

All About Love Study Guide

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Contents

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| All About Love Study Guide..... | 1 |
| Contents..... | 2 |
| Plot Summary..... | 3 |
| Chapter 1..... | 5 |
| Chapter 2..... | 7 |
| Chapter 3..... | 9 |
| Chapters 4 - 5..... | 11 |
| Chapters 6 - 7..... | 13 |
| Chapters 8 - 9..... | 15 |
| Chapter 10..... | 17 |
| Chapter 11..... | 18 |
| Chapters 12 - 13..... | 20 |
| Chapters 14 - 15..... | 22 |
| Chapter 16..... | 24 |
| Chapter 17..... | 26 |
| Chapters 18 - 19..... | 27 |
| Chapters 20 - 21 & Epilogue..... | 29 |
| Characters..... | 31 |
| Objects/Places..... | 35 |
| Themes..... | 37 |
| Style..... | 39 |
| Quotes..... | 41 |
| Topics for Discussion..... | 42 |

Plot Summary

All About Love, set in 1820, follows Alasdair Cynster, better known as Lucifer, on his journey to escape the curse of love. Alasdair travels to his friend and mentor's house only to find his friend has just been murdered. Aided by a local, Phyllida Tallent, in his search to find the killer he also finds himself unwilling to run from the curse any longer.

Lucifer, after seeing the rest of the males in his family give into the family curse and marry themselves off, leaves London and the ton to avoid a similar fate. He heads to Colyton, a place where he is sure to avoid any similar temptation. His friend and mentor in the field of collecting, Horatio, has invited him to visit and appraise a very valuable find.

When Lucifer arrives in Colyton, he walks into Horatio's drawing room to find Horatio has been stabbed with a letter opener just moments before. As Lucifer is examining his friend and the scene surrounding him, he realizes that he is not alone. Before he can turn to protect himself, he is knocked out with a halberd, a thirteenth century weapon consisting of a battle ax and a pike on a pole about six feet long.

His attacker is Phyllida. Phyllida, having slipped into Horatio's house for alternative reasons, walks into the drawing room to find Horatio murdered. She turns him over onto his back. Then she hears a call and footsteps approaching. Thinking it is the killer returning to the scene of the crime, Phyllida backs into a corner to hide herself. As Lucifer is kneeling over the body, she realizes by his actions that this is not the murderer, but accidentally knocks the halberd off of the shelf. She tries to turn it away from him but is only partially successful. Lucifer is hit with the pole.

Phyllida touches his cheek, and after seeing that he is still alive, leaves the scene, not wanting to explain her presence in Horatio's house. Although he is found and taken to jail as the suspected murderer, Phyllida convinces her father, the magistrate, that this man is not the killer. She cares for him in her manor as he slips in and out of consciousness.

When Lucifer begins to recover, he realizes that Phyllida was in the house when she touches his cheek once again, thinking he is sleeping. Phyllida will not tell why because she promised her friend that she wouldn't.

As Lucifer and Phyllida spend their days searching for the murderer, Lucifer continues to question her about her presence. She continues to decline to tell because her friend continues to decline to give her permission. However, as multiple attempts to kill Phyllida occur, Lucifer is convinced that she must know something that the killer does not wish her to know.

As the pair continue to put the clues together, and question the locals, they continue to get closer and Lucifer spends his days seeking her hand in marriage. This is made

easier when her father lets her stay at Horatio's house, which was willed to Lucifer, after one very close attempt on her life.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

All About Love, set in 1820, follows Alasdair Cynster, better known as Lucifer, on his journey to escape the curse of love. Alasdair travels to his friend and mentor's house, only to find his friend has just been murdered. Aided by a local, Phyllida Tallent, in his search to find the killer, he also finds himself unwilling to run from the curse any longer.

Alasdair Cynster, better known as Lucifer, travels from London and his brother's wedding to Colyton. Lucifer bemoans being the last remaining male relative still single. In Alasdair's mind, love is a curse to avoid at all costs. In order to successfully avoid it, he travels to a place he is sure will be devoid of any tempting female companionship.

Lucifer's old friend and mentor in the field of collecting, Horatio Welham, has recently written and invited him to come stay with him in Colyton. Horatio mentions in the letter that he has found an item that he is very excited about and would like Lucifer to look at it for him. Lucifer arrives in town while Sunday morning services are still being held. When he arrives at Horatio's manor, he is struck by the sight of Horatio's garden. Lucifer realizes it looks just like Horatio's late wife's garden at his former estate. Another thing that Lucifer takes note of as he walks into the house is the fact that the door is open. This is out of the ordinary, considering that Horatio and his household should not be home.

When Lucifer walks into Horatio's drawing room, he finds his friend has been murdered with a letter opener. Although Horatio is deeply disturbed, he finds the presence of mind to realize that the murder happened mere minutes beforehand. Lucifer's military background comes into play as he begins to take in the details of the scene. He sees no evident signs of struggle, and realizes that Horatio has been moved. As he is kneeling beside his friend and after he removes the letter opener, he realizes that someone is behind him. Assuming it's the killer, he quickly raises, turns, and is knocked out by a halberd at the hands of Phyllida Tallent.

Phyllida, faking a headache that morning to avoid going to church, had dressed in men's clothes and snuck into Horatio's house. The reader will later discover that she was in the Manor during the time of the murder looking for love letters of a friend. Having no luck in the first rooms, she goes in to search the drawing room and finds Horatio's body. After turning him over to see if he is really dead, Phyllida hears Lucifer's call and footsteps toward the room. Thinking it to be the killer returning to the scene, she hides.

As Lucifer is kneeling over Horatio, Phyllida realizes that this is not the murderer after all, but right at that moment, she bumps the halberd stored above head. She tries to keep it from hitting him, but isn't strong enough. She only manages to turn it enough to keep the ax part from hitting him. It is enough that he lives, but he will be in and out of consciousness for a while. After Phyllida bends and touches his cheek and makes sure



that he is alive, she hears people approaching. Realizing that she will have a lot of explaining to do if she is found there, Phyllida runs out the back door and back to her house, leaving Lucifer unconscious beside Horatio's dead body with the murder weapon in his hand.

Phyllida goes back to her house, planning to change into appropriate clothes and find an excuse to return to Horatio's house. What Phyllida doesn't know is that her visiting aunt has brought her two sons and she becomes detained with them. By the time she can return to Horatio's house, the locals have already transported Lucifer to jail as the suspected murderer. Phyllida, remembering seeing a hat in the drawing room before she left and knowing it not to be Horatio's, decides to take it to Lucifer, assuming it must be his. However, it is not there. Inquiring about it, she learns that it was not there when he was found.

Phyllida goes to the jail, where the locals have taken Lucifer. Without breaking her promise of secrecy to her friend, she convinces Sir Jasper, the local magistrate and her father, that Lucifer can not be the killer. Her father, in agreement, has Lucifer transported back to his house where Phyllida and other local ladies take care of him. It is while Phyllida is taking care of him that his full, unwavering consciousness returns to him. Not realizing that he is aware once again of his surroundings, Phyllida, curious about this stranger, reaches down and traces his cheek once again. In that instant, recognizing the touch, Lucifer realizes that Phyllida was in Horatio's house with him. Lucifer grabs her wrist and brings himself up to face and confront her, saying, "It was you".

Chapter 1 Analysis

The two main characters of the book are introduced in this chapter. Lucifer is one of the ton's most eligible bachelors. Seeing love and marriage as a curse, Lucifer flees the ton to avoid the possibility of finding either.

For Phyllida, the magistrate's daughter and a prominent citizen of Colyton, love and marriage is not on her mind or her agenda. Her main focus is seeing that the town of Colyton is running just as it should.

In this first chapter of the book, the reader will be left with a lot of unanswered questions. It's not until later that the reader will learn that Phyllida was searching for a friend's love letters, and that when she snuck in, the killer was already there and was most likely still in the room, hiding, when Phyllida entered.

Also unrevealed at this time is the fact that the killer was inquiring about the murder when Phyllida came back and asked about the hat. This is important because it explains why the killer wants Phyllida dead. He knows that she is aware that the owner of that hat is the killer. He also knows that she has seen it on him numerous times and may remember later on.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Phyllida is immediately questioned about her reasons for being at Horatio's house after he was murdered. At first she thinks that Lucifer has to be guessing. How could he really know that it was her who touched his cheek? She is quickly convinced that he does know, but refuses to tell him why she was there. She assures that she does not know anything about Horatio's murder. Lucifer lets the matter drop for the time being, but has no intention of letting it go.

Phyllida invites Lucifer to tea on behalf of her father, and he accepts. When she asks his name, he tells her that it is Lucifer. She does not believe him, but does not continue to argue. When he introduces himself to Sir Jasper, he introduces himself as Alasdair Cynster, but notes that he is better known as Lucifer.

Phyllida, Sir Jasper, and Phyllida's twin brother Jonas, Sir Jasper's sister-in-law Lady Huddlesford, and her sons Percy Tallent and Frederick Huddleford are all present at the tea. There, Sir Jasper begins to question Lucifer. Lucifer describes his relationship with Horatio and explains his presence at his manor. Unfortunately, he did not bring the letter that Horatio sent with him.

Since Lucifer has not visited Horatio since he moved to Colyton, the locals there do not know him. Lucifer tells Sir Jasper that Horatio's loyal servant, Covey, would know him. However, Covey has visited an aunt in Musbury and is not there to identify Lucifer when he is found.

After Lucifer is ruled out as a suspect, they continue their discussion of Horatio's murder. Sir Jasper eventually asks the question that Phyllida has been dreading. Jasper wants to know what else Lucifer knows about the matter. Even though Lucifer feels that Phyllida may know something relevant, he keeps her secret to himself.

When Phyllida announces that she is going to check on Mrs. Flemmings and to visit with Mr. Filing, Lucifer invites himself to go along with her. Phyllida agrees.

Chapter 2 Analysis

Phyllida and Lucifer are attracted to each other right away. The fact that he knows her touch shows just how much she has affected him even before they have spoken to each other. Phyllida is unnerved from the instant recognition, but she is intrigued by Lucifer.

Phyllida is relieved when Lucifer keeps her secret, but loses her sense of control because of it. Since Lucifer has kept her secret, she feels that she owes him. She also may feel that he might break that confidence if she was to offend him. So although there is attraction and curiosity, there is no trust or anything deeper.



Phyllida has many admirers, which Lucifer takes note of. Phyllida has no interest in any of her suitors because they all want something from her and she feels that she has nothing to gain from marriage. Lucifer seems surprised at her lack of apparent desire for love and marriage.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

As Lucifer accompanies Phyllida on her errands, he prods her for details of what happened after he was knocked unconscious. She relates to him that he was found by Hemmings, Horatio's gardener, and the locals took him to jail. During this time, she had planned on coming to the manor to borrow a volume of poetry as she sometimes did. When she finds that her cousins have come to visit, she must wait until the household returns from church before she could leave.

Phyllida continues to answer Lucifer's questions. Although he has some memories of what happened, they are scattered. Lucifer wonders why Phyllida does not relate to him how hard she worked to care for him while he was sick.

During their outing, they begin to meet and discuss the locals. There is Cedric Fortemain, who is courting Phyllida, and his mother, who refers to Phyllida as their "treasure". There is Grisby, who is also courting Phyllida, and who confronts Lucifer with the impression that he is the murderer. Thompson, the blacksmith, apologizes to Lucifer for being rough with him when they took him to the inn that served as the prison.

Jocasta Smollet passes them by, and she seems rude to Phyllida and Lucifer. She is Basil's sister. Basil is also courting Phyllida. The next person they meet is Silas Coombe. Coombe is a sight to see with his odd sense of style. Although Phyllida cannot see Silas killing anyone, she relates that he may be the only person who hated Horatio. Silas has a sense of jealousy when it comes to Horatio because Horatio is what Silas is trying to be but is failing. Silas is a self-proclaimed collector of books, but doesn't have near the collection that Horatio has and isn't nearly as knowledgeable about them.

While they are meeting and discussing these people, they are going about their errands. First, they go to the manor where Horatio's wake is taking place. It is here that Lucifer consoles Covey. Covey relates that he does not know what the item was that Horatio wrote about and that no collectors have been by the house. It is also during the wake that Phyllida and Lucifer make silent promises to find Horatio's murderer.

When Phyllida leaves the wake to finish her errands, Lucifer accompanies her. First they head to the church to change the flowers, and then to the Curate's house. It is obvious that Phyllida does not want Lucifer to overhear their conversation. They speak in very vague terms, leaving Lucifer to wonder what they are talking about.

As Phyllida and Lucifer are walking back to the Grange, it comes out in the open that Phyllida has assumed that Lucifer has accompanied her to get her to tell why she was at the murder scene. When Lucifer suggests that he may have come along simply to be in her presence, she is taken aback. She then realizes that she wants that to be the truth.



Chapter 3 Analysis

Phyllida decides that it would be best if she and Lucifer work together, but she is torn. Although she feels that he really should know every detail she can relate about that day, she doesn't want to break her promise of secrecy to Mary Anne.

The day is spent investigating Horatio's murder, but it is also spent allowing Lucifer and Phyllida to get to know each other a little better. Phyllida is a surprise to Lucifer. She is a leader in the community, has many suitors, and is interested in marrying none of them. She is very different from most ladies that he has been attracted to, but he finds himself attracted to her all the more.

Phyllida finds Lucifer to have many qualities that she admires. Although she trusts Lucifer in some regard, she still feels that his motives for spending time with her are simply to further the investigation.



Chapters 4 - 5

Chapters 4 - 5 Summary

When Lucifer and Phyllida arrive back at the Grange, they find that Lady Huddlesford has thrown an impromptu party. Many of the locals that Lucifer has yet to meet are in attendance. Phyllida uses the opportunity while Lucifer is busy mingling to talk to Mary Anne. She tries to make Mary Anne see that it is important to tell Lucifer about the love letters. Mary Anne is not so sure. She tells Phyllida that she must talk to Robert before she can give her permission.

Phyllida and Lucifer leave the party so that Lucifer can tend to his horses, which have been stored at the manor. Phyllida leads him through the shortcut that she took Sunday morning to get from the Grange to the Manor. While Lucifer checks on his horses, Phyllida takes the opportunity to search for the desk that the love letters are in again. She has no luck and assumes the letters must be upstairs.

On the way back to the Grange, there is a dip in the path. After Lucifer crosses it, Phyllida falls across it and into Lucifer's arms. Caught up in the moment, they kiss. She has never kissed a man before, and is curious and excited. Finally, they end it and finish the walk to the Grange.

Phyllida and Lucifer both attend Horatio's funeral at the church the next day. Afterwards, they and many others gather at the Manor. Phyllida introduces Lucifer to more of the locals. Lucifer discusses with the locals their relationships with Horatio and their alibis. While mingling with the others, Silas Coombe is seen fingering Horatio's books, adding more suspicion to the only suspect that has a visible motive so far.

While at the gathering, Lucifer is given a new surprise. He is the sole beneficiary of Horatio's estate, with the exception of some minor bequests. This shock is compiled with the surprise that Lucifer decides that he will not sell the estate. He will make it his home.

After everyone has departed from the Manor, they all meet again at the Grange. Lady Huddleford has decided to host a funeral dinner. She has invited most everyone, including Robert and Mary Anne. This proves to be a rather uncomfortable situation.

Phyllida once again confronts Mary Anne with the necessity of telling Lucifer about the letters. Mary Anne, however, insists that no one must know about the letters until Phyllida finds and returns them to her. Phyllida is wondering what is in the letters that could possibly be as horrible as Mary Anne thinks.

While at the dinner, Phyllida's cousin Percy takes her outside to ask her to marry him. He thinks that they should marry because she is becoming an old maid, and he wants her money. Phyllida turns him down, but Percy does not want to take no for an answer.



His proposal becomes a sexual assault. Phyllida is no match for him in strength, but Lucifer has come looking for her and breaks it up. Percy is no match for Lucifer.

Chapters 4 - 5 Analysis

It is in this chapter that the reader learns that Phyllida was in the Manor the day of the murder due to Mary Anne's love letters. Mary Anne and Robert have been writing detailed love letters to each other, and Mary Anne has stored them in her grandmother's traveling writing desk in a secret drawer. Her father sold the desk to Horatio, and Mary Anne is scared about what might happen if the letters are found. Not only will there be a public scandal, if Robert's boss found out, he may fire Robert. Then he would not get registered and they wouldn't be able to marry.

When Phyllida and Lucifer kiss, it seems that neither one of them want to end it. Although, logically, neither wants to marry, they are both attracted to and intrigued by each other. However, Phyllida thinks that the reason that Lucifer kissed her is so that she would tell him her secret.

The fact that Horatio has left Lucifer his estate answers one question. Who will benefit the most from Horatio's death? Unfortunately, it does nothing to further the investigation as the only person who had motive in that way has already been cleared.



Chapters 6 - 7

Chapters 6 - 7 Summary

Lucifer is going to wait until the next day to move into the Manor. Therefore, the night of the funeral, he is still staying at the Grange. Late that night, long after everyone should be in bed, he is looking out the window and spots Phyllida going into the woods. Concerned, Lucifer follows.

What he finds when he follows is that Phyllida plays a key role in what appears to be a smuggling operation. Lucifer presses Phyllida for answers and finds that Phyllida has masterminded the whole operation. The Colyton Import Business is a legalized smuggling business. Those involved are very careful to keep the operation a secret so that the workers can save face. They don't want others to know that they aren't taking chances like they used to.

After she has finished the work, Phyllida and Lucifer head back through the woods to the Grange. On the way, a tree falls and Lucifer saves them from being crushed, and they end up on the ground with her on top. She kisses him. After a few heated moments of passion, they resume their walk to the Grange. There is a moment of self-reproach on Lucifer's part, when he decides that she will tell him what she is holding back if he makes her trust him. He questions whether he is any better than the rest of her suitors.

The next morning, after assuring the current staff that their jobs are safe, Lucifer has his things moved into the Manor where he will now reside. Lucifer then takes the opportunity to assess how the killer came to Horatio's house. He finds recent hoof prints in a clearing behind the shrubbery. About that time, Phyllida walks through the woods and joins him in his investigations. They surmise that the horse is a decent horse, not a workhorse, but can determine little else from the prints.

Because of where the tracks are found, the pair can conclude that the killer is either a local, or someone who rode in from the way of Chard. As they are discussing details of the murder, a carriage pulls up. They go to greet it and Lady Ballyclose invites the two to a party she is throwing in honor of Lucifer's decision to stay in Colyton. They accept and she is on her way again.

Lucifer does not want to fall in love and get married, or so he tells himself, but he finds himself needed to defend marriage when he is in Phyllida's presence. As they talk, he learns that she lost her mother when she was twelve, and has been taking care of the locals who need it ever since.

They discuss the garden a little. The garden was always Martha's, but after she passed, Horatio learned to care for it. Lucifer asks Phyllida if she would help him in this area as he is not sure how to take care of a garden, and she agrees.



At the party that night, Lucifer spends the time getting alibis. Cedric's alibi in particular needs a little more looking into.

Phyllida is becoming more and more convinced that she needs to tell Lucifer about the letters and the hat. Just when she is about to tell him, however, they are interrupted. Mary Anne finds Phyllida and makes her promise again not to tell for fear that Robert won't get his certification if Mr. Crabbs finds out.

Chapters 6 - 7 Analysis

Lucifer is both concerned and irritated that Phyllida takes the chances with her safety that she does. He is also impressed with her leadership and caring for the town. He also begins to think that she is seriously underappreciated in Colyton.

The two continually get closer as they lean on each other for help with the investigation. They find out in this chapter that there are many men who did not attend the service on Sunday. Among them are Cedric, Coombe, Appleby, Farthingale, and Grisby.

Phyllida's need to tell Lucifer her secrets intensifies. Some readers may wish that she would just go ahead and spill the secrets. Finding a killer is generally higher priority than avoiding public scandal. However, Phyllida also wants to keep her promise to her friend.

The reader also finds out while reading about the ball that the character of Jocasta seems to really hate Phyllida. Both of the characters and the reader are clueless as to why at this point, but later on will learn that it stems from jealousy over Cedric.



Chapters 8 - 9

Chapters 8 - 9 Summary

Lucifer and Phyllida travel the next day to the east and verify that no strangers rode in from that direction on the day in question. During the day, Phyllida once again refuses to tell her secrets and Lucifer assumes it is because she still doesn't trust him. It is also during this day that Lucifer begins to think that the manor needs a family living in it.

After they verify that no one rode in from this direction, they decide to take their picnic lunch to the cliffs. They are now surrounded by beautiful scenery, they have been in each other's company all day, and events similar to the ones on their walks in the woods begin to unfold. Once again they stumble and fall down together. The sparks fly and the couple makes out. Lucifer finally breaks it off, much to Phyllida's disappointment. They head home a couple of steps in front of a storm.

The next morning, Lucifer goes for a walk through the woods and runs into Phyllida. Phyllida appears angry and very shook up. The reason is that she was shot at. Her bonnet has a hole through the top of it, the bullet having just barely missed her head. It wouldn't have missed at all had she not bent over at that exact moment and then ran after her bonnet was shot. Phyllida assumes that it was a hunter. She takes him back to the spot where it happened.

After seeing Phyllida safely home again, Lucifer and Dodswell return to the place where she was shot at. They find hoof prints that are sure to belong to a gentleman, like the ones found at the Manor after Horatio's murder. Dodswell is certain that it wasn't a hunter. There is nothing to hunt in this area in this season. Lucifer is now sure that Phyllida knows something that the killer doesn't want her to know and she still hasn't told him what that is.

That afternoon, Silas Coombe pays a visit to Lucifer. He makes it known that he would like some of Horatio's books. He tries to make it sound as if taking them would be doing Lucifer a favor since Lucifer doesn't collect books. Lucifer informs him that he probably won't sell, but if he did, he would use an agent. Coombe leaves offended. After he is gone, Lucifer asks Covey to begin an inventory of all of Horatio's books.

Sir Jasper doesn't take the shooting incident as seriously as Lucifer, in part because he does not know that she was at the murder scene on Sunday. As neither Jasper nor Phyllida believe that someone is really trying to kill her, she goes "smuggling" again that night. Lucifer follows.

As he takes his place with Phyllida at the church, the men seem to take his presence for granted. To Phyllida, it seems that he has been accepted way too easily. On their way back, they see a light in Lucifer's drawing room. They take off running toward the house, certain that it is the killer back to collect what it is he murdered for.



Despite multiple demands that Phyllida stay put, she runs after Lucifer to catch the prowler. Just as they approach the back door, the prowler runs out the front. Phyllida and Lucifer give chase to the suspect, but he is faster and beats them to the horse that he has waiting.

Chapters 8 - 9 Analysis

The shift in Lucifer's idea of love and marriage is mostly complete at this point. He has gone from thinking that he never wanted to marry to picturing his family in the Manor.

The author's use of the storm after the couple's picnic is both literal and metaphoric. It describes both the incoming bad weather and the roar of emotional chaos that is the couple falling in love.

As Lucifer finds himself protecting Phyllida at every turn, he begins to warm to it. He is thinking of himself as her protector. He is also thinking of her as more, but for right now will only act as her protector.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

After giving orders for Hemmings and Dodswell to check the house and lock up for the night, Lucifer walks Phyllida home through the shrubbery. On the way, Lucifer tries to talk some sense into Phyllida. She tells him that she will tell him all that she knows in a few days. He wants her to tell him that she will not wander around without a male escort until the murderer is captured. She only tells him that she will be careful.

Lucifer is unhappy with this inadequate promise. As he is trying to make Phyllida see how dangerous things are for her right now, he traps her in between him and the shrubbery. Instead of continuing in the argument, Phyllida asks him to kiss her. After being asked two more times, he gives into her request.

They spend a good part of the night leaned into those shrubs, making out. Phyllida gets a taste of sensual pleasures that she has never known. She is anxious to know more. She wants to experience all she can. Lucifer finally calls it a night, but assures that there will be more the next time.

The next morning, Phyllida goes to church to take care of the flowers. To Lucifer's delight, she has brought a male escort, Jem, a groomsman on the Grange. Lucifer drives by and offers Phyllida a ride in his curricle. She accepts.

Before they take off, she hears Lucifer placing an order for new locks for all of the windows and doors from Thompson, the blacksmith. He says it'll be a week or more before he can get them in. Lucifer tells Phyllida that the intruder broke in through the dining room window. He also relates that he thinks that the killer is looking for a book and that he'll be back.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Phyllida wants to learn all she can from the physical aspect of her and Lucifer's relationship. She is very curious and knows that if she does not marry, she may not get another chance to know. From her experience with Lucifer, she is beginning to see what may be in Mary Anne's love letters that would cause such a scandal.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Lucifer and Phyllida are both in attendance of a dance that the Smollets have arranged. Lucifer spends the evening meeting more people and keeping his eye on Phyllida. When he gets a chance to talk to her, he comes up with a new way of making her talk to him. He is going to kiss her right there in front of everyone if she doesn't tell her what he wants to know. Thankfully for Phyllida, she manages to find plenty of distractions through the evening. She tries to make sure that she has someone else with her every moment.

Phyllida takes a few minutes to talk to Robert. She wants to know what is in the letters that is so horrible that it has to be secret. He tells her that they are very detailed accounts of their meetings. It is implied that they are of a sexual nature. Phyllida assures him that she'll find them.

Phyllida makes it through the dance without a scandal. The couple waltzes, but Lucifer backs off of his threat of indecency.

On Sunday, a week after Horatio's murder, Phyllida goes to the Grange to speak to Lucifer. Inquiring as to whether Covey has found anything, Phyllida is informed that he has found an inscription about Lady Fortemain. She is not told what. Lucifer asks her if she will tell him her secret. When she declines, he tells her that he hopes she will trust him someday and then dismisses her.

Phyllida walks back to the church to change the flowers. She is angry and distracted because of her encounter with Lucifer. When she goes behind the church, leaving her escort where he is, she is attacked. The attacker throws the curate's robe from the church over her head and throws a rope over her.

Years of wrestling with Jonas come in handy. Although she is not able to get completely loose, she manages to get enough jabs in to loosen the rope enough to scream. Jem, her escort, chases the attacker through the woods, but he is too fast.

Phyllida is carried back home by Lucifer. Not much was learned from the attack, only that the attacker is a male, his approximate size, and that he wears nice clothes.

Chapter 11 Analysis

Lucifer tries multiple tactics to make Phyllida tell him her secret. None work, and he feels guilty when Phyllida is attacked. He blames himself for making her an easy target by distracting her purposefully.

Appleby's attacks are very well planned out. So far, the only two times that he has attempted to kill Phyllida have been in places where everyone knows she is at every single week at that time.



Chapters 12 - 13

Chapters 12 - 13 Summary

That night, Phyllida begins to think about the love letters. She desperately wants to tell Lucifer, but she also doesn't want to break a promise. The best solution is that she finds the letters and then tells Lucifer. The locks will be in soon and then her window of opportunity will be gone.

She dresses in men's clothes and once again breaks into Horatio's house to look for the traveling desk. As she is searching Horatio's old room which connects to Lucifer's room, the door behind her opens. She is instantly afraid that it is the killer, but instead it is Lucifer, naked and wielding a sword.

When Lucifer asks what she has broken in to look for, she refuses to tell. He tells her that she must do exactly as he says if she doesn't tell. When she still won't tell, he tells her to hold her arms above her head. She does and he cuts her buttons off one by one. Lucifer undresses her with his sword and they make love.

When Phyllida wakes in the morning, she starts to get her clothes and return to the Grange. Lucifer informs her that she isn't going anywhere until she tells him what she is hiding. She does. She tells him about the letters, faking a headache, the hat, and even confesses that it was her that hit him with the halberd. They talk until they hear signs of others rising. Then she dresses in an outfit with no buttons and returns home.

That day, Lucifer goes to Sir Jasper and asks for Phyllida's hand in marriage. He tells him that the ultimate decision is hers, but that he has whatever permission he needs. They agree not to say anything to Phyllida on the matter while Lucifer courts her.

When Lucifer sees Phyllida next, she verbalizes her opinion that Lucifer seduced her to attain information. Although Lucifer assures her that is not the reason, she doesn't really believe him. He gives her permission to search the outbuildings for the desk, and she goes on her way, leaving him to simmer about her opinion. Phyllida and Lucifer's relationship is awkward at this point. She is confused about his intentions, and he is trying to decide the best course of action to attain her hand in marriage.

Coombe returns again to inquire about buying some of the books, and Lucifer informs him that he is not selling at all. Coombe leaves peaceably this time, acting surprised that he would want to keep the collection. His continued interest in Horatio's possessions, coupled with his hatred for the man, casts serious doubts on his innocence.

When Phyllida sees Coombe in the graveyard, she decides to try to get some information out of him. She thinks that he knows something about one of Horatio's books. Unfortunately, he takes her verbal language out of context, and much to her protests, assaults her. Once again, Lucifer intercedes.

Lucifer tells Phyllida that he doesn't want her out of his sight again. He reveals that Sir Jasper has given him permission to watch over her. This does not sit well at all. Phyllida has a strong sense of independence and this goes completely against her nature and makes her very angry. She leaves Lucifer at the church to go his own way.

Chapters 12 - 13 Analysis

When Lucifer confronts Phyllida about her reasons for breaking in, she thinks that he will not seduce her if he doesn't have the knowledge to gain from her. That is why she keeps her silence at this point.

When Phyllida finally does tell Lucifer all that she has been holding back, it is something of a relief. However, she really does not know how to react when Lucifer tells her that he was not seducing her to get anything in return.

When Phyllida finds that Lucifer and her father have been discussing plans for her, it makes her very angry. She is used to being independent and in control. Taking that from her seems nothing but cruel, even if it is to protect her.



Chapters 14 - 15

Chapters 14 - 15 Summary

As Lucifer is walking through the woods to the Grange, he meets Phyllida. She is on her way to the Manor to search the outbuildings for the traveling desk. Lucifer lets her and puts someone keeping guard of the building while he goes about his own business. Later on, however, he interrupts.

Lucifer wants Phyllida to understand that his motives for seducing her had nothing to do with getting her story. He tells her that he seduced her out of desire. They both can relate to desire, and they make love again in the outbuilding.

Lucifer tells Phyllida that he wouldn't have seduced her if he hadn't intended on marrying her. She points out the obvious—that she hasn't agreed to any such thing. He lets her know that he is aware of that, but that he is sure that she will.

With Lucifer and Phyllida's relationship back intact, they begin to help Covey inventory all of the tomes. There are simply too many for one person. They are writing down not only what book it is, but any inscriptions they come to, as it is sometimes the inscriptions that make the books valuable.

They find many volumes that point to Lady Fortemain as having an affair sometime after Cedric was born. This may give Cedric motive. If he is not a legitimate heir and Polmeroy, his little brother is, he could lose his inheritance. This, coupled with the fact that Cedric does not have a solid alibi, leaves Cedric looking more like a plausible suspect by the minute.

Lady Fortemain throws a ball at the Ballyclose Manor. Jonas and Lucifer make sure that they keep an eye on Phyllida. While at this ball, Phyllida convinces Lucifer to go with her to search Cedric's room for the hat. Although she can't remember having seen the hat on anyone, she is sure that she would recognize it.

Lucifer has determined that Cedric has no interest in Horatio's books, but doesn't want to completely rule him out as a suspect on those grounds. Therefore, they search his room. He has many, many hats, but the hat in question is not there. However, coming out of the closet, Phyllida is attacked again. Neither gets a good glimpse at him, nor can they catch up with him.

Chapters 14 - 15 Analysis

It takes Lucifer a while to decide how to fix his problem with Phyllida. She has entirely the wrong impression about his intentions. He finally decides to show her. After his intentions are out in the open, the awkwardness dissipates.



Although neither Phyllida nor Lucifer feels that Cedric would kill Horatio, he isn't free of suspicion. Although this suspicion is misplaced, they cannot logically ignore the signs at this point. They are some of the few leads they have to follow.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Phyllida and Lucifer return to the ball and try to lure the attacker, using Phyllida as bait, while Jonas and Lucifer keep an eye out. However, when no one comes forward, Phyllida breaks her agreement with Lucifer and leaves the ballroom with Mr. Appleby. She feels that Appleby is safe because he should have had duties in the ballroom as he works for the Fortemains. Lucifer promptly marches out to the balcony to usher her back in.

Lucifer and Phyllida, having no luck in their investigations at the ball, travel north to ascertain whether a stranger traveled in to town from this way last Sunday. While they are out, Phyllida must talk to a man at the revenue office. She leaves a lasting impression on Lucifer. He is very impressed with her business skills, especially the fact that she overcomes the stigma of being a mere woman.

Lucifer and Phyllida have found no sign that any stranger recently passed through, barring Lucifer, and they turn towards home. On the way they meet a tinker wearing the hat that Phyllida saw.

The tinker tells them that he found the hat outside Ballyclose Manor last Sunday afternoon. Lucifer pays him for the hat and they go to Ballyclose. Although Lucifer does not think it is a good idea, Phyllida wants to go straight to Cedric and confront him.

When they do confront him, they find that the hat is way too small. It couldn't be his. They learn from Cedric that although there may be some question of his paternity, there is absolutely none about Polmeroy's. He is not Mr. Fortemain's. The books with the inscriptions would do no harm to Cedric. Phyllida and Lucifer also learn why Cedric's alibi is so weak when Jocasta interrupts the discussion. She informs them that Cedric was with her all day last Sunday. They announce that they have been in love for a long time and are getting married.

Chapter 16 Analysis

When Phyllida proposes to use herself as bait to lure in the attacker, Lucifer desperately wants to say no. He doesn't because he knows that she does not want to be overprotected, and he is trying to make her want to marry him.

It is not until later on that the reader and Phyllida will learn how much trouble she really put herself in by stepping onto the balcony with Appleby. Later, he recounts how he thought that he had lucked out and was going to get a chance to kill her with no one there to see.



When they are in the revenue office, Phyllida is instantly taken more seriously just by Lucifer's presence. Lucifer is very impressed by the way she handles her business. It makes him think that they could be good for each other in business as well as other areas.

When Lucifer and Phyllida learn about Jocasta and Cedric, it explains why Jocasta was always hateful toward Phyllida. She was simply jealous because she was in love with Cedric but couldn't have him. Lady Fortemain had wanted Cedric to marry Phyllida.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

On Sunday, Lucifer goes to church and finds that Phyllida is not in attendance. When Sir Jasper tells him that Phyllida stayed home with a headache, Lucifer leaves to find her. Remembering the last time that Phyllida got out of going to church with a headache, Lucifer is afraid that something is wrong.

When he gets to the Grange, Jonas informs him that he just got back from walking Phyllida to the Manor. Back at the Manor, Dodswell gives Lucifer a note that Phyllida has left him. It gives a brief explanation of where she is going and includes a set of directions.

A note is left for Phyllida, and looks like a note from Molly, Cedric's seamstress, and indicates that she may know who the hat in question belongs to. She wants to meet in secret at an abandoned house to see the hat, and then and only then will she say who it belongs to.

Phyllida goes to the house, but is attacked from behind. The attacker knocks her out and then sets the place on fire and leaves. She never gets a look at him.

Lucifer's instinct proves to be accurate. He is sure that something is wrong. He begins to run the way that the directions say. He then smells smoke. He realizes that the house is on fire. Lucifer rushes in and saves Phyllida, but loses the hat. Although they both have minor burns and suffer from smoke inhalation, they are fine.

When locals come to put out the fire, they eventually spot the couple and take them back to the Grange. There, she and Lucifer explain all of the details that Sir Jasper and Jonas have been left out on, starting from the Sunday that Horatio was killed.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Lucifer once again plays the hero in this chapter. Phyllida would have died here had it not been for him. The killer is leaving no doubt that he wants Phyllida dead and he shows some cleverness. The way that he wrote the note is one example of his cleverness. He made it look as if it was labored over as a woman in a seamstress position would likely have to do.



Chapters 18 - 19

Chapters 18 - 19 Summary

That night, Lucifer and Sir Jasper discuss how to best keep Phyllida safe and free from stress. Lucifer suggests that she should stay with him as a guest at the manor. Of course Miss Sweetie, her simple governess, would accompany her to avoid a scandal. Jasper agrees that this would be best, and Phyllida is moved to the Manor.

That night, Phyllida comes to Lucifer and announces that she wants to sleep with him. They make love, and she spends the night in his bed. Lucifer tells her that he loves her, and asks if she loves him. She replies that she doesn't know what love is.

Lucifer heads to the burned cottage for clues. The hoofprints that the killer's mount has left this time are clear. Its markings are Thompson's work. Better yet, a shoe is about to come off. Thompson is sure that he will see the horse within a week or so, and then he will know who the murderer is.

The next day, Horatio lets Phyllida know that he has written to Devil, the Duke of St. Ives, and his first cousin. He has asked for information on some of the locals that have not been eliminated from their list of suspects. He is also planning to write fellow collectors to see if they could shed any light on the murder or what the special item might be.

The days become a tedium of inventorying books and waiting for a horseshoe to fall. Lucifer soon receives a packet from the duke, saying that he is following up on the names. Lucifer is particularly interested in Appleby. Lucifer suspects that Appleby has been in the army, and many of the attacks have some of the same characteristics.

The tension and the tedium mount as they wait for the horseshoe to fall. Then comes a welcome distraction and help. Lucifer's cousin Demon and his wife Flick come to stay at the Manor. They bring a response about the men in question. All are clean except Appleby. Appleby was seen by his superior when he murdered his best friend in the army.

As the four are taking inventory, which is made all the more difficult by Horatio's use of fake covers, Flick has an idea. If the killer wants a book that is in the house, and they don't know what it is, why don't they simply let him come get it and then catch him at it? They decide that they can do exactly that at the Fete, the town picnic.

Chapters 18 - 19 Analysis

Phyllida has not seen any truly loving relationships firsthand. Her mother died when she was young. Mrs. Fortemain has had an affair with another man. The others that she can



think of are not caring. They are business arrangements. Therefore, she doesn't know exactly what to expect. Lucifer decides to try to show her exactly what love is.

The hoofprints give those investigating the strongest lead yet. Unfortunately, they will have to wait for a shoe to fall off before it will do them any good, and the killer seems to be getting more and more desperate.

Lucifer's experience as a cavalryman gives him insight into how most infantrymen operate. This is what puts Lucifer on the right track to pegging who the murderer is. He knows that the killer is a planner, fairly clever, but doesn't know what to do if things don't go as planned. This description fits Appleby. Also, whoever the killer is knows the workings of the Ballyclose house well.



Chapters 20 - 21 & Epilogue

Chapters 20 - 21 & Epilogue Summary

The weather is pretty the morning of the Fete, but it is obvious that a big storm is rolling in. Flick and Phyllida simply mingle at the picnic, Lucifer and Demon keep an eye on the two and Appleby, and Jonas keeps an eye out for unusual behavior in the other men. During this time, Hemmings, Covey, Demon's groom, and Dodswell kept watch on the house, waiting for the killer.

While they are waiting, Oscar tells Lucifer and Demon about a passenger who wants across the channel, and it has to be tonight. Due to the weather, there will be no ships out, but he wants to know from Lucifer what he should do. Lucifer tells him that they should wait and see what happens.

About then, Thompson rides up and says that he has found the horse. It's the one that Appleby's been riding. He's just got it out in the open when Cedric comes running. He is certain of where he saw the hat before—on Appleby.

When the men of the town want to go after Appleby, Lucifer and Demon reveal the trap that has been set. Mrs. Hemmings tells them that Sweetie went back to the Manor about an hour ago, due to the heat. Just then, Jonas runs up to let them know that Mr. Filing has run into the Manor, and Dodswell announces that Appleby has gone in the back door.

Many of them go back to the Manor to sort things out. When they arrive, they find that Mr. Filing has been badly wounded and Sweetie has been taken hostage at knifepoint. Appleby allows Covey and Jonas to help the curate and has the rest looking for Aesop's Fables. Although the people who worked to inventory the books knew where the book was, they took this time to get some answers.

Appleby reveals that he killed his friend in the army in order to obtain an old, valuable painting that his dying father had. He hid it in the cover of Aesop's Fables. Unfortunately, the book was already sold when he got there. He spent the next five years tracking who the book was sold to. He killed three people, including his friend and Horatio along the way.

Appleby also fills in the gaps on the investigation to Horatio's murder and Phyllida's attacks. Finally, Phyllida gives him the book that he wants. He tells them that if anyone follows, he will kill Sweetie. They all stay where they are until he is gone and Sweetie walks back in, safe but shaken.

Most of the town show that night at the place where Appleby has asked for passage. All are hidden and wait for him to show. The group of "smugglers" wait as if to sail, even though no ships will sail that night due to the weather.



Appleby appears from his hiding place when he decides that his passage doesn't look like a setup. As soon as he does, he is quickly surrounded. He has the town around him all of the way to the edge of the cliffs where he arranged to meet them.

Sir Jasper confronts Appleby and charges him. Appleby is desperate, however. He has spent five years on his quest, and when he finally finds the book, it is empty. A very loud boom hits and all back away from the edge, except for Appleby, who does not understand the significance of a storm here. He is swept right off the edge, where he dies.

When Phyllida and Lucifer get back, Lucifer takes her to the Grange. He proposes and she agrees. They let Jasper know of their plans. They then let Mr. Filing, who is going to be okay, know of their plans. Phyllida stays in Lucifer's room for the first time. Here, she sees the writing desk.

Lucifer never realized that she was talking about a traveling writing desk. He had been looking for a larger piece of furniture the whole time. In the hidden compartment they find the love notes as well as the piece that Horatio most likely wanted Lucifer to appraise. The painting that Appleby was looking for is there as well.

After the proper steps are taken, Lucifer and Phyllida marry. At the wedding are many Cynsters, and they all seem to love Phyllida.

Every year the Cynsters meet to share in the joys of new additions to the family. This includes births and marriages. In this meeting, there is an honorary addition named Chillingworth. He is the one single man there.

Chapters 20 - 21 & Epilogue Analysis

Appleby's greed is consuming. Not only does it lead to the death of three others, it ultimately leads to his own death. If he had not been willing to go to any costs to attain the painting, he would have likely lead a much happier life.

The investigating group has a good plan laid out, but things don't go according to their plan. Lucifer implies during the story that Cavalrymen were better able to cope with plans gone awry than infantrymen. This proves to be the case if Appleby and Lucifer are any indication.

In the end, the whole town pulls together to see that Horatio gets justice. Phyllida and Lucifer learn what it is to love. Together, they vow to treat their love like Horatio's garden — "with a lot of love".



Characters

Alasdair Cynster (Lucifer)

Alasdair Cynster, better known as Lucifer, is one of the two main characters of this book. This book follows him as he changes from a man running from love to a man running to love. Lucifer is one of the most eligible bachelors that the London ton has to offer. He comes from a family of dukes and duchesses, but is not in line for a title himself. He is an experienced cavalry officer and an avid collector of silver and jewelry. Lucifer could marry most any woman that he intends, but instead shies away from even the idea of love and marriage. He makes his escape from the ton to visit a friend and mentor, only to find him dead.

Lucifer, though shocked with grief, immediately begins to take mental stock of clues surrounding his friend's death. However, as he is doing so, he is knocked unconscious from an accidental blow to the head. Through his days of slipping in and out of consciousness he is taken care of by Phyllida. Although part of the reason that Lucifer came to Colyton was to avoid love, he can't help but be attracted to Phyllida. She is unlike the ladies of the ton, and that fact seems to make her all the more attractive to him.

As soon as Lucifer awakes, he begins the search for his friend's murderer. Aided by Phyllida, Lucifer learns who the locals are, what their alibis are, and how they related to Horatio. He questions people, looks for clues, and oversees all aspects of the investigation. One person that he is not getting answers from is Phyllida. Lucifer decides that if he can show her that he is trustworthy, she will tell him what she is hiding. This is the initial reason that he uses, but Lucifer's motives for getting close to Phyllida change as time goes on. He begins to take on the role of her protector, and later her lover. After Lucifer realizes that he can no longer run from love, he begins planning on how to attain Phyllida's hand in marriage. His days are filled investigating with, rescuing, and courting Phyllida.

Phyllida Tallent

Phyllida Talent is the other main character of this novel. Although Phyllida Tallent is the magistrate's daughter, she may have a bigger part in running the town than her father does. Whenever a local has a problem, they typically bring it to Phyllida. She spends her days caring for others and taking care of the needs of the town. She spends her nights running the importing business that she created. Although she is such a cornerstone of the community, she is taken for granted, though she doesn't see it. Because she is a woman, the town thinks that her father runs the importing business. The fact that she has grown up in this role, with the absence of a mother, is another reason she is taken for granted.



When Phyllida's friend Mary Anne asks Phyllida to find the love letters that accidentally ended up in Horatio's house, Phyllida agrees. Wanting to help, she dresses in men's clothing while the household should be at church. She then sneaks into Horatio's house and searches for the desk that the letters were in. When she enters the drawing room, she walks into the murder scene, where she accidentally knocks Alasdair unconscious and sees a clue to who the murderer may be. After nursing Lucifer back to health, Phyllida vows, the same as Lucifer, to find Horatio's killer. She spends the following days looking for clues to Horatio's murderer alongside Lucifer.

Phyllida has many suitors in the town. All of them want to marry her for ulterior motives, though, leaving marriage an unappealing option in Phyllida's mind. The only marriages that she has firsthand knowledge of are not caring relationships. This leaves the idea of marriage even less appealing. Phyllida begins to become curious about love and desire as she continues to spend time with Lucifer. When she first begins investigating with Lucifer, she keeps the reason for being in Horatio's house a secret due to her promise to Mary Anne. Later, she keeps it secret thinking that he will seduce her for the information.

Even after Phyllida has confided in Lucifer, they continue to see each other. Phyllida is continuously learning because of her relationship with Lucifer. Phyllida is at first mostly curious about the physical aspect of their relationship, but as time goes on, she begins learn about love as well.

Horatio Welham

Horatio Welham is the friend and mentor of Lucifer's who is murdered for the rare collector's item he has discovered. Horatio leaves Lucifer his estate and the example of a couple completely in love with each other. From the beginning, Lucifer is taken by the garden that Horatio learned to cultivate. He knows that Horatio grew it to remember his late wife, Martha. Lucifer dwells on how their relationship was and sets it as the example that he wants his to follow.

Mary Anne

Mary Anne is the friend who is responsible for Phyllida's presence at the crime scene. Mary Anne is in love with her boyfriend, Robert, who she has been seeing for a long time against the wishes of her father. Robert does not have the means to provide for Mary Anne should they marry. This is the reason that her father has forbidden her to see him. Her father's disapproval doesn't stop the star-crossed lovers. They simply meet in secret and bide their time until Robert can complete his registration.

Because they can't see each other as much as they would like, Mary Anne and Robert exchange passionate, descriptive love letters. Mary Anne keeps these letters in a hidden compartment in her grandmother's traveling desk. When she finds that her father has sold the desk to Horatio, she is desperate to get the letters back. The fear that they will be read and given to Robert's boss, Mr. Crabbs, keeps Mary Anne from giving



Phyllida permission to tell Lucifer about the letters. If Robert doesn't complete his registration, the couple may never get permission to wed.

Sir Jasper Tallent

Sir Jasper Tallent, Colyton's magistrate, is Phyllida's father. Throughout the novel, he is involved with discussions of how the investigation should proceed. Sir Jasper lives in a time when fathers make the big decisions in their daughters' lives for them. Jasper has a more independent daughter, so he is an exception to the rule. When it comes to the importing business, his daughter is in charge, even though he may act as its face from time to time. He gives his permission to Lucifer to court her and take care of her. And although he states that he would like to have him for a son-in-law, he makes sure that Lucifer realizes that Phyllida makes her own decisions.

Luicious Appleby

Luicious Appleby is secretary to Cedric Fortemain. He first appears in the novel asking Horatio's butler, Bristleford about Horatio's death. He is described as having fair good looks, and being popular with the ladies. He leads what appears to be a normal life in Colyton, but none know much about his past.

Luicious was a boy who grew up poor. He went into the infantry and befriended a man who read to him a letter about a valuable painting that his father had. Luicious concocts his plan from there. He murders and steals and does everything in his power to get his hands on the painting, even after it is sold.

Luicious murders Horatio, who he knows has the painting. He just can't find it. He's not going to give up though. He tries multiple times to kill Phyllida because she may be able to connect him to the murder, and breaks into the manor to search for the painting multiple times. In the end, Luicious has no painting to show for his five year search and an incoming storm takes him to the end of his road.

Cedric Fortemain

Cedric Fortemain is one of Phyllida's many suitors and one of the town's many suspects. Cedric's mother wishes Cedric to marry Phyllida and pushes him at her at every available opportunity. Cedric is a willing participant in this ritual for a while. However, he is actually in love with Jocasta Smollet. As Phyllida and Lucifer investigate Horatio's murder, clues begin to point directly towards Cedric. However, when confronted by Phyllida, Cedric undoubtedly rules himself out as a suspect. Not only is the killer's hat too small for him, he was with Jocasta during the time of Horatio's death. After this point, Cedric becomes an ally in the investigation.



Silas Coombe

Silas Coombe is a local who is a colorful character. The first thing that people notice about Coombe is his odd sense of style. In Phyllida's words, he "contents himself with adopting all the extremes of fashion and wearing them all at once". Silas is one of the few suspects in Horatio's murder who has an obvious motive. Silas Coombe had the most extensive book collection around until Horatio moved to Colyton. Horatio's collection and his knowledge put Silas' collection and knowledge to shame. It was no secret that Silas held a grudge about this.

Demon

Demon, Lucifer's cousin, comes to visit, along with his wife Felicity (Flick), and brings a message regarding Luicious Appleby. It is another man's suspicion that Luicious has killed before. While he is visiting, he and Flick spend their time helping to solve the murder. They also provide a diversion from the more mundane tasks that lay ahead for Lucifer and Phyllida.

Mr. Filing

Mr. Filing is Colyton's curate, and a trusted friend of Phyllida's. Mr. Filing is involved in Phyllida's importing business. His church is used as a storage place for the imported goods. As the men involved wish for the operation to continue to look like a smuggling business, very few are privy to the information.

Jonas Tallent

Jonas is Phyllida's twin brother. They have a close relationship and Jonas is protective of Phyllida. Jonas participates in the ongoing investigation and any plans that may involve.



Objects/Places

The Bar Cynster

The Bar Cynster was the group of single Cynster males that was notorious in the ton.

Colyton

Colyton is the town where Horatio lived.

Colyton Import Company

The Colyton Import Company is a business that Phyllida came up with.

Colyton Manor

Colyton Manor is the manor that Horatio left to Lucifer.

The Grange

The Grange is Sir Jasper Tallent's house.

Ballyclose Manor

Ballyclose Manor is the name of Cedric's home.

Musbury

Musbury is a village near Colyton where Covey's aunt lives.

Honiton

Honiton is a town near Colyton.

Exeter

Exeter is a town near Colyton.

Chard

Chard is a town that borders Colyton.



Themes

Secrecy

From the very first moment that Phyllida lays eyes on Lucifer, there are secrets. Phyllida is keeping secret from Lucifer the very reason why she is at the crime scene at all. She also keeps secret the fact that she saw the killer's hat in the drawing room and that she, not the killer, is responsible for Lucifer's head injury. Lucifer tries time and again to coax her secrets out of her, and Phyllida tries time and again to coax permission to tell from Mary Anne. This continues until Phyllida is convinced that the necessity to tell overcomes the need to keep her promise.

Also being kept secret are multiple love affairs. Mrs. Fortemain keeps her extramarital affair secret for obvious reasons. Cedric Fortemain and Jocasta Smollet keep their love affair secret for a time to appease Mrs. Fortemain. Like Cedric, Mary Anne's parents do not approve of her choice in Robert. Although Mary Anne's parents are aware that she and Robert write to each other, they, along with the rest of the town, are under the impression that physical meetings are rare. That is not the case. Mary Anne and Robert secretly meet each other on a regular basis. These meetings fuel their passion and keep the taboo love letters coming.

The most obvious secret being kept is who the killer is and why he killed. Luicious Appleby has kept almost everything about him a secret for the last five years, ever since his plan to become wealthy off of the finds of another were born. He has killed, ran, and pretended to protect his secrets.

Love

As the title says, this is a novel about love. Phyllida is a very intelligent woman who understands a lot that others don't. But she does not understand what love is. Growing up without a mother, there was no example of romantic love in her home. The couples in town are not very good examples of love. They are uncaring and unfaithful. Phyllida is not sure what love is, but she wants to learn. It is the love of Mary Anne and Robert that inadvertently leads Phyllida to be in Horatio's house during the murder. As she is searching for another's love letters, she finds Lucifer and eventually love.

Lucifer is set on avoiding love at all costs. Fate has a different idea about that, and Lucifer gives in. After questioning himself as to whether he knows what love is, Lucifer decides that he does. He knows because he loves Phyllida. Lucifer sets out to make Phyllida see exactly what love is. It is what Martha and Horatio had. It is what Phyllida and Lucifer have. He just has to make her see. As they interact, Lucifer and Phyllida come to know desire, caring, excitement, and eventually, love.



Status

Horatio's murder could be linked with Appleby's insecurity about his status. Appleby is born poor and never gets over the injustice of this. He is provided with an education that is good enough to allow him to become a secretary to a landowner, but he is born with a low enough status that he will never be rich by honest means. While in the infantry, Appleby considers the injustice of this. He has befriended a man who has been born with a little more. Appleby considers himself better, but is angry that he will never have as much. This is where his life of killing, stealing, and lying stem from.

In present times, Phyllida would probably have been a very powerful woman. In 1820, Phyllida is still a woman, no matter how big a role she played in the community. Phyllida has managed to overcome many of the restrictions that that status would have ordinarily placed. She was free to marry or not marry who she wished. She was allowed to move in with the man who was courting her before they wed, although Sweetie had to accompany her. Phyllida was allowed to do much more than most women of the time were allowed, but she still had to remember that she was a woman, especially when dealing with men about business matters.

Mary Anne and Robert are determined to marry. Because of his status and his inability to provide a cushioned life for Mary Anne, her parents are against it. That is why Robert is working so hard to become registered so that his income and status will be acceptable.

Style

Point of View

All About Love is written in third person. Laurens uses the viewpoint of two characters to tell this story. The element of suspense is sometimes added by Lauren's choice of which character's viewpoint the reader follows through a certain event. For example, when Phyllida gets the note from the killer, the reader sees only Lucifer's limited viewpoint. Lucifer feels that something is wrong through the whole event, but doesn't know for sure until he nears the burning building.

The story is told through a mixture of dialog and exposition. At times, the reader may be left wondering about one of the main characters because of the limited view. It may be told this way in part to give the reader a better understanding of how the character they are currently following perceives the other.

Setting

This novel is set in 1820 in England. It is important to note that, because of this setting, status is important to the characters of the book. One's status in life helped define what jobs one could attain, what role one played in society, and who one could and could not marry. Appleby is probably the character most affected by his status in life. Although he is fairly clever, with military experience and some education, he has little hope of becoming a wealthy man through honest means.

The year is an important factor because of the general rules of society. More specifically, the roles that women played in this time were significantly different. How women dress, conduct themselves in the presence of a man, what positions they held, and more were defined by the rules of the time. The time is one reason that the heroine of the book is unique to Lucifer. Phyllida defies many of these rules, though not always for all to see.

Because of the setting of this novel, there are many individuals with a specific trade rather than more organized workforces. Most are farmers or tradesmen. Also, any education at all is valued during this time.

Language and Meaning

All About Love is written so that an average reader is able to understand. Although there may be a few old fashioned words scattered though the book, they are limited. The author writes in a way that the meanings of the majority of these words would be understood by most simply because of the surrounding context.



Some readers may find that customs and traditions referred to are unfamiliar because of the setting. Most of the less familiar ideas and customs are explained, but not all. For example, Phyllida and Lucifer have the banns read by Mr. Filing. Although the author makes it clear that the banns must be read three times before they wed, no other explanation is offered as to what the banns are.

Some readers may be put off by the large amount of sexual content in this book. Some of the sexual content is worked into the story line, but there are many scenes that pertain solely to the physical aspect of Phyllida and Lucifer's relationship. With a few exceptions, there is often little to no value to the plot gained by these scenes. They are simply long and entertaining ways of saying that the main characters desire each other physically.

Structure

This novel is comprised of twenty-two chapters, most between fifteen and twenty pages long. It is an easy, entertaining read. The plot is fairly straightforward. It is obvious from the very beginning where Laurens is going with Phyllida and Lucifer's relationship. There are no real twists and turns in the main plot. The characters are against the idea of marriage and love in the beginning, but it comes as no real surprise that the characters change their minds as they fall in love.

The subplot is a little more complicated, though still easy to follow. The investigation of Horatio's murder drags on. Many of the local men are not in church the day that Horatio is murdered. Lucifer and Phyllida continue to search for an item that Horatio may have wanted Lucifer to appraise. Everyone is a suspect, which leaves the reader guessing as to who the killer may be. The main plot and the subplot are worked together so that they flow together as one story very well.



Quotes

"It wasn't a curse to be trifled with - it had already claimed five of his nearest male relatives, all the other members of the notorious group that had, for so many years, lorded it over the ton." Chap. 1, pp. 1-2

"It was as if something she'd worked for all her life - the peace and serenity of Colyton - had been violated, tainted." Chap. 3 p. 49

"Vengeance might be the lord's, but sometimes he needed help." Chap. 3 p. 51

"The promise of something new, illicit, sensual - a taste she'd not tried before." Chap. 4 p. 79

"They've got used to a regular income and a comfortable existence free of any threat from the Revenue, but the mystique of smuggling runs deep in these parts - they don't want it known they're no longer involved, no longer taking risks." Chap. 6 p. 108

"Temptation might be his middle name." Chap. 6 p. 111

"Was he any better than the others who courted her, not out of real desire, but out of a desire for something she could give them?" Chap. 6 p. 112

"He'd gone charging into uncharted terrain, far too fast for her, and much too fast for him." Chap. 9 p. 148

"He'd wanted to irk her, to prod the temper he'd sensed and occasionally glimpsed behind her calm façade; wanted to bring it to life and use it to get her to tell him the truth. Instead, he'd distracted her and made her an even easier target for the murderer."
" Chap. 11 p. 195

"If truth be told, she had seduced him into seducing her." Chap 13 p. 234

"He could hear fate cackling in the wings, but he shut his ears and set his jaw." Chap. 18 p. 330

"She wanted to learn about love - so be it. He would make sure she saw it clearly, uncamouflaged, undisguised." Chap. 19 p. 336

"I killed three men to get my hands on this. Bartered my immortal soul and worse. Five long years I patiently searched, and for what? What do you think my life, my soul, would be worth?" Chap. 21 p. 386



Topics for Discussion

When Lucious Appleby writes his letter to Phyllida, he made it look as if he struggled to write it, although that was not the case. Why? Do you think that this was an important detail?

What significance does Horatio's garden have? Do you think that it held the same meaning when it was tended by Martha?

When Lucifer accompanies Phyllida to the revenuer's office, he decides that they could be of help to each other professionally. Explain why. If the novel had been set in the present, would the benefits to each other be of the same value? Explain why or why not.

Phyllida states that she has nothing to gain from marriage. Explain why she feels this way.

Do you think that Phyllida's behavior and position throughout the novel is characteristic of the average woman in the 1820s? Discuss the reasons for your opinion.

Lucifer suspects that Appleby has served in the military before he is told. What made him come to this conclusion? Could a person draw the same conclusion of the killer based on the way that he plans his attacks? Why or why not?

When Appleby's captain suspected him of killing his best friend, why didn't he do anything about it? Do you think most reasonable people would have reacted in the same way?