

Barchester Towers Study Guide

Barchester Towers by Anthony Trollope

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Plot Summary

Barchester Towers is the chronicle of personal and political maneuvering within the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century. The story begins as one Bishop of Barchester dies and a new bishop is selected. This new Bishop, Dr. Proudie, is led by his wife, Mrs. Proudie, and his domestic chaplain, Mr. Slope. Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope are determined to shake up the church establishment in Barchester with a series of new policies and practices, including the formation of Sabbath, or Sunday schools. The established clergy of Barchester, led by Archdeacon Grantly, the son of the previous Bishop, are equally determined to keep things as they have always been.

Tangled up in this church power struggle is Hiram's Hospital, a charitable establishment for retired people. A new warden is to be appointed to run this hospital and both sides want to put one of their own followers in this position. The Archdeacon wants to reappoint Dr. Harding, who held the position previously before a newspaper scandal forced him to resign. Dr. Harding is also the father of two daughters. The older daughter is Susan Grantly, who is married to the Archdeacon. The younger is Eleanor Bold, a new widow with a baby and a small fortune.

At first Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope are united in their desire to appoint someone of their own group to the position. This unity ends, however, as the two of them fight between themselves for control over the Bishop. At first they work together to get the position for Mr. Quiverful, an extremely poor preacher who has fourteen children and a very small income. Then Mr. Slope realizes that, because of her money, he wants to try to marry Eleanor, and he switches alliances to support Mr. Harding. This begins a struggle between Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope to get the Bishop to choose their candidate.

Mr. Slope's interest in Eleanor has begun to worry her family, who think that she might consider marrying Slope, a prospect that fills them with horror. Without consulting Eleanor, they discuss the possible marriage behind her back and decide that if she does marry Slope, they will all refuse to see her anymore. Eleanor, however, has no intention of marrying Slope and no idea that her family thinks she will. She continues to see Mr. Slope because she feels it is wrong to be rude to him just because he has different opinions about the church.

The next complication to enter the story is the return of the Stanhope family, which has been living in Italy the last twelve years. Dr. Stanhope is also a preacher, but he has neglected his post in England in order to live idly in Italy. His children have been raised in Italy and are very badly suited to England. His oldest daughter Charlotte is trying to protect his only son, Bertie, who is lazy, good-natured, and deeply in debt. His other daughter, Madeleine, is crippled from an accident involving her now absent husband, Signor Neroni. She can't walk, is carried everywhere, and her only wish in life is to seduce every man she meets. She refers to herself as "the signora." Soon after their arrival to Barchester, two plots emerge. The first is the signora's seduction of Mr. Slope. The second is Charlotte's plan for Bertie to try to marry Eleanor for her money.



In the ongoing power struggle between the Bishop's group and the Archdeacon, the Archdeacon has decided to call in a respected Oxford scholar, Mr. Arabin, to help him fight for traditional church values in Barchester by giving him the post of preacher at St. Ewold's, a small country church. Mr. Arabin is an older, unmarried, and very honest man who quickly finds himself in love with Eleanor. While Eleanor's family is convinced she will marry Mr. Slope, Eleanor is actually growing closer to Mr. Arabin. Eleanor and her family have a huge fight when the Archdeacon reveals their suspicions, and they refuse to see each other for a while.

Meanwhile, the Bishop has awarded the warden position to Mr. Quiverful, therefore giving Mrs. Proudie a victory and Mr. Slope a defeat. Mr. Slope is not discouraged, however, because a new position as Dean of Barchester Cathedral has just become available. Mr. Slope is determined to gain this new, important post. The Archdeacon's group is equally determined to keep him from getting this position.

At a party to welcome Arabin to his new position at St. Ewold's, both Mr. Slope and Bertie Stanhope propose to Eleanor, which upsets her because she had not realized either of the men thought that she liked them in that way. Also at the party, the signora meets Mr. Arabin and decides, against her usual character, that she will help him to marry Eleanor because she feels he is a good, honest man incapable of being seduced. Two days after the party, the signora meets with Eleanor to tell her that Mr. Arabin loves her. Eleanor loves Mr. Arabin but does not know what she should do about it. This problem is solved when a wealthy neighborhood lady, Miss Thorne, invites both Eleanor and Mr. Arabin to visit her at her country home. When they are left alone together, Mr. Arabin proposes and Eleanor accepts.

Eleanor and Mr. Arabin return to town and announce their engagement. At the same time, Mr. Harding has been informed that he has been chosen to be the new Dean. He turns down the position and gets the church leaders to give it to Mr. Arabin instead. Mr. Slope leaves Barchester in disgrace. Eleanor and Mr. Arabin get married and everyone is very happy for them.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The story begins in July in the 1850s. The Bishop of Barchester, Dr. Grantly Sr., is on his deathbed. There is a great deal of speculation about who will replace him. One hopeful candidate is the Bishop's son, the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon has reason to hope that he will be the replacement because the current Prime Minister has promised him the position. However, in the month that Dr. Grantly Sr. is dying, the government of England changes and a new Prime Minister is appointed. The new Prime Minister is of the opposing party, and therefore chooses his own candidate to be Bishop of Barchester. After much newspaper debate, Dr. Proudie is selected to be the new Bishop. The Archdeacon is very disappointed.

Chapter 1 Analysis

The story opens with one of the book's central struggles: who will control Parliament in England, and, through Parliament, control the leadership of the Church of England? The appointment of the new Bishop is shown as a complete act of chance, because only a few days will make the difference between the Archdeacon being Bishop and someone else being chosen Bishop. The qualifications for the position are not discussed. Everything is left to political fortune. At the beginning of the chapter, the conservative party is in power and the position is promised to the Archdeacon. By the end of the chapter, the liberal party has taken over and the position goes to one of their followers, Dr. Proudie.

The specific case of how the Bishop is chosen will be played out again and again in the story as conservative and liberal factions struggle against each other to determine who will control the church leadership in Barchester. The press will also continue to play a role in how the different church leaders will be viewed throughout England.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

This chapter examines the history of Hiram's Hospital. Hiram's Hospital was established many years earlier by a wealthy benefactor who donated money for its construction after his death. It is not a hospital in the modern sense, but more of a retirement home for older men who can no longer work. Originally, the hospital was supposed to have twelve such old men along with a warden to run the establishment. About five years before the current story begins, there was a great scandal about how the money for the hospital was being spent. Many people felt that the warden at the time, Dr. Harding, was paid too much for the amount of work he did. Under public pressure, Dr. Harding resigned and has been living in shame ever since. Many of the other members of the Barchester church leadership, however, are very anxious that Dr. Harding be returned to the position.

Finally, after a long wait, Parliament has passed a bill to re-establish the position of warden at the hospital. They completely change the original hospital plan in order to fund twelve old men and twelve old women. The new warden will also have half the salary of the original plan. While the bill makes no specific mention of Dr. Harding, many people in Barchester assume that he will return as warden of the hospital.

Chapter 2 Analysis

While many of the debates throughout the story involve the more abstract differences between the liberal and conservative factions in Barchester, the ongoing problems with Hiram's Hospital become the very concrete example of how these arguments affect members of the church community. The hospital, and Dr. Harding's claims to it, will define both sides through the story, as each side uses this very insignificant position to further its own cause.

The new legislation for the hospital comes from the same Parliament that has appointed the new Bishop, and is therefore seen as falling on the liberal side. The changes to the bill are direct attacks at the conservative factions in Barchester. The appointment of the new warden will be the first act of the new Bishop, and therefore it will determine how the liberal and conservative forces will be able to exist together in Barchester.

The last important point in this chapter is the establishment of Dr. Harding's character. He is a man who is very unsure of himself. His honesty has led him to shy away from public life in the past, and this is likely to happen again in the future. His daughter, Eleanor, however, is established as a much stronger-willed person.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Dr. Proudie is introduced and his career in the church is explained. Throughout his career, Dr. Proudie has generally been associated with the royal family and members of Parliament, not with the average churchgoer. He is a liberal, and his political opinions are influenced by the party in power. Dr. Proudie is always eager for attention and signs his name to documents written by liberal politicians without really doing anything himself. He has used this technique as a means of gaining power and influence for himself. The real power, however, belongs to his wife, Mrs. Proudie, who controls everything that he does. She, in turn, is influenced by Mr. Slope, an evangelical London preacher, who leads the family in religious matters. Both Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope see Dr. Proudie's appointment as Bishop as a means for extending their own powers.

The Proudie family is much more interested in life in London than in Barchester. They tend to view Barchester as more of a vacation home and intend to spend most of their time in London in order to continue to be influential with Parliament. This is in contrast to how the previous Bishop, Dr. Grantly Sr., viewed his role as Bishop of Barchester.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Dr. Proudie's name is a clear allegory for his character. He is proud and self important without any real substance. He and his followers are much more interested in political power than in managing the day-to-day operations of the church. Again, the difference between his views as part of the liberal faction, and the views of the previous Bishop and the conservative faction are shown to be at odds.

This chapter sets up the relationship between Dr. Proudie, Mrs. Proudie, and Mr. Slope. Mrs. Proudie intends to rule through Dr. Proudie and Mr. Slope intends to rule through Mrs. Proudie. This power triangle will prove unsteady at times as Mr. Slope seeks a more direct route to Dr. Proudie. Both Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope see themselves as the real Bishop and their alliance at this stage is at its strongest.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Mr. Slope is introduced and his ambitions are explained. Rising from a position as a tutor at Cambridge to a preacher at a small London church, Mr. Slope's religious career rests on convincing vulnerable women to follow him. One of these women, though not so vulnerable, is Mrs. Proudie. When Dr. Proudie becomes Bishop, Mr. Slope is made his domestic chaplain, meaning he will go to Barchester with the Proudies.

Mr. Slope believes that the Proudies will want to spend all of their time in London, and therefore give him free rein in Barchester. He anticipates fighting with Mrs. Proudie for power, but assumes that since she will be in London most of the time it will not be too difficult to get the local people on his side.

Mr. Slope's religious style is very evangelical and he has very strict views on many religious matters. He is intent on controlling all private and public behavior of those in his congregation. He can be quite popular with women who are drawn to his fiery preaching style and his personal flattery. His views on religious matters is very different from the Archdeacon, who generally expects the members of his congregation to be responsible for their own religious faith and leaves them alone when it comes to their private lives.

Chapter 4 Analysis

This chapter begins Mr. Slope's quest for power by discussing various aspects of his character. In one instance, he tried to court the Proudie's oldest daughter, but he lost interest when he felt there was no financial gain. This will continue to be a pattern in his relationships with women as he calculates the personal benefits of getting married. At the same time it shows his true position in the world because Mrs. Proudie never suspects that he is courting her daughter because she would never consider such a low-born person as Slope to be a candidate for marriage into her family. This shows how Slope's ambition and his true position in society do not really match up.

As part of the ongoing battle between conservative and liberal church factions, Slope's views on religious matters are shown to be very different from the established conservative church leadership of Barchester. His evangelical take on public and private religious matters will cause the church leaders of Barchester, particularly the Archdeacon, to view him as a serious enemy and will lead them to do what they can to protect the status quo in Barchester from his proposed changes.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Dr. Proudie has just arrived in Barchester for the first time and has called Dr. Harding to discuss the appointment at Hiram's Hospital. On the way to the meeting, Dr. Harding sees the Archdeacon, who accompanies him to the meeting. The Archdeacon and Mr. Harding are both very conservative and quickly come to disapprove of the Proudies. In this first meeting, Dr. Proudie, Mrs. Proudie, Mr. Slope, and the Archdeacon size each other up as possible rivals for power in Barchester.

Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope are quick to establish their position and make a point of arguing about the sanctity of Sunday religious observance. They want to establish Sabbath schools for all the children in the area. They also want to take action against the railway company for allowing people to travel on Sundays. They try to engage the Archdeacon in debate on these matters, but he is appalled that they would offer their opinions on the subject since neither of them has any official position within the church leadership at Barchester. Dr. Harding and the Archdeacon leave feeling very angry and disappointed in the new Bishop and his companions.

Chapter 5 Analysis

In this chapter, the reader sees the different factions meet each other for the first time. The liberal faction is focused on small matters and eager for battle. The conservatives, however, seem unable to find a polite way to disagree and instead leave feeling frustrated. The ongoing issues of Sabbath schools and Sabbath traveling will continue to be a sticking point between the two groups, with the liberal faction trying to force their views at every turn.

Underlying the chapter, though, is the social tension between the two sides. At one point, Mrs. Proudie makes a comment that implies that the Archdeacon is not as wealthy as the Proudies, which is untrue. Similarly, when the Archdeacon asks politely about their comfort in their new home, they launch on a long and detailed list of complaints with the property. In this way, the characterization of the liberal faction seems petty and self-centered while the conservatives come across as polite and well-mannered.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

The two sides prepare themselves for battle. The Archdeacon considers himself to represent high church tradition, including the ceremonies and music that accompanies them. The established church leadership of Barchester is described as very laid back in its presentation of religious doctrine and does not preach about any specific matters of church doctrine. Instead, they rely on a traditional approach in which they all fulfill their duties without being especially conscientious or energetic about it. The Archdeacon feels that the church establishment will need to wake up and be more passionate about its views in order to confront its new enemies, Mr. Slope and the Proudies.

Mr. Slope prepares for the challenge by accepting an invitation to preach at the cathedral the following Sunday. The cathedral ceremony is very elaborate and staged with music. Mr. Slope's sermon directly criticizes the way in which church services are conducted, particularly the music and ceremonial proceedings. His sermon is intended to show that the established church community is hiding behind ceremonies instead of showing true faith by adhering to strict religious doctrine. The sermon is extremely offensive to the congregants and even Dr. Proudie is upset by it.

Chapter 6 Analysis

The struggle between liberal and conservative factions has its first confrontation in this chapter. Mr. Slope is shown to be especially audacious in his approach with giving such an explosive sermon in the most traditional place, the cathedral. He has clearly drawn the battle lines.

What is very interesting is how Mr. Slope makes the conservative side reevaluate its principles and practices. The church leadership in Barchester has fallen into a rut in which the clergy themselves are uninspired to do their jobs. The introduction of Mr. Slope and the liberal elements have shaken up many of the conservatives and forced them to reconsider their own views on church doctrine and how they express it to the common people.

Another interesting point at this point in the story is the author's stated opinion that the texts of sermons should not be printed in a novel. He draws clear lines about the inappropriateness of religious subjects being discussed in the context of a popular medium, the novel. This is an interesting point given that the subject matter of the novel is concerned, almost exclusively, with members of the Church of England.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Mr. Slope's sermon has divided the community of Barchester. The church leadership is offended by Mr. Slope's comments and decides to ban him from ever preaching again at the cathedral. They feel that the ban will express their opinion to the Bishop. The Archdeacon, in considering how to keep Slope from preaching, reviews the common practices of the established clergy and finds problems. In particular, he is disturbed by the number of area churches in which the appointed preacher has neglected his duties for months, or sometimes years, at a time.

Despite the Archdeacon's belief that all of Barchester is angered by Mr. Slope's sermon, many of the lower clergy and common people of Barchester are quite interested in the ideas expressed in it. Many are bored with the established church routines and eager for something new and different. The pro-Slope elements in the community are only strengthened by the church leadership's ban. They will follow Mr. Slope to whatever smaller church will have him to speak and establish his reputation as an outsider and reformer.

The Bishop and his wife immediately return to London to avoid any confrontation about the sermon. Mr. Slope, however, stays behind in Barchester to continue his plans to gain control of the local community.

Chapter 7 Analysis

In the developing conflict between the liberal and conservative branches of the church, this chapter provides an insight into the real state of the community. The Archdeacon believes that all of Barchester is united behind the traditional clergy, but this is not the case. Instead, Mr. Slope's sermon has exposed a significant amount of boredom with the established church order and sets the stage for a greater conflict as the people of Barchester seek to decide for themselves what kind of church leadership they want.

This provides a good counterpoint to the Archdeacon's political problems. While he and his followers lament that control of church is out of their hands and is instead decided by the political factions in Parliament, the common people have a similar gripe against the established church leadership in Barchester who have made no attempt to win their hearts and have instead relied on the status quo to get them by. The issue of absentee preachers is significant. It reflects the established clergy's neglect of the common people and their inattention to making preachers accountable to their community.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

As part of his offensive in the community, Mr. Slope pays a visit to Eleanor Bold and Susan Grantly. He flatters both women and leaves them with a positive impression of him. They share this opinion with their father, Dr. Harding, who is dismayed by their positive opinion of Mr. Slope.

Dr. Harding and the Archdeacon are both concerned with the appointment of the wardenship at Hiram's Hospital. Dr. Harding is very eager to regain the post and discusses his wishes with his family. The Archdeacon is also very interested in restoring Dr. Harding to the position. Both men are extremely confident about Harding's appointment and they act as though the matter is already decided. Dr. Harding expresses continued anger and animosity toward Mr. Slope, however, and claims that he will not ask the Bishop for the position but will simply wait for the Bishop to ask him.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Mr. Slope has already begun to drive a wedge in the family of the Archdeacon. The positive impression that he gives to Eleanor will continue to be a problem in the family, as Eleanor seeks to separate herself from church politics and remain independent in her opinions. The Archdeacon's continued insistence that he knows what is right about everything will also cause a lot of tension in the family.

Another interesting aspect of Mr. Slope's character is revealed in this chapter, as he seeks to minimize his controversial position in the community and instead find areas of common ground with the locals. His conversation with Eleanor and Mrs. Grantly shows that he knows how to connect on a personal level, rather than a religious one. This is not the case with the Archdeacon, who can only preach at those around him and demand their obedience.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Three months have passed since Mr. Slope's sermon. The Archdeacon, in trying to avoid having any open churches in which Mr. Slope could preach, recalls all of the clergymen who have left their churches vacant. The biggest offender in this case is Dr. Stanhope, who has been living in Italy for the past twelve years while still collecting his salary from his vacant church in England. Under threat of being exposed to the national church council, Dr. Stanhope and his family must return to England to put in an appearance.

The Stanhope family consists of Dr. Stanhope, his wife, and their three children. Both Dr. Stanhope and his wife are used to luxury and idleness and do very little actively. Their oldest daughter, Charlotte, runs the household, not out of kindness but out of a need to control the other members of the family. Their second daughter, Madeleine, has led an interesting and tragic life. A very beautiful woman, her only aim in life is to seduce every man she meets. Her brief marriage to Signor Neroni ended with Madeleine returning to the family home after her leg is amputated, this presumably having been caused by her husband's abuse. Madeleine uses her disability to her advantage, being carried everywhere and continuing in her quest to seduce all the men of the neighborhood. She calls herself "the signora" and everyone else does the same. Dr. and Mrs. Stanhope's only son, Bertie, has bounced from one lifestyle to another, being at different times a law student in Germany, a painter in Rome, a missionary in Jerusalem, and a sculptor in Carrerra. He has also converted to both Catholicism and Judaism at different points in his life. The only emotional bond in the family is between Charlotte and Bertie, as she seeks to protect him from the consequences of his lazy and debt-ridden lifestyle.

Chapter 9 Analysis

The Stanhope family represents one of the worst excesses of the conservative side, having taken advantage of a lack of discipline in Barchester for such a long time and having no regrets about it. Dr. Stanhope's manner of raising his children has produced three people who are completely at odds with church values. Their introduction to the Barchester community is certain to make an already tense situation much worse.

The Stanhope family characteristics of indifference and heartlessness will carry over when they reach Barchester. Bertie's debts and Charlotte's protection of him will continue to be a problem for the family and will influence their relationships with the locals of Barchester. The signora's behavior will also be considered very inappropriate in the religious atmosphere of Barchester.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

The Bishop and his family have been avoiding Barchester since Mr. Slope's sermon. While Mrs. Proudie wholeheartedly agrees with Mr. Slope, the Bishop wants to avoid confronting either her or the church leadership in Barchester about it. In their absence, Mr. Slope is working hard to establish himself in the community by organizing support for Sabbath schools and other reforms.

The Proudies prepare a large party to celebrate their return from London. All of the local clergy are invited. At first the anti-Slope faction wants to boycott the party but eventually agree to attend out of respect for the office of the Bishop. The Stanhopes, newly arrived in England, will also be attending, having made special arrangements for the signora. Dr. Stanhope is worried that the signora will flirt inappropriately with the men at the party, which is exactly what she plans to do.

All the preparations for the party are taken care of by Mr. Slope because the Bishop and his family will not arrive until the day of the party. At the beginning of the party, everyone has been told of the special arrangements made to accommodate the signora. She delays her arrival in order to make a scene at the party.

Chapter 10 Analysis

The chapter continues in developing the conflict between liberal and conservative factions in Barchester. Mr. Slope's efforts for reform are meeting with some positive reactions from the local community despite the church leadership being against him. The patterns for the Bishop handling conflict, especially regarding his wife, are set, providing the personal struggle that underlies the more public struggle over church politics.

This chapter also gives us our first glimpse at how the Stanhopes will affect the church leadership in Barchester, most likely negatively. Their introduction into the community will add another source of personal struggle to the larger public religious one.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

The Bishop and Bertie introduce themselves, though the Bishop is unsure of Bertie's identity and thinks he and the signora are foreign guests. Bertie engages the Bishop in a very interesting conversation about his various religious conversions. The signora is laid out on a sofa. In order to get around the sofa, Bertie pushes it to the side, unintentionally sending it flying and tearing the dress of Mrs. Proudie, who was standing next to it. Mrs. Proudie, already angry at being slighted by the signora, leaves to repair her dress. The Bishop sits down to talk with the signora, still unaware of who she is. When Mrs. Proudie returns, the Bishop leaves the signora and finally, via his daughter, learns who the signora and Bertie are.

The Bishop tries to have polite conversations with the local clergyman but Bertie keeps interrupting them by attacking all British institutions, both religious and scholarly. The clergy are united in feeling contempt for Bertie for speaking on such subjects without any obvious credibility.

Mr. Slope, meanwhile, has fallen under the spell of the signora, which makes Mrs. Proudie very upset. He intentionally ignores Mrs. Proudie's commands in order to spend more time with the signora. Overall the Proudies and Stanhopes have not enjoyed meeting each other.

Chapter 11 Analysis

This chapter sets up some of the personal conflicts that will carry the story. The Stanhopes and Proudies have made negative impressions on each other and the stage is set for problems between them to continue. One particular point of conflict is Mr. Slope's relationship with the signora, which will begin the process of distancing Mr. Slope from Mrs. Proudie. It will also put Mr. Slope in a difficult position as a reforming evangelical preacher obsessed with a married woman.

Bertie's social and personal problems will also continue to be a sore point with the religious authorities in Barchester on both sides. The Stanhope family's lack of traditional religious values, despite their father being a preacher, sets them apart from the rest of Barchester.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Mr. Slope asks Dr. Harding for a meeting about the wardenship at Hiram's Hospital. He has two motives in this meeting. The first is to assure the Bishop that Dr. Harding was offered the position. The second is to make sure that Dr. Harding refuses the position so that he can offer it to one of his own followers. Mr. Slope outlines many changes the ways that the hospital will be run. In addition to the requirements of the bill from Parliament, he has also tacked on a Sabbath school for local children and will also require the new warden to preach twice at the hospital on Sundays and several times during the week. Mr. Slope presents these changes as mandates, when actually they are just suggestions that can be rejected. To further convince Dr. Harding to reject the position, he makes several long speeches about the need to clear out the old clergy to make room for the new.

Dr. Harding, when confronted in this way, sees no choice but to refuse the position. Mr. Slope takes his refusal to the Bishop and tells the Bishop that it is not related to any of the proposed changes, but is Dr. Harding's rejection of the Bishop's authority. This view is seconded by Mrs. Proudie. Instead of Dr. Harding, Mr. Slope and Mrs. Proudie want the position to go to Mr. Quiverful, who is very poor and who they feel they can control.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Mr. Slope's meeting with Dr. Harding has shown the lengths and deceptions that Mr. Slope is willing to go to get his way. He is rude to Dr. Harding because he does not feel that anything is to be gained from him. This will continue to be a pattern in the way that Mr. Slope deals with different types of people.

Again, insignificant issues, such as the Sabbath school proposition, take center stage as a point of contention between the two sides. Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope are determined to make the local clergy do their bidding. This motivation will continue to make the appointment of the wardenship of the hospital a major division between the two sides.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

While Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope use the meeting with Dr. Harding to further their own agenda, Dr. Harding has been wounded emotionally by what Mr. Slope has said. He goes to see his daughter, Eleanor, to discuss the situation. What he does not know, however, is that Eleanor has already discussed the proposed Sunday school with Mr. Slope and expressed her approval. She does not see what her father would have to object to about this proposal and expects to congratulate him when he returns from the meeting.

Neither Eleanor nor Dr. Harding is able to explain their position to each other. Eleanor shows that she likes Mr. Slope but is very upset to have done anything that might seem to be against her father's wishes. Instead, Dr. Harding goes to discuss the matter with the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon is not home, so Dr. Harding talks to his other daughter, Mrs. Grantly. Mrs. Grantly shares her father's hatred of Mr. Slope and suggests that he is trying to gain Eleanor's affection in order to marry her for her money.

The author lets us know that neither Eleanor nor Mr. Slope has any intention of marrying each other at this point. Instead, Eleanor is simply being polite and refusing to be ruled by the Archdeacon's opinions of people. Mr. Slope's attentions to Eleanor reflect the way he acts to every person whom he tries to get on his side.

Chapter 13 Analysis

This chapter creates one of the larger issues that will affect the majority of the characters throughout the story. The suggestion here is that because Eleanor has continued to be polite to Mr. Slope, she is considering him as a suitor. Eleanor's family's speculation about this idea will continue to grow until it becomes an established fact in their minds without ever becoming an established fact in reality. This speculation will affect how they all relate to each other and will make the public religious differences even more personal.

The problem presented here is that no one in the Archdeacon's family seems able to communicate how they feel about anything. Instead they all develop their opinions based on different first-hand information. Because they don't share the same pool of information, they come to different conclusions and then use those conclusions to judge the behavior of the other family members. Because none of them can explain why they feel the way that they do, they begin to build many misunderstandings that will explode out of proportion later in the story.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

As part of the Archdeacon's plans to strengthen traditional values in Barchester, he has appointed a conservative Oxford scholar to as preacher at St. Ewold's church. This scholar, Mr. Arabin, has had a long-standing dispute with Mr. Slope in the editorials of a popular newspaper. The Archdeacon hopes that Mr. Arabin will be able to help him in his feud with Mr. Slope and the liberal factions of the church.

The Archdeacon and Dr. Harding discuss the wardenship of the hospital. The Archdeacon correctly assumes that Mr. Slope has managed to trick Dr. Harding into refusing the position and that the changes that Mr. Slope proposed could not be enforced. Dr. Harding, still upset about the initial public scandal that had lost him the position five years ago, refuses to take any public steps against Mr. Slope. The Archdeacon again correctly assumes that Mr. Slope and Mrs. Proudie, rather than the bishop, are behind the scheme. The Archdeacon decides that he will go and see the Bishop and explain the case to him.

That evening, Mrs. Grantly shares her suspicions about Eleanor and Mr. Slope with her husband, the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon vows that if Eleanor does marry Mr. Slope she will never be welcome in the family again.

Chapter 14 Analysis

The conflict continues to grow and take on more and more personal layers. While the fight is supposedly about the hospital and the Sabbath school, in reality it is a power struggle between the two sides. The Archdeacon's decision to bring in outside help shows that he feels his position to be weaker than Mr. Slope's and also that he cannot count on the established clergy to overcome their longtime indifference to matters of church doctrine.

The suspicions about Eleanor's romantic relationship continue to solidify in the minds of her family as they begin to regard her as being on Mr. Slope's side instead of on their own. The Archdeacon takes this supposed preference as a personal attack against him and therefore counters with a personal attack against Eleanor in vowing to cut her off from the family if she marries Mr. Slope.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

While visiting Mr. Quiverful to inform him that he has been nominated for the wardenship of the hospital, Mr. Slope learns that Eleanor has a large annual income. This new information causes him to reevaluate his relationship with her and his treatment of her father. In order to secure Eleanor's money by marrying her, he decides he needs to support her father in getting the wardenship. This brings up complications in his relationship with Mrs. Proudie, who wants Mr. Quiverful to have the position. The other issue in Mr. Slope's decision to try to marry Eleanor is his feelings towards the signora. Mr. Slope is drawn to the signora despite the social problems of pursuing a relationship with a married woman.

At the same time, at the Stanhope house, Charlotte is trying to convince Bertie that he should try to marry Eleanor for her money because he is incapable of settling down in a profession. Bertie is in serious debt and on the verge of being disowned by his father.

The author reassures the reader, however, that Eleanor will not marry either of these men, but that the townspeople, including her family, continue to suspect that she will.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Mr. Slope's new intention to marry Eleanor for her money throws a wrench into the public debate over the wardenship of the hospital. He and Mrs. Proudie's relationship is based on absolute unity of purpose which is challenged by his new personal motivations.

Eleanor's position grows increasingly complicated, although the author assures the reader that she is not aware of it. This unawareness on Eleanor's part will not serve her very well. Because she does not know that everyone suspects her, she does not do anything to protect her reputation. This simply adds more "evidence" to the rumors that everyone else believes.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Mr. Slope decides to go forward with his plan to marry Eleanor. As for the hospital wardenship, he wants to find a way for the Bishop to make the decision in favor of Dr. Harding so that Mrs. Proudie will not hold him personally responsible for the change. Unfortunately for him, Mrs. Proudie has already congratulated Mrs. Quiverful on her husband's selection as warden of the hospital and is, therefore, not willing to go back on her word. Mr. Slope is then forced to make a stand against Mrs. Proudie and get the Bishop to take his side.

Mr. Slope visits Eleanor in order to reassure her of his support for her father as warden. Now that he views himself as a potential suitor, Mr. Slope makes many gestures and comments to establish intimacy between himself and Eleanor. Eleanor is not sure what to think about Mr. Slope's behavior and is unsure if she can trust him despite the fact that he has always been kind to her. She is also embarrassed because his visit comes unexpectedly when she is playing with her young son and is not prepared to receive any guests. Mr. Slope sees that she does not trust him and continues working on getting her to consider him as a friend, and hopefully later as a suitor.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Mr. Slope is forced to take action against his ally, Mrs. Proudie, and is prepared to lose her support because he thinks it will help him marry Eleanor. The liberal and conservative sides are now preparing to break apart. The split between Mr. Slope and Mrs. Proudie will break up the liberal unity and the growing suspicions about Eleanor undermine the unity of the conservative side. Neither side is aware of the breaks in the other, and continues to see the other as a unified front.

Mr. Slope's visit to Eleanor has other complications. Eleanor's appearance at the time of his visit will be an ongoing problem because he saw her with her hair loose instead of covered by her widow's cap. While Eleanor is embarrassed by this, Mr. Slope will use it as a sign of the growing intimacy between them.



Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Mr. Slope has managed to convince the Bishop that he should appoint Dr. Harding to the wardenship of Hiram's Hospital. The Bishop faces the dilemma of telling his wife that he disagrees with her. Because his wife has always exerted strict authority over him, it is very difficult for him to confront her and tell her that he is not going to do what she wants. He views this conflict as one that will determine whether she will be able to dominate all of his decisions as Bishop.

The confrontation, of course, does not go his way, and he concedes to his wife's point of view. During the argument, however, he lets her know that Mr. Slope has personally sided with Dr. Harding against Mr. Quiverful. Based on this information, Mrs. Proudie begins to formulate her own plans to make Mr. Slope see that she is more powerful than he is.

The Bishop informs Mr. Slope of his new decision in favor of Mr. Quiverful. Later that evening, Mrs. Proudie visits him in his room. First she lectures him about continuing to see the signora and warns him that it does not look good for him to be so attached to a married woman. Then she warns him that he should never interfere between herself and the Bishop and makes it clear that she considers herself to be the power behind the throne and will not tolerate any independence on his part. Mr. Slope realizes that he can no longer attempt to work things out with Mrs. Proudie; the battle between them must be settled to determine who will dominate.

Chapter 17 Analysis

This chapter centers mainly on the relationship between Dr. and Mrs. Proudie. The author sets up their relationship as unnatural because Mrs. Proudie is the dominant partner and Dr. Proudie is afraid of her. This idea will continue to be pushed throughout the rest of the story in order to show the weakness of the Bishop and his inability to take either personal control or personal responsibility for what goes on in Barchester.

The other key element is the official ending of Mr. Slope's alliance with Mrs. Proudie and his determination to gain power over her. This split will add more ammunition to the ongoing debate over the wardenship of the hospital as this issue will be the means of showing which person has won control over the Bishop. If Dr. Harding is appointed, then Mr. Slope is the victor. If Mr. Quiverful is appointed, then Mrs. Proudie wins. This adds confusion for the opposing side, however, which views Dr. Harding as their candidate and Mr. Quiverful as representing both Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope.



Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

The Archdeacon has been denied a meeting with the Bishop to discuss the wardenship of the hospital. He then visits Eleanor and Dr. Harding to vent his frustration and express his anger at Mr. Slope, who he views as the reason for all the problems in Barchester. Eleanor defends Mr. Slope, fueling suspicions that she is considering marrying him. Eleanor and the Archdeacon have a very serious argument over Mr. Slope in which neither of them realize what the other is fighting for. The Archdeacon assumes that Eleanor's defense of Mr. Slope comes from her romantic feelings toward him. Eleanor assumes that the Archdeacon's anger comes from the fact that Eleanor will not let him tell her what to think.

Dr. Harding is very disturbed to be the cause of so much trouble and wants to give up the fight for the hospital. The Archdeacon insists on continuing and counts on his friend Mr. Arabin to help solve the problem. The Archdeacon has invited Mr. Arabin to come and stay at his home, known as Plumstead, for a month while he settles into his new job at St. Ewold's. He wants Eleanor and Dr. Harding to come and stay with him at the same time in order to welcome him. Eleanor declines the invitation because she has plans with the Stanhopes but agrees to come on a later day.

Chapter 18 Analysis

The continuing debate over the wardenship of the hospital divides the conservative camp just as much as the liberal one. Dr. Harding, as the actual candidate for the position, wants to give up the fight but cannot because the Archdeacon and other more powerful people insist on continuing the battle. This helps to show that the wardenship of the hospital is merely a tool that both sides use in their fight for power.

The assumptions of Eleanor and the Archdeacon continue to be at cross purposes. Neither can see what the other sees and therefore they continue to be confused about what is really at stake here. Their inability to communicate will continue to be a problem, as each one becomes increasingly angry at the other and even less able to see their point of view.



Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

During breakfast at the Stanhope house, Charlotte and Dr. Stanhope go through the bills and discover that Bertie has accumulated even more debt at a high interest rate. Dr. Stanhope is angry at Bertie's continuing inability to provide for himself. Charlotte persuades him that Bertie might be coming into some money soon if he marries well, which keeps Dr. Stanhope from immediately disowning Bertie and telling him to leave the house.

That evening, Eleanor comes to visit as planned. Mr. Slope also arrives, though no one expected him. This complicates matters because he cannot spend time with the signora while he tries to gain Eleanor's affection. After tea, Charlotte, Bertie, Mr. Slope, and Eleanor all go for a walk. During this walk, they pass the hospital and Charlotte asks when Dr. Harding will return there. This embarrasses Eleanor, who tries unsuccessfully to end the conversation. Later, when Charlotte and Mr. Slope have gone ahead, she confides in Bertie about the problems with the hospital and Mr. Slope's involvement in it. Bertie agrees that Mr. Slope is not trustworthy. After returning to the house, Mr. Slope talks with the signora while Bertie and Eleanor are left alone together. They establish a strong friendship and Eleanor leaves feeling very close to Bertie and his family.

Chapter 19 Analysis

In this chapter Eleanor is confronted with her two suitors without ever considering either of them to be suitors. She continues to be unable to see what is going on in the minds of others and does not suspect that either man wants to marry her. Her blindness to the motivations of others puts her in the position of not being able to check her own behavior with either man. If she knew that they considered themselves suitors, she would not establish such terms of friendship with them. In her mind, the relationships are entirely innocent. Others, though, interpret her friendship as an encouragement that she is interested in a relationship with one of these men.

This chapter helps to show the problems that Eleanor has in relating to those around her and how those around her attempt to use her for their own gain. Just as she and the Archdeacon do not see eye to eye on her relationship with Mr. Slope, she cannot understand the motivations of those she considers her friends. This inability on her part will continue to be a problem throughout the story.



Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Mr. Arabin is introduced and his career as a religious scholar is explained. He is forty years old, unmarried, with a reputation as a fierce debater on religious issues. His own religious experience has been problematic because his mentor in college converted to Catholicism. Mr. Arabin considered a similar conversion but decided to remain in the Church of England after a long inner struggle. On his return to Oxford he became a leading figure of the High Church and takes part in all debates about reform. He is strictly against reform of any kind and always sides with the established church leadership.

Mr. Arabin enters the Archdeacon's home and makes a negligible impression on the other members of the household. Personally, he is very interested in the Archdeacon's family life because he does not have any of his own. He reconsiders his own choices to remain an unmarried scholar and regrets that he did not choose to have a wife and family. Amidst the Archdeacon's family, he feels very alone and isolated.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Mr. Arabin's character stands in contrast to the Archdeacon's despite the fact that they share many of the same opinions on church doctrine. While the Archdeacon is very self-assured and belligerent in his opinions, Mr. Arabin is much more quiet and contemplative. The Archdeacon has introduced him as a fierce and respected debater but Mr. Arabin himself does not seem to exhibit any of these qualities. On the contrary, he fails to leave any real impression on Mrs. Grantly or other members of the family.

Mr. Arabin's position within the conservative and liberal debate is problematic because he does not reflect the Archdeacon's firmness and unwillingness to see the other side's point of view. He is presented as a very evenhanded scholar who is seeking to distance himself from his former scholarly life and explore what it might mean to be a part of the community. His personality implies that he might not be what the Archdeacon hopes he will be, and that he will not add very much fire and authority to the conservative cause in Barchester.



Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Eleanor and Dr. Harding go to visit the Archdeacon and his guest, Mr. Arabin, at Plumstead. On the first day, the men all go off to inspect the church while the women stay home. Mrs. Grantly and Eleanor discuss Mr. Slope, who Mrs. Grantly hates and Eleanor defends. Eleanor still does not know that everyone thinks she is in love with Mr. Slope and does not understand how her comments will be interpreted. Later that night, Mrs. Grantly shares the conversation with her husband, who reaffirms that Eleanor will not be welcome in his house ever again if she decides to marry Mr. Slope.

The next day the whole group goes to inspect the house in which Mr. Arabin will live. During the ride over, Mr. Arabin and Eleanor start to get to know each other and begin to like each other. At the house, they are left alone at several points and begin to discuss religious matters. Eleanor is very surprised that Mr. Arabin can discuss such ideas without insisting that he has the only correct opinion. It is a very different way of looking at religion from the one that she has been used to from the Archdeacon and other members of the church establishment.

Chapter 21 Analysis

In this chapter Mr. Arabin shows himself to be different from the factions in Barchester. While he definitely holds conservative opinions, he does so intellectually and does not try to convince others that his opinions are right. This sets him apart from the other clergy members, particularly singling him out for Eleanor.

The discussions both in the carriage and in the house allude to a "priestess" who would make the house into a home. This foreshadows the idea that Mr. Arabin will have romantic as well as religious issues to deal with in his new position as a small church preacher. Given the way that they get along so well together, it appears that this "priestess" might turn out to be Eleanor.



Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

This chapter introduces the local landowners to the area, the Thorne family. Though this family is very old and established in the town, it currently has only two members. Mr. Thorne and his sister Miss Thorne share the home together. Neither of them is married and both are extremely old-fashioned and set in their ways. Their opinions are usually consistent with whatever was fashionable fifty years earlier. This results in their statement of many certainties about people who are no longer living and of policies that ended two generations earlier.

Chapter 22 Analysis

The Thornes are introduced as a point of comic relief. In the ongoing religious debates and power struggles in Barchester, events move very quickly. At St. Ewold's and the Thorne estate, however, time has passed very slowly. The Thornes provide an interesting contrast to the people of the town, and the clergy in particular, because they are so far behind the times and do not know anything about the current political situation, either in Parliament or the Church of England.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

The Thornes own the property that Mr. Arabin's church is part of. As part of his official introduction to the church, he meets with them and preaches his first sermon. His sermon is not particularly interesting or different, and he is accepted indifferently by the people of the parish.

The Archdeacon and Eleanor have accompanied Mr. Arabin to St. Ewold's for the occasion and join him for lunch at the Thorne estate. During the lunch, Miss Thorne again shows how behind-the-times she is by suggesting that Eleanor take her baby to a doctor who has been dead for several decades.

Chapter 23 Analysis

Mr. Arabin's introduction to his new position is also very different from what the reader has been led to expect from the Archdeacon's descriptions of him. Again, he is shown to actually be extremely quiet and mild mannered. His reception by the average churchgoers is also very telling of the reality behind the debates over church doctrine. While to the Archdeacon, Mr. Arabin is a respected scholar and intellectual, to the church audience he is just another boring preacher, not particularly different from the last one. The description of Mr. Arabin's sermon combined with the description of the Thornes implies that established church practices might be out of touch with the congregations they serve and do not inspire anyone or give them much to be excited about.



Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Two weeks have passed and Eleanor and Dr. Harding are still visiting at Plumstead. On one occasion they are all invited to a party at the Stanhope house. At the party, Mr. Arabin meets the signora and spends a long time talking to her, making Eleanor jealous but not stopping her from spending a lot of time talking to Bertie.

Faced with the fact that the Bishop refuses to meet with him about the hospital, the Archdeacon takes Mr. Arabin's advice and sends for help from Dr. Gwynne, the Master of Lazarus, a division of Oxford University. Meanwhile, Mr. Slope continues to form plans about the hospital in order to win Eleanor's favor and triumph over Mrs. Proudie. He visits Mr. Quiverful to get him to renounce his claim on the hospital. Because Mr. Quiverful is so nervous and unsure of himself, he agrees with Mr. Slope despite the fact that losing the position will put his family back in poverty. Mr. Slope takes his agreement to the Bishop to convince him to give the position to Mr. Harding instead.

Chapter 24 Analysis

Hints continue about the possible romantic relationship between Mr. Arabin and Eleanor. While the author has been very clear in telling the reader that no chance exists for Eleanor's marriage to either Mr. Slope or Bertie Stanhope, he is also very vague about the possibilities for a union between Eleanor and Mr. Arabin.

Mr. Slope's character continues to show himself to be dishonest. His conversation with Mr. Quiverful is nothing more than an attempt to bluff him out of the hospital position just as he did with Dr. Harding earlier. Mr. Quiverful is shown to be very easily intimidated and without the resources to fight against Mr. Slope. At the same time, the Bishop's refusal to do anything directly has allowed Mr. Slope to manipulate the situation.



Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Mr. Quiverful tells his wife that they will not be getting the wardenship of the hospital. While he is content to drop the subject, she is determined to take her case to Mrs. Proudie and find out if there is still a chance of getting the position. Without telling her husband, she goes to the Bishop's home to see Mrs. Proudie. The trip itself is very difficult for Mrs. Quiverful because she has to ask a local farmer to drive her there and then must bribe the servants to arrange a meeting with Mrs. Proudie.

Mrs. Proudie, who has just won another argument with her husband, is in a very good mood when she meets with Mrs. Quiverful. However, as Mrs. Quiverful relates the story of how Mr. Slope informed them that they will not be getting the position, she becomes extremely angry. Mrs. Proudie asks Mrs. Quiverful to wait while she goes and discusses the matter with the Bishop.

Chapter 25 Analysis

This chapter shows how desperate the Quiverfuls are for the wardenship. Their poverty makes an excellent case for their appointment and shows the greater problems in the ongoing debate over the hospital; no one in power cares about finding the best person for the job. They are merely interested in securing the position for their own side. Mr. Quiverful is simply a tool of those around him and has very little say in anything that happens to him or his family. Mrs. Quiverful's trip to see Mrs. Proudie shows her own desperation as well as the many barriers that keep her from being able to state her case. While the other characters ride in private carriages, Mrs. Quiverful relies on the assistance of a local farmer who is kind enough to drive her and wait for her. She must also sacrifice what little money she has in order to see the people in power. She is shown to be helpless and powerless, dependent on others to secure her future and the future of her children.



Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Mrs. Proudies goes into the Bishop's office to confront him about the Quiverfuls. Mr. Slope is there already and an argument over the hospital quickly ensues. Throughout the argument, the Bishop sits, quietly waiting for them to resolve it themselves and not offering any indication of his own opinion on the matter. Mr. Slope argues that he has only acted on the Bishop's request. Mrs. Proudie wants to discuss the issue with her husband alone but Mr. Slope won't leave. Mrs. Proudie begins to directly address the Bishop, asking him which side he is on. Finally, the Bishop decides in favor of Mr. Slope, who gloats openly as Mrs. Proudie leaves the room. Whatever chances Mr. Slope had of maintaining his relationship with Mrs. Proudie are now gone. After Mrs. Proudie leaves the room, Mr. Slope presses the Bishop to sign the papers for Dr. Harding, but the Bishop insists he wants to meet with him first. Mr. Slope goes off to arrange the meeting.

Mrs. Proudie returns to Mrs. Quiverful and tells her that there is no hope of getting the position at the hospital. Mrs. Quiverful's protestations of her extreme poverty, however, make Mrs. Proudie sorry for her. Mrs. Proudie vows to fight for the Quiverful's cause and get her husband to change his mind.

Chapter 26 Analysis

The climax that has been building between Mrs. Proudie and Mr. Slope reaches a breaking point. Neither one can go back from this confrontation and reestablish a positive relationship. The Bishop's inability to decide anything for himself has caused him to attempt to transfer his dependence from his wife to Mr. Slope.

Mrs. Proudie's reaction implies that the fight is not over, and that Mr. Slope's victory will be short-lived. This does not look good for Mr. Slope, as he does not have enough personal power to establish himself independently of Mrs. Proudie or the Bishop.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

Because Dr. Harding and Eleanor are away at Plumstead, Mr. Slope cannot arrange the meeting with Dr. Harding immediately. Instead, he writes a letter to Eleanor, asking her to arrange the meeting. This letter is also full of very intimate expressions with which Mr. Slope hopes to establish a greater romantic bond with her. In particular, he refers to her loose hair and her private relationship with her baby son.

After leaving this letter with Eleanor's maid, he goes to visit the signora. He is very conflicted about his relationship with her because she is a married woman. He knows that any public relationship with the signora would be the end of his career but he cannot help himself in his attraction to her. Their meeting is filled with poetic allusions to great loves throughout time and leads to Mr. Slope declaring his love for her. She reproaches him for claiming to love her when he is trying to marry Eleanor. She dares him to give up his ambitions in order to be with her and therefore prove his love. Mr. Slope is distraught and confused. He tries to get her to tell him that she loves him but she uses the excuse of her mother's presence in the house to make him leave without telling him if she loves him.

Chapter 27 Analysis

The letter that Mr. Slope has sent to Eleanor is bound to cause some problems with her family. Just the sending of the letter will ignite their suspicions, and the romantic contents will further condemn Eleanor in their eyes.

Mr. Slope's relationship to the signora continues to be problematic for him as he tries to force himself to stop seeing her. His attraction to her is too powerful for him to control, which is one of the few times that he allows himself to be controlled by someone else without having his eye on furthering his own ambitions. The signora is trying to push him past the point of no return, though her motivations come simply from the game of seducing him without having the same passion that he feels. Their relationship will continue to develop alongside Mr. Slope's intentions for Eleanor and for his career.



Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

The Archdeacon and Dr. Harding go into town to pick up Eleanor's mail and discover the letter from Mr. Slope. The Archdeacon uses this as a sign that Eleanor has disgraced herself by receiving letters from Mr. Slope and makes many negative comments about her moral character. Dr. Harding is nervous about Eleanor's possible relationship with Mr. Slope but refuses to draw any lines in the sand or take any stand that might hurt his relationship with her.

The letter is given to Eleanor, who rejoices about the news it contains about her father but is disgusted by Mr. Slope's romantic overtures. The rest of the house knows about the letter and is discussing her relationship with Mr. Slope behind her back. Eleanor does not understand why everyone is so angry at her all of a sudden. She is offended that they would want to see her private mail and angry that she is being condemned for receiving a letter. She still has no idea that everyone thinks that she is going to marry Mr. Slope. She refuses to show the letter to her sister but shows it to her father in order to let him know the news about the hospital. She thinks he will be happy, but instead he is disturbed by the romantic parts of the letter, which Eleanor does not think to apologize for because she does not view Mr. Slope as a suitor.

Chapter 28 Analysis

The confusion over Eleanor and Mr. Slope's relationship is about to reach its climax. Eleanor's family has decided that their suspicions are true without ever asking Eleanor about them. Eleanor, in turn, has no idea that anyone thinks these things about her and therefore responds to their insults without understanding their source. Eleanor sees Mr. Slope as a symbol of her independence from the Archdeacon, but does not ever consider him as a possible suitor.

The inability of the family members to communicate threatens to tear them apart. Instead of explaining their concerns, they each strictly defend their own opinions. This personal conflict mirrors the larger public conflict over the religious leadership of the church, in which each side clearly dislikes the other but does not communicate its own thoughts and opinions in a constructive way. Just as the rumors swirl about the appointment of the wardenship and about the various power plays of each side, rumors also take over Eleanor's personal relationships with her family.



Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

After her father leaves, the Archdeacon comes into Eleanor's room to discuss her relationship with Mr. Slope. He tells her it is wrong for her to be receiving letters from him so she shows him the letter to prove that there is nothing wrong with it. Instead of seeing the parts about the wardenship, the Archdeacon naturally focuses on the romantic expressions and believes that she is, in effect, declaring her love for Mr. Slope. He argues that all her friends will abandon her if she continues with Mr. Slope but she does not understand and asks what she has done wrong. He tells her that he has discussed the matter with Mr. Arabin and that everyone agrees she will not be welcome in their home if she marries Mr. Slope.

This statement outrages her and she leaves the room. The Archdeacon interprets her reaction to mean that she does intend to marry Mr. Slope. Eleanor, however, now has the idea that Mr. Arabin thinks that she is going to marry Mr. Slope. This hurts her because she has grown to like him very much and now feels that he has turned her family against her. The next morning she packs her bags, intending to leave.

Chapter 29 Analysis

The conflict between Eleanor and her family has come to a head with both sides still unaware of what the other is really thinking. The misunderstanding has blown out of proportion and presents serious divisions in the family. A new misunderstanding concerning Mr. Arabin's role in the issue has also developed, so that there is a new barrier between Eleanor and Mr. Arabin in discovering their true feelings for one another.

The stubbornness of both Eleanor and the Archdeacon threaten to ruin the family without any real cause. Their argument, much like the fight over the wardenship, is not about a real problem, but instead uses a perceived problem to work out power relationships. Eleanor is determined to think for herself and the Archdeacon is determined to force everyone to do as he commands. If the two of them were willing to work together, the misunderstanding could have been avoided. This mirrors the division between the liberal and conservative factions who seek to destroy each other rather than find a mutually respectful way to work together.



Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

Mr. Arabin, having learned about Eleanor's imagined marriage plans with Mr. Slope, now begins to consider his own feelings toward her and regrets that he might have missed his chance to be with her. While not recognizing that he has fallen in love with Eleanor, he cannot abandon the idea of seeing her again before she leaves. He finds her in the drawing room and attempts to start a conversation with her. She refuses because she fears she will lose her temper or cry and she does not want to show her emotions. She accuses him of talking about her behind her back but does not explain that she thinks he started the idea that she was going to marry Mr. Slope. Mr. Arabin cannot defend himself because he does not know what she is talking about. She storms off and at that moment Mr. Arabin realizes that he is in love with her.

He goes after her to try to get her forgiveness and declare his love for her, but he is unable to express his feelings and instead bumbles the whole conversation by asking her directly if she intends to marry Mr. Slope. Though she almost understands that he is trying to tell her that he loves her, she is extremely offended by the direct question and immediately leaves Plumstead. Mr. Arabin believes that she will never speak to him again and that his chances of being with her are lost.

Chapter 30 Analysis

Again the problem between Eleanor and Mr. Arabin is that they are unable to clearly tell each other how they feel or what they think has happened. Instead they each rest on assumptions about the other instead of explaining their positions. There are clear signs that they are attracted to each other and that they could possibly fall in love with each other. However there is little chance of them doing so without being more honest with each other.

Both Eleanor and Mr. Arabin show themselves to have strong personal characters. Eleanor refuses to cry or show emotion. The author tells the reader that if Eleanor had had an emotional breakdown, the truth of the situation would have come out; but because she was in control of her emotions the misunderstanding continued. Mr. Arabin has a similar problem in that he cannot state his opinions clearly but falls back on an intellectualization of love.



Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Summary

When Eleanor arrives home in Barchester, a new development has taken place. The Dean of Barchester Cathedral has had a stroke and is not expected to live. As the news spreads through the town, rumors begin to surface about who will be appointed to the deanery if and when the present dean dies. Many of the conservatives, including the Archdeacon, worry that Mr. Slope might be chosen to be the new dean. Because they do not know of the split between Mr. Slope and Mrs. Proudie, they consider him to still have the complete backing of the Bishop. Many famous doctors are called in to assist the dean, who lingers on for another few weeks.

Chapter 31 Analysis

While the last chapter ended with rumors about Eleanor still in circulation, this chapter opens with a new item for the gossip mill. The possible appointment of Mr. Slope to the deanery becomes a new issue of conservative and liberal church debate without any substantive evidence. From the point of view of the conservative faction, Mr. Slope's appointment seems like a real possibility because they are unaware that Mr. Slope and Mrs. Proudie are no longer allies. This new rumor, which upsets many people, is once again founded only on appearances from which people have jumped to the conclusion that they can predict what will happen.



Chapter 32

Chapter 32 Summary

The news about the dean reaches the Bishop's palace and Mr. Slope begins his calculations about how to get the job. He approaches the Bishop about it but the Bishop is not back in the control of his wife and does not feel that Mr. Slope can aid him anymore. He halfheartedly agrees to mention Mr. Slope's name to the Archbishop when he goes to visit him in London.

The Bishop also informs Mr. Slope that he has changed his mind about the hospital appointment and is going to give the wardenship to Mr. Quiverful. Mr. Slope takes this development in stride and continues moving with his own plans. He learns from Eleanor's maid about what had happened at Plumstead and is encouraged to know that Eleanor has argued with her family over him. He considers asking Eleanor to marry him before word gets out about Mr. Quiverful's appointment to the hospital. His first priority, however, is to write to his influential friends in London to see if they can help him get the deanery of the cathedral.

Chapter 32 Analysis

Mr. Slope's pattern of dropping those people who he feels no longer serve his interest continues to develop. Because his mind has moved on from the wardenship to the deanery, he is not concerned that the Bishop has sided against him about the wardenship. He does not seem to see that the Bishop's decision could mean a further loss of power because he no longer sees himself as the Bishop's domestic chaplain. Instead, he sees himself as the new dean of the cathedral. While the Bishop has not expressed any support for his endeavor in this area, Mr. Slope, like the conservative faction, believes that he has a legitimate chance at winning the office. While he does ask the Bishop to mention him to higher authorities, his real plans involve getting his own influential friends to support him and drum up interest in his candidacy in London.

On the personal side, Mr. Slope also uses rumor and gossip as encouragement in his pursuit of Eleanor. He takes the fight at Plumstead as a sign of encouragement because he views the issue in the same way that the Archdeacon does.



Chapter 33

Chapter 33 Summary

While the dean's illness and his possible successor are the main topics of conversation in Barchester, no action is being taken because the influential players are not at home. The Bishop is attending an extended meeting with the Archbishop in London and Mr. Slope's influential friends both happen to be on vacation, so no news has come to confirm or encourage Mr. Slope's chances.

Bertie Stanhope is still trying to win Eleanor's affection, though it is his sister Charlotte who is more interested in the match. Eleanor, again, does not see these plans or assumptions and is just being friendly. She is anxious, however, about Mr. Arabin and wants to forgive him. An opportunity to do this presents itself in the form of a party at the Thorne estate. This event is meant to have games, dancing, and other amusements. Eleanor agrees to go with the Stanhopes since she is still angry at her own family. Matters are complicated when the signora also invites Mr. Slope to accompany them. Eleanor, who has been avoiding him since she learned of her family's suspicions about their relationship, tries to get out of going but can not think of a good scheme fast enough.

The Bishop returns home from London and is pleasantly surprised to see that his wife is happy and willing to present a warm domestic front. The Bishop tells her about his visit to the Archbishop, including his mention of Mr. Slope's name as a possible candidate for the deanery. Mrs. Proudie is angered by this, but sees no real harm in it because she does not think that Mr. Slope has enough influence to carry the position. The Bishop assures her that he only mentioned his name and did nothing to improve his prospects of getting the job because he wants to placate her and preserve domestic harmony.

Chapter 33 Analysis

Rumors fuel the ongoing discussion about the appointment of the new dean. Mr. Slope and the conservative faction, however, appear to be the only ones giving real credence to Mr. Slope as a candidate. The Bishop and his wife both express their own disbelief that Mr. Slope has the necessary experience and connections for the position and are not overly worried that he might have a serious chance at being awarded the position.

Eleanor's problems with suitors are not over and more complications await her in disentangling herself from both Mr. Slope and Bertie Stanhope. While she has learned to be cautious with Mr. Slope, she still does not see Bertie as a suitor and continues to give his family unintended encouragement about it.



Chapter 34

Chapter 34 Summary

Mr. Arabin struggles with his feelings for Eleanor while the Archdeacon tries to figure out what to do about the possible appointment of Mr. Slope to the deanery. Mr. Arabin tries to convince the Archdeacon that Eleanor does not want to marry Mr. Slope but the Archdeacon refuses to change his mind. Mr. Arabin goes to London to confer with Dr. Gwynne, an influential church leader at Oxford, about the continuing struggle with the Bishop. While he is there, he participates in discussions about university reform as well as the possibility of Mr. Slope's appointment to the deanery. Dr. Gwynne returns to Plumstead with Mr. Arabin in order to further discuss matters with the Archdeacon.

Chapter 34 Analysis

Church reform is put in the context of overall reform of many established institutions such as the university system. Mr. Arabin finds himself on the side of the status quo on both accounts as he confers with his old friends about how to keep traditions from changing. At the same time, his private feelings for Eleanor have changed much of his scholarly focus, so that he is not as interested in church matters as he once was.

The conservative faction has now brought in its own support to keep Mr. Slope from being appointed to the deanery. They think that they are countering the Bishop and his followers, when really they are on the same side in this case.



Chapter 35

Chapter 35 Summary

Mr. Slope has received mostly noncommittal responses from his influential friends but is encouraged that they will help him to get the deanery. He uses this boost to prepare to ask Eleanor to marry him. He plans to do so at the Thorne's party.

The plans for the Thorne's party are complicated by many factors. On one hand, the party is meant to be split between the upper classes and the tenant farmers that live on Thorne property. One side of the house will host the upper classes and the other side of the house will host the tenants. Miss Thorne is worried that some socially mobile tenants, such as the Lookaloft family, will try to attend the upper class section instead of the tenant section and she is not sure what to do about this. The other issue lies in Miss Thorne's plans for entertainment at the party. In keeping with her old fashioned ideas, Miss Thorne wants to have many medieval style games, including an ancient riding game called the quintain. Everyone else in the household thinks that this idea is very silly and that no one at the party will be interested in it. Miss Thorne, however, has set her heart on seeing the quintain played at her party.

Chapter 35 Analysis

The Thornes' party brings up many of the social issues that have been dormant throughout the novel. The upcoming problems with the Lookaloft family, the tenants who think that they are better than the other tenant farmers, present the idea that not everyone is content with the way things are. The Thornes and the established church leadership in Barchester do not seem to take the feelings of the common people into account in their organization of society. The party itself will be a perfect example of how the clergy have cut themselves off from the common people and how the common people have an active social circle outside of upper class notice.



Chapter 36

Chapter 36 Summary

The party is set to begin and the tenants have all arrived. The upper classes, however, are fashionably late. Because the upper class guests have not yet arrived, the Lookalofts manage to insert themselves into that section of the party against the Thornes' wishes.

Eleanor arrives with the Stanhopes and is upset when Mr. Arabin clearly sees her get out of the carriage with Mr. Slope. She seeks out her father to explain to him that she does not like Mr. Slope and did not choose to ride with him. She clearly states that she does not want to marry Mr. Slope and the two of them make up.

Miss Thorne is desperate for someone to try the quintain, but no one wants to mess up their nice party clothes. One son of the tenant farmers agrees to try it in order to please her and ends up being thrown from his horse. Luckily he is not seriously hurt, but Miss Thorne is forced to give up the quintain.

Chapter 36 Analysis

The party continues to represent class issues rather than church ones. With the exception of Eleanor's personal problems with Mr. Slope and her father, the main story line is abandoned in order to take advantage of Miss Thorne and her obsession with the quintain as a means of comic relief. Because the religious and personal issues are about to hit another climax, the author seems to have required a break for something a little sillier.



Chapter 37

Chapter 37 Summary

The signora makes her entrance at the party but is upstaged by the highest-ranking guest, the Countess de Courcy. The Countess is surprised by the lack of respect she receives from the signora but quickly makes friends with Mrs. Proudie. The easiest subject for them to discuss is how much they both dislike the signora. Mrs. Proudie hints that Dr. Stanhope has a chance to become the new dean and states that Mr. Slope is going to be fired because of his inappropriate relationship with the signora.

Eleanor works hard to avoid entering the dining room with Mr. Slope but ends up sitting next to him anyway. Mr. Arabin gives all his attention to the signora, which makes Eleanor jealous because she does not know that he is only talking to the signora about his feelings for Eleanor.

Chapter 37 Analysis

The personal crisis of Eleanor, Mr. Slope, and Mr. Arabin appears to be coming to a climax. Mr. Slope prepares to propose to Eleanor, who is not expecting it and is trying to avoid him for appearances' sake. Mr. Arabin does not seem concerned with appearances at all, however, and spends all his time with the signora despite how bad it looks to Eleanor and the rest of the partygoers.



Chapter 38

Chapter 38 Summary

In Barchester, the dean dies. The news reaches the Prime Minister, who writes up a list of five possible candidates, none of which is Mr. Slope. The news has not reached the party yet.

Mr. Arabin is full of sadness and anger toward Eleanor for not returning his love. He had hoped to get more information about her feelings at the party but is turned off when he sees her arrive with Mr. Slope. He discusses the matter with the signora because she is such a good listener. At first the signora wants to seduce him because he has shown his preference for another woman. However, as Mr. Arabin continues to confess his feelings for Eleanor, the signora begins to respect him as a man above seduction and decides to help him win Eleanor's affections.

Chapter 38 Analysis

The focus of this chapter is on Mr. Arabin's feelings for Eleanor and the strange way that he expresses him by giving all of this attention to the signora. His honesty impresses the signora, who is usually not impressed by anyone, and she decides to go against her character by planning to help him. Complications have also occurred in the appointment of Mr. Slope to the deanery, because, despite the speculation among the Barchester clergy, he has no apparent influence at high levels of government.



Chapter 39

Chapter 39 Summary

The social climbing Lookalofts have stirred up a lot of anger among the tenant farmers because they have joined the upper class party. Though the Lookalofts are ignored by the upper classes, they will most likely use their inclusion there as proof that they are better than the other tenant farmers. Many of the tenants are jealous of the Lookalofts while others claim that they would not bother going to so much trouble to mix with the upper classes.

Chapter 39 Analysis

Again this chapter has little to do with the overarching themes and plotlines of the story and instead concentrates on characters outside of the main story. Their impressions of the upper classes are not completely positive or completely negative and it is stressed that they have their own social problems and issues of which the upper class is not aware.



Chapter 40

Chapter 40 Summary

Despite Eleanor's best efforts, Mr. Slope manages to get her alone at the party. She tries to get away from him but he follows her. The way he is acting makes her suspect that he is going to propose to her. This makes her extremely angry because it shows that her family probably had reason for thinking that she might marry Mr. Slope. She tries to stop him but he declares his love and tries to embrace her. She pulls away and slaps his face. She tells him she will never speak to him again and runs away.

Mr. Slope thinks negative thoughts about Eleanor and the world in general before returning to the party. Upon his return, he is slighted by the Bishop and Dr. Gwynne, but does not seem to care. After the dean's death is announced at the party, Mr. Slope hurries back to town to prepare the next phase of his plan.

Chapter 40 Analysis

Eleanor and Mr. Slope's relationship is finally finished, as both of them are no longer deluded about the other's feelings. While Eleanor is angry with Mr. Slope, she is angrier with herself for not seeing through him earlier. She is upset that she did not see what her family saw.

Mr. Slope's reaction to the rejection by Eleanor and the slight by the Bishop reflect his ongoing beliefs in his own power and influence. He lets his plans for domination over both of them drop away without hesitation as he looks forward to an even better position as the new dean of the cathedral.



Chapter 41

Chapter 41 Summary

Eleanor avoids returning to the party and runs into Charlotte Stanhope. Eleanor confesses everything about Mr. Slope to her. Charlotte suggests that Bertie will defend Eleanor's honor. Actually, Charlotte wants Bertie to be in a position to propose to Eleanor. The proposal has to happen today because Bertie's debt problems are about to get him thrown out of his father's house.

On their way to find Bertie, they pass the signora and Mr. Arabin. While the signora and Charlotte talk, Mr. Arabin and Eleanor are very uncomfortable. They both love each other but can not find a way to express it.

Chapter 41 Analysis

With one prospective suitor rejected, Eleanor is unsuspectingly preparing to meet another. Her relationship with Mr. Arabin is going nowhere because neither is able to express their feelings to the other.



Chapter 42

Chapter 42 Summary

The party is quickly emptying out. Charlotte and Eleanor finally find Bertie, who is less than eager about proposing to Eleanor. The situation with Mr. Slope is explained to Bertie. Charlotte leaves the two of them alone together. Bertie is supposed to propose to Eleanor, but he can not go through with it because he does not want to spend his life married to her in the quiet town of Barchester. He decides, instead, to confess the whole plan to try to marry her for her money and get Eleanor to tell his family that he tried to propose to her, but failed. Eleanor, of course, does not respond well to this confession and feels used by his family, especially by Charlotte.

Chapter 42 Analysis

The second potential suitor is rejected and Eleanor feels even worse for not having seen through either Mr. Slope or Bertie. She begins to seriously question her judgment of character, particularly of men.



Chapter 43

Chapter 43 Summary

After much delay, the Quiverfuls finally get the wardenship of the hospital and are eager to begin. The papers for the appointment are sealed quickly under the encouragement of Mrs. Proudie. Not knowing of this change, the Archdeacon sends Dr. Gwynne to speak to the Bishop about securing the position for Dr. Harding. Mrs. Proudie is at the meeting between Dr. Gwynne and the Bishop and uses the opportunity to push for more Sabbath schools. They inform Dr. Gwynne that the position has been filled and he leaves.

Mr. Slope, however, is encouraged by a letter from an influential newspaper editor who has agreed to support him in his quest for the deanery. The editor publishes a long article in favor of Mr. Slope's candidacy.

Chapter 43 Analysis

In this chapter, the affair of the hospital is finally wrapped up despite the efforts of many to prolong it. The Bishop and Mrs. Proudie's relationship has been resecured after the meddling by Mr. Slope. The possibility of Mr. Slope getting the deanery is increased by media attention. Mr. Slope's manipulation of the press shows his own sophistication in shaping public opinion in his favor. However, despite the newspaper's popular appeal, it is not clear if it will be enough to influence the high levels of government that are responsible for appointing the position.



Chapter 44

Chapter 44 Summary

Returning home from the party, Eleanor is angry and exhausted from her ordeal with Mr. Slope and Bertie Stanhope. She confesses everything to her father but says she will not do anything to convince the Archdeacon and her sister to change their minds about her. She tries to get her father to move in with her but he refuses, thinking that sooner or later she will marry again. During this family conference, a letter arrives for Eleanor from the signora requesting a meeting. Eleanor accepts.

Chapter 44 Analysis

This short chapter helps Eleanor clear the air with her father, though confusion still continues with the Archdeacon and his wife. The signora has decided to do something to help Mr. Arabin and Eleanor, and her proposed meeting will hopefully move in that direction.



Chapter 45

Chapter 45 Summary

At the Stanhope house, Charlotte tries to convince her father to give Bertie another chance but he refuses. At this point Bertie arrives home from the party and must explain himself. He gives no excuse for himself and his father orders him to leave the following day. Bertie is unresponsive, drawing pictures while his father yells at him. The argument is resolved by the father agreeing to pay for some of Bertie's trip to Italy. Later that night, Bertie reveals that he did not really propose and that he has told Eleanor about Charlotte's scheme to help him marry her. The next day Bertie leaves for Italy.

The day after that, Eleanor arrives for her meeting with the signora. The signora tells her directly that Mr. Arabin loves her and that she needs to be honest about her feelings for him. Eleanor is shocked by the straightforwardness of the information but is also very happy and eager to find Mr. Arabin.

Chapter 45 Analysis

The signora accomplishes what no one else could, by expressing herself openly and honestly. It is ironic that this character, known best for her deception and ulterior motives, is the only one capable of doing this. She steps in to stop the ongoing misunderstanding and confusion between Eleanor and Mr. Arabin and help them find a way to express their feelings for each other.



Chapter 46

Chapter 46 Summary

On another day at the Stanhope house, the signora is surrounded by admiring men. Mr. Arabin is there to discuss his love for Eleanor. Mr. Slope, now considered a favorite for the deanery, is also there. The signora uses the opportunity to needle Mr. Slope about his rejection by Eleanor in front of Mr. Arabin. While it is not clear if Mr. Arabin gets the message, Mr. Slope is humiliated and leaves full of hatred for the signora, which was her intention.

Chapter 46 Analysis

Again, the signora leads the way in trying to get information between Mr. Arabin and Eleanor. She makes sure that Mr. Arabin knows that Eleanor has rejected Mr. Slope, hoping that this will get him to do something to win Eleanor. She also ends her relationship with Mr. Slope.



Chapter 47

Chapter 47 Summary

There is much speculation about Mr. Slope's candidacy for the deanery. He receives an official letter about the position and takes a trip to London. Meanwhile, Mr. Arabin is raising eyebrows over his many visits to the signora. Mrs. Grantly, in particular, thinks he is disgracing his position. While she is debating the matter with her husband, Dr. Harding suddenly shows up acting very excited. Dr. Harding announces that he has been offered the deanery. However, he feels that he should turn down the position because he is too old and lacks the energy for it. Of course, the Archdeacon and his wife urge him to accept it and assure him that he is capable of the job. Finally, Dr. Harding agrees to write and ask for more time to consider.

Chapter 47 Analysis

The chapter shows that Mr. Slope will not be receiving the deanery despite everyone's speculation. Instead Dr. Harding has been given the post, but wants to refuse it. This finishes much of the ongoing church debate, as a conservative faction member has won the coveted spot.

Rumors again are a source of trouble as Mr. Arabin's relationship with the signora is beginning to make people speak negatively behind his back. Again, no one proposes asking him about it directly so the rumors will live on.



Chapter 48

Chapter 48 Summary

The rumors about Mr. Arabin and the signora have reached Miss Thorne, who is determined to put an end to them. Unlike Mrs. Grantly, she does not simply sit around spreading rumors. Instead she makes a plan to find Mr. Arabin a suitable bride to take his attention away from the signora. Quite innocently, not knowing anything about their relationship, she decides that Eleanor would be a good candidate to be Mr. Arabin's wife.

She invites both Eleanor and Mr. Arabin to come and stay at her home. She thinks that a few months to a year will be sufficient time for the two of them to fall in love and get married. Eleanor is surprised by the invitation but agrees to visit for a week or two. Eleanor arrives at the house. Mr. Arabin arrives the next day. Within hours, Eleanor announces her engagement to Mr. Arabin. This surprises Miss Thorne by happening so quickly.

Both Eleanor and Mr. Arabin go back to their own houses to prepare for the wedding. Mr. Arabin breaks the news to Mrs. Grantly, who is overjoyed and dismisses her suspicions about him and the signora and regrets her suspicions about Eleanor and Mr. Slope.

Chapter 48 Analysis

Again a conflict is ended because someone chooses to take direct action instead of just gossiping. Miss Thorne's plan to make Eleanor and Mr. Arabin fall in love with each other relies on the two of them choosing to do so through opportunity, not interference. Eleanor and Mr. Arabin are encouraged by the advice given to them by the signora to be open and honest with each other so that they can finally express their feelings.



Chapter 49

Chapter 49 Summary

Eleanor returns home and tells her father of her intention to marry Mr. Arabin. He is very happy for her and tells her about the offer of the deanery. She tries to convince him to accept the post, but he refuses to consider it. However, he does get the idea that Mr. Arabin could be the new dean instead of him and thinks about how to make this idea happen.

Chapter 49 Analysis

This short chapter allows Eleanor and her father to show their unity and support for each other. Dr. Harding's plans to help Mr. Arabin secure the deanery are evidence of his kind and generous nature.



Chapter 50

Chapter 50 Summary

The Archdeacon arrives at Eleanor's house but Eleanor does not want to tell him about her marriage plans with Mr. Arabin and leaves her father to break the news. At first the Archdeacon does not believe it because he is so convinced the Eleanor is going to marry Mr. Slope. Finally, he realizes that it is true and is angry with himself for thinking that it would be Mr. Slope. Dr. Harding shares his hopes that Mr. Arabin could be made the new dean.

The Archdeacon likes the plan, happy to see Mr. Slope lose more power. He goes to London to consult Dr. Gwynne about supporting Mr. Arabin's candidacy for the position. Dr. Gwynne agrees to help. On his way back to Barchester, the Archdeacon passes Hiram's Hospital and is kind to Mrs. Quiverful, which surprises and delights her. The Archdeacon takes the long way home in hopes of seeing Mr. Arabin. They pass each other on the road and stop to discuss the upcoming wedding. The Archdeacon insists on personally performing the ceremony when he returns from another special trip to London.

Chapter 50 Analysis

Now everyone knows about Eleanor and Mr. Arabin and can put aside the rumors that had almost destroyed their relationship. This settling of arguments extends to Mrs. Quiverful at the hospital, who is assured that no one is angry with her family for taking the wardenship of the hospital away from Dr. Harding. The final twist in the plot is shaping up around the idea of Mr. Arabin becoming the new dean. Since everyone is satisfied that Mr. Slope is no longer in the running, they are eager to see who will finally get the position.



Chapter 51

Chapter 51 Summary

Mr. Slope has been denied the deanery and is fired by the Bishop. He has arranged to go to a new church in London however he must have a final meeting with the Bishop to formally end his position as the domestic chaplain. Mrs. Proudie is determined to use the opportunity to humiliate Mr. Slope and he is equally determined to humiliate Mrs. Proudie. Mrs. Proudie tells him that he is being dismissed because of his inappropriate relationship with the signora. She offers him the post of curate in Mr. Quiverful's old church as a further tool to humiliate him. He refuses, of course, and threatens to publish an article about her unfair treatment of him.

Mr. Slope leaves, though he never publishes the article against the Proudies. Instead, he settles comfortably in London and becomes a famous preacher with wealthy patrons. The Bishop goes on to posts in the House of Lords but remains controlled by his wife.

Chapter 51 Analysis

This chapter begins the process of summing up the lives of the characters and ending the particular conflicts of the story. The conflict between Mr. Slope and Mrs. Proudie ends without either of them really winning or losing. Instead, they simply go their separate ways while continuing to dislike each other. Both Mr. Slope and the Bishop's family go on to successful careers in the church.



Chapter 52

Chapter 52 Summary

The Archdeacon and Dr. Harding have gone to London to convince Dr. Gwynne to help Mr. Arabin become dean. After another effort to convince Dr. Harding to accept the position for himself, Dr. Gwynne throws his support behind Mr. Arabin. The three men stay in London waiting for a chance to meet with the Prime Minister and give their recommendation. Finally, word comes that Mr. Arabin has been selected as the new dean. The Archdeacon and Dr. Harding return to Barchester to share the good news. Everyone is very happy and Dr. Harding agrees to move in with the new couple after their wedding.

Dr. Harding also stops by the hospital to show his support for Mr. Quiverful. His personal support helps the men at the hospital respect Mr. Quiverful and gives him new confidence that he will be successful at the hospital.

Chapter 52 Analysis

The chapter ties up the loose end of the deanery. Everyone is happy about Mr. Arabin's selection, although the reader is certainly not surprised by it. Details of the plot are wrapping up quickly.



Chapter 53

Chapter 53 Summary

Mr. Arabin and Eleanor finally marry. They live happily ever after at the deanery where Arabin establishes a reputation as a scholar of religious literature. The Stanhopes return to Italy. Everyone else continues with their normal lives.

Chapter 53 Analysis

The novel comes to a speedy conclusion with each character settling happily into their regular lives. Everyone is expected to remain content in this way for many years to come.



Characters

Archdeacon Grantly

Archdeacon Grantly is the son of the previous Bishop of Barchester, and was originally promised the position of Bishop. He is a man of strong opinions who is unable to admit when he is wrong. His wife Susan is the daughter of Dr. Harding and the sister of Eleanor Bold. He is the leader of the conservative clergy in Barchester and has developed his religious differences with Mr. Slope into a personal battle for domination. This deeply affects his relationship with his sister-in-law when he feels that she is going to marry Mr. Slope. His attitudes in this matter are extreme and unbending, as he would rather cut off his relationship with Eleanor than see her married to his enemy. He is unable to see his own prejudices or admit his mistakes and sees the world as an us - against - them situation. Eventually he realizes that he was wrong about Eleanor and accepts that she is really going to marry Mr. Arabin, an arrangement that makes him very happy.

Dr. Proudie

Dr. Proudie cares more about appearances than anything else. He wants to appear as powerful as Bishop of Barchester but is really ruled by his wife in everything. In many instances he seeks to end his wife's tyranny and almost succeeds in doing so only to be brought back under her control. Dr. Proudie is a very weak man and unable to face any real confrontation. He relies on others to fight his battles for him. His career has been in the hands of other people who have used him to spread their views. He, in turn, has used this to his advantage, to the point that he rises very high in the leadership of the Church of England and eventually ends up in the House of Lords.

Mrs. Proudie

Mrs. Proudie controls her husband with an iron fist and does not allow him to exercise free will in any way. She wants to be the one in power and, in reality, she is. Her own religious views are generally extremely strict and she wants to be able to force everyone to follow them. At the same time, she is also a social creature and very concerned with appearing to be more wealthy and important than she really is. She puts a great deal of time and effort into her appearance and the appearance of her home and family. She considers herself to be very high born and worthy of great things. Buried deep in her character, however, is a softer side, as evidenced by her pity for poor Mrs. Quiverful and her family. She eventually triumphs over Mr. Slope and establishes herself as the unquestioned ruler of her husband, the Bishop.



Mr. Slope

Mr. Slope has risen from humble beginnings and hopes to rise still further. Taking advantage of a series of influential women to fund his path, he becomes the domestic chaplain of the Bishop of Barchester. He is determined to be the power behind the throne and is prepared to fight his benefactress, Mrs. Proudie, in order to make it happen. Mr. Slope has a very high opinion of himself, especially in regard to women. He also feels that he is capable of quickly rising in the church leadership and views individual people as stepping stones to his success. His courtship of Eleanor is a reflection of his character, in that he feels no remorse in attempting to marry her for her money. He is extremely conflicted about his feelings for the signora Madeleine, however because she is a married woman that he can't help but be attracted to her. The signora makes him question himself and his purity, putting his ego in an awkward position. He considers himself worthy of being promoted to be the Dean of the Cathedral and taps his resources of powerful friends to gain that position only to be cast off even from the lowly job of domestic chaplain. He goes on to a career in small but wealthy churches in London.

Eleanor Bold

Eleanor is introduced as a recent widow with an infant son. Her father, Dr. Harding, is seeking the wardenship of the hospital and her brother-in-law is the Archdeacon. Eleanor is both personally and financially independent of her family and resents her brother-in-law's attempts to control her relationship with Mr. Slope. She is also an essentially innocent person, never suspecting that men would want to marry her for her money. Her own widowhood is so recent that she does not even think that others would be interested in pursuing a romantic relationship with her. This, combined with her stubbornness, causes a major rift with her family when they believe that she is going to marry Mr. Slope. This is never a possibility, though, and instead she marries Mr. Arabin after a very antagonistic courtship.

Dr. Harding

Dr. Harding was the warden of the hospital until a media scandal removed him from the post. Most the story is given to the various attempts to restore him to this position. Dr. Harding himself is very shy and unwilling to be the cause of more controversy. He also shows his unconditional love for his daughter, Eleanor, even when he thinks she is going to marry his enemy, Mr. Slope. His decision not to accept the deanery and instead arrange for it to be given to Mr. Arabin reflects the kindness and generosity of his character.



Mr. Arabin

Mr. Arabin has lived an intellectual life and enters the story as an unmarried forty-year-old. His personal struggle with issues of church doctrine, particularly his near conversion to Catholicism, reflects his scholarly appreciation of his faith. He has deep regrets about pursuing a scholarly life instead of having a family and corrects this by falling in love and marrying Eleanor. Eleanor's father and friends also help him to gain the deanery position and settle into a new life that combines both family and scholarly work.

Signora Madeleine Neroni (Stanhope)

The signora's life has been extremely interesting, beginning with an ill-fated marriage to an Italian man. Abuse at the hands of her husband leaves the signora with an amputated leg but a highly sophisticated spirit. Having always been a great beauty, the signora's major pastime is seducing men. She manages to do so with Mr. Slope, though she eventually rejects him in disgust. She considers seducing Mr. Arabin but finds herself actually respecting him and feeling that he should be with Eleanor, the woman he loves, instead. She is the one that breaks the barrier between Eleanor and Mr. Arabin by telling Eleanor directly that Mr. Arabin loves her.

Bertie Stanhope

Bertie Stanhope is the only male character referred to by his first name, implying that he is more childlike and less manly than the others. After a series of turns as a law student in Germany, a painter in Rome, a missionary in Jerusalem, and a sculptor in Carrara, Bertie has established himself as being unemployable and irresponsible. His debts finally reach the point where his father will no longer support him and his sister persuades him to try to marry Eleanor for her money. Bertie is unable to do even that much work, and instead returns to Italy to earn his living by sculpting again.

Mr. Quiverful

Mr. Quiverful is in the awkward position of having fourteen children and no money to support them. The offer of the wardenship is a huge boon for him and his family that he cannot turn down. This makes the conservative factions in the town angry at him for taking the position they feel belongs to Dr. Harding and exposes their own inability to sympathize with Mr. Quiverful's poverty. Like Dr. Harding, Mr. Quiverful is a tool of more powerful interests and takes very little action in securing the position for himself. His eventual appointment to the wardenship is good for everyone involved and allows his family to lift itself out of poverty.



Objects/Places

The Diocese of Barchester

A diocese is the area under the control of the Bishop and contains all the churches in the area. Barchester is fictional.

The Bishop's Palace

This is the official residence of the Bishop in Barchester. The Proudie family and Mr. Slope live here. The house reflects the personalities of the people living in it. The Bishop's own rooms are small and cramped, forcing him to use the dining room when there are large groups of people to see him. Mrs. Proudie takes up the most public space in the house and her own private rooms are larger and more prominent than the Bishop's. The Bishop's palace is a showplace for the Proudies despite the fact they care more about London than they do Barchester.

Plumstead

The Archdeacon's residence is not described in detail but it is the setting for many of the events in the story. It is presented much more as a private home for the Archdeacon's family than a public place intended for social gatherings. Instead, it serves mainly for private guests invited for small and intimate visits.

Eleanor Bold's House

Eleanor Bold lives with her sister-in-law, Mary and her infant son, Johnny. Their home is a very private space for friends and family. Mr. Slope's attempts to marry Eleanor for her money intrude on this private space. Eleanor resents Mr. Slope inserting himself into her private lives and catching her in private moments, such as when she is playing with her son. Eleanor is anxious for her father to move in with her rather than live in rented rooms.

Hiram's Hospital

Hiram's Hospital was established by a wealthy benefactor as a retirement home for old men. It is the subject of intense church battles. Originally, the hospital was meant to house and feed twelve old men, but a bill in Parliament changes that to twelve old men and twelve old women. Mr. Slope's plans for the hospital include adding a Sunday school for the children of the area and requiring the warden to perform many religious duties. Eventually, after much in-fighting, Mr. Quiverful and his family take over the wardenship and go to live in the accompanying house.



St. Ewold's Church

St. Ewold's is a small and insignificant church on the Thorne estate. It is only important because it becomes vacant, thus allowing Mr. Arabin to gain a position in Barchester. The church and the house that goes with it are located in the countryside and serve a small tenant class. In preparation for Mr. Arabin's relocation to this church, there are many visits to inspect the church and house. One of these visits sets the stage for Eleanor and Mr. Arabin to fall in love.

Barchester Cathedral

Barchester Cathedral is the flagship church in Barchester. It is the only church in the area where important ceremonies are conducted, including elaborate musical performances. Because it is a symbol of Barchester, many people are very competitive over its control. When the dean dies and his position becomes vacant, there is a power struggle to determine who will be in charge of its future.

Oxford University

Oxford University is the place where members of the Barchester clergy turn to in times of trouble. Lazarus, in particular, is a place very clearly aligned with high-church traditions and the scholars that live there reflect established traditional church values. Both Dr. Gwynne and Mr. Arabin come from here and the respect that both men inspire stems from their positions of authority within the University community.

Bishop (Church of England)

The Bishop is a high ranking official in the Church of England. During the nineteenth century this position would have been exclusively male. A Bishop is appointed through a series of high level meetings within the church leadership. The leadership makes a recommendation to the Prime Minister, who makes the selection and then sends this name to the King or Queen. The King or Queen makes the actual appointment, but this is just a formality.

Archdeacon (Church of England)

An Archdeacon manages groups of churches under a Bishop. The Archdeacon is appointed by and reports directly to a Bishop. It is a senior position above most of the common clergy in the diocese, or local area.



Dean (Church of England)

The dean is in charge of the cathedral, the spiritual center of the diocese. The dean is a senior official and usually the head of a chapter, or general governing body. Because the dean runs the cathedral, he has no territorial church and no personal parish. While he is supreme within the cathedral, he ranks lower than the Bishop.

Vicar (Church of England)

The vicar is the parish priest. A vicar receives his salary through church offerings or taxes on the local community. The vicar controls his own church and usually lives in an adjoining house.

Curate (Church of England)

A curate is an assistant to a vicar and usually performs most of the actual duties in the church. He is appointed by an individual vicar and paid a salary by the diocese.

Quintain

The quintain is an ancient game of horsemanship in which a rider carrying a pole attempts to hit a bag of flour that is on a rotating chain. The rider must be quick in hitting the bag and riding away before the bag spins on the rotating chain and hits the rider in the back. The quintain is one of the games that Miss Thorne wants to have performed at her party with disastrous results.



Themes

Church Doctrine and Reform

The major theme of *Barchester Towers* is the ongoing struggle between the conservative and liberal factions of the Church of England. The conservative, or high-church, faction seeks to preserve the ceremonies and traditions of the older church, usually involving great elaborate musical and spiritual exercises. In Barchester, the Archdeacon and his followers represent the conservative side. The liberal, low-church, wants to abandon symbols and concentrate on personal spirituality. In Barchester, Mr. Slope and Mrs. Proudie represent the liberal side.

The conservative side is shown as seeking to maintain the status quo at all points. It is also regarded as boring and unconnected to real life by many of the common churchgoers. Many members of the clergy, particularly Dr. Slope, are shown to have taken advantage of the lax accountability among established churchmen and have constructed ways in which they can receive a salary for work they have no intention of doing. Many of these clergyman see their church positions as theirs by right, similar to inheriting property. The practice of hiring curates to manage the day to day affairs of the church further separates the conservative vicars from their congregations.

The liberal side, however, focuses on evangelical rhetoric to win followers. Common churchgoers respond to sermons delivered in this way because they are different and more interesting than the ones given by the conservative preachers. The liberal side presses individual church doctrinal issues in order to force reform. Issues like the formation of Sabbath schools become extremely important because they represent change in how the church groups are conducted, including the religious instruction of children.

In Barchester, these religious issues take on personal significance as each side rejects the other's ideas about what makes the church. Rather than seeing each other as opposite sides of the same organization, both sides work to establish their own dominance and to make sure that the other side cannot enforce its own views. In doing so, many insignificant issues become very important because they reflect the struggle for power.

The wardenship at the hospital, the deanery of the cathedral, and the smaller concerns of the Sabbath schools all have important consequences in having one side or the other vindicated by public recognition of their cause.

Gossip

One of the ongoing themes relates to the problems created by rumor and gossip. Much of the plot revolves around the misunderstanding and confusion of people assuming that suspicions are fact instead of going for direct information. Eleanor Bold is at the



center of many such misunderstandings, as everyone around her assumes things about her personal life without ever asking her directly about it. Her intended marriage to Mr. Slope is treated as fact based solely on the fact that she continues to talk to him when her family has expressed their disapproval. Her family's suspicions spin out of control and they decide among themselves that she is planning to marry him when she has no such intention and has not expressed such an intention to anyone.

Because no one tells her what they are thinking, she unwittingly provides more "evidence" in her defense of Mr. Slope. Based on what her family actually says, the conflict lies with Mr. Slope's religious views and that is what Eleanor addresses. She does not understand that her family is really talking about a romantic relationship because her family members rely on innuendo rather than direct tactics. This repeats itself in the inability of Eleanor and Mr. Arabin to express their feelings directly. Instead they rely on metaphor and assumptions to get the other to understand their feelings.

The character that goes against this trend is the signora, who uses direct language to tell Eleanor exactly how Mr. Arabin feels and urges her to pursue him directly instead of waiting for him to figure out how to tell her he loves her. The signora is not troubled by the social rules of the other characters and can cut through all the rumor and gossip and confront problems directly.

Husbands and Wives

Several sets of husbands and wives, and potential husbands and wives, are presented in the story. Each set shows some variation on what the author considers to be natural and unnatural relationships between men and women.

Dr. and Mrs. Proudie are presented as an unnatural couple because Mrs. Proudie is the dominant partner. The author offers various statements of how Dr. Proudie should rise up and reclaim his rights as the man in the relationship and dismisses him as weak and ineffectual because he does not. Mrs. Proudie, having been allowed to assume this unnatural power, uses it against other men, such as Mr. Slope and the Archdeacon, who both resent being told what to do by a woman.

The relationship between the Archdeacon and his wife is set up in contrast to the Bishop's. Their relationship is based on mutual respect and it is out of respect that the Bishop's wife believes that she should be obedient to him. When the Archdeacon decides to cut off their relationship with Eleanor, his wife does as he says despite her own feelings on the matter.

Eleanor and Mr. Arabin present what the author assumes is the perfect couple. They are mutually respectful of each other while at the same time recognizing Mr. Arabin's dominance. Eleanor, who because of her private income from her husband's death has been leading a life of relative independence for a woman, is now brought under her new husband's authority.



Style

Point of View

The novel is told from the third person omniscient point of view. The author can see everything that the characters do as well as discuss their motives and feelings. At many times during the story, the author specifically addresses the reader to explain why he has chosen to show some event or to elaborate on the feelings of the characters.

One of the more interesting aspects of this is that the author is very clear that he is telling a fictional story and at many points refers to his writing of the novel that the reader is reading. He uses the characters and events to present his own opinion about many novel conventions.

Setting

The majority of the story takes place in the Barchester diocese, in the various homes of the characters. Most conversation is restricted to the privacy of individual homes or rooms and very little occurs outside or in a public manner. The few public events are when one of the many clergyman preaches a sermon to a congregation. Even here, though, the church becomes a private space where meetings between private individuals take place.

Many of the events occur in London, though often these events are described rather than acted out. The principle characters are usually concerned with what is happening in London and take many trips there. However, the reader rarely goes with the characters to London and apparently remains waiting in Barchester for them to return.

Language and Meaning

The story is written with the vocabulary of a nineteenth century English novel. It makes many references to the hierarchy of the Church of England and issues of church doctrine that it does not fully explain. Many readers from a non-British background might need to do additional research in order to understand some of the more complicated terms, however, a great deal can be determined from context and none of the religious issues are explored in depth.

The novel usually follows very clear convention in establishing the setting, plot, and characters. The author does challenge these conventions at several points by directly addressing the reader and calling attention to the fact that he is writing a novel about fictional people and events.

Structure

The novel is set sometime in the 1850s and takes place over several months. The fifty-three chapters all include titles that explain what each chapter is about. These chapters get smaller as the story progresses and become quite short during the concluding chapters when the plot consists of a simple wrap-up of what happens to individual characters.

Some of the chapters cover a few hours while other chapters summarize the events of weeks or months. Often information will be presented about an event that happened in the recent past after explaining the consequences of that event. However, overall the novel is written in a clear chronological order and is easy to follow.



Quotes

"Hitherto Barchester had escaped the taint of any extreme rigor of church doctrine. The clergy men of the city and the neighborhood, though very well inclined to promote high-church principles, privileges, and prerogatives, had never committed themselves to tendencies, which are somewhat too loosely called Puseylite practices. They all preached in their black gowns, as their fathers had done before them...and were contented to confine themselves to such ceremonial observances as had been in vogue for the last hundred years." (Chapter 6)

"It would not be becoming were I to travesty a sermon, or even repeat the language of it in the pages of a novel. In endeavoring to depict the characters of the persons of whom I write, I am to a certain extent forced to speak of sacred things. I trust, however, that I shall not be thought to scoff at the pulpit, though some may imagine that I do not feel the reverence that is due to the cloth. I may question the infallibility of the teachers, but I hope that I shall not therefore be accused of doubts as to the thing to be taught." (Chapter 6)

"Among the greatest of the diocesan sinners in this respect was Dr. Vesey Stanhope. Years had now passed since he had done a day's duty; and yet there was no reason against him doing his duty except a want of inclination on his own part." (Chapter 9)

"Well - he is a little odd in some of his fancies, but there's nothing about him you won't like. He is as staunch a churchman as there is at Oxford. I really don't know what we should do without Arabin. It's a great thing for me to have him near me; and if anything can put Slope down, Arabin will do it!" (Chapter 14)

"Mr. Slope again pointed out to his patron that he thought he was perhaps not quite wise in his decision, and this he did sotto voce. But even with the precaution it was not safe to say much, and during the little that he did say, the Bishop made a very slight, but still an ominous gesture with his thumb towards the door which opened from his dressing room to some inner sanctuary." (Chapter 18)

"Now that the Archdeacon was away, they could all trifle. Mr. Harding began by telling them in the most innocent manner imaginable an old legend about Mr. Arabin's new parish. There was, he said, in days of yore, an illustrious priestess of St. Ewold, famed through the whole country for curing all manner of diseases." (Chapter 22)

"He had felt that his brother clergymen, men who he had known for the last twenty years, looked coldly on him from the first moment that he had shown himself willing to sit at the feet of Mr. Slope; he had seen that their looks grew colder still, when it became bruited about that he was to be the Bishop's new warden at Hiram's hospital." (Chapter 24)

"What horrid words were these which greeted the ear of Mrs. Proudie? The matter was indeed too clear. There was premeditated mutiny in the camp. Not only had ill-



conditioned minds become insubordinate by the fruition of a little power. The Bishop has not yet been twelve months in this chair, and rebellion had already reared her hideous head within the palace. Anarchy and misrule would quickly follow, unless she took immediate and strong measures to put down the conspiracy." (Chapter 26)

"From you, Mr. Arabin,' she continued, 'I would have listened to advice because I should have expected it to have been given as one friend may advise another; not as a schoolmaster gives an order to a pupil.'" (Chapter 30)

"I don't want to save appearances; I want Mr. Slope to appear just what he is - a false, designing, mean, intriguing man. I have my eye on him; he knows little what I see...If he doesn't look well to it, he'll have his gown stripped off his back instead of having a dean's hat on his head. Dean, indeed! The man has gone made with arrogance." (Chapter 33)

"He had passed the previous night alone at his new parsonage and it was the first night that he had so passed. It had been dull and somber enough. Mrs. Grantly had been right in saying that a priestess would be wanting at St. Ewold's. He had sat there alone with his glass before him, and then with his teapot, thinking about Eleanor Bold." (Chapter 38)

"Slowly, gradually, thoughtfully, Dr. Grantly fell into his father-in-law's views. Much as he liked Mr. Arabin, sincere as he was in his admiration for that gentleman's ecclesiastical abilities, he would not have sanctioned a measure which would have robbed his father-in-law of his fairly earned promotion, were it at all practicable to induce his father-in-law to accept the promotion which he had earned." (Chapter 50)

Topics for Discussion

How does the author's portrayal of the different church groups prejudice the reader for and against them?

What do you think about the author's decision to tell the reader early on that Eleanor will not marry either Mr. Slope or Bertie Stanhope? How does this add to the dramatic tension of the novel?

Eleanor Bold is able to function independently of the men in the novel because she is a wealthy widow. Often her brother-in-law, the Archdeacon, urges her father to step in and tell her what to do, but he refuses. How does Eleanor's independence affect the novel? What changes do you expect now that she is married to Mr. Arabin?

Bertie Stanhope is the only male character called by his first name. The other men are all addressed by their surnames. What does this show about Bertie's character? What does it show about the female characters that are alternately addressed by their first and last names?

Many of the last names are allegorical. Discuss how the Proudies and the Quiverfuls are defined by their last names.

Why does the novel include portions about the tenant farmers on the Thorne estate? These characters are not necessary to the plot and could have been left out. Why include them?

Consider Madeleine Stanhope Neroni. How does her manipulation of her own identity work within the story? Why is she able to create her own name and get everyone to address her by the title, "signora?"