

# **Daniel Deronda Study Guide**

## **Daniel Deronda by George Eliot**

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## Plot Summary

Gwendolyn Harleth is the oldest daughter of the widow, Fanny Davilow. She is also the favorite and accustomed to getting her way. As a young adult, she moves to an estate called Offendene with her mother and four sisters in order for the family to be near Mrs. Davilow's sister and her family, the Reverend and Mrs. Gascoigne. There, Gwendolyn soon attracts the attention of her cousin, Rex, who pledges his love for her. Gwendolyn refuses his offer but is soon courted by the heir to the baronetcy, Henry Mallinger Grandcourt. She is considering accepting the offer of marriage she is certain will be forthcoming but learns that Grandcourt has a mistress and several illegitimate children. The mistress believes that Grandcourt should do right by his illegitimate family and Gwendolyn goes away to visit with friends at a resort called Leubronn. There she meets a young man named Daniel Deronda.

Daniel is the ward of Grandcourt's uncle, Sir Hugo Mallinger. Daniel and Gwendolyn are quickly drawn to each other, though they aren't formally introduced on this first meeting. Daniel is a kind man and goes out of his way to help others. One day he sees a young lady, obviously in distress and obviously about to drown herself. He intervenes and becomes her protector. She's a Jewish woman named Mirah and she and Daniel eventually marry. Daniel has grown up without knowing of his parentage but is eventually contacted by his mother. She tells him that he is also Jewish, that she'd handed him over to Sir Hugo to raise, partly in order to save him from being ostracized as a Jew but also because she was an actress and didn't want a child. Daniel comes to terms with his mother, though she tells him that she has no plans for them to meet again or get to know each other.

Gwendolyn, meanwhile, falls on financial difficulty when her mother loses her fortune. Gwendolyn decides to marry Grandcourt anyway, reassuring herself that, as his wife, she can sway him to do right by his illegitimate children. She soon learns that he is controlling and she has no sway with him at all. He chastises her and she is soon miserable though she hides it, fearing that people will pity her. The couple are traveling in the Mediterranean when Grandcourt insists that he and Gwendolyn go for a sail. They are alone on the ocean when Grandcourt is knocked from the boat and drowns. Daniel happens to be staying in the same hotel, having just met with his mother, when the drowning occurs. Gwendolyn tells him that she's to blame for Grandcourt's death, but it seems she feels guilty for wishing him dead and that it actually was an accident.

Gwendolyn returns to her mother's home and Daniel makes plans to marry Mirah. Gwendolyn tells Daniel that she's a better person for having known him and Daniel begins his new life, living openly as a Jew.



# Book One

## Book One Summary

In chapter one, Daniel Deronda walks into a room filled with ladies and gentlemen at the gambling tables. Among them is an arresting young beauty named Gwendolyn Harlet. Daniel learns that she is in the city with cousins, the Langens. Though they don't meet that night, each asks friends about the identity of the other. In chapter two, Gwendolyn receives a letter from her mother, Fanny Davilow saying that they are in very dire financial circumstances, must give up the house they are renting, and urging Gwendolyn to come home at once. Gwendolyn had actually been significantly ahead at the gambling tables the night before but had allowed her preoccupation with Daniel to take precedence over prudence and had lost most of that money. Now she regrets that loss but determines to sell a necklace in order to gain a little cash to pay for her trip home. She has a little money besides the necklace and considers returning to the gambling tables but fears losing. She makes her way to a shop where she sells the necklace and later returns to the hotel, trying to decide if she'll leave Leubronn at once for Brussels or will wait to make the trip. A short time later, she receives a message accompanying her necklace wrapped in a handkerchief. Her pride is wounded. She believes Daniel purchased the necklace and returned it. She wants to send it back to him but fears how foolish she would seem if it wasn't his gesture. She leaves at once.

In chapter three, Gwendolyn is already a young woman when she, her mother and her four younger sisters move to Offendene. It's a rented house that's very large and somber but has the advantage of being located near Mrs. Davilow's sister and brother-in-law, Reverend and Mrs. Gascoigne. They have a daughter, Anna, and she and Gwendolyn are soon spending a great deal of time together. Mrs. Gascoigne says that she hopes her sons won't fall for Gwendolyn and Reverend Gascoigne says there's no need to worry about it.

In chapter four, Reverend Gascoigne believes that Gwendolyn will make a good marriage, ensuring her future financial security and that of her mother. In chapter five, Gwendolyn is soon being invited to a great many parties and dinners in the neighborhood. She visits the home of Mrs. Arrowpoint, who has a daughter near Gwendolyn's age, Catherine, and who employs a music teacher named Herr Klesmer. Gwendolyn performs for the gathering and Klesmer is condescending.

In chapter six, Catherine Arrowpoint is twenty-four and intellectually superior to Gwendolyn, though inferior in appearance. Anna's brother Rex comes home for the holiday and is soon happily involved in all Gwendolyn's entertainments. Anna believes that she will never marry and will become Rex's housekeeper. However, Rex soon falls in love with Gwendolyn and, despite that they are first cousins, says that he wants to marry her. Gwendolyn makes plans to join a fox hunting party and Rex agrees to go along, despite the fact that his father's horse isn't suitable for that activity. During the course of the hunt, Gwendolyn rushes off with the field of hunters and Rex's horse



stumbles, throwing Rex and breaking the horse's legs. Reverend Gascoigne goes to Offendene and Gwendolyn says she hadn't realized Rex was injured and says she is relieved that he is not seriously hurt. Reverend Gascoigne reassures himself that Gwendolyn doesn't return Rex's love and returns home. The following day, Rex goes to Gwendolyn with a profession of his love but she pleads with him to stop, saying she hates it. Rebuffed, he leaves. In chapter eight, he spends time moping in bed and is feared to be ill. When he is finally out of bed, he tells Anna that he plans to go to Canada to build a new life for himself. She pleads to go with him and he agrees, provided their father agrees. The Reverend Gascoigne says that Rex must wait before making such a decision and Rex agrees.

In chapter nine, Sir Hugo Mallinger's nephew and apparent heir to the baronetcy, Mallinger Grandcourt, is due to arrive at Diplow Hall. The Arrowpoints hope that Grandcourt will choose Catherine as a bride, and Reverend Gascoigne and Mrs. Davilow hope he'll choose Gwendolyn. In chapter ten, there's an archery meeting at Brackenshaw Park and Grandcourt arrives. Gwendolyn, who feels that her chances with Grandcourt are better than any other girl present, is at her best.

## Book One Analysis

Gwendolyn has been brought up to be a young lady but she is much too headstrong to give in to the will of others. For example, it's expected that she, as the oldest and best educated of the children, will teach her younger sister Alice, but Gwendolyn hates it and says that it would be better to allow Alice to do what she excels at - being ignorant. She is the child her mother relies on most, but she is also the child who determines the direction of the household on most occasions. For example, when they move to Offendene, her mother and sisters are unsure whether it's a good thing. They look to Gwendolyn, apparently believing that if she finds nothing to like about the house there is nothing that they will like either. Gwendolyn, however, pronounces that it's a romantic setting and a place where "anything" might happen. It seems possible that she makes this pronouncement as a way of soothing her mother and sisters, but isn't likely because she's simply not prone to trying to make others feel better about situations unless it suits her purpose. The exception seems to be her mother. She can't stand to be at odds with her mother, and on the rare occasions when Mrs. Davilow doesn't give in to Gwendolyn's demands or that she actually cries at a hurt inflicted by Gwendolyn, Gwendolyn is contrite and seeks to make her mother feel better.

Gwendolyn has no lack of self-esteem, but she does desire the overt approval of others. She has no reason to expect that Herr Klesmer will not approve of her music, her talent and her selection. However, he tells her that it's no good and means it. She excuses herself, saying that she's certain she hasn't received the proper education on this subject and he agrees that she obviously hasn't. What's interesting is that Gwendolyn later turns to Herr Klesmer and it seems that she respects him because of his brutally honest assessments of her performance.



Gwendolyn is noted to be willing to do penance for whatever she believes she's done wrong, but that she tends to seek out the easiest penance she can possibly perform. Her self-absorption is phenomenal and all-encompassing. She is so caught up in her own appearance that she wraps situations around her desire to wear a particular outfit. She tends to surround herself with people who will "adore" her. It's noted that she doesn't particularly do well in the company of women but it's because women don't show the same homage as men. She doesn't particularly want to be married, saying that to marry is to give up her personal will and freedom to do as she pleases, but she wants men to pay attention to her. At her age, it seems natural that she would expect marriage proposals, but she doesn't seek them out.

Gwendolyn has obviously had little experience with men and love and she fears professions of love that are meant to be anything other than adoration of Gwendolyn. However, she has read many books, and apparently these have included romance novels of a popular sort. She goes through this incredible scenario of how she expects her meeting with Grandcourt to go. She says that he'll be immediately and completely in love with her and she'll "send him round the world to bring me back the wedding-ring of a happy woman." She says that while he's gone, all those who stand between him and taking over the baronetcy will die off and that he'll officially be "Lord Grandcourt" when he returns, but will have returned without the ring, which will prompt Gwendolyn to scorn his affections. She says that at this point he'll be so resentful that he'll rush to Catherine Arrowpoint, but that Catherine will have given up on him and married a poor musician. This vivid imagination is seen in various points of Gwendolyn's life and it seems possible that it's these imaginings that make her life even more difficult than it might have otherwise been.



# Book II, Meeting Streams

## Book II, Meeting Streams Summary

In chapter eleven, Gwendolyn's opinion of Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt wavers as she spends a little time with him during the archery competition, but she still believes that she will not commit to marrying him. They are both attending the ball that evening, but Gwendolyn says that she will only dance the quadrille, saying that she won't waltz with anyone. Her uncle can find no fault in this because he believes dances other than the quadrille to be overly showy. While she doesn't dance with Grandcourt over the early part of the evening, she notes that he is watching her often. She also sees Mr. Lush, Mr. Grandcourt's personal assistant, watching her. She has taken an instant dislike to Mr. Lush. Later, Grandcourt asks Gwendolyn to dance, but she refuses, saying that she will only dance the quadrille and that her card for that dance is filled. When a quadrille is announced and a friend says that Gwendolyn's partner for the dance has been unexpectedly called away, she agrees to dance with Grandcourt. At the end of that dance, she says that she wants to put on her jacket and Mr. Lush offers it first. She snubs him but accepts the jacket from Grandcourt. By the end of the evening, she says that she might accept him as a suitor but that it depends on how he is willing to "answer her wishes."

In chapter twelve, Grandcourt and Lush are talking on the morning after the ball, with Lush pointing out that Grandcourt would be well advised to seek out Catherine Arrowpoint's favor because she has money and Grandcourt may find that he doesn't inherit the baronetcy for some time or even not at all. In chapter thirteen, Grandcourt, though having announced to Lush his intention to marry Gwendolyn, continues to let the days slip by without making or receiving a commitment. His intentions seem evident and Gwendolyn's mother believes he would make Gwendolyn as happy as any man she is likely to marry. She can't decide what she's to say when the proposal comes, as she believes it will. She wants to say yes but isn't certain she can bring herself to make that decision. Reverend Gascoigne says she won't likely have another opportunity of this kind and she decides that she will accept. Meanwhile, Mr. Lush makes arrangements for a certain woman to come to the area and he helps settle her into the hotel called the Golden Keys.

In chapter fourteen, the group from the archery meet has an outing at the Green Arbor. Gwendolyn is given a letter asking that she come to a specific place along the route. She does and meets a woman with two children. The woman, Lydia Glasher, says that she left her husband for Grandcourt, that the children are his and that she has claims on him if he's to marry anyone. Gwendolyn asks to go home early and tells Grandcourt that he is welcome to visit the following day but tells her mother that she plans to join friends in Dover. There is no one at home when Grandcourt calls the following day.



In chapter fifteen, Grandcourt decides that he'll follow Gwendolyn and encounters his uncle, Sir Hugo Mallinger, with Sir Mallinger's "nephew," Daniel Deronda. It's from Daniel that Grandcourt learns that Gwendolyn has left the resort to return to Offendene.

Chapter sixteen explains Daniel's life. He has been raised by Sir Hugo, who Daniel calls "uncle," though he's had moments of uncertainty when he wonders if Mallinger is actually his father. Chapter sixteen returns to Daniel's youth. He is raised by Sir Hugo who he calls "uncle." Daniel spends a great deal of time with Sir Hugo until he makes the decision to send Daniel to school, first to Eton and then Cambridge. While Daniel is away at school, Sir Hugo marries a woman named Miss Raymond, who has four daughters in short succession but doesn't provide a male heir. Daniel does well but doesn't excel, and there are teachers who believe it's simply because he doesn't apply himself. Sir Hugo says Daniel will also be provided for into adulthood so that he can take time to decide what he wants to do with his life. Daniel makes friends with a young man named Hans Meyrick in college, and when Hans' eyes are injured, Daniel helps him study in order to gain a scholarship, though the time spent on tutoring means Daniel's own studies suffer. Hans makes sure Sir Hugo knows of the sacrifice so that he isn't upset with Daniel.

In chapter seventeen, Daniel doesn't know what he wants to do, but a year after leaving college he begins to "read law" for lack of a better pursuit. One day he is rowing on the Thames when he sees a girl walking along the bank. She removes her cloak and seems about to drown herself when Daniel intervenes. He pleads that she allow him to take her somewhere safe, and she finally agrees. He initially plans to take her to Miss Raymond but knows that she isn't home and hates to subject the girl to the servants so takes her to Mrs. Meyrick's home instead. In chapter eighteen, they arrive and Mrs. Meyrick, with her daughters, agrees to take the girl in. Her name is Mirah Lapidoth and she says that she's a Jewish woman in search of her mother and brother.

## Book II, Meeting Streams Analysis

Grandcourt is staying at the home of his uncle, Sir Mallinger, who is a baronet and owns the estate known as Diplow Court. Gwendolyn's attitude toward Grandcourt wavers so much during the stages of their brief courtship that it's almost impossible to keep track of the reasons for her changes of attitude. She initially expects that she won't like him and approaches the first meeting determined that she not allow herself to even look his direction lest he catch her looking. By the end of the first evening, she's saying that she won't accept him "unless" she can assure herself that he'll be willing to indulge her wishes. She continues to waver, and it seems that her mother might have given her a push toward marrying him by telling Gwendolyn that the family is facing financial ruin, but she doesn't. Mrs. Davilow later tells Gwendolyn that the ruin didn't happen all at once and that means she probably had some inkling of the situation prior to Gwendolyn's departure, but she doesn't share it. It seems unlikely that it would have made a difference in Gwendolyn's eventual decision to turn down Grandcourt, considering the circumstances.





It's noted that Grandcourt isn't really angry at Gwendolyn for leaving. In fact, he believes that she's angry at him because he had left her alone for a period of time during the outing. He decides that all he has to do is follow after her and show an appropriate level of contriteness in order to gain her forgiveness. He sets out to do that, but keeps being sidetracked along the way so that he takes days arriving and doesn't get there until after Gwendolyn is already gone.

Mr. Lush is actually an employee of Grandcourt, and it's noted that he is pleased with his position. He doesn't want anything messing up his current situation and knows that Gwendolyn has taken an instant dislike to him. Because he fears that she will have him dismissed, Mr. Lush is doing whatever he can to ensure that Gwendolyn and Grandcourt don't get married. The identity of the woman who identifies herself as Grandcourt's mistress isn't revealed at this point. Gwendolyn's reaction to her is interesting. Gwendolyn is desperate to make sure she doesn't reveal any aspect of being upset at the situation. She she does an admirable job.

Daniel's insecurity over the situation of his birth seems to have bothered him a great deal, though he has apparently become a self-possessed and self-confident man. The connection between Daniel and Hans is obviously friendship, though they are from entirely different worlds. Hans' mother and sisters desperately wanted to see him succeed, and he is living as cheaply as he can in order to finish his academic career. Daniel's sacrifice in helping Hans pass his exams is commendable, considering that Hans would have lost all his opportunities had he not had Daniel's help. This probably wasn't a great deal of sacrifice for Daniel, who doesn't seem particularly interested in any endeavor, including his own studies. However, the effect of Hans' sisters is very deep. They literally do everything they can to "bring honor" to Daniel and have a serious hero-worship complex for Daniel.



# Book III, Maidens Choosing

## Book III, Maidens Choosing Summary

In chapter nineteen, Daniel considers telling his uncle about the girl he'd found at the river but decides to wait.

In chapter twenty, Mirah tells the story of her life and how she comes to be so desperate that she is ready to drown herself. She says that as a child, she and her father embark on a trip and wind up in America. She is schooled by her father for the theater and is a quick study. While her father pets her, she comes to realize that he isn't always truthful with her and begins to doubt many things he tells and promises. They travel around, ending up for a time in Vienna and Mirah, realizing that her father means to marry her off, runs away. She believes that her mother and brother live in the city and arrives with the idea that she'll search for them but then learns that the neighborhood address she recalls from years earlier is no longer a valid address, that the neighborhood is gone and that she has no idea how to go about continuing the search. She has no money and no friends and fears that her father might search for her. Daniel goes to visit and talks with Mrs. Meyrick. He gives money to pay for her keep and Mrs. Meyrick believes that Mirah might eventually find something to help pay her way as all the Meyrick girls do. Soon after discovering Mirah at the river, Daniel is to leave with Sir Hugo and his wife for Leubronn and it's there that he meets Gwendolyn for the first time.

In chapter twenty-one, Gwendolyn begins to wonder what the family will do. Her initial reaction is that they will travel abroad because it's much cheaper to live abroad and they've taken that route before. However, when she arrives home, her mother tells her that the situation is more serious than Gwendolyn can imagine and that they haven't enough money to travel abroad or to live without income. Mrs. Davilow says that she and the girls are to move to "the sawyer's cottage." According to Mrs. Davilow's plan, the younger girls will be doing needlework to earn some money to help support the family. She says that she wants to save Gwendolyn the indignity of living in that tiny cottage without servants to provide any of the typical services, but says the only way to do that is for Gwendolyn to leave home and get a job. The two options available to Gwendolyn are as a teacher in a school and as a governess to a family. She says that each pays "a hundred a year" and suggests that Gwendolyn will be happier as a governess, where she would be living in luxury, though relegated to the role of servant. Gwendolyn sends word to Herr Klesmer, requesting that he stop by the following morning.

In chapter twenty-two, Herr Klesmer is at the Arrowpoint estate where there are several other guests as well. Catherine and Herr Klesmer talk and she comes to realize that he cares for her but won't announce his love because he is financially beneath her. She knows that her love for him is deep and that she wants to be with him, regardless of the costs. She tells her parents of her decision and they say that they'll disown her if she marries Herr Klesmer. She says that she doesn't care and they ask to speak to Herr



Klesmer. He says that he makes a sufficient living as a musician and that he also doesn't care whether Catherine is to be a wealthy heiress. Catherine says that their engagement will be announced immediately, and she and Herr Klesmer leave the room as her parents begin to discuss what they might do with their property because they plan to disown Catherine.

In chapter twenty-three, Gwendolyn tells Herr Klesmer that she wants to go on the stage in order to earn money to support her family. He tries to let her down gently but tells her that the life is difficult, that those who are successful begin working on their stage careers from an early age, and that she hasn't the talent to command even a paltry wage. Before he leaves, Herr Klesmer tells Gwendolyn that he and Catherine will be happy to do anything for Gwendolyn that they can, but she knows that having Catherine as a patroness is not an option.

In chapter twenty-four, the Gascoigne family discusses ways to cut back expenses because they are almost in the same position as Gwendolyn's family because of the same failed investments. Gwendolyn gives her mother all her jewelry with the exception of a chain that had belonged to her father and the necklace that she'd pawned at Leubronn, instructing her mother to sell them in order to raise at least a little money.

In chapter twenty-five, Daniel, Grandcourt and Sir Hugo remain in Leubronn. Daniel is very aware of the fact that, with a small twist of the fates, he might be in Grandcourt's position with an expectation of someday inheriting the baronetcy. He also knows that Grandcourt expects Daniel to be jealous, so Daniel is careful not to appear envious in any way. Despite this, Grandcourt believes that Daniel is jealous.

A few days after Gwendolyn's departure from Leubronn, Grandcourt announces that he's ready to leave as well and Lush makes the arrangements. Grandcourt remains a few days in Paris, while Lush goes ahead and discovers the situation of Gwendolyn's family. A few days after his arrival at the estate, Grandcourt asks if Gwendolyn is at Offendene and Lush reveals what he knows of the family's financial demise. Grandcourt says that he'll go visit Gwendolyn and Lush warns against it, saying that Grandcourt must realize that to take Gwendolyn on as a wife now would mean that he'll also have to take responsibility for Gwendolyn's family. Lush expects that Grandcourt will become heated over the statement, but he simply asks for pen and paper and sends a note to Gwendolyn.

In chapter twenty-six, Reverend Gascoigne talks to Gwendolyn, urging that she accept the situation and make the best of her job opportunity. Gwendolyn receives Grandcourt's letter and wavers but finally tells him that she'll be at home the following day if he should choose to call.

In chapter twenty-seven, Grandcourt arrives and asks Gwendolyn to marry him. She agrees, and he asks if it's possible that they be married in just a few weeks. She agrees to that as well. During the course of their conversation, she tells him that she wants him to protect her from unpleasant things much more than she wants him to provide pleasant things. He says that he'll do his best, though it's not always possible. She tells



him that she doesn't like Mr. Lush and he says that he'll send Mr. Lush away immediately. Gwendolyn says that she'd thought Grandcourt to be fond of Mr. Lush. He says that Lush was thrust upon him as a traveling companion many years earlier and that he has no objections at all to firing him.

## Book III, Maidens Choosing Analysis

Gwendolyn hates the idea of going to work for several reasons, but one of them is that she fears rejection. She notes that she's come to the conclusion that she'll accept the job as a governess, but that doesn't mean that the woman will accept Gwendolyn. She is filled with doubts in contrast with what is typical for Gwendolyn. She says that she might sit quietly during the interview with this prospective employer, but that might be the wrong thing to do, or that she might speak out and risk her words, offending the woman so that she decides not to hire Gwendolyn. At one point, Gwendolyn is crying over the situation. She says that it's not out of pity for herself but from the sheer tragedy of the situation. She knows that youth is a time for happiness and believes the situation is going to make it impossible to be happy.

Gwendolyn worries about the woman named Lydia who seems to have a claim on Grandcourt, but it's interesting that she isn't indignant that he might have wronged the woman so much as she's worried what other people might think of the situation if it ever comes to light. What's interesting is that Lush tells Grandcourt that Gwendolyn knows about Lydia and Grandcourt goes to Gwendolyn's house with that information but neither of them address it.

Gwendolyn says that she plans to refuse Grandcourt's offer prior to his arrival. It might be that the alternative - a life in servitude to another - makes her more willing to consider the engagement. When Grandcourt initially arrives, she mentions the family's new circumstances but he doesn't pick up the conversation. This may have been merely good manners on his part, but Gwendolyn notes that she wants him to make it clear that he understands the new situation. It's actually this point that Grandcourt uses to lead up to the proposal. He says that he'd like to have the right to take care of her mother and that all she needs to do is agree to marry him in order to give him that right. Gwendolyn seems to have a reluctance toward anything physical and Grandcourt puts her at ease on this point, though it seems to be unintentional. After she accepts his proposal of marriage, he goes toward her, takes her hand, kisses it and then lets go. She is inordinately pleased with this reaction and is equally pleased when he opens the door for her a few minutes later.



# Book IV, Gwendolyn Gets her Choice

## Book IV, Gwendolyn Gets her Choice Summary

In chapter twenty-eight, Reverend and Mrs. Gascoigne soon learn of Gwendolyn's engagement and arrive to congratulate her. Anna manages to be congratulatory, though she admits to having harbored the hope that Gwendolyn, now faced with the financial ruin, might look more favorably upon Rex. Lush writes a letter to Sir Hugo, telling him of the engagement. In chapter twenty-nine, Grandcourt announces that he's to be out of town for a short time and Gwendolyn, knowing that he's going to see Lydia, is cold but doesn't confront him. Daniel arrives to visit though his real reason for the visit is that Sir Hugo wants to offer Grandcourt a settlement in return for Grandcourt giving up any future claims to Sir Hugo's estate, meaning Sir Hugo could leave the property to his wife upon his death. Mrs. Davilow says that she's learned Daniel's mother was "some foreigner of high rank" and that Daniel is likely Sir Hugo's son. This prompts questions by Gwendolyn about the frequency of illegitimate children. Mrs. Davilow, thinking Gwendolyn is referring to Daniel, says it doesn't really matter socially and Gwendolyn doesn't confide that she's really worrying about Grandcourt's illegitimate children. Later, Gwendolyn and Daniel talk about gambling. Daniel says that he doesn't enjoy gambling because even if he's winning, it's because someone else is losing. Gwendolyn says that's the case in all aspects of life.

In chapter thirty, Grandcourt arrives at Gasmere, where Lydia is staying. He tells her of his engagement and she is angry. He asks for the return of his diamonds and she says that she won't give them to him, but that she'll give them to his wife as soon as Gwendolyn and Grandcourt are married. With no option, Grandcourt leaves, though he assures Lydia that she and the children will be cared for "as usual."

In chapter thirty-one, Gwendolyn and Grandcourt are married and they leave for Grandcourt's estate at Ryelands. Grandcourt leaves Gwendolyn alone as soon as they arrive with plans to meet shortly for dinner. He notes that he is "more in love than he'd thought he ever would be." A servant soon brings Gwendolyn a package and Gwendolyn knows it must be the diamonds Grandcourt had promised would arrive soon after their marriage. She opens the package and finds the diamonds and a letter from Lydia, saying that Grandcourt had given the diamonds to Lydia first with "ardent" professions of love and that Gwendolyn can do what she pleases with the letter. Lydia goes on to say that Gwendolyn has broken her promise not to marry Grandcourt and that she now has the power to turn him completely against Lydia and her children. When Grandcourt returns to collect her for dinner, she's screaming hysterically.

In chapter thirty-two, Daniel returns to the city and tells Sir Hugo that Grandcourt hadn't agreed to accept a settlement but seemed willing to talk about it. Daniel promises Mirah that he'll help search for her mother and brother, Ezra, though he dreads what he might find. In chapter thirty-three, Daniel begins the search and soon locates a shop that belongs to Ezra Cohen. Daniel decides not to tell Mirah about the possible discovery



until he's had time to further evaluate the family. He also meets an older man at a book store who will later be identified as Mordecai. One of Mordecai's first words to Daniel are to ask if he's Jewish, which Daniel denies.

In chapter thirty-four, Daniel pawns a ring with Cohen in order to have an excuse to spend more time with the man. Daniel discovers that Mordecai lives with Cohen. Cohen says that Mordecai is a former employee and that he is now old and weak, so he lives with Cohen as a charity case, though he teaches a child in the house as well. Daniel notes as he leaves that he's no closer to deciding about the family than he had been before he pawned them his ring.

## Book IV, Gwendolyn Gets her Choice Analysis

From almost the first moments of Gwendolyn's engagement to Grandcourt, she feels out of control. She compares it to getting into a chariot with someone else holding the reins. She says later that she feels as if the chariot is rushing forward and that she hasn't the ability to regain control. Despite this worry, she also finds several reasons to believe that the engagement is the best possible course of action. While the financial situation is naturally of concern, it's just as important to Gwendolyn that she be marrying someone she finds acceptable and agreeable. The match is destined for problems because both people are strong willed and neither likely to want to give in when there's a conflict. At one point, Mrs. Davilow says that she hopes Gwendolyn isn't marrying only for the sake of saving Mrs. Davilow and her other daughters a life of poverty in the sawyer's cottage. Gwendolyn seems upset at the words. She says that she doesn't want to lose this as "a motive" for marrying Grandcourt. She admits to being drawn to him but feels uncomfortable with this situation.

Gwendolyn is very conscious of the fact that she'd virtually promised Lydia Glasher not to marry Grandcourt and that she'd run away when she'd learned Grandcourt had children by Lydia. After accepted Grandcourt's proposal, she begins to try to justify her new decision. She says that she, as his wife, will have the power to ensure that Lydia and the children are dealt with favorably. She also considers that if she doesn't have children, these children might be in line to inherit Grandcourt's estate. She says that she hopes she doesn't have any children and seems to at least consider the idea that he might be willing to forgo more children because of the illegitimate children he'd fathered by Lydia.

There are details offered about the life of Lydia and how she and Grandcourt came to be together. It's noted that Lydia was married, though not happily, that Grandcourt had offered to pay for her divorce but her husband refused, and that there'd been a duel, though no one was hurt. Lydia's husband had died only three years ago at the time Grandcourt and Gwendolyn are planning to marry and Lydia, devoted to her children, has only recently set her heart on marrying Grandcourt. It's noted that she really doesn't care about the situation one way or another for herself, but that she wants that security and respectability for her children.





# Book V, Mordecai

## Book V, Mordecai Summary

In chapter thirty-five, on December 29, Grandcourt and Gwendolyn arrive at Sir Hugo's home, the Abbey. Daniel knows that they've arrived but doesn't see them until they come down for dinner. The conversation indicates that the Arrowpoints have come to accept the marriage between Herr Kesler and Catherine Arrowpoint. Sir Hugo says that the Arrowpoints have taken the better course of action because disowning a child creates a public fuss.

The situation between Gwendolyn and Grandcourt is not good. Gwendolyn's screaming fit upon receiving the letter from Lydia Glasher was explained away by Gwendolyn saying that she was just stressed out from the day but Grandcourt suspects that there was something included in the package containing the diamonds. Though without the exact knowledge of what had happened between Gwendolyn and Lydia, he is aware that Gwendolyn is upset is because of Lydia. At the Abbey, Gwendolyn wishes she had someone to talk to and believes that Daniel might be that person. She says that she wishes he knew about her, her feelings and her situation, but she doesn't really want to put herself in the position of telling him about it in order to gain his advice.

In chapter thirty-six, Daniel learns from another guest at the Abbey about Lydia. He initially doubts that it could be true but comes to believe it. He then believes that Gwendolyn can't possibly know about the woman or that she wouldn't have married Grandcourt. He considers that Gwendolyn left Grandcourt's presence and went to Leubronn and that learning of Lydia might have been the reason for that. He also realizes that her dire financial situation might have been enough to help her get past the knowledge. Later, Daniel and Gwendolyn are talking and she does confide in him.

At one point, Gwendolyn asks Daniel what she should do. She says that she's miserable and doesn't know what to do about the situation. While she and Daniel are talking, Grandcourt walks on, seemingly unconcerned. Later, Grandcourt chastises Gwendolyn and tells her that she will not act in ways unbecoming of his wife. He tells her that she will "fill her place properly". Gwendolyn says that she'd never intended to do anything else. When there's yet another opportunity for Gwendolyn to talk to Daniel, she asks what she should do if she were in a situation to have done wrong to someone. She doesn't elaborate, but Daniel realizes what she's referring to. He says that she must make amends and vow never to do it again. Daniel tells her that she must also find something of interest other than herself if she wants to be really happy. She promises to try and tells him that her life has been better for having known him, then leaves the room.

In chapter thirty-seven, Daniel's friend Hans arrives and, because Mirah is staying at the home of Hans' mother, Hans stays with Daniel. Hans is an artist and has many of his works with him, including a drawing of Rex Gascoigne. Hans also says that he has



fallen in love with Mirah. Daniel says it can't work out because Mirah is Jewish. Hans says that he'll convert if that's what's necessary, but that he believes Mirah will eventually give that up. Later, Daniel talks to Mrs. Meyrick, who says that Mirah is happier since the arrival of Hans.

In chapter thirty-eight, Daniel has formed an attachment to Mordecai, and Mordecai, in turn, has decided that Daniel is to be an important person in his life. Mordecai teaches the youngster of the house, Jacob, but comes to believe that he'll impart a great deal of wisdom to Daniel, and he waits impatiently for Daniel to return to redeem his ring.

In chapter thirty-nine, Herr Klesmer arrives at the Meyrick house to hear Mirah sing. He isn't immediately complimentary but does tell her that she has a good voice for drawing rooms but shouldn't strain it in a stage setting - a fact that she's already come to realize. He invites her to sing at a "private concert" at his home the following week with the promise that there will be mothers who want to hire her to give voice lessons after her performance.

In chapter forty, Daniel goes to the bookstore where Mordecai works at noon but misses the man on his first visit. He returns the following day. Mordecai says that Daniel can easily see that Mordecai is dying. During the course of their conversation, Daniel says that he never knew his mother but that he believes his father is an Englishman, apparently referring to Sir Hugo. When the bookshop's owner returns, Daniel and Mordecai leave together, headed toward Ezra Cohen's home. Daniel, referring to an earlier talk with the Cohens, asks Mordecai why he was instructed not to ask the older Mrs. Cohen about her daughter, obviously referring to the fact that he believe Mirah to be Mrs. Cohen's daughter. Mordecai says that he knows, but that he won't gossip about the family that has taken him in. Mordecai asks when Daniel will come again. Daniel doesn't name a day, but promises to return. Mordecai again warns that he hasn't many days left.

## Book V, Mordecai Analysis

The situation between Gwendolyn and Grandcourt, only a few weeks after their marriage, is serious. Gwendolyn's inward demeanor has changed dramatically. As the story opened with Gwendolyn engaging in some light gambling, she impetuously kissed her reflection in the mirror. The author notes that she no longer has such urges and this seems to be a statement of Gwendolyn's unhappiness. Gwendolyn is terribly unhappy and Grandcourt is all but indifferent to her in public but chastises her severely in private. Gwendolyn refuses to put any face forward other than that of the happy young bride. She knows that to do otherwise would mean that she is pitied by those who know her unhappiness and won't allow herself to be the object of that pity.

Sir Hugo seems to recognize some level of attraction between Daniel and Gwendolyn and urges Daniel on several occasions to be careful. Daniel comes to learn that Gwendolyn probably knew about Lydia prior to marrying Grandcourt and the author notes that he "tends to judge her tenderly" on this account. Daniel seems to believe that





Gwendolyn shouldn't have married Grandcourt if he'd already fathered four children and is keeping a woman as his mistress. Daniel's interest on this point seems to have something to do with the fact that Daniel compares the situation of his own birth to that of Lydia's children.

Gwendolyn, in talking with her mother after her marriage, had told her mother that it's "exceedingly generous" of Grandcourt to pay the rent for Offendene in order that Mrs. Davilow and her remaining daughters have a place to live. Gwendolyn says that her mother is "better off" because of the marriage and seems to continue to try to find a way to use that as a means of justifying her marriage.



# Revelations

## Revelations Summary

In chapter forty-one, Daniel and Mordecai grow closer, though Daniel is often busy on errands for Sir Hugo, so he doesn't get to visit as much as he'd like. In chapter forty-two, Daniel wants to ask Mrs. Cohen, the mother of the man who Mordecai is living with, whether she is Mirah's mother. Daniel goes to visit Mordecai, who takes Daniel to a place where men gather to talk political, social and religious topics. Everyone eventually leaves except Mordecai and Daniel.

In chapter forty-three, Mordecai speaks to Daniel, saying that he knows that Daniel is "by my side on the mount of vision." Mordecai then recounts the story of an event that happened to him. In this story, he says that his companion called out to him, "Ezra." Daniel realizes that Mordecai is a name taken only in recent years and that Mordecai had been named Ezra as a child. Mordecai says that four siblings had died and that his mother was especially connected to her youngest daughter because of it. Mordecai had then received a letter from his mother with news that his father had taken his little sister, Mirah, away. Daniel realizes that he's found Mirah's brother Ezra. He doesn't say so to Mordecai but begins to plan for a way to allow the two to live together.

In chapter forty-four, Daniel realizes that he spends a great deal of time thinking about Mirah. Meanwhile, Gwendolyn is bitterly unhappy with Grandcourt but does her best to assure her mother that she is happy. Grandcourt doesn't want Gwendolyn's family near and makes fun of her uncle's family. In chapter forty-five, Lush spends some time with Sir Hugo, but then Grandcourt announces that Lush will be dining with them and that Gwendolyn will be required to treat him civilly.

In chapter forty-six, Daniel finds a place in Brompton for Mordecai and Mirah. Daniel tells Mordecai first that he's found Mirah. Daniel says that he's selected a place for them to live and Mordecai says he will accept Daniel's kindness. Daniel and Mordecai then break the news to the Cohen family. They are sad to see him leave, citing the fact that they'll miss Mordecai as a teacher of their son Jacob, but agree that Mordecai should be with his sister. In chapter forty-seven, Mirah dresses in the poorest dress she has in deference to her brother's lack of money, saying that she doesn't want to make him uncomfortable. Mirah almost immediately realizes that Mordecai is ill but they are immediately connected, despite the loss of the years.

In chapter forty-eight, Grandcourt and Gwendolyn argue over a great many aspects of their lives. Grandcourt then tells Gwendolyn that there are some financial arrangements to be discussed, especially as pertains to his will, and that he doesn't care to discuss these things with her. He says that he's sending Lush to tell her the details. It makes her angry, but she has no choice. She learns from Lush that Grandcourt has made Lydia's son his heir unless Gwendolyn has a son. A short time later Grandcourt announces that they are going yachting in the Mediterranean.



In chapter forty-nine, Daniel learns from Sir Hugo that his mother wants to meet him. Sir Hugo now reveals that keeping Daniel's parentage a secret was his mother's request, that his father is dead, and that his mother has now asked to see him. Sir Hugo says that he might have been wrong, but that he'd done as Daniel's mother asked.

## Revelations Analysis

Daniel doesn't seem to share with Sir Hugo the details of his time with Mordecai. Daniel notes that he knows what Sir Hugo would say about Daniel spending so much time "with a consumptive Jew." Daniel is maturing during this time. It's noted that he has spent most of his life harboring the idea that Sir Hugo might be his father.

Gwendolyn drops in at her mother's house from time to time, trying to reassure her mother that she's happy. Gwendolyn might have gone to her mother about her unhappiness, but she knows that her mother can't do anything to change the situation and that complaining would only elicit worry. However, it seems that Gwendolyn is more interested in making certain that no one knows she is unhappy so that people won't feel sorry for her. Gwendolyn is worried about public appearance and will endure whatever Grandcourt hands out to her without complaint, fearing that people will know that she doesn't have the power in her marriage that she'd expected to have. Grandcourt is showing all the classic signs of an abuser. Gwendolyn is kept away from her parents and other family members and completely under his control.



# Book VII, The Mother and the Son

## Book VII, The Mother and the Son Summary

In chapter fifty, Daniel reads his mother's letter given to him by Sir Hugo. She asks that he meet her in Genoa. She says she isn't certain what day she'll be there but asks that he wait for her, says she is a princess and signs the letter Lenora Halm Eberstein. Daniel doesn't tell Mordecai and Mirah the purpose of his trip. Daniel arrives but is kept waiting for three weeks. When his mother arrives, he receives word that the princess is in the hotel and that she wants to see him the following day.

In chapter fifty-one, Daniel's mother's servants believe that Daniel is a young doctor being consulted for issues of the princess's health. Daniel tells his mother that he's spent a great deal of time thinking about her over the course of his lifetime. She tells him that she'd been an actress when Daniel was born, that she hadn't wanted to be tied down with a child, and that Daniel's father had died. She says that Sir Hugo had been among her suitors, and that when he'd offered to do anything for her, she'd convinced him to take Daniel and raise him as an English gentleman.

She also reveals that she is Jewish and answers some questions about his heritage, though she is reluctant to give more than cursory answers. She tells Daniel that he'd been seen months earlier by a man named Joseph Kalonymos, a friend of Daniel's grandfather, who had seen a family resemblance. The Princess says that Joseph has a chest that had belonged to Daniel's grandfather. The Princess says that Joseph wants Daniel to pick up the chest and that demand prompted the Princess's request to meet Daniel. She provides him with a letter to pick up the chest.

The Princess then reveals that she has a husband and five children and that they don't know about Daniel. She says that she'd encountered a problem with her voice, that she'd feared it was about to be the end of her career and that she'd quickly married a nobleman before people had a chance to tell her she should get out of the business. She says that she realized later that she'd only been ill but that she'd found it impossible to extract herself from the marriage.

In chapter fifty-two, Daniel receives a letter from Hans, who says that Rex Gascoigne had recently visited his family and that he'd brought his sister Anne along. Mirah and Mordecai talk about their connection with Daniel, and Mordecai says it's because Daniel has treated them as brothers in faith. Mirah tells Mrs. Meyrick that she has recently seen a man she believes to be her father. Mrs. Meyrick urges that she not talk to him, give him money or go anywhere with him unless she tells Mordecai.

In chapter fifty-three, Daniel waits another day before the Princess summons him to her rooms again. She tells him that she'll be leaving soon. He asks if that means they are to part without plans to ever see each other again and she says that's the best.



In chapter fifty-four, Grandcourt and Gwendolyn are yachting in the Mediterranean. Gwendolyn hates the trip, but Grandcourt refuses to give her any time at all on her own. Gwendolyn continues to hope she doesn't have a child. The yacht is damaged and they are forced ashore at Genoa for repairs. They happen to encounter Daniel in the hotel. Grandcourt plans to go sailing, but after seeing Daniel, he insists that Gwendolyn accompany him. She initially refuses and he says that he'll also remain at the hotel. He paces and is angry so she gives in.

In chapter fifty-five, Daniel had been on his way to meet his mother when he'd seen Gwendolyn. He's planned to leave immediately for Mainz where he is to pick up his grandfather's chest, but finds ways to delay without putting any real thought to it. He hears of a commotion and goes to watch a boat coming in to shore. He finds that Gwendolyn is in the boat and that Grandcourt has drowned.

In chapter fifty-six, Daniel sends word to Sir Hugo and to Gwendolyn's family of the accident and takes statements of the events from those nearest the accident. It seems that Grandcourt had been knocked out of the boat by a flapping sail and that Gwendolyn had jumped in after him. She tells Daniel that she is evil and that she'd wished for Grandcourt's death. She says that she'd even planned to kill him at one point. She hints that she had something to do with his drowning. In chapter fifty-seven, the following day, Gwendolyn asks Daniel whether she should tell that she'd had a role in Grandcourt's death and he urges that she not.

## Book VII, The Mother and the Son Analysis

Faced with the knowledge of his impending meeting with his mother, Daniel says that his affection for Mirah fall to second place. Daniel worries about the impending meeting with his mother. He has had a lifetime to build up fantasies and suppositions about his parentage and now doesn't really know what to hope for. He notes that her letter is direct, without even a hint of affection for him, and he should have allowed this to set the tone of the meeting but it's natural that he had expected to have an emotional meeting with his mother.

Anna is visiting Mrs. Meyrick and her daughters and Mirah and the ladies are talking, as is to be expected when there are no men present. Though Anne is typically reticent about sharing such intimate family information, she says that her father and Gwendolyn's mother are pleased with the marriage and that means it must be alright, but that she might otherwise have thought that the marriage might not have been a good match.

Daniel and his mother are uneasy with each other, though it's mostly because they want different things from their relationship. She obviously agreed to meet with him against her personal wishes. She says that he was an inconvenience when he was born and that she wasn't interested in being a mother. She expects that he's going to be angry with her for having abandoned him and she's defensive. He says that he is not ashamed or upset at being a Jew but she says that it's because he hasn't spent all his life with the



prejudices. She asks if he hasn't gained something from his education and he agrees that he has, but doesn't seem to feel that makes up for having lost his heritage. Still, he pleads with her to forget the hurts that might lie between them and to just move on with their relationship. She, intent on having nothing more to do with him, does offer to answer questions about his family but seems almost anxious to end their meeting. She is obviously ill and Daniel knows that. Despite the fact that the meeting seems completely unfulfilling, Daniel seems at peace with the situation.

Gwendolyn doesn't seem to have actually murdered Grandcourt and it seems that she is merely feeling an incredible guilt for having wished for his death. She hints that she had a role in his death and calls herself a murderess. It seems possible that she caused him to be knocked from the boat or even knocked him from the boat. However, the witnesses agree that they heard her scream and then saw her jump into the water after Grandcourt. She says that he was knocked from the boat and pleaded with her to throw him a rope, but that she hadn't thrown it. Daniel is of the opinion that Grandcourt obviously couldn't swim, or at least not well and that nothing Gwendolyn could have done would have saved him.



# Book VIII, Fruit and Seed

## Book VIII, Fruit and Seed Summary

In chapter fifty-eight, it's noted that Rex has gotten over Gwendolyn and is throwing himself diligently into his studies. He and Anne sometimes visit at the home of his Aunt Fanny, and they are there when word comes from Reverend Gascoigne that Grandcourt has drowned. The Reverend writes that he will immediately travel to Genoa and Mrs. Davilow says that she'll be ready to leave shortly. Rex returns to the rectory but waits outside for a few minutes to gather his thoughts. He wonders if Gwendolyn might be willing to accept him now and feels guilt and confusion over the thought. He then goes inside and offers to do anything he can to help. The Reverend instructs him on handling some correspondence and other duties before leaving.

In chapter fifty-nine, Sir Hugo takes several days longer to arrive than Mrs. Davilow and the Reverend Gascoigne. When he does arrive, he and Daniel talk and Sir Hugo expresses his anger over the meager allowance arranged for Gwendolyn through the provisions of Grandcourt's will. He then asks about Daniel's meeting with his mother and Daniel says that he's going to Mainz to retrieve a chest that had belonged to his grandfather. In chapter sixty, Daniel meets Joseph Kalonymos who had been Daniel's grandfather's friend. Joseph questions Daniel about his intentions and his beliefs and Daniel confirms that he will live as a Jew.

In chapter sixty-one, Hans realizes that Mirah is in love with Daniel but doesn't yet realize that Daniel is in love with Mirah. In chapter sixty-two, Mirah's father follows her home one day. He and Mirah talk and she tells him that she's living with her brother. She urges her father to come inside and talk with Ezra but he pleads for money so that he can buy himself some decent clothes before reuniting with his son. She hands him her purse and he takes the entire bag with its contents, promising that he'll come for a visit on the following day. Inside, she tells Mordecai about the meeting and he predicts that their father won't come the next day as he'd promised but they both know that he'll likely return to the neighborhood in search of an opportunity to find Mirah alone to beg for more money. In chapter sixty-three, that same afternoon Daniel returns to town and brings the chest directly to Mordecai along with the news of his parentage and his ethnicity. Daniel asks for Mordecai's help in translating the information contained in his grandfather's chest which apparently includes family information.

In chapter sixty-four, Mrs. Davilow is pleased to have Gwendolyn depending on her and Gwendolyn seems to cling to her mother, calling out for her in the night and saying that she'd only wanted to make sure her mother was near. Sir Hugo takes Gwendolyn under his protection, calling her "niece" and treating her as his own relative. He tells Reverend Gascoigne the truth of Grandcourt's will in order that he and Gwendolyn not be upset to learn that Grandcourt had left Gwendolyn only a small annual stipend and a house while providing for his illegitimate son and the boy's family. Gwendolyn says that she had known of these facts and says that she isn't certain she'll accept any part of



Grandcourt's provision for her. She asks Sir Hugo to send Daniel to her as soon as possible. Sir Hugo considers that Daniel and Gwendolyn are obviously attracted to each other and that Daniel marrying Gwendolyn would not be a bad match.

In chapter sixty-five, Daniel worries about Gwendolyn's dependence on him. When she asks if she should accept the provisions of Grandcourt's will or some variation of it, Daniel says that she's only trying to do a penance for her imagined role in his death. Daniel says that nothing she's done eliminates Grandcourt's responsibility to her and that she should accept the money.

In chapter sixty-six, Mirah's father arrives at her house, says he has no money and no where to go, and asks for money. Mordecai tells him that he can stay with them, that he will be fed, sheltered and clothed, but that he won't be given money. Mirah pleads with him that he "be good." He moves in and in chapter sixty-seven, Daniel learns that Mirah's father is staying with them. Daniel's dislike of Mirah's father is instant.

Daniel sends a letter to Hans but it isn't answered and he goes to check on Hans. Hans is home, admits that he's recently tried opium but that he's sworn off the drug, and says that he hates Daniel for his success with Mirah. Daniel says his relationship with Mirah is unchanged but Hans says that it's obvious Mirah loves him and wishes Daniel the best of luck. Daniel leaves, determined to declare his love for Mirah.

In chapter sixty-eight, Daniel puts his heavy ring on the table while he is studying with Mordecai and Mirah's father considers that he could easily steal the ring though he knows that he could also ask Daniel for money and probably get it. Though he is saying that he won't take the ring, he does and leaves the house with it. When Daniel discovers it's missing, Mirah immediately believes her father is the thief and goes to his room to find him gone. Daniel tells her that he doesn't want to pursue her father for the crime, then tells her that he loves her and pleads with her to be his wife. She agrees.

In chapter sixty-nine, Daniel visits at Diplow, the country estate near Offendene, with plans to move Mordecai to the country where he hopes the man's health will improve. Daniel visits Gwendolyn while he's there, but several visits pass before he works up the courage to tell Gwendolyn of his engagement. She is distraught, accuses him of abandoning her and says that she deserves nothing better. She is hysterical for some time but assures her mother that she "will live."

In chapter seventy, Daniel and Mirah are married in a traditional Jewish wedding. Mrs. Meyrick and her daughters attend as do the Cohens and Mordecai, though the event is very small. Daniel receives a letter from Gwendolyn on the morning of his wedding, assuring him that she hopes only the best for him and that she is a better person for having known him.

## **Book VIII, Fruit and Seed Analysis**

Daniel wants his relationship with Sir Hugo to remain unchanged after having met his mother. He wants to talk to Sir Hugo about the situation but doesn't want to be the one





to bring it up. When Sir Hugo does bring it up, Daniel is relieved. But then Sir Hugo asks if Daniel is headed back to England and Daniel says that he's going to pick up his grandfather's chest. Sir Hugo says, "I hope you are not going to set a dead Jew above a living Christian." He is apparently saying that he hopes Daniel isn't going to put his grandfather above Sir Hugo. Daniel is upset by the statement but manages not to retort. This is part of Daniel's nature, that he hates confrontation. When Daniel decides to marry Mirah, he informs Sir Hugo in a letter. Daniel says that allowing Sir Hugo to read the news means that Daniel won't know Sir Hugo's first reaction. Daniel expects Sir Hugo to be upset and says that he wants to be sure that Sir Hugo doesn't say something in anger or haste that will drive the two men apart. Daniel is right in this assumption, though Sir Hugo himself defends Daniel when Sir Hugo's wife expresses concern.

Daniel realizes that his acceptance of the fact that he is a Jew is tempered by his association with Mordecai and Mirah. He says that they have become his teachers and that he aware that, without this background of teaching, the news that he was a Jew would have been unwelcome. Ironically, this means that there's nothing standing in the way of a courtship between Daniel and Mirah but their relationship is suddenly very strained. Mirah believes she sees a difference in Daniel but can't be certain whether it's because he is difference or because she wants to see him differently. Both are slightly guarded with the other and both note this change as well. This prompts them both to analyze the emotions of the other and to assume that there's something wrong, which makes them both act more reserved.



# Characters

## Gwendolyn Harleth

Gwendolyn is the oldest daughter of her mother and the two of them are very close. She is extremely spoiled and accustomed to getting her own way. Her mother favors her over all her sisters and everyone, including her sisters, knows it. Despite spoiling her, her mother and sisters also depend greatly on Gwendolyn. For example, when they are first shown the house at Offendene, her mother and sisters are prepared to be disappointed with the house and look to Gwendolyn for a first impression. She seems to realize their dependence on this point and says that the house is a place of great potential, thereby ensuring that her mother and sisters will be happy here.

Gwendolyn is courted by several but hates the idea of romantic love and spurns the offers until her mother loses her entire fortune, thereby leaving the family in dire financial straits. Gwendolyn then accepts Grandcourt's proposal and looks upon her acceptance as nothing more than a way of making life better for her mother and for herself. She has ideas of controlling her new husband but soon realizes the futility of this. She is fully controlled by Grandcourt and there is little affection between them.

Gwendolyn hates her marriage but refuses to make her disappointment known, evidence of her pride. It seems she might have had something to do with Grandcourt's drowning but it is more likely that she feels guilty over his death because she had wished for it. As the story draws to a close, she thanks Daniel for his attention to her over the years and says that his presence had made her a better person.

## Daniel Deronda

Daniel is the ward of Sir Hugo, who holds the baronetcy. He is a handsome man who draws interest from almost everyone who sees him and is a kind man who feels it his duty to help whenever he can. Daniel meets Gwendolyn by chance, and it's also by chance that he is with her shortly after Grandcourt is drowned. Daniel is born to a Jewish woman, who is a stage performer. His father dies when he is very young, and at two his mother convinces Sir Hugo to raise Daniel. Sir Hugo agrees, but doesn't reveal his parentage until Daniel is an adult and his mother requests to see him. This lack of knowledge creates conflict in Daniel's life. He spends a great deal of time fantasizing that Sir Hugo is his father. When he learns that he is, in fact, Jewish, he's happy and can hardly wait to share the news with a young woman and her brother who are also Jewish. Daniel seems to feel a strong bond to his Jewish roots, though the exact nature of this bond is hidden during his youth. Daniel is drawn to Gwendolyn, though it seems that he sees her more as a person who needs to be helped than as someone he could love. His attraction to her is not lost on those around him and Grandcourt is suspicious that there's more to the relationship than Gwendolyn or Daniel let on. Daniel feels love for the young Jew named Mirah and is by her side when her brother dies.



## Henry Mallinger Grandcourt

The heir apparent to the baronetcy, he comes to stay at his uncle's estate and there meets Gwendolyn. He proposes to Gwendolyn, earning her favor by promising to provide financially for her mother and sisters at a time when they are about to be reduced to living in a cottage and earning their own living. Grandcourt drowns while sailing with Gwendolyn in the Mediterranean.

## Fanny Davilow

Gwendolyn's mother is a widow and has five daughters but is especially fond of Gwendolyn. She also depends greatly on Gwendolyn and her satisfaction in almost every situation rests on whether Gwendolyn is satisfied. Fanny is somewhat ineffective and is more than willing to turn over control of situations to others. When the family fortune is gone, she fears most for Gwendolyn and hates the fact that Gwendolyn is going to have to work to support herself. Fanny hates the idea that Gwendolyn might marry Grandcourt in order to save Fanny and the four younger daughters from a life of labor and searches for clues to assure herself that Gwendolyn is happy in the engagement and then in the marriage.

## Mirah Lapidoth

A young Jew, she is taken away from her mother as a very young child by her father. She grows up on the stage, acting and singing parts dictated by her father. When the situation becomes unbearable, she runs away, hoping to find her mother and older brother. When she realizes the search is nearly impossible and that she has no money and no way to survive, she prepares to drown herself but is interrupted by Daniel, who takes over as her provider. She is eventually reunited with her brother, thanks to Daniel, and lives happily with him until his death.

## Sir Hugo

The baronet, he is the uncle of Grandcourt and the guardian of Daniel. Sir Hugo is somewhat gruff and self-centered, though he is also generous and kind. Having taken Daniel in as a toddler, he doesn't marry until Daniel is old enough to be away at school. He has treated Daniel as his own son, so much so that Daniel comes to believe that Sir Hugo might be his father.

## Mordecai

Known as Ezra as a child, he is Mirah's older brother, separated from her when she was very young. Mordecai is a devout Jew and is living penniless with a family when Daniel happens to find him and discover that he is Mirah's brother. Mirah describes him as a



prophet and Daniel considers him a great teacher. He dies of natural causes as the story draws to a close.

## **Rex Gascoigne**

Gwendolyn's cousin on her mother's side, Rex is away at school when Gwendolyn first arrives at Offendene and falls in love with her. He feels certain that she will return his affection and is devastated when this turns out to be untrue. He is so heartbroken that he remains in bed for several days. When he is again up and around, he tells his father that he wants to go to America to start a new life, but his father convinces him to wait before making that move. As a year passes, Rex comes to realize the truth of his father's advice and moves contentedly and purposefully into a career in law.

## **Hans Meyrick**

A classmate of Daniel's, he is unable to study on his own because of an injury to his eyes and Daniel helps him prepare for a vital test, ensuring that Hans is able to go on with his studies, though Daniel fails because of the time lost on his own studies. Hans is a happy person, seldom serious and loved dearly by his mother and sisters. He imagines himself in love with Mirah and tells Daniel all about his affection for her without considering that Daniel himself might love Mirah. He means no harm with this and other similar actions, but is typically self-centered enough to be oblivious to others' thoughts.

## **Anne Gascoigne**

First cousin of Gwendolyn, she is Rex's sister and is initially quite taken with Gwendolyn, though she becomes angry with Gwendolyn for her treatment of Rex. Anne is very quiet and unassuming and believes that she will never marry but will remain as Rex's housekeeper for her entire life.

## **Catherine Arrowpoint**

A young woman of about Gwendolyn's age, Catherine's parents hope she'll be selected as a wife by Grandcourt. Catherine falls in love with her music teacher, Herr Klesmer, and flaunts her parents' wishes by declaring her intention to marry him. She does marry Klesmer and her parents are eventually reconciled to the idea.

## **Herr Klesmer**

A music teacher, he is brutal with Gwendolyn after hearing her first performance and later dashes her hopes that she might attain fame and a good living from the stage. He later encounters Mirah and takes her under his wing. He evaluates her as a singer, tells



her that she should not return to the stage but is quite capable of being a music teacher, and endorses her in that pursuit.

## **Lydia Glasher**

Grandcourt's mistress of many years, she has three daughters and a son that are his. She tells Gwendolyn of her situation prior to Gwendolyn's engagement to Grandcourt and says that Grandcourt should do right by the children. Gwendolyn consoles herself that, as Grandcourt's wife, she can be sure that Lydia and the children are taken care of. Lydia is angry at Grandcourt's marriage, but her son becomes the apparent heir to the baronetcy upon Grandcourt's death.



## Objects/Places

### Lebronn

Where Gwendolyn is entertaining herself with some light gambling when she sees Daniel for the first time.

### Diplow Hall

Sir Mallinger's place and where Grandcourt stays during his time in the area.

### Ketchum

The Arrowpoint estate.

### Offendene

The estate Mrs. Davilow is renting until the family falls on hard times and has to move to a cottage.

### The Golden Keys

The hotel where Mr. Lush settles the woman claiming to be Grandcourt's mistress.

### The Green Arbor

Where Gwendolyn and the others meet for the outing after the archery competition and where she meets the woman who claims to be Grandcourt's mistress.

### Gasmere

Grandcourt's estate where Lydia is living with his children.

### Ryelands

Where Gwendolyn and Grandcourt live for a period of time after their marriage.

## **Brompton**

Where Daniel helps find a place for Mordecai and Mirah.

## **Genoa**

Where Daniel goes to meet his mother.

## **The Mediterranean**

Where Gwnedolyn and Grandcourt go yachting and where Grandcourt drowns.



# Themes

## Coming of Age

Gwendolyn is the typical coming of age heroine. As a child, she is favored by her mother and sisters, petted and protected by them, and held as the person in the family who dictates everything, from what food is to be served to the mood of a situation. Gwendolyn is afraid of nothing and believes everyone will treat her this way. She is immature and petulant when things don't go her way. She cares little for anyone else and doesn't mind hurting someone's feelings to get her own way. She has moments of regard for others, but these are few and far between, and happen generally only when Gwendolyn is happy in her own situation. As the story progresses, Gwendolyn marries and finds that her husband has no affection for her and that he cares only for his own happiness. Gwendolyn's immediate reaction is to rebel but she realizes that she has no real rights in this marriage and that she's fully in her husband's control. This realization changes her and she sets out to make people believe she's happy in her new situation. Even then, she has an ulterior, personal motive in that she doesn't want people to pity her. It's only when Grandcourt drowns that she is suddenly moved to care for others more than herself. The first evidence of this is seen when she calls out for her mother in the middle of the night. Her mother immediately answers and Gwendolyn then urges that her mother sleep, saying that her mother shouldn't stay awake for Gwendolyn. She admits that she'd been a selfish child and apologizes for it. This change in Gwendolyn could be a reaction of the situation and it might be that this new maturity is short-lived, but it seems real and permanent.

## The Need to Know One's Parentage

Daniel Deronda is raised by a baronet named Sir Hugo Mallinger. Throughout his childhood, Daniel is taught to call Sir Hugo "uncle" but Sir Hugo never offers up any information about Daniel's parentage. Daniel fantasizes as a child that Sir Hugo is actually his father and that he'd taken in Daniel, his illegitimate son, to rear as his nephew. Daniel's need to know his parentage is evidenced by the fact that he would rather be an illegitimate son than a young man without parents. Daniel eventually receives a letter from his mother and learns that his father is dead. He meets with his mother and finds that his parents were Jewish and that his mother gave him up for two reasons: that he would be raised as an Englishman without the prejudices facing Jews, and that she not have to put her career on hold to raise a son. The meeting between the two happens only because Daniel's mother has been confronted by a friend of her father who'd discovered Daniel's whereabouts. Daniel's mother seems to realize that he would have questions about his heritage. She offers to answer questions, says that Daniel's grandfather was an intellectual and provides other pieces of information. However, she is unwilling to have a relationship with Daniel at this point. She tells him that this meeting will be their only meeting. Daniel is apparently hurt by this, naturally wanting to





get to know his mother better, but is reconciled because he now has information about his parentage that had been missing all his life.

## Daniel's Caring Nature

Daniel is a giving person who is willing to go out of his way to help others. It's this that creates a bond between Daniel and several of the characters, including Gwendolyn. Gwendolyn sees Daniel as a good person and she wants to be more like him. She naturally calls on him for guidance as she seeks to be a better person. She first learns this about Daniel at their first meeting. She has pawned a necklace in order to raise money to return home. Daniel goes to the pawnbroker and redeems the necklace, then gives it back to her anonymously. He could easily have given it to her in person with the expectation of appreciation, but sought to save her the embarrassment by sending it in a way that she might not be indebted to him. When she's faced with several situations, she resolves to ask Daniel's advice and to do whatever he says is right. Daniel is willing to answer her questions and to give her whatever advice he can because this is part of his caring nature. This attribute is what brings him into contact with Mirah and Mordecai as well. Daniel saves Mirah from throwing herself in the river. Though she is a stranger and Daniel has no reason to become involved, it's not in his nature to simply pass her by without trying to help. When he realizes that Mordecai and Mirah are siblings, he arranges for them to have a home together. Daniel's caring nature is also seen in his friendship with Hans. When Hans suffers an eye injury, Daniel drops his own studies to help Hans prepare for an upcoming test.



# Style

## Point of View

The story is written in first person from the perspective of the author. This is very interesting as the author is not, apparently, a member of the cast of characters. This deviation from the typical choice to write either from the perspective of a character or from a third person perspective may seem strange to the reader. The author seems to have chosen this option because of the ability to add personal observations and asides. For example, in book two, Gwendolyn seems about to land a proposal from Grandcourt and it seems that she is going to accept that proposal. The author then interjects, saying, "I am not concerned to tell of the food that was eaten ..." It seems obvious that the author is telling the story from her perspective as she knows it, and that she is offering the reader an insight into the information that could be offered. The author does go on to say that there was plenty of food and champagne, as well as "talk and laughter" over the course of the evening. This deviation is what is considered typical presentation and perspective means that the author has access to a great deal of information. For example, she knows about a secret meeting between Gwendolyn and a woman who claims to be the mother of Grandcourt's children. She also knows about Daniel's secret childhood fantasies that his uncle is - or is not - his father.

## Setting

The book is set largely in England though the characters travel to various places. A great deal of the action occurs at or near an imaginary estate called Offendene. This is described as a roomy house though it's also somewhat gloomy. Gwendolyn finds the house somewhat romantic, saying that it's the kind of place "where anything might happen." The author describes many of the settings, including Offendene itself, in detail. There is another scene set in a wooded area in the region where an archery event takes place. Later, there is an afternoon gathering in another wooded area. Scenes also take place at the rectory, home of Gwendolyn's aunt, uncle and cousins, and at other estates in the area. The author doesn't get bogged down in these secondary settings but does provide sufficient detail for the reader to have an adequate visual image of the places. The time setting is probably the mid-1800s. The story was first published in 1876 and the author lived from 1819 until 1880. This makes it reasonable to expect the story setting to be during her lifetime. Further evidence is provided throughout the book. The major modes of transportation are horses and buggies or walking. Another clue is seen in chapter forty-eight when the author notes that Grandcourt is touched by the political and social movements of the day "only through the wire." This is a reference to the telegraph and the book's notes indicate that it was a relatively new piece of technology, further proving the time setting.



## Language and Meaning

The story's presentation is an overall formal tone, as is appropriate for the setting and the topic. The tone is overall hopeful and cheerful though there is an undercurrent of dread at the mess Gwendolyn is certain to make of her life. The book seems to have more narrative than dialogue and this seems necessary because the author is presenting a great deal of background information to the reader. The narrative tends to be rambling and formal and the dialogue, for the most part, seems to match. The notable exception seems to be in the word "thanks." Several times the characters say "thanks" when it seems more appropriate that they would have been formal with the words, "Thank you." This occurs several times and seems to stand out in the level of informality. There are long discourses on situations, emotions and feelings that may become cumbersome to some readers. Reader may be tempted to skim over these sections as boring or insignificant. However, these passages lend a deeper understanding of the various characters that help the reader understand desires, motivations and actions.

There are some references to current events of the time period and these may be lost on the casual reader. The book includes notes on various aspects of the story that will help the reader more fully understand these references.

## Structure

Mr. and Mrs. Klein and Mr. and Mrs. Miller are the main characters that exhibit the theme of parental devotion. Will notes that his father is fully willing to do anything at all for his children though he doesn't really care for anyone outside the immediate family. This is seen when Will learns of Sheila Rogers' death and believes that Nora is dead. While Will is suffering alone, his father arrives. Will says that he would have collapsed on the floor but his father holds him up. Mr. Klein's devotion goes too far in the case of Ken's childhood murder of a thirteen-year-old bully named Daniel Skinner. Ken had stabbed the boy to death and Mr. Klein, apparently learning of the murder, convinces John Asselta's father to arrange for John to take the blame. John says that Mr. Klein even convinced himself that having removed John from his abusive home was a good thing, regardless of whether it was right. While it turns out to be untrue, Will believes for a time that his mother might have helped Ken stay hidden by providing money to help him over the years. Katy talks about her parents and their inability to deal with Julie's death, even years afterward. She says that her parents have never changed the basement where Julie was murdered and that they refuse to talk to Katy either about the murder or about their feelings. In the case of the Millers, it seems that they believe that moving on with their lives would be a lack of devotion to their daughter's memory.



## Quotes

"Miss Gwendolyn, quite aware that she was adored by this unexceptionable young clergyman with pale whiskers and square-cut collar, felt nothing more on the subject than that she had no objection to being adored: she turned her eyes on him with calm mercilessness and caused him many mildly agitating hopes by seeming always to avoid dramatic contact with him - for all meanings, we know, depends on the key of interpretation."

Book I, Chap. 6, p. 57

"Her face was beaming with young pleasure in which there were no malign rays of discontent; for being satisfied with her own chances, she felt kindly towards everybody and was satisfied with the universe."

Book I, Chap. 10, p. 101

"Mr. Lush felt a triumph that was mingled with much distrust; for Grandcourt had said no word to him about her, and looked as neutral as an alligator: there was no telling what might turn up in the slowly-churning chances of his mind."

Book II, Chap. 15, p. 157

"When Gwendolyn came down into the drawing room, fresh as a newly-dipped swan, and sat leaning against the cushions of the settee beside her mamma, their misfortune had not yet turned its face and breath upon her."

Book III, Chap. 21, p. 231

"The only way I can think of - and I should like it better than anything - is to be an actress - to go on the stage. But of course I should like to take a high position, and I thought - if you thought I could, -"

Book III, Chap. 23, p. 252

"Her heart denied that the trouble was easier because she was young. When was she to have any happiness, if it did not come while she was young?"

Book III, Chap. 26, p. 289

"It was a full ten years since the elopement of an Irish officer's beautiful wife with young Grandcourt, and a consequent duel where the bullets wounded the air only, had made some little noise."

Book IV, Chap. 30, p. 340

"And disowning your own child because of a misalliance is something like disowning your one eye: everybody knows it's yours, and you have no other to make an appearance with."

Book V, Chap. 35, p. 407



"Oh, there are plenty of people who knew all about it; but such stories get packed away like old letters."

Book V, Chap. 36, p. 433

"In the doctrine of Cabbala, souls are born again and again in new bodies til they are perfected and purified, and a soul liberated from a worn-out body may join the fellow-soul that needs it, that they may be perfected together, and their early work accomplished."

Book VI, Chap. 43, p. 540

"That is because you have not been brought up as a Jew. That separateness seems sweet to you because I saved you from it."

Book VII, Chap. 51, p. 630

"I'm perfectly disgusted with Grandcourt. I don't know that I'm obliged to think the better of him because he's drowned, though, so far as my affairs are concerned, nothing in this life became him like the leaving it."

Book VIII, Chap. 59, p. 716



## Topics for Discussion

Describe Gwendolyn. What aspects of her life impact the kind of person she is? Does her proximity to specific people make a difference in her actions? Support your answers.

Describe Daniel. What are the major issues that face him as a young man? What is his nature? What are the aspects of his nature that attracts people to him?

How does Gwendolyn meet Daniel? How does she meet Grandcourt? How does Daniel meet Mirah? Compare these three meetings. How are they similar? How are they different?

Who is Mrs. Meyrick? Mrs. Davilow? Reverend Gascoigne? Anne? Rex? Hans? Mordecai? Lenora Halm Eberstein? Joseph Kalonymos? How are each of them connected to Gwendolyn? To Daniel?

Who does Daniel marry? Why does he choose this woman? What are the traits she exhibits that he admires? Support your answers.

What do you believe is Gwendolyn's fate after Grandcourt's death and Daniel's marriage? What does she do with the rest of her life? Support your answer with facts from the text.

Describe the relationship between Gwendolyn and Daniel. What is it that Gwendolyn seeks from Daniel? What is her reaction when she learns that Daniel is to marry? Is she angry because she wants to marry Daniel? Support your answers.