

Earthly Powers Study Guide

Earthly Powers by Anthony Burgess

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Plot Summary

Earthly Powers by Anthony Burgess is an exercise in narcissism and self-indulgence. The main topics in the story are good vs. evil and homosexuality. The story begins in the 1970s, back tracks to 1918, and then moves forward to return to the 1970s when the main character, Kenneth Toomey is an old man.

The story begins with noted author Kenneth Marchal Toomey celebrating his 81st birthday. Toomey lives in Tangier with his secretary/lover Geoffrey Enwright. Toomey is visited by the Archbishop of Malta who requests that Toomey write about his brother-in-law, Carlo Campanati aka Pope Gregory XVII. Carlo had performed a miracle that would ensure that he be canonized in the Roman Catholic Church. Toomey was the only witness to the miracle.

Toomey struggles greatly with his homosexuality and how it wars with his values and the values of the Church. Although Toomey accepts his orientation, the Church does not, and it causes a great deal of doubt, trouble and pain for the writer. Toomey seeks advice from several church officials throughout the book, none of which is sympathetic or very helpful.

Toomey confesses to his sister, Hortense, who confides the secret in their mother. Both condemn Toomey's choices and ensure that Toomey's father never learns the truth.

Toomey becomes involved with a series of men who are either unavailable or abusive. The first lover is Val, a young man who abuses Toomey. Toomey eventually has an affair with Rodney Selkirk, a married man. Toomey is arrested for homosexual activity and flees the country shortly before his trial. Rodney dies of the flu. During this time, Toomey's mother also dies.

Toomey's father remarries and Hortense moves in with Toomey. Hortense meets and marries Domenico Campanati, a jazz musician. Domenico is the brother of Carlo Campanati, a priest who will eventually become Pope Gregory XVII.

Carlo and Domenico have another brother, Raffele, who, when fighting against the Chicago mob, is murdered.

Toomey becomes close to Carlo's mother, Concetta, a stalwart women who openly opposes the Nazis and attempts to kill Heinrich Himmler. Concetta dies and Toomey learns more about her activities through her personal effects.

Carlo continues his work and rises rapidly through the Church until he is named Pope. Carlo, a man who loves excess, lives only five years after his inauguration.

Hortense becomes a successful sculptor but suffers many personal tragedies including the dissolution of her marriage to Domenico, the death of her son, John, and the death



of her granddaughter Eve. Hortense has also lost an eye in a tragic accident and spends the rest of her years working and being cared for by her lover, Dorothy.

Toomey continues to travel around the world, basking in his notoriety and often getting into trouble for his actions. Toomey is eventually mugged in Rome and moves to England to live out his days with Hortense.



Chapters 1-15

Chapters 1-15 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 1

The story begins with a servant named Ali alerting Kenneth Toomey that the Archbishop of Malta has come to visit. Toomey tells Ali to take the Archbishop into the bar and serve him a drink.

Toomey thinks about his career.

"I retired 12 years ago from the profession of novelist. Nevertheless you would be constrained to consider, if you know my work at all and take the trouble now to reread that first sentence, but I have lost none of my old cunning in the contrivance of what is known as arresting opening." Chap. 1, p. 7

Toomey thinks about his 81st birthday and how he has been receiving cables all day congratulating him on his birthday. Toomey's lover, Geoffrey, is in the room getting dressed. Geoffrey is 35 years old. Toomey notices that Geoffrey has begun to age and to gain weight. Geoffrey says that perhaps the Archbishop has come to deliver a writ of excommunication to Toomey. Toomey jokes that the Archbishop would be 60 years too late. The lovers argue and Toomey tells Geoffrey that perhaps it is time he began to sleep alone since it is appropriate considering his advanced age. Geoffrey is angry about moving to Malta instead of remaining in Tangiers. Toomey reminds Geoffrey that he was the one in trouble which forced them to leave their former home. Toomey tells Geoffrey to lower his voice because they have two priests waiting for them.

Chapter 2

Toomey enters the bar and greets his grace, the Archbishop of Malta. Toomey is surprised that the Archbishop is speaking to Ali in his native tongue. The Archbishop says it is a pleasure to meet Toomey and wishes him a happy birthday. Accompanying the Archbishop is Father Azzopardi. Azzopardi also greets Toomey and wishes him a happy birthday. Toomey introduces Geoffrey Enright as his secretary. The Archbishop wishes to speak to Toomey alone so the chaplain is escorted into the garden where he sits and has a conversation with Geoffrey.

The Archbishop has come to talk to Toomey about the recently deceased Pope Gregory. There is talk of canonization of Pope Gregory and part of the basis of the canonization relates to a miracle performed by the Pope. The Pope is formerly known as Don Carlo Campanati, Toomey's brother-in-law. This miracle had been witnessed by Toomey and therefore Toomey is essential in pleading Pope Gregory's case. Toomey finds it interesting and somewhat amusing that the Archbishop should ask for his help. Toomey is a well-known homosexual and has been cut off from the church for many years. The Archbishop pleads with Toomey to write about Campanati.



Chapter 3

The Archbishop's visit has come to an end. Many of the household staff and villagers rush forward to kiss the Archbishop's ring. The Archbishop continues to flatter Toomey with the hopes that he will write Campanati's story.

Geoffrey marks the Archbishop's request. Toomey says the Archbishop knows of Geoffrey's actions and warns him to watch his step. Once again the men argue about the fact that Geoffrey has not been faithful. Toomey decides to retire to his study.

Chapter 4

Toomey's library is located near the upstairs salon. The walls are adorned with artwork by Willem de Kooning, Egon Schiele, and one of Picasso's first sketches. The library is furnished with two large oxblood chairs and a matching leather couch. Toomey's books are stored in glass cases. Toomey talks about several books and his collection. Ali brings food and tea as requested. Ali and Toomey discuss the difference between God and Allah.

Ali presents Toomey with a tacky metal lighter encrusted with a Maltese cross. Toomey tells Ali that it is beautiful. Toomey stretches out on his couch and thinks about his brother Tommy, a comedian who had died from lung cancer at age 44.

Chapter 5

Geoffrey and Toomey visit the British Council representative. They are attending a literary roundtable along with a group of notable people. A man named Sciberras spends the evening being argumentative about the Maltese and the French. He also takes any opportunity to argue with anyone and show his superiority on a number of subjects.

Chapter 6

One of the guests, Wignall, tells Toomey that he saw Toomey's sister Hortense in America. She sends her best wishes. Janie, one of the writer's girlfriends, is not familiar with Toomey's work but is impressed with the fact that he knew Hermann Hesse.

Chapter 7

"I was stupid not to go straight to bed, initiating the new regime of sleeping alone, instead of having at length on and dangerously out with Geoffrey." Chapter 7, page 33

Toomey asks Geoffrey why he made such a deliberate attempt to make him look foolish at the dinner party. Geoffrey is still sulking about leaving Tangiers. Geoffrey says it is clear that Toomey wants him to leave. Toomey says that Geoffrey is unhappy and while he really doesn't want to go it's a matter of self-preservation. The men fight and Toomey orders Geoffrey to leave. Toomey collapses.



Chapter 8

Geoffrey stays to watch over Toomey after his collapse. Toomey wakes and wanders down into the kitchen. Toomey thinks about the various events about which he dared not write. He also thinks about Carlo Campanati and how he is not under any obligation to help the Archbishop canonize the man. Toomey understands why he was asked to provide testimony about Pope Gregory's miracle, in part because he is a writer and in part because he is an old man.

"Best let Carlo achieve sainthood through other miracles, better attested. But then faith and duty trumpeted a muted two-part invention antechamber of my brain. Saint Gregory, enthroned to some extent by grace of the attestations of K.M. Toomey, Companion of Honour, pray for us. Pray for me, hypocrite, lecher, waster of seed and sterile embraces." Chapter 8, page 41

Toomey goes into Geoffrey's office and is appalled by what he sees.

Chapter 9

Toomey goes into the kitchen and pours himself a drink. He goes upstairs and wakes Geoffrey. Toomey tells Geoffrey that he has something to say. Toomey tells Geoffrey that he will give him the 10,000 pounds he requested the night before. Toomey says he read the letter on Geoffrey's office floor. The man Geoffrey had fought with before coming to Malta has died. The man's father is seeking justice outside the law. Toomey tells Geoffrey he must leave immediately. Toomey outlines a plan for Geoffrey, offering to pay him for his services.

Chapter 10

Toomey and Ali take Geoffrey to the airport. As usual, Geoffrey causes a great scene. Despite Geoffrey's actions Toomey is lonely without him.

Chapter 11

Toomey meets with Father Frobisher. It is 1916.

"'The point is father,' I said, 'I shall never have any hope of making a good act of contrition. Not until the urge fails, or libido, as some call it. And why, for that matter, should I have to be contrite about the way God made me?'" Chapter 11, page 47

Chapter 12

Toomey recalls the atmosphere of the Great War. Toomey's career begins to take off and his work begins to sell. Toomey discusses the literature of the time and some of the writers who are popular. Toomey is very devout in his faith and begins to have conflict over his faith and sexuality.



Toomey has a young lover named Val. The men meet at Toomey's apartment in secret because Val's parents do not know that he is gay. Val is often argumentative and rude to Toomey. The men fight and Val leaves.

Chapter 13

Toomey discusses his parents who are doing well in France despite the war. The war and being left by Val deeply affects Toomey and he grieves. Toomey thinks about being seduced at age 13 and how the act has changed his life.

Toomey discusses the work and personality of James Joyce, the Irish writer.

Chapter 14

Toomey goes home to his family for a visit. Toomey's mother wants him to come home to live. Toomey attempts to explain that he must do what is necessary to further his career. Toomey's father does not approve of his career as a writer and would prefer that his son would get a more responsible job. Toomey's father makes veiled references to homosexuality.

Chapter 15

Toomey regrets going home. Although the family has not changed, the atmosphere is too religious for Toomey's beliefs. Toomey's parents want him to go to mass. Toomey does not want to go to confession because he does not feel that he should apologize for the way God made him. Toomey fakes illness in order to avoid going to church.

A man comes to Toomey's father's dental practice while the family is at church. Toomey performs an extraction. Later there is a party at the house to celebrate Christmas. Toomey's mother knows that he was not sick. Toomey talks to his mother about atheism. Toomey also talks to his mother about men. Toomey's mother asks him not to tell his father or else it will ruin Christmas.



Chapters 16-22

Chapters 16-22 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 16

It is 1917. Toomey begins to make money from his writing and enjoys the success and notoriety that goes along with it. Toomey is refused again for military service. Toomey relates his career to the battles of the war.

Toomey's first play debuts. Toomey's father attends the play and enjoys the comedy. Toomey's mother is unable to attend but writes her son a letter. Toomey's mother is afraid that London is evil. No one has told Toomey's father about his sexual orientation. Hortense visits.

Chapter 17

Toomey continues to be successful. Val attempts to return and to get back into Toomey's good graces. Toomey seems to be disinterested.

It is suggested that Toomey turn his new play into a musical. Toomey thinks this is a good idea and begins to write lyrics for "Say it Cecil."

Toomey becomes involved with a married man named Rodney.

On the night of one of the performances the lead actress is grieving because her husband died. The woman's flubs her lines. Although Toomey is upset he understands the woman's predicament.

Toomey spends the evening with Rodney. Rodney's wife arrives and creates a big scene. She threatens to expose Rodney and Toomey. Toomey knows that this could possibly end his career. Rodney has been sick and his condition rapidly deteriorates. Rodney is taken to the hospital. The police arrive with the intention of arresting Toomey for his involvement with Rodney. Toomey manages to avoid arrest.

Chapter 18

Toomey goes to the Marmion hotel. Subsequently Toomey goes to Paris where he learns that Rodney has died of the flu. At that time there were no antibiotics and many people died that year. Toomey wonders if he is still in trouble with the law.

Toomey discusses the people he met in Paris including Maynard Keynes who is selling pictures at rock-bottom prices. Toomey is invited to go to the Ritz. It is said that Toomey looks gloomy, bruised and lonely.

Chapter 19



Toomey goes to confession where Father Chabrier hears his confession. The priest is clearly against homosexuality. Toomey talks about agape in reference to his sexual preference. The priest says that using the term agape is blasphemous. In order to be absolved Toomey must repent love as it is obscene and against the charge. There must be some form of penance.

"I felt myself to be gently fingered by the savants of the Enlightenment. Tap tap, they tapped. Do more than write farces and sensational fiction. Construct something in which to believe. Love and beauty are not enough." Chap. 19, p. 92

Chapter 20

Toomey continues to write. His next novel is titled *Moving South*, part travel book, autobiography, philosophic essay. Toomey is quite pleased with himself as he finishes the book; happy to be a writer just for the notoriety.

Toomey also discusses battles of the war and their outcomes.

"I do not want to use terms like good and evil. If such terms possess a meaning, it must be only in a general context of theology. Right and wrong will do for me, variable in meaning though they are. It is been right to hate the Germans; soon it will be all right to love them." Chap. 20, pp. 92-93

Toomey discusses these feelings with Domenico and Don Carlo.

Chapter 21

Toomey goes to work on a libretto although his Italian is poor. Domenico also works on the libretto as a performer.

Chapter 22

Toomey receives a telegram that his mother is gravely ill. Toomey makes his way to his parents' home only to learn that his mother has died at the same moment he arrives at the front door. Toomey spends time with Tom and Hortense. For the first time Toomey openly discusses homosexuality with his siblings.



Chapters 23-31

Chapters 23-31 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 23

Toomey returns to Monaco with Hortense in tow. Toomey worries about taking Hortense to his apartment because Domenico is in residence and often makes his morning coffee while naked. Despite a rocky start Hortense becomes involved with Domenico.

Chapter 24

Toomey eases up on his dominion over Hortense. Hortense and Domenico become intimate. When Toomey asks his sister about the relationship she scoffs and says she is not an innocent.

Toomey continues to scour the theater and other places for a suitable lover. Toomey is attacked and beaten in an alleyway.

Chapter 25

Toomey manages to get a message to Hortense while he is in the hospital. Toomey insists that Hortense not be told of the details.

Hortense and Toomey argue about her relationship with Domenico. Toomey tries to get Hortense to leave and she becomes angry.

Chapter 26

It is Sunday, March 30, 1919. Toomey meets with Dr. Henry Havelock Ellis, a former physician who has turned to becoming a man of letters. Toomey reflects on the meeting wherein he discusses possible castration for his homosexuality.

"This friend of mine at Roquebrune is a homosexual of long-standing. I think there is little that can be done about it, and I fail to see why it would be regarded as morbid. It is the law that is morbid, but the law will in time be changed." Chap. 26, p. 142

The men meet at the Hotel de Paris where they engage with Domenico, Hortense, and others. Toomey struggles with the fact that Ellis is going deaf.

Domenico and Toomey discuss options for his wedding to Hortense.

Chapter 27

Don Carlo arrives for a week-long stay. Don Carlo has arrived to perform an exorcism, a feat for which he is well known. Don Carlo meets with the press to discuss the concept of evil. Don Carlo also discusses the concept of returning to perfection.



Chapter 28

It is the summer of 1919. Toomey lives in Paris.

Domenico and Hortense get married by Don Carlo in the town of Gorgonzola outside Milan. Hortense and Domenico plan to go to Paris.

Toomey discusses the history of the Campanatis who made their fortune from selling cheese. Mr. Campanati is uncommunicative and spends his days in a wheelchair. Mrs. Campanati, Concetta, says that even though her husband cannot communicate, he is happy.

Hortense tells Toomey that she will not forgive him for his vulgarity. Hortense also confesses that she does not love Domenico and that Don Carlo creeps her out.

Hortense and Domenico leave for Paris.

Toomey realizes that he does not see eye to eye with the family. Raffeale confronts Toomey about his affair with Rodney. Toomey tells Raffeale that it is none of his business. Raffeale insists that Toomey is now part of his family and therefore it is family business. Toomey storms off.

Chapter 29

The author speaks about a man who manages to seduce a boy in a hotel bar.

Chapter 30

Toomey meets with Ford Madox Ford, a man with definite opinions and very bad breath. There are other famous people present such as James Joyce, Ezra Pound, and Ernest Hemingway. They discuss writing while Domenico plays jazz with the band.

Domenico tells Toomey that he and Hortense have had a spat. Hortense seems to be overbearing which goes against the Italian way. Hortense moves in with Toomey.

Chapter 31

It is 1922. Hortense revels in her newfound freedom. Toomey is afraid that Domenico will find out that Hortense has come home drunk and half naked. Don Carlo arrives and discusses having babies. Don Carlo talks about becoming a monsignor.



Chapters 32-41

Chapters 32-41 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 32

It is spring 1924. Hortense gives birth to twins, a boy and a girl. Once again Hortense throws Toomey out of her house.

It is a good year for Domenico. It is also a good year for Toomey but Toomey claims that the year will end in agony. A new play opens in London. Toomey is insulted by people attending the play. Rudyard Kipling states that he does not like it.

Chapter 33

Toomey moves to the Malay Archipelago and then to Polynesia. Don Carlo tells Toomey that there is a lack of funds in the Vatican coffers to propagate the faith in schools and hospitals. Don Carlo also discusses the papacy. It is learned that Mr. Campanati is dying. Toomey tells Domenico and Don Carlo that they should go home to be with their father. Toomey tells Don Carlo that God will take care of the people. Don Carlo says he cannot go home and that Toomey should go in his place. Toomey says he thinks that is terrible.

"You think it terrible? There are many things that people say are terrible. They're mostly things that are decreed by the laws of nature, which are God's laws, or by the laws of the church, which are also God's." Chap. 33, p. 203

Toomey continues to write during his travels. Toomey arrives in Kuala Lumpur.

Chapter 34

Toomey faints because he is not used to the tropical weather. Dr. Philip Shawcross tends to Toomey. Shawcross takes Toomey to his home. They have dinner with Malingham, a black man whose son is under the care of Shawcross. The men discuss religion. Toomey and Shawcross both claim that the dinner was terrible. However Shawcross says that the races must learn to mix.

Chapter 35

Toomey loves the tropics, particularly in the morning when it is beautiful. In the afternoons the tropics turn hot and sweaty. Toomey learns that he has tachycardia but Shawcross says that it shouldn't kill him.

The men discuss religion. Shawcross says that he believes sex is a trap. Toomey relates sex to religion.



Shawcross says, "You don't like God much do you?" Chap. 35, p. 227

Toomey decides to stay with Shawcross and write.

Chapter 36

People begin to speculate about the relationship between Shawcross and Toomey. It is unusual for two men to live together. It is natural for people to visit Kuala Kangsa but not stay for more than two months as Toomey has. Toomey and Shawcross' relationship might involve some type of love that is not homosexual or physical. Toomey says that if it will make things easier he will ask for formal permission from the government.

Malingham comes to dinner. He tells Shawcross that his son is getting better.

Chapter 37

The next evening with Malingham is terrible. His son has taken a turn for the worse. There is a great deal of weeping, anxiety and maudlin behavior. It is learned that Malingham's son was misdiagnosed and he will be okay.

Toomey prepares to leave for Malacca but realizes how much he needs Shawcross.

Malingham's son takes a turn for the worse and dies. Malingham goes on a rampage against Shawcross and is thrown out of the house.

Shawcross become very ill and collapses. Shawcross goes into a coma but maintains an eerie smile on his face. Some wonder if Malingham is to blame. Weeks pass with no improvement in Shawcross' condition.

Chapter 38

Don Carlo arrives and prays over Shawcross. Don Carlo plans to perform an exorcism.

Toomey visits Malingham. Malingham says that Shawcross' condition is justice for what happened to his son. Don Carlo performs an exorcism on Malingham's son. Malingham also collapses. A defaced photo of Shawcross is found in Malingham's home. Malingham put a curse on Shawcross. Don Carlo is successful but it is too late for Shawcross. Shawcross will certainly die. Don Carlo says that Toomey loves Shawcross' spirit and that kind of love can never die. Don Carlo tells Toomey to rejoice.

Chapter 39

Shawcross dies. Don Carlo and Toomey go their separate ways.

Toomey travels to Darwin, Australia. From Darwin, Toomey travels south with Ted Collins. Toomey continues his travels and ends up in San Francisco. Toomey is still intent on proving himself and takes four comedies to Chicago to be reviewed. The plays are well received.



Chapter 40

Raffele is in the hospital. Don Carlo arrives as does Toomey. Don Carlo learns that Raffele had been beaten by members of the mafia. Don Carlo prays for Raffele's soul.

Don Carlo asks Toomey to go and see his mother, Concetta. Don Carlo must remain in the U.S. but Toomey is free to return to the family to visit with "their" mother. Don Carlo says that he must remain in the U.S. to raise money for the church. Toomey objects, saying that he wants to return to Europe to write.

In the hallway, Don Carlo blesses a boy who seems to be in the final stages of a terminal disease.

Raffele dies. Toomey is asked to make the arrangements.

The boy Don Carlo had blessed makes a miraculous recovery.

Chapter 41

Toomey goes to Switzerland to visit Concetta. Toomey and Concetta talk about Don Carlo's mission. Concetta believes her son relies too heavily on the church doctrine to explain the nature of man.

"There are bad men and good men, it's as simple as that. Greed and malevolence face moderation and decency. Carlo always wants to bring theology into things, blame everything on the devil." Chap. 41, p. 277

Toomey and Concetta also talk about theater, the war, and the relationship between Hortense and Domenico.



Chapters 42-58

Chapters 42-58 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 42

It is 1928. Hortense and Domenico's twins are growing up and changing into little people. Toomey and Hortense travel to London for Tommy's wedding. The people at the wedding discuss the newly popular *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall. There is a great deal of talk and many opinions contrast regarding the quality of the book versus the subject matter.

"The only defense you can raise in law is literary value, which they take wrongly, of course, to mean the same as moral value. You know, like *Paradise Lost*. It strikes me as wrong to present a book's good when it isn't." Chap. 42, p. 287

There are many famous people at the wedding. At the end, Tommy and others perform for the guests.

For the first time, Toomey decides to publish something controversial under his own name.

Chapter 43

It is 1929. Don Carlo is having a conversation with Cardinal Gasparri and a government official referred to as Duce. Don Carlo and Duce often argue about politics and religion. The men are confrontational and strong in their beliefs. The Cardinal tells Don Carlo to stop bullying the atheist.

Don Carlo continues his rise in the Church and has become a monsignor. He openly criticizes Mussolini and the Nazi party.

The stock market crash occurs. Toomey considers himself lucky that he has lost only \$15,000 while many have lost everything.

Chapter 44

Toomey goes to Hollywood. Don Carlo gives a script to Toomey and asks him to get it published. Toomey is not interested but Don Carlo convinces him to read the material.

Chapter 45

The men go to a party in Bel Air. Hortense has stayed home with her son who has sustained an injury. There is more conversation of good versus evil.



Domenico is caught red handed cheating on Hortense. He is confronted by Toomey and Don Carlo. Domenico is unrepentant and says that the men have no business berating him. He calls Hortense a whore. Domenico has learned that he is infertile and assumes that the twins are not his children.

Chapter 46

Toomey pitches a story to his editors about the Holy Grail. The men hate it and say that they want only human stories.

Don Carlo's reputation is tainted.

Domenico and Hortense split up and Hortense leaves. It is clear that Don Carlo adores Hortense and condemns his brother.

Hortense takes the children and moves to New York.

Toomey believes that despite what is happening in Europe the movie industry in Hollywood would not dare to exploit the Nazis.

Chapter 47

Toomey goes to Berlin and participates in many interviews about his films.

Chapter 48

Concetta dies. Toomey goes through Concetta's belongings and is once again reminded of Concetta's determination to fight against the Nazis and to help the Jews. Toomey is moved to write a book about Concetta. Toomey's publishers are worried that the book will anger the public. Toomey writes the book anyway. It is not successful.

Chapter 49

There is discussion of the Communists versus the Nazis.

Toomey is faced with the task of having Concetta's body transported back to Italy.

Chapter 50

Toomey meets with Don Carlo who is now a Bishop. Carlo talks about becoming the Pope. Carlo says he is free to proceed without the shadow of his family hanging over him. Carlo believes that the actions of Raffele and Concetta caused them to die, thereby committing suicide. They will not go to Heaven. Toomey criticizes Carlo for a lack of compassion.

Chapter 51

Pope Pius XI dies and Pope Pius XII is installed as the new Pope. The war continues to rage on.



Toomey receives a letter from his step-mother informing him that his father is very ill. Toomey's father is not living entirely in reality. He assumes that Toomey is living with his British publisher. He has not accepted that Tommy is dead.

Toomey becomes involved with Heinz.

Chapter 52

Toomey and Heinz create a scenario that allows them to smuggle Strehler out of Austria. Toomey has not yet met Strehler.

Heinz continues to behave badly and continues to steal. Toomey discovers that he has been hoarding stolen goods in his room. When Heinz is caught trying to steal a watch, Toomey tells police that he is not responsible for Heinz's actions.

Toomey finally meets Strehler. Strehler tells Toomey that he is mad for being with Heinz.

Chapter 53

Toomey skims over his time at Strehler's house. The Gestapo arrives and arrests the two men. Toomey is convinced that he can make contact with an ally and get them out of the mess. Toomey succeeds and goes back to England.

Toomey meets with Carlo. The men discuss Domenico's divorce and subsequent marriage. Carlo tells Toomey to go home and that they will probably not see each other for several years.

Chapter 54

Toomey is taken before the Church of England and the military including a Superintendent and member of MI. Toomey is questioned at length about his relationship to Heinz and Jakob Strehler. Toomey explains his devotion to Strehler due to his work. Toomey is chastised for trying to help the enemy.

It is also learned that Concetta, dying of cancer, wants to see Heinrich Himmler. Concetta attempts to shoot Himmler but Himmler is pushed out of the way by Toomey.

Toomey is told that he is obviously not cut out for treason but that his naiveté in such matters could get him killed.

Toomey begins to feel old. The twins have grown up. Johnny is fighting in the war and Ann has married.

The next chapter is written by Howard Tucker, an author who has written about Carlo.

Chapter 55

"On April 26 the town of Verona, long and romantically associated with Romeo and Juliet, fell to the Americans. There was nothing romantic about it at this time: many of its



historic buildings had been destroyed by Allied bombing, and the Germans compounded the chaos by blowing up all of the seven bridges over the Adige before the Americans could reach it." Chap. 55, p. 408

Tucker writes about the capture and execution of Mussolini and Duce. Carlo is confronted about his beliefs in the Church and how they apply to the war. Carlo has strong opinions about the war but attempts - not always successfully - to temper his opinions to preserve a certain political stance.

Chapter 56

Toomey is confronted once again about his presence in Germany and Austria.

Chapter 57

Toomey has lost his passport but must get to New York. Toomey has learned from Ann that Hortense has been in an accident. Toomey tries to get a replacement passport but is denied. Toomey tries again with the French embassy but it does not work. It is learned that Hortense has lost an eye in the accident but will be fine. Toomey makes more attempts to get an illegal passport.

Johnny visits Toomey and tells him that he is going to study anthropology and perhaps work in England.

Chapter 58

Toomey arrives in New York. Toomey receives a visit from Carlo, who is now an archbishop.

Toomey visits Hortense. He is stunned that there is no softness to her now. She smokes and drinks a lot. She is cared for by a former nightclub singer named Dorothy. Hortense will not tolerate any of Toomey's cooing over her.



Chapters 59-70

Chapters 59-70 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 59

Ann marries Professor Breslow. Toomey believes that Ann is not terribly bright, somewhat frivolous and silly. Toomey meets Breslow and the men discuss the literature taught in Breslow's college courses.

Breslow also discusses Toomey's adventures in Europe and being arrested by the Nazis.

Chapter 60

Toomey becomes involved with Ralph Pembroke, a younger black man. The men have a relationship that is unhealthy. Ralph is combative. Toomey is aging and wants companionship. Ralph is often too militant for Toomey. Later, Toomey would realize that Ralph and Heinz would make a good pair.

Chapter 61

Toomey visits Domenico. Domenico is aging badly and does not take care of his health. He tells Toomey that his third wife has left him for another. Domenico is jaded and tired of Hollywood. He tells Toomey that he wants to write an opera.

Carlo is featured in Life magazine.

Ralph and Toomey continue to fight. Ralph resigns as Toomey's secretary.

Chapter 62

Toomey goes to a university in Indiana where he gives a talk to 500 students. Val is present. Despite Toomey's views and topics, people still question him about Christianity. Toomey objects but goes unheard.

Toomey and Ralph continue to fight.

Chapter 63

Toomey and Ralph travel to Africa and to Barcelona. There is still a great deal of turmoil. Ralph wants to return home while Toomey plans to go to Tangier.

Chapter 64

Toomey often claims that he spent the next 15 years in Tangier although that is not true. He travels around the world being a personality and celebrity in various places.



Toomey has long discussions about testifying on a book of notable works that are banned based on their literary worth and questionable morality.

Chapter 65

Toomey travels to Milan for a performance of his libretto.

Chapter 66

Hortense is commissioned to sculpt a bas-relief of Saint Ambrose that will appear in a Duomo. Toomey does not attend the dedication.

Ralph leaves without saying goodbye.

Toomey is angry with Domenico for changing his libretto which is panned by the press.

Carlo collapses in church.

Chapter 67

Carlo is taken to a nursing home to rest. Toomey is ordered to spend the day with Carlo. Toomey finds Carlo to be recovered but clearly not taking care of himself. The men talk about old times and visit a casino with visiting sheiks. Carlo says the death of the Pope is imminent.

Chapter 68

It is 1958. The Pope dies and Carlo is inaugurated into the papacy as Pope Gregory XVII.

Chapter 69

Carlo tours the United States and crosses paths with Toomey. The men discuss the creation of the universe and the existence of souls.

Chapter 70

Toomey returns to Indiana where he meets with John. John announces that he plans to travel to Africa the following year. Toomey offers to help pay for John's wife to make the trip.

Toomey visits Hortense and an ailing Dorothy. Toomey's agent wants to make a film of one of his books. Hortense says Domenico called and wants to get back together. Hortense has refused.



Chapters 71-82

Chapters 71-82 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 71

Toomey visits his niece, Ann, and stays for dinner with her daughter, Eve. Toomey fears Eve will become just like her mother - empty pretty. Toomey and Ann talk about the fact that Dorothy is dying and wishes to end it all.

It is learned that Carlo dies five years after being named Pope.

Chapter 72

Laura sends letters to Toomey from Africa. She claims that they are working on the outskirts and it is hard to get a grasp on the "real" Africa.

Toomey goes to Cannes to jury a film. He is confronted by several people about speaking on Nazi radio and being a homosexual. Toomey learns that Val has written the script to his movie and he is not pleased.

Toomey talks with Professor Bucolo about the African trip. Toomey learns that John is dead. Bucolo cannot return to the States in his delicate condition. Toomey is committed elsewhere and plans to get in touch with Domenico to tell him the news.

Chapter 73

Toomey speaks a great deal about seeing "The Blooms of Dublin" on Broadway.

Toomey sees Professor Breslow and learns that Eve has moved to LA and has had a baby out of wedlock. Breslow wants Eve to come home and asks Toomey to intervene.

Chapter 74

Toomey continues to talk about loneliness. Geoffrey Enwright is introduced as Toomey's new lover and secretary.

Toomey meets Godfrey "God" Manning. Manning is a zealot.

Toomey speaks to Eve but cannot convince her to come home.

Chapter 75

Manning's brother dies. Melvin Withers reviews God Manning's dossier. Manning clearly has a God complex.

Toomey prepares to go to Tangier.



Chapter 76

Toomey and Geoffrey have breakfast. Things are going well but Toomey still worries.

Domenico died the previous year. Carlo is also dying. Hortense is called to be by his side.

Manning convinces 1700 followers to commit suicide. Eve is one of the followers. Manning is arrested at the airport.

Chapter 78

Toomey meets Poet Laureate Wignell. The men talk about the visit by the Archbishop of Malta. The police arrive to speak to Toomey about his expired visa and Ali's presence at the house. Ali must be deported.

Chapter 79

Toomey goes to Rome where he is mugged.

Chapter 80

Toomey must spend a long time in a private ward at a hospital. Toomey learns that Ali is gone. Toomey is warned not to be gone too long or his house will be deemed abandoned and it will be taken over by the government. Toomey cannot make arrangements or return so his house and all possessions are seized.

Chapter 81

Toomey continues to fight against the government for the return of his possessions.

Chapter 82

Toomey and Hortense are in Sussex. Toomey learns that Geoffrey wants to publish Toomey's biography. Toomey is now in his mid-80s and lives with Hortense.

Toomey and Hortense discuss Tom. Hortense refers to Tom as a saint. There is a terrible storm. Both Hortense and Toomey hope that they can sleep and that there will be no dreams.

Toomey struggles with a way to finish his book.

"I contrived, you will perhaps remember, an adequate beginning. I have always, all throughout my literary career, found endings excruciatingly hard." Chap. 82, p. 607



Characters

Kenneth Marchal Toomey

Kenneth Marchal Toomey is the main character in *Earthly Powers* by Anthony Burgess. Toomey is a well known and lauded playwright and author although he is admittedly mediocre and often writes what the public demands without little regard to his own desires.

Toomey is raised in a Catholic home with two parents, a dentist and homemaker. His younger sister, Hortense, becomes a world renowned sculptor; his younger brother Tommy, becomes an actor and comedian.

Toomey struggles greatly with his homosexuality and how it wars with his values and the values of the Church. Although Toomey accepts his orientation, the Church does not, and it causes a great deal of doubt, trouble and pain for the writer. Toomey seeks advice from several church officials throughout the book, none of which is sympathetic or very helpful.

Toomey spends his life involved with a series of men who are either unavailable or abusive. Many pose as secretaries but who are inept and rude. Toomey faces many battles as a homosexual although he does not make the fact public knowledge until later in his career.

One of Toomey's most important relationships, aside from the one with Hortense, is with Don Carlo Campanati, the brother of Hortense's husband Domenico. Although the men argue about God and the church, there is a camaraderie that Toomey finds nowhere else.

Don Carlo Campanati

Don Carlo Campanati is the son of wealthy parents, Concetta and a paralyzed and uncommunicative father who dies early in the story. Carlo also has two brothers - Domenico, an adulterous jazz musician and husband to Hortense Toomey; and Raffele, a man who combats the Chicago mob and is murdered.

Since his youth Don Carlo was destined for greatness. He became a priest at a young age and rose quickly in the Catholic Church. It was always Carlo's desire to become Pope when the time was right.

Carlo is so devoted to the Church, his values and good works that he all but ignores everything else, even his family duties. When Domenico and Hortense marry, Toomey is taken in by the family and becomes an integral part of its functioning, like it or not. When Raffele dies, Carlo insists that Toomey take care of the arrangements. It is also Toomey who must be present after Mr. Campanati dies, and who takes care of Concetta.



Don Carlo has a fondness for whiskey, gambling and cigars. His views on the church are both archaic and modern. Carlo performs a miracle while visiting the dying Raffele, for which the Archbishop of Malta wants to have him canonized.

Hortense Toomey Campanati

Hortense is Kenneth Toomey's younger sister. Hortense goes out on her own after her father remarries. She marries Domenico Campanati and has twins, John and Ann. Hortense also becomes a world renowned sculptor.

Domenico Campanti

Domenico Campanti is the brother to Raffele and Don Carlo. Domenico is a successful jazz musician and composer.

Raffele Campanati

Raffele Campanati is the brother to Domenico and Don Carlo.

Concetta Campanati

Concetta Campanti is the matriarch of the Campanti family. Concetta is a Jewish sympathizer.

Tommy Toomey

Tommy Toomey is the beloved brother of Hortense and Kenneth Toomey.

Geoffrey Enwright

Geoffrey Enwright is Toomey's lover and secretary.

Philip Shawcross

Philip Shawcross is a doctor that cared for Toomey when he was ill. Toomey claims that Shawcross was his one great love although the men had a platonic relationship.

Val

Val is Toomey's young lover. Years later, Val resurfaces and often torments Toomey.



Objects/Places

Toomey's House

Toomey's house is located in a small village on the island of Triq Il-Kaba in Malta. The house is large and somewhat old-fashioned. It has a lovely garden that is tended to by Toomey's gardeners. The house has a servant named Ali. Also living in the house is Geoffrey Enright, Toomey's lover and secretary.

Toomey greets the Archbishop and Father Azzopardi in the bar next to the garden. The chaplain is interested in seeing the beautiful gardens and is taken on a tour by Geoffrey.

Toomey's library is located near the upstairs salon. The walls are adorned with artwork by Willem de Kooning, Egon Schiele, and one of Picasso's first sketches. The library is furnished with two large oxblood chairs and a matching leather couch. Toomey's books are stored in glass cases.

Toomey likes this somewhat unassuming house. Geoffrey hates it as well as the village where the police and priests are supposedly in cahoots and the entire region is corrupt.

Toomey eventually loses the house when he is injured and recovering in Rome. The government seizes the house and all of Toomey's belongings.

Church

The Church is one of the main topics in the book.

The main proponent of the Church in this story is Don Carlo Campanati. Since his youth Don Carlo was destined for greatness. He became a priest at a young age and rose quickly in the Catholic Church. It was always Carlo's desire to become Pope when the time was right.

Carlo is so devoted to the Church, his values and good works that he all but ignores everything else, even his family duties.

Toomey struggles greatly with his homosexuality and how it wars with his values and the values of the Church. Although Toomey accepts his orientation, the Church does not, and it causes a great deal of doubt, trouble and pain for the writer. Toomey seeks advice from several church officials throughout the book, none of which is sympathetic or very helpful.

It is ironic that the Archbishop has come to talk to Toomey about the recently deceased Pope Gregory. There is talk of canonization of Pope Gregory and part of the basis of the canonization relates to a miracle performed by the Pope. The Pope is formerly known as Don Carlo Campanati, Toomey's brother-in-law. This miracle had been witnessed by



Toomey and therefore Toomey is essential in pleading Pope Gregory's case. Toomey finds it interesting and somewhat amusing that the Archbishop should ask for his help. Toomey is a well-known homosexual and has been cut off from the church for many years. The Archbishop pleads to Toomey to write about Campanati.

Malta

This is where Toomey lives for a time with Geoffrey.

Tangier

This is the location of Toomey's home.

England

This is where Hortense and Toomey live at the end of the story.

Theater

Toomey spends a great deal of time at the theater watching his plays.

New York

This is where Hortense moves with the twins after the divorce.

Hospital

This is a common location in the book. Raffeale is hospitalized after being beaten, Toomey is hospitalized after being mugged twice.

Los Angeles

This is where Hortense and Domenico live. Later, it is where Eve and her husband live and die.

Switzerland

This is where Concetta lives during World War II.



Themes

Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church is one of the main topics in the book. The book begins in the early 1900s and follows the activities of the Church throughout the end of World War I, through World War II, the reigns of Mussolini and Hitler and into the modern era.

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Homosexuality

Homosexuality is one of the main themes in the book. From the early parts of his life, Toomey struggles greatly with his homosexuality and how it wars with his values and the values of the Church. Although Toomey accepts his orientation, the Church does not, and it causes a great deal of doubt, trouble and pain for the writer.

Still, Toomey does not believe that he is living in sin or that he should be punished for his orientation. This is a major topic of conversation between Toomey and several others including the devout Hortense - who later becomes a lesbian - and Don Carlo Campanati.

Toomey is careful to conceal his homosexuality from his reading public until late in his career. Toomey and his editors feel that revealing his tendencies will hurt if not destroy



his career. At the time, homosexuality is not accepted by the public and is actually illegal in many regions. Toomey is arrested for having an affair with a married actor and escapes England before he can be put on trial. This makes reference to the Oscar Wilde trial.

Toomey continues to live his life although as he gets older it seems that he has given up on relationships altogether.

Good vs. Evil

Good vs. Evil plays a major part in *Earthly Powers* by Anthony Burgess. There are many examples of good vs. evil when evil is in fact just another way of life that does not conform to the tenets of the Catholic Church. For example, many people believe that Toomey is evil because he is a homosexual. Carlo believes that Raffele and Concetta deserved to die because of their actions.

There are many instances in which evil is a more appropriate term. Much of this relates to World War II and the actions of Benito Mussolini and Adolph Hitler. Both men are responsible for murdering millions of people in the name of their cause.

Concetta Campanati recognizes Hitler's evil and works hard to combat against it and to save the Jews. Concetta manages to get a pistol and attempts to murder Hitler's right hand man Heinrich Himmler. However, Toomey pushes Himmler out of the way. By doing so, Concetta is murdered and Toomey unwittingly has perpetuated more evil.

John and Laura Campanati/Campion suffer death at the hands of cannibalistic natives when attempting to convert them to Catholicism. This is certainly viewed as an evil deed.



Style

Point of View

Earthly Powers by Anthony Burgess is written in the first person point of view, through the eyes of the main character, Kenneth Toomey. The use of first person in the story works well in that the reader is able to understand the modern world of an author and playwright throughout his career. The reader is taken on a journey along with Toomey and is enabled to see inside the mind of the author as he rises to fame and deals with the relationships and struggles in his life.

The use of first person makes the story seem slightly less removed due to the time period and subject matter. Burgess uses Toomey's experiences and relationships to give the reader a bird's eye view of what it was like to live in the times and places inhabited by Toomey. Toomey also gives the reader the opportunity to venture into the world of literature in the early 1900s through his interactions with such famous writers as James Joyce, Rudyard Kipling, Ezra Pound and Ernest Hemingway.

While third person omniscient may have enabled the reader to get a broader view of Toomey, as well as the inner workings of the church and government, the use of first person lends an air of authenticity to the story and allows the character of Kenneth Toomey to become real.

Setting

There are many settings used throughout the book, including New York, London, Gorgonzola, Tangier, and Los Angeles.

The setting used most often is Kenneth Toomey's house in Tangier. Toomey's house is located in a small village on the island of Triq Il-Kaba in Malta. The house is large and somewhat old-fashioned. It has a lovely garden that is tended to by Toomey's gardeners. The house has a servant named Ali. Also living in the house is Geoffrey Enright, Toomey's lover and secretary.

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Language and Meaning

The language used in *Earthly Powers* by Anthony Burgess tends to be relatively informal and relies a great deal on dialogue between the characters.

It is clear by the use of specific language regarding weapons that Toomey is a professional writer who is involved in an intricate web of relationships, both familial and sexual. Despite the references to several professions, from evangelical to literary and musical, the terms used are either self-explanatory or explained well enough so that the reader can fully understand what is being said and what specific references mean and how they affect the story.

The language used by Toomey and the other characters is very descriptive and is used in such a way that the person he is speaking to can fully understand the meaning and context of what is being said.

One chapter is given over to another writer when Toomey says he can no longer stand the sound of his own voice. However, the text and dialogue are exactly the same as if they were written by Toomey.

Burgess is well known for his love of language and flourish. The narrative is quite lengthy and descriptive, often giving details that might otherwise be missed or thought to be inconsequential.

Structure

Earthly Powers by Anthony Burgess is a work of fiction. The book is 607 pages in length and is comprised of 82 chapters. The shortest chapter is 4 pages in length; the longest chapter is 14 pages in length. The average length of a chapter is 7 pages.

The story is chronological in nature. It begins in the 1970s, back tracks to 1918, and then moves forward to return to the 1970s when the main character, Kenneth Toomey is an old man.

The story begins with noted author Kenneth Marchal Toomey celebrating his 81st birthday. Toomey lives in Tangier with his secretary/lover Geoffrey Enwright. Toomey is visited by the Archbishop of Malta who requests that Toomey write about his brother-in-law, Carlo Campanati aka Pope Gregory XVII. Carlo had performed a miracle that would ensure that he be canonized in the Roman Catholic Church. Toomey was the only witness to the miracle.

From this point the story flashes back to the beginning of Toomey's career and involvement with the Campanati family. It also addresses Toomey's struggles with

relationships and sexuality. Throughout this time Toomey often wars with himself and his unrealistic vision of self. The book ends with Toomey as an old man, living out his days with his sister when his wants and dreams are few.



Quotes

"I retired 12 years ago from the profession of novelist. Nevertheless you would be constrained to consider, if you know my work at all and take the trouble now to reread that first sentence, that I have lost none of my old cunning in the contrivance of what is known as an arresting opening." Chap. 1, p. 7

"The point is, father,' I said, 'I shall never have any hope of making a good act of contrition.'" Chap. 11, p. 47

"The above must not, of course, be taken as a verbatim account of what happened." Chap. 12, p. 50

"1917 was, among other things, the year in which I began to make money." Chap. 16, p. 71

"Photostats of my diaries and notebooks arrived from the United States about three months after my 81st birthday, and I found therein days and weeks of my life pretty fully recorded, although there are considerable lacunae." Chap. 26 p. 141

"1922 would seem in the far future to have been a momentous year for literature, what with productions like Ulysses and The Wasteland, though not of course my own Windfalls of the Storm. That it had been a big year and the sphere of public enactments was, to some, already evident." Chap. 31, p. 182

"Why are you telling me all this? I do not, if I may say so, find it pertinent to my situation." Chap. 33, p. 204

"How badly I wrote. I took the completed piece out of my typewriter two hours later, read it with disgust, and then caught an image of all the badly written pages of the world since the burning of the library of Alexandria, all the bad and useless books crowding the shelves of the world, diseased books, books with yaws and suppurating pudenda being born to clutter and to trap, offering an unreal reality, lies." Chap. 35, p. 226

"Evil's necessary to his trade. Without evil he'd have nothing to do. So go on, let's have more evil." Chap. 41, p. 277

"The book's greatest offense is its failure to suggest that anyone with the horrible tendencies described is in the least degree blameworthy. All the characters are presented as attractive people and put forward with admiration." Chap. 42, p. 286

"I felt ashamed. They did not burn my books. My books were rather popular in Nazi Germany." Chap. 46, p. 334



"On April 26 the town of Verona, long and romantically associated with Romeo and Juliet, fell to the Americans. There was nothing romantic about it at this time: many of its historic buildings had been destroyed by Allied bombing, and the Germans compounded the chaos by blowing up all of the seven bridges over the Adige before the Americans could reach it." Chap. 55, p. 408

"God gave his creatures the most tremendous endowment, the thing most like his own essence-I mean freedom of choice. If he knows in advance what his creatures are going to do, then he is denying them freedom. So he deliberately blacks out for knowledge. God could know if you wished, but out of respect and love for his creatures he refuses to know." Chap. 69, p. 518

Topics for Discussion

Discuss the relationship between Toomey and Don Carlo.

Don Carlo performed a miracle on the small boy in the hospital. Discuss the miracle and the fact that little was said about the great deed.

Discuss Toomey's friendship with Philip Shawcross.

Examine Concetta Campanati's involvement in rescuing Jews from Nazi Germany.

Describe Toomey's works and why they were popular although considered to be mediocre.

Discuss Don Carlo's rise through the Catholic Church.

Discuss the relationship between Hortense and Toomey.