

The American Study Guide

The American by Henry James

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Plot Summary

In the novel *The American* by Henry James, American Christopher Newman learns firsthand how cruel a society can be when one's worth is based on name and lineage rather than an individual's characteristics. In Newman's case, he is denied the right to marry the lady of his choice because she is an aristocrat and he is not of royal bloodlines. The novel illustrates the great differences in the French and American cultures in the mid-nineteenth century.

At the beginning of the novel, Newman is attempting to enjoy his leisure in The Louvre in Paris. Although he knows little French, Newman approaches a young lady, Mademoiselle Noemie Nioche, copying a painting in the museum and offers to buy her work from her. Although she quotes him an exorbitant charge, Newman agrees to buy the painting. In exchange, Noemie's father agrees also to give Newman lessons in French conversation. As Newman becomes more acquainted with Noemie and her father, he adopts them as his own project. He offers to help the girl get married by buying a number of paintings from her for an amount of money that will serve as her dowry. Although Noemie does not reject the proposal, she never begins the work.

Meanwhile, Newman has met up with an old friend from America, Tom Tristram. Tristram's wife has introduced Newman to the beautiful Claire de Cintre. Although Claire does not wish to remarry, she does finally agree to marry Newman. Because Newman is of the working class, Claire's family does not like him. They do agree to allow Claire and Newman to marry only because they are aware that Newman has a great deal of money. As the engagement progresses, however, Claire's mother and older brother decide they cannot stand to see Claire married to a "commercial" person, as they call Newman. In reality, a distant, rich relative has suddenly arrived whom they would prefer that Claire marry. Instead of being forced to marry this relative, however, Claire joins a convent and refuses to speak to Newman or her family again.

Despite his bad experience with the Bellegardes, Newman does feel that he has one opportunity to redeem himself. On his deathbed, Claire's brother, Valentin, tells Newman of a secret in the Bellegarde family. Newman searches out information about this secret and not only finds someone who can validate the fact that Claire's mother and older brother were responsible for the death of Claire's father, but also has tangible proof of the murder.

For a while, Newman entertains himself with the idea that the Bellegardes are afraid of him because he has discovered their secret. Newman approaches Urbain with a copy of the note and threatens to make the secret public if Urbain does not allow his sister to marry. Even with his secret out, Urbain will still not agree to the marriage. Newman considers telling the Bellegardes' secret, but his good nature gets the best of him and he finds he does not see the sense in doing anything that might be harmful to the family. At the conclusion of the novel, however, it is suggested to Newman that he did not state his position strongly enough to get the attention of the Bellegardes and make them

understand that he meant business. At this point, Newman has already dropped the note into the fireplace and it is too late to retrieve it.



Chapters I and II

Chapters I and II Summary

In the first chapter, Henry James introduces his main character, Christopher Newman. Newman is enjoying his leisure at the Museum of the Louvre. Newman has looked at all of the famous works of art indicated in the tour book. He has also admired the copies of these works being created by women artists actively painting in the Louvre. Newman is not only described as being an attractive man, but also obviously American.

Newman soon begins to pay particular attention to one lady who is painting in the museum. He suddenly asks the lady how much it would cost to purchase the painting on which she is working. The lady hesitates in giving the price but finally tells him the price of her painting is 2,000 francs. Although Newman realizes the price is high, he agrees to buy the painting once it is finished. Mademoiselle. Noemie Nioche gives Newman her card, and then leaves Newman and her father to make arrangements for the delivery of the painting.

Believing that Newman might be able to help her father regain his fortune, Noemie tells her father to offer to give French lessons to Newman. Newman agrees, stipulating only that their conversations be of a cheerful nature. At the close of the chapter, arrangements for the delivery of the finished painting are made and the Nioches leave Newman alone in the museum.

In chapter two, Newman is on the verge of asking the price of another painting in progress when he spots his old American friend Tom Tristam walking through the museum. Newman and Tristam had known one another eight or nine years before when they lived together in St. Louis. Newman asks Tristam to show him around Paris and explain the culture to him. Newman mentions to Tristam that he wishes that Tristam had been around when Newman bought his painting. Although Newman is enjoying the Louvre, Tristam insists that the atmosphere of the Louvre does not represent the true culture of Paris. Tristam suggests instead that they go to the Palais Royal. Once there, Tristam asks Newman where he is staying. When he learns Newman is staying at the Grand Hotel, Tristam tells Newman the Grand Hotel is not the place that he needs to be in order to experience the real Paris.

As the two men continue to discuss their lives, Newman tells Tristam that he believes he has earned enough of a fortune that he can rest for a while. Newman also tells Tristam that he intends to get married if he finds a woman he likes well enough. Newman describes to Tristam his life after his four years in the army. According to Newman, his life seemed to be going nowhere until he moved to San Francisco. It was in San Francisco that Newman's luck changed and he was able to make his fortune. Now, however, Newman indicates that he intends to forget work and learn how to relax. Tristam suggests they visit The Occidental Club so they can play poker. Newman, however, indicates that he wishes to see Europe, not play poker in a club.



Newman tells Tristram he had decided to get out of business one day when he was in a mad hurry to get money back from a client he felt had stolen the money from him. When he arrived at the building he was traveling to, however, Newman realizes how easy it would be to just let that money go. It was at that point that he decided to get out of business and go to Europe. Newman, feels that one day he will have the urge to get back into business, just as he did when he got out of business. Newman then tells Tristram all of the things that he wants to see. At the conclusion of chapter two, Tristram decides to let Newman meet his wife.

Chapters I and II Analysis

James' leisurely style of writing is evident from the beginning of this novel. He takes delight in fully developing his characters and describing their surroundings. The American Christopher Newman is the first character introduced, and is obviously the person to whom the novel's title refers. Newman is an American who has worked hard to make his fortune. He has come to Europe to enjoy art, music and European culture. When Newman meets his old friend, Tristram, however, Newman learns that those who live in Paris have a different idea about the real culture of Paris as compared to those, such as himself, who visit Paris for the first time. While Newman believes he will find true Paris culture in places like the grand museum the Louvre and motels such as the Grand Hotel, Tristram has other ideas about the Paris experience. He agrees to help Newman learn about the real Paris.

In these chapters, James also includes an incident in which Newman buys a painting from a young French painter for a great deal too much money. This incident highlights Newman's simple ignorance of Paris culture as well as his generous nature. Although he suspects the lady is gouging him, Newman still pays the price she asks. Even though the lady and her father are not of Parisian nobility, Newman still treats the two with a respect that shows he is not interested in who a person is, but that they are a person.



Chapters III and IV

Chapters III and IV Summary

In chapter three, Newman meets Tristam's wife. He and the lady quickly become good friends. Mrs. Tristam introduces Newman to her friends and gives him endless advice. Newman, on the other hand, offers Mrs. Tristam companionship. As Newman begins to know the Tristams better, he soon prefers Mrs. Tristam to Tristam's snobbery. Although Tristam wants Newman go to the club and play poker with him, Newman prefers to sit and talk with Mrs. Tristam. Before very long, Newman's love life becomes a topic of conversation for Mrs. Tristam. When she learns Newman has never been in love, she accuses him of being a man of no feeling. Mrs. Tristam also indicates she believes that Newman is a barbarian. She tells Newman that she will find a way to make him show his true colors.

It is during one of their evening suppers together that Mrs. Tristam decides that it is time that Newman find someone to marry. Newman admits he has not married earlier because he did not want to make any mistakes in the matter. He also hopes to marry a woman who is magnificent in every way. Newman is more interested in finding a woman who pleases him and fits his desires than falling in love blindly. At this point, Mrs. Tristam offers to introduce him to one of her friends whom she believes is the lady for whom he is looking.

This lady, named Claire de Bellegarde, is a widow who has no interest in remarriage. Mrs. Tristam sets it before Newman to make Claire want to be married again. Although Tristam warns Newman there is no chance for him to have a relationship with this snooty woman, Newman asks Mrs. Tristam to introduce him to Claire. A few days later, Mrs. Tristam obliges him. Although Claire has come to decline Mrs. Tristam's dinner invitation, she does invite Newman to come and see her. A few days later, Newman makes the trip to Claire's home but is told she is not in.

In chapter three, Nioche delivers the painting that Newman purchased from his daughter. The Nioches have added a frame to the finished portrait, bringing the purchase price up to 3,000 francs. When Newman asks Nioche about his daughter, Nioche voices concern about the future of his pretty daughter. He indicates he would be happier if she were either not pretty or she were married. Although he would like her to be married, he has no money for a dowry for her. Newman makes an offer to buy a group of six paintings from Nioche. Newman intends her to use this money for her dowry. In exchange for this kindness, Nioche offers to give Newman his lessons in French at no charge.

During one of their conversations, Nioche describes his former wife as being his purgatory. He describes his daughter as being just like her mother. Nioche indicates that he does not command his daughter, only lets her go about as she wishes. Although her painting has not made them rich, they have managed to stay alive. Nioche says that he



is worried about his daughter's safety as she paints in the museum. Newman assures him that they will see to it that she gets married. Nioche asks only that Newman respect his daughter's innocence.

Newman meets Noemie at the Louvre the next day to choose the works she is to copy for him. As Newman talks to Noemie, he quickly learns that the girl is wise in the ways of the world. He believes she has gained this wisdom by observing people as she painted in the museum. When Newman does choose the artwork he wishes to have copied, the girl criticizes the works that he has chosen. Newman soon becomes aware that Noemie is flirting and toying with him. At the conclusion of the chapter, he comes to the conclusion that she is the frank coquette that her father said that she was.

Chapters III and IV Analysis

In these two chapters, James begins to detail differences between the culture of the French and the American. While American-born Newman believes a person should be free to marry someone whom they like and who pleases them, this freedom is not always guaranteed in French marriages. In the case of Claire, for instance, her parents arranged a marriage for her. Claire had no say in deciding whom she married. As a rich descendant of nobility, Claire is also expected not to marry anyone below her social class.

Nioche, on the other hand, wishes that his daughter could marry any man so that he could be assured of her safety. Since they are poor and can afford to offer a man no dowry, the hopes of Noemie being wed to a good, successful man are slim. Newman is appalled at the idea that a man seeking marriage should look only at the amount of money or property that he will gain from the union and not consider whether there is affection there or not.

Notice also in this section Newman's ability to get along with anyone that he meets. He does not despise those poorer than him or praise those richer than him. He simply sees them all as people. For this reason, Newman is highly confused by a society in which wealth dictates who can socialize and who cannot.

In chapter four, Newman develops a very interesting relationship with Nioche and his daughter. Although he does not really know the man and his daughter very well, Newman seems to take them under his wing in some effort to care for them. The pair has already overcharged Newman for a copy of a painting of Madonna, yet Newman does not seem to feel he should feel wary of their motives. When dealing with Noemie as he picks out the artwork that he wants her to copy for him, he does get the feeling that she is playing some sort of game with him. He finally decides that she is just a flirt.

It is also important to notice in this section of chapters the claim that Mrs. Tristram makes to Newman. When she learns that he has never been in love, she tells him that he is a barbarian. Mrs. Tristram claims that she will make Newman show his true colors. It is

important to remember this claim that Mrs. Tristram makes as one continues to read the remainder of the novel.



Chapters V and VI

Chapters V and VI Summary

In chapter five, Newman leaves Claire and Nioches behind and begins his planned tour of Europe. At one point in his journey, Benjamin Babcock, a young Unitarian minister who is also an American, joins Newman. The two men are very different in personality. Although these differences do not bother Newman, they distress Babcock terribly. As a result of these differences, Babcock decides to separate himself from Newman after they have travelled together for several weeks. In a letter to Mrs. Tristam, Newman admits that he wishes that Claire were with him.

In chapter six, Newman returns to France. Upon his return to Paris, Newman allows Tristam to choose a new apartment for him. Soon after he has moved into his new rooms, Mrs. Tristam tells Newman that Claire is also back in town. Mrs. Tristam has seen Claire leaving confession at a distant church. Mrs. Tristam tells Newman that she had visited with Claire, upon Claire's request, and had recognized that the young lady was suffering. Mrs. Tristam tells Newman that Claire is persecuted by her mother and one of her brothers. She indicates that Claire's family wants her to remarry a rich man for the benefit of the family.

After his conversation with Mrs. Tristam, Newman attempts to visit Claire again. This time he is allowed into the house. Newman is led into a room where Claire and one of her brothers, Valentin, are sitting in front of a fireplace. As the three converse, Valentin makes the suggestion that Newman might like a tour of their home. Although Newman would like this tour, Claire discourages it. Newman senses something odd in Valentin's offer as well as Claire's response to her brother making the offer.

Shortly after tea is served, a lady to whom Valentin refers as his sister-in-law, enters the room to have tea with them. During the visit, the four discuss things such as Newman's business ventures. Newman also has a few minutes to talk to Claire. At the end of their discussion, Claire asks Newman to return again to see her.

Chapters V and VI Analysis

Although Newman enjoys his tour of Europe, he soon finds himself wishing that Claire were with him on his journey. It is this desire to spend time with Claire that causes Newman to make his way back to Paris more quickly than he had at first intended.

Note that when he returns to Paris, although he believes Tristam to be a snob, Newman does allow this man to choose the apartment in which he will live. Newman does this not so that he will have a fine place to live that is worthy of his social standing, but instead for the practical reason that he does not like to do the things necessary to find a good apartment.



Another important issue to notice in this section, chapter chapter in particular, Newman is appalled at the idea that the French still use marriage as a way to improve the family. Claire's family has already sold her in marriage to a man whom they hoped would provide them with a fortune. Because this did not come through as they hoped, Claire's mother and one of her brothers now intends to see that she remarries someone who will be beneficial to the family. It should also be noted the importance of family in the French culture. Mrs. Tristram tells Newman that Claire will not act against her mother or her brother because of this importance of family. She indicates that it is unheard of for a child, even a grown child, to refuse to do as their parent bids. Then French also believe it is more important for a person to act in a way that will benefit their family instead of benefiting just themselves.

In the end of chapter five, Newman makes an interesting point. He indicates that Babcock abandoned him as a companion because he did not believe that Newman had high enough moral standards for his tastes. An Englishman whom Newman toured about with for about a week parted ways with Newman because he thought Newman was too strict of a moralist. Newman only briefly makes the comment that he wonders which of these critics he should believe.



Chapters VII and VIII

Chapters VII and VIII Summary

In chapter seven, Valentin pays a visit to Newman in Newman's home. After discussing the largeness of Newman's home, Valentin admits that his sister had asked him to pay a visit to Newman. Valentin tells Newman that Claire wanted him to convince Newman that Valentin was not crazy. Valentin suggests to Newman that he believes Newman is a success while he, Valentin, is unsuccessful. Valentin had always been thought of by his family as the one who would ruin their good name. For this reason, Valentin had been given extra schooling and lessons, however, these lessons did not have the positive affect that his family had hoped that they would have on him. Valentin expresses the idea that he believed all things were off limits to him. Valentin felt himself only worthy to go to Rome and fight for the Pope, which he did until he received what he referred to as an "apostolic" wound. Valentin agrees with Newman when Newman suggests that Valentin does nothing but enjoy his leisure. Valentin indicates he is considering joining a monastery. Valentin tells Newman that there is something about Newman and his person that Valentin covets.

Meanwhile, Newman visits Claire several times. Although he does not have the chance to speak with her much privately, he has begun to admire her just by watching her interact with other people. He enjoys watching her as she goes about her tasks of entertaining guests.

In chapter eight, Newman asks Valentin to talk about his sister during one of their private visits. Valentin describes his sister as being kind, good and intelligent. He says that although she has gone through unpleasant circumstances in her life, she still tries to be as happy as she can, despite her troubles. Valentin goes on to explain that when Claire's husband died, his family brought a lawsuit against Claire to keep her from inheriting her late husband's money. When Claire learned that her husband had participated in some business deals that had adversely affected his family, she stopped the lawsuit and gave up her right to her husband's money. Claire did this even though her family pushed her to continue to sue for the money. Claire finally got peace with her family when she agreed that she would do anything that her mother asked for the next ten years. The only thing that Claire refused to do for her mother was to marry again.

As the chapter closes, Newman asks Valentin to see to it that Claire think well of him. Valentin picks up on the idea that Newman wishes to marry Claire. He suggests that he is horrified by this idea because Newman does not have a title. Newman suggests that it is Valentin and his family who should determine that Newman is not noble instead of Newman having to prove that he is noble. Although Valentin tells Newman that he should be aware that their family is strange, he does agree to help Newman in his case to please Claire.

Chapters VII and VIII Analysis

In this section, James highlights the differences between Newman and Valentin. Although Valentin has had every opportunity to succeed, he sees himself as being unsuccessful. Although he has no job or profession, Valentin is, because of his name, considered to be an upstanding, noble member of society. Valentin has done nothing to deserve these characteristics; he has simply inherited them because of his family's name.

Newman, on the other hand, is nobody in French culture. He does not bear an old name, he has no nobility in his background. Newman is an American who has worked hard for his money and has earned his own self-respect through his hard work. Based on American principals, Newman believes this hard work and desire to succeed makes him noble in his own way. When talking to Claire, Newman makes the comment that he cannot understand nor accept the idea that his occupation and background makes him unqualified to seek Claire's hand in marriage.



Chapters IX and X

Chapters IX and X Summary

In chapter nine, Newman pays a visit to Claire the day after he has spoken to Valentin. Newman comments to Claire that it is during this visit that they have been alone together for the first time. Newman asks Claire if she is aware that Newman has spoken to Valentin. She says that she is aware of their conversation. Claire tells Newman she is seeing him because she promised her brother that she would. Newman tells Claire that he likes her deeply. Although he knows that her family believes that he is somehow not worthy of her, Newman asks Claire to make her decision about him based on whether or not she likes him, not what her family thinks about him.

Although Claire seems fascinated by Newman's speech, she responds by telling him that she has decided not to remarry. Claire tells Newman there are many reasons why she should not marry again. She adds that if Newman continues to talk about this topic, she will ask him to leave and not return. Newman again insists to Claire that he means her no harm in his proposal. Claire backs away from her decision to send Newman away and instead asks him only not to speak of marriage again for six months.

In chapter ten, Mrs. Tristram suggests to Newman that he should consider Claire's response to his proposal as a victory. Later in the chapter, Valentin takes Newman to meet the remaining members of his family, including Claire's mother and older brother. Newman gets the impression from Claire's mother that she is very concerned with discerning what things were proper and what were not and treating them as such.

It is when Newman meets Valentin's brother, Urbain, that he first begins to feel the intensity with which the family looks down on him. Urbain and his wife are preparing to attend a ball. As they begin to leave for the party, they receive a note from Claire asking them to wait so that she can go with them. The whole family is surprised at this request since Claire had stopped going to parties since her husband had passed away.

After Newman and Claire's mother are left alone in the room, Newman introduces his intention to marry Claire one day. Although Claire's mother indicates that the family will not allow a union between Claire and Newman, she does not give Newman an immediate answer when he asks her if she would approve of the union, especially after he tells her how much money he has made.

Chapters IX and X Analysis

When Newman again speaks to Valentin, Valentin shows his surprise that Claire has not sent Newman away. Newman tells Valentin that Claire did not accept Newman's offer of marriage, but has allowed him to see her again. Valentin voices surprise at his sister's strange response to Newman. He tells Newman that Newman should consider the response he received from Claire as a personal victory.



When Newman meets the remainder of Claire's family, however, his results aren't as victorious. Newman gets the distinct feeling from Urbain that Urbain does not like or approve of his interest in Claire. It appears, however, that Claire's mother could be swayed by the amount of money that Newman has amassed from his work. Newman expresses his pleasure that the older lady is willing to even entertain the idea that he and Claire might have a future.



Chapters XI and XII

Chapters XI and XII Summary

In chapter eleven, Nioche seeks out Newman when Newman returns to Paris in order to continue giving French lessons. He tells Newman that he continues to struggle with his daughter and her bad behavior. Newman makes a special trip to the Louvre in order to see Noemie but instead runs into Valentin. Since the people for whom Valentin is waiting have not arrived, he demands that Newman take him to meet Noemie. When Newman and Valentine do find Noemie, she is watching two women and only pretending to work. Valentin is obviously very taken with Noemie. He tells Newman that he believes that Noemie has a plan to succeed at any rate. Valentin believes the girl is only using her painting as a way to pass her time until she find an opportunity to, as he says, "launch" herself.

In chapter twelve, Newman is invited to dinner with the Bellegardes. He is the only guest at the dinner. As he eats, he wonders the meaning of being the only one included on the guest list. He cannot decide if this is a good or a bad sign. Urbain talks about fine art, but Newman gets the idea that Urbain is afraid of Newman. Later, when the men are together in a smoking room, Valentin and Urbain tell Newman in a very formal way that Newman has been accepted by the family as Claire's suitor. Urbain adds, however, that the family has still not yet become accustomed to the idea of Claire marrying a man who is in business. Although Newman does not understand the reasons that Claire's family dislikes him as a suitor for Claire, he believes these differences can be worked through. Later that evening, when speaking in private with Valentin, Newman learns that Noemie has left her father's home. Valentin believes the girl has put her plan to work her way to the top into action.

Chapters XI and XII Analysis

It is in these chapters that Valentin meets Noemie for the first time. He is very impressed by her, not only her beauty but also her desire to make something of herself. Valentin gets the impression that the girl would be willing to do whatever it took to appear to be an upper class lady. This could explain why she has not completed, or even started, the painting job that Newman has given her. She will not be satisfied with just any husband, she wants an upper class man.

Newman, on the other hand, is feeling pressure and dislike from Claire's family because he was not born into a rich and powerful family. It does not appear that it is good enough for them that he has made a success of himself and has earned great riches by himself. In fact, the family seems to look down on Newman because he has had to work to earn his money.



It is in these instances of Noemie and Newman that the reader begins to recognize the big difference between the Americans and the French at this time. While in America, it is considered an honor and a commendation to be willing to work and earn one's own fortune, it is not so in France. The French in this time period believe the highest honor comes from belonging to an old family that has been rich for years. Although these upper class families have done nothing to contribute to their own riches, they feel compelled to snub their noses at people like Newman who have had to work to earn a living. Noemie attempts to model the American mindset as she tries to work her way into the upper crust society.



Chapters XIII and XIV

Chapters XIII and XIV Summary

Although he claims not to be in love with Claire, Newman visits her in her home often in chapter thirteen. While there he is also often required to spend time with Claire's mother. Newman describes Madame de Bellegarde to Mrs. Tristram as an old sinner. He believes she bears the personality of one who might have murdered someone in the past. Newman indicates that although he believes the Madame de Bellegarde is cruel, he cannot stand Urbain. Newman gets the feeling from Urbain that he might be the type of person who would do something completely underhanded with no good reason or motive.

One day while Newman is waiting to visit with Claire, he has the opportunity to meet an older servant lady named Mrs. Bread. Mrs. Bread tells Newman that she has been with the Bellegarde family for forty years. She came to France with Madame de Bellegarde when she was first married. The woman admits to Newman that she loves Claire as if Claire were her own daughter. She encourages Newman to marry the girl and take her as far from Paris as he can. Mrs. Bread encourages Newman to be patient with Claire, however, and allow her to make her decision in her own time. It is during this conversation that Newman promises Mrs. Bread that if he and Claire do marry, he will take Mrs. Bread away with them.

Near the conclusion of chapter thirteen, Claire confronts Newman and asks him to tell her why he does not like her family. First, Newman gets Claire to admit that her family does not like Newman. He then indicates his attitude toward them comes as a result of their dislike for him, a dislike that is based simply on social status. As they talk, Urbain bursts into the room, obviously happy, and introduces Lord Deepmere, a before unknown relative who has come to visit.

In chapter fourteen, Newman reaches the end of the six-month period that he was to spend with Claire without mentioning marriage to her. At this point, he asks her again if she will marry him. This time Claire accepts his proposal. The next day when Newman once again visits Claire, he is accosted by Mrs. Bread. Mrs. Bread congratulates Newman for his upcoming marriage, but warns him that the sooner the marriage is completed, the better.

Newman is met with a not particularly warm response when he announces to the Bellegarde family that Claire has accepted his proposal of marriage. Madame de Bellegarde is openly upset that Claire did not mention the engagement to her first. The entire Bellegarde family seems shocked and offended that Newman has already announced the wedding to people in America. Instead of allowing him to throw an engagement party, they insist on being allowed to present this party themselves.



Chapters XIII and XIV Analysis

Note in chapter thirteen Newman's reference to both Madame de Bellegarde and Urbain as people who might have murdered someone in the past. Although the writer indicates that this description of the two is "invidious", or unfair, it turns out to be more truthful than Newman would have wanted to admit at the time. A second bit of foreshadowing is offered by the author in a discussion between Newman and Claire about Valentin. In this discussion, Claire tells Newman that she has a feeling that Valentin will come to an unhappy end. Although Newman tries to cheer her up and tell her that he will watch over Valentin, this promise is actually broken later on in the novel.

Notice also in chapter thirteen the author's description of the ways in which Newman and the Bellegarde's interact with one another. Newman does not have any idea the extent to which his common background irritates the Bellegardes. Newman sees humans as humans, not as a product of social class alone. To the Bellegardes, however, social class is very important. They allow Newman to woo Claire only because he is rich. They hope to benefit from these riches. Even with his riches, however, the Bellegardes are still deeply offended by the idea that Claire might marry this common man who has worked to earn his living. Urbain hides this offense behind a polite smile only because he has promised Newman that he and the family would not interfere with the relationship between Claire and Newman.

In chapter fourteen, Newman reaches the end of his six-month period and once again asks Claire if she will marry him. This time, Claire accepts his proposal, much to the dismay of her mother and older brother. Although they do not openly try to discourage Claire, they make it quite obvious that they are not enthralled with the prospect of her marriage to Newman. Note the mention of the glance that passes between the elder madame de Bellegarde and Urbain when Madame de Bellegarde offers to host a party for Newman and Claire. This glance almost makes it appear that the older lady has some sort of trick up her sleeve. Notice also that although Urbain is openly uncivil to Newman, his wife treats Newman in the opposite way. She seems happy to see another outsider enter the family. In fact, she tries to join forces with Newman .



Chapters XV and XVI

Chapters XV and XVI Summary

In chapter fifteen, the focus of attention turns back to Noemie and her plan for success. Valentin has learned that she has been seen about with an older man who is bald and deaf, but spends money easily. Valentin believes the girl had been waiting for such a suitor to come all along and had simply held out until this man arrived.

In an effort to find out for himself what is going on with the Nioches, Newman searches them out and finds them in the Café de le Patrie. After a brief conversation with Noemie in which she tells Newman that if Valentin wants information about her, he should come and get it himself, Noemie leaves her father and Newman alone. Although Noemie's father says that he is ashamed of his daughter and angry with her for the way she has chosen to live her life, he admits he would be angrier with her still if he did not take the funds that she offered him to pay his expenses. Although Newman would prefer not to, he almost agrees with Valentin that the old man is happy with the way that things have turned out for his daughter and himself.

Later in the chapter, Newman receives his invitation to the Bellegardes' party. As Valentin looks at the invitation, he says that he is surprised that it does not indicate that there will be an American present at the party as a form of amusement or entertainment. Valentin asks Newman if he is sure that marrying Claire is the best thing for him to do. Newman indicates that he is sure of his decision. He tells Valentin meanwhile that Valentin needs to clear his head of Noemie. Newman suggests to Valentin that he go back to America with him and get a job in a bank.

In chapter sixteen, Claire seems to be happy and at peace as her marriage to Newman grows closer. Claire and Mrs. Tristam renew their friendship. When the elder Madame de Bellegarde learns that it was Mrs. Tristam who introduced her daughter to Newman, she expresses her gratitude in a sarcastic way. Mrs. Tristam, however, also gets a job in at Madame de Bellegarde by indicating to her that she is worthless.

At the party, Urbain seems determined to introduce Newman to all of the important people who are in attendance. One of these ladies is a duchess who repeats to Newman a highly embroidered story that she has heard about the fortune that Newman has earned for himself in America. Urbain introduces Newman to many other people throughout the evening. At one point, however, Newman happens to see Urbain looking at him as if he is displeased. Newman seeks out Mrs. Tristam and asks her if he is acting in a way that might be considered embarrassing. Mrs. Tristam assures Newman that he is acting just as a happy man should act, but that Urbain is not happy with Newman's happiness.

Later in the evening, Newman discovers the older Madame de Bellegarde talking to Lord Deepmere in what appears to be a serious conversation. Although Newman does



not know what the two have been talking about, Newman encourages Lord Deepmere to take any advice that the marquise might have given him. Later, as Newman is wandering through the rooms of the Bellegarde estate, he happens to come upon Claire and Lord Deepmere talking together in the conservatory. Although they appear to be having a serious conversation, Claire will not tell Newman what the conversation was about.

Chapters XV and XVI Analysis

In this section, Newman learns what has been happening with Noemie and her father. Although Valentin believes that Noemie's father is just as greedy and underhanded as his daughter is, Newman holds out hope that the older man is truly ashamed of the way that his daughter is acting.

Meanwhile, the Bellegardes throw a party to honor Newman in his engagement to Claire. It is known from the story that the duchess repeats about Newman's "success" in America, that there have been some fabulous and massively out of proportion stories about the way that Newman has actually made his fortune. Newman's happiness perhaps keeps him from seeing the events of the evening with a clear eye but it is indicated that at one point Urbain looks displeased with Newman's happiness. This displeasure is shown clearly enough that even Mrs. Tristram, who is also an American, pick up on the attitude. Meanwhile, at the end of chapter sixteen, a mystery develops involving Lord Deepmere. Newman first sees this man talking intently to the marquise, then later catches him in a serious discussion with Claire. Claire refuses to tell Newman what she and Lord Deepmere were discussing.



Chapters XVII and XVIII

Chapters XVII and XVIII Summary

In chapter seventeen, Newman attends an opera. During one of the breaks in the performance, Newman visits Urbain and Urbain's wife in their box. During their visit, Urbain's wife tells Newman that she is terribly bored being married to Urbain. She insists that Newman agree to take her to the Bal Bullier, a ball where students dance with their mistresses. Although she wishes to go, she knows that her husband will not agree to take her.

Also during the opera, Newman meets up with Valentin, who has been sitting in a box with Noemie, and a suitor or friend of Noemie's. Newman again begs Valentin to forget Noemie. Newman makes plans for Valentin to go with Newman to America and allow Newman to set Valentin up in some form of practical business. Shortly after this discussion, however, Valentin leaves Newman to go and sit in Noemie's box. Valentin tells Newman that the man who has been with the girl has been drinking and has acted in an unmannerly way toward the girl twice. Valentin wants to see if the man will act badly again.

When Newman next sees Valentin again, he learns that his friend has committed himself to a duel with the unmannerly man. Newman learns from Noemie that the two are going to fight about her. Noemie is excited, believing this duel will increase her importance. Although Newman hopes to talk some sense into Valentin, Valentin stays to watch the remainder of the opera. Afterward, he sends Newman to wait for him in his room, and goes in search of some friends whom he says can arrange the duel for him.

Before Valentin leaves for his duel, he visits with his sister, his mother and Newman. Although he does not tell Claire what is about to happen, Claire bursts into tears after Valentin leaves her. She tells Newman that she has a strange sense that something bad is about to happen to her brother. Newman also has a bad feeling about the duel as he watches Valentin eat his last meal before leaving to fight with Kapp.

In chapter eighteen, when Newman goes to visit Claire, he learns that her mother and brother have gone back on their word and will now not allow them to marry. Claire will tell Newman only that she is ashamed and that he must ask her mother and brother why they are not being allowed to marry. Newman learns from them only that they have not interfered with Claire's decision; they have instead simply commanded her not to marry.

After Newman leaves the Bellegarde house, he goes to visit Mrs. Tristram. Mrs. Tristram tells him that she is not surprised about the outcome of his affair. She indicates that she had sensed that something was wrong the night of the Bellegardes' party. Mrs. Tristram indicates to Newman that she believes that Claire's mother and brother want her to marry Lord Deepmere.



When Newman returns home, he has a telegraph waiting for him telling him that Valentin has been seriously injured and wants Newman to come to him as soon as possible. Newman leaves a telegraph for Claire telling her that he is going to see her brother, who is ill. Newman indicates that he will be unable to come to see her as quickly as he would like.

Chapters XVII and XVIII Analysis

These two chapters mark a distinct change in the tone of the novel. Although Claire's family was never openly kind to Newman, they have now done him the ultimate injustice. They have convinced Claire, by commanding her, according to her mother, to not marry Newman. Newman feels that this decision by Claire indicates that her mother and brother have gone back on their promise not to interfere in Claire's engagement. The Bellegardes, however, believe that what they have done has been completely acceptable.

The French and American cultures again clash in chapter seventeen when Valentin agrees to take part in a duel. Although Newman argues that Valentin should have ignored the situation and the acts that led up to the fight, Valentin tries to explain to Newman how it was impossible for a man of honor to just turn his back on the situation. Newman, however, does not understand how engaging in hand to hand combat, or a duel, can help one keep or defend their honor. Newman also believes that the fight has something to do with Valentin's feelings for Noemie. He does not understand how Valentin can put his life in danger for such a shallow woman. Valentin argues, however, that the fight has nothing to do with Noemie at all. Valentin simply saw that the man, Stanislas Kapp, was looking for an opportunity to provoke Valentin. Valentin believes he did right by giving Kapp the opportunity to speak out his mind. Newman, however, believes that Valentin is being silly.

To complete the melancholy tone of these two chapters, Newman receives a telegraph from Valentin saying that he has been injured in his duel. Because he feels bound to visit this man, who is perhaps dying, Newman must put off his visit to Claire. He does, however, mention to Claire in a note to her that it is her brother who has been injured and whom Newman must visit.



Chapters XIX and XX

Chapters XIX and XX Summary

In chapter nineteen, Newman is met by another friend of Valentin's at the train station. Newman is informed by this man that Valentin will not survive the wounds he received in the duel. When Newman is finally allowed to see Valentin, Valentin asks first if Claire is going to come to him, then also if his mother and brother are coming. Newman tells Valentin only that Claire had left Paris and Newman was unable to speak to her in person about Valentin's injuries. Although Newman says nothing to Valentin at first about what has happened concerning his engagement to Claire, Valentin guesses that something is wrong with Newman.

For a while the doctors will not let Newman see Valentin, claiming that he excites the sick man. Valentin, however, insists that his friend be allowed to return to his room. When Valentin presses Newman about his bad humor, Newman tells him about his broken engagement. Valentin tells Newman that he is ashamed of his family. He, like Newman, does not believe that Claire has given Newman up willingly.

Valentin then confides a secret with Newman that he believes will force the Bellegardes to come to their senses. Valentin tells Newman that he believes that his mother and brother may have been involved in the death of his father. Valentin tells Newman that he had always suspected that foul play was involved in his father's death, even though he was never sure exactly what happened. He indicates to Valentin, however, that his brother and his mother do know what happened. He tells Newman also that Mrs. Bread knows what happened. He orders Newman to ask Mrs. Bread to tell him the details.

In chapter twenty, Valentin dies. Newman leaves his friend's deathbed before the arrival of Urbain and his mother. Newman travels then to Fleurieres not only to see Claire but also to attend Valentin's burial. When Newman does see Claire, she tells him that she is sorry that she has treated him so badly and has done him such a wrong. Although Newman tries to convince Claire that they can overcome whatever her family has done to her, Claire insists that they cannot. She tells Newman that although she had tried to escape the curse of the Bellegarde house, this curse had overtaken her and now she was unable to leave. She tells Newman she has made plans to go into a convent and become a Carmelite nun. In this place, she says, the pain of the world will affect her no longer. She will at last have the peace that she has desired for so long.

Chapters XIX and XX Analysis

In these chapters, the tone of the book becomes even more dreary as Valentin dies. When Newman finally talks to Claire, she insists that she cannot marry him. She tells him that she has arranged to go into a convent where she will live the remainder of her days.

Valentin, however, gives Newman some hope of a way to avenge himself. Just before he dies, Valentin tells Newman that there was some secret associated with his father's death. Valentin believes that his mother and brother were involved in the death in some foul manner. He indicates to Newman that his father did not get well from the disease from which he was suffering. Valentin tells Newman that Mrs. Bread knows the details of what happened. He believes that the older woman can be convinced to tell Newman what happened if she believes that Valentin wanted her to tell.



Chapters XXI and XXII

Chapters XXI and XXII Summary

In chapter twenty-one, Newman tries to decide how he will address the wrong that he feels has been done to him. He tries to understand why Claire has made the decisions that she has made and why that she has decided to become a nun. Newman finally decides to try to talk to Claire's mother and brother one more time. Although at first he plans to threaten them with Valentin's secret, his good nature over takes him and he decides instead to appeal to the goodness that he believes is in them.

When Newman enters Fleurieres to talk to the Bellegardes, he is met by Mrs. Bread, who tells him that Claire has already gone back to Paris in order to enter the convent. Mrs. Bread adds that Claire's mother and Urbain were very unhappy when they learned what Claire had planned. When Mrs. Bread asks Newman for information about Valentin's last hours, Newman asks her if she can leave the house and meet him to talk about this topic in private. Mrs. Bread says she will try to get away and meet him.

When Newman does talk to Madame de Bellegarde and Urbain about Claire, he does not get the response he desired. Although Newman proposes to Claire's mother and Urbain that he will see to it that Claire does not enter the convent if they will renounce their reasons for not allowing her to marry Newman, they do not accept his terms. When the pair does not accept these terms, Newman tells them that prior to his death Valentin had told Newman that he was ashamed of his family and their behavior toward Newman. At this point Claire's mother exits the room and leaves Newman and Urbain alone. It is at this point that Newman tells Urbain that he knows about the family's secret. Urbain is startled by this information. Newman tells Urbain that if he is allowed to marry Claire, Newman will leave the secret alone, if they are kept apart, however, Newman will make this secret public knowledge.

Newman encourages Urbain to talk to his mother about the proposal and then bring a response to Newman by a particular time. At this given time, Newman is given a note that indicates that Urbain and his mother are returning to Paris to support Claire in her decision to become a nun. As a result, Newman meets Mrs. Bread as they had planned.

In chapter twenty-two, Mrs. Bread first tells Newman that Claire's mother and Urbain had made Claire deny him by working on her feelings and making her feel wicked. Mrs. Bread at first resists Newman's request to tell what she knows about what happened to the elder Bellegarde. She consents to tell, however, when Newman reminds her that it was Valentin's dying wish that he be told what happened. Mrs. Bread is finally convinced to tell Newman what she saw the night of the elder Bellegarde's death.

During their conversation, Mrs. Bread first tells Newman that she bears her own grudge against Madame de Bellegarde. The woman once accused her of trying to make her husband notice her by wearing a red ribbon on her cap. She describes the Bellegardes'



marriage as being one lacking in love. The couple apparently did not spend much time with one another.

Mrs. Bread indicates that the trouble that led to the elder Bellegarde's death began at the time when the family was trying to find a suitable husband for Claire. Monsieur de Cintre was the only suitor who would take the small amount of dowry that the Bellegardes were willing to offer for her. The elder marquis did not approve of the old man as a husband for his daughter. He and his wife apparently had a fairly violent argument about the issue. It was after this argument that the elder marquis went to bed and never got up again. Mrs. Bread tells Newman that Madame de Bellegarde was aware that if her husband died, she could command her daughter to marry whomever she wanted her to.

At one point during his illness, the marquis began to get better, but then suddenly was dead. On that night, the marquise had insisted Mrs. Bread leave her alone with her husband. When Mrs. Bread was allowed to return to the marquis that night, he appeared to be dead. Urbain is sent for the doctor, but Mrs. Bread tells Newman that the count went very slowly. When Urbain did finally return, alone, Mrs. Bread was left alone in the room for a short while. It is during this time that the marquis told Mrs. Bread that the marquise had done something to kill him. He then wrote a note that he told Mrs. Bread to show to someone to prove that his wife killed him. Mrs. Bread gives Newman the note on which the marquis wrote the note. When Newman has translated it, the note does indeed indicate that the elder Bellegarde did in fact believe that his wife was responsible for his death. He also believed he was killed so that Claire could be married to the man whom her mother wanted her to marry.

Chapters XXI and XXII Analysis

In these two chapters, Newman learns a good deal about Claire and the Bellegarde family. First, he learns from Mrs. Bread that Claire's mother knew just how to manipulate Claire when she decided that the marriage between Claire and Newman could not happen. Mrs. Bread tells Newman that Claire's mother made the girl feel wicked.

Newman also learns that Mrs. Bread bears her own grudge against the marquise. Apparently, in earlier years, the marquise had accused Mrs. Bread of trying to catch her own husband's attention by wearing a red ribbon in her cap. Mrs. Bread also tells Newman other things that the marquise said about her that were of a hateful nature.

With this grudge, combined with the information that Valentin wanted Mrs. Bread to tell Newman the secret about his father's death, Mrs. Bread consents to tell Newman what she believed happened to the elder marquis. The note which Mrs. Bread could not read and never showed anyone else to read validated Mrs. Bread's story. It appears that the marquise was killed because he did not like the man whom the marquise had picked out for their daughter to marry.

At first, Newman does not want to use the information that he has discovered about the Bellegardes against them. Because of his good nature, he appeals to the Bellegardes once again. They, however, would rather see Claire become a nun than to have her marry Newman.



Chapters XXIII and XXIV

Chapters XXIII and XXIV Summary

In chapter twenty-three, Mrs. Bread moves into Newman's home in Paris. Newman receives her as he had promised. Newman learns from Mrs. Bread that Claire has refused to see any members of her family. Mrs. Bread does tell Newman the location of the convent that Claire has joined. She also tells him about a public chapel located on the grounds where worshipers can hear the nuns singing. Mrs. Tristram arranges to get Newman into one of these services so he might be able to catch a glimpse of Claire or hear her voice.

In chapter twenty-four, Newman attends a service at the chapel at Claire's convent. When Newman leaves the chapel, he notices that Urbain and his mother have just entered the chapel, possibly with the same purpose as Newman. As Newman leaves the convent grounds, he sees Urbain's wife and daughter waiting in a carriage. She waves him over to speak to her. Together, they devise a plan so that Newman can speak to Urbain and his mother again. In this interview, Newman tells Urbain and his mother that he knows that they killed the elder Urbain. Newman shows Urbain a copy of the note written by the elder Urbain at the time of his death. Newman threatens to show this note to all of the influential people to whom he was introduced at the party that the Bellegardes gave in his honor.

The next day Urbain pays a visit to Newman. He tells Newman that the note that Mrs. Bread has given Newman is real. The circumstances that it details really did happen. However, Urbain appeals to Newman's good nature and asks Newman not to show anyone else the note in order to spare the honor of his father's memory.

Chapters XXIII and XXIV Analysis

In this section, Newman tries to appeal to any good nature that the Bellegardes might have to get them to renounce their command to Claire not to get married to Newman. When this plan does not work the way Newman wants it to, he tries to intimidate the Bellegardes by threatening to expose the way that the elder Bellegarde died. Urbain shows how well he has studied Newman and learned his character by appealing to Newman's good nature. Unfortunately Urbain's appeal to Newman's good nature works better than Newman's appeal to Urbain's good nature.



Chapters XXV and XXVI

Chapters XXV and XXVI Summary

In chapter twenty-five, Newman attempts to talk to the duchess about what the Bellegardes have done to him. When he is actually in her presence, however, he finds himself unable to talk to her. He watches as she discourses with a prince. He realizes that making her dislike the Bellegardes will not benefit him in any way. Newman makes up his mind not to think about the Bellegardes at all.

Later, while dining with the Tristams, however, Mr. Tristam offers Newman sympathy for what has happened to him. Mr. Tristam tells Newman he should not have become involved with Claire at all and that she would have turned out to be a bad wife. Mrs. Tristam also suggests to Newman that he would not have been happy. When Newman asks if she arranged the meeting with Claire out of curiosity, Mrs. Tristam says that it was the case. It is at this point Newman shows the only sign of frustration toward Mrs. Tristam that he has even shown.

Newman takes Mrs. Tristam's advice and leaves Paris. Newman travels to London and visits there for awhile. While in London, Newman happens to run into Noemie. He also happens to sit next to Noemie's father in the park. M. Nioche tells Newman he has still not forgiven his daughter. He also indicates that he is unaware what his daughter has done. Nioche claims that he still intends to stop his daughter. As they talk, Noemie and her new suitor, who turns out to be Lord Deepmere, approach them out of the crowd. Deepmere attempts to make excuses for his appearing with Noemie despite the fact that it was she who was responsible for his own cousin, though distant, being killed. As Newman leaves, Nioche promises that Newman will see something about Noemie's death in the paper. Newman indicates there is never anything in the paper about Nioche stopping his cruel daughter.

In chapter twenty-six, Newman spends some time in England before returning to America. In America, he tells those who ask only that the lady whom he was supposed to marry had changed her mind. In what is described as "restless idleness", Newman travels from New York to San Francisco, back to New York, and then back to San Francisco. While in San Francisco, Newman receives a letter from Mrs. Tristam telling him that Claire has taken her vows at the convent. On the day that he receives this letter, Newman begins his trip back to Paris.

At this point, Newman intends to remain in Paris for the remainder of his days. After spending some time near the exterior of the building where Claire is cloistered, and then in a chapel at Notre Dame, Newman comes away with the decision not to do any harm to the Bellegardes. His final visit before leaving Paris for good is to Mrs. Tristam. Newman shows Mrs. Tristam the note, and then burns it in the fireplace. After he has done so, Mrs. Tristam indicates that she believes Newman did not get what he wanted



from the Bellegardes because they believed he was too good natured and would not pursue the matter. By this time, the note is already destroyed.

Chapters XXV and XXVI Analysis

It is important to remember the beginning of the novel when Mrs. Tristram tells Newman that she intends to make Newman show his true colors. At this point, Mrs. Tristram accuses Newman of being a barbarian in disguise. She believes that the longer she knows him, the more likely he is to show off a cruel or hateful personality. Contrary to Mrs. Tristram's claim, however, Newman's trials seem to bring out nothing but his good nature. Although Newman has the opportunity to show all of the Bellegardes' friends that they are murderers and were cruel to their daughter, Newman allows his good nature to keep him from destroying what is left of the Bellegarde family.



Characters

Christopher Newman

Christopher Newman is the main character of the novel. Newman is a thirty-six-year-old American who was named after Christopher Columbus. Newman has made his fortune working in America first selling leather and then later selling washtubs. Newman has come to France to enjoy some of the profits of his fortune.

Newman is a person who has planned his life out in minute detail. Until the time that he meets the Bellegardes, Newman's life has gone as he had planned. Although he started out with nothing, he has worked hard to make his fortune. He has not married or taken any time for rest or leisure.

Newman has a specific idea of what type of woman his wife should be. Claire de Cintre meets his requirements. Fortunately, Claire, who has been married once before, also likes Newman. After a period of six months, Claire accepts Newman's proposal of marriage. Because he is rich, the Bellegardes allow the engagement to go forward for a time. It comes to a point, however, when Claire's mother and older brother decide they can no longer stand the idea of Claire marrying a "commercial" person and force Claire to break the engagement.

At his point of death, Claire's younger brother gives Newman information about a secret that he believes Newman can use to force the Bellegardes to allow Claire to marry him. Although Newman does investigate and discover the family secret, his good nature will not allow him to use the information against the Bellegardes.

Claire Bellegarde de Cintre

Claire is the widow to whom Mrs. Tristram introduces Newman. Claire was forced at the age of eighteen by her mother to marry an old man. Since that time, the old man has died without Claire having inherited any of his money. She is twenty-five at the time of the novel and does not intend to marry again. She is French by her father and English by her mother. Both of her parents were aristocrats.

Mrs. Tristram knows Claire because the two attended a convent school together. After Claire left the school, however, she was no longer allowed to see Mrs. Tristram because her parents considered Mrs. Tristram to be below them.

Although Claire does not intend to marry again, she listens to Newman because he is so different from anyone she has ever known before. She believes for once that she has an opportunity to escape from the bonds of her family and her social standing. Claire, however, is easily manipulated by her mother. She allows her mother to force her to break her engagement with Newman. At the same time that Claire is forced to break her



engagement, she also decides to become a nun and join a convent. After she makes this decision, she refuses not only to speak to Newman, but also her family.

Although Newman believes that Claire is the perfect woman and sees her as the mother of his children, she repeatedly tells him that she is not the woman he believes that she is. Claire insists that she is weak and cold, and that once Newman really knew who she was, he would no longer like her. It seems that Claire may have told Newman this not because of any characteristics original to her own personality, but instead those characteristics that would surface when her mother forced her to act a particular way.

Mademoiselle Noemie Nioche

Noemie is the young painter who Newman meets in the first chapter of the book. At their first meeting, Noemie badly overcharges Newman for a painting. Newman believes that he can help Noemie and offers to give her enough money for a dowry if she will paint him a series of several pictures. Although Noemie does not openly reject the deal, she never begins the work.

Noemie's father tells Newman on one occasion that Noemie is just like her mother, a shameless flirt. Newman at first does not believe this description of the girl, but as he watches the girl in action, he soon learns that is indeed what she is. Newman makes the mistake of introducing Valentin to Noemie. Valentin falls in love with the pretty young girl.

As a result of an injustice done while Valentin is sitting in an opera box with Noemie and her suitor, Valentin is killed in a duel. Noemie shows no remorse that lives are put in danger because of her, she only wants a scene so that her name will be in the paper. She seems to believe that her role in the duel will cause her to become famous.

Noemie is a very shallow person and wants only to be part of the public and the showing of the rich and the well known. She does not care who she has to step on to get there. In his last meeting with Noemie, Newman sees her walking with Lord Deepmere. Deepmere is a distant relative of Valentin, the man who was killed as a result of Noemie's selfishness. Deepmere is also the man whom Claire's mother and older brother wanted to marry her to instead of Newman. Noemie's willingness to be seen in public with this man illustrates the shallowness of her personality.

Monsieur Nioche

Monsieur Nioche is Noemie's father. Although Valentin believes that Nioche is content to reap the benefits of his daughter's bad behavior, Newman has a better opinion of the old man's personality. Because Nioche speaks both English and French, he gives lessons to Newman in French conversation. During this time, Newman believes that Nioche is simply a worried father who has no control over his wayward daughter.



Nioche continues to tell Newman each time that he sees him that he is ashamed of his daughter. Nioche also tells Newman that he has not forgiven his daughter for what she has done. Nioche, however, does not separate himself from his daughter and does not attempt to punish her or force her to do the right thing. For this reason, the reader gets the idea that it is Valentin who is correct in his description of Nioche's personality and role in life.

Tom Tristam

Tom Tristam is Newman's friend from St. Louis. The two met when Tristam was in the army. Tristam has been living in Paris for six years and has come to the decision that Paris culture is better than American culture. Newman begins to prefer to spend time with Tristam's wife instead of Tristam because Tristam insists on being so degrading to American ways and those from America.

It is Tristam who helps Newman to pick out the huge, highly decorated apartments in which Newman lives during his engagement to Claire. When Mrs. Tristam first suggests introducing Claire to Newman, Tristam warns Newman that the relationship is not a good idea. After the engagement has been broken, Tristam tells Newman that he probably would not have been happy with the high-class woman, as she probably would have turned out to be cold and haughty.

Mrs. Lizzie Tristam

Mrs. Tristam becomes a very close friend and confidant to Newman. She is the one who introduces Newman to Claire. After the engagement has been broken, Mrs. Tristam admits to Newman that she proposed that the two meet simply out of curiosity. She wondered what might have come of the relationship if it were allowed to grow. Even after Newman has returned to America, Mrs. Tristam continues to write to Newman and send him news of Claire. At the close of the novel, it is Mrs. Tristam who suggests to Newman that if he had really pushed the issue of the Bellegardes' secret, then they might have allowed him to marry Claire.

Valentin de Bellegarde

Valentin is Claire's younger brother. Valentin is the only one, with the exception of Claire, who tries to be friends with Newman. Although Newman had planned to help Valentin make something of himself, Valentin is mortally injured in a duel with another man about Noemie. On his deathbed, Valentin shares with Newman a secret about the Bellegarde family that he believes Newman can use to avenge himself of the wrong that has been done to him.

Valentin and Newman are alike in the aspect that neither of them are approved of by the Bellegarde family. It has always been believed that Valentin would be the one who would ruin the family name by doing or saying something that would embarrass them.



Newman believes that he is doing Valentin a favor by offering to send him to America and arranging a job for him so that he can feel productive. Unfortunately, Valentin meets Noemie and falls in love with her. In an attempt to defend his honor, Valentin agrees to take part in a duel concerning the flighty young girl. Valentin is killed by a pistol shot in this duel.

Marquis Urbain de Bellegarde

Urbain is the elder brother of both Valentin and Claire. When Newman is in the presence of Urbain, he feels as if he is in the presence of evil. During the party given for Claire and Newman by the Bellegardes, Newman notices on several occasions that Urbain does not look pleased. When the engagement is finally broken between Newman and Claire, Urbain is not shy in telling Newman that he does not and never did like Newman.

It was Urbain who had a role in helping his mother kill his father. The two worked together so that the elder Urbain de Bellegarde would not survive an illness from which the doctors indicated he should not have died. The evening of the murder Urbain was sent for the doctor, but when he returned he said the doctor could not come. It was believed that Urbain helped his mother kill his father because he wanted his sister to marry the rich de Cintre, a man who, they believed, would add riches to the family.

Emmeline Atheling de Bellegarde

Emmeline is mother to Claire, Urbain and Valentin. Her favorite child, undoubtedly, is Urbain. Urbain helps the marquise murder her husband so that they can force Claire to marry a rich old man who Claire's father does not approve. The marquise is a jealous woman. This personality trait is demonstrated by the way that she lashed out at Mrs. Bread for wearing a red ribbon in her cap. The marquise accuses the servant of trying to catch the eye of the marquis. The marquise also has a very strong manipulative hold over her daughter. Although the older lady had promised not to interfere in the engagement, she thinks nothing of commanding her daughter not to get married to Newman. Her honor is questionable because of the way she allows her family's deal with Newman to be broken. What bit of honor that might have remained is erased when one learns that she killed her husband so that she could force her daughter to marry an old man just because he was rich and required little dowry of the family.

Madame de Bellegarde

Madame de Bellegarde is Claire's sister-in-law. She is the wife of Urbain. At one point, this lady tries to form some sort of alliance with Newman. At the end of the novel, this lady does help Newman to set up an opportunity to speak to the Bellegardes again. She does not really help Newman but she doesn't really hinder him either.



The younger Madame de Bellegarde appears to be very much interested in parties and dresses and society. She requests at one point that Newman take her to a particular ball where students dance with their mistresses. When it happens that Newman is unable to escort her, she simply finds another escort. Madame de Bellegarde seems to float above the troubles of the Bellegarde house without really paying that much attention to them.

Mrs. Bread

Mrs. Bread is the servant who tells Newman the truth about the secret that Valentin shares with Newman at Valentin's death. Mrs. Bread is perhaps Newman's greatest ally in the Bellegarde house. She approves and anticipates Newman's marriage to Claire. Because Mrs. Bread has raised both Claire and Valentin from birth, she feels a strong connection with them, almost as if they were her own children. As a result of her loyalty to him, Newman arranges for Mrs. Bread to live in his home in France. She earns her livelihood as his servant although he chooses not to inhabit this house after Claire enters the convent.

Lord Deepmere

Lord Deepmere is a distant relative of the Bellegardes whom the marquise seems to hope that Claire will marry instead of Newman. Deepmere is described as not being very intelligent. He also seems to be a flirt as he is seen trying to seduce Claire, is later seen spending time with Noemie despite that fact she was part of the reason Valentin was killed, and also agrees to take Madame de Bellegarde to a ball which she wants to attend without her husband.

Madame de Outreville

Madame de Outreville is the duchess whom Newman tries to befriend and join forces with against the Bellegardes. As Newman sits in her presence he realizes how silly it is for him to try to turn this lady against the Bellegardes. He also gets the feeling that the duchess is avoiding a personal conversation with him. He feels that even with the news that he has, the duchess will be loyal to her rich friends.

Monsieur Stanislas Kapp

Kapp is the man with whom Valentin duels. Kapp is described as the bad natured son of a brewer. Instead of shooting Valentin in an area of his body that would not have been fatal, Kapp chooses to shoot Valentin in the chest. Kapp, on the other hand, is only given a flesh wound by Valentin. It is a result of Kapp's bad behavior around Noemie that Valentin agrees to duel with this man.



Objects/Places

Museum of the Louvre

The Louvre is a Paris museum where Newman is relaxing at the beginning of the novel. It is in this museum that he meets Noemie and reunites with Tom Tristam.

2000 Francs

Two thousands francs is the sum of money that Noemie charges Newman for her painting.

Palais Royal

It is to the Palais Royal that Tristam suggests that he and Newman go instead of staying at the Louvre.

Grand Hotel

The grand hotel is the hotel where Newman stays the first time he visits Paris. Tristam, however, insists this hotel is not good enough for Newman.

The Occidental

The Occidental is a club to which Tristam hopes Newman will visit with him. It is at this club that Tristam spends his time playing poker.

Tower of the Hotel de Ville

The Tower of the Hotel de Ville is one of the sights in the city of Brussels that impresses Newman. He wonders if something like this tower could be built in the city of San Francisco.

A Grotesque Statue of Ivory

It is this representation of a monk carved out of ivory that Newman sends to Babcock as a gift after they parted ways.



Boulevard Haussmann

The apartment that Tristram chooses for Newman to live in is located on the Boulevard Haussmann.

Six Months

Six months is the amount of time that Claire requires Newman to see her before proposing the idea of marriage to her again.

An Indifferent Statue of an Eighteenth Century Nymph

It is beside this statue that Mrs. Bread talks to Newman in private when she learns that Newman and Claire are engaged. Mrs. Bread encourages Newman to make the engagement a short one.

Café de la Patrie

The Café de la Patrie is the café where Newman meets Nioche after Newman learns that Noemie has left her father's home. He is surprised to see the old man as he believed Nioche would either kill himself or Noemie when the girl disobeyed to this extent.

The Conservatory

The conservatory is the room where Newman happens to catch Claire and Lord Deepmere talking.

A Carmelite Nun

A Carmelite nun is what Claire decides to become instead of allowing her mother and older brother to force her to marry Lord Deepmere.

Bal Bullier

Bal Bullier is the ball that takes place in the Latin Quarter where the students dance with their mistresses. It is to this ball that Urbain's wife asks her future brother-in-law to take her one day. When Newman cannot take her, she arranges to go with Lord Deepmere instead.



Fleurieres

Fleurieres is the name of the estate where Valentin and his father are buried. It is also to this estate that Claire escapes when her family forces her to break her engagement with Newman.

A Letter

It is this letter, written by the elder Urbain de Bellegarde, that proves that the man was killed by his wife and oldest son. Mrs. Bread has had this letter in her possession, but gives it to Newman when she learns that Valentin has requested that she do so.



Themes

Cultural Differences

The cultural differences between the Americans and the French are one of the most visible themes throughout this novel. Newman was born and raised in America. He is accustomed to a culture where one is allowed to prove one's worth by the work he or she chooses to do. For instance, Newman started out with nothing, but has made a fortune in selling leather and washtubs. In the French culture, worth is simply a matter of one's lineage and last name. Those belonging to a particular family are seen as being more worthy than those who belong to a different family. In this shallow system of determining one's worth, the most worthy ones, such as Newman, are often pushed aside for those less honorable simply because of their name.

Another aspect of French culture that deeply bothers Newman is the unspoken rule that children, even adult children, must obey their parents. Newman's difficulty with this idea becomes evident as he begins to spend more and more time with Claire. Although Claire feels compelled to do what her mother tells her to do, Newman believes that Claire should be free to make her own choices, especially when these choices will affect Claire's happiness.

The French peoples' ideas about marriage are another characteristic of the French culture that bothers Newman. He strongly disapproves of the opinion that one should marry for the sake of money or a name instead of love. For instance, when Newman discusses the possibility of Noemie's marriage with her father, the father tells Newman Noemie cannot get married if she does not have a dowry. While Newman sees Noemie's ability to paint as a dowry, Newman can not understand why a man would demand cash money in order to seal a marriage. The French also believe that marriages should take place only between those of similar social classes. Since Newman is a "commercial" person, Claire's family finally decides they cannot stand to see her married to Newman.

Proving One's Worth

Finding a way to prove that one is worthwhile is a difficult prospect in French culture. Generally, in France, worth is built on name and lineage. Although Newman has built up his own worth and fortune in America, all of this worth means little or nothing in France. Because he is not of royal blood, he is seen as nothing when he tries to marry Claire.

Another idea of proving one's worth is illustrated in Valentin's duel with Kapp. Valentin tells Newman that he must duel with Kapp in order to preserve his honor. Newman, however, sees this duel only as a waste. To Valentin, it is very important to him to take part in the duel and prove to Kapp that he intends to stand behind what he says.



Although she goes about it in a perverted way, Noemie is also trying to prove her own worth. She knows she will not be satisfied marrying a grocer or butcher. She has higher aspirations for herself. She, like Newman, goes about trying to make a name for herself. Instead of entering the business world, however, Noemie attempts to flirt her way to the top. She is excited at the idea of a duel between Kapp and Valentin, especially since it involves her. She believes this duel will help to break her into society. Although it is shameful, Noemie is almost more successful in breaking into French culture than Newman is. This is shown by her being seen about with Lord Deepmere. Although Noemie is, in a way, responsible for killing Valentin, who is Lord Deepmere's relative, and also Noemie is of a social class lower than Deepmere, he still allows himself to be seen with her.

Marriage

Marriage, particularly the rituals of arranged marriages and dowries, is one theme that is dealt with in James' novel. This theme first surfaces when Noemie's father tells Newman that he is afraid his daughter will not marry a good man because she has no dowry to offer this man. Newman is surprised to learn that French men prefer to marry based on the amount of money they might make in the deal rather than basing their decision on affection.

Claire's forced marriage to the old man de Cintre is another situation that surprises Newman. The circumstances of this marriage seem even stranger when it is learned that Claire's mother and older brother killed Claire's father as a result of the arranged marriage. The mother and brother wanted Claire to marry the old man, who didn't require a large dowry, while Claire's father was strongly against his daughter marrying the old man. To make matters worse, when Claire's old husband died, her family did not benefit from his money as they hoped they would. Instead his family begins a lawsuit to keep Claire from getting an inheritance. As a result, Claire gives up her part of the inheritance.

Since money has been such an important factor in marriage thus far, it seems that Newman's offer to marry Claire would be very attractive to the Bellegardes since Newman was very wealthy. However, it appears that even in this society, there are some things that are more important than money. Claire's family forces her to break her engagement with Newman because they cannot stand the idea of her being married to a commercial person. They would rather see Claire married to a man whom she dislikes but has a royal name and lineage rather than see her happy.

Good versus Evil

This is not the typical good versus evil story where the good character wins out over the evil one. Instead, the novel shows the way in which evil people often triumph while those who are intrinsically good allow the evil characters to come out on top in the name of their good nature. Newman, for instance, gives up the woman whom he believes to



be perfect for him because he is unwilling to be hateful or cruel to the Bellegardes. Although the reader admires Newman for his refusal to stoop to the level of the Bellegardes, he is also pitied because he does allow Claire to slip away when he has the ability to keep from losing her.

Because she is an adult and has the ability to make decisions for herself, one also has to pity Claire because her family has such a strong hold over her. Claire allows her family to command her not to marry Newman. Again, because she is so obedient, Claire refuses to go against her family's wishes. In fact, Claire goes to the extent of becoming a Carmelite nun in order to escape her family's hold over her. Claire chooses to become a nun instead of marrying Newman because as a nun, she has the rules and regulations of the convent to protect her from her family. They are not allowed to see her. Even if Claire and Newman had married and moved to America, Claire's family would still have been a threat to Claire's peace and happiness.

Style

Point of View

This novel is written from the point of view of a third-person narrator. This narrator follows the actions of main character Newman as he tries to maneuver through the snobbish French culture. Although the narrator gives the reader insight into Newman's thoughts and actions, he does not give insights into the thoughts and actions of the other characters. The reader is given the job, just as Newman is, of trying to figure out why the people around him are acting the way in which they are.

The point of view of the third-person narrator works the best for the story that James hopes to tell. The main theme of the story deals with the differences that Newman encounters when travels to France. If James had chosen a different character to highlight in the novel, one of the characters more acquainted with the French culture perhaps, there would have not been such a distinct sense of bewilderment about the way the French people treat Newman.

Setting

The majority of this story is set in the French capitol of Paris in the year of 1868. The story opens in the Louvre, a place that is perhaps the most famous museum in Paris. The Louvre is a very significant setting in this book since many important scenes are played out in this museum. It is in the Louvre that Newman meets Noemie and her father. It is also in this same museum that Newman becomes reacquainted with his old friend Tristam. Another significant event that takes place in this museum is Valentin's introduction to Noemie.

Another setting often visited in this novel is the home of Claire de Cintre. This mansion is the long-time home of the Bellegarde family. According to a date on a cornice board in the house, the home was built in 1672. The house is described as being dark and dusky and as a house of secrets. Newman spends considerable time trying to get to know Claire inside the walls of this house. Among his visits include a dinner party as well as an engagement party.

Other settings include Newman's apartments that Tristam chose for him and the Tristams' house. While still in his rooms at the Grand Hotel, Newman takes language lessons from Nioche. Newman also visits Nioche at the Café de la Patrie. Newman also visits several places in Europe during one of his sightseeing tours.

Although not much of the action of the novel actually takes place in the American city of San Francisco, this city is significant because it is where Newman earns his fortune. For a brief time after Claire broke her engagement with Newman, Newman returns to America for a short while. He visits the cities of New York and San Francisco.



Language and Meaning

James tells this story in a very leisurely but deliberate manner. He is very thorough in describing his characters, their mannerisms and the situations they encounter. For this reason, the book is comprised of about seventy percent exposition while about thirty percent is dialogue.

Probably the most significant aspect of the language used in the book is some of the names that James chooses to give his characters. There are a few names that are very fitting. For instance, notice that Christopher Newman is referred to most often by his last name. Separated into two words, his name is "new man". This newness could refer to the differences between Newman and the French people. He is a "new man" from the men they are accustomed to encountering.

Valentin's name perhaps has a meaning that is similar to his nature. There is a St. Valentine who is said to be the patron saint of love. Valentin's name is a shortened version of Valentine. It is no surprise that Valentin should die in a duel defending the honor of the woman whom he loves. Valentin's brother, Urbain, also has a name that is descriptive of his character. The word "urbane" is spelled differently from the name used in the novel, but pronounced the same. Urbane is a term that one could use to describe Urbain, who is a man who tries to be very sophisticated.

Another name that gives some insight into the character's personality is Noemie's father. It would probably be better to say that his lack of a name would be descriptive of his personality. Throughout the novel, Nioche is never given a first name. This could indicate his connection with his daughter and her strong personality. Because he is willing to stay in the girl's shadow and never assert himself, he is destined to remain unanimous and unnamed.

Structure

This book is comprised of twenty-six chapters. Each chapter is designated with a title bearing only the chapter number in Roman numerals. The chapters are between ten and fifteen pages long.

The novel has a fairly complex story, with one main plot as well as a couple of sub-plots. The main plot deals with the story of Newman and his attempted relationship with Claire. While this story could, in itself provide enough material for a novel, James adds some other aspects to the book that add depth to the main theme and help to strengthen some of the ideas and concepts presented in Claire and Newman's story.

One of the sub-plots involves Valentin's relationship with Noemie. Although it is uncertain if the two ever really had a close relationship, it is known that Valentin was taken with Noemie's beauty. Valentin is so taken with Noemie that he agrees to duel with a man who belittles Valentin's honor in front of Noemie. Noemie is emotional about

the duel, not because she is afraid Valentin might be hurt but because she believes the publicity from the even will help her to break into high society.

Another of the sub-plots in the book involves Newman's relationship with Noemie and her father. Although Newman tries to help the girl and her father when he first meets them in the Louvre, by the end of the novel he realizes how shallow they both were. Noemie chooses to pass up the offer Newman makes her to earn her dowry and get married. Instead, she chooses to try to push her way into high society by any means possible. One of these ways is by having Valentin and Kapp fight about her.



Quotes

"An observer with anything of an eye for national types would have had no difficulty in determining the local origin of the this underdeveloped connoisseur, and indeed such an observer of might have felt a certain humorous relish of the almost ideal completeness with which he filled out the national mould."

Chap. 1, p. 6

"He knew Mademoiselle Nioche had asked too much; he bore her no grudge for doing so, and he was determined to pay the young man exactly the proper sum."

Chap. 2, p. 15

"'I must confess,' he presently went on, 'that here I don't feel at all smart. My remarkable talents seem of no use. I feel as simple as a little child, and a little child might take me by the hand and lead me about.'"

Chap. 2, p. 22

"Her observation, acutely exercised here, had suggested to her that a woman's first duty is not to be beautiful, but to be pleasing, and she encountered so many women who pleased without beauty that she began to feel she had discovered her mission."

Chap. 3, p. 27

"She is not a beauty, but she is beautiful, two very different things. A beauty has no faults in her face, the face of a beautiful woman may have faults that only deepen its charm."

Chap. 3, p. 37

"The young man from Dorchester accused Newman of a fault which he considered very grave, and which he did his best to avoid: what he would have called a want of 'moral reaction.'"

Chap. 4, p. 61

"In France you must never say nay to your mother, whatever she requires of you."

Chap. 6, p. 72

"We are very different, I'm sure; I don't believe there is a subject on which we think or feel alike. But I rather think we shall get on, for there is such a thing, you know, as being too different to quarrel."

Chap. 7, p. 86

"In America, Newman reflected, lads of twenty-five and thirty have old heads and young hearts, or at least young morals; here they have young heads and very aged hearts, morals the most grizzled and wrinkled."

Chap. 7, p. 87



"You have seen her; you know what she is: tall, thin, light, imposing, and gentle, half a grande dame and half an angel; a mixture of pride and humility, of the eagle and the dove."

Chap. 8, p. 96

"He found in her what he had found before - that faint perfume of a personal shyness worn away by contact with the world, but the more perceptible the more closely you approached her."

Chap. 9, p. 106

"And this was the starting-point of a speculative theory, in his mind, that the late marquis had been a very amiable foreigner, with an inclination to take life easily and a sense that it was difficult for the husband of the stilted little lady by the fire to do so."

Chap. 10, p. 120

"And in one gift - perfect heartlessness - I will warrant she is unsurpassed."

Chap. 12, p. 133

"He had never been a man of strong personal aversions; his nerves had not been at the mercy of the mystical qualities of his neighbors. But here was a man towards whom he was irresistibly in opposition; a man of forms and phrases and postures; a man full of possible impertinences and treacheries."

Chap. 12, p. 138

"This promise had a great sound, and yet the pleasure he took in it was embittered by his having to stand there and receive his passport from M. de Bellegarde."

Chap. 12, p. 140

"If he has never committed murder, he has at least turned his back and looked the other way while someone else was committing it."

Chap. 12, p. 152

"This, it must be confessed, was a slightly malicious stroke; the reader must judge in what degree the offense was venial."

Chap. 14, p. 171

"I have said that Newman was observant, but it must be admitted that on this occasion he failed to notice a certain delicate glance which passed between Madame de Bellegarde and the marquis, and which we may presume to have been a commentary upon the innocence displayed in that latter clause of his speech."

Chap. 14, p. 174

"I have no spirit, and when you have no spirit, you must keep quiet."

Chap. 15, p. 180

"They made a distinction. They said it was to hold good only until Madame de Cintre accepted me."

Chap. 16, p. 240



"There's a curse upon this house; I don't know what - I don't know why - don't ask me. We must all bear it. I have been too selfish; I wanted to escape from it."
Chap. 20, p. 251

"That this superb woman, in whom he had seen all human grace and household force, should turn from him and all the brightness that he offered her - him and his future and his fortune and his fidelity - to muffle herself in ascetic rags and entomb herself in a cell was a confounding combination of the inexorable and the grotesque."
Chap. 20, p. 253

"For a moment the effect of these words was as if Newman had struck a physical blow. A quick flush leaped into the faces of Madame de Bellegarde and her son, and they exchanged a glance like a twinkle of steel."
Chap. 21, p. 260

"My dear boy, don't think me a vulgar brute for hinting at it, but you may depend upon it, all they wanted was your money."
Chap. 25, p. 307

"Responsible or not, he was equally an accomplice of his detestably mischievous daughter."
Chap. 25, p. 3143

"Without in the least intending it or knowing it, he attempted to read the moral of his strange misadventure. He asked himself, in his quieter hours, whether perhaps, after all he was more commercial than was pleasant."
Chap. 26, p. 316

"If there was any reason in the nature of things why his connection with business should have cast a shadow upon a connection — even a connection broken — with a woman justly proud, he was willing to sponge it out of his life forever."
Chap. 26, p. 316

"What the paper suggested was the feeling that lay in his innermost heart and that no receiving cheerfulness could long quench — the feeling that after all and above all he was a good fellow wronged."
Chap. 26, p. 318

"Their confidence, after counsel taken of each other, was not in their innocence, nor in their talent for bluffing things off; it was in your remarkable good nature! You see they were right."
Chap. 26, p. 321



Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast brothers Valentin and Urbain. In what ways are they similar? How are they different?

Compare and contrast the ways in which Noemie and Newman earn their "fortunes". What is similar in the way that the two have risen to the top? How are the two different in their desires to achieve their own individual ideas of success?

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Do you believe things might have turned out differently had Newman pressed the issue with the letter that proved Urbain and his mother killed the father? Do you believe the Bellegarde's were ever truly afraid of Newman and the information that he had against them? Why or why not?

Do you believe Claire's affection for Newman was real? Support your answer with examples from the book?

In what way does Lord Deepmere fit into the action of the novel? Why is it significant that Newman later sees the man escorting Noemie?

Why is it significant that Valentin be killed in a duel? What should the reader glean from this situation about Valentin's personality?

Although Newman claimed not to be affected by the silly sentiments of love and indicated that he chose his future wife based solely using an educated method, there are times when he shows the behaviors of one in love. Do you believe that Newman was in love with Claire? If so, why does he not fight harder to separate her from her strange family?

What is your opinion of Valentin's relationship with Noemie? Is she the one whom he loves but cannot marry? Why does he choose to give his life for her?