class woman named Molly Farren.

Dunstan's power over Godfrey is significant in several of Godfrey's decisions and actions. Godfrey is willing to go to long lengths to keep his secret, rather than confessing the truth, and this often means appeasing Dunstan. Godfrey's inability to be honest shows his weak character. While the consequences of honesty would be great, he prefers to rely on chance and hope rather than taking responsibility for his actions. Godfrey isn't bad; he's just weak.

When Godfrey argues that he has no money to offer in place of the loaned rent money he gave Dunstan, Dunstan suggest that he sells his horse, Wildfire. The horse could be sold the next day at the hunt, but Godfrey protests that he is supposed to attend Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance the next day. Dunstan teases him about Nancy Lammeter who will be at the dance and who doesn't know of Godfrey's secret marriage. Godfrey desperately claims he could tell the Squire himself of his secret marriage, so that Dunstan could no longer hold the secret as bargaining power.

Godfrey's horse Wildfire is well cared for and a far nicer horse than Dunstan's own. Selling Wildfire and entrusting him to Dunstan is evidence of Godfrey's fear of his brother's knowledge of his secret. Wildfire demonstrates the difference between the brothers: Dunstan is careless and Godfrey is anxious, as their treatment of Wildfire reveals.

Godfrey's naturally irresolute personality and his fear of losing Nancy Lammeter's affections, should his secret become known, have stopped him from telling Squire Cass everything. He argues to himself that while telling the Squire would have a certain outcome, Dunstan's betrayal of his secret is not certain and, if he keeps silent, he may be able to avoid losing Nancy, his claim to Squire Cass's inheritance, and the village's respect for a while longer. Godfrey agrees, therefore, to let Dunstan take Wildfire and sell the horse at the hunt the next day.

In numerous scenes and passages, Godfrey Cass debates the pros and cons of revealing the truth himself. Godfrey is irresolute and unable to commit to a strong course of action. The nature of Godfrey's mind is revealed through these internal debates, which give insight into his inner character, a unique technique in 19th century literature.

After Dunstan's departure, Godfrey curses both his brother's careful manipulation and his own folly for having gotten himself into this situation. For four years, he has wooed and dreamt of Nancy Lammeter. He longs for the comfort of a domestic life with her, having grown up in a home without the comfort and orderliness he desired. He longs for the presence of Nancy Lammeter in his life to make the good and happy things he prefers, rather than the sporting, drinking, and card playing that tempt him currently.

Nancy Lammeter holds a powerful position in Godfrey's heart and mind. He perceives her to be entirely good and without fault. He thinks she is his only hope for changing his life and becoming a better person. Such idolization of Nancy places all his hope on her such that he doesn't realize the need to change himself through his individual choices.

Godfrey can only imagine one situation worse than his present one: the one he will be in when his secret marriage comes to light. By keeping the secret, and prolonging the time until the secret is revealed, Godfrey hopes that the chance he will be rescued by some outside event is increased. Despite his natural good humor and affection, Godfrey begins to hope for terrible chance outcomes that could change his situation. As Godfrey leaves the room to go to the Rainbow, he pushes aside Snuff, the patient spaniel, who waits for attention from her master. Despite his disinterest, the dog loyally follows him from the room.

Godfrey's reliance on chance is frequently referred to throughout the events of the novel. Despite many events occurring as if by fate or a divine power, Godfrey's hesitancy and indecision is always referred to as him preferring to rely on chance rather than his own actions. Godfrey's relationship with his dog demonstrates his dismissive attitude toward those he does not care for, including his secret wife and child.

CHAPTER 4

Dunstan Cass rides Wildfire to the hunt the next morning, and, on his way, he passes by Silas Marner's cottage. Dunstan realizes that the weaver must have saved a large sum of money and wonders why he never thought of manipulating Godfrey into taking a loan from the old man. Such a suggestion would surely be agreeable to Godfrey, who would want the chance to preserve his secret and keep his horse. But Dunstan, eager to sell the horse and drive a bargain, continues onward.

Dunstan's first noting Marner's cottage and reflecting on the weaver's supposed wealth serves as foreshadowing for his theft of Marner's money. The reader is aware that Dunstan is self-centered and spendthrift, and that he is thinking of the wealth of the weaver and hoping to manipulate Marner.

Dunstan meets two men—Bryce and Keating—at the hunt and tells them that he has swapped his own horse with his brother's and now owns Wildfire. The two men nevertheless discern Dunstan's true purpose of selling the horse, and eventually the bargaining concludes with Bryce agreeing to buy Wildfire upon his safe delivery to Bryce's stables.

The buying and selling of Wildfire demonstrates Dunstan's underhanded character. He is not forthright about his intentions to sell the horse or about why he has his brother's horse to sell.

Despite a fleeting thought that he should deliver the horse and return home, Dunstan decides to ride Wildfire on the hunting course. He pushes the horse too hard and the horse falls. Dunstan is uninjured, but Wildfire dies. Dunstan, glad that others did not witness his mistake, decides to leave the horse and walk home so as not to encounter anyone else.

Dunstan's immediate concern upon Wildfire's death is that others will see what happened and think poorly of him. He is focused on his own reputation, not on the waste of a high quality horse and its needless death.

Dunstan is unconcerned by Wildfire's death as he plans to suggest his earlier idea to Godfrey: taking a loan from Silas Marner. Dunstan walks toward **Raveloe** through the misty evening, all the while tapping Godfrey's inscribed **gold** whip that he carries.

Dunstan carries Godfrey's inscribed whip, a detail that will eventually help identify his body sixteen years later. He again contemplates Marner's money.

Dunstan sees light gleaming through the mist as he nears the **Stone Pits** and realizes it is the light from Marner's cottage. As he walks, Dunstan fantasizes about the bribing and threatening necessary to secure a loan from Silas Marner, and he decides to go speak with the weaver directly when he sees the light from his cottage. At the very least, he hopes to borrow a lantern from the weaver.

The light from Marner's cottage is what guides Dunstan to the door. Likewise, the light encourages Eppie to follow it when her mother lies dead. Light is commonly associated with faith or goodness, and Marner's light shines into the world causing several key changes in his life.

Dunstan knocks loudly at Marner's door only to be met with silence. He intends to shake the door, but it swings open before him to reveal a blazing fire in Marner's inviting **hearth**. Marner's dinner is cooking on the fire, and Dunstan wonders if he left for some brief errand, but slipped into the **Stone Pits**, never to return. If the weaver is dead, who has a right to his money, Dunstan ponders.

Dunstan's assumption that the weaver may be dead is not logical or supported by evidence. However, this idea leads him to the idea of robbery. The author demonstrates the danger of assumptions and poorly founded opinions, and shows how Dunstan rationalizes his way into committing crimes.

Dunstan wonders, where is the money? He does not stop to consider that Marner might not, in fact, be dead, but quickly notes the one spot on the floor well covered with sand and the marks of fingers. Dunstan lifts up the loose bricks and discovers the two bags of money. Feeling a sudden dread, Dunstan hurries out of the house into the darkness. The rain and darkness thicken as he moves quickly beyond the light from the cottage.

Dunstan steals the gold and tries to hurry out of the light of the cottage, which could reveal him in the act of theft. Again light has a link to the good or the just. Dunstan's willingness to take the gold is unsurprising to the reader after the development of his underhanded, self-centered character.

CHAPTER 5

Just as Dunstan is leaving the cottage, Silas Marner is about to return. While he had left his home and his money defenseless, Marner is not uneasy. His feeling of security has become a habit, as he's never had reason before to suspect a thief might take his **gold**. Marner is looking forward to a gift of cooked pork for his supper and to pouring over his treasured gold in the evening.

Silas Marner's false sense of security in leaving his home unlocked is the result of habit. Habits and familiarity may prevent one from seeing a potential problem. This is different than the faith in benevolence that Marner held previously. He does not believe he is protected or looked after.

Marner had ventured out earlier because he recalled he needed to purchase a fine twine for the next day's weaving project and didn't want to lose time in the morning with a trip into the village. And so he set off through the mist and rain, leaving his door unlocked, the latch tied to help string up his cooking supper. Upon entering his home, Marner's poor eyesight notices no difference, and he sits down to tend his supper.

Marner's fixation with accomplishing as much weaving as possible leads to his evening outing. His obsession with the gold allows it to be stolen. Marner's poor eyesight overlooks the marks of an intruder in his home. His nearsightedness may also represent a metaphorical blindness to everything he is missing in life.

Silas Marner has lost all his faith, and his isolation has turned his power of loving onto only his **gold**. He decides to take out his gold before supper and admire it as he eats. He removes the bricks without noticing any change and sees the empty hole. Shocked and shaking, Marner at first hopes he himself moved the gold and searches every inch of his cottage until he must face the absence of the gold. He cries aloud, a desperate, desolate cry.

Marner's reaction to losing the gold transitions from disbelief and denial to incredible pain. His emotions resemble those one might experience at the loss of a loved one. He grieves for his gold, which was the object of his love and attention.

Marner wonders suddenly if he has been robbed, but it had appeared to him as if the sand and the bricks had been unmoved. Was it some cruel supernatural power, and not a human thief, who had taken his **gold**? His thoughts fix on Jem Rodney as the probable thief. Jem had once lingered too long on a visit to Marner's house, which had irritated the weaver. Marner feels he must go and proclaim his loss in the village, not so any thief can be punished, but so that he can reclaim his property.

Marner considers the possibility of a supernatural "thief" rather than a robber who entered his home. Having lost faith in a benevolent power, he is nevertheless quick to think of a divine explanation for his loss, attributing it to some evil force. He also considers Jem who he suspects because of Jem's attempted socializing, which Marner misunderstood and disliked.

Marner runs to the Rainbow, which he thinks of as a place where the most prominent people of **Raveloe**, and those most likely to help him, pass the time. The nice parlor at the Rainbow is dark that night, as the important townsfolk at all at Mrs. Osgood's birthday dance. The bar where the lesser townsfolk gather is well occupied and Silas Marner stumbles into that crowded room.

The Rainbow is the social center of Raveloe where conversation occurs and diverse folks gather together. In appealing to his fellow men, Marner is rejoining society and placing some trust in the power of others to help, rather than hurt, him. Need forces Marner to connect with other people.

CHAPTER 6

The conversation is lively when Silas Marner enters, having reached a pitch after a slow and quiet start to the evening. Earlier in the evening, Mr. Snell, the landlord, had started conversation by asking the butcher about the fine animal he'd bought the previous day. The farrier asks if the animal was a red Durham, a type of cow, and says he knows the only red Durhams in the area come from Mr. Lammeter. Quickly the discussion between butcher and farrier becomes heated.

A heated discussion between the butcher and the farrier on the subject of a cow brings to life the world of Raveloe. The simplicity and passion of the villagers is apparent. Mr. Snell, as the landlord, is also the instigator of conversation, community, and agreement. The richness of these secondary characters adds depth to the novel.

To dispel the argument between the butcher and the farrier, Mr. Snell appeals to the elderly Mr. Macey who remembers when Mr. Lammeter's father moved to **Raveloe**. Mr. Macey, tailor and parish clerk, says he prefers to let the young ones talk, and the young deputy, Mr. Tookey, taking offence, says he's not one to speak out of his place. Mr. Winthrop and Mr. Macey tease Mr. Tookey about his poor singing in the choir, and receive laughs from the whole group.

Mr. Macey, as an elderly figure, brings a sense of tradition and history to the Raveloe villagers gathered at the pub. The generational gap between Mr. Macey and Mr. Tookey results in several comical struggles in which both the old and the young are convinced they are each right.

The landlord settles the disagreement among the group, as Mr. Macey bemoans the absence of great musicians in **Raveloe**, when there used to be some in the village. Mr. Macey speaks warmly of Mr. Lammeter's father. He reports that the man sold his own land to move to the village and rent land after his wife died. While such a choice may seem odd to the villagers, Mr. Macey notes that there are reasons for certain things that no one knows.

Mr. Macey's account of Raveloe's past adds more depth and richness to the portrait of this quiet little village. His story of Mr. Lammeter includes the Raveloe philosophy that there are events and reasons beyond human understanding, a viewpoint also expressed by Dolly Winthrop.

Mr. Macey recounts the locally famous tale of Mr. Lammeter the younger's marriage to Miss Osgood. The elderly pastor, Mr. Drumlow, misspoke during the marriage vows, asking whether the bride would take this woman for her wedded husband, and the groom would take this man for his wedded wife. No one else seemed to notice the error except for Mr. Macey, the parish clerk. Mr. Macey wondered if the words themselves or the meaning behind them had more weight in securing Mr. Lammeter and Miss Osgood in marriage.

The anecdote of Mr. Lammeter and Miss Osgood's wedding ceremony serves both as a humorous story and as a portrait of the small and insular Raveloe society. A story like this one has been preserved and retold. Little of note or excitement must happen in Raveloe to give this small dramatic tale the interest and humor that it has.

In confusion, Mr. Macey later, respectfully, pointed out the problem to Mr. Drumlow, only to be reassured that the register, and not the words or the meaning, secures a marriage officially. Mr. Macey's audience in the Rainbow has listened to this familiar tale with the air of hearing a favorite tune, and, upon its conclusion, question him further about Mr. Lammeter's land and stables.

Raveloe villagers mean well and yet they often choose the ideas or opinions they find least troublesome. Mr. Macey is happy to accept Mr. Drumlow's reply and does not question its truth. The listeners in the Rainbow treat the tale as a local favorite.

Mr. Macey says that if you go to Mr. Lammeter's deserted stables at night you'll see lights and hear horses inside. The farrier, Mr. Dowlas, is skeptical and dares anyone else to visit the stables with him at night. Ben Winthrop points out that anyone else believing the ghost story would be unlikely to risk such a thing. Mr. Snell attempts to settle this new disagreement by pointing out that some people can probably see ghosts, while others cannot. Such ability is like the sense of smell, which his wife has lost. She cannot smell what is right in front of her, and the landlord says he's never seen a ghost because he doesn't have the smell for them.

The pub conversation moves to the topic of ghosts, further evidence of the backwardness of thought in the village. Superstition and fear of the unknown holds significant sway over the uneducated villagers. And while some scoff at the idea of ghosts, others attempt to explain their presence and who can see them. The discussion of ghosts also sets the tone for Marner's sudden and startling arrival.

CHAPTER 7

Just as the farrier is scoffing again at ghosts, Silas Marner appears like an apparition in the midst of the group. Everyone is startled and Mr. Macey feels a brief triumph at this evidence to support his theory that Marner's soul becomes loose from his body while he is in one of his fits. The landlord is the first to speak to Marner, who finally gasps that he has been robbed.

Silas Marner's appearance in the pub like an apparition causes Mr. Macey to reflect on his theory that Marner's soul can come lose for his body during a fit. A supernatural, rather than a physical or medical, explanation is given. The impressionable villagers are stunned by his appearance.

The landlord calls to Jem Rodney to calm Marner down, but the young man has no interest in approaching Marner, still apprehensive of his ghostly appearance. Marner whirls on Jem and accuses him of stealing his **gold**. The landlord encourages Marner to sit down and to share his full story and the others finally speak up in curiosity. At first slightly suspicious, the others are soon convinced by Marner's simple and apparent distress as his story unfolds. Marner feels, but does not recognize, the stirring of old feelings of faith and community as he sits in the circle of attentive listeners.

While Marner is perceived as a suspicious character, the villagers begin to trust him because of his obvious emotional distress. They do not suppose anyone could fake such emotions and trust they are genuine. Marner's behavior is erratic, as he wildly accuses Jem Rodney of being the robber. But he is not entirely unaware of the powerful community feeling in the Rainbow, and he responds to them.

The group at the Rainbow feels someone or something other than a human thief must have completed the crime of robbery because of its perfect timing with Marner's brief and unique absence from home and the appearance that nothing else had been touched or changed in the cottage. Marner is urged to not point a finger at Jem Rodney, or to accuse the innocent, and upon hearing this he is moved by the memory of his own false accusation and apologizes to Jem. The farrier believes Marner has been robbed by a passing tramp and points out that Marner's eyesight is poor and he might have overlooked footprints or other slight disturbances.

The villagers consider, as Marner did, a supernatural explanation for the robbery. The supernatural is, at this time period and in this community, considered as legitimate an explanation as a rational account of events, such as robbery by a passing tramp. Marner's realization that he has falsely accused Jem causes him to think of his own past and reflect on injustice, perhaps softening his heart a little as he realizes that he, too, can err.

The farrier proposes going with Marner to the constable's home, where he is ill, and asking him to appointment another man as his temporary deputy, a role the farrier hopes to fill. The landlord is also interested in going with Marner to the constable's home, and Mr. Macey offers himself as a fitting temporary deputy. An argument breaks out, which is once again resolved by the landlord. The farrier consents to go along, but without a specific interest in being appointed deputy, and the three set off into the rainy night.

The disagreement among the villagers as to who is best suited to serve as a deputy constable on Marner's case is ironically contrasted to Marner's distress. The villagers squabble over self-importance when they should be focusing on what is best for Marner. Their good intentions are sidetracked by a trivial concern. The villagers seem incapable of talking without arguing.

CHAPTER 8

Godfrey Cass returns home from Mrs. Osgood's party to find Dunstan has not returned. His thoughts are too occupied with having seen Miss Nancy Lammeter, and despair that he cannot free himself from his secret wife, in order to dwell on Dunstan's absence. The next day, the whole of **Raveloe** is fascinated by the story of Silas Marner's robbery. A close examination of the area near Marner's cottage produces a tinderbox found in the mud. Many of the villagers are convinced that the tinderbox is connected with the robbery, while others maintain that Marner is fabricating his story or partly crazy. Mr. Macey is convinced of supernatural intervention in Silas Marner's robbery.

Dunstan's absence indicates that something above and beyond the robbery of Marner may have occurred. The village unites around the story of Marner's loss. In a village where everyone knows each other the idea of a thief is shocking and the villagers conclude that it must be an outsider, and one who owned the found tinderbox. The villagers, like Dunstan, are not afraid to build ideas and actions upon poorly grounded assumptions.

At the Rainbow, Mr. Crackenthorp (the rector). Squire Cass, and several others carry out an investigation of the tinderbox. The landlord Mr. Snell, now appointed deputy constable, recalls a peddler who stopped in for a drink a month earlier and who stated that he carried a tinderbox to light his pipe. Upon further reflection, Mr. Snell recalls his foreignness and a certain look in his eye, which he had disliked.

The peddler who is connected with the robbery exemplifies the Raveloe community's fear of the outsider. The most incriminating detail that Mr. Snell can recall about the peddler is his "foreignness." To be foreign is nearly the same as being a criminal, in the minds of the villagers.

Mr. Crackenthorp asks if the peddler wore earrings. Mr. Snell can't recall, but as the peddler stopped at nearly every house in town, the question is posed to the villagers of **Raveloe**. Through the power of this suggestive question being passed among the villagers, there are at least two who are quickly able to declare, with certainty, that they noticed earrings in the peddler's ears.

The question over whether or not the peddler wore earrings demonstrates the impressionable nature of the uneducated villagers. The villagers are always well intentioned, however, they are strongly influenced by superstition, fear, and prejudice.

Silas Marner's memory of the peddler is generally disappointing: he recalls the man turning away at once and not entering his house when Marner wasn't interested in buying anything. The villagers wondered that the peddler didn't murder Marner because earring-wearing individuals have been known to resort to murder. Godfrey Cass treats the matter lightly. He recalls that the peddler was rather a merry fellow, but his opinion is dismissed as the talk of youth.

Despite Marner's innocuous memory of the peddler, fear of the individual has escalated from his foreignness to the likelihood of him being a murderer. Godfrey Cass's lighthearted response sets him apart from the superstition and gossip of the villagers.

By afternoon, Godfrey's concern about Dunstan's absence has grown and he leaves for Batherley. He worries that perhaps Dunstan has vanished with the money from selling Wildfire, only to return at the end of the month having gambled away everything. On the road, he runs into Bryce. Bryce reports that he'd been planning to purchase Wildfire only to have learned that he was found dead after Dunstan rode him on the hunt. Godfrey and Bryce suppose that Dunstan is unlikely to return home immediately with such a bad piece of news.

Godfrey's anxiety directs him to seek out what happened to Dunstan and Wildfire. He learns the truth from Bryce. Bryce and Godfrey's assumption that Dunstan is unlikely to return home immediately with such news indicates that Dunstan may have behaved badly before, but returned home later to escape the Squire's passionate, but fleeting, wrath.

Godfrey is convinced that he must now tell his father the whole story of loaning Dunstan the money and why he did so, or else face Dunstan's anger if he returns to find himself blamed by their father. Godfrey thinks that he could take the blame for spending the money himself, and so secure Dunstan's continued silence, but he feels he cannot lie this much. Godfrey is familiar with the Squire's unforgiving nature, but he hopes that his confession will cause the Squire to want to hide his secret marriage rather than turn Godfrey out of his house and expose him.

Godfrey becomes briefly convinced that he must now admit the truth of the matter to his father. He imagines the outcome of his confession in the best possible light. Godfrey can only convince himself to follow the right course of action by working himself into a state of determination and agitation. Telling the truth is more difficult for Godfrey than keeping the secret.

Despite Godfrey's conviction, he awakes the next morning unable to persuade himself that he should tell the Squire everything. He feels again the inclination to rely on the chance of not being betrayed rather than to betray the secret fully himself. What would be wisest, he decides, would to be try and soften his father's anger at Dunstan and to try to keep everything as it had been before the loss of Wildfire and the money.

When Godfrey changes his mind the next day and decides to appease his father and keep the secret, the reader fully feels the futility of Godfrey's attempts to convince himself and his weakness of character. The reader has experienced, in detail, the internal battle of the previous day.

CHAPTER 9

Godfrey rises early the next morning, and, after eating breakfast, waits for the Squire's appearance in the parlor. The Squire is a slovenly man, but one who has always been aware of his own superiority, never having interacted with men of a higher rank, and living among the villagers of **Raveloe** for his whole life. The Squire leads an idle life, but believes youth is the time of folly in a man's life. Godfrey tells his father that there's been a bad piece of luck with Wildfire. His father scoffs at his foolishness and remarks that he is short of money, and mentions that some of his tenants are not inclined to pay their rent.

The Squire is a one-dimensional character: he does not change over the course of the novel. His character, however, is detailed and reveals aspects of Godfrey's character and Raveloe society. His indulgences have contributed to his son's indecisiveness. His position at the top of Raveloe society means that he employs others and his management impacts the lives of villagers.

Godfrey tells his father that Wildfire has been killed when Dunstan rode him to the hunt. The result of this is that he doesn't have the money to repay his father. Fowler, their tenant, did pay his rent to Godfrey, but Godfrey loaned the money to Dunstan hoping to repay his father earlier. His father is outraged that Godfrey would let Dunstan have the money and proclaims that there must be some lie at the bottom of this situation. With sudden perception, the Squire accuses Godfrey of having been up to some trick and bribing Dunstan with the money to keep quiet. Fearfully, Godfrey claims it was only some foolishness between Dunstan and himself.

Godfrey reports the true story to his father, but omits the most significant detail: his secret marriage and Dunstan's knowledge of it. When Squire Cass focuses on this omission and wonders why Godfrey would give the money to Dunstan, Godfrey is startled into lying further rather than telling the truth. His instinct is for self-preservation, which means hiding the truth, when he is caught by his father's question.

Squire Cass declares that it's time Godfrey outgrew any foolishness. He has been a good father, he feels, and his sons have turned into good-for-nothing fellows. Godfrey reflects that his father's indulgence has not always been helpful in guiding them, and wishes for some discipline in his life. Squire Cass mentions that he's never dissuaded his son from marrying Nancy Lammeter who he seemed interested in, whereas some fathers might forbid their sons from making certain matches. He questions why Godfrey hasn't proposed to her, and pressures him to do so.

Squire Cass and Godfrey both feel as if the other is in the wrong when it comes to their father-son relationship. Squire Cass feels it is high time his sons repaid his fatherly kindness and financial support, and Godfrey wishes his father had guided him with discipline and strength of character. Squire Cass's questions about Nancy cause Godfrey to lie further.

Squire Cass says he'll ask for Mr. Lammeter's daughter's hand for his son himself, if only cowardice is holding Godfrey back. Godfrey pleads with his father to let the matter alone, to let him speak for himself, and to not say anything about it. The Squire replies that he'll do as he chooses and then sends Godfrey away to sell Dunstan's horse and to tell his brother that he need not bother returning home. Godfrey says he has no idea where his brother is and departs unsure if he should feel relieved by the outcome of his conversation with his father.

Squire Cass's statement that he'll do what he chooses gives a perfect portrait of his character. He is less interested in Godfrey's plea that his father allows him to manage his own affairs than he is in doing what suits himself at any given moment. The Squire's rejection of Dunstan shows that he is capable of dismissing his sons on the basis of their behavior, and with little thought or feeling. The Squire does not treat his sons with respect or love, a direct contrast to how Marner treats Eppie.

Favorable Chance takes over the minds of any men in unfavorable circumstances, and Godfrey's hopes all depend on some chance outcome that will settle everything for him. Rather than admit to his circumstances, he hopes that a chance occurrence will change his situation before his father can make any comments to Mr. Lammeter about a union between their children.

Again chance is the governing force in Godfrey's life. He hopes, rather than praying or believing, that his circumstances will change and free him from his dreadful secret in time.

CHAPTER 10

When Justice Malam is notified of Silas Marner's robbery and the tinderbox, an inquiry is sent out about the peddler in question. But as no news arrives over the next few weeks, the villagers of **Raveloe** slowly lose interest in Silas Marner's robbery. Dunstan's disappearance on the same day as the robbery is not seen as remarkable. Even if any villager were able to connect these two events, he or she would not be likely to share a theory that would cast an unfavorable light on the Squire's family. Furthermore, the upcoming Christmas season, complete with festivities, food, and drink, is likely to discourage any thoughts on the subject.

Silas Marner's robbery loses the interest of the villagers when it is no longer new and exciting news. Even after Dunstan's disappearance, the villagers would be unlikely to attribute any true evil to a member of Squire Cass's family because they are so used to seeing the Cass's as their superiors. The author emphasizes the power of holiday celebration to turn these villagers' minds away from any real analysis of either event. The people are distracted by the pleasures of the season.

When the villagers speak of the robbery, disagreements continue as to whether the robber was a man or a supernatural force. As interest in the case falls away, Silas Marner's grief continues. The basis for his continued work and existence has been removed, and often, as he sits weaving, he moans aloud, in pain and loneliness. Yet, his misfortune has changed his reputation in **Raveloe** and his neighbors become more likely to help him than to avoid him.

Silas Marner has lost his direction and purpose in life with the loss of his gold. His misfortune, however, has improved his relationship with his neighbors. Because he is no longer self-sufficient and independent, he must reach out to the villagers and the villagers, for their part, do not suspect him of any evil powers. He is pitied, rather than feared.

Neighbors share gifts of pork and black puddings with Silas Marner, as well as kind words. Mr. Macey encourages Marner to get a Sunday suit and to start attending church. Mrs. Dolly Winthrop also visits Marner with the purpose of asking him to come to church. While the villagers of **Raveloe** are not religious churchgoers, it is still expected that one attend church occasionally. Mrs. Winthrop is a patient and kind woman, who also loves to be working and taking on new tasks, and such a woman is naturally drawn to Silas Marner and his troubles.

In addition to gifts, Marner receives advice from his neighbors, and this advice is most often encouragement to attend church. Dolly Winthrop's interest in Marner and her advice that he comes to Sunday service depends on her belief in the goodness of the world and the church.

One Sunday afternoon, Mrs. Winthrop brings cakes and her little son Aaron along with her as she goes to visit Silas Marner. Marner receives them without impatience. Before the loss of his **gold**, any interruption would cause him to lose work time and profit, but after his loss he is left groping in the darkness of loneliness, with the vague sense that any help he might receive could come from other human beings.

Marner is more vulnerable after the loss of his gold and therefore unresisting to Mrs. Winthrop's determined charity. His vague understanding that other humans could help him hints that he will eventually discover the help, love, and assistance that he can receive from others.

Mrs. Winthrop gives Silas Marner the cakes, which she has inscribed with letters she's seen in church: I.H.S. Neither of them can understand the meaning of the letters, but Mrs. Winthrop says they must be good letters to appear in church. Marner is struck by her kindness and thanks her with genuine feeling. Mrs. Winthrop encourages Marner to attend church on the upcoming Christmas day. Marner says he's never been to church, only to the chapel in **Lantern Yard**.

Mrs. Winthrop's inscribed cakes demonstrate that faith and belief need not be grounded in knowledge. Dolly believes in the goodness of anything associated with church or religion even if she cannot understand it. Marner is used to a different religious community and practices than those of Raveloe.

Mrs. Winthrop tells him that it's never too late to turn over a new leaf by coming to church. Her simple **Raveloe** theology, in which she refers to the divine "They" or "Them," has little impact on Silas Marner because it does not resemble the faith he had known in **Lantern Yard**. Flustered by her discussion, Marner attempts to return her good will by offering Aaron a bit of the cakes. At his mother's bidding, Aaron sings, "God rest you merry, gentlemen" for Marner. Mrs. Winthrop hopes that hearing the Christmas music will help entice Marner to come to church.

Mrs. Winthrop's use of the plural pronoun to refer to God or the divine reflects the difference between her faith and the faith Marner held in Lantern Yard. "They" implies a divine that does not need to fit the exact description of the traditional Christian God. Dolly Winthrop's God is ambiguous, not benevolent or perfect, but all knowing. Aaron's childish innocence shines through in his song.

Silas Marner tries again to respond to her kindness in the only way he knows, by offering Aaron more cake. Dolly Winthrop urges him again to stop working on Sundays and then the pair takes their leave. Marner is somewhat relieved to be alone to weave and mourn in peace. Marner spends his Christmas day alone, a very different person from the Silas Marner who had once loved and trusted other men and in an unseen goodness.

Marner's confused attempt to respond to Mrs. Winthrop's kindness by offering Aaron a cake demonstrates how unfamiliar he has become with adult interactions. He is relieved to be alone and to spend Christmas in isolation. He has grown disused to human society and what it can offer him.

In **Raveloe**, the bells ring merrily on Christmas and the villagers celebrate. At Squire Cass's family party, no one remarks on Dunstan's absence. The affair is quiet with only the doctor and his wife, uncle and aunt Kimble, visiting the Red House. On New Year's Eve, however, Squire Cass always hosts a large party where all the society of Raveloe and the neighboring village of Tarley gather. Godfrey is looking forward to this party, half anxious that Dunstan will return and reveal his secret and half eager to see Nancy Lammeter and to dance with her.

Squire Cass's humble Christmas gathering sparks enthusiasm for the upcoming extravagant New Year's party. Godfrey's anticipation of seeing Nancy is only heightened by Dunstan's prolonged absence, which is mixed with his fear that his brother may return. Godfrey fears Dunstan's power, even in his absence.

CHAPTER 11

Miss Nancy Lammeter arrives at the Red House with her father on New Year's Eve. She sees Godfrey standing at the door, and wishes she could have her sister Priscilla at her side to cast Godfrey's attention onto someone else. She does not know what to make of Godfrey's strangeness, his fluctuating interest in her, and she has determined to not marry him. As Godfrey lifts her down from her carriage, Nancy hides her confusion and hurries inside.

Nancy Lammeter's interactions with Godfrey reveal her character to be both proper and strongly grounded in her moral beliefs. She has determined to not marry a man who appears so inconsistent to her, and yet she is also a young woman who cannot help but be flattered by his attention and, perhaps, to sense his inner goodness (despite his weakness of character).

Mrs. Kimble, the Squire's sister and the doctor's wife, greets Nancy. In nearly every bedroom in the house, women are getting dressed and ready for the tea and the dance. Nancy finds her way to the Blue Room where her and her sister's things were delivered earlier in the day. She meets her aunt Mrs. Osgood and her aunt's guests, the Miss Gunns, who are similar to her aunt in thought and opinion.

The New Year's Eve event provides a portrait of the time period, from the details of the women's preparations for the evening to the extravagant house that can accommodate many guests. The manners of Nancy, her aunt, and the Miss Gunns show the civil society author George Eliot observed.

Nancy prepares for the evening. Everything she owns is neat and pure. When she is ready, the Miss Gunns think she looks completely perfect other than her hands, which reveal the marks of labor, but Nancy is not ashamed of her hard work. Her speech, however, shows her lack of education. Otherwise, Nancy has all the delicacy, honor, and refined personal habits of a lady, in addition to a slight pride and over-commitment to her strongly held opinions.

Nancy 's appearance reflects her character: her well cared for belongings demonstrate her diligence, and her work-worn hands show her humility and her active nature. Nancy 's uneducated speech is the result of how little Raveloe values freethinking and education, regardless on one's place in society.

Nancy's older sister Priscilla arrives and comments on her and Nancy's matching gowns. Nancy wants her and her sister to match despite the fact that the color of their gowns does not flatter Priscilla. However, Priscilla cheerfully owns to being ugly, and to having no interest in marrying. Once the Miss Gunns and their aunt leave, Nancy insists that she had wanted her sister to choose the color of their gowns. Priscilla says it would be silly for them to dress to match her coloring and skin, but she does find fault with Nancy's insistence that sisters should dress alike.

Priscilla's character creates a foil for Nancy's. Where Priscilla is blunt, Nancy is shy; where Priscilla is honest, Nancy is sensitive to others' feelings. The matching outfits link the two as sisters, despite their personality differences. Priscilla's deference to her young sister's gown color highlights Nancy's uniquely beautiful appearance for a woman in Raveloe society.

Priscilla remarks that she'd rather see the men fawning over Nancy, and Nancy, blushing, says she won't ever marry. To which Priscilla responds that one old maid among two sisters is enough. The sisters descend to the parlor and Godfrey guides Nancy to a seat near himself. Surrounded by the Squire's family's wealth, Nancy is very conscious of her decision to never marry Godfrey, for she feels she could not marry a man so careless of his character. However, her love for him has caused her to vow that she will never marry another.

Nancy struggles with her vow to not marry Godfrey, in conversation with her sister and in her own heart. Her love for Godfrey, which is rarely the focus in the novel, is proven by her decision to never marry if Godfrey is not the man. Nancy's love for Godfrey often conflicts with what is right, as she later struggles with the idea of adopting a child to make her husband happy.

Nancy blushes as she takes her seat and Mr. Crackenthorp teases her that he saw the roses blooming on New Year's eve. The Squire also compliments Nancy, and Mr. Lammeter is flattered, but reluctant at the thought of a union between his daughter and the Squire's son. He feels Godfrey would have to make some changes before he would consent to such a marriage. Dr. Kimble compliments Priscilla's pork pie, and then her witty responses. The cheerful doctor skips to Nancy's side and implores her for a dance. Squire Cass teases him, telling him that Godfrey must have secured the first dance with Nancy. Godfrey asks, with as little awkwardness as possible, if Nancy will dance with him.

Dr. Kimble is a minor character who, nevertheless, has life and depth. George Eliot brings the world of Raveloe to life through her portraits of secondary characters. Squire Cass, Mr. Lammeter, and Dr. Kimble all note Nancy's beauty in this scene. Despite Nancy's moral resoluteness, her beauty is her most visible characteristic to the members of Raveloe society. Priscilla, lacking beauty, is noted for other abilities.

Hearing the fiddle beginning in the hall, Squire Cass calls the fiddler into the dining room as the young people wish impatiently for the end of the meal and the beginning of the dance. With another lively tune, the fiddler leads a procession into the White Parlour and the dancing begins. The older folks lead the early dances before sitting down to cards, and upholding this proper tradition seems to reinforce **Raveloe**'s society and quality. Those villagers sitting and watching comment upon the dancers. Mr. Macey and Ben Winthrop comment upon the figures of the dancers, and, while Mr. Macey criticizes Godfrey's shoulders and coat, Mr. Winthrop can find no fault in him.

The fiddle playing, dancing, and card playing all follow a familiar pattern at Squire Cass's party. Onlookers feel that the very society of Raveloe is strengthened and glorified by maintaining such traditions. What is right and proper corresponds to what has always been done. The onlookers comment upon the dancing, another tradition in which the villagers take pride in their society through the beauty and skill of the dancers.

In the middle of the dance, Nancy's skirt is caught under the Squire's foot and stitches are torn out at the waist of her dress. Godfrey leads her into the adjoining parlor until Priscilla can come help her fix her dress. Godfrey tells her how much dancing with her matters to him and asks if she could ever forgive him for the past. Nancy replies that she'd be happy to see any person improve his character, but that it would be better if such an improvement were not necessary. Priscilla's appearance to fix the dress interrupts their confrontation.

The chance event of Nancy's torn skirt allows Godfrey the opportunity to speak with her and to make his feelings more apparent to her. Chance governs Godfrey's life, both in keeping or revealing his secret, and in allowing him time with Nancy. Nancy upholds her moral conviction that Godfrey's character does not meet her standards, in large part because he is so inconstant and relies on chance rather than his own moral understanding of right and wrong.

CHAPTER 12

While Godfrey is caught up in spending his precious moment with Nancy, his wife, unknown to him, is making her way through the village to the Red House. Molly, his wife, has decided to appear at the Squire's party with her child in her arms and reveal, once and for all, the secret connection between herself and Godfrey. Molly knows that the real cause of her poverty is not Godfrey's treatment of her but her opium addiction. However, she wants to punish her husband who is well off.

Molly's attempt to reveal her connection with Godfrey is the result of bitterness. She hopes to bring her unhappiness upon him too and knows that the best way to do this is to shame him in public. The power of public opinion is evident in Molly's knowledge that she could punish her husband by revealing their connection to Raveloe society.

As she walks through the snow, she takes a dose of opium, seeking comfort. Due to the cold, her weariness, and the drug, she is overcome by a longing to sleep. She collapses in some bushes, and relaxes her hold on her daughter. A light on the snow catches the child's eye and she follows it to the open door of Silas Marner's cottage. She wanders inside and falls asleep on an old sack near the warm **hearth**.

Molly's downfall is her addiction to opium. Because she is so dependent on the drug she cannot resist taking it and losing both her life and her vengeance on Godfrey. Molly's death, which occurs as she is on her way to hurt Godfrey, is her moral punishment.

In the weeks since the loss of his money, Silas Marner has formed the habit of opening his door from time to time and looking out as if he thought his money might be coming back to him. On New Year's Eve, as he peered out his door, he was frozen in one of his trances, his eyes fixed and unseeing. Upon recovering from his trance, Marner felt that no time had passed and, turning to his **hearth**, he saw, with his poor vision, his **gold** on the hearth.

Marner's sense that his gold could come back to him prepares both the character and the reader for the link between the golden haired child and the lost gold. Marner even mistakes her for his gold at first, indicating to the reader that one thing is intended to replace the other in Marner's life.

Stretching his hand out to his returned **gold**, Silas Marner touches curly hair. Marner examines the sleeping child. Is this a dream? He wonders. He cannot understand how this child could have entered his house without his knowledge and he feels as if it must have appeared by some supernatural method because his imagination cannot supply a rational explanation.

Marner's inclination to believe the child has appeared by supernatural means, just as he thought his gold might have disappeared through non-human intervention, demonstrates how willing he is to turn to the unexplainable to account for an event in his life.

The child awakens, crying, and Silas Marner is kept busy feeding her porridge and following her tottering steps about his house. He removes her wet boots and realizes, finally, that she must have been walking in the snow and entered his house on foot. As he opens the door, the child cries, "Mammy!" He notices footprints in the snow and follows them to discover the human body collapsed in the bush and half-covered with snow.

The child's wet boots are a concrete piece of evidence pointing out her arrival by realistic means. The child's limited speech can identify the dead woman as her mother, but she is young enough to not understand what is happening. She is innocently trusting of the weaver.

CHAPTER 13

After the early suppertime at the Red House, festivities reached a stage of jolliness and freedom and the servants and villagers crowded to the doors of the white parlor to look on the dancing. Nancy is seated with her father, as Godfrey stands a little ways off, attempting to avoid his father's jokes about his and Nancy's relationship. At that moment, Silas Marner appears in the doorway carrying Godfrey's own child. Marner says he's looking for the doctor and that he has found a woman in the snow near the **Stone Pits**, dead, he thinks. Godfrey feels a sudden terror that the woman might not actually be dead.

All is normal at the Red House until Marner's sudden appearance. Like his earlier appearance at the Rainbow, he interrupts a moment of joviality and startles everyone. Godfrey's reaction is clearly the strongest because, with the arrival of his child, his secret life has collided with his happiness in the Red House. Godfrey's wish that his wife be dead shows his desperation and dislike for the woman, his connection to her, and his fundamental weakness as a person who would rather evade responsibility by any means necessary.

The ladies encourage Silas Marner to leave the child there, but he finds he cannot part with it. Godfrey offers to get Mrs. Winthrop for assistance, as Dr. Kimble heads toward the **Stone Pits** with Marner. Dolly tells Godfrey he need not come all the way to the cottage with her, but he insists. He waits outside the cottage as Dr. Kimble inspects the body, his thoughts jumping between hope and fear about the two outcomes of the situation. Dr. Kimble leaves the cottage and pronounces her dead.

Marner's inability to part with the child shows the strong bond he is already forming with the little girl. Godfrey's agitation causes him to leave the party to learn the truth about his wife. It is noteworthy that he is most preoccupied with the outcomes of life or death and how that will affect his life rather than concerned for his child, or his wife.

Godfrey enters the cottage to see his secret wife's body, but casts her only one glance. He asks Silas Marner if he'll take the child to the parish the next day. Marner says he wishes to keep the child. His money's gone and this child has appeared from the unknown. Godfrey gives Marner some money toward buying clothes for the child. Godfrey overtakes Dr. Kimble on the walk back and lies easily about his willingness to leave the party. With a sense of relief and gladness, he reappears in the White Parlor.

Godfrey's gesture of giving Marner money for the child's clothes reduces his relationship with his daughter to a monetary transaction. The only responsibility he feels for her can be covered with money. Godfrey lies to deceive Dr. Kimble, Marner, and Dolly about his true interest in the situation. He is relieved and glad, as he has not been up until this point in the novel.

Godfrey feels strongly the opportunity he has from this point onward to say tender things to Nancy and to make promises to her. He realizes that Dunstan may still return and betray his secret, but he hopes to persuade Dunstan to be silent. What would the point be now of confessing the truth and losing what he has finally gained: his happiness with Nancy Lammeter?

Now that his happiness with Nancy is achievable, Godfrey has no interest in revealing the truth. This indicates that a past interest in telling his story was created from fear and anxiety and not any inclination to integrity. He wishes to have his happiness with Nancy, finally.

CHAPTER 14

Molly's burial occurs without great notice, and without any tears, but her death has redirected the lives of several individuals in **Raveloe**. Silas Marner's decision to raise the child is met with surprise, and women throughout the village advise him on what he must do to care for the girl. Dolly Winthrop is the one whom Marner prefers to take advice from. She talks with Marner about the disappearance of his money and the appearance of the girl, saying it's like the night and the morning, or sleeping and waking…one goes only to be replaced by the other.

Molly's death is characterized as fate, not chance, that has redirected several lives in Raveloe. Marner's interest in raising the child is out of character for a man at this time period. It is only the women of Raveloe, and not other men, who give him help and advice about raising children. Dolly Winthrop's growing friendship with Marner allows the two to discuss his lost money and the found little girl.

While Silas Marner appreciates Dolly's advice, he prefers to do everything he can himself to care for the little girl. Marner decides to tie the child's leg to his loom with a long linen strip while he works, in order to keep her out of mischief. Dolly tells Marner that he must bring the girl to church and have her christened in order to raise her properly. Christening is not a religious concept Marner was exposed to in **Lantern Yard**.

Marner's decision to tie the girl to his loom to keep her out of trouble may shock a modern audience, but is perfectly acceptable within the context of the book. Bringing her to church and christening her makes the child officially a part of Raveloe society, accepted by their religious customs.

Silas Marner decides to do whatever he can that is best for the girl, and to have her christened he names her Hephzibah after his mother and deceased little sister. Dolly says she ought to have a nickname, and Marner decides to call her Eppie. Marner finally attends church for Eppie's christening, but the practices and congregation are so different than what he knew in **Lantern Yard** that he cannot identify any of the experience with his old faith.

Marner's choice of Eppie's name links him to his family and his own youth. Finally attending church, however, does not remind him of his past for the church of Raveloe is vastly different. The religious organizations in the book highlight the diversity of practices and ideas within Christianity at this time.

Silas Marner's **gold**, when it had been the center of his attention, needed nothing, and could be worshipped in isolation. Eppie, on the other hand, needs many things that carry his attention away from his solitary weaving and form ties between him and his neighbors. As he walks outside with Eppie, Marner begins to again gather the herbs for remedies that had once interested him. As the child grows, Marner's mind grows back into his memories, allowing him to think on a distant past he had tried to forget for years.

In growing and changing in order to help and care for Eppie, part of Marner's change is a renewal of ideas and memories from his past, such as his collection of herbs. The gold had closed off his heart, and also his memories, for it did not cause him to think about and face his past, as Eppie's presence does.

Eppie grows into a troublesome toddler, but Marner finds he never has the heart to punish her despite Dolly Winthrop's insistence that some discipline is for her own good. Because Marner will not hit or scold his daughter, Dolly suggests shutting her in the coal hole as a form of punishment. Marner fears punishing her because he worries she will love him less afterwards.

Marner cannot bear the idea of punishment because of his desperate need for Eppie's love. Marner may fear punishment because of his past, in which he was punished for something he did not do. Marner's failure to discipline Eppie recalls the Squire's failure to discipline his sons, though there is a sense that Marner refrains because of his love for Eppie while the Squire's indulgence is founded not in love but laziness.

One day, however, Eppie causes more mischief than usual. Using Marner's scissors, she cuts herself free of the linen strip and runs outside. When next Marner reaches for his scissors, he discovers Eppie is gone and instantly fears she has fallen in the **Stone Pit** or is hurt or dead. When he finds her in the field, he is so relieved that he hugs and kisses her, only remembering, after carrying her home, that he should discipline her. Feeling he is using a strong measure, he shuts her in the coal hole for just a moment. Later, after Eppie's bath, Marner turns around to find her happily back in the coal hole.

Eppie's act of cutting herself free of her tie to the loom shows not only how strongly Marner clings to her, but may remind readers that, at some point, most children are cut free from their parents. Marner is concerned primarily for her safety, rather than disciplining her, and he does not punish her immediately. The failure of the punishment portrays Marner as an inexperienced parent.

The failure of the coal hole punishment discourages Marner from ever again attempting to discipline Eppie. Marner carries the little girl with him on journeys and deliveries. Everywhere the pair goes they are met with cheerfulness, questions, and neighbors eager to talk about the child. The children of the village are no longer afraid to approach Marner when Eppie is with him. She links Marner with the community and with other people. He no longer is interested in **gold**, other than as a means to secure what Eppie needs.

Eppie receives not only Marner's unwavering kindness, but his full attention. Their bond strengthens from the time they spend together, but also through Marner's new engagement with Raveloe life and society. Eppie directs and consumes his life as much as his gold did, but this causes him to interact with others rather than withdraw.

In the olden days, there were stories of angels who descended to earth to save men from destruction. While such angels may no longer be seen, men may still be guided from destruction, even by the hand of a child.

George Eliot presents Eppie as an angel-like figure, golden-haired and innocent. Her role in Marner's life is to save him from isolation and darkness, as an angel might have done.

CHAPTER 15

From a distance, Godfrey watches Eppie grow up in Silas Marner's care. Occasionally he does what he can to help the weaver, but he does not want to do too much and raise suspicion. Godfrey seems determined and firm. Dunstan has not returned and Godfrey no longer feels the threat of his brother's presence. Everyone, including himself, thinks he has reformed and set his feet on a better course. He rides to visit Nancy nearly every day and feels the imminence of his own happiness with Nancy, and their future children. He promises himself, however, that when the opportunity presents itself, he will see that Eppie is well provided for.

Godfrey has transformed in spirit and in behavior. Freed from his secret and Dunstan's presence, he becomes both devoted to Nancy and confident. He consoles himself about Eppie by promising that the time will come when he'll be able to do more for her. However, now that this secret no longer threatens him, Godfrey feels no guilt about having kept the secret: it is not his conscience that has bothered him throughout the book, but a rather selfish concern for his own future.

CHAPTER 16

Sixteen years have passed since Silas Marner discovered Eppie asleep on his **hearth**. The villagers of **Raveloe** are leaving their Sunday morning church service. Godfrey Cass and his wife Nancy depart first, as their humbler neighbors watch them pass. The pair turns to wait for Mr. Lammeter and Priscilla to accompany them as they walk toward the Red House. Silas Marner is impossible to mistake in the church congregation, although his posture, white hair, and near-sightedness are marks of age beyond his actual years. Close by his side is Eppie, now a blond, polite girl of eighteen.

Part Two opens with a reintroduction of the major characters as they leave the church. The visual scene functions like a stage on which each character is presented by the author. The author speaks of the characters as if they are familiar to her readers as old friends might be. For example, Silas Marner is "impossible to mistake" for readers who have "seen" him before.

Aaron Winthrop, now a good-looking young fellow, follows Marner and Eppie from the church. Eppie expresses to her father how much she wishes they had a garden like Mrs. Winthrop's. Aaron quickly volunteers to dig the garden and to bring some soil and plants from his employer, Godfrey Cass's, garden. Eppie makes her father promise he won't work too hard when he and Aaron start the garden that very afternoon.

Aaron's enthusiasm to help Eppie create her garden shows his love for her. The author does not state that Aaron loves Eppie, however the reader can infer so through his actions and conversation. This indirect characterization brings Aaron and his earnest personality to life.

Once Aaron turns back to the village, Eppie skips in happy triumph, declaring that she knew Aaron would volunteer to help. At the cottage, their new brown terrier and tortoise shell kitten greet them, while a mother cat looks on. The cottage has been transformed in many ways, from the presence of these lively pets to the new furniture given by Godfrey Cass. No one in the village is jealous of Mr. Cass's generosity to the poor weaver, for he is regarded as an exceptional, generous person worthy of neighborly help.

Marner and Eppie's new pets are physical indications of the happiness and life in the small cottage. The transformation of the space from a room including only the bare necessities to the home where Marner and Eppie live together is evidence of the change Eppie has brought about in Marner's life. Godfrey Cass's generosity has been unquestioned.

Marner watches Eppie as she prepares their Sunday meal at the **hearth**. He has kept the hearth and never added a grate or oven because it is the precious spot where he found Eppie. After their meal, Marner goes outside in the sunshine to smoke his pipe, a new daily habit of his. He was encouraged to smoke by Dr. Kimble, and he has acquired many such habits and beliefs which are held to be good by **Raveloe** society. By seeking out everything that could help Eppie and add to her happiness, Marner has adapted to Raveloe life.

The hearth is the center of Eppie and Marner's home. It remains unchanged, which shows that Eppie and Marner's familial love for each other remains unchanged. Marner's smoking habit indicates that he will pick up any practices, even personal habits, which he thinks will benefit Eppie's happiness and relationship with Raveloe society.

Marner has opened up his heart so fully that he has even been able to share the story of his early life with Dolly Winthrop. She is confused and grieved by his account of the drawing of lots that falsely demonstrated Marner's guilt. Dolly recognizes that Marner must be troubled most by the betrayal of a divine power that should have caused the lots to show his innocence. Dolly is sure that the powers that be cannot be bad, but she is puzzled by Marner's tale.

Marner's ability to tell Dolly about his past misfortunes allows Dolly to pinpoint the most significant and painful problem: Marner's loss of faith. Dolly's belief will not let her accept that the powers that be could intend Marner any ill will.

One day, Dolly arrives at Marner's with the pronouncement that she has had a sudden realization about his story. She says that there are things in the world that she can't understand, but the power that created all humans knows what's best and understands all things. One must trust that there's a good and right plan bigger than what any individual can understand. Marner says that he finally believes there is good in the world, and that he again feels there's more goodness than he can understand, despite the evils and troubles that also exist.

Dolly is able to reconcile Marner's tale with her own belief system by accepting the fact that there are things she will never understand. She trusts that there was some greater purpose to Marner's false accusation, even if she can't see it. Marner's own faith has been restored, though it is not the same faith. Eppie's love and trust, and his neighbors' friendship, are the new sources of his faith

Marner has been able to talk of his past with Eppie too as she has grown older. He's always been honest with her about her past, and her unknown parentage. Eppie wonders and asks about her mother as she grows up because her interactions with Mrs. Winthrop make her believe having a mother must be very wonderful. With Marner as her father, however, she rarely wonders about her unknown biological father.

Despite Eppie's awareness of her past, it is clear neither she nor Marner ever worry about who her biological father may be. Her mother is of more interest to Eppie. The wedding ring found on her mother's finger indicates that, at some point, everyone will have to face the truth of Molly's marriage.

Eppie and Marner sit outside discussing their garden and the stones they could gather to build a wall that keeps out their donkey. As Eppie points out all the stones they could gather, she skips to edge of the **Stone Pit** only to notice the low water level. Marner says this must be because of the draining in Mr. Osgood's fields that Godfrey Cass has directed.

The Stone Pit is mentioned throughout the novel, as a recurring image. The attention given to the pit, even in a brief passage, prepares the reader for the key role the location will play in the plot of the novel.

After the pair has been sitting a while in silence, Eppie asks her father whether, if she were to be married, she should be married with her mother's ring. She confesses that Aaron Winthrop has asked her to marry him now that he has a lot of gardening work and a steady career. Aaron told Eppie that he'd never take her away from her father, but that they could all live together, so Marner wouldn't need to work at all. Eppie intends to marry Aaron, someday. But at the moment she doesn't want anything to change. Marner reminds her that someday things will change and that he'll keep growing old, and that he'd like to know Eppie would be cared for her whole life.

Eppie refers to her mother's ring, reminding the reader that Godfrey's secret marriage has never been revealed. Eppie and Aaron's plan to marry and move in with Marner is fitting considering the old man's attachment to Eppie. Marner's existence and faith depend on not just Eppie's happiness and time spent with her, but on never separating from her. Marner wants to secure Eppie's future happiness, however, despite his own attachment to her.

CHAPTER 17

At the Red House, Nancy tries to persuade her sister to stay for tea. The Red House has been changed by Nancy's presence, and all is purity and order where some rooms were once dreary or imposing. Priscilla insists that she and their father cannot stay for tea, as there is too much to do on their family farm, which she manages. Before leaving, the two sisters walk alone in the garden and Nancy tells Priscilla that she is contented, but worried about Godfrey and his low spirits.

The beauty and comfort of the Red House, which has been improved by Nancy's orderly management, contrasts the unhappiness at the edges of Godfrey and Nancy's marriage. Nancy chooses to confess her concerns over her husband's low spirits to her sister.

Priscilla is frustrated by men like Godfrey who, she believes, always want what they don't have, but Nancy defends her husband. It's natural and understandable that he wishes he had children because he works hard and wants to have someone he can pass his property and income to, she says. After Priscilla and Mr. Lammeter depart, Godfrey leaves for a walk around the draining fields near the **Stone Pits**. During Godfrey's customary Sunday afternoon walks, Nancy tries to read the Bible, but ends up reflecting. Her thoughts often focus on her own choices and character, replaying memories in her mind to make certain that she has done everything well. "I can do so little—have I done it all well?" She repeatedly asks herself.

Nancy complains to Priscilla about her predicament, but also defends her husband, which Priscilla has little patience for. Nancy's contemplation on Sunday afternoons focuses primarily on the hole in her marriage: she and Godfrey are childless. This situation is linked to Godfrey's past and his unacknowledged biological daughter and it seems Godfrey's past actions must, in a moral sense, be linked with his present unhappiness.

Nancy is hurt by the knowledge that their lack of children has been an aspect of their lives to which Godfrey cannot reconcile himself. Nancy had once prepared a drawer of baby clothes, enthusiastically expecting a child, but only one small dress had ever been used, for a burial dress.

The death of a child of Nancy and Godfrey's, perhaps a stillborn death or an infant death, shows the emotional trauma Nancy and Godfrey have gone through over the years as they've hoped for a child of their own.

Nancy had resisted over the years Godfrey's few attempts to suggest that they adopt a child. Nancy holds strongly to her opinions and principles, and one such principle is her refusal to adopt a child. She feels such a course of action attempts to change the lot in life given by Providence, which would bring about a curse on anyone who tried to get what a high power had determined they were better without. Any child adopted by them would turn out badly.

Nancy's conviction that adoption is wrong is one of her many strongly held, but relatively indefensible, moral beliefs. The villagers of Raveloe do not always make rational decisions or assumptions. Nancy's conviction is tied to her faith and understanding of God's role in human lives, as she believes that if God has not granted her children then she must not try to get children by other means.

From the first suggestion of adoption, Godfrey had specifically spoken of Eppie as a child whom they could adopt. Surely the weaver would be pleased by this Godfrey felt, to have his adopted child raised to such a high station and himself taken care of for the rest of his life. Godfrey knew nothing of the weaver's true connection with and feelings for the child. His natural kindness would not have allowed him to contemplate such a plan otherwise.

Godfrey's interest in adoption focuses on his true daughter Eppie. Godfrey is unable to see the pain that separating Eppie and Marner could cause. His position in society has always been such that he supposes anyone would love the opportunity to improve their circumstances and secure their wellbeing. Godfrey is not bad—he would not try to attempt adopting Eppie if he understood the pain it would cause—but he is blind and weak.

Nancy, during her Sunday afternoon reflection, reassures herself that she was right to discourage any consideration of adoption. Nancy labors to make her life with Godfrey perfect in every way except the one that in unchangeable, consoling herself that a different woman may have had children, but could not otherwise have made her husband so happy. Nancy's earnest goodness makes Godfrey certain that he'll never be able to confess his past to her. He feels the confession would cause an irreparable separation between him and his beloved wife.

Nancy's natural orderliness and properness causes her to strive to create a perfect life with Godfrey, in every way that she can. If not for Nancy's deference to her husband and her desire to please him, perhaps Godfrey could not have been as happy as he is. He does know Nancy's value and importance to him, which is why he continues to hide the truth of his past.

Godfrey's conscience is never easy about Eppie and his lack of children with Nancy feels like an intentional punishment. The couple hasn't spoken of the idea of adoption in four years at the time of this Sunday afternoon, and Nancy wonders if Godfrey will mind their childless lives more or less as they grow older. Jane, their servant, enters the parlor to report that outside all the villagers are hurrying in one direction. Nancy waits at the window, overcome by a vague fear, and wishing Godfrey would return.

Godfrey himself recognizes a connection between his past wrong in not claiming Eppie and his current lack of any children. The couple's concern with their childless lives has the moralistic tone of several events in the novel. Bad choices have consequences that may be indirect or manifest years later.

CHAPTER 18

Godfrey returns, but he is trembling and pale. He tells Nancy to sit down and that he'd had a great shock, but has come back to tell her what has happened in order to avoid her hearing it from anyone but himself. Godfrey tells her that Dunstan's body, his skeleton, has been found. The **Stone Pit** has dried up from the draining and at the bottom of the pit was Dunstan Cass's body, with his watch and seals, Godfrey's hunting crop, and, most horrifyingly, all of Silas Marner's stolen money. Nancy is surprised and ashamed for herself and Godfrey, having been raised to consider any connection with crime a dishonor.

Dunstan's body found with the gold is a tidy resolution—narratively and morally—to the mystery of Marner's lost money and the disappearance of the younger Cass son. In Raveloe society any association with a crime of this nature is shameful and Nancy and Godfrey are embarrassed to be connected to Dunstan. Family connections last a lifetime in this novel, whether they are biological or chosen.

Godfrey's tale continues as he reflects aloud that all secrets come to light sooner or later, when God wills it. Nancy's feeling of dread returns. Godfrey says that when he married her he kept his past a secret: the dead woman found by Silas Marner was his wife and Eppie is his child. Nancy is silent as Godfrey tells her that he couldn't bear to give her up, that he couldn't acknowledge the child as his own. Nancy wishes regretfully that they could have had Eppie all along, to ease their childless lives and the death of their little baby.

Godfrey's admittance that everything comes to light when God wills it finally places his fate in God's hands, rather than on chance, for the first time in the novel. Directly after this statement, Godfrey takes charge of his situation and tells Nancy everything. Nancy, selfless as always and eager to do what's right, wishes that they could have adopted Eppie sooner.

Godfrey reminds Nancy that if she had known the secret earlier she would never have married him. Nancy insists that she wasn't worth Godfrey doing anything wrong for, as he pleads for her forgiveness. She's more troubled by the wrong he has done Eppie for fifteen years. Godfrey says they can still adopt the girl, although it will be different, Nancy feels, to take her in when she's already grown up. But she agrees that it is Godfrey's duty to acknowledge her and provide for her, so they decide to go that very evening to see Marner and Eppie.

Nancy's high moral principles are most troubled by the wrong Godfrey has done his daughter by not acknowledging her, and they seek to correct this wrong by finally adopting her. Nancy's acceptance of Godfrey's story is, Godfrey feels, different than how she would have responded sixteen years earlier, which demonstrates that even Nancy has changed over the years. Though Godfrey and Nancy's sense that Eppie has been harmed by not being adopted by them betrays a lack of understanding on their part about everything Eppie has gained by having a father as loving and devoted as Silas Marner.

CHAPTER 19

That evening, Silas Marner and Eppie are sitting alone in the cottage. Marner is exhausted by the events of the afternoon, and has been craving the quiet of being alone with only Eppie. Near them on the table is the **gold**, arranged as Marner used to arrange it. He has been telling Eppie of how he counted the gold every night. At first, he admits, he worried that Eppie might again be changed into the gold after she had appeared on his **hearth**. The gold holds no power over Marner now, but he worries aloud that if Eppie were lost he might again feel God had forsaken him.

The presence of the gold and Eppie in the same place is ominous, especially when Marner is speaking of how he once worried Eppie would be changed back into the gold. The exchange between the gold and Eppie has established in Marner's mind that, by fate or divine will, he cannot possess both at once, raising the dramatic tension as the reader knows that Godfrey and Nancy are about to appear and offer to adopt Eppie. Might Eppie agree and leave Marner?

There is a knock at the door and Eppie blushes when she opens the door to admit Mr. and Mrs. Cass. Godfrey first apologizes to Marner for the loss of his money, hoping that he can make it up to him, as one of his own family members was the thief. Godfrey tells Marner's it's time that he had some rest, as he's worked so hard at his weaving to survive before and after the robbery. Godfrey says to Marner that he has done his part by Eppie and he's sure it would be a comfort to the weaver to see her taken care of by folks who could make her into a lady.

Godfrey presents his offer to adopt Eppie in terms of an attempt to apologizes for his brother's crime and to help the weaver rest and not be occupied supporting a daughter. From the first, Godfrey stresses his social position and the fact that he could make Eppie into a lady by adopting her. What's missing from his offer is any hint of love toward his biological daughter.

Godfrey points out that he and Mrs. Cass have no children and, therefore, they would like to adopt Eppie as their own. As Godfrey speaks, Eppie puts her arm around Marner and feels him trembling. Marner is clearly distressed, but says only that he will not stand in Eppie's way if this is what she wishes. Eppie steps forward and she thanks Mr. and Mrs. Cass, but she refuses their offer, unwilling to leave her father, and to give up the folks she's familiar with by becoming a lady. With a sob, Marner takes her hand.

Marner's response is a true act of selflessness, as numerous details have established that Marner's entire life and happiness revolves around Eppie's presence. However, he feels he cannot stand in her way because he wants only what's best for her. Despite his words, Marner is overwhelmed by Eppie's declaration of commitment to her adoptive father.

Godfrey, irritated, exclaims that he has a claim on Eppie because she is his child and her mother was his wife. Eppie is startled. Marner speaks with new fierceness, asking Godfrey why he didn't claim his daughter sixteen years earlier. Godfrey turned a blessing away, Marner points out, and so God gave the child to him. Godfrey no longer has any right to the child. Godfrey claims he has repented for this past choice, but Marner insists, "repentance doesn't alter what's been going on for sixteen year."

Godfrey attempts to claim Eppie on the basis of her parentage and Marner raises the point that Godfrey has not been in her life for the past sixteen years. Through this exchange, the novel asks: who has claim over a child? Who is a true parent? Christian children at the time firmly believed they had a duty to honor and obey their parents.

Godfrey urges rationality. Such a change wouldn't tear Marner and Eppie apart forever, he argues. He says that he feels it's his duty to care for his own daughter, and that Marner ought to be happy to see her elevated to better circumstances rather than marrying a lowly man. Eppie's initial decision to refuse the offer of adoption was determined by her love for Marner, but Godfrey's insistence and his treatment of Marner cause repulsion toward her biological father to grown in her heart. Marner, on the other hand, is struck by a fear of raising his own desires in the way of what's best for Eppie and he again defers to her decision.

Godfrey mentions his duty to his daughter, but ultimately the decision falls to Eppie. She loves Marner, but she is also unimpressed with Godfrey. She sees that he sees himself as being superior to Marner and treats Marner with frustration and contempt when he doesn't get his way, and she wonders also about Godfrey's connection with her deceased mother whom he never publically recognized as his wife.

Eppie insists that she would never again be happy if she were forced to leave her father, Silas Marner. He had no one to love or care for him before she appeared in his life, and she'd again be leaving him alone. He cared for her and loved her first, and she is certain that no one will ever come between them. Nancy reminds Eppie that what she says is a natural way to feel, but that she also owes a duty to her true father. Eppie says she can only think of Marner as her father, that she wasn't raised to be a lady, and that she's engaged to marry a workingman.

Eppie chooses to see Marner as her true father, whom she loves and obeys, rather than Godfrey who is her father only by birth. For her, the behavior and attitude of a father, rather than blood, is what determines parentage. Eppie's choice demonstrates that one can choose one's family and one's community. She chooses to stay with those she loves, having faith in those around her.

Godfrey is frustrated that his attempt to atone for his past wrongs has been thwarted. He leaves abruptly, unable to say anything else to Marner and Eppie, and Nancy follows more gracefully.

Godfrey's abrupt departure shows his frustration that he cannot adopt Eppie. His haughty mannerisms are contrasted to Marner's quiet love for Eppie.

CHAPTER 20

Nancy and Godfrey walk home in silence and stand together in the parlor. They look at each other in mutual understanding. Nancy admits they'll have to give up hope of adopting Eppie. Godfrey says that Marner was right about turning away a blessing from one's door: it falls to another. Godfrey decides he won't make it known that Eppie is his daughter, but that he must still do all he can for her regardless of the life she has chosen.

Godfrey and Nancy's mutual acceptance of each other's thoughts and feelings demonstrate that they have not lost everything. They love each other, even though they have no children. It is too late for Godfrey to reclaim the blessing of having a child when he once saw the presence of his child as a burden.

Nancy is relieved that Priscilla and her father won't be troubled with the truth. Godfrey realizes that Eppie didn't like the idea of him being her father, and that she thinks he did wrong by her mother and herself. But this is part of his punishment, he admits, for his daughter to dislike him. Nancy is silent, for she feels Eppie's response to be a bit of fair justice for Godfrey's past choices. Godfrey says that he has been unhappy wanting something else, above and beyond his lovely wife who he got, in spite of his past errors. "It is too late to mend some things," Godfrey says, but it's not too late to mend his longing for children and his unhappiness with his lot in life.

Godfrey and Nancy both believe that Eppie's dislike of Godfrey is more than chance, and is in fact a punishment given by the divine because of his past choices. The novel relies upon the power of fate and divine intervention in the lives of the Raveloe villagers. The characters can control their actions and their attitudes, but certain things occur which are beyond their control. The novel's plot relies upon these meaningfully connected events.

CHAPTER 21

The next morning, as Silas Marner and Eppie are eating breakfast, Marner tells Eppie that there's something he's been meaning to do for a while, which is achievable now that his money had reappeared. He wants to visit his old home in **Lantern Yard** and to see if anything ever came to light concerning his innocence and to ask about the ritual of drawing lots. Dolly Winthrop approves of the plan, telling Marner that she hopes he'll be at ease once he knows the truth.

The reappearance of the money in Marner's life, rather than reviving his interest in gold, allows him to continue his interest in his own past, by visiting Lantern Yard again and discovering what he can. Marner has changed. Eppie has changed him so that gold can never again have a claim on his heart.

Silas Marner and Eppie arrive in **Lantern Yard** only to find a great manufacturing town, altered to a bewildering degree within the last thirty years. They are ill at ease on the noisy, crowded streets filled with strangers. Eventually the pair finds their way to Prison Street, which Marner recognizes. The shops are all altered, but Marner knows it's the third street after the jail. Eppie is surprised by the closely proximity of the houses and remarks how pretty the **Stone Pits** will look when they return home.

The alteration of Lantern Yard is a key moment in the novel. Change, which the villagers of Raveloe so fear, has happened in Lantern Yard, and it marks the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, which will have profound impacts throughout England. Both Eppie and Marner now prefer Raveloe, its isolation, community, and its nature. Their preference for the stone pits suggests a preference for the unknown versus the bustling known of an industrial town.

There are people leaving the Yard, as if they'd gone to chapel at noon on a weekday, Marner exclaims, and then stops in amazement. They are in front of a large factory where workers are leaving. "**Lantern Yard** is gone," Marner cries. The large factory has replaced the chapel and everything Marner remembers. Eppie leads her father into a brush shop to ask about the old chapel, but no one they ask recalls the former chapel or anyone from that congregation.

Lantern Yard is gone and, with it, Marner's past and his opportunity to discover whether the truth of his case was ever revealed. Yet if the community that made him an outcast no longer exists, should he still think of himself as having been cast out? Strangers and workers have replaced human connections in Lantern Yard.

Upon their return to **Raveloe**, Marner reports to Dolly Winthrop that the old **Lantern Yard** has completely vanished. He realizes that he'll never know whether the truth of the robbery was uncovered, or why they used the practice of drawing lots. Dolly replies that there are many things in this world that are dark to humans, but there are other things that she has never felt confused about. Silas Marner was falsely accused, but that does not stop there being something good about the event, even if it's not for Marner or Dolly to see and understand what that may be. Marner says that since Eppie has appeared in his life he's been able to trust again in the world, and because she'll never leave him, he will trust until he dies.

Lantern Yard's strong contrast to Raveloe shows how Marner himself has changed into a man who fits into the world of Raveloe. The remaining mystery of Lantern Yard's disappearance and Marner's unresolved false accusation force Dolly and Marner to come to terms with those things in life that they will never understand. Despite this, Marner knows he can trust again, his faith having been restored by Eppie's love for and commitment to him.

PART 2, CONCLUSION

Eppie and Aaron are married on a beautiful sunny day. Eppie wears a dress of white cotton, which Nancy begged that she be allowed to provide for the young bride. Eppie tells her father that on this wedding day he won't be giving her away, but instead taking Aaron as his son. Priscilla and Mr. Lammeter stop to watch the wedding procession on their way to the Red House. Priscilla wishes Nancy could have had a child like Eppie, someone to occupy her and Godfrey's minds above and beyond the lambs and calves.

Like many nineteenth century novels, the book follows "the Marriage Plot": it ends with the wedding of Eppie and Aaron. While the domestic bliss of the ending cannot fully account for Marner's unresolved past, or for Godfrey and Nancy's childless home, it does show the way that bliss can coexist with the mysteries of the unknown and of moral fate.

The wedding party passes into the humbler part of **Raveloe** and stops to greet old Mr. Macey, seated outside his door. Mr. Macey says he always insisted that there was no harm in Master Marner and that he'd live to see him get his money back. Guests are already assembled early at the Rainbow, chatting about Silas Marner's strange story, and the great blessing he brought upon himself when he adopted a child. The villagers agree that they ought to wish a man joy who, like Marner, deserves all his luck and blessings. The group gives a cheer as the bridal party passes.

The wedding unites the Raveloe community in celebration. Mr. Macey reminds the wedding party that Marner wasn't always trusted and liked in Raveloe. But, after his kindness towards Eppie, all the villagers agree that he deserves all his blessings—the village sees Marner as having achieved morally appropriate happiness. The cheering villagers show that Marner and Eppie are now truly loved members of Raveloe society.

The cottage at the **Stone Pits** now has a larger garden than Eppie ever dreamed of. Other alterations were made by Godfrey Cass to accommodate Silas Marner's growing family in the home where they preferred to stay. As their beautiful home comes into view, Eppie exclaims that no one could be happier than they are.

Despite Marner's restored faith and connection to his community, the novel ends with the true source of blessing in the weaver's life—the mutual love between he and his daughter, the family they have built— and suggests that such things are more valuable than wealth, privilege, or even knowledge.

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