

The Innocent Study Guide

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Contents

The Innocent Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1, 2 and 3.....	5
Chapters 4, 5 and 6.....	7
Chapters 7 and 8.....	9
Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12.....	11
Chapters 13, 14, and 15.....	13
Chapters 16, 17 and 18.....	15
Chapters 19 and 20.....	17
Chapters 21 and 22.....	19
Chapter 23.....	21
Characters.....	23
Objects/Places.....	26
Themes.....	29
Style.....	31
Quotes.....	34
Topics for Discussion.....	37



Plot Summary

This novel, a blend of coming of age narrative and espionage thriller, tells the story of Leonard Marnham, a young British postal worker and unexpected government agent in Berlin in the months following the end of World War II. As he finds himself caught up in a web of tensions spun between the American and British allies, he also discovers the joys of love and sexuality, with the two aspects of his life coming together in a horrific and intense climax. Both these narrative lines are, on some level, defined by the narrative's examination of the complex relationships between conquered and conqueror.

The narrative begins shortly after Marnham's arrival in Berlin. After receiving a series of orders, first from a British contact and then from his American supervisor, Bob Glass, Marnham finds himself assigned on a top secret surveillance project, headquartered in a secret facility outside Berlin and co-sponsored by the American and British intelligence agencies. The night before he is due to officially start work, Glass takes Marnham out to a succession of nightclubs, where he gets increasingly drunk and encounters the attractive Maria, a German woman with whom he quickly and irreversibly becomes attracted.

As he becomes absorbed into his dull and repetitive nature job, Marnham becomes obsessed with thoughts of Maria, eventually putting together a plan to meet her. As he puts that plan into effect, he unexpectedly encounters Maria herself in a meeting that results in his being seduced into a relationship that opens him up both emotionally and sexually. Over the next few weeks, Marnham finds that his job is becoming less and less important to him even when he receives a secret assignment from a British superior.

One day when he returns home from work, Marnham is shocked to find that Maria has been assaulted by her ex-husband Otto. As they struggle to recover from this invasion of their happiness, they also respond fearfully to the threat of a return visit. Eventually however, and after Marnham returns briefly to England where he realizes how much he wants to be with Maria, they put their fears aside and agree to marry. At their engagement party, after Glass gives a sentimental speech, Marnham is warned by a new downstairs neighbor that Glass's espionage activities are well known and that to keep himself and his life safe and quiet, he should be careful about how much they associate. Later, after a late dinner out, Marnham and Maria discover that Otto has invaded Maria's apartment. A violent confrontation results in Marnham killing Otto in self-defense. His conversation with Maria in the aftermath of Otto's death makes Marnham realize they have no choice but to dispose of the body and the narrative graphically describes how the two lovers cut up the body and load it into a pair of suitcases for disposal.

A complicated chain of events, including Marnham's repeatedly frustrated efforts to dispose of the suitcases and their contents, results in the cases being stored in the basement of the secret research facility. Shortly after he leaves the suitcases, Marnham is shocked to learn that the facility is being raided by the Russians and worries that



Otto's body is going to be found, leading the authorities back to him. As it turns out, however, Marnham faces no reaction to the bodies being found and is reassigned back to Britain. Maria says goodbye at the airport, promising to visit him as soon as she can. As he is boarding his plane, however, Marnham sees her on the airport roof with Glass's arm around her shoulder.

The book's final chapter, set thirty years after the events of the rest of the book, finds Marnham back in Berlin for the first time since he left. As he walks through familiar streets and unfamiliar buildings, he remembers the past and contemplates the future. This is a response to a letter from Maria explaining her feelings, what happened between her and Glass, and expressing the hope that she and Marnham can someday, somehow recapture what was special between them. The novel concludes with Marnham resolving to bring Maria back to Berlin and rebuild their relationship.



Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 Summary

This novel, a blend of coming of age narrative and espionage thriller, tells the story of Leonard Marnham, a young British postal worker and unexpected government agent in Berlin in the months following the end of World War II. As he finds himself caught up in a web of tensions spun between the American and British allies, he also discovers the joys of love and sexuality, with the two aspects of his life coming together in a horrific, intense climax. Both these narrative lines are, on some level, defined by the narrative's examination of the complex relationships between conquered and conqueror.

In Chapter 1, in a meeting with an impatient British Army officer, postal service employee Leonard Marnham, newly arrived in post World War II Berlin, is told that he and the equipment with which he is to work have been handed over to American forces for supervision. After receiving a sealed envelope and after listening to the officer disparage the American way of working, Marnham returns to his recently rented apartment, with narration commenting on his enjoyment at relishing living away from his parents' home for the first time in his life. He also opens the envelope, discovering that it contains only a name and a telephone number. He calls the number and is brusquely told by Glass to report for a meeting the following morning. That night, Marnham walks through Berlin, feeling somewhat superior for being a member of a conquering country (England) walking through a conquered city. The next morning, Marnham goes to meet Glass who, after complaining about the British way of working, quizzes Marnham about what he knows about his assignment. Marnham, self-consciously aware of how his British reserve is very different from the American's assertiveness, reveals he knows next to nothing. Glass tells Marnham they are to travel together to the research facility at Altglienicke.

In Chapter 2, Marnham becomes increasingly uncomfortable as Glass bombards him with questions without seeming to care about the answers and, at the end of the drive, arranges for them to go out together and find some girls. When they arrive at Altglienicke, Glass goes through a complicated series of security arrangements, leaving Marnham in the car at the main gate. While waiting for Glass to return, Marnham watches a couple of Americans toss a football back and forth, and wonders at their extravagant playfulness. After Glass returns, he tells Marnham that there is a complicated system of security clearances within which the system functions and that the site is constantly under surveillance by the Russian military. Glass then shows Marnham through the complex, guiding him past a large tunnel in the process of being dug and showing him to the room where he (Marnham) is to set up and modify several banks of tape recorders. Later, as Marnham is toured through the rest of the facility, Glass tells him that the Americans are only allowing the British to work on the tunnel as a political favor, his comments making Marnham more and more angry. His anger peaks when, after driving Marnham home, Glass complains about the relative luxury of his



accommodations, saying that it is strange that a mere post office clerk should be put up so well.

In Chapter 3, at his apartment, Marnham thinks about his situation and after making a shopping list, goes out and buys some groceries. As he returns, he encounters a pair of painters working in an apartment below his. He discovers they're British and talks with them further, their conversation revealing how much they and the Germans alike hate the Russians who, according to the painters, behaved brutally during the war. Marnham goes back up to his apartment, unpacks his groceries, and has a nap before getting ready for his night out with Glass.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 Analysis

This section introduces several key aspects of the novel. The most important is the presentation of the main character, Leonard Marnham. The reader learns about his sense of national pride, his celebration of what seems to be a long desired personal independence, and perhaps most importantly, his reactive behavior. All these aspects of his character define both the action of the narrative and the personal journey of transformation triggered by those events. The second important aspect of the novel introduced in these first chapters is the establishing of one of its two main plots, that involving Marnham's work in the tunnel. An important point to note here is that, in both content and tone, the initial steps along this narrative line seem to set the book up as a sort of spy novel or suspense thriller. But as the narrative unfolds, the reader becomes aware that the espionage work with which Leonard is involved is, in fact, a catalytic backdrop for the more emphasized narrative line exploring Marnham's emotional, sexual, and romantic coming of age. Here it's important to note the connection between these first two aspects of the novel - specifically, how Marnham's personal and professional lives have been, up to the point the novel begins, quite sheltered, defined by a quietness and restraint that, again in both aspects of his life, becomes transformed by his Berlin experiences. In other words, his journey of transformation over the course of the novel is a movement from innocence and naivete to knowledge and awareness, manifesting in changes to who he is, what he does, what he believes, and how he feels.

Meanwhile, as it introduces its central character and narrative situation, the book also introduces its key themes.

Finally, there are several important elements of foreshadowing in this section. These include the conversations about security and the conversation with the painters in Chapter 3, which foreshadows the arrival of the Blakes (Chapter 10) who, in turn, turn out to be key, if underdeveloped, players in the plot. Finally, Glass's invitation to go out to "meet some girls" foreshadows Glass and Marnham both meeting, in the following section, the woman with whom they both become emotionally involved.



Chapters 4, 5 and 6

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Summary

In Chapter 4, Marnham and Glass are joined on their evening out by Russell, a talkative American. They go to the Neva Hotel, where they drink several bottles of champagne, argue politely about politics, and get a little too loud. Narration comments that the next day Marnham couldn't remember leaving the Hotel, but then describes how he and the others made their way to another, more crowded club. As the men get increasingly drunk, Glass comments on how people find having and keeping a secret stimulating. Conversation is interrupted by the arrival of a message for Marnham from a woman who wants to dance with him. After being fussed over by Glass and Russell, Marnham joins the woman, whom narration names as Maria Eckdorf.

Chapter 5 begins with a summary of Maria's life and circumstances with narration commenting that Marnham learned some of it that night at the bar and the rest over the following weeks. Narration then describes his first full day at work, which he undertook with a considerable hangover from the night before. He attempts to interrupt Glass's complicated, specific instructions with comments about their going out, hoping for a chance to talk about Maria, with whom he has become infatuated. Glass, however, tells him firmly that under no circumstances is anything about life outside the complex to be discussed. He also tells a surprised, and somewhat offended Marnham that Marnham is expected to work fifteen hour days or face being replaced. Narration then describes how Marnham settles down to work, unpacking, sorting and modifying tape recorders, how his obsession with thoughts and fantasies about Maria gets him through his days, and how in the future he could remember her face clearly, but at the moment could only imagine its outlines. When he finally has a day off, Marnham hatches an elaborate plan to meet Maria, and puts it into action. He pushes the note he spent hours composing through her door, and then does "an inexplicable thing, quite out of character" for an "over-scrupulous observer of other people's privacy." He opens her door and finds her standing right there.

Chapter 6 describes Maria's initially frightened response to Marnham's presence, his embarrassed attempts to explain herself, and their surprising and sudden intimacy when she takes off his glasses and tells him how beautiful his eyes are. They hold hands and talk for a while and then Maria makes tea with Marnham observing that she makes it in the British style. Their conversation turns to sex with Marnham's embarrassed admission that he is a virgin, triggering in her a surge of excitement and in him a desperately embarrassed desire to leave. She keeps him there however, by grabbing and hiding his glasses. They end up in bed together and Marnham has his first experience of sex, which narration describes as simultaneously surprising him and being exactly what he imagined, eventually triggering such intense feelings that he becomes so concerned about premature ejaculation that he has to distract himself.



Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Analysis

In this section, the book begins the process of entwining its two main narrative lines, the espionage plot and the romance plot. It is important to note here and throughout the novel that while events in each narrative line appear to be unfolding independently from one another they are, in fact, very closely connected. This section contains a vivid example of how this connection manifests, with the narrative's description of how Marnham's fascination with Maria gets him through the dull routine of his days. It's possible to see, here and at other points throughout the novel, how the book is making the broad strokes suggestion that an active, fulfilling inner life can provide support and provide strength throughout difficulties in external life, particularly when that emotional life is a new experience.

The character of Maria, introduced in this section, is a very interesting one. It could be argued that she is, in some ways, almost stereotypical - an older, more sexually experienced woman with a troubled past introducing a naïve young man to the ways of the world. It could also be argued that she is also a stereotypical victim, a woman held emotional hostage by a brutal and unfeeling man. On the other hand, it could also be argued that she is not stereotypical but archetypal, a manifestation of universal, recognized female experience of female maturity entwined with vulnerability. In any case, she is multifaceted and intriguing, her intensely lived life a powerful contrast to Marnham's much more sheltered existence and therefore an effective, motivating, catalytic presence in his journey of transformation.

Also in this section, there are glimpses of an occasionally recurring motif or image of flawed memory. Examples here include the narrative's references to Marnham's alcohol-triggered loss of memory about the events at the bar and his later difficulties remembering Maria's face. The motif reappears in the novel's final chapter, in which Marnham's return to Berlin thirty years after his initial visit are defined by memories, both present and absent.

Finally, for further consideration of Glass's comment about secrets in Chapter 4, see "Topics for Discussion - Discuss how Glass's comment ..."



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

Chapter 7 describes how Marnham takes four weeks to unpack and refit all the tape recorders, how the cafeteria at the facility became more and more crowded, and how the workers became less and less discreet with their conversations. Shortly after his assignment is finished, Marnham is approached by a British superior, MacNamee, who tells Marnham his security clearance is going up to Level Four and reveals that the tunnel is being constructed to tap into Russian and German telegraph lines so that coded communications between the two allies can be intercepted. Research by a man named Nelson, MacNamee continues, has discovered that when a message is electronically coded, a faint trace of the original message remains embedded into it. But the Americans, according to the bitter MacNamee, are keeping the details about how Nelson's technique works. Marnham, as someone fairly low on the status ladder and as someone with technical knowledge, is being asked to listen for any clues and/or hints about the Nelson's Technique and pass them on to the British. Marnham agrees. Later, his confidence increased, Marnham goes back to Maria, with narration revealing that Maria knows nothing about his work life, while those with whom he works know nothing about Maria. As he walks in the increasing darkness, Marnham contemplates the nature of his movement between the two secret parts of his life.

Chapter 8 describes how Marnham becomes increasingly obsessed with making love with Maria, how he doesn't go back to his apartment for a week after their first encounter, and how when he finally does return, he felt more fully a man, no longer the young naive boy who first came to Berlin. Narration also describes how, as the relationship continued, Marnham became obsessed with exploring every detail of Maria's body, and how after a while thoughts of dominance began to come into his mind while they were making love, dominance based on his being British and her being German, a defeated enemy. Narration then comments on how those thoughts became fantasies about dominating her sexually, how his attempt to act on those fantasies ended in embarrassment and failure, and how just as the Russian communication cables at the facility were being revealed, Marnham discovered that Maria had moved back to her parents' home.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

This section contains two key turning points, one in each of the novel's narrative lines. The first is Marnham's new job and the accompanying increase in security clearance. The latter is of particular importance, since the heightened clearance is a key component of the action in Chapter 20. This also makes this particular moment an important piece of foreshadowing.



The second turning point is related, but is arguably far more important. This is the sexual confrontation in Chapter 8 between Marnham and Maria. There are several elements to discuss here, the first being Marnham's mental and emotional state at this point in his journey of transformation. As the narrative made clear in its earlier chapters, Marnham came into his job in Berlin with the attitude of a conqueror, overconfident and self-righteous. As the narrative suggests in Chapter 8, he feels a surge of this attitude with Maria, but there is the sense that without the confidence emerging from his new status at work and from his newly discovered sexuality, he would never have acted on that attitude the way he does. To look at the situation another way, the pendulum of his identity has swung too far in the other direction. Where he was once submissive and retiring to a fault, he is now overconfident and aggressive, also to a fault. The rest of the narrative is defined by his efforts to bring himself and his attitudes back into balance, finding ways to utilize his courage and confidence more appropriately ... efforts that are arguably not always successful.

There is yet another potential level of meaning in this confrontation, in that it can potentially be seen as a reflection of a complicated power dynamic between Marnham, Maria, and Glass. Often times an individual with no power or status in one situation or relationship will bully or attempt to over-power an individual with no status in a different relationship in order to assert at least some kind of control in his life. It may be that because Marnham has no power in his professional relationship with Glass, he is driven to assert power in his personal relationship with Maria.

Finally, both turning points can be seen as manifestations of the narrative's thematic consideration of the relationship between conqueror and conquered, with both the revelation of the nature of the tunnel and the attack on Maria illuminating ways in which, in the novel's view, the conqueror humiliates the conquered.



Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12

Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12 Summary

Chapter 9 begins with a detailed description of the process by which the Americans and British tap into the Russian communication cables, and of Marnham's relief when his modifications to the tape recorders seem to be working. He encounters Glass who confronts him. Glass reveals his knowledge of Marnham's relationship with Maria, saying security regulations require that she has to be investigated. After Marnham gives Glass the addresses for Maria's home and for her place of work, Glass takes him for a drink in his office, and when he (Glass) goes to fetch some ice, narration says that Marnham had "a little under a minute." The implication is that he is going to look through the papers on Glass's desk to for information on the Nelson Technique.

Chapter 10 describes how Marnham continues to stop by Maria's apartment on his way home from the facility even though he knows, somehow, that she's not going to be there. When he gets home he keeps himself busy and at work tries to do the same, but because the recorders are functioning smoothly and there are fewer people around, he has more time to think and to brood. At the same time, a married couple, the Blakes, moves in downstairs, and Marnham finds himself feeling intimidated by their style and confidence. Eventually, he's visited by MacNamee, who asks him whether Marnham has been able to find out anything about the Nelson Technique. Marnham tells him he's tried several times but has discovered nothing, narration revealing that aside from that one moment in Glass's office, he has done nothing. As the disappointed MacNamee is walking away from him, Marnham finds himself reminded of Maria also walking away.

In Chapter 11, Leonard finds Maria waiting for him outside his apartment. His initial attempts to apologize and to reach out for her trigger, in her, a sudden and unexpected surge of fear resulting in a scream. The sound brings Mr. Blake up from downstairs, ready to defend her if necessary. A tense standoff between him and Marnham is broken by Maria, who apologizes for creating a disturbance and tells Blake that there's nothing to worry about. A still unsatisfied Blake leaves, and Maria and Marnham go into the apartment. After collecting her thoughts in the bathroom, Maria comes out to find Marnham waiting for her in the living room. Narration describes how he talks at length, apologizing and trying to explain. Narration also describes Maria's realization that he is struggling to connect with feelings he never knew existed. She listens with increasing compassion and forgiveness as he repeatedly professes his love. The chapter concludes with narration describing how, in the increasing darkness of early evening, Maria finally takes off her coat and moves towards Marnham.

In Chapter 12, Glass tells Marnham that the security check on Maria came back clear, and that she had been told to go back and make things up. Narration describes how Maria had told Marnham about being checked, and had been impressed that he was so important. Narration also describes how disgusted Marnham feels with Glass and his procedures.



Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12 Analysis

There are several important points to this section. The first is the relative lack of overt action in the espionage narrative without any real high points, with Marnham and his activities essentially in a holding pattern. This reinforces the sense that for Marnham, his job is becoming increasingly less important and less defining than his relationship with Maria. It's important to note the difference in emphasis between this section and the first, in which the emphasis was almost entirely on the espionage narrative, which is now clearly taking a narrative back seat. The statement here is that for the author, Marnham's his journey of transformation is far more defined by his relationship with Maria than his work.

That said, it is important to note Glass's revelation in Chapter 9 that Maria is to be investigated. In terms of the espionage narrative, the event is relatively insignificant - for Glass, and at first for Marnham, all in a day's work. Later, however, as Marnham becomes more and more emotionally intimate with and dependent upon Maria, he simultaneously becomes more suspicious and paranoid of what her relationship with Glass involves. His suspicions later prove, at least in his own mind, to be justified. To look at it another way, the investigation of Maria marks the beginning of what might be described as the dark side of Marnham's journey of transformation. He learns to love, but he also learns to fear, to doubt, and to question.

There is also, in this section, the introduction of an important character, Mr. Blake. There are two important points to note here. The first is that although his appearances are quite small in both number and in size, the role he plays in later chapters is essential in the chain of events that enables Marnham's escape from a potential prison term. The second point to note about his appearance here is that it sets him up as something of a heroic character, a good person. This is known as a red herring or a piece of false information or narrative misdirection that establishes a certain perspective in the reader's mind in order to make a later surprise more potent. That surprise, his role in the aforementioned chain of events leading to Marnham's freedom, shows up in Chapter 23.

Finally, a key point to note is the narrative's brief shift in focus in Chapter 11, moving its attention from Marnham to Maria.



Chapters 13, 14, and 15

Chapters 13, 14, and 15 Summary

Chapter 13 describes the comfortable and easygoing routine into which Marnham and Maria slip following Maria's return, essentially living together while maintaining separate apartments. The relative smoothness of their routine is interrupted twice. The first time is the result of a conversation between Marnham and Glass, in which the two men disagree over the value of Britain's contributions to the current effort. Narration describes how Marnham's side of the argument is colored by his recollection of Maria saying her interrogation didn't happen in the way Glass said it did. The second interruption comes when Maria receives a visit from her ex-husband Otto, making one of his periodic and violent attempts to borrow money from her. A shocked Marnham tends to her cuts and bruises.

In Chapter 14, Marnham goes home to England for Christmas, having left Maria behind. After being home for a short time, Marnham realizes not only that Maria was right, but that he has changed too thoroughly to feel comfortable with his mother fussing over him as though he was still her little boy. As the days pass, he becomes homesick for his life in Germany, not only for Maria but for the friendship of Glass and the routine of the tunnel and the rest of the facility. He begins to consider asking Maria to marry him, and as he makes a list of pros and cons, he remembers Otto, with narration describing the details of Otto's background, his attack on Maria, and their careful striving to keep Maria safe. After taking a long walk to think, Marnham decides that any problems he and Maria might face are less important than the pleasure and rightness of being married, and resolves to propose.

In Chapter 15, back in Germany, Marnham and Maria teach themselves to dance the jive to American Jazz and plan their engagement party. Among the guests is Glass, who gives a speech of congratulation and who jokingly talks about taking an Eastern European bride back to Iowa with him. Another guest is Mr. Blake who, after Glass's speech, pulls Marnham aside, warns him that Glass's identity as an American security agent is well known, and suggests that Marnham would do well to not see Glass socially. From this conversation, Marnham realizes that Blake has just given himself away as another member of the Security Service, and realizes Marnham has to be careful. Later, while he and Maria are out celebrating their engagement with a private dinner, Maria comments that she neither likes nor trusts Glass. Also at this point, narration describes how Marnham has been assigned by Glass to obtain entertainment for an upcoming celebration of the one year anniversary of the beginning of the tunnel project. Meanwhile, Marnham and Maria finish their dinner, and later that night at Maria's apartment, begin making love but suddenly stop when Maria senses someone in the wardrobe.



Chapters 13, 14, and 15 Analysis

Here the narrative's emphasis shifts almost entirely to the Marnham/Maria relationship, reinforcing the previously discussed sense that, in spite of the focus of the book's earliest chapters, the key component of Marnham's journey of transformation is his relationship with Maria. Key components of this section include the sudden, violent attack by Otto and the description of Marnham's visit home. Another important element is the deepening of Marnham's suspicions about Glass and Maria which, although the narrative never explicitly makes the connection, seem to play a role in Marnham's eventual separation from the relationship. Then there is the reappearance of Mr. Blake who, at this point in the narrative, seems again to be essentially a decent human being, if somewhat emotionally restrained. This, however, is another red herring, another misdirection on the part of the narrative to send the reader's suspicions and/or ideas in a direction other than that in which the narrative is headed. Another important point is Glass's comment about taking an Eastern European back with him to Iowa, an ironic foreshadowing of Maria's letter in Chapter 13 in which she reveals she married Glass and in fact did exactly as Glass jokingly proposes her, which is to move with him back to Iowa.

Finally, there is the conversation between Marnham and Glass in Chapter 13 about Britain's involvement in the war. Here again, the narrative dramatizes one of its key secondary themes, which is the postwar tension between Britain and America.



Chapters 16, 17 and 18

Chapters 16, 17 and 18 Summary

In Chapter 16, Marnham and Maria get out of bed and, preparing themselves for a confrontation, turn on the bedroom light. When nothing happens, they look in the wardrobe and discover Otto, drunk and unconscious, lying on its floor. Marnham and Maria go into the living room where Marnham tries to figure out what to do and Maria berates him for not being angrier about the situation. They have a short and sharp argument, which is suddenly ended when Maria's skirt accidentally catches on fire from a still-smoldering cigarette. Marnham rips it off her, tosses it to the floor, and stamps out the fire, all the while thinking he should instead be comforting her. As soon as the fire is out, he starts to do so, but then he and Maria both become aware that Otto is conscious and is watching them. Otto and Maria confront each other in German, becoming increasingly angry as they argue over which of them has the right to the apartment. Marnham, his German inadequate for the situation, merely stands by and listens. Otto soon becomes infuriated and attacks Maria. Marnham attempts to protect her, and is himself attacked, defending himself with a shoemaker's handed to him by Maria. The still penetrates Otto's skull, and he falls dead to the floor.

Chapter 17 begins with Marnham's planning what to say at work about what happened after the engagement party, but then narration shifts, somewhat incoherently, between Marnham making his way to work and narration of what he and Maria did in the immediate aftermath of Otto's death. Narration describes the routine of Marnham's journey to work, contrasting it with his and Maria's desperate confused actions earlier and conversations about what to do and who to tell. The narrative lines continue to intertwine as Marnham arrives at work, where he does a couple of routine jobs, avoids a meeting with Glass, and retrieves two large suitcases. Meanwhile, he recalls his early morning conversation with Maria, in which she told him that Otto was good friends with the local police who would never, she adds, believe that what happened was self defense. They will, she says, go to prison for manslaughter. Then, narration describes how, after leaving work with the suitcases, Marnham goes to a department store and makes some purchases, at the same time as narration describes his and Maria's conversation about how to dispose of Otto's body. The chapter concludes with Marnham's arrival back at Maria's apartment, and the narrative clearly indicating that they are planning to dismember Otto and take the various body parts out of the apartment in the suitcases.

Chapter 18 describes in considerable and graphic detail, the process by which Marnham and Maria cut up Otto's body, wrap it, and prepare to dispose of it. Eventually, they fit all the pieces of the body into the suitcases, and Maria suggests that Marnham take the cases and dispose of them while she cleans the apartment. Marnham realizes she wants to be alone, and agrees. He takes the cases into the hall, looks back at her standing by the door, and realizes that while he feels he ought to kiss her goodbye, he cannot. He promises to return and Maria closes the door.



Chapters 16, 17 and 18 Analysis

The two key components of this section are the events they describe, and the way in which those events are narrated.

In terms of the first, there are several elements to consider. On a structural level, the confrontation and its resolution are a significant turning point in the book's plot, with both narratives changing direction completely as the result of Otto's death. In terms of the effect these events have on Marnham's character, there are a number of noteworthy points. The first is how Marnham, in spite of his essential fear, takes decisive action, albeit with Maria's help. This marks another important stage of his journey of transformation. He has moved away from his natural reserve, timidity, and reluctance for physical confrontation, and is prepared to defend the woman he loves. The second point to note here is the different quality of violence he expresses, and the direction in which he expresses it. Previously, he had expressed emotional and sexual violence towards Maria, now he is expressing physical violence in her defense. This can also be seen as a step forward in his maturation process. Finally, there is the somewhat unexpected moment when Marnham leaves the apartment with the suitcases and realizes he doesn't want to see Maria for a while. It is unexpected, but somehow not surprising, in that it makes a degree of sense that, having endured the horrors they have, the relationship between Marnham and Maria has changed. At this point the narrative suggests that change is only temporary, in that Marnham seems to think they will reconnect after he has disposed of the bodies, but as the remainder of the narrative indicates, the damage to the relationship has been more significant than he realizes.

The other interesting component of this section is, as discussed above, the way in which its events are narrated in a fragmented, almost incoherent mosaic of memory, action, flashback, and present-time event. This stylistic choice effectively evokes and dramatizes Marnham's state of mind, shocked and barely functional, traumatized and acting/reacting on autopilot. The transformation is made even more effective by the stylistic context in which it takes place.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

Chapter 19 begins with the comment, in narration, that Marnham is glad not only to be leaving the apartment, but leaving Maria. "There was bound to be sorrow in all this," narration comments, "but it could not reach him now." He struggles to get the very heavy suitcases down the stairs and into the street, the various injuries he suffered in the fight with Otto and the soreness incurred during the dismembering process paining him intensely. He has to stop every few steps to rest, and at one such stop the cases are sniffed by an increasingly curious dog, who is eventually pulled away by his owner. Eventually, Marnham makes his way by foot and by taxi to a train station, where his attempt to leave the cases in a luggage locker ends in failure. He then decides to go home to his apartment where, when he arrives, he first hallucinates that the engagement party is still going on, but then realizes the place is empty. He cleans himself up and lies down for a nap, dreaming that he is attempting to reassemble Otto and bring him back to life, an attempt that in the dream ends with Otto indeed coming back to life, but grabbing a knife and stabbing him. After waking from the dream and after spending a sleepless night, Marnham formulates a new plan - to take the cases to the end of the bus line and leave them there. As he's taking the cases downstairs he encounters Blake, who recognizes the cases as belonging to the Ministry of Defense and asks what's in them. Marnham says the cases contain decoding equipment, and Blake hurries off. Outside his apartment, Marnham is met by Glass. Glass has been looking for Marnham all day. He too recognizes the cases and when Marnham says he had taken work home with him, Glass berates him for creating a security risk. He then loads the cases into his car, telling Marnham they have to be taken back where they belong.

In Chapter 20, as Glass drives Marnham to the tunnel facility, Glass complains about the inappropriateness of Marnham's plans for the anniversary party. Marnham, however, is barely able to respond, being preoccupied by worries about the cases and what is going to happen when they are inevitably searched by the facility's security. When they arrive at the facility, his concerns prove justified, but just before they're about to be opened Marnham has a brainwave, reveals that he has Level Four security and that the contents of the cases is classified information. Glass confirms Marnham's security status, and the cases are stored near the tunnel. Marnham then says he's fatigued from working so hard, and Glass lets him leave. As he travels back to his apartment, Marnham realizes that he's solved one problem only to create another. What is he going to tell MacNamee when he asks about the cases? He then formulates another plan and begins to leave Berlin. While waiting for a train, he encounters a young man named Hans who, after a casual conversation about traveling, drops hints that he'd be willing to be paid for any "information" that Marnham might have. Marnham tells him about the tunnel, thinking that when the Russians discover what has been going on and break into the facility, the cases will either be destroyed or their contents misidentified. After bidding farewell to Hans, Marnham returns to his apartment, where his sleep is



interrupted by a telephone call from Glass, desperate to know what is in the cases. The facility has been discovered and is being overrun by Russians. At first Marnham is pleased to know his plan worked, and jokes that the cases contain a dismembered body. But when Glass reveals that the attack began before Marnham gave the information to Hans, Marnham becomes concerned, getting even more so when Glass reveals that the Russians are going to use their discovery of the facility for propaganda purposes.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

After spending several chapters exploring Marnham's personal journey of transformation as simultaneously triggered by and manifested in his relationship with Maria, the narrative turns back to the stylistic and plot elements with which it started. In other words, it seems to be turning back into an espionage novel, with the facility, the research going on there, and Marnham's role in that research again taking primary focus. It's important to note, however, that the only reason it does so is because of events in Marnham's personal life, another example of how the narrative entwines both its narrative lines, events and circumstances in one triggering and defining circumstances and events in the other. All that said, this section contains the climax of the espionage plot, as the secret work being conducted by Marnham and the other workers at the warehouse facility finally being discovered and disrupted by their eastern bloc enemies. The climax of the romantic plot follows in the coming chapters.

Specific points to note in this section include Marnham's conversation with Blake and the important role played by Marnham's increased security status, foreshadowed several times throughout the narrative.

Finally, an interesting point to consider is the potential metaphoric value of Marnham's attempt to get rid of the suitcases. On one symbolic level, Marnham is ridding both Maria and his relationship with her of the threat posed by Otto. Essentially, he is getting rid of emotional baggage at the same time as he is getting rid of literal, physical baggage. On another level, the destruction of Otto and the disposal of his body can be seen as manifestations of the novel's thematic exploration of the relationship between conqueror and conquered. In the same way as, in the espionage plot, the British and Americans are attempting to dispose of remaining German threats, the British Marnham is attempting to dispose of the personal threat posed by the German Otto.



Chapters 21 and 22

Chapters 21 and 22 Summary

In Chapter 21, at a meeting on the outdoor patio of a nearby restaurant, Marnham explains the cases by telling MacNamee that because he had been unable to come up with any information on the Nelson Technique, he was working on his own decoding process, but without success. The contents of the cases, he says, were the devices he came up with. MacNamee appears to accept the story, revealing that Marnham is being recalled to England, and that MacNamee has "put in a good word" for him. After MacNamee leaves, Marnham scans the newspapers for reports of the cases and fantasizes about the ways and circumstances he will plead his innocence. He makes his way to Maria's apartment where, in spite of his reluctance to see her, he knocks on her door and is surprised to not only discover Glass there, but to discover evidence that he's been there for quite some time. Both Glass and Maria tell him that as the result of what happened, girlfriends and wives of workers at the facility are again being interrogated, and then Glass leaves. Stiff, awkward conversation between Marnham and Maria reveals that Marnham is still very much on edge, while Maria is quietly confident everything will be all right. Both of them are uncomfortable with each other. Marnham eventually leaves, kissing Maria politely as he promises to let her know when his flight for Britain leaves. He spends the next few days packing up at the facility and at home, in both places preoccupied with wondering what's going on between Glass and Maria. He sends a note to Maria telling her when he is leaving and she sends a note back saying she will be there. When the time comes for him to depart, the British officer accompanying him to the airport asks if he would like help carrying his cases. Marnham says yes and that he would.

In Chapter 22, at the airport, Marnham stands in line to check in his luggage, worrying that he is going to be taken away by police, when he is surprised by a touch on his shoulder. It is Maria, wearing new clothes and looking clean and rested. She keeps him company as he slowly edges forward in the line, laughing and encouraging him to laugh as well. She promises to visit him in London, assures him that everything will be all right, and hints at something she wants to tell him but cannot say. After his luggage is checked in, she promises to wave to him from the roof. As he is walking to board his plane, he looks back at the roof and sees her standing there with Glass, both of them waving. He gets on the plane, furious with himself and with her, looking out his window and seeing Glass has his hand on Maria's shoulder.

Chapters 21 and 22 Analysis

In the aftermath of the climax of the espionage plot, the novel builds to the climax of the romance plot in this section and specifically, to the final conversation at the airport between Marnham and Maria, in which the intense and complex feelings alive in both of them are suppressed by what might be described as very English restraint. The English



conqueror, Marnham, has converted the German conquest, Maria, to his way of expressing feeling. Meanwhile, an important step along the way to that climax is Glass's apparently lengthy visit to Maria, the importance of which is revealed in Maria's letter in the following section, which in turn makes it clear why Maria is so mysteriously certain here that everything will be all right. Meanwhile, Marnham's glimpse of Maria and Glass on the airport roof, which is a component of the denouement or falling action following the climax, is simultaneously an ending and a beginning. For Marnham, who believes that his suspicions about the two of them are being confirmed, the moment is the end of his hopes for an ongoing relationship with Maria. For Maria, and again as indicated in the following chapter, the moment on the airport roof marks the beginning of an emotionally fulfilling relationship and life with Glass.

Another important aspect of this section is that at this point in the narrative, Marnham has reached the end of his journey of transformation. He has come of age, not only sexually and romantically but also in terms of his awareness of how the world works militarily and politically, and also how friendship works. He has, over the course of his experiences in Germany, moved out of a naïve and sheltered boyhood and into a wounded, wiser, and more experienced manhood.

A final noteworthy point in this section is the black humor at the end of Chapter 21 when the soldier asks if Marnham wants help with his cases. The moment is profoundly ironic because the cases that he is using for luggage are the cases he really needed help with.



Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

This chapter is set in June of 1987, which is almost thirty years after the events of the rest of the book.

In the first part of this chapter, the now middle-aged Leonard Marnham returns to Berlin, which is now divided into East and West. Narration describes his confused attempts to make his way through the now unfamiliar streets to his hotel, his visit to Maria's apartment building, and his eventual visit to the site of the tunnel facility, now divided by the Berlin Wall. There, he sits and reads a letter that was sent to him ten weeks before and has followed him through several addresses.

The letter is from Maria who had married Glass and moved to America. In the letter, Maria reveals that on the afternoon Marnham had discovered her and Glass together, she had just finished two intense days of clearing up the mess left behind by Otto and was so tired, upset, and vulnerable that Glass's kind words triggered both tears and truth. She confessed everything, she writes, and Glass used his influence to protect Marnham from prosecution. She also says that Glass' appearance at the airport on the day Marnham left was a coincidence and that Glass showed up just as Maria was going to the roof to wave goodbye. She writes of the three daughters that she and Glass had, of their happiness and contentment, of how Glass was "softened" by being a father, and of his recent death from a heart attack.

The letter also refers to George Blake, revealing that he had been an agent for the Russians who had known about the tunnel all along and permitted it to go ahead in order to take up American and British time and resources. Then, after reminiscing about her time with Marnham in Berlin, Maria comments that part of her wishes things had been different, but another part of her is glad things turned out the way they did. The letter concludes with her hope that they both someday and somehow, find peace and forgiveness.

After reading the letter, Marnham goes back into Berlin, making plans to visit Maria in Iowa where, narration reveals, he will explain that the raid on the facility took place when it did because that afternoon, he had told George Blake that he had new decoding equipment in his suitcases.

Chapter 23 Analysis

The first point to note about this section is its setting, thirty years or so after the events of the rest of the novel. There are several important aspects to this shift in time. The first is how the narrative conveys relatively little of what Marnham's life has become as opposed to the very detailed picture that emerges of Maria's life. The difference suggests that for Markham, the years of the war and his relationship with Maria were



the most significant of his life, an idea reinforced by his visiting the important sites of their relationship and his decision, at the end of the novel, to find her and attempt to recapture the feelings and intimacy of that life. This idea is reinforced even further by the suggestion at the end of the narrative that Marnham wants to return with Maria to Berlin before the Berlin Wall is torn down. In other words, he wants to bring her back not only to the place they were happiest, but also to the time before the Berlin Wall was dismantled. This event was a powerful and defining symbol of Communist power of the sort that defined Germany and Eastern Europe at the time of Marnham and Maria's romance.

A second key point is related, in that this section's emphasis on memory is a reiteration of the memory motif first introduced in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. When first introduced, the motif suggested that memory is essentially and fundamentally flawed, a suggestion reiterated here particularly in Marnham's recollections, which at least have gaps in them and at worst are borderline delusional. All of this, in turn, suggests that his journey of transformation, hasn't continued into maturity, that his emotional growth has been suspended since he left Germany and moved back to England.

The second point to note about this section is the way it ties up the various loose ends in the espionage plot, some of which come as a surprise. These include the revelations of Blake's involvement in the Russian raid on the warehouse facility and of Glass's involvement in keeping Marnham out of prison which, in turn, combines with the rest of Maria's revelations about Glass to suggest that he was a better friend than Marnham ever believed him to be. In other words, Marnham's coming of age also included the development of his first real friendship, although it could be argued that Marnham was too absorbed in Maria, and his suspicions of Glass, to notice or even to be open to the possibility that Glass was as good a friend as he actually was.



Characters

Leonard Marnham

Marnham is the book's central character and protagonist. There are two important points to note about the way he is presented and developed. The first is that he is what might be described as a reactive protagonist. He is a character who does not set action in motion but who instead reacts to situations and circumstances around him. The point is not made to suggest that one sort of protagonist is more "right" or more effective than the other. It is made, rather, to suggest that the general function and role of protagonist can manifest in either activity, creating circumstances or responding to them. In Marnham's case, the latter is definitely predominant. Many very effective and engagingly written protagonists, by the way, have elements of both function at work in their characters.

The second point to note about Marnham is related, in that there is a close relationship between the events and circumstances of the plot with which he interacts and his journey of transformation. That journey is clearly charted throughout the narrative, as he evolves from a naïve, sheltered, and inexperienced young man into a worldly, sexually and emotionally experienced adult. This sort of transformation, a so-called "coming of age" is an archetypal one, anchoring many sorts of narratives throughout history. It means, essentially, that the central character in such a story grows up, achieves a new maturity, and learns how to relate to the world from that new perspective.

Maria

Maria and Bob Glass are the novel's two main supporting characters. Both are antagonists, and a distinction can be drawn between two different sorts of antagonist. While the essential purpose of any antagonist is to trigger change and transformation and action in the protagonist, that triggering process can manifest either directly or indirectly. It is also important to note that although the general sense of an antagonist is a "bad guy" where the essential function of the antagonist to challenge and trigger transformation in, the protagonist does not necessarily have to be motivated by evil or by the desire to confront for its own sake. In "The Innocent" both Maria and Glass trigger transformation in Marnham, playing primary roles in his journey of transformation without any evil or negative intent. Both, however have elements of both the direct and indirect action that triggers such transformation.

Maria, for the most part, is responsible for most of the personal and emotional aspects of Marnham's transformation. She introduces him to the world of feeling and a wide range of feeling including lust, love, anger, aggression, patience, joy, and fear. As suggested in the analysis for Chapter 5, it is possible to see Maria as a character carefully balanced on the fine line between archetype and stereotype, in that she can be seen as doing what literary tradition has generally had female "love interests" doing,



particularly when they interact with characters younger and less experienced than they are. In other words, Maria, like so many other female characters do with so many other male characters, awakens Marnham to the ways and world of the spirit.

Bob Glass

Like Maria, Glass is a primary antagonist and a key trigger of transformation. While Maria's sphere seems to be that of feeling, specifically romantic feeling, Glass's is that of politics, both personal and international. That said, Glass does also bring experiences of feeling into Marnham's life, specifically friendship and suspicion, but his influence is far more defined by the work he asks Marnham to do and the circumstances under which Marnham is asked to do it. In other words, Glass is in many ways all about secrecy while Maria is about openness.

MacNamee

MacNamee is the British secret service agent assigned to the warehouse tunnel project. He is defined, in narration, as much by his teeth as much as he is by his character. He is friendly but guarded and eager to equal if not better the success of the Americans on the project. His decision to enlist Marnham's aid in spying on the Americans, and thereby increasing Marnham's security status, plays an important but indirect role in defining both Marnham's journey of transformation and the resolution of the espionage plot.

Otto

Otto appears first only in narration, referred to in the narrative of Maria's past as the violent ex-husband she was desperate to leave. This reference, however, is only a foreshadowing of his two much more important appearances. The first is in Chapter 13, when he hunts Maria down to ask for money and, when she does not give it to him, beats her up. The second is in Chapter 18, when he shows up drunk, hides in Maria's wardrobe, is discovered by Marnham and Maria, and is eventually killed and dismembered by them.

Mr. Blake

Blake appears only infrequently and even then only briefly. He is an important character, in that he plays an essential role in defining the novel's climax. He is an espionage agent, an operative for the Eastern Bloc whose true identity and purpose are disguised by a mask of British mannerisms.



Hans

This minor character appears briefly in the novel's final chapters. He, like Blake, is an espionage agent working for the Eastern Bloc, and manipulates Marnham into revealing secrets about the work being done at the facility. The narrative never actually makes it clear, but there is the sense about the circumstances of the Eastern Bloc's raid on the facility that Hans' information essentially confirms that already communicated to the Eastern commanders by Blake.

Russell

Another minor character, in this case appearing only in the novel's early chapters, Russell is an American who accompanies Glass and Marnham on their nightclub tour that eventually results in the meeting with Maria. Loud, outspoken and brash, he is in Marnham's mind and perspective the embodiment of just about everything he resents in Americans, particularly what he sees as their self-righteousness and arrogance.

The Russians and Germans (The Eastern Bloc)

For several decades after World War II, Europe was essentially divided into two separate socioeconomic and political regions. The West was democratic and capitalist, the East was essentially autocratic and communist. The Soviet Union and East Germany were the primary and dominant countries in the so-called Eastern Bloc. The presence of military, political, and espionage-oriented personnel in the area around the tunnel facility is a defining element in the high-stakes circumstances in which Marnham, Glass, MacNamee, and other allied agents find themselves.

The Allies

In the aftermath of World War II, the Allies that had eventually defeated Nazi Germany continued their alliance, forming what eventually became known as NATO or North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The British and Americans were arguably the most powerful and influential members of the Alliance, but because both were eager to be the dominant member, maintained a rivalry that manifests throughout "The Innocent" and provides an additional level of contextual, competitive tension in Marnham's professional and personal experiences.



Objects/Places

Berlin

Berlin is the capital of Germany. At the time in which the novel is set, in the years immediately following World War II, Berlin was still one city, a center of culture and the arts with an active nightlife. A few years after the war, and in the novel a few years after several events, Berlin was partitioned into East and West along the sociopolitical divisions. The separation was defined by the infamous Berlin Wall.

The Berlin Wall

The partitioning of the two sides of Berlin took place in 1961, the partitioning being defined by the construction of the Berlin Wall which enclosed West Berlin and kept those desperate to escape the Eastern Bloc's communist regime from escaping. At the time in which the novel, the Wall had yet to be constructed, meaning that it does not play a role in the main body of the action. The Wall, however, is clearly and pointedly mentioned in the novel's final moments, in the context of Marnham's desire to rebuild his relationship with Maria on the terms they shared in prewar days.

Marnham's Apartment

When Marnham first moves to Berlin, he is accommodated in a relatively luxurious apartment paid for by his employers in the British Secret Service. The apartment represents Marnham's old way of living. It is limited, secure, middle class, and dull.

Maria's Apartment

In contrast to Marnham's apartment, Maria's is portrayed as small, cluttered, and individualized. It is, in other words, a home as opposed to just a place to live. It is therefore appropriate that most of Marnham's experiences of transformation and his awakening to a wide range of feeling takes place here.

The Research Facility at Altglienicke

The facility is an abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of Berlin and houses an extensive espionage operation run by a British and American alliance intent upon sabotaging the political and military operations of the Eastern Bloc.



The Tunnel

The main purpose of the American and British espionage operation is to dig a tunnel into Eastern Bloc territory in order to physically tap into Eastern communication lines in order to intercept Eastern communications.

The Tape Recorders

When Marnham first arrives at the facility, he is put to work unpacking and modifying a large number of tape recorders, intended to record intercepted conversations and/or transmissions between members of the Eastern Bloc. Later, once this phase of his work is completed, he is assigned to maintenance work on the recorders as a cover for what MacNamee tells Marnham is his real job, which is getting secret information from the Americans.

The Nelson Technique

This is the information Marnham is assigned to seek out by MacNamee, the technique used by the Americans to search out the ghosts of original messages hidden within the coded versions.

Rock and Roll

Initially, Marnham resents the high energy, passion and excitement of American rock and roll, narration suggesting that he, his perceptions defined by British reserve, finds its enthusiasm distasteful. Later, however, as his reserve is broken down by Maria's passion and affection, he finds rock and roll suits his new mood and experiences well, entering into a spirit of celebration with the music and even enthusiastically dancing along with it.

The Suitcases

Marnham steals two large, heavy suitcases from the facility and puts Otto's dismembered body in them for disposal. Later, once the suitcases have been filled, he ends up carrying them around Berlin as he looks for a place to dump them, a situation that can be seen as having significant metaphoric value.

Maria's Letter

The novel's final chapter consists mostly of a long letter written by Maria to Marnham decades after their intense Berlin experiences. In the letter, she explains what happened between her and Glass during and after those experiences, reveals important

information about the chain of events that led to Marnham's departure, and expresses the hope that they can somehow reunite.



Themes

Coming of Age

This is the novel's central theme, defining both its plot and the journey of transformation undertaken by its protagonist. "Coming of age" is a term generally used in literary and dramatic narrative to describe a story in which a character leaves behind the world, experiences and perspectives of childhood and becomes more of an adult. It is a story of maturation, of movement from innocence to knowledge and experience, terms which all define what the narrative recounts of Marnham's experiences in Berlin. He matures into a life of greater personal feeling, of greater knowledge of a wider range of relationships, and of greater awareness of bigger, national, and international issues. Like protagonists in many other stories of this thematic genre, Marnham also becomes more sexually experienced and at the same time, more intimately and immediately aware of death. In short, he receives an education in almost everything in which a maturing individual CAN receive an education.

There are, at the same time, additional levels of meaning associated with the theme of "coming of age" in "The Innocent." Specifically, there is the sense that Marnham's coming of age as a human being is parallel to Britain's coming of age as a military and political entity. The narrative's entwining of the British Marnham's personal maturation with the parallel and political maturation of the British power structure are evidenced in Marnham's discovery of the complexities and failings of life metaphorically equivalent to discoveries made by Britain of the complexities and failings of dealing with America.

Britain vs. America

This is one of the novel's more notable secondary themes, manifesting throughout the book from its opening chapter to its closing. Tension between the two Allies defines and colors almost every important relationship, from that between Marnham and the man giving him his assignment in Chapter One to Marnham's determination to win Maria back from her American marriage in the book's final moments. It is interesting to note, however, that while the book defines a variety of ways in which the rivalry and tension between the two countries plays out, it never really defines reasons why the rivalry exists. There are several possibilities, some defined by the book and others by history. Examples of the former include the American belief that the British are less technologically sophisticated and less willing or able to come out on top of the espionage game being played with the Eastern Bloc. Another example of book-defined tension is the senses that for the British, the Americans are brash and aggressive, insensitive to social niceties and impulsive when it comes to engagement with the Eastern Bloc enemy. Meanwhile, history-defined sources of tension between the two countries are essentially grounded in America having rebelled against and separated from England's rule as the result of the rebellion of the mid-1700's and the Declaration of Independence in 1776. In other words, the rivalry between the two countries is



centuries old. While the rivalry between the representatives of the two sides in the more contemporary context of the novel is at least partially defined by personal contradictions, it is also defined by what has passed between them over those centuries.

Relationships between Conqueror and Conquered

There are several ways, many of which are complex and multifaceted, in which this theme manifests throughout the book. In general, the conquered struggle to reclaim a sense of personal individuality and power, while the conqueror struggles to maintain and often increase their power. Manifestations of this situation can be seen on both the personal and the political levels. Examples of the former include how Maria, conquered at various times by Otto and by Marnham, Maria, conquered by Maria's passion and Glass's control, Otto, conquered as a German by the Allies and as a man by Maria, all struggle, often violently, to regain at least some degree of control in their lives. The main example of the latter, of the political level upon which this theme plays out, is the tri-level tension between Germany, a conquered state, Britain, a conqueror in one way of Germany, conquered in another way by America, and America, a conqueror of all, conquered by none. On this level, the conqueror again strives to achieve both freedom and identity. Germany strives to escape the control of those who defeated it in the war, England tries to assert control over Germany while, at the same time, being kept under control by the Americans, and the Americans simply strive to ensure that both Germany and England stay under its control.

Style

Point of View

For the most part, the narrative is written from the third-person and limited point of view, focusing on the protagonist, Leonard Marnham, his experiences, insights, and reactions. This draws the reader fully into his journey of transformation, making the narrative of that journey immediate, active, and engaging. At times, however, the narrative shifts its overall focus to consider events from Maria's point of view, looking into her mind, feelings, and experiences of Maria. At such moments, the narrative offers insight into her emotional and psychological states, suggesting there is more to her and what she does than Marnham's perceptions and what the subsequent narrative conveys. While these changes in focus sometimes seem jarring and distracting, they also deepen insight into Marnham. In other words, seeing him through her eyes enables the reader to form a deeper and even more complete picture of who he is, why he is that way, and where he is at on his journey of transformation.

There is a particular effective variation on the book's general point of view in Chapters 17 and 18, in which the central perspective remains Markham's but sentence structure, narrative order of events, and emotional sensibility are all reshaped to reflect his incoherent state of mind. If it is possible for a third-person narrative to be subjective, the narrative's stylistic choices in this section create exactly that situation, bringing the reader even more immediately into an empathic relationship with the novel's central character.

Setting

There are several important points to note about the various levels upon which setting is important in "The Innocent," ranging from what might be described as the macro level such as temporal, international, national, and municipal down to the micro level such as the apartments occupied by Marnham and Maria. In terms of the first, time is important and specifically the fact that the novel is set in Berlin, the capital city of Germany, in the months after the end of World War II. In these months, the narrative suggests, memories of battle are still fresh in individual and national psyches, buildings are relatively newly bombed out, and relationships between nations are still essentially undefined. The narrative also suggests that Berlin as a city is experiencing the same sense of unsettled and uneasy recovery as Germany, which is a sense that that fragile recovery exists alongside an equally fragile peace. These aspects of societal life affect, in turn, aspects of "individual" life. In other words, setting is an important defining characteristic of both character and story.

On the "micro" level, meanwhile, there are three main settings. They are the facility in which Marnham works, the apartment to which he is assigned, and Maria's apartment



where he eventually spends most of his time and which is the setting for much of his emotional growth, both good and bad.

Language and Meaning

Language is subtly employed throughout the novel to define the very different aspects of Marnham's life, specifically his personal and work lives. As previously discussed, there is in both content and style a sense of the spy novel about the sections of the book relating to Marnham's work on the secretive tunnel project at the warehouse facility. Without hitting the point too hard, the language here is firmer, terse, aggressive, and mysterious. The contrast with the softer, flowing, poetic, and often more emotional language used in relation to Marnham's relationship with Maria is vivid and telling. This particular use of language combines with the sense that the Maria plot gets more page time than the espionage plot to reinforce the idea that in terms of Marnham's journey of transformation, the relationship with Maria is by far the more important.

Language is used to particular effect in Chapters 17 and 18 as the fractured and nearly incoherent style of the narrative reflects Marnham's desperate state of mind, his ruptured perspective, and sense of relative calm. Sentence structure, word use, and phrasing suggest that Marnham is highly stressed, troubled, and barely functional. He has been traumatized and is in many ways, operating on autopilot, as mentally and emotionally removed as he can be from the horrific situation in which he has found himself. The language employed here, both in terms of the words used and the way in which they are used, is powerfully evocative of this shift in his state of mind.

Structure

For the most part, the narrative is written in a straightforward and focused fashion, with the story unfolding with a linear progression. The result is a clearly shaped sense of forward narrative movement, of cause-and-effect progression from incident to reaction to action to incident and so on, which are all tied in with the narrative's Marnham-centric "Point of View" as outlined above. There are, however, some notable breaks from this structure. Also as suggested in "Point of View" above, there are occasionally moments in which the narrative's perspective shifts to that of Maria but nevertheless maintains its narrative focus on Marnham. Structurally, these shifts take the story outside of its central linear structure to offer deeper insight into both Marnham and Maria.

Another structural shift takes place in Chapter 17, in which linear structure is deconstructed and the narrative shifts back and forth between what might be described as the main narrative line and the immediate aftermath of Otto's death. As noted in the Analysis for that chapter, this stylistic shift is even more effective given the fairly straightforward and linear progression of the narrative surrounding it. In other words, a straightforward story of a straightforward life is interrupted by a period of stylistic and personal chaos with structure echoing character. In the aftermath of Otto's death,

Marnham has to put himself back into some kind of order and a personal state of being is also reflected in the book's structure, which also has to put itself back together.



Quotes

"Leonard Marnham, an employee of the Post Office, had never actually met an American to talk to, but he had studied them in depth at his local Odeon" (pg. 1.)

"He should do without his glasses. The things he really wanted to see were up close. A circuit diagram, a valve filament, another face. A girl's face" (pg. 5.)

"Leonard had never seen an American football game, never even heard one described. This routine...seemed over-demonstrative, too self-loving, to represent any serious form of game practice...these were grown men, showing off...but...the certainty that the catch would not be fumbled [was] almost beautiful, an unforced subversion of the surroundings - the concrete, the double fence...the cold" (pg. 18.)

"Leonard had no ready means to respond to an insult. He had not received one in adult life. He was nice to people, and they were generally nice back to him" (pg. 27.)

"He had everything he needed. A job, a place where he was expected. He would have a pass, he was part of a team, a sharer in a secret. He was a member of the clandestine elite" (pg. 29.)

"The message was hardly a surprise. Now it was before him, it was more a matter of recognition for him, of accepting the inevitable. It had always been certain to start like this. If he was honest with himself, he had to concede that he had always known it really, at some level" (pg. 44.)

"To one who had grown up edging round his mother's porcelain figurines, ever careful not to mark her walls with his fingers, it was strange and wonderful that this unfussy stripped-down room should belong to a woman" (pg. 62.)

"She was free, they both were free, to invent their own terms. They could be partners in invention" (pg. 65.)

"It was just this combination of abandonment and loving attention that was too good to be looked at, too perfect for him, and he had to...think of...a circuit diagram, a particularly intricate and lovely one he had committed to memory during the fitting of...the Ampex machines" (pg. 70.)

"He was not certain whether this time spent traveling between his two secret worlds was when he was truly himself, when he was able to hold the two in balance and know them to be separate from himself; or whether this was the one time he was nothing at all, a void traveling between two points" (pg. 85.)

"He went around turning on the lights, intrigued by the signs of a former self...the scrubbed clean innocent who had left scum and hairs round the bath and towels and



clothes on the bedroom floor...here was the childish chocolate bar and beside it his mother's letter...the little anxieties expressed on his behalf cloying, really quite irritating" (pg. 90.)

"Leonard was flustered. Too many half-sentences were crowding before him. He had been handed a gift he could easily destroy in the unwrapping" (pg. 120.)

"...she had come slowly to the decision that Leonard was not malicious or brutal, and that it was an innocent stupidity that had made him behave the way he had. He lived so intensely within himself that he was barely aware of how his actions appeared to others" (pg. 124.)

"It gave [Leonard] great satisfaction to know that if he lowered the page, his girl would be there. It was a luxury to ignore her. He felt settled, proud, truly grown up at last" (pg. 133.)

"As he went to fetch cotton wool and a bowl of water, Leonard was thinking through the nausea of shock that he knew nothing about people, what they could do, how they could do it...then, remembering his own behavior months before, he could not speak" (pg. 137.)

"In Berlin he had grown so fond, so dependent, and at the same time had felt so grown up. Now the old, familiar life engulfed him. He was suddenly a son again, not a lover. He was a child. Here was his room again, and his mother worrying over the state of his socks...he sat on the edge of his bed...making plans to have a telegram sent that would urgently recall him to the warehouse" (pg. 143.)

"When he wants you to know how brave he is, he tells you about all the fighting he's seen. Then when he is drunk and he wants to let you know how clever he is, he tells you how he kept out of the fighting by getting sent to the field headquarters as a telephonist" (pg. 145.)

"...Leonard took satisfaction in dancing in a way his parents and their friends did not, and could not, and in liking music they would hate, and in feeling at home in a city where they would never come. He was free" (pg. 150.)

"We all know the kinds of freedom we want and like...we all know that the place, the only place, to start making a Europe free and safe from war is right here, with ourselves, in our hearts. Leonard and Maria belong to countries that ten years ago were at war. By engaging to be married, they are bringing their own peace, in their own way, to their nations" (Glass, pg. 153.)

"If all this suddenly disappeared, they would have a hard enough time getting back to where they had once been. But what they were about to do now would block their way forever. Therefore...what they were doing was wrong. But they had been through all that, they had talked the night out" (pg. 194.)



"It was easy, it was sensible. An hour's mess, or five years in prison...this was what they had to do, this was what they were doing...it was a job" (pg. 200.)

"[Maria] took each part of her ex-husband onto her lap and patiently, with an almost maternal care, set about folding it away and sealing it and packing it carefully along with the rest...she was a good woman, resourceful, kind. If they could do this, they could do anything together. When this job was done, they would start again. They were engaged, they would resume the celebrations" (pg. 201.)

"There was a moment before he left the room when Leonard suddenly had the measure of the distance they had traveled, the trajectory that had delivered them from their successful little engagement party to this, and how all along the way each successive step had seemed logical enough, consistent with the one before, and how no one was to blame" (pg. 204.)

"...the dog was straining to get back. Through the fogs of species memory it recognized a chance of a lifetime, to devour a human with impunity and avenge the wolf ancestors for ten thousand years of subjugation" (pg. 210.)

"He wanted to stop thinking the same thoughts over, he wanted to speak to someone official ... he wanted to set out the events, and make known to those whose job it was to have truths officially established how one thing had led to another, and how, despite appearances, he was no monster" (pg. 241.)

"It was a description of a past that should have been theirs. The happy couple after their engagement. The normality of it was a mockery, and they fell silent" (pg. 245.)

"[Marnham] sensed something light and simple returning to him, or at least the idea was there. Soon he might be able to feel for her again. Once he was away from her he would begin to miss her, and separate her from [his memories]" (pg. 250.)

"When I think of you, I don't only think of the terrible thing with Otto. I think of my kind and gentle Englishman who knew so little about women and who learned so beautifully! We were so easy together, it was such fun. Sometimes it's as if I'm remembering a childhood" (pg. 266.)



Topics for Discussion

Discuss ways in which Marnham's actions in the opening chapters dramatize the novel's thematic exploration of the relationship between conqueror and conquered.

Discuss how Glass's comment in Chapter Four about people being stimulated by keeping secrets applies throughout the narrative. Consider both the romantic and espionage plots in your comments.

Whose version of Maria's relationship with Glass do you believe? Is it Marnham's, in which the relationship was ongoing after their first meeting or Maria's, where their meetings are coincidental and that nothing happens between them until after Marnham leaves? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Discuss the different ways in which both Maria and Glass trigger transformation in Marnham directly and indirectly.

In what ways do Otto's attacks, his death, and what happens to his body embody and manifest the book's thematic consideration of the relationship between conqueror and conquered?

How do aspects of the triangular relationship between Britain, America, and Germany play out in the triangular relationship between Marnham, Glass, and Maria?

What is the symbolism behind the apparently deliberate reference in the novel's final moments, to the Berlin Wall? Pay attention specifically to Marnham's desire to return to his relationship with Maria, founded in a time before the Wall was built.

What do you think is the metaphoric implication of the novel's reference to how Maria's letter has followed Marnham from address to address, and of the novel revealing the content of the letter only when Marnham has arrived at what was once the site of the tunnel research facility?