

Maurice Study Guide

Maurice by E. M. Forster

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Plot Summary

Maurice by E.M. Forester is a tale of a young man struggling with his sexual orientation in a time when little was known or understood about homosexuality. Maurice feels as though he must hide his true character from everyone, even those closest to him, for fear that they will not understand or that he will be placed in prison. As Maurice grows older, he finds a small group of people who understand him, including a young man who pledges him his love. However, these others outgrow their feelings, but Maurice cannot. It is a struggle that still rings true today, causing modern readers to root for a man who is struggling with the basic crisis all people face, the discovery of who he really is.

Maurice is given a lecture on sex as a fourteen year old boy. As a result of this lecture Maurice begins to realize there is something different about him. When Maurice goes to high school and hears other boys talk about girls, he realizes that his thoughts are not only different, but something to hide. Maurice pretends to be like the other boys while in the back of his mind he desires not women, but men. It is a struggle for Maurice to keep his thoughts to himself and it causes him to disengage from the people around him in fear that they will learn what he really is.

Maurice goes to Cambridge to further his education. While there, Maurice meets a young man who, unlike Maurice, feels free to speak his mind. Maurice wants to befriend this young man because he feels that with him he too can be the person he really is rather than the fake persona he has developed over the years. When Maurice goes to this man's room, however, he finds another young man there. Maurice and this man talk and soon Maurice discovers in him a kindred spirit. Maurice and Clive Durham become close friends. Shortly before a school vacation, Clive suggests to Maurice that he read a book about the Ancient Greeks. Maurice reads the book and discovers it speaks about homosexuality with openness. Maurice has never experienced this type of openness before and is excited to discuss the book with Clive. When Clive learns that Maurice read the book and embraced its message, he tells Maurice that he loves him.

Maurice is shocked by Clive's announcement. Maurice reacts as society would have him do, shunning Clive. Clive is heartbroken and refuses to speak with Maurice again. Maurice finally cannot hide his true feelings anymore and goes to Clive to apologize. Clive is so angry and hurt that he refuses Maurice's apology. Maurice hangs around outside Clive's room all night until he hears Clive call his name in his sleep. Maurice goes into the room and Clive welcomes him. For three years Clive and Maurice have a close relationship. However, due to his religious upbringing, Clive is reluctant to consummate the relationship. Maurice is content with this as long as Clive wants to be with him. Maurice is of the opinion that homosexuality is so rare and morally wrong that he is lucky to have found one man willing to share anything with him.

Maurice is kicked out of school shortly after his affair with Clive begins. Maurice returns home and takes a position with his father's old stock broker firm. Clive finishes his education and becomes a lawyer. Maurice and Clive spend a great deal of time together, with Maurice often spending Wednesday nights at Clive's city apartment. The



two families of the two men also become acquainted. After three years, Clive becomes ill with the flu. During this illness, Clive begins to believe he has been healed of his homosexual desires. Clive becomes distant with Maurice, leaving Maurice to believe that the illness has caused a change in personality. Clive travels to Greece on holiday and while he is gone sends Maurice a letter telling him that their relation must end. Maurice refuses to accept this.

When Clive returns home, he tells Maurice that although he wants to remain friends, he no longer feels a sexual connection to Maurice. Clive wants to get married to a woman. Maurice is heartbroken. However, Maurice realizes he must remain friends with Clive in order to protect himself from discovery. Clive's desertion causes Maurice to desire a cure for his homosexual thoughts. Maurice runs into an old college friend and accepts from him the name of a man who is rumored to have cured men of homosexual desires. Maurice sets up an appointment with this man while visiting with Clive at his country estate.

Maurice's desire to find a cure increases when Clive offers Maurice one last kiss. Maurice desperately wants to marry a woman to end the deep loneliness and heartache he feels. The first meeting with Lasker Jones, the hypnotist, goes well. That night, Maurice is contemplating his future when one of Clive's employees sneaks into his room. Maurice lies with this man, Scudder, and finds himself content for the first time. Maurice is ashamed of his feelings, however, and rushes away from Clive's home the next day in order to avoid Scudder. Scudder is heartbroken by Maurice's actions and begins to send him letters that frighten Maurice into believing Scudder intends to call the police on him.

Maurice arranges to meet Scudder in London. After a short conversation, the two men go to a hotel where they spend the night. Maurice believes he has fallen in love with Scudder. Maurice begs Scudder to run away with him rather than move to Argentina where he is planning to go. Scudder at first refuses. However, Scudder decides at the last moment to stay with Maurice. Maurice goes to Clive and tells him about his love for Scudder and tells him that he plans to disappear to a place where he and Scudder can live happily together. Clive disapproves, but Maurice does not care.



Part 1, Chapters 1-5

Part 1, Chapters 1-5 Summary

Maurice is a fourteen year old boy who is about to leave his private elementary school in order to attend the public school his father attended before him. Maurice's father has died, leaving him with his widowed mother and two younger sisters, all of whom Maurice is expected to provide for when he has finished his education. Maurice is also expected to take his father's place at the stock broker firm where he worked before his death.

In chapter 1, Mr. Ducie, a teacher at Maurice's school, pulls Maurice aside while the entire school is taking a walk. Mr. Ducie takes Maurice to the beach and talks to him about sex, drawing diagrams in the sand in order to illustrate his point. Maurice listens politely, but is confused by Mr. Ducie's lecture because he has never had any of the thoughts Mr. Ducie insists he must have had. Chapter 2 follows Maurice home where he and his mother talk about the responsibilities Maurice will have when he finishes his education and comes home permanently. Maurice is overwhelmed by the burden of his responsibilities, but finds his thoughts straying to the disappearance of a young servant boy he enjoyed playing with during his last visit home. Chapter 3 follows Maurice to the public high school. Maurice struggles at school because by now he is aware that his thoughts are different from the other boys. Maurice often finds himself pretending to be someone he is not in order to keep others from learning the truth about him. It is a terrible strain on Maurice and leaves him feeling isolated and alone.

Chapter 4 brings Maurice to the age of nineteen and graduation from high school. Maurice has won a prize for a Greek oration that he wrote himself. Maurice does not feel that the oration was good, but that the teacher gave him the prize because he was a good person and was leaving the school. Dr. Barry, a neighbor of the Halls, has come to watch Maurice receive his reward. Afterward Dr. Barry gives Maurice some advice on women. Maurice is polite but feels awkward. In chapter 5, Maurice goes to Cambridge where he finds an atmosphere that is very different from his other school experiences. At Cambridge, men are freer to be themselves. Maurice enjoys this more relaxed atmosphere. During lunch with the Dean one afternoon, Maurice meets a young man named Risley, a relative of the Dean. Risley is an outspoken young man who speaks with a freedom that excites Maurice.

Part 1, Chapters 1-5 Analysis

The reader is introduced to Maurice Hall in these chapters. Maurice is the young son of a widowed woman who expects her son to step into his father's footsteps the moment his education is finished. It has never occurred to this mother that her son might have other ambitions for himself. Maurice has not considered other ambitions as well. Maurice is focused on his future because it seems logical for him to take his father's place. Maurice is bothered, however, by the subject of sex. The book opens with



Maurice discussing with a teacher the basics of sex. Maurice does not understand this lecture because he does not feel the way the teacher assumes he should. Not only this, but Maurice is aware that he has a special affection for a young man who was once employed at his family home.

As Maurice grows older, he begins to realize that his sexual orientation is different from the other boys. As a result, Maurice is forced to create a public persona that is different from his internal thoughts. Maurice becomes a very lonely young man the older he gets. Maurice knows that morally his sexual thoughts are wrong, touching on the theme of morality, but that he cannot control the direction of those thoughts. This sets up a situation in which Maurice is forced to deny his true self and become someone he is not. The reader sees this and begins to wonder what Maurice will do as a result of the pressure he is under. It seems hope might be in sight when Maurice goes to Cambridge and finds a world that is more relaxed and men are allowed to be more like their true selves. The reader hopes that this might open a new world for Maurice where he will be allowed to discover his true self.



Part 1, Chapters 6-11

Part 1, Chapters 6-11 Summary

Chapter 6 finds Maurice scheming to find a reason to seek out Risley again. Maurice likes Risley and enjoys his openness. Maurice would like to befriend Risley and see where the relationship will go. When Maurice finally gets up the courage to visit Risley's room, he finds another boy there instead. Clive Durham is searching through Risley's records for a few specific ones that he has been invited to borrow. Maurice and Durham begin to talk and before long Maurice finds himself fascinated by this new boy. In chapter 7, Maurice and Durham become close friends. This relationship is a new experience for Maurice who has never allowed himself to become close to another boy before. Durham is open and friendly with Maurice, introducing him to his group of friends. Durham allows Maurice to stroke his hair and show affection in other, subtle ways, that excite Maurice. Durham shares with Maurice his distrust in his mother's religion, creating in Maurice something of a theologian. Before the vacation at the end of the term, Durham talks to Maurice about the ancient Greeks. Durham suggests that Maurice read a book called Symposium.

Chapter 8 follows Maurice home over the vacation. Maurice reads Symposium and discovers that it discusses homosexuality without restraint, a new experience for Maurice. Also during the vacation, Maurice and Durham share a great many letters, all of which Maurice treasures. Also during this vacation, Maurice meets a young woman with whom his mother hopes he will begin a committed relationship. Although the girl is pleasant, Maurice finds it difficult to feel for her what he feels for Durham. At the same time, Maurice visits his father's old partner at the stock broker firm and begins the arrangements necessary to join the firm. Chapter 9 brings Maurice back to school where he is excited to see Durham. When Durham learns that Maurice read Symposium and was not offended by it, he announces his love for Maurice. Maurice reacts with scorn, reminding Durham that gentlemen do not feel that way for one another.

In chapter 10, Maurice realizes what he has done with his reaction to Durham. Maurice has never allowed himself to really think about what his thoughts in regards to men meant until Durham's announcement. Now Maurice realizes he can no longer lie to himself about his true feelings. Chapter 11 brings Maurice back to Durham. The two had continued to keep up their public friendship, but refused to share the same intimacy they once did. Maurice is hurt by this and finally finds the courage to confront Durham. Maurice apologizes for his initial reaction and explains his fear. Durham understands, but is too hurt to forgive. Maurice hangs around outside Durham's room until he hears Durham call out for him in his sleep. Maurice slips into Durham's room where he is forgiven and a new relationship begins.



Part 1, Chapters 6-11 Analysis

College is a new world for Maurice that has opened up new possibilities for him. Maurice meets Clive Durham, a young man much like himself. With Clive, Maurice finds a new world of affection and kindness. Maurice feels as though he can be himself with Clive rather than hiding behind his public persona that he created in order to hide his odd thoughts. Clive seems receptive to Maurice, allowing Maurice to caress him during their many long conversations. The reader becomes convinced that Clive will be someone who can help Maurice accept himself and becomes encouraged when Clive announces his love for Maurice. However, Maurice surprises the reader when he reacts with scorn.

Maurice's reaction is the product of many years of religious training and the fear of discovery that has built in recent years since Maurice discovered the danger of his sexual thoughts. In the time in which this novel is set, Maurice could be arrested if it were made public that he is homosexual. This setting adds to the moral consequences of Maurice's feelings, leaving him stuck in a difficult position that makes it nearly impossible for him to accept Clive's affections. However, Maurice decides that he can lie to the public world, but he no longer wants to lie to himself. Maurice goes to Clive and begs for forgiveness, receiving it only after Clive discovers he cannot hide his feelings any longer. This begins a relationship that will shape Maurice's character as the plot continues to develop.



Part 2, Chapters 12-17

Part 2, Chapters 12-17 Summary

In chapter 12 the reader learns Clive Durham is a deeply religious man, despite his objections to attending church with his mother, and therefore believes that if he consummates a homosexual relationship he will be forever damned. As a consequence, Clive refuses to allow his relationship with Maurice to progress beyond a few affectionate caresses. Chapter 13 takes Maurice and Clive on a romantic outing in which they decide to drive as far as Maurice's motorbike will take them. As a result, Clive and Maurice miss several of their scheduled classes. A few miles from a small farm, the motorbike breaks down. Clive and Maurice have a picnic by the side of the road before walking back to the farm. In chapter 14, Maurice is disciplined for missing his classes. The Dean will not allow Maurice to finish the rest of the term and wants an apology before he will consider allowing Maurice to return for the next term. Mrs. Hall is upset with Maurice in chapter 15 upon learning of Maurice's suspension from school. However, Mrs. Hall's anger cannot touch Maurice's own anger at being separated from Clive. Aware of Maurice's change in personality, Mrs. Hill sends Maurice to speak with Dr. Barry. The doctor offers Maurice some advice, telling him to find a nice girl to settle down with.

Maurice goes to visit Clive at his family home in the country in chapter 16. The house was once grand, but has become neglected since the death of Clive's father. Maurice goes on this visit with only the expectation of spending some time alone with Clive. Much to Maurice's relief, he discovers that Clive has placed him in an isolated room where the two of them can spend the entire night alone together without anyone being aware. Maurice and Clive spend these nights talking. Maurice wins the affections of Clive's mother and sister in chapter 17 even though he has done nothing to attempt to achieve this. Later Clive and Maurice talk about the expectations of Clive's mother that Clive will marry and provide an heir to take over Penge. Maurice realizes for the first time that he will never have children and this saddens him.

Part 2, Chapters 12-17 Analysis

The reader learns more about Clive Durham in chapter 12. Clive is a religious man despite his objections to his mother forcing him to attend church services. These beliefs cause Clive to believe that his homosexual desires will cause his soul to be damned in the afterlife. This belief causes Clive to refuse to consummate his relationship with Maurice. At the same time, Clive's mother expects him to get married and take his place in society that his father held before him. Not only this, but Clive's mother expects him to get married and have children. This expectation puts Clive under a great deal of pressure to deny his homosexual desires. As a result, the reader begins to worry that Clive will chose his religious and family obligations over Maurice.



Maurice is perfectly happy with Clive despite Clive's reluctance to consummate the relationship. In Maurice's mind, he is lucky just to have found a man willing to share any degree of affection with him. Maurice is so happy to no longer be lonely to see that Clive is holding him at arm's length and is likely to dump him without warning. It is a difficult situation for a young man who is just beginning to accept who he is and what his future most like holds for him.



Part 2, Chapters 18-25

Part 2, Chapters 18-25 Summary

Maurice and Clive's relationship continues for two years in Chapter 18. During this time Maurice and Clive travel to Italy before Maurice begins to work at the firm. Their relationship remains physically platonic as they are both aware of what could happen to them should their relationship become public knowledge. Chapter 19 shows how Clive and Maurice's families have become acquainted with the mothers becoming good friends as well. The two mothers will often ask each other for advice and worry together about their sons' refusal to settle down with a woman. At the same time, Maurice has fallen into the habit of spending Wednesday nights with Clive at his apartment in the city. Chapter 20 begins with Clive falling ill from the flu shortly before taking the bar exam. Clive comes to visit Maurice shortly after his illness has past and has a relapse. Maurice does all he can to take care of Clive, but finds Clive unreceptive to his affections. Maurice finds himself forced to hire a nurse to provide for Clive's needs.

In chapter 21, Maurice begins to realize that something has change in Clive. Maurice believes the illness did something to change Clive's personality. Clive is distant and cold toward Maurice, refusing to accept Maurice's affections any longer. Clive talks of going to Greece alone. Maurice hopes that Clive will change his mind, but when Wednesday comes and Maurice is to spend the night with Clive, he finds that Clive is reluctant to have him come. Clive tells Maurice that he has not bought his train tickets yet, but is determined to leave for Greece the following day. That night, both Maurice and Clive have trouble sleeping. Clive comes to Maurice's bed hoping that will help, but quickly leaves again. Chapters 22 and 23 find Clive in Greece where he writes to Maurice in order to inform him that his homosexual desires have gone. Maurice refuses to accept Clive's declaration. In chapter 24 Clive extends his visit to Greece despite Maurice's insistence that he return home to England. Clive thinks about Maurice and his new attraction to women that began while he was ill and felt drawn to his nurse.

Clive returns to England in chapter 25 where he goes straight to the Hall home. Kitty is the only one home and Clive speaks to her for a time. Ada and Mrs. Hall return home a short time later and Clive finds himself alone with Ada. Clive is attracted to Ada and invites her to go on a walk with him the following day. When Maurice arrives home, Clive insists on speaking with him alone immediately. Clive tells Maurice that although he would like to remain friends, he no longer wants to have a homosexual relationship. In fact, Clive hopes to marry soon. Maurice is heartbroken, especially when he learns that Clive is attracted to Ada. Maurice attempts to tell Ada about Clive and his relationship, but Clive stops him to discourage the relationship. Clive ends the conversation and soothes Ada, while at the same time he could never have a relationship with Ada because she would remind him too much of Maurice.



Part 2, Chapters 18-25 Analysis

For two years Maurice is content in his relationship with Clive. The two men fall into a routine that includes a budding relationship between their mothers. Everything seems perfect to Maurice, as though this relationship can continue for a lifetime. However, Clive is beginning to feel the pressure to marry. Clive becomes ill and during this illness finds himself drawn to the nurse hired to care for him. When Clive visits Maurice afterward, he has a relapse. Clive has collapsed under the pressure to renounce his homosexual desire and to embrace the expectations of his mother and society.

As has been foreshadowed in previous chapters, Clive decides he must end his relationship with Maurice. Clive runs off to Greece and attempts to end the relationship with a letter. Maurice is deeply in love and refuses to be brushed aside so callously. Maurice insists that Clive come back and tell him this in person. Clive does, breaking Maurice's heart. Maurice can see that Clive is buckling under society's expectation and wants to convince Clive that there is nothing unnatural about their relationship. However, Clive refuses to be persuaded. In fact, Clive fancies himself in love with Maurice's sister. The reader sees this and wonders if Clive is not simply focusing on Ada because she is a more acceptable version of Maurice. Clive seems to represent the group of homosexual men who make choices such as this in order to find an easier way to survive in society. Clive is frightened of losing his soul, touching on the theme of morality, as well as the legal repercussions of his relationship with Maurice. The reader is now left wondering if Maurice will do the same, crumple under society's expectations, or if he will be true to himself.



Part 3, Chapters 26-30

Part 3, Chapters 26-30 Summary

In chapter 26, Maurice becomes aware that Clive made a date with Ada that Ada had looked forward to. Maurice becomes outraged with jealousy, telling Ada things that cause her to cry. Maurice later apologizes and agrees to send Ada to a school she had wanted to attend. At the same time, Maurice falls into a deep depression in which he convinces himself that he will never find anyone else to love him. In chapter 27, Maurice is preoccupied by the death of his grandfather. At his grandfather's deathbed, Maurice considers sharing his secrets with his grandfather, but cannot. However, his grandfather's struggle between life and death shows Maurice that it is better to live miserable than not to live at all. Chapter 28 follows Maurice as he settles into the mundane routines of life. Maurice's family notices the change in his friendship with Clive and comment on it. Maurice's sisters also begin to notice his lack of concern in everyday matters, causing them to lose some of their respect for him.

In the spring, as chronicled in chapter 29, Maurice learns that Clive has become engaged to a young woman he met in Greece. Maurice is upset because Clive did not write to him personally about the engagement despite his claims that he wants to remain friends. On the same weekend, Dr. Barry's nephew comes to stay with the Halls. Maurice finds himself attracted to the young man and makes some mild overtures toward him. Unfortunately, the boy does not reciprocate. In chapter 30, Maurice deals with the disappointment of this failed relationship, finding himself lonelier than ever before. Maurice receives a phone call during this time from Clive and his fiancé, Anne. Clive and Anne want to invite Maurice to lunch so that Anne might meet him. Maurice refuses, having taken a vow of celibacy and unwilling to break it even for an old friend. Instead, Maurice agrees to help Anne invest some money. Afterward, Maurice goes out to buy the happy couple a gift despite his annoyance at learning he was not one of the first friends Clive attempted to introduce Anne to.

Part 3, Chapters 26-30 Analysis

Maurice is so heartbroken over the loss of Clive that he lashes out at first against those closest to him, specifically Ada. Maurice learns of Ada's expectations in regard to Clive and becomes darkly jealous, causing her some insecurities in relation to her first attempt at romance. Later Maurice regrets his actions and agrees to let Ada go to a school he had previously refused her. Next Maurice considers suicide, but the death of his grandfather changes his mind. It seems to the reader that Maurice is going through the stages of grief as he suffers in the aftermath of a three-year-long relationship. Maurice soon convinces himself that he will never find another man to love him, especially after his overtures to a young man are ignored.



Maurice contents himself to a mundane life full of routine rather than a life of love with the only man who has ever showed him kindness. At the same time, Clive makes their breakup worse by getting engaged and not informing Maurice himself. Maurice is heartbroken not only because Clive is marrying a woman, but because Clive failed to tell Maurice himself. To add insult to injury, Clive calls Maurice to introduce him to Anne, but Anne lets it slip that Maurice is at the bottom of their list. Now Maurice knows where he is on Clive's list of priorities and he is saddened by this sudden turn of events. Maurice's future seems bleak in light of all this and the reader begins to wonder how Maurice will deal with the situation as he continues down the road of self-discovery, a theme of the novel.



Part 3, Chapters 31-37

Part 3, Chapters 31-37 Summary

Maurice decides he must see a doctor to help him shed his homosexual desires in chapter 31. After lots of thought on the subject, Maurice decides to go to Dr. Barry. Dr. Barry has been retired for many years, but when Maurice insists on an exam, Dr. Barry agrees. At first Dr. Barry does not understand what Maurice is asking for help with. However, when Dr. Barry realizes the truth, he refuses to believe it, telling Maurice to simply put those thoughts out of his mind. In chapter 32, Maurice realizes that Clive turned to women shortly after his twenty-fourth birthday, so Maurice begins to hope the same will happen to him when his birthday comes. When this does not happen, Maurice is close to despair. One night, Maurice runs into Risley who gives him the name of a hypnotist who cured one of Risley's friends.

In chapter 33, Clive has settled into his marriage happily and is relieved to find his wife to be a good companion, but not demanding in the bedroom. Clive has also accepted his role in society and is running for a political office his own father once held. In chapter 34, Maurice arrives at Penge to visit Clive and meet his new wife. Clive is not home when Maurice arrives, which offends Maurice, but Anne is. Maurice and Anne speak for a time and get to know each other. Maurice finds Anne to be pleasant, making Maurice wish once again that he could be attracted to a woman. At the same time, Maurice writes for an appointment with Mr. Lasker Jones, the hypnotist. That night, while visiting with Clive, the roof begins to leak onto the piano. A man Maurice had noticed earlier comes in to move the piano.

In chapter 35, Maurice tells Anne and Clive that he intends to get married. Clive is excited for Maurice. That night Clive walks Maurice to his bedroom and gives him a kiss for old time's sake. Maurice is unhappy with this mixed message from Clive. In chapter 36, Maurice goes to see Mr. Lasker Jones. The hypnotist tells Maurice that he cannot promise success, but that he has had success in some cases. The hypnotist tells Maurice that he needs to be relaxed and not to think too much between treatments. As a result, Maurice returns to Penge even though he had not wanted to. In chapter 37, Maurice returns to Penge and discovers that both Anne and Clive are out for the night campaigning. Maurice has dinner with Anne's priest, Mr. Borenius. The conversation covers many things, including the changes Clive hopes to make if he wins his political office, and the plans of Scudder, a Penge employee, who seems to have taken a particular interest in Maurice. That night Maurice is lonelier than ever before and cannot help but dwell on his situation despite Mr. Lasker Jones' orders. During the night, Scudder slips into Maurice's room and spends the night in his arms.



Part 3, Chapters 31-37 Analysis

Maurice has decided he no longer wants to be homosexual. Maurice wants to find a way to change, from going to a doctor to visiting a hypnotist. Maurice is determined to get married and have children, just like Clive. Maurice is unaware that Clive is unhappy in his new life. Clive has fooled himself into believing that he is living the life he wants, but when he kisses Maurice, the reader can see that Clive misses his old lover and the life they had together despite the immorality of it.

Maurice is attempting to find himself, a theme of the novel, through Clive. Maurice has always seen himself through Clive's eyes, so now is no different than before. However, Clive has rejected everything that Maurice embraced. Now Maurice is attempting to reject these same values, but cannot make himself let go of his homosexual desires despite his deep wish to do so. Instead, Maurice finds himself embraced by Scudder, an employee of the Durham family. Scudder has come to Maurice in same fashion that Maurice first came to Clive, reversing his role in the relationship from what it was in his relationship with Clive. The reader sees this as hope that Maurice will finally accept who he is.



Part 4, Chapters 38-41

Part 4, Chapters 38-41 Summary

Chapter 38 finds Maurice waking after his first restful sleep in a long time. Scudder is still there, but preparing to leave. Maurice does not want Scudder to leave, but Scudder is afraid he will get into trouble from his supervisor if he does not leave. Maurice is alone in the beginning of chapter 39 when a servant brings him his breakfast. Maurice begins to let reality intrude on his happiness as he begins to wonder if the servant wonders why Maurice's door was locked. Maurice then begins to think of what others would think if they knew what he had been doing the night before. As Maurice begins to prepare for the day's cricket match, he worries that Scudder might say something to someone, ruining Maurice's reputation and possibly sending him to prison. Maurice sees Clive briefly during the game but learns he will be leaving again to continue campaigning. That afternoon Maurice's guilt and fear is so intense that he becomes physically ill.

At the beginning of chapter 40, Maurice tells Anne that his illness requires that he return home. Clive and Anne are sympathetic. Maurice manages to ask Clive a few questions about Scudder and learns that he is planning on moving to Argentina with his brother. Clive also tells Maurice that Scudder's father was a butcher. After Maurice arrives at home he receives a note from Scudder asking him to return to Penge. When Maurice does not return, Scudder sends him another letter detailing his disappointment and asking to see Maurice again before his ship sails the following week. Again Maurice ignores the note, afraid it is all a set up to expose Maurice's secret. In chapter 41, Maurice returns to Lasker Jones for his next treatment. Unfortunately, this time the treatment does not work. Lasker Jones suggests that Maurice move to a country where homosexuals are better accepted. Maurice also asks Lasker Jones his opinion of Scudder's last letter. Lasker Jones tells Maurice that the letter does not appear to be a threat of any kind.

Part 4, Chapters 38-41 Analysis

Maurice has found contentment in the arms of another man in the middle of treatments designed to help him overcome the desire to be with other men. At first Maurice is happy, thrilled to have found a man willing to share everything with him, not just his friendship. However, as reality returns, Maurice becomes obsessed with the idea that he has trusted a man who only wants to hurt him. Maurice believes Scudder has come to him with the idea of revealing the truth of Maurice's character to ruin his reputation and to see him put in jail. Scudder sends Maurice letters begging to see him, but Maurice sees them as attempts at blackmail.

Maurice goes to Lasker Jones to continue his treatments, but discovers his night with Scudder has made it impossible for him to submit to the hypnosis. Maurice is frightened, unsure what to do next. Lasker Jones suggests that Maurice go to a country where it is



not illegal to be a homosexual. Maurice, it seems, has finally come to a place in his search for his own identity, a theme of the novel, where he is forced to either accept himself or run away. At the same time, Maurice cannot make himself trust a man after Clive broke his heart. Maurice wants to trust Scudder, even asks Lasker Jones' opinion on Scudder's letters. However, Maurice still cannot make himself step out there onto the ledge and trust someone to catch him.



Part 4, Chapters 42-46

Part 4, Chapters 42-46 Summary

In chapter 42, Maurice struggles to accept his fate. Maurice realizes that homosexual desires is a part of who he is fundamentally. Maurice knows he must accept this part of himself or live a life void of pleasure. When Scudder sends him another letter chastising him for treating him like a servant, Maurice finally responds. Maurice asks Scudder to meet him in London. In chapter 43, Scudder and Maurice meet at a museum. Scudder tells Maurice that his brother knows of their relationship and is unhappy with the way Maurice has treated him. Maurice apologizes and asks Scudder if he intended to turn Maurice in. Scudder talks around the subject for a time, attempting to upset Maurice by suggesting that he is not homosexual and could marry a woman anytime he chooses. Eventually, however, Scudder admits his affection for Maurice and admits as well that his brother knows nothing of their relationship. Eventually it is decided they will spend the night in a hotel together.

Maurice wakes in chapter 44, content with the night he spent with Scudder. Maurice asks Scudder to remain in England. Maurice suggests they can run away together, go somewhere where no one knows them. Scudder tells Maurice that he has a good job waiting for him in Argentina and would be crazy to give it up for an uncertain future. Chapter 45 opens on the Saturday Scudder is to sail to Argentina with his brother. Maurice goes to the ship to wish Scudder a good trip. However, Scudder never arrives. Maurice has no idea what has happened, but rushes to the boat house at Penge to see if Scudder is there. Maurice is afraid Scudder has disappeared, but finds him sleeping in the boat house. Scudder has chosen Maurice over a good job in Argentina. In chapter 46 Clive is reviewing his campaign, attempting to find ways to make it better. Maurice is shown in by a servant. Clive is happy to see him. Maurice and Clive walk in the garden at Penge. Maurice confesses that he has tried to overcome his homosexual desires but failed. Maurice then tells Clive that he is in love with Scudder and has consummated the relationship. Clive is shocked and begs Maurice to end the relationship. Maurice refuses, telling Clive he has only told him out of respect of the relationship they once had. Maurice walks away and Clive never sees him again, nor does he ever tell Anne the truth about their relationship.

Part 4, Chapters 42-46 Analysis

Maurice returns to his life, the boring job and the family he is not sure he even likes, and realizes he has only two choices. Maurice can accept himself for who he is and go live a happy life elsewhere. On the other side, Maurice can remain where he is, taking care of a mother and sisters whom he no longer likes, and work a job he hates. Maurice receives a letter from Scudder that makes him realize he has allowed his own fears and biases see something in Scudder that is not there. Maurice has finally decided to trust his feelings and to trust Scudder. Maurice goes to Scudder and they spend a night in



bed. This is the first time Maurice has consummated such a relationship and he finally realizes that what he had with Clive was nothing like what he can have with Scudder.

When Scudder insists on continuing with his plans to move to Argentina, Maurice knows that he will be alone again, but he does not regret his choice to be with Scudder. This shows the reader that Maurice has grown a lot in a short period of time. This also illustrates for Maurice that there are other men out there who will be willing to share with him all the love he has to give. When Scudder changes his mind and decides to stay, Maurice is ecstatic. However, Maurice feels that he owes it to Clive to tell him. Maurice shares his happiness with Clive, but is not surprised when Clive disapproves. Maurice does not allow this to destroy his happiness, proving once and for all that he has outgrown his dependence on Clive and become his own man.



Characters

Maurice Hall

Maurice is a young Englishman who is growing up as a gentleman, being groomed to take his deceased father's presence in society. Maurice is the son of a religious woman who thinks of her son as the man of the house even though he is only a small child when his father dies. Maurice is sent to all the best schools and even attends college for a time even though college is considered unnecessary for his station in society. Maurice is then to take over his father's position in a stock broker firm when he is finished with his education.

Maurice struggles with his role in society. Maurice is expected to meet a nice girl and marry. However, Maurice is not attracted to women. Maurice is at first confused by his lack of interest in girls. Later, Maurice realizes that his interest runs toward his fellow schoolmates and finds that he has to hide his true nature because homosexuality is not readily accepted in the world where Maurice lives. In fact, homosexuality is punishable by law. It would ruin Maurice's life and the reputations of his mother and sisters should anyone learn the truth. Therefore Maurice must pretend to be someone different from whom he really is.

Maurice meets Clive Durham while attending Cambridge. Clive is also a homosexual. However, Clive is deeply religious and believes that consummating a homosexual relationship would cause his soul to be damned. Therefore, when Clive and Maurice reveal their true feelings for one another, Clive will not allow the relationship to be more than a platonic friendship. Maurice is content with this relationship. However, after three years, Clive decides that he does not feel the same way anymore and chooses to marry a woman. Maurice is devastated by Clive's change of heart. Maurice decides that without Clive and any hope of another romance, that he no longer wants to be homosexual. Maurice visits a doctor who claims to be able to claim homosexuals with hypnosis. The treatment does not work on Maurice. However, about the same time Maurice meets another man who is willing to have a fulfilling relationship with Maurice.

Clive Durham

Clive Durham is the only son of a widowed country woman. Clive is set to inherit his father's estates upon his marriage. Clive is not interested in women, but his deep sense of religion makes him feel as though his interest in men will cause him to be damned. At Cambridge, Clive rebels against religion and his mother, determined to live his life as he wants, not as others expect him to. When Clive becomes friends with Maurice, he finds in Maurice a kindred spirit. Eventually Clive reveals his true nature to Maurice only to have himself denied.



Maurice eventually comes to Clive and attempts to explain his initial reaction to Clive's revelation. Clive is angry and does not want to accept Maurice's apology. However, Clive's feelings change and he welcomes Maurice into his life. Clive wants to have a relationship with Maurice, but does not want to consummate the relationship because he believes at that point his soul will be irredeemable. Maurice accepts these restrictions. After three years, Clive decides he is no longer a homosexual and desires to marry a woman. Maurice is heartbroken, but vows to continue his friendship with Clive. When Clive kisses Maurice during a visit to his home, Maurice is angry and unable to contain his emotions. Maurice falls in love with another man soon after this and confesses everything to Clive. Clive disapproves, but his approval is no longer something Maurice craves.

Alec Scudder

Alec Scudder is an employee at Penge, Clive's family home. Maurice sees Scudder several times on the grounds of Penge during a visit after Clive's marriage, but believes Scudder to be a straight man with a long list of girlfriends. Maurice does not give Scudder a second thought. However, one night while Maurice is struggling with his homosexual desires and his need to conform to everyone else's expectations, Scudder comes to his room. Maurice and Scudder spend the night in each other's arms and Maurice is happier than he has been in years.

The next day, Maurice suffers from guilt. Maurice is frightened that Scudder might call the police and reveal to the world what Maurice is. Maurice runs away, ignoring many requests from Scudder to return. Finally Maurice agrees to meet Scudder, but only to ask him not to tell anyone about him. During this meeting, Maurice discovers that Scudder has innocent intentions. Maurice allows himself to be talked into spending a night with Scudder. Afterward, Maurice begs Scudder to run away with him. Scudder finally agrees.

Mrs. Hall, Ada, and Kitty

Mrs. Hall is Maurice's mother. Mrs. Hall is a gentlewoman who was widowed at a young age and left with three children to raise. Mrs. Hall has high expectations for Maurice, hoping he will step into his father's shoes and care for Mrs. Hall and her daughters. Mrs. Hall also wants Maurice to marry because she wants grandchildren and she wants Maurice to be happy.

Kitty and Ada are Maurice's sisters. In the beginning of the book, the girls look up to Maurice and admire him. However, as Maurice grows older, the girls lose their respect for him. Maurice is weak when it comes to running the house and uninterested in things the girls think are important. Maurice seems odd to the girls and over time they develop a deep dislike of their older brother.



Anne Durham

Anne Durham is Clive Durham's wife. Anne is a young woman Clive meets while traveling in Greece in the aftermath of the flu that convinced Clive he was no longer homosexual. Anne is kind and gentle, happy to meet all of Clive's friends, especially Maurice. Anne has no idea what the nature of Clive and Maurice's relationship once was, only that they were close friends at one time. Anne embraces Maurice and they become good friends. Maurice would like to marry a woman like Anne, but cannot force himself to imagine spending the rest of his life with a woman.

Mr. Lasker Jones

Mr. Lasker Jones is a professional who claims to be able to cure people of personality traits they dislike. Maurice learns of Lasker Jones through his friend Risley. Risley claims that Lasker Jones cured several of his friends of their homosexual desires. Maurice goes to Lasker Jones in hopes that this will happen for him. Lasker Jones hypnotizes Maurice and tries to help him become sexually attracted to women. The first session appears to have some success. However, the second session clearly does not work and Maurice is warned that it may be possible that he is of the few for whom the treatment does not work.

Edna May

Edna May is a school friend of one of Maurice's sisters. Edna May is an attractive young woman who would make a good wife. Maurice sees that Edna May is attractive and finds himself focusing on her when he attempts to encourage himself to be attracted to women. Maurice imagines Edna May would be a good wife for him. However, Maurice is not attracted to Edna May and cannot see tying himself down to someone he does not love for the rest of his life. When Maurice goes to Lasker Jones, Edna May is the target he reaches for, but he is unsuccessful.

Risley

Risley is an outrageous young man that Maurice meets at Cambridge. Risley is introduced to Maurice through the dean at the school. Maurice has never meet anyone like Risley and finds himself attracted to him. Something about Risley's behavior makes Maurice believe he can be himself around Risley. When Maurice goes to Risley's room in an attempt to connect with him, he finds Clive Durham there instead. It is with Durham that Maurice connects and becomes involved. In later years, Maurice runs into Risley and is given the name of Lasker Jones to help him get over his homosexual desires.

Dr. Barry

Dr. Barry is a neighbor and friend of the Halls. Dr. Barry is like a surrogate father to Maurice. Dr. Barry attends Maurice's graduation from high school and attempts to give him some advice on the future. Later, when Clive ends their relationship, Maurice goes to Dr. Barry in hopes of finding some kind of cure for his homosexuality. Dr. Barry knows no cure, but advises Maurice to simply stop thinking of himself in that way. Maurice takes Dr. Barry's advice to heart because of the importance the man holds in his family. However, Maurice eventually finds it impossible to deny who he is.

Mr. Ducie

Mr. Ducie is a teacher at the private elementary school Maurice attends. When Maurice is to graduate and move on to public high school, Mr. Ducie takes Maurice aside and talks to him about sex. Maurice listens to Mr. Ducie's advice and finds that there is nothing about it that correlates with the thoughts and feelings Maurice has. Maurice is not attracted to women. Maurice is attracted to men, but nothing Mr. Ducie tells him prepares him to deal with that set of feelings.



Objects/Places

Risley's Records

Maurice meets Durham when he goes to Risley's room. Durham is at Risley's to borrow some of his records.

Letters from Durham

Maurice receives many letters from Durham during their relationship. At the end of their relationship, Durham breaks up with Maurice in a letter from Greece.

Letters from Scudder

Maurice gets a series of letters from Scudder after he leaves Penge in the aftermath of their first meeting together.

Symposium

Symposium is a book written by the Greeks that deals with the subject of homosexuality. Clive Durham suggests that Maurice read it and upon learning that he has, announces his love for Maurice.

Mr. Lasker Jones' Office

Maurice goes to Mr. Lasker Jones' office to be hypnotized. Maurice hopes the treatment will stop his attraction to men and allow him to marry a woman, as is expected of him.

London Hotel

Maurice spends the night with Scudder in a London Hotel.

Hall Family Home

Maurice lives with his mother and sisters at the home left to him by his father.

Maurice's Office

Maurice joins his father's profession and goes to an office everyday in his occupation as a financial adviser. Maurice dislikes his job, but finds routine comforting.



Mr. Abraham's School for Boys

Maurice attends Mr. Abraham's school for boys before going to public finishing school.

Cambridge

Maurice goes to school at Cambridge. It is at Cambridge where Maurice meets Clive Durham.

Penge

Penge is the country estate where Clive Durham lives with his wife and mother. Penge is also where Maurice meets Scudder.

Greece

Durham travels to Greece after suffering a long bout with the flu. During this trip, Durham decides he is attracted to women and no longer wants to be with Maurice.

Argentina

Scudder plans to move to Argentina to live and work with his brother.

London

Maurice lives outside of London. Maurice meets Scudder in London to explain to him his reluctance to remain at Penge. After their meeting, Maurice and Scudder spend a night together and Maurice tries to talk Scudder into staying with him in England rather than leaving the country.



Social Sensitivity

E. M. Forster completed *Maurice* in 1914, but the work was not published until 1971, the year following the writer's death. The third revision of the manuscript was discovered, in 1970, in Forster's rooms at Cambridge, shortly after his cremation. A note in Forster's own hand on the manuscript read, "Publishable; but is it worth it?" Without Forster's presence to respond to his own inquiry, the question raises two possible issues: "is it worth it" (publication) in terms of the artistic quality of the novel, or "is it worth it" insofar as concerns the principal substance of the piece, Maurice Hall's homosexuality? The homosexual issue arises as the major social concern of the novel, and one needs to consider, before anything else, the link between that issue and the eventual publication of *Maurice*.

In 1885, when Forster had reached only the age of six, Henry Du Pre Labouchere (1828-1904), Radical Member of Parliament for Northampton (1880-1905), sponsored the Criminal Law Amendment Act directed, principally, against the white slave traffic in England, as well as raising the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen and the age of abduction from sixteen to eighteen. Thus, the Act was significant for the legal protection of women. However, Labouchere's specific contribution to it, Section XI, focused upon the prohibition of indecent relations between consenting adult males, labeling such acts misdemeanors and forcing upon the guilty maximum prison terms of two years (Labouchere initially wanted the term to extend to seven years), with or without hard labor. That statute remained in effect until 1967—three years before Forster's death, when the Sexual Offenses Act erased the illegality of homosexuality between consenting adults. The 1885 Act, nonetheless, became the legal instrument by which to try the poet, playwright, and novelist Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) and then cause him to spend two years (May 25, 1895 to May 19, 1897) in English prisons—first at Pentonville, then at Wandsworth and Reading before being returned to Pentonville. The Act also forced a number of men to seek safety in unhappy and unsatisfactory marriages and caused them to spend considerable periods outside Great Britain, particularly at Paris and on the French Riviera. Further, especially among the literati (Somerset Maugham comes immediately to mind here), any open discussion of homosexuality or defense of homosexuality proved for those men, out of the question. Labouchere's amendment to the Criminal Law Act of 1885 existed during all but nine years of Forster's long life.

There exists little doubt that fear of legal action kept Forster from attempting to publish *Maurice* during his lifetime. He could only show it to friends and revise it: first in 1919, when he returned to England from wartime work in Egypt and his love affair with Mohammed el Adl; in 1932, the same year as Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson's death; in 1959-1960, when he wrote (September 1960) the "Terminal Note" (including the concluding paragraph on "Homosexuality").

Specifically, the novel focuses upon the process by which Maurice Hall, a shy and conventional young man, leaves his public school, Sunnington, and enters Cambridge, where he discovers, and gradually comes to accept the fact, that he naturally finds



himself attracted to men, not women. He enjoys a romantic—but nonetheless idyllic, sentimental, and chaste—relationship with Clive Durham, a fellow undergraduate and the son of country gentry. Unfortunately for Maurice, Clive, during an illness, suddenly adjusts his direction toward heterosexuality and marries. The unhappy Maurice consults his family doctor and a hypnotist, but neither can help him. He then visits Clive at the latter's country estate at Penge and falls in love—physically, this time—with Clive's gamekeeper, Alec Scudder. In the graphic (at least for the Edwardian context of that term) bedroom scene, Forster bridges the gap separating the social classes by linking Maurice (a representative of patrician youth) and Alec (a member of the working class) in a passionate series of embraces. In the end, Maurice realizes the social and political consequences of his homosexuality; he has now become a criminal. He must abandon his respectable business as a stockbroker and accept his sexual love for Alec as a form of rebellion against the social values of the affluent Edwardian middle class.

A related social concern in *Maurice* takes the form of Forster's attack upon the London suburbs—those suburbs that nurtured young Forster and which he hated deeply. When Maurice goes off with Alec Scudder to "green-wood" England—an idyllic never-never land, he escapes from the suburbs. He and Alec must live outside their class, muses Maurice toward the end of the novel, "without relations or money; they must work and stick to each other till death. But England belonged to them. That, besides companionship, was their regard. Her air and sky were theirs, not the timorous millions' who own the stuffy little boxes, but never their own souls." The most striking note of the novel, the note that allows it to be read at the very end of the present century (or at the beginning of the next one) reverberates from Maurice's homosexuality. It throws open the gates, for him, to freedom from the suburbs, with its hypocrisy, suffocating matriarchal family, and boring bourgeois society.

Techniques

Forster's principal technique in *Maurice* emerges from his self-confessed determination to develop three major male characters, have his titled character fall in love with two of them, sacrifice one to societal tradition and convention, and then provide the novel with a happy ending because the remaining two characters find happiness with each other. "The general plan," wrote Forster in his "Terminal Note," ". . . all rushed into my pen. And the whole thing went through without a hitch." Forster termed the happy ending as "imperative"; Alec and Maurice would fall in love, remain so forever, and roam the "greenwood" of England. More importantly, for Forster, the lovers have committed a crime and gotten away with it.

Therefore, one might not stray too far from the mark by identifying the novel as a pure and not always simple love story, for it contains all of the elements of that form of fiction. Although Forster does dwell upon the issues relative to social criticism, Maurice's homosexual affairs with Clive Durham and Alec Scudder constitute nothing short of romance—with all of the joy and pain and tribulation associated with that state and exercise. Had Forster disguised the sexes of Clive and Alec—much as Somerset Maugham did with Mildred Rogers in *Of Human Bondage* (1915; see separate entry)—*Maurice* would have been published in 1914, little would have been said, and after a year or two the piece would have fallen quietly into the cracks of literary obscurity. However, in refusing to distort or to cloak his agenda, Forster retained what he created and awaited another day for publication. Although the issue of male homosexuality looms large throughout the novel, Forster treats it gently and with the respect that genuine love of one human being for another deserves. Although Maurice's problem emerged as "sensational" within the context of Victorian and Edwardian societies, Forster did not treat it "sensationally," turning his creative back away from vulgarity and pornography.



Themes

Sexual Awareness/Self Discovery

The novel begins with Maurice receiving the birds and the bees talk from one of his teachers. Maurice finds the discussion mildly interesting but cannot reconcile it with his budding sexual awareness. When Maurice goes off to a new school with older boys who are also beginning to become aware of their sexuality, Maurice cannot become interested in the jokes and stories the other boys share. Finally, at Cambridge, Maurice finds a group of boys who appear to have the same thoughts and feelings he has.

Maurice is raised in a religious family where there are certain expectations for every member of the family. As the only son and provider for his sisters and mother, Maurice is expected not only to get a job to support the family financially, but to marry and have children. Maurice is aware of these expectations early in his life, but never feels the urge to spend time with women. In fact, Maurice finds that he is awkward and nervous around girls. Maurice feels more comfortable around men.

Maurice falls in love with another student while at Cambridge. This young man is also the only son in a family of women who expect him to take his father's place in the family. The man, Durham, dislikes these expectations that are placed on him and rebels. Part of this rebellion is his relationship with Maurice. Maurice believes Durham is the love of his life, but Durham never allows Maurice to do more than share long conversations and few expressions of affection. Eventually, Durham breaks under the pressure to get married and ends his relationship with Maurice. Maurice is so heartbroken that he decides to see a doctor to help change him into a normal man. This treatment does not work. Instead, Maurice falls in love with a man who treats him with love and respect, helping Maurice come to terms with his own sexuality.

Friendship

Due to his uncommon sexual desires, Maurice cuts himself off from other boys. Maurice has few friends because he always feels that he has to hide his true nature and keep distant from other people his own age. While at Cambridge, Maurice finds a group of boys with whom he can be more like himself. Among these men is Durham, his first love. Maurice is shocked when Durham first announces his feelings for Maurice, nearly ending their relationship before it can begin. However, Maurice finally tells Durham the truth about his feelings and convinces him of the importance of their relationship.

Maurice and Durham share a deep friendship for several years. Durham confesses his love for Maurice often, but refuses to allow their relationship to move beyond the platonic. Eventually, Durham decides that he is attracted to women and wants to get married. Durham ends his relationship with Maurice, but insists that he would like to continue being friends. Maurice wants to keep up the appearances of friendship



because he knows it is important for Durham. However, Maurice finds it difficult to be around Durham and not receive the same affection he once accepted as a part of their relationship. Finally, Maurice tells Durham he cannot end his feelings of affection for men and has decided to enter a relationship with another man. Durham is upset and ends the friendship. However, Maurice does not mind because he never plans to see Durham again.

Morality

Throughout the entire novel, Maurice struggles with his sexual orientation. Part of the reason for this struggle is the belief Maurice holds that homosexuality is a moral sin. Maurice, his family, friends and neighbors all attend church regularly. The church teaches that a man is placed in this world to marry and procreate. A homosexual man cannot do this. The church also teaches that it is immoral for a man to desire another man. As a result, Maurice believes himself to be immoral and that there is something fundamentally wrong with him. As a result, Maurice finds himself forced to pretend he is someone other than who he really is.

As Maurice grows up, he struggles with his own identity. Maurice wants to be normal, to marry and have children. However, Maurice cannot make himself stop wanting to be with other men. Maurice goes so far as to visit a hypnotist to help him end his desires for men. This does not work because in the middle of the treatment Maurice falls in love with a man who is willing to be the lover Maurice has desired since he first realized what his sexual identity truly was. Only in the security of this relationship can Maurice realize that he is not wrong to want love from another human being. Before reaching this epiphany, however, Maurice struggles with morality. Maurice even argues against religion because of its restraints on love and affection. It is this struggle that makes morality a theme of the novel.



Themes/Characters

The theme of *Maurice* relates directly to the titled character's homosexuality, in that it becomes the metaphor for both the pain and the joy of growth in a repressive society. It also takes the form of freedom from that society. Maurice Hall's "surroundings exasperate him by their very normality," wrote Forster in his September 1960 "Terminal Note": "mother, two sisters a comfortable home, a respectable job gradually turn out to be Hell; he must either smash them or be smashed, there is no third course." Thus, rather than essentially repeat the same story told in at least three of H. G. Wells's novels, Forster endowed Maurice Hall with his homosexuality: "I dropped an ingredient that puzzles him, wakes him up, torments him and finally saves him."

If Maurice saves himself and becomes a truly liberated Edwardian, so, too, does Alec Scudder. He directs his homosexuality toward bettering himself, trying to raise himself from one social class to the next. From a combination of his own greed and dissatisfaction with Maurice's snobbery, he attempts to blackmail Maurice, but when that fails the two reconcile.

Alec then determines to try emigration as a means to seeking his freedom, but love conquers all; he deliberately misses his ship and returns to Maurice. At that point, Maurice determines to abandon suburbia, and he and Alec hope to achieve freedom on a common ground.

Part of the theme hinges on Forster's determination that the novel would produce a positive ending.

Although Forster's characters in *Maurice* generally tend to be heavily biographical (and even autobiographical), they represent the struggle of homosexuals, regardless of the time or social periods in which they live. Maurice, Clive, and Alec search for identities, but as homosexuals they have become aliens within their respective societies. They might not be as fully developed as we expect from Forster's fictional characters, but they rise above being mere stereotypes, and thus help Forster underscore his themes.

Maurice Christopher Hall, eldest of three children (the others being his sisters Ada and Kitty) and the principal character of the novel, comes forth, initially, as a deeply conventional Edwardian young man destined for a predictable middleclass existence as a respectable stock broker and a family man. After he has left Cambridge University, he will enter his father's old firm, Hill and Hall, Stock Brokers, as an unauthorized clerk. He will step "into the niche that England had prepared for him." However, Maurice finds his life's expectations shattered by the discovery, at Cambridge, of his homosexuality. A handsome and athletic young man, Maurice becomes devoted to Clive Durham—a relationship that he likens to a fire "never to be quenched again." Tormented by his shame and loneliness, Maurice struggles to discover a cure for his sexual affliction, and he eventually achieves true peace of mind in accepting himself and his physical relationship with Alec Scudder. From his university days at Cambridge until he leaves



with Alec for the "greenwoods" of England, Maurice conducts a courageous rebellion against the mores of his day.

Descended from a long line of lawyers and landed gentry on the Wiltshire and Somersetshire border, Clive Durham appears as "a very small man with simple manners and a fair face." An outstanding classical scholar at Cambridge University, Clive has earned the reputation for being somewhat aloof, but, at the same time, he possesses a distinct awareness of right and wrong. Thus, the strong commitment to religious convention that has' been deeply rooted widiin his entire family convinces him that he will be damned because of his homosexuality.

Before marching off upon the path to total respectability, however, Clive enjoys agnostic stimulation from and with Risely and then engages in a three-year idyllic homosexual relationship with Maurice Hall, which does indeed furnish him with happiness. In the end, however, following a bout with influenza and a trip to Greece, Clive frees himself from resistance to Edwardian social pressures.

"There had been no warning—just a blind alteration of the life spirit, just an announcement, 'You who loved men, will henceforward love women. Understand it or not, it's the same to me.' Whereupon he collapsed." He marries Lady Anne Clare Wilbraham Woods, stands for Parliament, and becomes "quite the squire."

Alec Scudder resides at the bottom of the three-tiered social scale drawn by Forster: Clive Durham at the top (the landed gentry) and Maurice Hall in the middle (the middle class). The highly intelligent son of a butcher, Alec functions as the hard-working gamekeeper at Clive Durham's estate at Penge. A proud representative of the working class, Alec nonetheless wants to rise above his station—an almost impossible exercise for the Edwardian lower classes. Therefore, he had planned to leave England, with his brother, for Argentina, but instead meets up with Maurice Hall. Their homosexual relationship lights a spark in Alec, for, in a way, he believes that he has climbed up the social ladder. Shrewd and suspicious, Alec even tries blackmail, but in the end Maurice wins his love. In Maurice's view, Alec exists as "a treasure, a charmer, a find in a thousand, the longed-for dream."

Mr. Abrahams, the principal master of Maurice Hall's local school, has been described as a "preparatory schoolmaster of the old-fashioned sort." Concerned neither for work nor games, Abrahams worked hard to keep his boys fed and their behavior proper. Mr. Read, Abrahams' junior assistant, had similar notions of education, except that he proved more stupid than his superior. Mrs. Abrahams, the principal master's wife, would, at the end of the annual all-school walk, meet the boys and the three masters at the tea place with a number of her lady friends.

She appears hospitable and motherly.

Finally, Mr. Ducie, the senior master who "prevented the whole concern from going to sleep," comes forth as able, orthodox, and aware of the workings of the world. Ducie explains sex to fourteen-year-old Maurice Hall prior to the latter's going off to



Sunnington. At the end of the explication, Maurice thinks Ducie a liar and a coward who has told him nothing.

At her suburban London home, Mrs. Hall, Maurice's mother, has only one place to go—church, since all of the local shops delivered. George, the Halls' gardener, has been let go by Mrs. Howell, the Halls' senior housekeeper, because he wanted to better himself. George's departure seriously upsets young Maurice, for the two had often played together, and the naked spirit of George continues to haunt Maurice's dreams.

The retired Dr. Barry, a cynical and sarcastic old bully, but a friend and neighbor of the Halls, has as little use for Maurice than he did for the departed Mr. Hall senior. Following his break-up with Clive Durham, Maurice visits Dr. Barry and confesses his homosexuality to him, and Barry tells him to marry. Dr. Barry's young nephew, Dickie, becomes for Maurice Hall, on one occasion, "the World's desire." Maurice mistakes Dickie as a second Clive Durham and practically assaults him, but "the fires died down as quickly as they had risen, leaving some suspicious ashes behind them."

Gladys Olcott, an infrequent guest of the Halls, provides an example of Maurice's inability to summon forth a romantic urge with women, as well as functioning as a sign leading to Maurice's homosexuality. They meet during Maurice's vacation from Cambridge. He annoys her, and "she knew something was wrong. His touch revolted her. It was a corpse's."

When Maurice moves on to Cambridge, he comes in contact with the Bohemian Risley, who "spoke continuously . . . [and] used strong yet unmanly superlatives." He cares only for conversation, but he "stirred Maurice incomprehensively." In Risley's rooms, Maurice first meets Clive Durham, after which he looks upon Risley with indifference.

Maurice's grandfather, Mr. Grace, exemplifies the growth that may come with old age. He lives with Ida, his unmarried daughter, who keeps house for him. Grace has formulated a new religious idea, wherein God lives inside the sun. Thus, for him, death meant a journey to the sun. Maurice's one fear focuses upon the notion that love (in the form of Clive Durham) had left him to "'play the game.' And he might have to play as long as his grandfather, and retire as absurdly."

After failing to receive sound advice from Dr. Barry, Maurice, upon the recommendation of Risley, consults Mr. Lasker Jones, a hypnotist with a slight American accent. This "advanced scientific man" identifies Maurice's problem as congenital homosexuality—the only instance when that word appears on Forster's page—and admits that his method has proven successful with only fifty percent of his cases. Between his first and second meeting with Lasker Jones, Maurice discovers Alec Scudder, and thus finds himself among the hypnotist's failures and statistics.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the third person point of view with some aspects of the authorial voice. The third person point of view is omniscient. However, the tone of the narration leaves the reader convinced that rather than using his characters as narrators, the author simply tells the story with thoughts and emotions that he has placed inside his character's heads. This authorial voice is often masked by the omniscient aspect of the point of view, but at times makes its presents known in such a way that it can be somewhat startling to the reader.

The point of view of this novel can at times be difficult for the reader. The narration moves quickly from character to character, leaving the reader unclear at times whose thoughts and emotions are being revealed. The authorial voice at times can keep the reader at a distance from the characters, limiting the intimacy that is often essential in character driven novels such as this. Despite these technical flaws, the point of view does offer the thoughts and emotions of several of the main characters, allowing the reader to understand the struggle these characters are working through as the plot develops. This understanding helps the reader to connect to the plot and find satisfaction in the climax.

Setting

The novel is set in England in the early part of the 1900s. The setting shifts from a private boy's school, to the public boy's school, to Cambridge. The setting also includes the family homes of several of the characters, including Maurice and his first love, Clive Durham. All of these settings are in or around London, keeping the setting in a relatively common area.

The setting of this novel is important not so much for where it is set but the time in which it is set. Maurice is a novel about a young man coming to terms with his own sexual orientation. While learning to accept oneself as a gay man in modern times is difficult, doing so in a time when sexual orientation was not fully understood and the morality of such an orientation was considered a sin against everything proper, it is even more difficult. This time period places pressure on Maurice to attempt to hide his sexual orientation and to find ways to be healed from it. It is this aspect of the time period that makes the setting an important factor in the development of the plot.

Language and Meaning

Due to the fact that the novel was written in the early part of the 1900s, the language in this novel tends to be stiff and awkward for the modern reader. The novel is written in English, but is an old fashioned style of English that often puts together sentences in a



structure that readers are not familiar with. The novel also includes passages in foreign languages that the reader is expected to be able to decipher, leaving the linguistically challenged reader lost as to the content of the foreign phrase.

The language of this novel is typical of the time in which it was written and is set, giving the novel an authentic feel that allows the reader to embrace the setting more readily. However, the language is often stiff and misleading, causing the modern reader some difficulty in following the plot at certain points within the novel. The novel is also about young men who are highly educated. As such, these young men occasionally speak in foreign languages that some readers might not recognize. These phrases are not explained in the text, therefore the reader is often at a loss as to what the phrase is or what its impact is intended to be.

Structure

The novel is divided into four parts and forty-six chapters. Each part contains a section of the novel that pertains to a specific time in Maurice's life and corresponds to developments in his struggle with his sexual orientation. The chapters are all short, some are very short. The novel is told in both exposition and dialogue. There is also a great deal of internal dialogue. This internal dialogue not only documents Maurice's struggles, but the reader is also offered a glimpse into Clive Durham's internal dialogue and allowed to witness his own struggles.

The novel has only one plot. The main plot follows Maurice from adolescences into adulthood as he struggles with his own identity. To add to Maurice's difficulties, he discovers that he has a different sexual orientation than the other boys around him. Maurice tries to hide his sexual orientation, afraid of the consequences should anyone find out since he lives in a time when homosexuality was punishable by law. Maurice falls in love, but his lover refuses to consummate the relationship and eventually ends it in order to marry a woman. Maurice wants to be healed from this affliction, but finally finds love with a man who is not afraid of his own identity.



Quotes

"The Principal neither knew nor would have wished to know. Parting from his pupils when they were fourteen, he forgot they had developed into men. They seemed to him a race small but complete, like the New Guinea pygmies, 'my boys'." Part 1, Chapter 1, pg. 4

"Maurice liked his home, and recognized his mother as the presiding genius. Without her there would be no soft chairs or food or easy games, and he was grateful to her for providing so much, and loved her." Part 1, Chapter 2, pg. 10

"He had lost the precocious clearness of the child which transfigures and explains the universe, offering answers of miraculous insight and beauty." Part 1, Chapter 3, pg. 14

"Durham didn't dislike him, he was sure. That was all he wanted. One thing at a time. He didn't so much as have hopes, for hope distracts, and he had a great deal to see to." Part 1, Chapter 6, pg. 33

"Maurice was stepping into the niche that England had prepared for him." Part 1, Chapter 8, pg. 47

"Durham could not wait. People were all around them, but with eyes that had gone intensely blue he whispered, 'I love you.'" Part 1, Chapter 9, pg. 50

"He would not deceive himself so much. He would not—and this was the test—pretend to care about women when the only sex that attracted him was his own. He love men and always had loved them. He longed to embrace them and mingle his being with theirs. Now that the man who returned his love had been lost, he admitted this." Part 1, Chapter 10, pg. 53

"Clive had suffered little from bewilderment as a boy. His sincere mind, with its keen sense of right and wrong, had brought him the belief that he was damned instead." Part 2, Chapter 12, pg. 61

"If Maurice made love it was Clive who preserved it, and caused its rivers to water the garden." Part 2, Chapter 18, pg. 89

"He had stopped loving Maurice and should have to say so plainly." Part 2, Chapter 23, pg. 107

"He lived on miserable and misunderstood, as before, and increasingly lonely. One cannot write those words too often: Maurice's loneliness: it increased." Part 3, Chapter 28, pg. 130



"There was something better in life than this rubbish, if only he could get to it—love—nobility—big spaces, where passion clasped peace, spaces no science could reach, but they existed for ever, full of woods some of them, and arched with majestic sky and a friend..."

Part 3, Chapter 37, pg. 178

Adaptations

In 1987, Kit Hesketh-Harvey and James Ivory adapted *Maurice* to a 140-minute color film, the piece directed by Ivory and produced by Merchant-Ivory Productions. The cast of the film included James Wilby, Hugh Grant, Rupert Graves, Denholm Elliott, Simon Callow, Billie Whitelaw, Ben Kingsley, and Judy Parfitt. It could muster only a single Academy Award—that being for costume design. The themes and characterizations in the screenplay generally follow the spirit of Forster's novel.



Key Questions

The major theme of *Maurice* focuses on homosexuality to the extent that one school of criticism argues that the work is a propaganda piece on behalf of freedom for homosexuals.

Aesthetically, the form of this as an autobiographical novel creates problems developing the theme of homosexuality; the social struggles undergone by the characters sometimes stifles the development of plot, character, setting, and form as devices of fiction.

1. In his 1960 "Terminal Note" to *Maurice*, Forster argues that the attitudes of heterosexuals toward homosexuals has changed "from ignorance and terror [in 1914] to familiarity and contempt [in 1960 and after]." Does that comment in any way apply to the reactions of those who read *Maurice* in the current decade?

Why or why not? How can, or should, readers react to a novel such as *Maurice* that emphasizes certain social concerns of one age that then change radically a half-century or more later?

2. After *Maurice* has committed himself to Alec Scudder, he exclaims, "Oh, the situation was disgusting—of that he was certain, and indeed never wavered till the end of his life." Discuss the nature of *Maurice's* disgust. How and why has he become disgusted? Why cannot (or why does not) he take steps to ease or eliminate that disgust?

3. Discuss the relationships between sex and social class in *Maurice*. How do those relationships clash with *Maurice's* snobbery, or do they?

4. A real "touchy" argument in *Maurice* arises from the conviction by certain critics that for *Maurice* Hall, homosexuality functions as religion. It "saves" him and provides him with "grace." Do you see that as a valid critical argument? Why or why not?

5. One view of *Maurice* identifies the novel as a propaganda piece for homosexuality. Could propaganda possibly have been Forster's purpose—or at least one of his purposes? Why or why not?

Before responding to this problem, define propaganda and determine its potential function in fiction.

6. If Forster had not written *Maurice*, could he have written what has been considered his best novel, *A Passage to India*? Why or why not?

7. Defend or attack the notion that the principal value of *Maurice* lies in the realization that Forster has provided his readers with an extremely broad scope and wide variety of homosexual love. In other words, does Forster succeed in leading his readers to a clear understanding of homosexuals and homosexuality?



8. Advocates of *Maurice* maintain that even though the novel does not constitute Forster's best fictional effort, it does not embarrass him or his art. Do you agree or disagree with one or both parts of this question? What weaknesses in *Maurice* prevent it from standing on the same level of quality as *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*? What strengths place it equally with those two novels?

9. Identify and discuss the connections between the 1960 "Terminal Note" and the novel itself. Which has more value in terms of the principal social concerns raised by Forster in *Maurice*? What value can one derive from the "Terminal Note" as an exercise in the genesis of a novel?

10. At one point in *Maurice*, Dr. Barry exclaims, "England has never been inclined to accept human nature." That statement may well be a major thesis of the novel. Would you agree? Why or why not? If you do agree, would the statement, as thesis, limit considerably the scope, audience, and effectiveness of *Maurice*? Why or why not?



Topics for Discussion

Why does the teacher in the first chapter take Maurice aside? What is this teacher hoping to teach Maurice? Why does Maurice not understand the lesson? How does this lesson make Maurice feel? What does this tell the reader about Maurice? How old is Maurice when this takes place? Could his age have bearing on his reaction?

Why does Maurice feel as though he must pretend to be someone he is not? What is Maurice attempting to hide from his classmates? What is it about Risley that finally makes Maurice feel as though he might reveal himself? How does Maurice feel when he meets Clive Durham? Why does Maurice feel this way? How is Clive Durham like Maurice?

Why does Maurice pretend to be offended when Clive Durham announces his feelings for Maurice? What is Maurice afraid of? Why does Clive Durham not accept Maurice's apology? What has caused Clive Durham to be so angry with Maurice? Why does Maurice stand outside Clive's room all night?

Homosexuality is illegal in England at the time this novel is set. Discuss this law. Do you think homosexuals should be prosecuted by the law? Why or why not? Do police officers belong in bedrooms? When does a person have the right to privacy? Should Maurice be put in jail?

Is Clive Durham a homosexual? Does Clive become involved with Maurice because he is attracted to him or because he is rebelling against his mother? Why does Clive never take their relationship beyond the platonic? Why does Clive decide he wants to marry a woman? What helps Clive make this decision?

Why does Maurice go to Mr. Lasker Jones? What does Maurice hope Lasker Jones can do for him? Does the treatment work? Why or why not? Do you believe such treatments could work for someone like Maurice? Why or why not?

Who is Alec Scudder? Why does he write letters to Maurice? Why does Scudder threaten to hurt Maurice? How does Scudder change the way Maurice feels about himself? Why does Maurice ask Scudder not to go to Argentina? Why does Maurice go to Durham and tell him about Scudder? Is Maurice trying to hurt or help Durham with this knowledge?

Literary Precedents

Given the legal problems surrounding the publication of *Maurice*, uncovering "literary precedents" for the novel proves difficult. Even though D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928; see separate entry) did not appear in print until 1928 (in Florence, Italy)—fourteen years after Forster had completed his first manuscript draft of *Maurice*—critical commentators have been quick to label *Maurice* as a male version of Lawrence's effort.

However, if that is the case, then Forster, himself, becomes the precedent. Perhaps the specter of nontraditional but romantically inclined gamekeepers, a feature of both novels, proves too irresistible for the scholarly eye and mind. Again, we must turn to Forster, himself, for assistance in this matter. The writer tells us, for example, that Alec Scudder is senior in date to the prickly gamekeepers of D. H. Lawrence, and had not the advantage of their disquisitions, nor, though he might have even met my own Stephen Wonham [Rickie Elliot's illegitimate halfbrother in *The Longest Journey*, 1907] would they have had more in common than a mug of beer. What was his life before *Maurice* arrived?

Clive's earlier life is easily recalled, but Alec's, when I tried to evoke it, turned into a survey and had to be scrapped.

Thus, one may safely conclude that, in the Edwardian England in which Forster set his novel, creating a situation where outright and self-admitted homosexuality becomes a means for transcending the barriers of social and economic class and for eventually finding happiness does establish a certain uniqueness in English fiction. Of course, the effect of that precedent lessens, somewhat, from the fact that the novel did not reach the printed page until more than a half century following the completion of the initial version.



Related Titles

Although *Maurice* stands far apart from the five novels published during Forster's lifetime, it does contain a number of thin threads unraveled from other pieces. For example, the issues of class distinctions and class struggles, snobbery, pride, money, and the search for happiness raise themselves everywhere in Forster's fiction. Characters who champion those issues can march beside each other: Leonard Bast and Alec Scudder each possesses a strong sense of pride associated with the lower classes, and each wants to bully his way up the social ladder. The Wilcoxes and the Schlegels (from *Howards End*, 1910; see separate entry) would have little difficulty mingling with Clive Durham and Maurice Hall—all of them holding their heads high and snubbing everyone they consider beneath them. Charles Wilcox, Maurice Hall, and Ronald Heaslop would make a compatible trio of social snobs, joined, on the periphery, by the minor characters who inhabit the English settlement at Chandrapore. Again, stripped of the homosexuality issue, *Maurice* easily fits the Forster mold.

However, a number of feminist studies scholars have recently looked into *A Passage to India* (1924; see separate entry) to argue that the isolation of the British settlers in India symbolizes the closet into which sterile Edwardian homosexuals had to confine themselves. In opposition to that stands the heterosexuality of native India, particularly the fertile landscape.

Thus, Aziz, in the final section of the novel, lives in peace with his children; Fielding has problems with his -wife.

Ronald Heaslop and Adela Quested, at the outset of the novel, intend to marry.

They never do, because neither has an attraction for the other. Even the apparently unmarried Professor Godbole retains loving memories of Mrs. Moore.

Counter to that argument emerges the belief that Forster interrupted work on *A Passage to India* so that he could turn his attention to *Maurice* and thus purge himself of his particular treatment of the homosexual issue that he had to get on paper. Having done that, he returned, some ten years later, to complete *A Passage to India* without having to bother with love—the conventional or the unconventional forms.



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