

# **Middlemarch Study Guide**

## **Middlemarch by George Eliot**

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# Plot Summary

The novel "Middlemarch" by George Eliot tells the story of life in a small, rural English town in the early nineteenth century. Themes in the novel include the way that people react to change, women's roles, marriage, and relationships. Although the pace of the novel is leisurely, many scandalous topics are covered including suspected murder, infidelity, secret pasts, gossip, politics, and family feuds. The developing relationships of four couples form the backbone of the novel as these young people learn to relate to each other and the world around them.

Dorothea, who is headstrong and wants to make positive changes in the world around her, is a main character in the novel. She marries Reverend Edward Casaubon, an elderly priest, only to learn he is not the scholar that she had idolized before their marriage. Casaubon is displeased with Dorothea as he believes that she is not only critical of him, but she is believing damaging information about him from his cousin, Will Ladislaw. Casaubon's jealousy is so strong for Ladislaw that before he dies he writes a codicil to his will stating that if Dorothea marries Ladislaw, she will lose Casaubon's inheritance.

Meanwhile, the pretty Rosamond Vincy has set her sights on Teritus Lydgate, the new doctor in town. Like Dorothea, Lydgate is not interested in getting rich. He wants to treat and heal the poor of the town. His fiancée, however, is accustomed to a different way of life. Lydgate soon finds himself deeply in debt. He borrows money from the rich Bulstrode, but the circumstances under which the money is loaned make it look like a bribe to the rest of the people in the town. Relations between Rosamond and Lydgate are also rocky, but Dorothea steps in and tries to help the couple relate to one another by drawing on the experience of her own bad marriage.

Also featured in this story are Mary Garth and Fred Vincy. Mary and Fred have been in love with one another since they were little children. Although Mary knows that there is no one for her but Fred, she waits for him to grow up into the man whom she wants to marry. She waits patiently as he fights his way through a bad debt that he cannot repay, loss of an inheritance that he thought was a certainty, and his struggle to come to terms with his life and find a job that suits him. With a little help from Mary's father, Fred becomes his apprentice, tending the Tipton Grange and Freshitt estates. With some finagling, Caleb Garth arranges for Fred to live at Stone Court, the property that Fred thought he would inherit one day. Fred farms and tends that property and, eventually, buys it for himself. It is at this point that Mary agrees to marry Fred.

The romance between Dorothea and Will Ladislaw is followed closely throughout the novel. Though Will does not care for Dorothea when he first meets her, he soon grows to admire her. While she had always enjoyed Will's friendship, it is after Dorothea learns that Casaubon attempted to forbid her from marrying Will after his death that she is drawn to Will even more. Though both of these young people try to hold their feelings for one another in check, they surprise the community by announcing their plans to marry. Dorothea has decided that a chance at love is more valuable than riches.



# Book One: Chapters 1-6

## Summary

### Chapter 1

Dorothea Brooke and her sister Celia are introduced and described. Dorothea is beautiful and deeply religious, while Celia has more common sense. They are well educated. Since the sisters' parents are dead, they live with their uncle who will not hire them a chaperone. Instead, he allows Dorothea to be in charge of the house. Dorothea thinks often that her sister should marry Sir James Chettam, but she has more immature ideas about marriage for herself. They are preparing to host Chettam and the Reverend Edward Casaubon for dinner.

### Chapter 2

During dinner Chettam seems to be trying to impress Dorothea, but Dorothea is taken by Casaubon.

### Chapter 3

Casaubon has already begun to think that Dorothea might make an acceptable wife for him. Dorothea feels that Casaubon understands her as no one else ever has. He makes a point to tell her that he wishes for youthful companionship. Later, Chettam interrupts her walk, bringing her a puppy. She refuses it. He does, however, offer to help see to it that her cottages are built, an aspect that she believes will make him an excellent brother-in-law.

### Chapter 4

Dorothea's uncle tells her that Casaubon has asked for her hand in marriage. She wants to accept his proposal believing that it would be an honor to assist him in his studies. Her uncle tries to persuade her that Chettam would make a better match.

### Chapter 5

Cassubon proposes marriage to Dorothea, and she accepts. She is enthralled to be marrying an educated, though much older man. Her sister Celia and her uncle are not as pleased; though, her uncle does admit it is a good match. During their first meeting after Dorothea's acceptance of Cassubon, she throws herself at him in a show of gratefulness and naiveté.

### Chapter 6

Mrs. Cadwallader, who had long sought to make a match between Dorothea and Chettam, learns from Brooke that Dorothea has accepted Casaubon's offer of marriage.



Mrs. Cadwallader tells Chettam about the engagement and suggests that Celia is actually the better of the two sisters. Chettam is disappointed but goes to Tipton Grange anyway, intending to speak with Dorothea about the cottages, and offer his congratulations.

## Analysis

In these first chapters, the highly religious and idealistic Dorothea accepts the elderly Reverend Edward Casaubon's proposal of marriage even though those around her beg her not to do so. Dorothea, who is highly impressed by learning, believes that she can assist Casaubon in his studies and tells him so. It is indicated that Dorothea spends so much time wondering if she is worthy of Casaubon that she forgets to question if he is worthy of her. This statement indicates that Casaubon might not be the type of man who can live happily with Dorothea. Perhaps, he is looking only at the benefits that she can provide for him.

Dorothea's uncle, Mr. Brooke, tries to encourage Dorothea to think more seriously before accepting Casaubon's proposal, but she refuses to do so. Chettam, who fancies Dorothea himself, tries to woo her with the promise of a good riding horse, a puppy, and an offer to help build the cottages she has designed to house the poor of the area. Even with all of his offers, Dorothea never considers Chettam as a companion for herself. In fact, she shrugs off all of his suggestions. Mrs. Cadwallader, who considers herself to be a matchmaker, has been trying to match up Chettam and Dorothea as well. Brooke tells her that Dorothea has chosen Casaubon, though he doesn't approve of the match. Celia also expresses her concern about her sister's plans to marry the older man.

Unique in Dorothea's personality is her desire to be as religious as possible. She believes that wearing ornaments, even her mother's jewelry, constitutes putting on airs. Although her sister revolts, she tries to make Celia see and do things her way. For instance, Celia sees nothing wrong with wearing her mother's jewelry. She does not believe it will inhibit her ability to pray or be religious. Dorothea, however, believes jewelry shows vanity. She makes her sister feel bad about wanting to be fashionable. Similarly, when Chettam mentions that Dorothea is a good horse rider, she tells him that she plans to give up riding because she enjoys the activity. With this mindset, it is no wonder that Dorothea would think it an honor to be married to an older man who seems serious and dried up.

## Discussion Question 1

Discuss Dorothea's opinions of marriage. How does Casaubon fit her ideal?



## Discussion Question 2

Why is the discussion between Dorothea and her sister about their mother's jewelry significant? Does it show that the sisters have anything in common? How do their personalities differ?

## Discussion Question 3

Consider Dorothea's idea that she must give up horseback riding because she enjoys the activity. What is your opinion of her sacrifice? Why does Dorothea believe she must give up the activity just because she likes it?

## Vocabulary

Provincial, coquetry, eccentric, guimp, abeyance, fervidly, homage, parterre, triviality, impetuous, fastidious, brusque, philanthropy, sallow, rescind, affable, induce, formidable, scrupulous, illimitable, asceticism, discursive, exhorted, odious, purblind, propitiation, abdicated, dissimulate, neophyte, vacillate, infelicity, mitigated, prophetic.



# Book One: Chapters 7-12

## Summary

### Chapter 7

Dorothea insists upon learning Greek from her future husband, even though her uncle believes that she would find playing an instrument more useful. He tells himself that the match is a good one that he has no business meddling in especially since he believes that Casaubon will be well off in the ministry.

### Chapter 8

Chettam continues to think that Dorothea's marriage to Casaubon is a bad idea. He tries to get the rector to speak to Brooke about it, but the rector kindly refuses to interfere. Chettam goes forward with working on Dorothea's cottages. The two develop a friendship.

### Chapter 9

Dorothea, Celia, and Mr. Brooke tour Casaubon's manor home to see what changes Dorothea wants to make to the home. She asks that everything be left as it is. While on the grounds, they meet Casaubon's cousin, Will Ladislaw, whom Casaubon has agreed to support until he is finished with school and has a job. Ladislaw takes an immediate dislike to Dorothea. Dorothea, on the other hand, make a comment about being patient with Ladislaw, a comment that Celia later tells her sister is unlike her.

### Chapter 10

Casaubon is distressed because he does not feel excited about his upcoming marriage. Even those at a bridal dinner notice Casaubon appears to be getting older even more quickly now that he is engaged. Women talking at the dinner share with each other their opinions of his nasty temperament. One believes that Dorothea will be unhappy within one year of being married. Also at the dinner is Lydgate, a surgeon new to the area. He is enthralled by Dorothea but does not see her again until after she is married.

### Chapter 11

Lydgate has his sights set on Rosamond Vincy, but he is poor and young. Rosamond is described as a young lady who is the opposite of Dorothea. She is beautiful, well-learned, and accomplished.

### Chapter 12

Rosamond and her brother Fred ride to Stone Court, the home of their crotchety uncle, Mr. Featherstone. Rosamond wants an opportunity to see Lydgate again. Before they





arrive, however, Mrs. Waule, suggests to her brother that Fred has been promising people he will pay off his debts with the inheritance he gets from Featherstone. Featherstone speaks to Fred in private about this and warns him that his will can be changed and Fred left out. He asks for proof that Fred has not made the claims that some say he has. Meanwhile, Rosamond talks to Mary Grath in private. She wants to know if Mary Grath has any interest in Lydgate or he any interest in her. It appears that she does not. When Lydgate later enters Stone Court and sees Rosamond, a look passes between them that Rosamond has always associated with falling in love. On the way home, she plans out what her married life will be like.

## Analysis

A relationship begins to develop that is very different from the one between Dorothea and Casaubon. Rosamond is almost the direct opposite of Dorothea. Rosamond is beautiful and well educated. Dorothea is pretty, but she does not play up her beauty with attractive garments or jewelry. Rosamond is also of a lighter nature than Dorothea who seems very devoted to her religion but, at the same time, very limited by it.

The only thing the two girls seem to have in common is that they have very definite guidelines drawn about their husbands and their future marriages. Dorothea imagines her husband to be a sort of father figure. She wants an older, learned man whom she can help in some great intellectual feat. Rosamond, on the other hand, has always imagined marrying someone from another city. She does not believe that any of the boys with whom she has grown up with will be acceptable, Rosamond believes she has met her dream in Lydgate, while Dorothea believes that her future lies in Casaubon.

At this point in the novel, an interesting story line begins to develop as Ms. Waule accuses Fred of promising to pay off his debts using money he will get as part of his inheritance from his uncle. In fact, she tells her brother, Mr. Featherstone, who is the uncle with the inheritance what she has been hearing about from Fred. Mr. Featherstone confronts Fred with this information, but Fred tells his uncle he has not made any such promises. Even though he really hasn't made these promises and Ms. Waule is only trying to stir up dissent in the family, Mr. Featherstone makes Fred bring him some proof that the rumors are not true.

## Discussion Question 1

Compare and contrast Dorothea and Rosamond.

## Discussion Question 2

For what reason does Rosamond take a liking to Lydgate?



## Discussion Question 3

What clues are given in this section of the novel that Casaubon is not as excited about his upcoming marriage as his bride?

## Vocabulary

Conciliate, deanery, culpable, melancholy, bias, boudoir, proffer, droll, curate, deprecation, covert, indolence, ludicrous, anomalous, felicitating, augury, brevity, rhetoric, pedagogue, abeyance, epithet, cicerone, equanimity, laxity, filigree, dowager, philanthropist, piquancy, perturbation, aspirates, beguiled, placidity, tetchy, innuendo, physiognomy, ruminating, oracular, dropsical, satiric, sardonically, magnanimous, dissipate, epoch, sordid, misanthropic.



# Book Two: Chapters 13-17

## Summary

### Chapter 13

Mr. Vincy goes to visit Bulstrode to explain Fred's circumstances and to ask for a letter saying he knows nothing of Fred borrowing money against Featherstone's land. At first, Bulstrode refuses the letter saying that he doesn't doubt that Fred has made such offers. Later on, realizing that it will cause conflict with his wife, Bulstrode relents and tells Vincy he will consider the matter and probably send a letter.

### Chapter 14

Fred presents Bulstrode's letter to Featherstone. Though Featherstone reads between the lines and determines Bulstrode's meaning, he agrees to accept the proof. He also gives Fred five twenty-pound notes. Fred is disappointed that it is not more, but he thanks Mr. Featherstone for his generosity. After he leaves his uncle, he sits with Mary. He professes his love to her and asks some form of encouragement from her. She tells him that she will not marry him and requests he not talk to her about love and marriage again. Once he is home, Fred gives his mother four of his twenty-pound notes for safe keeping so he can pay them on his debt.

### Chapter 15

Eliot gives the reader background information about Lydgate. The boy was an orphan, but he still had the opportunity to go to school. He loved to read. One day while he was looking through an old set of encyclopedias a desire to practice medicine was awakened in him. As for matters of love, he fell in love with an actress who had intentionally killed her husband on stage but had made the murder look like an accident. He professes his love to this woman who tells him that she does not like being married. She confesses to him that she had meant to kill her husband as Lydgate had believed the death was an accident.

### Chapter 16

At dinner one evening at the Vincy home, Lydgate finds himself involved in a discussion about which pastor should serve as chaplain for his hospital. He offends the coroner without meaning to do so. Later in the evening, he enjoys listening to Rosamond play and sing, but he does not imagine that she has taken his interest seriously. Elderly gentlemen believe Rosamond will be quite a catch while the elderly ladies think she is too educated. One aunt in particular hopes that she will marry a rich husband.

### Chapter 17



Lydgate pays a visit to Farebrother, the clergyman. Farebrother warns Lydgate that although Middlemarch is a small town, it has its own share of preference and politics, just as the large towns do. For instance, he tells the young doctor that he is to vote against Bulstrode's party. This will make him an enemy of the man. Farebrother also suggests to Lydgate that the proper wife can be a great help to a man. He suggests that Lydgate pay attention to Mary Garth.

## Analysis

Perhaps, the most significant topic discussed in this section of the novel is Lydgate's idea that there is less "bigwiggism and obstructive trickery" in the country. He has decided to come to the country believing Middlemarch the ideal place to practice medicine where he can be free from the distractions of political pressure. In his meeting with Farebrother, the older priest warns Lydgate that he will still have to deal with politics, especially in Middlemarch. Farebrother tells Lydgate that he will not think ill of Lydgate regardless of the decision that he makes about who should fill the paid chaplain position at the hospital. Bulstrode has already tried to encourage Lydgate to vote for Tyke the candidate he hopes will fill the position.

It is also in this section that background information is given about Lydgate. Lydgate had been orphaned as a child. Even so, he had the opportunity to go to school. It is while he is looking through an old set of encyclopedias that Lydgate finds his calling. He is entranced by a diagram of the heart. He sets his mind on learning all that he can about human anatomy. Significant in Lydgate's background is his love affair with the actress. Being a doctor, he is one of the first people on the stage after the death of the actress' husband. He believes the death is what the woman intended it to appear, an accident. He is shocked when he searches down the woman to declare his love to her and has her tell him that she meant to kill her husband. She tells him that she had decided that she did not like to be married. This experience will definitely cloud Lydgate's opinion of women from this point on.

Fred, Rosamond's brother, is another interesting character who surfaces during this section of the novel. He has had all of the opportunities that any young man in his setting could hope to have, yet he has taken advantage of none of them. He has built up debt, which apparently he has promised to pay off using an inheritance he expects to get from his uncle. A busybody aunt tells the uncle about Fred's plans. This gets Fred in trouble. Mr. Vincy, Fred's father, gets his son out of trouble by using what power he has to convince Mr. Bulstrode, the banker, to write a letter saying Fred has never offered to pay debts using his uncle's property. The uncle, Mr. Featherstone, realizes what has happened and gives Fred five 20-pound notes as a gift. Since the amount is so small, Fred believes the gift is a slap in the face, but he pretends to be gracious in accepting the money.



## Discussion Question 1

Is Lydgate naïve in believing that there is less political pressure in small towns than large ones?

## Discussion Question 2

What is the significance of Lydgate's "relationship" with the actress who killed her husband?

## Discussion Question 3

Should Lydgate listen to Farebrother's advice? Why or why not? Why does he suggest that Lydgate pay attention to Mary Garth?

## Vocabulary

Copious, sonorous, palliative, circumspect, tyrannical, odious, colossi, proscenium, conjecture, incongruous, galvanic, vehemently, prig, sylph, parenthetically, erudite, arbitrariness, anomaly, piquant, assizes, snuggery, stagnate, emendations, fumigating, circumnavigator, antipodes.



# Book Two: Chapters 18-22

## Summary

### Chapter 18

Lydgate becomes preoccupied with the coming vote concerning who will fill the position of the chaplain. He personally likes Farebrother better, but he is feeling pressure to vote for Tyke. On the day the medical board meets to vote, there is a stalemate when Lydgate enters. The men know that Lydgate's vote will break the tie. He votes for Tyke because a man in the crowd taunts him. He holds this vote and the way that it was handled as a sore spot against the people of Middlemarch.

### Chapter 19

Will Ladislav and his German friend, Adolf Naumann, happen to run into Dorothea at the Vatican. Naumann believes Dorothea should be painted, as she is the antithesis of the Cleopatra. Ladislav tells Naumann that Dorothea is married to his cousin and should be left alone.

### Chapter 20

Dorothea has realized that her marriage to Casaubon might not be as she imagined. She feels lonely and useless as her husband leaves her alone to study. In a similar way, he becomes angry when she insinuates criticism of his work. It is in her despondency that Ladislav and Naumann had seen her at the Vatican.

### Chapter 21

Ladislav visits Dorothea at the place that she and Casaubon are staying. He is struck by her beauty and the wonder that she married his dried up uncle. He thinks that it is a cruel joke that Casaubon has spent his honeymoon studying instead of spending time with his new wife. Casaubon returns home earlier than expected and is surprised to see Ladislav there. He is jealous of his younger cousin.

### Chapter 22

Ladislav gets an opportunity during dinner with his cousin to invite both Dorothea and Casaubon to Naumann's study so that he can draw them both. After they leave Naumann's studio, Ladislav lashes out at Casaubon's vanity. He wishes that he were not indebted to the man so deeply. He makes a point to see Dorothea alone. During the visit, Dorothea questions Ladislav about his opinion of Casaubon's learning. Ladislav tells her that he plans to seek a living on his own, without Casaubon's aid, and will not see her again. Before he leaves, Dorothea makes him promise not to mention their discussion about his learning to Casaubon. Casaubon comes home as Ladislav is leaving the building, and they say their farewells. Dorothea later tells Casaubon about



Will's decision to not live off his cousin's money any longer. Dorothea expects her husband to be pleased. Instead, he seems irritated and asks that they not speak of Will again.

## Analysis

The residents of Middlemarch prove that they are just as politically minded as those in any large city when they pressure Lydgate concerning his vote on the chaplain issue. To make matters worse, Lydgate is the last in the room. It is announced that his vote will be the one that will break the tie. Lydgate holds this vote and the way that he was pressured into voting for Tyke against the people of Middlemarch. He tries to convince himself that he would have voted for Tyke even if the people hadn't pressured him, but he is never able to calm his conscience.

There is a description at this point in the novel of how deeply unhappy Dorothea has become in her marriage to Casaubon. Although they are still on their honeymoon, she begins to realize how imperfectly they fit together. Dorothea, who had grand aspirations of helping her husband to write a great book, is beginning to realize that not only is Casaubon's intelligence not flawless, she is not being of use to him as she thought she would be. Dorothea also misses the aspect of companionship that she had believed that she would have in her marriage.

It is at this point that Will Ladislaw re-enters, quite literally. Just as she is crying because of her disappointment, Will is ushered into her apartment. Will finds Dorothea amazingly attractive and is angry that his cousin should be matched with Dorothea. Though, he and his cousin are close in age, Casaubon has a less than appealing personality. Will is also inwardly angry that Casaubon is choosing to spend his honeymoon studying, away from his new wife. After Will lures the couple to Naumann's studio, Naumann stokes Will's anger with Casaubon when he mentions how vain the man was, caring more for the drawing of himself than the one of his wife.

Will's determination to live without Casaubon's help seems to touch off some anger with Casaubon. When Dorothea mentions Will's goal to Casaubon, Casaubon not only seems to doubt that Will will ever be able to support himself but also asks Dorothea not to speak to him about Will again. Will seems to make Casaubon angry. It could be that Casaubon senses Will's interest in Dorothea. He may suspect that Will is breaking away from him so that Casaubon will no longer have something to hold over his head that will make him feel guilty about his feelings for Dorothea.

## Discussion Question 1

Do you believe that Mr. Wrench's comment influences the way that Lydgate votes on the chaplain issue? Why or why not?



## Discussion Question 2

Explain why Dorothea is so unhappy in her new marriage. Give specific answers from the text.

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Will decide to stop depending on Casaubon's money and earn his own way in life?

## Vocabulary

Pithy, stagnant, cant, enmity, colloquy, pathos, preponderance, supersede, recapitulate, voluptuousness, antithesis, dilettantish, imperturbable, enigmatical, sordid, incongruities, minutiae, fervid, frescoes, benignant, hyperbole, emendation, preterm, amanuensis, iteration, admonished, colloquy, stultifying, enigmatical, benignant, erudition, invective, annihilated, satirical, coruscation, compeers, disapprobation, nonce, vivacious, opprobrious, adroit, dithyrambs, pedantic, coxcomb, anachronism, rejoinder.





# Book Three: Chapters 23-28

## Summary

### Chapter 23

Seeking to pay off his debts, Fred buys a horse at a horse fair which he believes that he will be able to sell at a much higher price than the one for which he bought it. He is on his way home with the horse when the chapter concludes.

### Chapter 24

Fred is forced to go and tell the Garths that he does not have the money to pay his debt. They are both disappointed with him. Mrs. Garth says that they will have to use the money she was saving for Alfred's apprenticeship to pay the debt, along with Mary's savings.

### Chapter 25

Fred goes to Mary to tell her what has happened. She is unhappy with the way he has acted and the way he has used her parents, but she still acts kindly toward him. For this reason, Mary is not surprised when her father comes asking for money. She gives it gladly and stands up for her parents even though Mr. Featherstone is snide when he asks her about the transaction.

### Chapter 26

Fred takes ill and is examined by Dr. Wrench who finds nothing wrong. He does not schedule a return call. The next day Fred is worse, and Dr. Wrench is out on rounds. Rosamond mentions Lydgate, also a doctor, is near the house. He examines Fred and believes the boy has typhoid fever. The Vincys are angry that Dr. Wrench did not make the proper diagnosis, and they fire him as their doctor. Rumors abound about the circumstances of this event portraying both Lydgate and Wrench in an unfavorable light.

### Chapter 27

As Lydgate nurses Fred back to health, he and Rosamond have a chance to get well acquainted. Although Lydgate doesn't see it, Rosamond has already put together their future in her head and believes their engagement is only a step away. Lydgate is walking beside Rosamond to protect her from a herd of animals being driven down the road as she walks when he is called to attend to a man at Lowick Manor.

### Chapter 28

The Casaubons have returned from their trip to Rome. During a visit, Dorothea learns that Celia is engaged to Chettam.



## Analysis

Much happens in these chapters as Fred tries to pay off his debts by buying a horse which he believes he will be able to sell for more than its purchase price. The horse is appropriately named “Diamond.” Diamond turns out to be a gem in the rough as he has a fit of rage in the Vincys’ stable, nearly killing a groom and laming himself. Knowing now that there is no way for him to earn the money needed to pay his debt, he goes to the Garths, giving them the money that he has left from his uncle’s gift and telling them that they will have to pay the rest.

Although few people see Fred as a particularly serious person, he is deeply distraught by the troubles that he brings on the Garth family. He has always been close friends with the family and hopes one day to marry Mary. Although both his father and uncle have money, Fred feels he is unable to ask either one of them as he has already demonstrated his careless nature with them concerning money. Fred is afraid that if his father finds out about his inability to pay this debt, he will be put out of the house. As much as Fred hates to take money from the poor Garths, he appears to hate even worse the idea of having no financial security himself.

Meanwhile, Fred becomes ill. His illness creates an interesting situation for Lydgate on two levels. First, Dr. Wrench had been the first doctor to examine Fred. He did not find anything wrong with the boy and did not plan a follow-up visit. When Fred was worse the following day and Dr. Wrench could not be found, Lydgate, who happened to be near their house, was called. Notice how this circumstance is referred to as “providence” or fate, by the author. When Lydgate is able to diagnose Fred and treat him, the Vincys renounce Dr. Wrench as their doctor. Although the Vincys simply become angry because they don’t feel that Dr. Wrench has properly cared for his son, rumors abound including one that Lydgate is Bulstrode’s illegitimate son. However, Fred’s illness does allow Lydgate and Rosamond to spend time together, getting to know one another. By the time Fred is getting better, Rosamond imagines that it is only a matter of time before they are married.

## Discussion Question 1

Describe the differences between Dorothea’s first impression of Aunt Julia’s miniature and the story of her unhappy life and of her impression of the woman’s life when she returns from her honeymoon.

## Discussion Question 2

Discuss the rumors that circulate from the Vincys act of “firing” Dr. Wrench. How do these rumors stand to affect Dr. Wrench? How might they affect Lydgate?



## Discussion Question 3

Discuss the way that Fred's relationship with the Garths changes when he tells them that he is not able to pay the debt that he owes and that they must pay it for him. What was their opinion of him before this? What is it like after?

## Vocabulary

Superfluity, ostentation, filial, transient, amiable, hoyden, avocations, genteel, sufficed, veracity, tacit, piqued, dissipation, nomenclature, anecdotes, perdition, fallacious, deluded, propitious, redress, rectitude, sallies, magnanimous, eccentric, peripatetic, fervid, malignant, contentiously, enunciation, maledictory, epithets, reticule, peremptory, derangement, bilious, equivocal, truckle, factitious, credulous, contravene, adroitness, quarantine, jocose, ostensible, maceration, commingled, placid.



# Book Three: Chapters 29-33

## Summary

### Chapter 29

Casaubon's view of his new marriage, as a proposition that has become disagreeable to him, is described. Although he doesn't want to, he has finally agreed to give Dorothea some work to do as he had promised before their marriage. He mentions to her that they have received letters from Will. Before she has even had a chance to read the letter, he informs her that he doesn't want to invite Will to visit as he finds the boy bothersome. Dorothea is upset that Casaubon would think that she would want to do anything that would make him unhappy. The two do not make up from their argument, and Casaubon has an episode requiring Lydgate to be called. When Chettam tells Celia about what has happened, he tries to think of his feelings for Dorothea when he first learned she was engaged to Casaubon. He finds that he is so happy with Celia that he is unable to think of Dorothea as anything other than a friend.

### Chapter 30

Lydgate and the others try to convince Casaubon that he must find some lighter, fun activities to intersperse with his studies to keep him from becoming ill. Casaubon does not take well to their suggestions. Meanwhile Lydgate tells Dorothea that he believes the trouble is with Casaubon's heart, but he cannot offer her any suggestions as to how she can help prolong her husband's life. Dorothea finally reads Will's letters and realizes that a reply must be made or he will come to Lowick to bring Casaubon's portrait. She asks her uncle to write a letter to Will telling him that Casaubon has been sick. However, instead of discouraging Will from visiting the area at all, Brooke invites him to come to Tipton Grange instead.

### Chapter 31

Mrs. Bulstrode and Mrs. Plymdale are working together as busybodies. They question the attention that Lydgate has been paying to Rosamond without the two of them being engaged. Lydgate decides to stay away from Rosamond; but, one day he is sent to give a message to Mr. Vincy. He finds Rosamond alone in the house. Her uncertainty and sadness seem to strike a nerve with him, and before he leaves that day, he has asked her to marry him.

### Chapter 32

Since Peter Featherstone appears to be nearing the end of his life, his relations come in an attempt to visit and influence him to include them in his will. They keep vigil at the house even though Featherstone tells them his will is already finished and won't be changed. One man, Borthrop Thrumbull, seems to take an interest in Mary, whom he says takes care in what she does. Unfortunately, Thrumbull is arrogant.



## Chapter 33

Before Peter Featherstone dies, he tries to get Mary to help him change his will. He tells her that he has made out two and now wants to destroy one. She refuses, believing that any assistance she might give him in this change would make her appear guilty of some misbehavior to other family members. A short time later, she notices he is not moving. She rings the bell for help. It is confirmed that he is dead.

## Analysis

Author Eliot gives each character fair play as she describes the motives and intentions that each has behind his actions. In this section, it is Casaubon who gets the opportunity to have his feelings about his marriage disclosed. It appears that Casaubon has married because he felt that was what he was supposed to do. He also hopes that an heir will come of his marriage to Dorothea. However, as his marriage has become more and more real to him, he realizes how comfortable he was being single. He hates the idea of having someone else involved in his work and his space. Although he doesn't want to make Dorothea unhappy, he also does not want to dedicate the time to her that she wishes that he would. It is after they exchange sharp words about Will and his planned visit that Casaubon has his first bout of heart trouble. Dorothea blames herself for arguing with him. In her guilt, she tries to get Lydgate to tell her what she can do to make him better.

The title of this third book, "Waiting for Death," keeps the reader wondering about who will die in this section. At the end, it is Featherstone who dies, but there are a variety of others who fall ill.. Fred has typhoid fever, and Casaubon has heart trouble. Either man could have easily been the subject of the title.

Featherstone's death is of great importance as family members vie with one another to see who will get the greatest part of his riches. Although Featherstone refuses to see them all with the exception of Thrumbull, the relatives still hang around. Eliot says they are there not only to try to plead their own case with their dying relative, but also to try to see that none of their other relatives get the upper hand at the last minute. Their actions, along with Mary's unwillingness to allow Featherstone to alter his will at the last minute, make the reader hope that the Garths, especially Mary who has cared for Featherstone all of these years, will be included in the will. Although one may have mixed feelings about Fred, it is also hoped that he will get a share of his uncle's inheritance as he actually spent time with the man during the course of his life. The other relatives, however, with their hypocritical concern for the man could be left out of the will with the reader feeling no remorse.

With the help of some neighborhood busybodies, Rosamond finally gets engaged to Lydgate. She had been hoping for this to happen for some time. There seems to be a trend developing that women, such as Dorothea and Rosamond, who set their sights on a particular man and inflate his image before truly getting to know him, wind up disappointed with their choice. It is wondered if Rosamond's marriage will end up in the



same situation as Dorothea's. A main difference has already been noted between Rosamond and Lydgate. While Lydgate would prefer to treat the poor people of the area, Rosamond is impressed that he is getting notice from the "important" families of the area, a factor that Lydgate is not as happy with as Rosamond.

## Discussion Question 1

In what way do busybodies Mrs. Bulstrode and Mrs. Plymdale help Rosamond get the engagement that she desires?

## Discussion Question 2

Consider Mary's actions when Mr. Featherstone asks her to help him alter his will. Why does she refuse? What might you have done in this situation?

## Discussion Question 3

How does Dorothea's belief that she has contributed to Casaubon's illness make her eager to do what she can to help her husband? How does she mis-step when she allows her uncle to write the letter to Will telling him that Casaubon is ill?

## Vocabulary

Scrupulosity, erudition, vivacity, penitence, conchology, felicitously, reticle, circumlocution, demise, penuriousness.



# Book Four: Chapters 34-38

## Summary

### Chapter 34

Featherstone's funeral is shocking because of the people who are invited. It's also shocking that Will Ladislaw attends. While watching the funeral with a group of others, Dorothea and Casaubon learn that Will is in town. Although Dorothea wants to tell her husband that she did not ask her uncle to invite Will to come, she feels she cannot do so without letting the others know that Casaubon does not like the boy. At the conclusion of the chapter, Brooke is going to get Will so he can show Casaubon his portrait.

### Chapter 35

Featherstone's wills are read. In his first will, he leaves small sums of money to all of his relatives and his land to Fred, with the remainder going to Joshua Rigg, a man whom no one knew. In his second will, Featherstone gives everything to Rigg. He also requests that the man, who says that he is Peter Featherstone's son, takes the name Featherstone.

### Chapter 36

Mr. Vincy suggests that Rosamond's and Lydgate's engagement be broken. Lydgate worries about money for furniture and other things. In spite of these things, Rosamond and Lydgate get permission from Mr. Vincy to be married in six weeks.

### Chapter 37

Will has been invited by Brooke to take charge of "The Pioneer," one of Middlemarch's newspapers. Dorothea supports Will's employment here, but her husband does not. She believes she is trying to make things right when she suggests that Will be included in Casaubon's. However, she only succeeds in making her husband angry. Casaubon writes to Will attempting to order him not to take the job and telling him to stay away from Lowick. Will writes back that he will take the job without his cousin's permission. Casaubon, who is afraid that Will will negatively influence Dorothea against him, searches for some way to retaliate against Will's decision.

### Chapter 38

Mr. and Mrs. Cadwalder and Sir James Chattem try to sway Brooke away from his decision to get involved with the newspaper and politics.



## Analysis

One of the most significant occurrences in this section of the novel is Brooke's purchase of the newspaper "The Pioneer." His family members and friends believe that it will reflect badly on him and on the family when he tries his hand in politics. They also disapprove of his choice of Will Ladislaw as the person who will be running the paper. Chettam believes it is not his right to say anything about this decision, believing it is Casaubon's place since he is a relative of Will's. He is not aware that Casaubon has already voiced his displeasure in having Will working so close, but that Will has not followed his cousin's wishes.

Meanwhile, Dorothea is a subject of concern, both for her family and for Will. Will continues to feel sorry for Dorothea and believes that his cousin has "stolen" her. He intends to stick around to prove to her that she has one devoted servant in the world. Dorothea enjoys talking to Will but seems to do so only innocently. After hearing him tell his story of the way his grandmother was disowned because she married a poor man, Dorothea believes that she will be helping to make things right when she suggests to Casaubon that he leave some of his wealth to Will. This suggestion angers Casaubon and he lashes out at her, telling her that she has no right to make assumptions about his family. Dorothea, who is unsure why her husband dislikes Will so much, is shaken by Casaubon's anger. Casaubon still believes that Dorothea had her uncle write to Will and tell him to come to Middlemarch. He also believes that Will can convince Dorothea to believe everything that he tells her about her husband, turning Dorothea against him.

## Discussion Question 1

Why is it so disturbing to so many people that Brooke has bought the newspaper?

## Discussion Question 2

Consider the way that Rosamond goes on with her engagement and wedding plans despite her father's suggestion that she break the engagement. Why does Vincy want the engagement off? Why does he allow Rosamond to go against his will?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Casaubon dislike Will so much?

## Vocabulary

Erudite, primogeniture, plashed, margrave, caprice, ostentation, paucity, animalcules, flaccidity, germinal, antipathy, factotum.





# Book Four: Chapters 39-42

## Summary

### Chapter 39

Chettam arranges for Dorothea to speak to Brooke in private, hoping that she will have some effect in encouraging him to fix up his own tenants' land before sending messages that others' lands need repair. While she is there, Will tells Dorothea that Casaubon has forbidden him from visiting Lowick. Finally, one of Brooke's tenants curses him about the condition of his property.

### Chapter 40

Caleb Garth receives a letter from Chettam asking him to manage the Freshitt and Tipton properties. With this income, Garth will be able to support his family without Mary going away to teach school. Meanwhile, Farebrother comes to talk to the family about Fred, who is going away to school. Garth comes up with an idea to take Fred on as an apprentice. Susan tells him that Fred's family would object to it. Information is also shared that Rigg-Featherstone might be looking at selling the Featherstone property to Bulstrode.

### Chapter 41

Rigg's stepfather pays him a visit, begging for money for himself and Rigg's mother. Since Rigg was abused by the man, he refuses to give him anything. While at Stone Court, the stepfather takes a letter which he believes had been discarded to secure his brandy bottle. The letter is signed by Bulstrode.

### Chapter 42

Casaubon is thinking that Will intends to draw Dorothea away from him, marry her, and take over Casaubon's life. He believes that Will intends to do this to fulfill some desire to best Casaubon. Casaubon believes this marriage would be bad for Dorothea. Casaubon asks Lydgate for a consultation about the state of his health. Casaubon learns that Dorothea knows about his coming death. His coldness toward Dorothea makes her wonder what she has done to him. That evening, she waits at the top of the stairs for him to go to bed. He takes her hand, and they go to the bedroom together.

## Analysis

Chettam takes a hand in trying to get his uncle-in-law to be responsible in his political exploits. He suggests that Brooke should clean up his own property before telling others to clean up theirs. Brooke's tenant Darby underscores Chettam's request by chewing Brooke out when he visits the tenant to complain that his boy had killed a young hare.



This man is angry at Brooke's suggestion that he needed to discipline his child and also lets Brooke know how unsatisfactory the living conditions are. It seems that Brooke is surprised by this honest outcry as he had always considered himself a good landlord. Although it is not detailed how it came about, Brooke, through Chettam, invites Caleb Garth to return as administrator of his properties.

Needless to say, this news that Chettam and Brooke want Garth to return as administrator is the best news the family has received recently. They are already down on their luck as they have been called to pay Fred's debt. In addition, since Featherstone has died, Mary has lost the income that she was getting from him. Although she is sewing for Rosamond's wedding, this is not a permanent job. She had just resigned herself to taking a teaching job in York when her father is offered the administrator's job.

Having had good news himself, Garth decides that he might be able to spread some good news to Fred as well. He does not have a son who can help him as administrator and believes that Fred might be a good partner. Garth's wife, Susan, tells him that she believes that Fred's parents will not allow him to take the job and that people will talk. Garth, however, believes that if good deeds are not done because of what people might think of them, nothing would ever get done. The section about Garth's suggestion that Fred would be a good business partner does not end with Garth making an offer to Fred, so at this point it is still uncertain if he really intends to offer Fred the job.

It is also interesting to take note in this section of the visit to Rigg by his stepfather. Apparently the stepfather had always been abusive to Rigg. Now Rigg is taking the opportunity to deny his father any help. The only things he will give the man are money for the train passage back to his home and some brandy. It has already been revealed that there has been a rumor that Rigg had been dealing with Bulstrode in a suspected attempt by Bulstrode to purchase Stone Gate. When Rigg's stepfather is in the house, he picks up a letter which he uses to secure his brandy bottle. It is mentioned that the letter has Bulstrode's name on it, but it is not revealed in this section what information the stolen letter might contain.

## Discussion Question 1

What does it mean if Bulstrode buys Stone Gate from Rigg? How would this sale be ironic in light of Featherstone's desires?

## Discussion Question 2

How does Chettam's invitation to Garth to return as administrator for Tipton Grange and Freshitt change life for the Garths? For Mary specifically?



## Discussion Question 3

Consider Eliot's description of Mary. Why is it significant that she is plain? Why does she have such an effect on the men in her life despite her plainness?

## Vocabulary

Diabolical, ardent.



# Book Five: Chapters 43-48

## Summary

### Chapter 43

Dorothea goes to talk to Lydgate about her husband's health and finds Will at the Lydgate home, alone with Rosamond. She is upset by the discovery even though she is not really sure why. Meanwhile, Rosamond seems to believe that she has the freedom to make conquests even though she is married. It seems to upset her, though, that her husband visits the Casaubon home so often. She seems to see Dorothea as a sort of competitor because she is attractive.

### Chapter 44

Dorothea agrees to donate money to Lydgate's new hospital because people are trying to block his progress. Casaubon continues to distrust Dorothea.

### Chapter 45

Lydgate is criticized in town for his habit of not dispensing medicine and for using methods different from other doctors. Some refer to him as a quack. Bulstrode's involvement in the hospital at which he works also keeps some doctors away. However, Lydgate is proving his naysayers wrong by often curing patients others had thought were dying.

### Chapter 46

Brooke and Ladislav delve further into politics with their newspaper. Ladislav discovers that he likes the business despite his cousin's insistence that he not become involved. Later at the Lydgate house, Lydgate and Ladislav disagree on their opinions of politics and Ladislav's position at the paper. Lydgate had been upset beforehand about a bill for furniture but does not tell Rosamond because she is pregnant.

### Chapter 47

Ladislav's desire to see Dorothea again makes him decide to attend church at Lowick. As soon as he gets there and senses that his presence makes Dorothea uncomfortable and anxious, he believes that attending the church had been a mistake.

### Chapter 48

Casaubon suddenly seems more alert and ready to work than ever. After they go to bed one evening Casaubon asks Dorothea to make him a promise that even after he dies, she will do as he wishes. She puts off giving him her answer, unwilling to devote herself to what she believes is the futility of her husband's work even after his death. She



knows she must tell him “yes” in order to keep from hurting him but by the time that she has made her decision, she finds him in the Yew-Tree Walk, dead.

## Analysis

After Dorothea meets Ladislav alone with Rosamond Lydgate, she is hurt and disappointed in his behavior. Ladislav does not want to hurt Dorothea as he holds her high on a pedestal. However, he decides to attend Lowick Church because he wants to see her and realizes as soon as the Casaubons enter the church that he has made a bad decision. He believes Dorothea looks anxious and pale, but she does acknowledge him. Casaubon, however, does not acknowledge his cousin. Dorothea is hurt by her husband’s behavior because she believes that Ladislav attended church as a way of making amends to Casaubon. She hopes the two will speak to one another, and try to restart their relationship. This does not happen as Casaubon completely ignores Ladislav.

Also described in this section of the novel is the way that Ladislav must fight against the ignorance of the Middlemarch people in order to run his medical practice as he sees fit. He is among the new breed of doctors who does not dispense medicine. In the past, the people had been of the opinion that doctors did not charge for their doctoring services, but for medicine. This practice caused some doctors to overprescribe medicine and give patients medicine that did nothing that they didn’t need. With Lydgate tending to patients and even helping them feel better without the use of medicines, he is disrupting the practice of other doctors in the area because he disagrees with their diagnoses and treatment. He also disgruntles the people as they feel they shouldn’t have to pay for something as intangible as a doctor’s services. In addition to Lydgate’s new doctoring procedures being under question, many people in Middlemarch do not like Lydgate simply because he works with Bulstrode. So far, it has been Bulstrode alone who has been funding the new hospital as many are against it simply because it is one of Bulstrode’s projects. After talking with Lydgate, however, Dorothea sees the need for new practices and agrees to give money to the hospital.

Also very significant in this section is the death of Casaubon. Although Dorothea is never able to give her promise to her husband that she will devote her life to the work that he was unable to finish, the end of Casaubon’s life almost decrees that she will feel indebted to follow through with his wishes because she was never able to give her answer to him before he died. Knowing Dorothea’s love for her husband despite his smallness and jealousy concerning her, she will believe that she in some way brought about her husband’s death by delaying her answer to his question. This guilt will make her try to make up what she believes that her husband saw as her shortcomings.

## Discussion Question 1

Do you think that Casaubon is wrong for asking Dorothea to carry on his work after he is dead? Why or why not?



## Discussion Question 2

Why is Lydgate having such a hard time in Middlemarch with his new ways of running a medical practice?

## Discussion Question 3

Why is Ladislav getting so much flack for participating in Brooke's newspaper and political aspirations? Should he ignore those who are tormenting him?

## Vocabulary

Tacit, bulwark, incongruity, amelioration, abstemious, charlatan, hustings, jejune, dilettantism, megrims, penitently, lucid, deprecate, stringently, caticom.



# Book Five: Chapters 49-53

## Summary

### Chapter 49

Brooke and Chettam discuss a need to send Ladislav away as Casaubon has apparently made some change to his will indicating that Dorothea is not to marry Ladislav after his death.

### Chapter 50

Celia tells Dorothea about Casaubon's addition to his will stating that she will not get any of his money or property if she marries Ladislav. It is the first that Dorothea is aware of the thoughts that were developing in her husband's mind about her relationship with Will. Meanwhile, Lydgate tries to convince Dorothea that Farebrother would be the proper choice as the new clergy at Lowick.

### Chapter 51

Brooke has an unfavorable experience giving a political speech as he forgets what he is supposed to say because he's had too much to drink, then is ridiculed by the crowd. He decides to give up the newspaper and urges Ladislav to seek another profession. Ladislav, however, wants to stay around Middlemarch to ensure he can win Dorothea's hand as he makes himself worthy.

### Chapter 52

Fred sends Mr. Farebrother, who also cares for Mary to see if she will consider marrying him if he becomes a member clergy. Although Mr. Farebrother hints at his own affection for Mary, Mary tells him that she could love no one but Fred, but will not commit to him until he has done something to make others admire him.

### Chapter 53

Raffles, Joshua Rigg's stepfather, arrives in Middlemarch to extort money from Mr. Bulstode. Raffles apparently knew Bulstode twenty years prior before Raffles went to America and Bulstode wound up in Middlemarch. Raffles seems to know of some sin that Bulstode committed dealing with a girl named Sarah, a step-daughter and a person by the name of Ladislav. Bulstode pays Raffles off and he leaves without disclosing the details of Bulstode's sin.



## Analysis

When he learns that Casaubon has written a codicil to his will stating that Dorothy will have nothing of his if she marries Ladislav after Casaubon's death, Chettam tries to get Brooke to encourage Ladislav to go away. Brooke will not do so because he sees that Ladislav is still useful to him. Besides, he reasons that Ladislav does not have to leave Middlemarch solely because Brooke asks him to do so. Chettam agrees but is still worried that Casaubon's codicil might reflect badly on Dorothea if others in the town were to find out about it. It is interesting to note that after Brooke's attempt at politicking goes badly for him and he decides to give up his newspaper, it is not as hard for him to encourage Ladislav to go away as he had reasoned to Chettam that it would be. This highlights not only that Brooke's interest in the well being of his niece might not be as strong as that of his interest in his own well being but also that his willingness to listen to advice of others comes and goes as it affects his own best interest.

A developing story of interest is the Riggs, Raffles, Bulstrode episode. It appears that Riggs got some of his ability to play people from his step-father as he makes Featherstone believe that he wishes to live at Stone Court. As soon as the property is his, however, he makes an arrangement to sell it to Bulstrode. Bulstrode is the very person whom Featherstone would have most hated seeing in control of his property. Although his relatives still feel stung by his will, they are slightly – because they know how unhappy Featherstone would be if he were aware of the way that Riggs had used him.

When Raffles visits his stepson at Stone Court, he accidentally picks up a letter with Bulstrode's name on it. With nothing else to do now that his wife has died, Raffles visits Middlemarch in an attempt to look up Bulstrode and see what he can take from him. Raffles has information about a sin in Bulstrode's past for which Bulstrode believes that he has made amends. He does not want the people of Middlemarch to know about this secret that Raffles holds over his head. Very little information is given about what Raffles might know about Bulstrode. It is only mentioned that it involves a woman named Sarah, a step-daughter and someone by the name of Ladislav.

## Discussion Question 1

What is your opinion of Casaubon's codicil to his will? Why are the people who know about the change in the will surprised at Casaubon's decision?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Brooke's political speech go so badly? Who is working against him?





## Discussion Question 3

Consider the new complication in Bulstrode's life as Raffles tries to extort money out of his with threat of revealing some past sin. It is interesting that this sin involves someone by the name of Ladislav. How do you predict this story line will tie in with the story of life in Middlemarch? Cite examples and reasons to support your prediction.

## Vocabulary

Purport, redactor, tactician, exordium, dolorously, paltry, philanthropist, indemnify, propitiating, obloquy, portmanteau, dilatory.



# Book Six: Chapters 54-58

## Summary

### Chapter 54

Dorothea is finally granted permission by her family to live at Lowick. She wishes to see Ladislaw and is surprised when one day he comes to say goodbye to her. He is not aware of the requirements of Casaubon's codicil so he is disturbed by Dorothea's strangeness. He holds back from asking her about her affections because he fears that she will believe that he is interested in money. In the end, Chettam comes to visit at Lowick, ending the farewell scene between Dorothea and Ladislaw.

### Chapter 55

Dorothea mourns the loss of her friendship with Ladislaw. She also informs her family of her intentions to never marry again.

### Chapter 56

Garth had gotten what he wanted when he first took over Brooke's property. He has gotten the opportunity to involve Fred in his work. Susan is sad because she is afraid this means that Mary will marry Fred even though she thinks he is beneath her. Fred's parents are also upset when they hear the news. Vincy believes Fred has thrown away his education while his mother believes the family will be lowered to a marriage bond with the Garths. Vincy is also unhappy with Rosamond's marriage with Lydgate as he is apparently gathering quite a bit of debt.

### Chapter 57

Mrs. Garth slips and tells Fred that Farebrother is also interested in Mary. Fred, who had planned to visit Mary anyway, goes to Farebrother's house to see her and in a rather rough way insinuates to her that she plans to marry Farebrother, an act of which she had not even thought. She tries to convince Fred that she intends only to care for him, but she is still gratified by the knowledge the Farebrother cares for her as well.

### Chapter 58

Unhappiness is beginning to surface in Lydgate's and Rosamond's marriage. Rosamond lost her baby because she insisted on going horseback riding even though Lydgate had specifically told her not to do it. Now, Lydgate has come to the realization that they cannot continue to live as they are because they are so far in debt. Rosamond is unhappy when Lydgate tells her they need to cut back on expenses and sell some things. She asks him to get money from her father, but he refuses.



## Analysis

In this section of the novel it is Lydgate and Rosamond's marriage that begins to crumble. Lydgate is finding Rosamond's habit of having company around all the time stressful as well as her style of living expensive. He cannot pay for the lifestyle with which he has tried to provide her. Rosamond has no desire to live any other way than the way that she has been accustomed. Her father has always allowed her to do as she pleased, and expects her husband to do the same. Lydgate, however, sees the folly of Rosamond's ways and hopes to save her from her own headstrong ways. He only succeeds in angering her.

One theme that has been developing throughout the novel is that of the role of a woman. In Chapter 56, it is stated that Dorothea's "head for business" was not often seen in women. In a prior chapter, it is indicated that Dorothea has thought badly of some women in the past because they did not take an active role in planning out their own lives. At this period of time, the woman was intended to be a pretty decoration, as Rosamond is. She is meant to be seen and not heard unless she is happily prattling about her baby or her home life, like Celia. Women are also supposed to be subordinate to their husbands. This was a problem for Dorothea and Casaubon because Casaubon knew that Dorothea had the capacity to be more intelligent than he. What he didn't take into consideration in his jealousy, however, that Dorothea was a well-disciplined woman who would obey her husband to the end because that was her duty. The woman being subordinate is also a problem for Rosamond and Lydgate as Rosamond has been accustomed to getting what she wants from her father during all of her years of growing up. Even though he would tell her not to do something, like marry Lydgate, she would do it anyway with not consequences. Now that Rosamond is an adult, she will not listen to her husband's better judgment even when it comes to protecting her baby. Because she goes out riding even though her husband told her not to, she loses her baby. Now that the couple is facing money issues, Lydgate is instructing her to be more frugal and help him sell things to pay the debts. Rosamond is obeying but is doing so in a pouty manner. She has already thought to herself that if she knew that Lydgate would act as he is, she wouldn't have married him.

## Discussion Question 1

Describe the circumstances that are causing stress between Lydgate and Rosamond. Cite specific examples.

## Discussion Question 2

Why are neither the Garths nor the Vincys pleased with the idea of a marriage between Fred and Mary?



## Discussion Question 3

Why does Dorothea tell her relatives that she does not intend to marry again?

## Vocabulary

Unemphatic, interdict, subordination, malediction, secular, presentiment, tenacity, noxious, ineffable.



# Book Six: Chapters 59-62

## Summary

### Chapter 59

Rosamond teases Will about Casaubon's codicil to his will. After Will leaves, Rosamond is restless, she thinks about how she has disobeyed her husband by asking her father for money.

### Chapter 60

Mr. Raffles approaches Ladislav at an auction to ask if his mother was Sarah Dunkirk. He also asks if Ladislav's father survived his illness. Ladislav breaks away from the man as quickly as possible wondering if he is trying to bring up some dirt about him.

### Chapter 61

Bulstrode, who is Ladislav's step-grandfather, tells Ladislav in a secret meeting that he will give him a yearly allowance in exchange for his silence about their relation. Ladislav did not know in the past that he was connected to Ladislav but did know that it was because of the business that the family, and Bulstrode, ran and got their money that his mother had run away. Ladislav refuses to take any of Bulstrode's ill-gotten money.

### Chapter 62

Will has decided to leave Middlemarch as soon as he is able to see Dorothea again. Meanwhile Chattem has arranged for Mrs. Cadwalder to tell Dorothea about Ladislav's habit of visiting Rosamond often. Dorothea does not believe the suggested gossip but wishes she could have told Ladislav she didn't approve of that habit. Dorothea happens to visit Tipton Grange while Will is there. He tells her that he will be leaving and not returning. She infers that he wants her to know why. Will wonders if Dorothea really loves him, but he can't ask her. Dorothea wonders if she is Will's glance of heaven. As Dorothea's carriage drives past Will, he feels bitter while she feels sad. Will leaves the following day.

## Analysis

Religious hypocrisy is one major topic in this section.. Bulstrode has presented himself as a highly religious member of the community. It is determined here that he has actually been trying to make amends for things he did in earlier years. Bulstrode apparently got his money from a business considered to be non-Christian. Additionally, Bulstrode got an inheritance from his first wife, a wife his current wife does not even know about, because he lied about being able to find the woman's daughter. It turns out



that Will Ladislaw is Sarah's son. By cheating Sarah out of her inheritance, Bulstrode also cheated Will out of his inheritance.

Will and Dorothea part again. Will is angry because people have been saying that he has been having an affair with Rosamond. Will has been spending quite a bit of time with Rosamond. Even Dorothea has seen the two of them together alone. Dorothea, however, does not believe that Will and Rosamond have done anything inappropriate.

## Discussion Question 1

Why is it Rosamond who tells Will about Mr. Casaubon's codicil to his will?

## Discussion Question 2

Discuss the implications of Will and Dorothea's last meeting at Tipton Grange.

## Discussion Question 3

How did Bulstrode earn his fortune? Why does he reason he does not owe Will anything?

## Vocabulary

Vacillation, reticence, somnambulist, ennui, proviso, tantamount, bijoux, florid, debauched, piety, opprobrium, putrefying, repugnance, pathos, nullifying.



# Book Seven: Chapters 63-67

## Summary

### Chapter 63

Farebrother thanks Lydgate for recommending him for the position at Lowick. He offers help to Lydgate, as he suspects the man is in some need; but, Lydgate refuses.

### Chapter 64

Rosamond becomes more unhappy with her marriage as Lydgate pushes himself.

### Chapter 65

Lydgate receives an answer to Rosamond's request for monetary help from his uncle. He is angry that his wife has, once again, gone over his head and made a decision about their finances without talking to him first. Rosamond, however, doesn't seem to understand that she has done anything wrong.

### Chapter 66

Lydgate begins going to the billiard room at the Green Dragon to gamble. Fred Vincy sees him there and pulls him away from the table by telling him that Farebrother wants to see him because Lydgate is beginning to lose money. After they are outside the establishment and Lydgate has gone on his way, Farebrother warns Fred not to get involved with gambling again.

### Chapter 67

Lydgate goes to Bulstrode hoping to borrow money to help him pay his debts. Instead, he learns that Bulstrode is planning to withdraw his interests in the hospital. Bulstrode tells Lydgate he will either have to seek help from Dorothea Casaubon in funding the hospital or will have to have it combined with the old infirmary. Bulstrode also tells Lydgate he has no money to help him with his current debts as he has had to help the Vincys so often over the years.

## Analysis

Things go from bad to worse for Lydgate in this section of the novel. He is having financial troubles, which he shares with his wife. Instead of helping him, however, Rosamond seems to work against her husband's every attempt to save them money or better their circumstances. Rosamond begs him to leave Middlemarch, but he knows this will only have them continuing to be poor in another town. He is embarrassed and



angered when Rosamond seeks money from his uncle, who refuses. He is again embarrassed when he decides to go and ask Bulstrode for money.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Lydgate not want to ask Bulstrode for money?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Rosamond get so upset when Lydgate chides her for her actions?

## Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast the differences that Rosamond and Lydgate are having in their relationship with those that Dorothea and Casaubon had in theirs.

## Vocabulary

Suavity, indefatigable, perversity, sordid, admonition, despotic, iteration, privation, irremediably, omnipotent, parochial, retractile, adroitness, puerile, salubrity, amalgamation, munificent, disposition, prodigal.





# Book Seven: Chapters 68-71

## Summary

### Chapter 68

Bulstrode continues making plans to leave Middlemarch in the fear that Raffles will tell his secret sins. He employs Caleb Garth to oversee Stone Court. In their agreement, Garth arranges for Fred Vincy to be allowed to live there, hoping that it will be good news to Fred and his daughter Mary.

### Chapter 69

Garth reports to Bulstrode that he has taken Raffles, who is very ill to Stone Court. He also tells Bulstrode that he cannot work for him because of things that Raffles has told him. Lydgate examines Raffles and believes he is suffering from alcohol poisoning. Bulstrode stays at Stone Court with the man to watch him.

### Chapter 70

Bulstrode considers actions that might bring Raffles life to an end and not cause him to be blamed. He tries to fight against his desire to allow the man to die but in the end gives Mrs. Abel watch over Raffles. When she begs for it, he gives the key to the liquor cabinet to her. She can then give Raffles brandy which Lydgate had forbidden him to have. The man dies the following morning. Bulstrode pretends to have changed his mind and gives Lydgate the money he needs to pay off his debts, believing this will be a way to hamstring Lydgate if there is ever a question about Raffles' death.

### Chapter 71

Through rumor, Bulstrode's past becomes common knowledge. During a meeting concerning quarantine for those suffering from cholera, Bulstrode is released from his public offices because of his rumored background. Lydgate helps him out of the meeting, reinforcing the idea that Bulstrode killed Raffles and that Lydgate took the money with which he has paid off his debts as a bribe. When Dorothea finds out about the rumors, she entreats Farebrother to help her get to the bottom of the rumors and clear Lydgate's name.

## Analysis

Despite all of his plans to keep his past quiet, Bulstrode's misdoings have caught up with him. It appears that the people of Middlemarch dislike him not because he sinned but because he has acted while in Middlemarch as if he has been beyond reproach. Now, the townspeople know about the sort of business through which he made his money. They also suspect that he had some hand in the death of Raffles.



Although Farebrother had warned Lydgate not to get mixed up with Bulstrode, the circumstances that surround the money that Bulstrode gave to Lydgate make it look like Lydgate has taken a bribe from Bulstrode to cover up the real cause of Raffles' death. Since the people of Middlemarch have been looking for a reason to dislike Lydgate, they quickly grab onto the idea that Lydgate was somehow involved with Raffles' death, even though this is not true.

It is significant that Bulstrode seems to believe that he can cover up one misdeed by not preventing another. Although it is true that Raffles might have died anyway, Bulstrode did allow the maid to have the key to the liquor cabinet, allowing her to give the man more liquor, even though Lydgate had told him that Raffles was to be given no more alcohol. While Bulstrode does not directly give Raffles the alcohol, or instruct any one to do so, he did allow the maid access to it. Even though he'd been fighting it, Bulstrode had considered how possible it would be for Raffles' death to look like it was of natural causes even if he did something to hasten Raffles' passing.

Of all the people in Middlemarch, Dorothea is the only one who believes that Lydgate was not somehow involved in Raffles' death. At the conclusion of Chapter 71, Dorothea is entreating Farebrother to help her clear Lydgate's name.

## Discussion Question 1

Raffles in trying to extract money from Bulstrode because he knows the nature of Bulstrode's past life. Bulstrode is trying to protect the "Christian" image that he has created for himself. In your opinion, which man is committing the greater wrong? Justify your answer.

## Discussion Question 2

Why is Dorothea the only one who seems to believe in Lydgate's innocence enough to try to clear his name? In your opinion, will she succeed? Justify your answer.

## Discussion Question 3

How has Lydgate fallen prey to Bulstrode, as Farebrother warned his against in the beginning of the novel?

## Vocabulary

Epoch, edification, diminution, conjecture, adjurations, imperiousness, impenitent, consign, stertorous, prophetic, ejaculation, antipathy, illimitable, glazier, dogmatism, virulent, repudiate, palavering.



# Book Eight: Chapters 72-80

## Summary

### Chapter 72

Chettam and Farebrother try to convince Dorothea not to try to interfere in Lydgate's behalf. Celia tries to convince her sister that Chettam does know what is best and encourages her to cooperate with him just as she cooperated with Casaubon.

### Chapter 73

Lydgate considers the situation in which he has found himself. He decides that he will not strike out against Bulstrode, and he will also not allow himself to be run out of Middlemarch. He is uncertain about how he should approach Rosamond with what has happened.

### Chapter 74

Mrs. Bulstrode finds out from her brother what is being rumored about her husband. Although she is shocked and hurt, she is unable to turn her back on her husband. She puts on mourning clothes as a sign of her hurt. When she goes to her husband the first time after learning his secret, they both cry together.

### Chapter 75

Rosamond learns of the suspicious about her husband. Although he hopes to turn the incident into a lesson on why they should support themselves financially, Rosamond continues to insist that they must leave Middlemarch. Lydgate is unhappy with his wife's lack of understanding, while she believes he is becoming more intolerable. She looks forward to a promised visit from Ladislaw.

### Chapter 76

Lydgate goes to visit Dorothea about the New Hospital and is relieved to learn that she believes in his innocence. She gets his permission to visit Rosamond with the intention of encouraging her and telling her that Lydgate has the possibility of doing great things in Middlemarch and changing to peoples' opinion of him. In order to relieve him of his debt to Bulstrode, Dorothea writes him a check for the 1,000 pounds so Lydgate can repay Bulstrode the money that people believe he took as a bribe.

### Chapter 77

Although Dorothea enters the Lydgate drawing-room to see Ladislaw and Rosamond in an intimate arrangement together and is disturbed by this meeting, she continues with



her plan to tell her uncle and Chettam the truth about Lydgate. She also leaves a letter and check for Lydgate at his house.

#### Chapter 78

Will is angry that Dorothea has seen him with Rosamond and takes out his anger on Rosamond. She is so upset by the words that Will says to her that she has the maid help her upstairs. When Lydgate finds her that evening, he believes that her grief and changed attitude toward him might be the result of something that Dorothea said to her.

#### Chapter 79

Will meets with Lydgate but doesn't mention his confrontation with Rosamond earlier in the day. The two both find themselves being led down a path where others hold their futures captive. Lydgate has rumors circulating around him, and Will believes that he is indebted to Rosamond.

#### Chapter 80

Despite her grief concerning Will's actions, Dorothea makes up her mind to see Rosamond again. For the visit, she changes from full mourning garb to the lighter mourning clothes, a sign to herself that she will go on despite the hurts that life has dealt her.

## Analysis

This section of the novel is probably the part that would most closely fit the definition of a climax. The romantic triangle between Dorothea, Will, and Rosamond finally comes to a head with Will taking his frustrations out on Rosamond when he believes that Dorothea will no longer respect him because she caught the two of them together in a compromising situation. Will is unfair to Rosamond because he does not consider his own responsibility in Dorothea catching him with Rosamond. Dorothea's beautiful personality shines out again as she goes to Rosamond to try to comfort her and encourage her relationship with Lydgate.

Another relationship that survives the test of bad news is that of the Bulstrodes. Bulstrode has secrets from his past. News of these secrets and rumors about the suspicious death of Raffles begin to leak back to his wife. But, Mrs. Bulstrode acts admirably, as she remembers all of the times that her husband had patiently and lovingly stood by her through all the years. She knows that it is her duty to support him during his time of trouble.

Notice the use of symbolism portrayed by the wearing of mourning clothes. Mrs. Bulstrode learned about her husband's misdeeds from her brother. She goes home and puts on the clothes of mourning before she goes in to tell her husband that she is aware of what has happened. When she enters his room, Bulstrode recognizes right away by her clothes that she knows what has happened.



In Dorothea's instance, however, she decides to stop wearing her mourning clothes. She is hurt and disappointed by Will's actions when she catches him with Rosamond in what she believes is a compromising situation. After she grieves, she decides to transition into lighter mourning clothes as a sign to herself that her life will continue and will improve.

## Discussion Question 1

How does Mrs. Bulstrode react when she finds out about her husband's misdeeds?

## Discussion Question 2

Why is Lydgate concerned about how Rosamond will react when she learns the rumors circulating about her husband?

## Discussion Question 3

In what way is Will unfair when he punishes Rosamond after they are seen together by Dorothea? How do Rosamond's preconceived notions about her relationship with Will lead up to her overwhelming hurt when Will is angry with her?

## Vocabulary

Demesne, interloper, adroitly, palliate, culpability, tenable, perturbation, reconcile, titillation, repugnance, purport, abstained, vitriolic, antagonism, tenacity, placard, opprobrium, stultified, anodyne, purgatory, sardonically, perdition, compendiously, paroxysm.



# Book Eight: Chapters 81-Finale

## Summary

### Chapter 81

Dorothea visits with Rosamond. She tells her the true story behind Lydgate's troubles and that he loves her still. Rosamond tells Dorothea that it is Dorothea whom Will loves and not her. Meanwhile, Lydgate returns to the two women. When Dorothea leaves, he takes charge of sheltering Rosamond even though it is a burden to him.

### Chapter 82

Will visits with Lydgate and Rosamond. Rosamond is cold toward him but does give him a note telling him that she has told Dorothea about his affections. Although this pleases Will, he wonders if he will ever see Dorothea again.

### Chapter 83

Will goes to visit Dorothea once more now that they realize their love for one another. At the conclusion of the chapter, Dorothea claims that she hates her wealth and that she would rather live on her own fortune with Will instead of living on Casaubon's money.

### Chapter 84

Mr. Brooke tells the family Dorothea's plans to be married again. Sir James is upset and declares never to see her again. Celia tries to change her sister's mind but is unable to do so.

### Chapter 85

Mr. and Mrs. Bulstrode have grown older from the recent revelations about him. Before leaving town, Mrs. Bulstrode wants to do something for her family. Mr. Bulstrode suggests they allow Fred to live at Stone Court as he had proposed before to Garth. Mr. Bulstrode tells his wife that she must be the one to make the suggestion to Garth as he has cut off all work relations with Mr. Bulstrode.

### Chapter 86

Though they know it will probably be a long while, Fred and Mary at last begin to speak happily of marrying one another. Fred is pleased with the arrangement that he will be able to live at Stone Court and make a life for himself and Mary.

### Finale



Eliot wraps up the lives of her main characters. Fred and Mary do get married and live a happy life. Lydgate does build up a good practice; but, he always considers himself to be a failure. He dies young and Rosamond remarries. Celia demands Chettam reconcile with Dorothea when Dorothea begins having children. He continues to believe, however that the marriage was a mistake. As for Dorothea, Eliot indicates that she is one of those people who touches the lives of others for the better, even though they may never recognize her impact.

## Analysis

In this final chapter, Dorothea finally makes the decision to turn her back on the money and possessions that Casaubon has left her and accept Will's proposal of marriage. Just as Dorothea's friends and family believed that her marriage to Casaubon was a bad idea, they also believe that her decision to marry Will is a bad idea. With the codicil that he added to his will, Casaubon has already put the idea that there was some compromising relationship between Dorothea and Will. Chettam, who was in love with Dorothea at the beginning of the novel, is angry when he first learns about Casaubon's codicil and says that he and relatives should force Will to move away. Even though Will tells Dorothea that he plans to leave Middlemarch and not return, he is unable to keep his promise and continues to return. On his last trip to Middlemarch, he and Dorothea finally recognize their mutual feelings for one another. He proposes marriage, and she accepts.

Most significant in this final section of the novel is Rosamond's selflessness toward Dorothea. Throughout the novel, Rosamond has not been able to think about anyone but herself. It is a severe character fault in Rosamond but not one she can entirely be blamed for because her parents have raised her to believe she is the center of the universe. Even if she was told she couldn't do something or have something, she did it or took it anyway and never had to suffer any repercussions. Now, Rosamond has information about a situation that will end any possibility of a relationship between her and Will. Even though Rosamond has nothing to gain from telling Dorothea how much Will cares for her, she does it because she realizes how selfless Dorothea is being by coming to her to help heal the relationship between Lydgate and Rosamond.

As is predictable for her personality, Dorothea does get involved with Lydgate and his troubles even though her family, Chettam especially, warns her not to do so. Because she believes in the young doctor, Dorothea gives him enough money to pay back his loan from Bulstrode. She does this so that people will realize that the money was a true loan and not hush money. Dorothea also listens to Lydgate's side of the story. She doesn't give advice to Lydgate as much as she offers him her sympathy. She knows how stressful a bad marriage can be and how difficult lines of communication can be to keep open between a couple. Dorothea's influence with Rosamond and Lydgate works because the two stay together even though Lydgate does so knowing that he will have to treat Rosamond with kid gloves the remainder of their married lives.



Finally, author Eliot grants a happy ending to Fred and Mary. After loving one another most of their lives, Mary finally agrees to marry Fred after he is allowed to rent and farm Stone Gate with the promise of being allowed to buy out the property. This arrangement is made possible by Mrs. Bulstrode when she and her husband decide to move away from Middlemarch. Though they could have sold the property outright, Mrs. Bulstrode convinces her husband to use it to do something to help her family. Since it had been believed at one time that the land would be inherited by Fred anyway, it is fitting that he be the one to whom it is offered.

## Discussion Question 1

What are Chettam's reasons for not wanting Dorothea to marry Will? Do you think his reasons are valid or is he being selfish?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Garth cut off his work relations with Bulstrode? Do you believe his actions are reasonable or is this decision rational?

## Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast Lydgate's and Rosamond's marriage to the marriage of Dorothea and Casaubon.

## Vocabulary

Impassibility, compunction, effusion, vagrant, philanthropic, laudable, badinage, efficacy, prohibition, fervidly, instigation, avowal, sophistry, declension, stratagem.





# Characters

## Dorothea Brooke Casaubon Ladislaw

While George Eliot's novel tells the story of several different characters, Dorothea is probably the character that best fits the bill as the main character for the novel. Dorothea is young, idealistic, and totally devoted to her beliefs. Yet, at the same time, she is still kind and empathetic. With her severe dress and dislike of fluff and decoration, she is a stark contrast from her more feminine younger sister. One of Dorothea's most important goals for her life is to improve the world around her and make life better for others.

It is with this idea in mind that Dorothea agrees to marry the elderly Edward Casaubon. She believes the older man is a genius and that she can be of help to him in his research. She enters the marriage believing that he is doing some important work. Then, as time passes, she realizes that his work is not as inspired as she once thought. Casaubon also holds Dorothea at arm's length, never really giving her the emotional support and connection that she expected during a marriage. Since she cannot express herself emotionally, Dorothea becomes depressed and withdrawn. Will Ladislaw happens upon her during her first emotional breakdown because of her disappointment in her marriage. It is as he speaks to her on this and other occasions that he sees her as a very special person.

Although Dorothea is unhappy in her marriage, she remains devoted to her husband as was expected of a woman during this time period. She helps him with his work when he asks, and leaves him alone when he requests solitude. Though she never says anything concerning the work to Casaubon, Casaubon gets it in his mind that Dorothea is critical of him and begins to hold this unjustified idea against her. Dorothea never suspects what her husband is thinking about her or that he believes that she is being influenced by Ladislaw until after he dies and the codicil to his will is opened. Dorothea is angry that her husband never discussed his suspicions with her. Just before his death, Casaubon asks Dorothea to promise that she will finish his book after his death. Dorothea struggles with the reply to Casaubon's request. She does not want to spend her life tied to a work that she does not believe is significant; but, at the same time, she does not want to hurt her husband. It is both fortunate and unfortunate for Dorothea that Casaubon dies before the time she had promised that she would give him an answer.

Dorothea believes in justice, even if it means not doing what is acceptable. It is for this reason that she chooses to offer Farebrother the position as clergyman at Lowick Church after her husband's death. Dorothea knows of Farebrother's gambling habit, but she also believes that he would denounce this habit if he were able to support his family through an adequate salary from his job. Similarly, Dorothea also chooses to try to help Lydgate when rumors begin to circulate that he might have had some hand in Raffles' death. Dorothea believes that she knows Lydgate well enough to know that he would not help with a murder and take money to help cover it up. Her family tries to persuade



her not to get involved in Lydgate's cause, but Dorothea does so anyway. Even though she is not able to provide proof that Lydgate had no hand in Raffles death, she does loan Lydgate the 1,000 pounds so that he can repay the money that he borrowed from Bulstrode. Since Lydgate has paid these funds back, there is no reason that people should think the money was paid as hush money to cover up any crime that Bulstrode might have committed.

Dorothea's empathetic personality shines brightest in her dealings with Rosamond. Although she suspects that Rosamond and Will have been having some sort of improper relationship, this does not stop her from trying to help the young, struggling wife of Lydgate. From her conversations with Lydgate, Dorothea understands that there are some problems with communication between the two which are putting a strain on their marriage. Coming from her own experience in a marriage with communication troubles, Dorothea tries to help Rosamond see the good in her husband. She loans the couple the 1,000 pounds to repay Bulstrode, an act that shows Rosamond and others that this money was not hush money but indeed a loan.

Finally, Dorothea's connection with Aunt Julia, the lady whose picture she finds in the room that she chooses as her boudoir at Lowick Manor, comes full circle when she marries Will. Dorothea has learned that the family had disinherited Julia because she had married badly. What they really meant was that Julia had married a poor man whom she loved. Dorothea believes it was wrong for the family to have been so spiteful to the young woman. Had Chettam had his way, however, Dorothea would have been disinherited, like Julia, when she turned her back on Casaubon's fortunes to marry Will. Happily, for Dorothea, the usually docile Celia puts her foot down and demands to be allowed to visit with her sister so the two families do reconcile, unlike Julia and her family.

## Teritus Lydgate

Teritus Lydgate is a new doctor who has come to practice in Middlemarch. He is very intelligent and hopes to open a new hospital in the town. Unlike the people in Middlemarch, Lydgate is very progressive in his thinking. He is one of the first doctors in the area to decide not to dispense medications. Although this is an up and coming practice, the people believed in the past that the money they paid their doctors went to cover the expense of the medication. They cannot fathom just paying a doctor for an intangible service. Lydgate also has a rocky start in the town because he is called upon to cast the deciding vote determining who will fill the paid position of chaplain at his hospital. Lydgate would prefer to vote for Farebrother because he knows the man personally. Bulstrode, however, who is funding the hospital, is putting pressure on Lydgate to vote for Tyke, whom Bulstrode wants for the position. With his vote in favor of Tyke, the people of Middlemarch already believe that Bulstrode has Lydgate in his pocket. Things don't improve when Lydgate takes money from Bulstrode, which he had requested as a loan, just after a strange man who had been spreading rumors about Bulstrode dies suspiciously while under Lydgate's care.



To make matter worse for Lydgate, he is attracted to Rosamond Vincy, a very demanding suitor, when he first comes to town. He makes friends with the girl because he enjoys her company. Rosamond decides that Lydgate is the man she is meant to marry and will consider no one else. Pressure is put on Lydgate by the ladies of the town as they tell him that he should not play with Rosamond's emotions if he doesn't intend to marry her. In an unexpected meeting, Lydgate finds himself face to face with an emotional Rosamond and proposes to her. The two marry quickly, and Lydgate soon realizes that he cannot support Rosamond in the type of lifestyle in which she is accustomed. Lydgate's association with Bulstrode and the suspicion of him taking money from the man also divides Lydgate and Rosamond as he believes that she will not listen to what he has to say. Lydgate finds solace when Dorothea takes the time to listen to his side of the story. She smooths things out between Lydgate and his wife but Lydgate realizes that he must carry the burden of a high maintenance woman through the rest of his life.

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The Reverend Edward Casaubon is the first husband of Dorothea Brooke and second cousin of Will Ladislaw. He is the clergyman at Lowick Church and has devoted his life to writing a book about mythology. Casaubon proposes marriage to Dorothea believing that marriage is something that is required of him in life. He hopes the union will produce a male heir. As the date for his wedding gets closer and closer Casaubon is distressed because he becomes more and more distressed about his decision to marry. He spends his honeymoon in Rome in solitary study. Dorothea is upset and disappointed by Casaubon's lack of interest in her emotionally. She feels smothered during her marriage by her inability to connect with her husband on this level. Dorothea also begins to realize that although she had always believed Casaubon was working on an important and life changing project, she realizes that his studies are not as inspired as she once believed. She has to struggle with herself when Casaubon asks her to carry on her work after he dies. Because he does die before she is able to give him an answer, Dorothea is able to put Casaubon's work to rest.

Even from the grave, Casaubon continues to try to rule Dorothea's life. He has written up a codicil to his will indicating that if Dorothea were to marry Will Ladislaw, she would forfeit any money or property that she had inherited from him. During his life, Casaubon had taken on the role of guardian for Ladislaw. Even during this time, Casaubon seems to be caring for the boy grudgingly. When Casaubon notices a relationship developing between Dorothea and Ladislaw, he seems to think that Ladislaw is feeding Dorothea the information that is turning her against him. He believes that Ladislaw intends to corrupt Dorothea's mind with incorrect information about him, then marry Dorothea himself. What Casaubon doesn't realize is that Dorothea has learned all of Casaubon's bad traits personally during their marriage. Although Ladislaw does hope to lure Dorothea away from Casaubon, he is not badmouthing his cousin in order to do so. When Casaubon dies of heart disease, he dies as an unhappy, jealous, and unfulfilled man.



## Will Ladislaw

Will Ladislaw is Casaubon's second cousin. Casaubon has been reluctantly supporting Ladislaw through much of his life. Though the boy has been to school, he refuses to get a job, but decides to travel and live off his allowance from Casaubon. It is later learned that Ladislaw is Bulstrode's step-grandson. Although Bulstrode cheated Ladislaw and Ladislaw's mother out of their portion of the family inheritance because he lied about being able to locate Ladislaw's mother Bulstrode tells Ladislaw that he does not feel as if he is indebted to the boy in any way.

Ladislaw does not like Dorothea when he first meets her. When he meets her again in Rome, his opinion of her changes. He is furious that his elderly cousin has married this young girl whom he considers to be an angel. Because he hopes to catch Dorothea's attention and earn her respect, he decides to stop living off his cousin's money. Instead of pleasing Casaubon, however, this decision seems to make the man dislike Ladislaw even more. Ladislaw accepts an invitation from Mr. Brooke to visit with him at Tipton Grange because he is not aware that Casaubon has forbidden him to return to Lowick. Casaubon becomes even angrier with Ladislaw when he takes a job with Mr. Brooke. After Casaubon dies and it is discovered that he specified that Dorothea will not get any inheritance from Casaubon if she marries Ladislaw, Ladislaw decides to leave town. He keeps returning to visit with Rosamond. One day when Dorothea comes upon Rosamond and Ladislaw in a compromising position, Ladislaw believes that he has ruined his chances with Dorothea and lost her respect. He lashes out at Rosamond, blaming her for ruining his chances with Dorothea. In the end, however, Rosamond lets Dorothea know that Ladislaw cares only for Dorothea. Ladislaw proposes to Dorothea and Dorothea turns her back on Casaubon's money to accept Ladislaw's proposal.

## Mr. Brooke

Mr. Brooke is the uncle who takes in Dorothea and Celia Brooke after their parents die. Mr. Brooke does not see the need in getting a chaperone for the girls and basically lets Dorothea run the house. When Dorothea announces her plans to marry Casaubon, Mr. Brooke tries to dissuade her but does not do so very forcibly. Mr. Brooke is also significant in the novel in that he invites Will Ladislaw to visit him at Tipton Grange after Dorothea asks Brooke to write to Ladislaw telling him not to come to Lowick. The mistake is not entirely Brooke's fault as he did not understand that Casaubon did not want Ladislaw anywhere in the area. Brooke fumbles again when he invites Ladislaw to work with him on his newspaper, a job that ensures the young man will stay in Middlemarch.

Mr. Brooke also makes a bumbling attempt at politicking as he works both with the newspaper and tries to run for office. As he intends to run on a platform of bettering the community, his friends and family try to convince him that he needs to see to better conditions for his own tenants, as his stance is hypocritical considering the poor conditions in which these people live. This idea is driven home when Brooke is cursed



by Daley, a man who lives in one of Brooke's rental homes, for the poor condition of his life. Brooke also derails his political career by having too much sherry before giving a speech. This extra alcohol causes him to forget what he's supposed to be talking about and he gets badly distracted. The crowd also heckles him, discouraging him from continuing his run for office.

## Rosamond Vincy Lydgate

Rosamond Vincy Lydgate is the spoiled daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vincy. Rosamond has been schooled in certain areas thought proper for ladies. However, some of the older women believe that the schooling is a loss on a woman. Rosamond is described as being exceptionally beautiful. She is impressed with people of wealth and high birth. She sets her sights on Teritus Lydgate almost as soon as he arrives in Middlemarch. She develops a dream in her mind of what their lives together will be like. Things go sour very quickly when Lydgate realizes he doesn't make enough money to support the lifestyle to which Rosamond is accustomed. Rosamond likes to think for herself and often does impetuous things without consulting her husband. Once, for instance, she goes horseback riding while she is pregnant. An accident causes her to lose the baby. She also writes and asks Lydgate's uncle for money, an act that results in the uncle scorning both Lydgate and Rosamond. Rosamond's self-confidence takes a sharp blow when Will becomes violently angry with her because Dorothea catches the two of them together in a compromising situation. Rosamond has had some idea that Will counted her as more than just a friend and is devastated to learn the Dorothea is the only woman whom he loves and that he blames Rosamond for losing Dorothea's respect. In what is perhaps her only selfless act in the course of the novel, Rosamond tells Dorothea that Will cares for Dorothea and not Rosamond.

## Nicholas Bulstrode

Nicholas Bulstrode is a banker in Middlemarch who makes a show of his morality. The people of the town get the impression that he believes that he is better than everyone else. Bulstrode ruins his own reputation when it comes out that he earned his money through an illegitimate, possibly illegal business years prior. Bulstrode also got money from marrying the wife of the owner of the business after his death. The woman asks Bulstrode to try to track down her daughter. Bulstrode does so, but lies and tells the woman that he was unable to find the daughter. Later, when he learns that Will Ladislaw is his step-grandson, Bulstrode tells Will in no uncertain terms that he does not feel as if he is obligated to Will in any way. In an attempt to get Raffles to stop spreading information about his past misdeeds, Bulstrode does nothing to keep Mrs. Abel from giving the man brandy when he is suffering with alcohol poisoning although Lydgate has ordered Bulstrode not to give him alcohol. Because he is afraid that Lydgate might recognize that Raffles was allowed to die, he decides to give Lydgate the loan that he had refused to give him several days prior. Although Lydgate does not recognize the money as hush money, others in the town do, especially after the story that Raffles told Mr. Bambridge about Bulstrode's past. Before Bulstrode and his wife leave town, Mrs.



Bulstrode convinces her husband to allow Fred Vincy to live at Stone Court, a property which they own.

## Camden Farebrother

Camden Farebrother is a poor clergyman in Middlemarch. He lives with and cares for his mother, his mother's older sister and his own older sister. He worked as a chaplain at the hospital for free until the job is given to Tyke when it becomes a paying position. Farebrother takes a liking to Mary but knows that she and Fred have been in love with one another for a long time so he does not push the issue. Farebrother had taken up the habit of playing cards for money to help support his family. When Casaubon dies, Dorothea offers Farebrother the job as the clergyman at Lowick. With the income from this job, Farebrother is able to support his family without gambling. Farebrother becomes a sort of a mentor for Lydgate. He warns Lydgate that he will have to be cooperative, even with people he doesn't like, in order to run his practice as he wants to. Farebrother refers to a Lydgate's vote in an election to determine if Farebrother or Tyke will be hired as the chaplain of the new hospital. Although Lydgate would rather vote for Farebrother, Farebrother knows that Lydgate will be encouraged to vote for Tyke because Bulstrode, who is financially supporting the new hospital, wants to hire Tyke. Even though Farebrother is not hired for the position, and it is well known that Lydgate cast the deciding vote, Farebrother does not hold this against Lydgate. Farebrother also suggests to Lydgate that he pay attention to Mary Garth, but Lydgate does not pay attention to this advice.

## Fred Vincy

Fred Vincy is a young man who manages to bring his life back from a series of bad decisions and bad luck. He is the brother of Rosamond and nephew of the Bulstrodes. At the beginning of the novel, Fred believed that he would inherit both money and land from his uncle. He is disappointed and left with a large amount of debt, however, when his uncle dies and leaves him nothing. He had been sent to school by his parents, but doesn't want to enter the ministry, as he was trained to do. Luckily, Fred is noticed by Caleb Garth, who believes that the boy can make a good apprentice, even though Fred has disappointed the Garth family once before by leaving them responsible for a large amount of debt to pay in his stead. Fred does well as an apprentice for Garth and is eventually allowed to live in the house at Stone Court and care for the property thanks to an arrangement by his aunt. Mary Garth, the love of Fred's life, had at one time said that she would not marry him until he showed promise of making something of himself. Once he begins to work to earn the property at Stone Court, Mary agrees to marry him. Eliot indicates in the final chapter of her novel that the two have a long and happy life together.



## John Raffles

John Raffles is Joshua Rigg's stepfather. He is an alcoholic and tries to use his knowledge of other's misdeeds to blackmail them for money. He visits Middlemarch the first time hoping to get money from his stepson but Riggs will only give him enough to get him out of town. During his visit to his stepson, Raffles accidentally takes a letter addressed by Bulstrode, giving Raffles knowledge of where Bulstrode, whom he has knowledge of past misdeeds, is living. Raffles returns twice trying to blackmail Bulstrode for money and Bulstrode pays him twice to be silent about his undesirable past which includes a stepdaughter and grandson (later identified as Will Ladislaw) whom he cheated out of money, as well as his affiliation with a questionable business. The final time that Raffles visits Middlemarch, he is sick. Bulstrode calls for Lydgate to tend to the man but Raffles dies even though Lydgate had believed the man would pull through his illness. Lydgate believes Raffles' death is slightly suspicious but not enough so for him to report it.

## Mary Garth

When Mary Garth is introduced, she is working as a caretaker for Peter Featherstone, her uncle by marriage. It is discovered quickly that she and Fred have been friends since they were small children and have always imagined that they would one day marry one another. Before Fred gets a good job, though, Mary will not even consider his proposals of marriage. Mary faces a dilemma in her job as Featherstone asks her to destroy a will that he had written up leaving all of his possessions to an illegitimate son. Mary refuses to do so believing that she will be incriminating herself if the will is contested. Mary feels badly after the new will is opened as Fred is left out of the will entirely. Had she destroyed the new will as Featherstone requested, Fred would have gotten a good deal of money which would have been a good start for him in life. Later, after Fred begins working as an apprentice for Mary's father and then is allowed to live at Stone Court in exchange for taking care of the property, Mary agrees to marry Fred. In the Finale of the novel it is noted that Fred and Mary have a long, happy life together.

## Peter Featherstone

Peter Featherstone is the rich relative of the Vincy's through marriage. Because it is believed the ailing Featherstone had no children his nieces and nephews, particularly Fred Vincy, believe they will get big windfalls when the man dies. Featherstone, however, is also cruel. He learns that Fred has tried to put the land he believes he will inherit from Featherstone as surety on a loan and demands a letter, signed by Bulstrode, saying that Fred has not done so. Featherstone also shocks his entire family by leaving all of his money and possessions to Joshua Rigg, an illegitimate son whom no one even knew existed. The night that Featherstone dies, he apparently has second thoughts about his decision to leave his wealth to Rigg as he tries to get Mary Garth to burn the new will that he had drawn up in secret. Had Mary done as the man wished, Fred, along with the other nieces and nephews would have gotten some money with



Rigg getting the bulk. Since she refuses to follow his commands, the will giving everything to Rigg is legal.

## Sir James Chettam

Sir James Chettam marries Celia, Dorothea's sister, during the course of the novel. He had first wanted to marry Dorothea but she is determined to marry Casaubon. Chettam admires Dorothea and refuses to let Dorothea's snubbing of him affect their friendship. He continues to care for her and even sees to the cottage plans that she had once enjoyed drawing in hopes of giving poor people better places to live. Chettam is angry when the codicil to Casaubon's will becomes public. He believes that he and Brooke should force Will to leave town at that time. Will, however, decides to leave on his own. After Will and Dorothea announce their engagement, Chettam becomes angry with Dorothea and refuses to see her. This lasts until Dorothea begins having children. Celia insists that she be able to see her sister so Chettam and Dorothea make amends.

## Celia Brooke Chettam

Celia Brooke Chettam is Dorothea's younger sister. She is the more feminine of the two sisters. She is more concerned about frivolous things like jewelry and attractive clothing. Celia sometimes feels like Dorothea looks down on her for not being as devoted to religion and as disciplined as she is. Celia marries Sir John Chettam and has a baby boy to whom she dedicates her life. Celia fulfills the role that was thought proper for women during the time period that Middlemarch is set. She is attractive, submissive and dedicated to her family. The only rule that her husband sets that she rebels against is the rule that they will never correspond with Dorothea again after she marries Will. Eliot indicates that even Chettam cannot win against sisterly love and that he changes his stance on this rule once Dorothea begins having children.

## Mrs. Abel

Mrs. Abel is a servant who works at Stone Court. She is working the night that John Raffles is brought there suffering with what Lydgate has described as alcoholic poisoning. After Bulstrode has spent several hours watching Raffles, he allows Mrs. Abel to take a turn watching him so that he can rest. Although Lydgate has ordered Raffles to have no alcohol, Bulstrode gives Mrs. Abel the key to the liquor cabinet when she asks to be allowed to give the man some brandy. Bulstrode also does not tell Mrs. Abel when she is supposed to stop giving Raffles the opium. She gives them both until he becomes unconscious, then later dies. Bulstrode uses Mrs. Abel as a pawn, hoping to cause Raffles' death through some action that can be blamed on her instead of him.





## Caleb Garth

Caleb Garth is Mary Garth's father. He is a good man who means well. He struggles to support his family after being let go as the caretaker of Tipton Grange. Shortly after the family is left no money from Featherstone's will, Mary loses her job caring for Featherstone and Gareth is called upon to pay the debt that he signed surety on for Fred Vincy, he learns that Chettam has convinced Brooke to allow him to have the job of caretaker at Tipton Grange as well as Freshitt. Even though Fred did leave the Garth's responsible for a debt at a bad time, Caleb still likes the boy. He arranges for Fred to work as his apprentice since he has no sons. Fred takes to the work of caretaking thanks to Garth.

## Aunt Julia

Aunt Julia is Casaubon's aunt. She never appears as a character in the novel, but she is significant because of the kindred spirit that Dorothea develops with the woman's miniature during the course of her marriage to Casaubon. When Dorothea first sees the woman's picture, Casaubon tells her that she had an unfortunate marriage. Dorothea does not pry, but when she returns from her honeymoon, with the knowledge that her own marriage is "unfortunate" she wonders if it were only Julia's family who thought the marriage was unfortunate or if Julia also believed her marriage was bad. Dorothea later learns the family disinherited Julia because she married a poor man.

## Mr. Bambridge

Mr. Bambridge is the man to whom Fred Vincy owes money. Bambridge goes with Fred on his trip to the horse fair where he buys the horse named Diamond, which later lames itself. It is noted that Bambridge had pushed for Fred to buy the horse, and that the horse had belonged to a friend of Bambridge. It is also Bambridge who begins the story of Mr. Bulstrode's past life circulating in Middlemarch. Bambridge had learned the story while out of town at a horse fair.

## Harriet Vincy Bulstrode

Harriet Bulstrode is Walter Vincy's sister and Mr. Bulstrode's wife. She is unaware of her husband's former life when he was involved in a questionable business. When she does learn about her husband's past, however, she shows great loyalty to the man who has been so good to her all of her married life and willingly stays with him even though it means that they will have to move from Middlemarch. It is Mrs. Bulstrode who arranges for Fred to live at Stone Court and care for the property.



## **Sarah Dunkirk**

Sarah Dunkirk is the name of Will Ladislaw's mother. She is the daughter of the family with whom Bulstrode was in some sort of dishonorable business as a young man. He earned his riches from this business because he married her mother after her father's death. All of the Dunkirk money goes to Bulstrode because he tells the mother that he searched for the daughter but was unable to locate her. In truth, Bulstrode did locate the girl but lied so that she would not get her family's money.

## **Walter Vincy**

Walter Vincy is Rosamond's father and Harriet Bulstrode's brother. He works as a manufacturer. Vincy tries to dissuade Rosamond from marrying Lydgate but is not successful as he has always allowed Rosamond to do as she likes regardless of his opinion. When Mrs. Bulstrode finally decides to learn for certain what has happened to her husband, she goes to her brother. Vincy explains to her what secrets have come out about her husband and what is rumored about Raffles' death.

## **Sir Godwin**

Sir Godwin is the uncle who raised Teritus Lydgate. Rosamond likes the man because she is impressed with his high rank. She also gets high compliments when she and Lydgate visit Godwin's home during their honeymoon. When she and Teritus are suffering in debt, Rosamond decides to write the man asking for money. He refuses, accusing Teritus of using his wife to conduct his business. The man basically tells Teritus he has no money to lend him and that Teritus should have chosen a better paying career.

## **Captain Lydgate**

Although Teritus Lydgate does not like this man, Rosamond is enthralled to have a baronet's son visit her home. Captain Lydgate persuades Rosamond to go horseback riding. She has a riding accident that causes her to have a miscarriage.

## **Reverend Walter Tyke**

The Reverend Walter Tyke is the man whom Lydgate is pressured by Bulstrode into choosing as the paid chaplain for the new fever hospital. Although Mr. Brooke tries to talk Dorothea into hiring Tyke to take Casaubon's place at Lowick, she chooses Farebrother.



## Joshua Rigg

Joshua Rigg is the illegitimate son to whom Peter Featherstone leaves all of his property and money when he dies. Instead of living at Stone Court, however, Rigg sells the property to Bulstrode, the man whom Featherstone would have least wanted to wind up with the property.

## Mr. Wrench

Wrench is the doctor who incorrectly diagnoses Fred Vincy saying there is nothing wrong with the man. Lydgate later correctly diagnoses Vincy with typhoid fever, unintentionally discrediting the older doctor.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## Mamma's Jewels

At the beginning of the novel, Celia asks Dorothea if they can look through their mother's jewelry and divide it up. Dorothea does not wear jewelry because she does not like to be showy, but Celia wants to wear some of the pieces.

## A Pearl Cross with Five Brilliants

Although Celia thinks that Dorothea would like to wear this cross, Dorothea actually shudders at the idea of wearing it. Celia believes that since her sister does not want to wear the cross herself, she would prefer Celia not wear it either.

## Tiny Maltese Puppy

Sir James Chettam brings this puppy to Dorothea while he is trying to woo her. Dorothea suggests that the dog be taken to Celia instead.

## Cottage Plans

Dorothea busies herself drawing plans for cottages to replace the homes of poor people. Chettam agrees to help Dorothea with her cottages and keeps his promise even after Dorothea discourages his advances.

## A Denial in Bulstrode's Handwriting

Fred Vincy's Uncle Featherstone requires a denial in Bulstrode's writing that Fred has not promised the Featherstone land that Fred hopes to inherit as surety on loans he has taken out.

## A Tin Box

Peter Featherstone keeps his cash in a tin box. He goes to this box when he gives Fred a gift of 100 pounds and again when Featherstone tries to get Mary to burn his second will.

## New Fever Hospital

Lydgate opens this New Fever Hospital which is financially backed by Bulstrode.



## **The Cleopatra**

It is when Dorothea is standing near this statue in the Vatican that Naumann sees her and wants to paint her.

## **My Love**

“My love” is a term of endearment that Casaubon uses in reference to Dorothea when he is irritated with her.

## **Hundred and Sixty Pounds**

One hundred and sixty pounds is the amount of money that Fred Vincy owes and, unfortunately, passes on to the Garths because he is unable to pay it.

## **Diamond**

Diamond is the name of the horse that Fred buys in hopes of selling it for enough money to pay his debts. The horse turns out to be less than a diamond as it lames itself before Fred has a chance to sell it.

## **Typhoid Fever**

Typhoid fever is the disease which Lydgate diagnoses Fred with after Dr. Wrench sees Fred as a patient and cannot find anything wrong with him.

## **Dispute**

The “Dispute” is the name that Naumann gives to the portrait that he has painted of Casaubon.

## **Codicil**

In a codicil to his will, Casaubon states that if Dorothea is to marry Will Ladislaw, she will lose anything that she might have inherited from him.

## **“The Pioneer”**

“The Pioneer” is the name of the newspaper of which Mr. Brooke and Ladislaw take charge.



## **The School at York**

The School at York is the job that Mary has decided to take just before the family learns that Garth will be rehired to take care of Tipton Grange for Brooke.

## **Fatty Degeneration of the Heart**

Fatty degeneration of the heart is the name of the disease with which Lydgate tells Dorothea he believes Casaubon is suffering.

## **Widgeon's Purifying Pills**

Widgeon's Purifying Pills are what most of the people in Middlemarch believe can cure them of their ailments, not any advice that Lydgate might give them.

## **Lowick Church**

Lowick Church is the church which Casaubon had pastored before his death. Farebrother is hired to fill the position.

## **Key to All Mythologies**

Key to All Mythologies is the name that Casaubon had intended to give the book on which he was working.

## **Second Glass of Sherry**

Mr. Brooke makes the mistake of drinking a second glass of sherry before his political speech. This extra alcohol makes him forget about the speech's subject.

## **Aunt Julia's Miniature**

Ever since Dorothea has first seen this miniature, she has an unusual connection with it. When she returns from her honeymoon in Rome, Dorothea understands how the woman might have been so unhappy in her marriage. When Ladislav leaves, she offers to give him this small portrait, but he refuses the gift.

## **Purple Amethysts**

It is the purple amethysts that Lydgate had given Rosamond as a wedding gift that he hates the most. She may have to give them back to help settle their debt.



## **1,000 Pounds**

One thousand pounds is the amount of money that Lydgate needs to settle the debts that he has accrued since his marriage.

## **A Letter and Check**

Dorothea leaves this letter and check with Rosamond. She intends for Lydgate to use the check to pay back the money that he owes to Bulstrode so that he will no longer be indebted to him.

## **Dorothea's Mourning Garb**

Dorothea switches from her heavier to lighter mourning garb after she sees Will and Rosamond together, believing they are in love. The change in clothes is a sign to her that life will go on.

## **Alcoholic Poisoning**

Lydgate diagnoses Raffles with alcoholic poisoning.

## **Brandy**

Brandy is the type of alcohol that Mrs. Abel gives to Raffles.

## **Key to the Wine Cooler**

Mr. Bulstrode gives Mrs. Abel the key to the wine cooler so that she can give Raffles brandy even though Lydgate has ordered that the man be given no alcohol.

## **Tortoise-shell Lozenge Box**

This lozenge box is a gift from Ladislav to Miss Henrietta Noble. Miss Noble is carrying this box when she goes to Dorothea to ask her to see Ladislav once more.



# Settings

## Tipton Grange

Tipton Grange is the property where Mr. Brooke lives. It is at this home that Celia and Dorothea live after their parents die.

## Lowick

Lowick is where Casaubon lives and preaches. Dorothea inherits the property when Casaubon dies, but she chooses to give it up to marry Ladislav.

## Freshitt Hall

Freshitt Hall is the Chettam residence.

## Dorothea's Boudoir

The room which Celia encourages Dorothea to choose as her boudoir at Lowick is the same room where Casaubon's mother grew up. It is in this room that Dorothea spends many of her free hours.

## Europe

Ladislav plans to travel to Europe.

## Middlemarch

Middlemarch is the name of the small, fictitious England town where this novel is set.

## Stone Court

Stone Court is the name of Featherstone's home. Fred believes he will inherit this house, but it winds up going to Featherstone's illegitimate son. The son sells it to Bulstrode who allows Fred to live there and buy the place from him.





## **Freeman's End**

Freeman's End is the name of the tenant's house where Brooke goes to talk to the man whose son has killed a leveret. The man gets angry with Brooke for being such a bad landlord.

## **Yew-Tree Walk**

It is in the Yew-Tree Walk that Dorothea goes out to tell her husband that she will work on his book even after his death. When she reaches him, however, he is already dead.

## **Quallingham**

Quallingham is where Lydgate's relatives live. Rosamond hopes for an invitation to this town but never gets one.

## **The Billiard Room at the Green Dragon**

It is in the Billiard Room at the Green Dragon that Fred finds Lydgate losing at gambling. Fred encourages Lydgate to leave the game before he really embarrasses himself.

## **The Shrubs**

The Shrubs is the name of the house where the Bulstrodes live in Middlemarch.

## **Bilkley**

Bilkley is the town where Mr. Bambridge learns the truth about Bulstrode. He returns to Middlemarch to spread what he has heard.

## **Rome**

Dorothea and Casaubon go to Rome for their honeymoon.

## **London**

Rosamond wants Lydgate to take her to London to live after their monetary embarrassment in Middlemarch. London is also the town where Dorothea and Ladislav live after they are married.



# Themes and Motifs

## Provincial Life

The title that Eliot assigns her novel promises it to be a “study of provincial life.” This indicates that it will be a close look into the way that people in England lived, worked, and behaved. The provincial life that Eliot portrays in this novel is different from what even some of the characters expected. Lydgate, for instance, had dreamed of going into medical practice in some provincial town where he could really make a difference to the people. He imagined the people in these towns would be more open to differences in opinion and less motivated by politics. Lydgate finds out very quickly that small towns can be just as political as large cities, if not more so. People in these towns are suspicious of outsiders and protective of their own people. They gossip; and, the stories they share spread like wildfire. It is as a result of this gossip that Lydgate and Bulstrode, both of whom are considered outsiders in Middlemarch, are ruined and forced to move away from the town.

## Women’s Roles

The role of the woman is one of the supplemental themes in this novel. Dorothea and Celia, who are sisters but almost exact opposites, demonstrate the differences in the accepted way a woman should act and the deviation from the norm. Those who know Celia and Dorothea describe Celia as having more “common sense” of the two sisters. She is also the sister who acts in a way that most properly represents the way a woman of the time in Middlemarch is expected to act. She is feminine. She dresses fashionably and wants to wear jewelry even though her sister frowns on the habit. When Sir James Chettam attempts to court Dorothea, he offers her the gift of a tiny puppy, a pet who will be a lady’s lap dog. Instead of being polite and accepting Chettam’s offer because he is a man of wealth and good blood — the kind of man every provincial lady should want as a husband — Dorothea turns Chettam down cold. She suggests he offer the puppy to Celia, who likes that kind of animal.

Eventually, Celia and Chettam do marry. Celia makes for Chettam the kind of wife that he expects her to be. She is proud of her husband because he is titled. She is also agreeable and placid in her marriage relationship. If Chettam suggests to her that she act a certain way or do a certain thing, she complies without complaint or question. When Chettam tries to dissuade Dorothea from getting involved in Lydgate’s troubles, Celia tries to encourage her sister to follow Chettam’s advice as Celia truly believes that the man knows better than the woman how situations should be handled. There is only one circumstance in which Celia revolts against her husband. This comes when Chettam resolves that they will separate themselves from Dorothea because she has married Will Ladislaw. When Dorothea begins having children, Celia insists on being allowed to see her sister and having their children grow up together. Chettam relents.



Dorothea, on the other hand, is more strong willed than Celia and tends to rely on her own opinion rather than seeking out advice from a man. This characteristic in Dorothea is often described as “rashness” but is really just a matter of Dorothea thinking for herself. Before she is married to Casaubon, Dorothea employs herself in drawing up plans for cottages to replace the old, disheveled ones in which some people around her live. Celia often tells her this habit of designing is not fitting for a woman but Dorothea refuses to relent. In fact, she is excited for Chettam to get married to Celia because he can advise her on the drawings and help her get the cottages built.

Marriage is another aspect that Celia believes that Dorothea enters into rashly. Dorothea dreams of being able to help out her husband in some great work. For this reason she sets her sights on marrying Casaubon, whom she believes is writing a great novel. After the two are married, Dorothea realizes that Casaubon’s work is not as great as she had once thought that it was. She also realizes that Casaubon, although old, is not as mature as she and by the time their short marriage ended in his death, he had made up his mind that she was having an affair with his younger cousin. Even though Casaubon did not communicate with her to the extent that she had hoped, Dorothea remains faithful to him and tries to be as obedient as she can. One topic on which she struggles is Casaubon’s request for her to continue his work after his death. Though she does not want to be disobedient to her husband’s wishes, Dorothea also knows that she will not be happy devoting the rest of her life to a work that she knows has no value. For this time period, it would have been accepted for Dorothea to consent to her husband’s request, without thought of what she wanted to do with her life. Luckily for Dorothea, Casaubon dies before the time comes that she is supposed to give him an answer to his question. For this reason she doesn’t feel bound by a promise that she felt pressure to make in order to relieve herself from guilt.

## Marriage

Marriage is an important topic in this novel, particularly the description of the downfalls of this establishment. Both the marriages between Dorothea and Casaubon, and Rosamond and Lydgate are unhappy. There are common threads in the reasons why these two couples are unhappy with the matches they have made. First, Dorothea and Rosamond both create an idealized image of the man whom that are going to marry before they really know him all that well. Dorothea builds Casaubon up to be a genius when in reality his work is not as inspired as she had once thought. Rosamond believes that Lydgate will be a man who can support the lifestyle in which she is accustomed to living. In real life, however, Lydgate is unable to provide for Rosamond as she is used to. Instead of understanding their circumstances, Rosamond believes that Lydgate is being cruel to her by not allowing her to have the things that she wants.

Second, Dorothea and Rosamond do not take to time to get to know their marriage partners well before they get married. Both of these ladies choose to have short courtships. These brief periods of getting to know one another seems to lead to surprises about the other’s personality once the marriage is actually in force. Dorothea learns that Casaubon is not as affectionate or as intelligent as she had believed him to



be. Rosamond also finds her husband to be moody and difficult to deal with at times. Their short courtship also does not allow them to properly get a grasp on their financial situation as during this period, Lydgate is simply doing what he must to please Rosamond.

Dorothea and Rosamond also get pressure from their families not to marry the men whom they wish. Dorothea's family is concerned with her match because Casaubon is so old. Mr. Brooke tries to talk her out of the marriage, but he is not very forceful in his persuasion. Celia also tries to dissuade her sister from marrying Casaubon but has no better luck than her uncle. For Rosamond, it is her father who tries to talk her out of her plans to marry Lydgate. Rosamond has been in a habit of not taking her father's advice, so this instance is no different. If anything, Rosamond seems more set to marry Lydgate after her father tries to keep her from doing so.

Compare the marriages of Rosamond and Dorothea with that of Mary and Fred. Although Mary knows from the beginning that Fred is the man she will marry, she makes him wait until he has made himself the man that she knows that he can be before she accepts him. Had she married Fred at the beginning of the novel, on the promise that he would be a landowner when his uncle died, the news of the will would have been a difficult spot in their marriage. Mary is certain of herself enough to wait for Fred to choose a career and make himself successful in that career before she agrees to marry him. Information in the Finale of Eliot's book indicates that the union between Fred and Mary is one of the happiest in the entire novel. Although the two went through hard knocks on their way to becoming a couple, and both sets of parents did not necessarily approve of the union, the two still made it work by waiting until they were mature enough to know one another and successfully handle the strains of marriage.

## Gossip

Gossip can be loosely defined as the spreading of information about a person or people even though this information is not necessarily based on facts. Gossip, particularly gossip in a small town, can be deadly. One person who is badly affected by the gossip of Middlemarch is Lydgate. He came to a small town because he believed he would be able to practice in such a town without having the pressures of politics and jealousies. Lydgate believed Middlemarch would be a place where he would be able to rise to greatness without having to battle all of the opinions and presuppositions that people in large cities might have. Lydgate badly underestimates the power of the rumor mill in a small town. Before he was even in his practice long enough for people to know what he was like, he was already being rumored to cut up dead bodies just to see why they had died. The uninformed people of Middlemarch did not realize this was a trusted way of learning about the illness, but thought that Lydgate would actually allow people to die so that he could experiment on them.

One aspect of the rumor mill that does run in Lydgate's favor occurs when he becomes the physician for the Vincy family. Wrench, the man who had been the doctor for the family in the past does not recognize the symptoms of the onset of typhoid fever in Fred



Vincy. The day after Wrench's visit, the young man has become much worse and Rosamond calls for Lydgate because he happens to be passing by the house. The story of Lydgate's diagnosis of Fred and the Vincy's decision to use Lydgate as their permanent physician spreads like wildfire. Soon, other families try Lydgate because the Vincy's have switched to him as their doctor.



# Styles

## Point of View

This novel is told from the point of view of a third person, omniscient narrator. The narrator knows all of the thoughts and actions of each of the characters. This is shown by the way in which sections of the novel focus first on the relationship between Dorothea and Casaubon then on the relationship between Lydgate and Rosamond. These two relationships are really unrelated until the end of the novel when the writer ties them together by allowing Dorothea to share what she has learned through her unhappy marriage to Casaubon with Rosamond in hopes of helping her to repair her marriage.

Interspersed with her use of the third person point of view, Eliot also intersperses times in the novel when she addresses her readers directly. Eliot will sometimes question her reader about some aspect of a character's personality or expound upon the personality traits that she has given to a character. All in all, Eliot writes her story as if she is telling it to a listener, person to person, instead of writing it down.

## Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel is very formal as the time about which Eliot writes is a very formal period of time. Eliot's novel also has a very somber tone which is characterized by the use of the stiff language of the nineteenth century. Since the novel was written nearly 150 years ago, many words may be unfamiliar to the reader as they have fallen out of use and are now considered archaic. For example, Mary is described as being "hoyden" which indicates she is lively, a term often used in that century, but hardly ever now.

This long novel is very long and leisurely in its telling of the story. Eliot packs her work with details of characters' personality traits and inmost thoughts, giving her reader a full picture of who they really are. Much more of the novel is spent in exposition as Eliot explores her characters than is spent in discussion between the characters, a drastic difference between classic novels and modern stories where much of the information is learned about characters through their dialogue with one another. The leisurely and thorough pace of the novel is a symptom of the period of time in which it was created. At that point in time, people entertained themselves through reading. There were no such things as televisions and computers. A long novel, such as this one that delves into the details of life in Middlemarch, was not uncommon for that period of time.

## Structure

This long novel is split into eight different sections that are about the same length. As was common during this time period, the book was probably released in eight parts over



the course of several months. The whole of the novel, however, reads very smoothly with no obvious changes in dramatics or any obvious cliff hangers intended to pique interest in the next installment of the book as is often the case in modern sequels. In fact, if the reader were not given the book divisions of the novel, he probably could not tell for certain where these divisions would have fallen.



## Quotes

I am not, I trust, mistaken in the recognition of some deeper correspondence than that of date in the fact that a consciousness of need in my own life had arisen contemporaneously with the possibility of my becoming acquainted with you.

-- Edward Casaubon (Book 1, Chapter 5 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** These are among the words that Casaubon writes to Dorothea in his proposal of marriage to her. Based on the cold and formal manner of the letter, it is not surprising that Dorothea does not receive the affection she'd hoped for in her marriage.

Women were expected to have weak opinions; but the great safeguard of society and of domestic life was, that opinions were not acted on. Sane people did what their neighbours did, so that if any lunatics were at large, one might know and avoid them.

-- Narrator (Book 1, Chapter 1 paragraph 4)

**Importance:** This quote basically sums up the basis of life in Middlemarch. Not only are women considered subordinate to men, it is also not accepted behavior to act differently than the other people in the area. It is when people with different mindsets and opinions come into the town that life begins to get more complicated.

She was not in the least teaching Mr Casaubon to ask if he were good enough for her, but merely asking herself anxiously how she could be good enough for Mr. Casaubon.

-- Narrator (Book 1, Chapter 5 paragraph 51)

**Importance:** In this quote, the narrator remarks on Dorothea's naïve behavior as she worships Casaubon. Dorothea has a personality that seeks to please others without making her own needs apparent.

A woman dictates before marriage in order that she may have an appetite for submission afterwards. And certainly, the mistakes that we male and female mortals make when we have our own way might fairly raise some wonder that we are so fond of it.

-- Narrator (Book 1, Chapter 9 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** This quote addresses not only a woman's role in the marriage but also life in general. Again, women are supposed to be submissive in marriage; therefore, they are allowed to choose the furnishings for their home in order to make them more willing to be submissive. The quote also indicates that many times when humans get what they think they want, they are unhappy with it. This is a foreshadowing of the unhappiness that Dorothea will have in her marriage.

Mark my words: in a year from this time that girl will hate him. She looks up to him as an oracle now, and by-and-by she will be at the other extreme.

-- Mrs. Cadwallader (Book 1, Chapter 10 paragraph 36)





**Importance:** In a discussion with Lady Chettam, Mrs. Cadwallader says these words about the coming marriage of Dorothea and Casaubon. Although Dorothea never “hates” Casaubon as Mrs. Cadwallader insists she will, she does not have a deep love for him. Mrs. Cadwallader is trying to appease Lady Chettam as Sir James Chettam, her son, was hoping to marry Dorothea.

Not that, like her, he had been weaving any future in which their lots were united; but a man naturally remembers a charming girl with pleasure, and is willing to dine where he may see her again.

-- Narrator (Book 2, Chapter 13 paragraph 22)

**Importance:** Rosamond has envisioned herself and Lydgate having a life together. However, Lydgate just enjoys being in the company of Rosamond because she is an attractive girl. He has no intention of making a life with her.

For surely all must admit that a man may be puffed and belauded, envied, ridiculed, counted upon as a tool and fallen in love with, or at least selected as a future husband, and yet remain virtually unknown – known merely as a cluster of signs for his neighbours’ false suppositions.

-- Narrator (Book 2, Chapter 15 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** In this quote, the narrator points out that even though a person may be an object of gossip and even fantasy, people may not really ever know the true nature of a person.

He went to study in Paris with the determination that when he came home again he would settle in some provincial town as a general practitioner, and resist the irrational severance between medical and surgical knowledge in the interest of his own scientific pursuits, as well as of the general advance: he would keep away from the range of London intrigues, jealousies, and social truckling, and win celebrity, however slowly, as Jenner had done, by the independent value of his work.

-- Narrator (Book 2, Chapter 16 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** Lydgate is a very ambitious young man. This quote outlines his intentions in life.

It was a principle with Mr. Bulstrode to gain as much power as possible, that he might use it for the glory of God.

-- Narrator (Book 2, Chapter 16 paragraph 2)

**Importance:** This quote sums up the intentions of Mr. Bulstrode. He tries to use the assets that he has to glorify God.

This was one of the difficulties of moving in good Middlemarch society: it was dangerous to insist on knowledge as a qualification for any salaried office.

-- Narrator (Book 2, Chapter 16 paragraph 18)



**Importance:** Unfortunately, in Middlemarch, as in many small towns, politicians as well as other office holders are often chosen on the merits of whom they know, not what they know.

He could not help hearing within him the distinct declaration that Bulstrode was prime minister, and that the Tyke affair was a question of office or no office; and he could not help an equally pronounced dislike to giving up the prospect of office.

-- Narrator (Book 2, Chapter 18 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** Lydgate decides to practice in Middlemarch because he hopes to avoid the political pressure of the big towns. However, he soon realizes that he may face the same pressures in Middlemarch when Bulstrode pressures him to vote for Tyke as the chaplain for the new hospital.

On other subjects indeed Mr. Casaubon showed a tenacity of occupation and an eagerness which are usually regarded as the effect of enthusiasm, and Dorothea was anxious to follow this spontaneous direction of his thoughts, instead of being made to feel that she dragged him away from it.

-- Narrator (Book 2, Chapter 16 paragraph 16)

**Importance:** This quote describes Dorothea's intentions concerning her relationship with Casaubon. She hopes to be able to help in his work, not be a hindrance to it.

But the idea of this dried-up pedant, this elaborator of small explanations about as important as the surplus stock of false antiquities kept in a vendor's back chamber, having first got this adorable young creature to marry him, and then passing his honeymoon away from her, groping after his mouldy futilities (Will was given to hyperbole) – this sudden picture stirred him with a sort of comic disgust: he was divided between the impulse to laugh aloud and the equally unseasonable impulse to burst into scornful invective.

-- Narrator (Book 2, Chapter 21 paragraph 7)

**Importance:** This quote not only sums up how most of the Middlemarch population feels about the marriage between Dorothea and Casaubon, but also gives a glimpse into Will Ladislaw's personality. He is attracted to Dorothea although he did not seem to like her at their first meeting. Ladislaw is also highly critical of his cousin and his cousin's work, believing that it is futile.

For some reason or other, Fred had none of his usual elasticity under this stroke of ill-fortune: he was simply aware that he had only fifty pounds, that there was no chance of his getting any more at present, and that the bill for a hundred and sixty would be presented in five days.

-- Narrator (Book 3, Chapter 24 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** Fred realizes that he must tell the Garths, the family of the girl he hopes to marry, that he has caused them to be in debt for 160 pounds. Fred cannot find any



reason to “bounce back” from his depression over the debt. The horse he’d bought with the intention of selling it for the amount of money needed to cover the debt goes lame.

However, Lydgate was installed as medical attendant on the Vincys, and the event was a subject of general conversation in Middlemarch. Some said, that the Vincys had behaved scandalously, that Mr Vincy had threatened Wrench, and that Mrs Vincy had accused him of poisoning her son.

-- Narrator (Book 3, Chapter 26 paragraph 20)

**Importance:** The Vincy family replaces Wrench as their personal doctor with Lydgate because Wrench did not recognize that Fred had typhoid fever. Rumors circulate in Middlemarch about the circumstances under which the change took place. Some of these rumors are beneficial to Lydgate’s reputation, while others are not.

Rosamond had a Providence of her own who had kindly made her more charming than other girls, and who seemed to have arranged Fred’s illness and Mr. Wrench’s mistake in order to bring her and Lydgate within effective proximity.

-- Narrator (Book 3, Chapter 27 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** The narrator credits Rosamond’s close proximity to Lydgate to Providence as he gets to experience a good deal of her charming behavior while he is tending to her brother.

Marriage, which was to bring guidance into worthy and imperative occupation, had not yet freed her from the gentlewoman’s oppressive liberty: it had not even filled her leisure with the ruminant joy of unchecked tenderness.

-- Narrator (Book 3, Chapter 28 paragraph 4)

**Importance:** This quote briefly sums up Dorothea’s unhappiness in her marriage. She still has not found any work that she finds worthy of doing. She does not even have the benefit of her husband’s attentiveness or tenderness.

For my part I am very sorry for him. It is an uneasy lot at best, to be what we call highly taught and yet not to enjoy: to be present at this great spectacle of life and never to be liberated from a small hungry shivering self – never to be fully possessed by the glory we behold, never to have our consciousness rapturously transformed into the vividness of a thought, the ardour of a passion, the energy of an action, but always to be scholarly and uninspired, ambitious and timid, scrupulous and dim-sighted.

-- Narrator (Book 3, Chapter 29 paragraph 3)

**Importance:** In this description of Casaubon, Eliot tells not only why the man is so unhappy, but also gives her opinion of the character that she has created. She reasons that while he is intelligent and has a high degree of learning, he is not fully appreciative of himself and the positive qualities that he has.

But the end of Mr. Brooke’s pen was a thinking organ, evolving sentences, especially of a benevolent kind, before the rest of his mind could well overtake them.



-- Narrator (Book 3, Chapter 30 paragraph 36)

**Importance:** In this quote, Eliot pokes fun at Mr. Brooke as he attempts to write a letter to Ladislaw warning him to not go to Lowick as Casaubon is sick. She indicates that Brooke writes out of the goodness of his heart, without thinking of the consequences, when he invites Ladislaw to Tipton Grange.

In half an hour he left the house an engaged man, whose soul was not his own, but the woman's to whom he had bound himself.

-- Narrator (Book 3, Chapter 31 paragraph 64)

**Importance:** This quote describes Lydgate's impromptu engagement to Rosamond. The quote indicates that Lydgate is making a mistake in choosing to marry Rosamond.

He loved money, but he also loved to spend it in gratifying his peculiar tastes, and perhaps he loved it best of all as a means of making others feel his power more or less uncomfortably.

-- Narrator (Book 4, Chapter 34 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** This quote sums up Peter Featherstone's attitude about money and the power that this money allows him to have over other people.

It was from Sir James Chettam, offering to Mr. Garth the management of the family estates at Freshitt and elsewhere, and adding that Sir James had been requested by Mr Brooke of Tipton to ascertain whether Mr. Garth would be disposed at the same time to resume the agency of the Tipton property.

-- Narrator (Book 4, Chapter 40 paragraph 26)

**Importance:** Mr. Garth had been relieved of his duties as caretaker of Tipton Grange. This invitation, offered by Chettam, vindicates Garth.

I call it improper pride to let fools' notions hinder you from doing a good action.

-- Caleb Garth (Book 4, Chapter 40 paragraph 83)

**Importance:** These are Caleb Garth's words to his wife when she tries to discourage him from hiring Fred Vincy as a helper because she is afraid the Vincys will be offended and that others will gossip about his decision.

And the ignorance of people about here is stupendous. I don't lay claim to anything else than having used some opportunities which have not come within everybody's reach; but there is no stifling the offence of being young, and a newcomer, and happening to know something more than the old inhabitants.

-- Lydgate (Book 5, Chapter 44 paragraph 12)

**Importance:** In this quote, Lydgate admits his frustrations with the closed-minded people of Middlemarch to Dorothea.



Still, there was a deep difference between that devotion to the living, and that indefinite promise of devotion to the dead.

-- Narrator (Book 5, Chapter 48 paragraph 34)

**Importance:** This quote sums up the quandary that Dorothea faces as she tries to decide how she should answer Casaubon's request for her to continue his work after he dies.

I say that he has most unfairly compromised Dorothea. I say that there never was a meaner, more ungentlemanly action than this – a codicil of this sort to a will which he made at the time of his marriage with the knowledge and reliance of her family – a positive insult to Dorothea!

-- Sir James Chettam (Book 5, Chapter 49 paragraph 12)

**Importance:** Chettam is angry when he learns of the codicil that Casaubon has made to his will. It prevents Dorothea from inheriting his possessions and money if she marries Will Ladislaw.

I used to despise women a little for not shaping their lives more, and doing better things. I was very fond of doing as I liked, but I have almost given it up,' she ended, smiling playfully.

-- Dorothea (Book 6, Chapter 54 paragraph 64)

**Importance:** During a conversation with Will, Dorothea admits to a small extent about how much she had to give up during her marriage with Casaubon.

I shall supply you with money now, and I will furnish you with a reasonable sum from time to time, on your application to me by letter; but if you choose to present yourself here again, if you return to Middlemarch, if you use your tongue in a manner injurious to me, you will have to live on such fruits as your malice can bring you, without help from me.

-- Bulstrode (Book 6, Chapter 68 paragraph 7)

**Importance:** Bulstrode finally gets fed up with Raffles' attempts to blackmail him and orders the man to leave him alone.

Strange, piteous conflict in the soul of this unhappy man, who had longed for years to be better than he was – who had taken his selfish passions into discipline and clad them in severe robes, so that he had walked with them as a devout quire, till now that a terror had risen among them, and they could chant no longer, but threw out their common cries for safety.

-- Narrator (Book 6, Chapter 70 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** Although Bulstrode has tried to become a better person and make amends for his past actions, his past has caught up with him as a result of Raffles.



And he was conscious that Bulstrode had been a benefactor to him. But he was uneasy about this case. He had not expected it to terminate as it had done. Yet he hardly knew how to put a question on the subject to Bulstrode without appearing to insult him; and if he examined the housekeeper – why, the man was dead. There seemed to be no use in implying that somebody's ignorance or imprudence had killed him.

-- Narrator (Book 6, Chapter 70 paragraph 52)

**Importance:** Lydgate considers Raffles' death in this quote. Although it seems unusual to him, he can find no specific cause for suspicion. At this point, Lydgate does not realize that Bulstrode has given him the loan he requested with the hopes that it would ensure that Lydgate would not question Raffles' death.

You don't believe that Mr. Lydgate is guilty of anything base? I will not believe it. Let us find out the truth and clear him!

-- Dorothea (Book 7, Chapter 71 paragraph 77)

**Importance:** When Dorothea hears the story going around about Lydgate from Mr. Brooke and Farebrother, she is immediately struck by a feeling that she must do something to help Lydgate.

Dorothea refrained from saying what was in her mind – how well she knew that there might be invisible barriers to speech between husband and wife.

-- Narrator (Book 8, Chapter 76 paragraph 36)

**Importance:** As Dorothea listens to Lydgate talk about how he has been unable to talk with Rosamond about his troubles, she sympathizes because she understands how he feels and does not question why he didn't tell Rosamond what was happening to him.

I had no hope before – not much – of anything better to come. But I had one certainty – that she believed in me. Whatever people had said or done about me, she believed in me. – That's gone! She'll never again think me anything but a paltry pretence – too nice to take heaven except upon flattering conditions, and yet selling myself for any devil's change by the sly.

-- Will Ladislaw (Book 8, Chapter 78 paragraph 11)

**Importance:** These are Will's angry words to Rosamond after Dorothea has seen the two of them together in a compromising position. Will believes that his reputation has been ruined forever in Dorothea's eyes.