

Of Human Bondage Study Guide

Of Human Bondage by W. Somerset Maugham

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Plot Summary

Of Human Bondage is the story of a young man's struggle to find the meaning of life in a world that is cruel. Philip Carey has a club foot, making him the subject of cruelty at school and ridicule in the adult world. Philip allows this treatment to warp his personality, making him introspective and solitary. Due to this, Philip suffers greatly in silence, aching only to find someone to love him without condition. It is a desire that is universal, making this novel one that readers of all ages will identify with.

Philip Carey is only five when his mother dies. Philip is taken to live with an aunt and uncle who are not used to children and do not know how to deal with him. Philip's uncle is self centered and strict, while Philip's aunt is unaccustomed to giving or receiving unconditional love. This situation makes Philip's childhood difficult, but not without affection. From his aunt, Philip develops a love of literature that he will carry with him the rest of his life.

At nine Philip is sent to boarding school. Philip finds school a harsh environment where his club foot is suddenly fodder for cruelty. Philip is teased and tortured over his deformity, causing him to shun the boys with whom he goes to school. When Philip finally makes a friend, this boy crushes his heart when he turns from him and then tells everyone that he was only kind to Philip because of his deformity. Philip cannot get out of school fast enough and eventually talks his guardians into allowing him to go abroad.

Philip goes to Germany where he finishes his studies in the home of a German professor and her husband. There Philip learns that God and religion are not absolutes and begins to embrace a new philosophy on the morality of life. When Philip returns home, he does not tell his uncle about his new outlook on life, but does announce he does not intend to enter Oxford or to become a clergyman like his uncle as had been expected. Instead it is arranged that Philip will become an apprentice with an accountant.

Philip works at this job for a year, but finds the work boring. Philip decides he would rather quit and move to France where he can learn to be an artist. Philip's uncle is against this decision and refuses to finance the move. Philip decides to go anyway. In Paris, Philip makes a great many friends. Among them is a young woman named Fanny Price who believes herself to be a great artist. Fanny is not a great artist, but Philip does not have the heart to tell her. When Fanny kills herself after becoming destitute and seeing no other future for herself, Philip begins to question his own devotion to his art. Philip feels he is a good artist, but he will never be able to make a living at it.

When Philip's aunt dies, he returns to England for her funeral. While there, Philip decides he will not return to Paris. Instead Philip decides he will go to London and study at the hospital where his father once worked. Philip wants to be a doctor. Philip enjoys his studies but is distracted from them when he falls in love with an unpleasant waitress. Philip knows this girl is below him and finds her unattractive, but he feels a passionate love for her that he cannot shake.



This girl, Mildred, does not return Philip's affections, but has no problem allowing him to take her out and buy her expensive things. Mildred even allows Philip the occasional kiss, making him feel as though there might be hope that one day she will fall in love with him. However, this dream is shattered when Mildred tells him she is to marry another man. Philip is heartbroken, but within a few months he has a new girlfriend. This girl is kind to him and makes him happy, even though Philip does not feel the same passion for her he felt for Mildred.

Mildred returns and Philip breaks the heart of the kind woman when he takes her back. Mildred is pregnant, so Philip pays for her keep until the baby comes. After the baby's arrival, Mildred meets a friend of Philip's and falls madly in love, leaving him once more. Philip throws himself into his work, only to come across Mildred again sometime later. Mildred is selling herself on the street, so Philip invites her to live with him. Philip insists that they remain just friends this time. Mildred is confused by this and determined to make Philip love her. When Philip refuses, Mildred leaves once more.

Philip invests his money in the stock market, hoping to make back some of the money he has spent on Mildred. However, the stock crashes and Philip ends up losing all his money. Philip finds himself living on the streets. A friend, Athelny, takes Philip in and helps him get a job in a shop. Philip works at this job until his uncle dies, leaving him enough money so he can afford to return to medical school. After becoming certified, Philip finds himself infatuated with Athelny's daughter. Philip decides rather than travel around the world, he would rather have a wife, a family, and love. Philip proposes to Athelny's daughter and is thrilled when she agrees.



Chapters 1-4

Chapters 1-4 Summary

Of Human Bondage is the story of a young man's struggle to find the meaning of in a world that is cruel. Philip Carey has a club foot, making him the subject of cruelty at school and ridicule in the adult world. Philip allows this treatment to warp his personality, making him introspective and solitary. Due to this, Philip suffers greatly in silence, aching only to find someone to love him without condition. It is a desire that is universal, making this novel one that readers of all ages will identify with.

Philip is awoken in the middle of the night to go see his mother. Philip's mother has just given birth to a stillborn child and the effort was too much for her. Philip's mother is dying. Philip is too young to understand what is going on, but his mother takes comfort in his nearness. Philip is soon taken back to bed and by the time he wakes the next morning his mother has died. An uncle Philip does not know arrives to take care of the funeral arrangements. The uncle is Philip's father's brother, a clergyman who never approved of his brother's profession as a doctor nor his choice of wives. Now both Philip's parents are dead and his uncle is the only family he has left.

After the funeral Philip's uncle instructs him to pick one of his mother's belongings to take away with him since all the others will be sold. Philip picks a clock he knew his mother liked. Philip then goes upstairs and lays in his mother's bed for a short time, feeling as though he is close to her there. The next day Philip is forced to say goodbye to his nurse as he and his uncle set out for Blackstable where his uncle lives. The trip is long and uncomfortable, and once they arrive Uncle William forces Philip to walk a long distance, forgetting about his club foot. When they arrive at the vicarage, Aunt Louisa is waiting for them. Uncle William insists on having a boiled egg, but does not have anything prepared for Philip because of the expense. Philip sits in a chair that is barely tall enough for him to see over the edge of the table and watches as his uncle eats.

Chapters 1-4 Analysis

The main character, Philip Carey, is introduced in this chapter. Philip is a small child who finds his whole world turned upside down when his mother dies. Philip is an orphan as his father dies a short time before the beginning of the book. Now Philip is forced to go live with his uncle, an unsympathetic man who never approved of his brother and his choice of wife and has little concern for their child. Philip has to leave his home, his nurse, and everything he has known in his short life in order to go live with this unemotional man.

Philip arrives at the vicarage where his aunt and uncle live. Aunt Louisa appears to be a kind woman, but clearly knows nothing about children. Aunt Louisa fusses over her husband, having an egg prepared for him, but it does not occur to her to have



something prepared for the child. Philip is forced to sit and watch his uncle eat. This scene shows the reader what kind of people Philip is living with. These people are not outwardly mean, but do not seem to be overly kind either.



Chapters 5-7

Chapters 5-7 Summary

Uncle William is much older than his brother. When Philip's father becomes a doctor and begins to make money, he spends it generously, even sending money to benefit his brother's church. Uncle William looks at this spending as irresponsible and seems to know that someday it will come back to hurt his brother. This fuels Uncle William's poor opinion of his brother and his wife. When, shortly after her death, pictures of Philip's mother arrive, Uncle William looks at them as products of vanity and put all but one away. That one Uncle William allows Philip to keep.

Philip settles down to the routine of the vicarage. Aunt Louisa takes Philip shopping with her. Being the wife of the vicar, Aunt Louisa can only shop in stores where the owners attend their church. This causes some confusion with the butcher, since both local butchers attend the church. Then Aunt Louisa goes to the bank and presents a message to the manager, who is also the churchwarden. The vicar and the churchwarden, Josiah Graves, have had a falling out, so Aunt Louisa is their only means of communication. After speaking with Mr. Graves, Aunt Louisa will spend some time with his sister before continuing on to the grocer.

During the week dinner is always at the same time and consists of the same elements. On Sunday they always have chicken in celebration of the Sabbath. When Philip first comes to live at the vicarage, there is some trouble deciding what day he should have his bath. The vicar, Aunt Louisa, and the maid have a set day to bathe, but adding Philip to the routine presents some conflicts. However, a compromise is eventually reached and Philip has his bath on Saturday. On Sundays the vicar holds services twice. Philip and Aunt Louisa are expected to attend the morning services. Philip is expected to also attend the evening service, though Aunt Louisa remains home in order to allow the maid to attend. The vicar and his wife are a people of routine and this routine is seldom disturbed.

Chapters 5-7 Analysis

Uncle William has a low opinion of Philip's parents, leaving the reader to assume he has a low opinion of Philip as well. This opinion is further illustrated when pictures Philip's mother took of herself in order to aid Philip's memory of her surface. Uncle William is unimpressed with these pictures and finds them a sign of vanity. However, he does allow Philip to keep one of the pictures before he puts the rest away.

There is a strict routine at the vicarage. At first Philip sticks out like a sore thumb in this routine as no one knows how to incorporate him into it. However, with a little time, Philip comes to find his place in the home. Philip attends to errands with Aunt Louisa, learning of a feud his uncle is having with an official within the church. This feud further explores



Uncle William's unpleasant personality and unwillingness to bend his opinions for anyone or anything. Philip is also expected to attend church services with his uncle every Sunday. Philip finds these services boring, but does not complain, showing the reader that he is a well behaved young man who does not do much to make himself stand out or cause embarrassment to his guardians.



Chapters 8-12

Chapters 8-12 Summary

Philip quickly becomes close to the maid, Mary Ann. Aunt Louisa is upset by this because she feels he should be close to her. Aunt Louisa, however, has never had children of her own despite a desire to do so and does not know how to behave around children. Aunt Louisa tries to win Philip's affections, but finds this pursuit difficult. One day Philip gets into trouble when his playing disturbs his uncle's Sunday afternoon nap. Aunt Louisa comes to comfort Philip, but he sends her away with unkind words, causing her a great deal of hurt. The following Sunday Philip asks his uncle what he should do if he cannot play. Uncle William gives Philip a book and instructs him to sit in the dining room and learn the day's prayers. Philip does as instructed, but soon realizes he will not be able to memorize the complicated sermon. Aunt Louisa comes into the room and finds Philip crying. Aunt Louisa takes away the sermon and exchanges it with a picture book from her husband's vast collection of books. Philip is fascinated with this book and soon develops a voracious appetite for more. Soon Philip is reading everything he can get his hands on, reading books his uncle does not even know are among his collection.

Aunt Louisa and Uncle William decide that Philip should go to boarding school. The school they choose, King's School, is one that has educated a great many clergy, a profession Uncle William hopes Philip will choose. Philip is very nervous the day he is taken to the school. The headmaster proves to be a man with a large personality, further causing Philip fear. However, the headmaster is kind to Philip, even when he learns of Philip's club foot. The other students, however, are not as understanding. When it is time to play in the yard, Philip becomes the center of attention when he attempts to run in order to keep up with the others. Soon everyone is laughing at him. The next day when it is time for the physical activities period, Philip is excused from play. However, this does not keep him from embarrassment. The teacher does not know about Philip's foot. When the teacher asks, another student butts in and announces it in front of everyone.

That night, a group of boys come into Philip's room and ask to see his foot. Philip attempts to refuse, but one of the bigger boys twists his arm and forces him. Philip is humiliated as the boys stare at his foot and make unkind comments. After a while, the fascination with Philip's foot begins to wane, but Philip still feels like an outcast. Soon a game sweeps through the school. The game, called Nibs, is one that Philip cannot only play, but has a good deal of skill at. One day Philip finds himself in a position of playing against a boy named Singer who has been bullying Philip almost since the beginning of the term. Philip wins the game and takes all of Singer's nibs. The boys get caught playing the game, which has been forbidden by the headmaster, and are taken to his office for punishment. Singer is spanked in front of Philip for his disobedience, but Philip is spared because of his club foot. This causes Singer to hate Philip even more, exposing him to even more torture from the older boy.



Chapters 8-12 Analysis

Philip discovers books when he learns he cannot play while his uncle is sleeping. The discovery of books helps Philip discover a world he had not known existed and exposes him to ideas and opinions that he would not have been exposed to otherwise. Not only this, but by introducing him to books, Aunt Louisa, who has been greatly distressed at not winning her nephew's affections, finally finds something kind she can do for the young man that will help them forge some sort of relationship. Aunt Louisa, who knows little of children and does not know how to behave around Philip, is desperate to win his affections. Now Aunt Louisa feels some hope in this pursuit.

Philip is sent away to boarding school with the hope that he will grow up with the desire to enter the clergy. Philip finds school difficult from the very beginning. Upon learning about his disability, the other children tease Philip. The boys force Philip to show his foot to them and he is so humiliated by this experience that Philip finds himself trying to hide his deformity for many years to come. Philip is also the object of torture by a bully. Philip tries to prove himself tough and plays a game against this bully, winning. However, the two boys are caught playing their game, which has been forbidden. Philip does not suffer any punishment, but the bully is spanked in front of him. The humiliation of this older boy causes him to hate Philip even more, and his subsequent torture of Philip is even more intense.



Chapters 13-19

Chapters 13-19 Summary

Two years pass. Philip is a good student and has won many awards. Soon he will advance to the higher grades and will be head boy in his class. However, Philip has also grown very self-conscious. Philip is very conscious of his club foot at all times and this makes it difficult for him to make friends. During this time Philip becomes deeply immersed in religion, praying every day and reading his Bible constantly. During a break from school, Philip discusses a passage in the Bible with his uncle that suggests if one prays hard enough God will move mountains for him. For a week Philip prays every night before he goes to bed that his club foot will be healed. When this does not happen, Philip asks his uncle why. Uncle William says Philip's faith is not strong enough.

At the beginning of Philip's thirteenth year, the school takes on a new headmaster. This man, Tom Perkins, is an ex-student who is not of the background that the school normally employs. Perkins is the son of a shop owner and is not married. The teachers of the school are deeply offended by this lack of class. However, Perkins proves to be an enthusiastic headmaster who takes a special interest in Philip when he discovers that one of the teachers has taken a dislike to Philip and often humiliates him in class. Philip begins to take classes in the headmaster's library where they often have long conversations about many things, especially Philip's future. Perkins suggests that Philip should thank God for his disability for it has helped form his personality.

After receiving his confirmation, Philip is moved into another group with students studying at the same level. Philip is not welcome in the tight group. However, one of the more popular boys takes a liking to Philip. Soon the two boys are close friends, spending all their time together. This is the first true friendship Philip has experienced. Philip does not know how to behave in this relationship and occasionally becomes too demanding, causing his friend some distress. When Philip is stricken with scarlet fever, he is forced to leave the school for half a term. Upon his return Philip discovers that his friend has forgotten him and become close to another boy. Philip is heartbroken and this experience causes him further humiliation, especially when he hears that his friend has confessed to being kind to him because of his club foot.

Chapters 13-19 Analysis

Philip has become a very good student, but still has trouble making friends. During this time Philip becomes deeply involved in religion. Philip prays often and reads his Bible daily. Philip also comes to believe that if he prays hard enough, God will take away his club foot. Philip prays every day for several weeks, placing all his faith into this one desire. When it does not come true, Philip comes to believe, because of something his uncle tells him, that his faith is not strong enough and that is why his foot has not been



healed. This episode begins to illustrate Philip's lifelong struggle with religion and touches on the theme of religion.

When he returns to school, Philip discovers that the school has a new headmaster. This headmaster is young and not of the prestigious background the school normally employs. This headmaster has unique ideas when it comes to teaching and this causes a great deal of tension between him and the other teachers. When the headmaster learns that one of the teachers has taken a dislike to Philip and humiliates him often in class, he takes a special interest in Philip. The headmaster often has long discussions with Philip about his future and his disability. The headmaster tries to teach Philip to be grateful for his uniqueness, assuring him that God knew what he was doing when he made Philip the way he did. This however does not help Philip with his self image.

Philip finally makes a good friend and finds himself a part of a relationship that fills a great deal of his time. Philip does not know how to act in this relationship since he has never had a close friend before, so he makes some demands on the relationship that cause him to suffer the occasional disappointment. When Philip falls ill and is forced to leave school for a time, he returns to find that his friend has dropped him and made a new friend. Philip is heartbroken and tries to force his way back into this man's life. However, Philip soon learns his friend has told people that he was only kind to Philip because of his club foot. This breaks Philip's heart and further deepens the humiliation he feels about his club foot.



Chapters 20-25

Chapters 20-25 Summary

Philip no longer enjoys school and stops working at his studies. Perkins and Philip's aunt and uncle begin putting pressure on him to start doing better. Philip tells them he no longer wants to go to Oxford, nor does he want to be ordained. This causes an argument between Philip and his uncle. One of Philip's school mates quit school some time ago and gone abroad to study and Philip has begun to think that this is what he would like to do. Uncle William discusses this with Philip and tells him he does not want him to go, but he will defer to the opinion of Perkins. Perkins gets a letter from William Carey asking his opinion. Perkins talks Philip into remaining in school for one more term. Uncle William promises that if Philip will stay in school until Easter, he will allow him to leave.

Philip begins to put effort into his studies again and is soon back at the top of the class. When Philip takes his exams, Perkins tells him that he is sure to get scholarships to Oxford. Philip insists that he still wants to go abroad. Perkins does not argue with him, although Philip might have changed his mind if he had. Philip moves to Germany and takes up residence in the home of a college professor whom his aunt and uncle have hired to help Philip finish his studies. Professor Erlin teaches him Latin and German, while a Frenchman, Monsieur Ducroz is hired to teach him French. Monsieur Ducroz is a very poor man who is quiet and rarely speaks to Philip of anything but their lessons. Philip also employs a student named Wharton to teach him math. Philip and Wharton, who is also English, spend a great deal of their time talking rather than working. Wharton is very poor and Philip often finds himself giving him money for lessons not given. Philip does not mind because he enjoys the time they spend together.

The home where Philip lives is a boarding house of sorts. There are other students living there as well as the daughters of the professor and a young lady boarder. This young lady is living at the house because her father sent her away when she fell in love with a young man deemed inappropriate for her social status. This young woman, Fraulein Hedwig, is very beautiful and Philip soon finds himself drawn to her.

Chapters 20-25 Analysis

Due to the ending of his friendship, Philip loses interest in his school work. Philip's uncle and the headmaster at his school are concerned with the drop in his grades and begin to push him to do better. Philip fights them on this, deciding he no longer wants to continue on to Oxford, nor does he want to become a member of the clergy. Uncle William is deeply concerned by this because he does not know what other professions might be available to Philip. However, Philip will not be persuaded. In fact, Philip decides he wants to quit school all together and live abroad. Philip makes a deal with



Perkins and his uncle. Philip holds up his end of the deal and is allowed to move to Germany weeks before his graduation.

Philip employs several people to help him finish his studies. One is a poor Frenchman who teaches him French. Another is a poor Englishman who teaches him math. Philip likes his math tutor and often finds they spend more time talking than they do working on math. Philip also finds himself interested in a girl. This girl is living in the same home as Philip because she has fallen in love with the wrong boy. Philip finds her beautiful and charming—his first crush. The reader sees her affection for him and wonders if perhaps Philip might have finally found someone who can see past his deformity and see the real Philip.



Chapters 26-28

Chapters 26-28 Summary

Three months into his time in Germany, Philip's hostess informs him that an Englishman of some means is going to be staying with them for a short time and encourages him to get to know the man. Philip resents this encouragement. Philip has had little luck making friends and he is still reeling from the departure of Fraulein Hedwig whose father changed his mind about her engagement and has called her home. The Englishman, Hayward, is a complainer whom Philip sets out to dislike. Despite Philip's reluctance to become friendly with Hayward, they get along well and Philip finds him entertaining. Soon Philip and Hayward on going on daily walks together and begin attending the theatre together. Philip is excited to have someone to share his views on art and literature with.

Another new tenant has come to stay at the house as well. This man, Weeks, is American and has very strong views on just about everything. Philip often has long discussions with him on various topics. When they discuss religion, Philip discovers that Weeks has views Philip has never considered. Weeks suggests that it is not necessary to believe in religion or God in order to believe in morality. This is a theory Philip quickly adopts, thus freeing him of the guilt his childhood religion has left him burdened with.

Chapters 26-28 Analysis

Two new characters are introduced in these chapters. The first is Hayward, an Englishman. Philip sets out to dislike this man because he has had such a hard time with friendships. Philip first trusted the boy at school and found out later he was only nice to him because of his disability. In Germany, Philip develops a crush on a young lady staying in the same house as he, but she goes back home in order to marry her fiancé. Philip is reluctant to make another friend who will soon be leaving. Hayward proves to be an entertaining character who has many of the same likes and dislikes as Philip, giving Philip someone to go to the theater with and to discuss literature.

Weeks is a young man from America who has a great many ideas about literature, art, and religion. Weeks talks about religion often, comparing it to philosophy, and introducing Philip to ideas he never heard in his uncle's home or during his years at King's School. Philip has struggled with his religious beliefs since praying that his foot would be healed. Philip also lives with the constant guilt of most religious people, concerned that the littlest infraction will keep him out of heaven when he dies. Weeks' idea that one believe in a moral life without believing in God or religion gives Philip a way to let go of his guilt without living an immoral life. Philip embraces these ideas as passionately as he once embraced religion.



Chapters 29-34

Chapters 29-34 Summary

Hayward's influence introduces Philip to things he has never thought of before. Romance becomes a heavy weight on Philip's shoulders. It does not help that a sordid affair has begun right under Philip's nose. One of the female borders in the professor's house has begun an affair with a Chinaman who also lives in the house. Philip discovers this by accident one afternoon while taking a walk. Philip runs into the couple, also walking, and senses he has interrupted something intimate. Later, the affair becomes evident to the other residents of the house. The older women living there are outraged by this improper behavior and become further upset when the young lady refuses to stop the romance. The professor threatens to write to the girl's uncle to have her sent away. Still the girl refuses to end the relationship. Finally the professor's hand is forced. The uncle is contacted and the girl is to leave the house. However, the night before the girl is to leave, she and the Chinaman disappear.

At Christmas, Hayward leaves Germany. Philip is glad to see him go because Hayward's inability to make decisions exhausts him. Philip settles down to his studies and makes arrangements to return to Blackstable when they are complete. Philip's aunt writes to him to request that he make arrangements to travel with a family friend who is coming from Germany for a visit. Philip is shy and lies to his aunt about his ability to leave at the specified time so he will not have to travel with the woman. When Philip arrives at the vicarage, he is surprised to find the visitor is not the old maid he imagined and regrets his actions.

The visitor, Emily Wilkinson, is a nanny of middle age who has lived in France for an extended time before moving to Germany. Emily speaks with a French accent that Philip finds fascinating. Philip and Emily spend a great deal of time together during their mutual vacation at the vicarage. Philip loves to listen to Emily talk about Paris, especially when she relates a story to him about a love affair she had with an artist. Philip cannot stop thinking about this story and somehow it makes Emily more romantic in his eyes. Soon Philip begins to think of Emily with a romantic eye, finding her sensual in the moonlight during their evening walks. Philip wants to develop a relationship with Emily, but is too shy to proceed. It takes Philip some time to get up the courage to kiss Emily, but once he does he becomes bolder, imagining more intimacy. One Sunday Emily claims a headache that keeps her home from church. Philip volunteers to stay home with her. While the house is empty, Philip and Emily become intimate. Afterward Philip is disgusted by the experience, suddenly seeing Emily as the middle aged woman she is.



Chapters 29-34 Analysis

Philip enters a sensuous world he was not aware of before. Suddenly Philip desires the experience of intimacy with a woman. His desire deepens as he witnesses a tragic love affair between two fellow boarders at the home where he is staying. Philip has never sought out a relationship before and does not know how to begin, but finds himself desiring to experience one. Philip returns home to Blackstable after his studies are complete. When he arrives there is a visitor at the vicarage. Miss Emily Wilkinson is a middle aged woman who appears worldly to Philip and full of romance. Philip falls in lust with her from the beginning, finding himself unable to think of anything but having an intimate relationship with Emily.

Philip and Emily spend a great deal of their vacation with each other. Philip listens to Emily's stories of her life in Paris and falls in love with the romance of the stories. Philip wants to become Emily's lover, but is shy and unsure how to take the first step. When Philip finally overcomes his shyness, he wants more. Philip comes up with a scheme to make love to Emily, but when it is all over he sees her without the tint of desire and realizes how old and unattractive Emily really is. Philip also discovers she is not as experienced as she made him believe. Now Philip is anxious to end the relationship. Philip has experienced his first romance and now that it is out of his system, is anxious to find love.



Chapters 35-39

Chapters 35-39 Summary

After their afternoon of passion, Emily is more affectionate toward Philip while Philip finds himself anxious for Emily's time at the vicarage to come to an end. Philip endures their time together, trying not to make promises to Emily he knows he will not keep. Philip is looking forward to the future and he does not want Emily in it. Philip is to apprentice to an accountant in London. Philip's uncle has made arrangements through the lawyer who administers Philip's inheritance from his father to pay for Philip's apprenticeship with the accountant. Philip is not sure he will like the work, but has been promised to get back half his money should he decide not to continue after a year, so he feels he has little to lose.

Finally it is time to go to London. Philip takes a small room and begins his apprenticeship. The work is difficult and tedious, and Philip often has trouble completing his columns without mistakes. Philip also has trouble making friends among his co-workers who resent his ability to pay for the job which they fought hard to receive. Philip also finds the city cold and inhospitable. During this time Philip also receives a great many letters from Emily. Philip finds the letters uncomfortable to read, since Emily continuously confesses her love for him. Philip would like to throw them away and ignore them, but he is afraid of hurting Emily's feelings.

In one letter, Emily suggests that Philip, who has a hobby of drawing, go to Paris and become an artist. This idea blooms inside Philip's head and he begins to think it might be a good idea. When an opportunity comes up for him to accompany one of the accountants to Paris for a few days, the idea explodes. Philip loves the city and finds the idea of making his living with art romantic. Philip decides to quit his apprenticeship, take his refunded money, and move to Paris. Uncle William will not discuss Philip's plan, believing it is not proper for a gentleman to become an artist. Uncle William will not give Philip the money he needs to go to Paris. Philip is determined to go anyway, thinking he can raise the money he needs to survive until he will receive his inheritance in a few months. Philip tells Aunt Louisa he will pawn the watch and other trinkets he has gotten from his father to raise the needed money. Aunt Louisa does not want Philip to do this, so she withdraws her own savings and gives it to Philip, telling him that she feels he is like her own child and she wants to give him this gift.

Chapters 35-39 Analysis

Philip no longer looks at Emily through rose colored glasses and is anxious to get away from her. Philip has agreed to learn the profession of accounting since his uncle believes this is a good profession for a gentleman. Philip goes to London, takes a room, and begins his new job. From the beginning Philip realizes he will not be good at this profession, but sticks with it because it is expected of him. However, Philip is lonely and



unhappy in the city. Emily continuously writes to Philip and this adds to his unhappiness since he does not want to talk to her, but does not want to hurt her feelings. Something Emily says in one of her letters give Philip an idea of what he might like to do with his life. Philip decides he wants to go to Paris to learn to be an artist.

Philip's uncle is unhappy with his decision and refuses to give Philip the money he will need to live in Paris. Philip will come into his inheritance in a few months, so he decides he can come up with the money he needs until then on his own. Philip decides to sell the few possessions he inherited from his father. Aunt Louisa is not happy with this idea and instead gives Philip money she has been saving for many years. Philip is shocked, but pleased with this unexpected act of kindness. Aunt Louisa's actions show a change in the relationship between Philip and his aunt and suggest that Aunt Louisa has finally developed the relationship with her nephew she has desired since he came to live with her as a small boy.



Chapters 40-43

Chapters 40-43 Summary

Philip arrives in Paris and meets the massiere of the school he is to attend. The woman is British and does all she can to continue a proper British lifestyle while living in Paris. The woman takes him to the school and introduces Philip to a student she hopes will guide Philip in his first few classes. This student, Fanny Price, is an unpleasant young woman who has many opinions on art that she is not afraid to force on Philip. At first Philip is happy for her help, as she gives him many tips on how to improve his technique. That first day Philip also meets several other students, including two men named Lawson and Clutton. Fanny disapproves of these men because they appear to not take their art seriously, but Philip finds their company pleasant.

Philip develops a friendship with Lawson and Clutton, going to eat with them most afternoons and getting to know their friends. Philip also attempts to become friendly with Fanny, but finds her attitude difficult. Fanny is angry most of the time and becomes irate over small offenses. After a time, Philip stops trying to befriend the unfriendly woman. One evening Philip goes with Clutton and Lawson to a small café where he meets a poet named Cronshaw. Cronshaw is an older man who likes to discuss philosophy with anyone who will listen. Philip finds him fascinating. On another occasion Philip asks Cronshaw about the meaning of life. Cronshaw tells Philip that is something he will have to learn on his own.

Twice a week professional painters come to the school to critique the students' work. Clutton and Lawson often get helpful criticism, but the masters often ignore Fanny. Fanny becomes upset about this and one day insists the master look at her work. The master is annoyed with Fanny's insistence and is cruel when he reviews her work. The master tells Fanny she would be better off quitting and taking up another profession. Philip feels this is harsh, but agrees that even to his inexperienced eye Fanny is not a very good artist. Philip walks Fanny home, hoping to offer some condolence. Fanny is not interested in anything Philip has to say, however, and announces that she does not care what anyone has to say. Fanny is determined to continue with her art.

Chapters 40-43 Analysis

Philip arrives in Paris and begins art classes immediately. Philip is excited about his future and believes he will become a good artist. Philip makes friends right away. Philip's male friends prove to be entertaining and exactly what Philip needs. Philip goes out at night with his friends, meeting more people and sharing in complicated discussions about art and other philosophical pursuits. Philip also meets a poet named Cronshaw who is full of wisdom and likes to share his thoughts with anyone who will listen. Philip has a discussion with this poet about the meaning of life and walks away with the statement that this is something he has to figure out on his own.



Also among Philip's new friends is a woman named Fanny Price. Fanny is an angry, bitter young woman who is difficult for Philip to get to know. Fanny helps Philip and he is grateful, often going out of his way to spend time with her because of this gratitude. However, Fanny is not a very good artist. When one of the masters at the school tells Fanny this in direct, unkind language, Philip attempts to console his new friend. However, Fanny will have none of his sympathy. Fanny disagrees with the master and has already decided that she will not give up her art no matter what. Fanny's determination is admirable, but makes the reader wonder if it might not come back to haunt her some time down the road.



Chapters 44-50

Chapters 44-50 Summary

Philip finds Fanny difficult to get along with. Fanny takes him to the Louvre one day, but when Philip asks her to lunch, Fanny becomes upset and rushes home. One day Fanny will be happy and kind to him and the next angry and mean. Philip begins to avoid Fanny due to his inability to get along with her. Philip has also stopped communicating with Emily. At first Philip ignores Emily's letters because he is busy, but after a time decides not to answer her letters in hopes she will get the message and leave him alone. Eventually she does.

Philip finds Paris more expensive than he originally thought, so he is forced to pawn his father's things. Lawson suggests that he and Philip take a studio together where they can both live and work at their art. Philip is happy with this idea and soon they are living together. Sometime later, Fanny asks Philip to come to her room and give his opinion of her art. Philip finds her art amateur and unattractive. However, to spare her feelings, Philip tells her it is good. In March, the students are invited to send their paintings to an exhibit called the Salon. Lawson gets a picture accepted, so to celebrate he and Philip throw a party at their studio.

That summer Philip decides to go away with Lawson and Ruth Chalice, the school instructor. While on vacation, Lawson and Ruth develop a relationship. Philip is a little jealous of their happiness, but enjoys the vacation greatly. During this time, however, Philip begins to notice that his art is not coming along as well as he had hoped it would. Philip's art is mechanically sound, but does not contain the heart that Lawson's does. When Philip returns to Paris, he attempts a portrait of Ruth alongside one Lawson is doing. Clutton comments on how good Lawson's is, but does not seem impressed with Philip's. At the same time, Fanny has left the school and has lost touch with Philip. Philip gives little thought to Fanny's disappearance.

One day Philip gets a letter from Fanny asking him to come see her at her room. Philip rushes over and finds the door to her room locked. Philip has the doorman open the door and finds Fanny hanging from a rope. Fanny has run out of money and killed herself out of despair. Philip goes through her correspondence and finds a letter from a brother. Philip telegraphs the brother and asks him to come. The brother comes reluctantly and complains so much about the expense of burying his sister that Philip finds him unpleasant. Philip is forced to deal with most of the work associated with burying Fanny because of the language barrier. This depresses Philip. Fanny's death makes Philip begin to wonder if perhaps he should not give up art before he finds himself in the same desperate straits as Fanny.



Chapters 44-50 Analysis

Philip finds Fanny difficult and begins to avoid her. Philip has troubles of his own and does not want to deal with Fanny's unpleasantness. Philip moves in with Lawson to help them both save some money and throws himself into his art. Philip goes away for the summer with Lawson and Ruth Chalice and watches as they begin to have an affair. Philip envies their happiness, though he is not interested in the complication of a relationship right now, since he has just recently managed to get Emily to stop writing to him.

Fanny disappears from the art school and Philip assumes she has given up on her art. However, Philip gets a letter from Fanny asking him to come see her. Philip goes and finds that Fanny has killed herself because she is starving and has no hope of her situation changing. Philip feels bad for Fanny, feeling as though he might have let her down. Philip contacts her brother and finds him unsympathetic to his sister's situation. Philip does most of the work for the funeral because of the language barrier.

Fanny's death makes Philip begin to think about his own future. Philip has begun to feel that his art will never be better than mediocre. Philip is concerned that he will never be able to make a living off his art. Philip's future seems to be in question, perhaps warning the reader of another change in professions.



Chapter 51-56

Chapter 51-56 Summary

Philip submits a portrait to the Salon, but it is refused. This event seems to fuel Philip's uncertainty about his art. Lawson believes Philip is simply disappointed in not being selected for the Salon, but Philip is thinking of the bottom line and his ability to make a living. Philip goes to Cronshaw and asks his opinion. Cronshaw tells him he should get out while he can. Philip then asks one of the masters to come look at his art. The master tells Philip that his art is good, but might not be good enough to make a living. The master suggests that Philip leave art while he is still young enough to start something new.

That same day, Philip gets a letter from his uncle informing him that his aunt has died. Philip goes back to Blackstable for the funeral. Philip is surprised to find his uncle as stoic as ever, more concerned with the idea that his wife receive a great many of wreaths rather than the idea that he will never see her again. Philip's uncle has also come around to the idea of Philip being an artist and is excited by the idea that Philip might make a portrait of him. When his uncle asks, Philip announces that he has decided to leave Paris in favor of returning to London to study medicine at the same hospital where his father worked. Uncle William is annoyed with Philip's continued indecision over his career and warns him that he will eventually run out of money and be forced to live in poverty.

Philip, who has developed a new freedom of spirit, sets off for London in high spirits. Philip begins classes and finds the lectures boring and lab work tedious, but looks forward to passing his exams so he can move on to the clinical. Philip makes acquaintances at the school. One of these acquaintances is a young man with whom Philip often goes to tea. At one of the restaurants where Philip and this young man go, there is a waitress who is rude and unkind to Philip. Philip finds himself determined to make this young woman be kind to him. Philip begins going back to the tea shop quite often in order to get this girl's attention. One day Philip makes a drawing of the waitress and leaves it where she can find it. The girl is so impressed that when Philip comes back the next day, she sits down and speaks to him. Philip asks the girl on a date and she agrees to go.

Chapter 51-56 Analysis

Philip becomes more concerned with his chances of making a living with his art after his portrait is refused for the Salon. Philip asks the people around him what they think and is often given half truths and bad advice. Cronshaw advises him to leave, as does one of the masters from the school. When Philip gets a letter telling him that his aunt has died, Philip leaves Paris without making a decision.



Philip returns home and finds his uncle more obsessed with public opinion and his own vanity than the death of his wife. Philip is shocked by this, but the reader is not surprised. Philip's uncle is a man who does not show his emotions easily, so his grief would be hidden even from Philip. When Philip's uncle asks him to do a portrait of himself, Philip refuses, saying he has decided to stop his art. Philip has finally decided that art is not what he wants from his life. Philip has become more in touch with his spiritual side, and thanks to his friends in Paris, has become more aware of the philosophical side of life. Philip feels freed from the oppression of religion and wants to enjoy this new freedom he has found in his life.

Philip goes to London to study medicine at the same hospital where his father once worked. While there, Philip meets a young waitress that he finds unpleasant and unattractive. However, Philip becomes obsessed with the idea of forcing this woman to be kind to him. Philip goes to the tea shop where she works often, speaking to her until she finally begins to be nice to him. Philip then asks her out. The waitress agrees and Philip finds himself extremely happy as a result. Philip is falling in love. However, the reader sees the waitress's unkind behavior and wonders how this will affect any relationship they have.



Chapters 57-65

Chapters 57-65 Summary

Philip takes the waitress, Mildred, to dinner and a comedy. Philip finds the comedy beneath him, but Mildred enjoys it. Philip goes with Mildred on the train to her stop and walks her as far as the corner of the street where she lives. Mildred stops him and insists that she can walk the rest of the way alone. Philip asks her out again and she agrees. Philip goes home and plays the whole evening in his mind over and over. Mildred is beneath him and he finds many of her mannerisms disgusting, but Philip realizes he is in love with her. It is inexplicable, but he cannot help himself. The next morning Philip rises early so that he can meet Mildred's train and walk her to work. Mildred is not happy with him and insists that she must walk too fast for him to accompany her. Philip is not put off by this rudeness and goes to the tea shop again that afternoon.

Philip and Mildred go out again, but Mildred will not give Philip a kiss at the end of the night. Mildred does agree to go out with him again. Philip makes plans for the following Saturday, but Mildred cancels at the last minute because she has a date with a German who is often in the tea shop. Philip is jealous and shows up to prove to himself that this is the reason she broke the date. Mildred catches him and they argue. Philip decides to never go to the shop again. However, after a week Philip cannot keep away. Philip and Mildred make up and begin going out again. Philip and Mildred make a habit of going to a small restaurant where they can be left alone.

Mildred refuses to confess love for Philip despite the fact that he does for her. Philip sees her everyday, often coming to the shop where she works. Occasionally Philip will sit at another table trying to make her jealous by flirting with the other waitresses, but Mildred is unbothered by his behavior. Philip is crazy with his love for her, causing him to fall behind in his studies at the hospital. Philip fails his first exam. Philip turns to Mildred for sympathy, but she is unconcerned with his distress. Then one night Mildred tells Philip that she is to be married. Philip is heartbroken. The day Mildred is supposed to be married, Philip goes to Greenwich with Hayward who has recently moved back to London, finding thin comfort in the company of his friend.

Chapters 57-65 Analysis

Philip takes the waitress out to dinner and a comedy. Philip finds the waitress, Mildred, beneath him. Mildred is cruel, uneducated, and unattractive, but for some reason Philip is passionately in love with her. Philip wants to be with her everyday. When Mildred wants to date other men, Philip becomes jealous and they quarrel. However, Philip continues to visit Mildred, taking all she is willing to give gratefully. Mildred refuses to tell Philip she loves him despite the fact that he confesses his love every day. Philip hopes



that with persistence, Mildred will come around and see what a good husband Philip would make her.

Despite Philip's deep love for her, Mildred decides to marry the German who has more money. Philip is heartbroken. Philip's affair with Mildred has caused him to fail his first big medical exam and to spend money he does not have. Now he has nothing to show for the affair. Philip spends supposed Mildred's wedding day with Hayward, who has recently decided to move to London for a time. Philip takes comfort in his old friend and is relieved to have the emotional affair over with. Now Philip can concentrate on his studies.



Chapters 66-71

Chapters 66-71 Summary

Lawson too has moved to London. Lawson tells Philip that everyone they knew left Paris and moved on to other pursuits. Philip learns that Cronshaw is quite ill and not expected to live long, causing Philip some regret. In Philip's studies, he fails a second exam and must make both exams up during the summer. During this time Philip meets a young woman who is separated from her husband and attempting to make a living writing cheap romance novels. Philip likes this woman very much and enjoys the support she offers him. Philip tells Norah all about his affair with Mildred and she offers him sympathy and assures him he is better off without Mildred in his life. Soon their friendship blossoms into a love affair. With Norah's help and support, Philip passes his exams and begins his second year in his studies. It is during this time that Philip and Hayward meet a young stock broker who becomes good friends to them all.

One day Philip wakes up feeling very sick. The landlady asks the young medical student living in the rooms above Philip's to come check on him. The young man, Griffiths, to check in on Philip. Griffiths arranges for a doctor to come and then stays the night with Philip to make sure he does not need anything. Philip is greatly appreciative of this and becomes good friends with Griffiths. Griffiths becomes a confidant for Philip, someone he can tell everything to.

Sometime later Philip comes home and finds Mildred waiting for him. Mildred tells him that she never married the German but became his mistress. When Mildred became pregnant, the German left her for fear his wife would divorce him and take away their children. Now Mildred is alone and unable to make a living. Philip finds her a room and agrees to pay for her care until the baby comes and Mildred is able to find work. Philip is happy to have Mildred back in his life, but feels guilty about what this means for his relationship with Norah. Philip delays telling Norah the truth, but during an argument, Norah tells him to leave. Philip takes her up on it, writing her a letter telling her that their relationship is over. Norah does not believe Philip is serious. Norah comes to visit him and is devastated when she realize that Philip is indeed serious.

Chapters 66-71 Analysis

Hayward and Lawson have moved to London, so now Philip has friends to spend time with. Together they make a new friend, a stockbroker, alerting the reader to the possibility that Philip will use the stockbroker's services. During this time Philip also meets a new young woman and begins a gentle affair that makes him happy. Philip is not in love with Norah, but he enjoys her company and for now that is enough. Philip also makes friends with the medical student in the rooms above him when he one day becomes ill and the student takes care of him. Philip is very grateful to this young man and counts him quickly as one of his closest friends.



Mildred comes back. Philip learns that she did not marry the German, but became his mistress. However, the German leaves her when he learns she is pregnant. Philip still loves Mildred and cannot send her off to live on the streets, so he agrees to care for her despite the small amount of money Philip has to live on until he can begin making a living as a doctor. Philip is very generous to Mildred because of his passionate love for her. However, the reader must wonder about a woman who will allow a man to take care of her in this way.

With Mildred back, Philip feels he must end his relationship with Norah. However, Norah has been nothing but kind to him. Philip does not want to hurt Norah so he lies to her until they have a quarrel in which Norah tells him it is over. Philip jumps on this and decides she has ended the relationship. Norah does not believe this, however, and attempts to patch things up. Philip sends her a letter ending the relationship, but Norah needs Philip to say it to her face. Philip is heartbroken when he sees Norah's pain, but it does not change his mind. Philip is blindly in love with Mildred and happy to have her back in his life despite the pain it causes Norah.



Chapters 72-78

Chapters 72-78 Summary

Philip spends the next three months taking care of Mildred while she waits for the birth of her baby. Mildred is unhappy with the impending birth and often voices the hope that the baby will die at birth. However, the baby and Mildred are both fine. Philip sends Mildred and the baby to Brighton for a vacation. Mildred hopes to find a woman there who will take in the baby so she can find work in the city. Philip wants her to wait a while, but Mildred is anxious to be free of the child. Mildred stays on at Brighton for an extra week to check out the woman she has chosen. Philip goes down for a day to visit her and meets the woman himself, finding her to be kind and appropriate.

When Mildred comes back to the city, Philip arranges a dinner with both Mildred and Griffiths. Philip is anxious for them to meet because they are both so important to him. From the first moments Philip can see that Mildred and Griffiths like each other a lot. At first Philip believes this is because they share an affection for him. However, the next day when Mildred invites Griffiths to dinner again, Philip can see that Mildred has romantic feelings for Griffiths. Philip leaves them alone for a time and spies on them, discovering that the affections appear to be mutual. Philip asks Griffiths about his feelings toward Mildred and Griffiths says he does not like her. However, the next day Philip learns this is a lie.

Philip is devastated. However, for some reason even he cannot explain, Philip offers to give them the money to go out of town for the weekend. Philip is hoping that if they do this, Mildred will get over her affections for Griffiths and come back to him. Griffiths resists the idea, feeling a great deal of guilt over Philip's hurt feelings. However, Mildred manages to talk him into it. Philip is devastated once again when Mildred comes for the money. Philip waits in agony for the weekend to end. On Monday Philip rushes to Mildred's rooms and finds that Mildred has not returned. Philip gets the same response Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday Philip gets a letter from Griffiths asking for forgiveness. Philip tears up the letter. Philip then goes to Mildred's and learns that she has packed up and left her rooms. Philip goes home to Blackstable for a few days and when he returns to London, he moves out of his rooms.

Chapters 72-78 Analysis

Philip spends the next three months in total bliss as he cares for Mildred. Mildred is worried about the birth of her child and hopes it will be stillborn. However, the child is born healthy. Philip sends both mother and child to the beach to recuperate. While there, Mildred finds a woman to take in the baby so that she can work without worrying about the baby. Philip is unhappy with this decision but does nothing to stop it. When Mildred returns to London, Philip introduces her to Griffiths because he loves them both and wants them to know each other.



Mildred and Griffiths fall in love at first sight. Philip sees what is happening and is devastated by it. Philip tries to stop it by threatening Mildred and then finds himself offering to give her the money to go away with Griffiths. Philip hopes that if Mildred goes away with Griffiths she will get it out of her system and come back to him. However, Philip is devastated when Mildred takes him up on his offer. Philip waits on pins and needles for Mildred to return. However, Mildred does not return on the expected day. Philip waits for nearly a week. During this time he gets a letter from Griffiths asking his forgiveness. Philip is not able to give it. On the Thursday following her trip, Philip goes to Mildred's only to learn she has moved out without leaving a forwarding address. Philip is beyond heartbroken. Philip goes home for a short time and then moves out of his rooms to avoid seeing Griffiths.



Chapters 79-86

Chapters 79-86 Summary

Philip learns that Norah has asked Lawson about him. Philip decides to go visit her. Philip finds a strange man visiting Norah when he arrives. Philip cannot wait for the man to leave so he can make his apologies. Philip tells Norah all about his experience with Mildred. Philip apologizes and confesses that he knows now that he should have chosen Norah. Norah is kind, but tells him she is engaged to the other man and very happy about it. Philip is embarrassed and heartbroken. At school, Philip is pressured by some of Griffiths' friends to forgive the young man. Philip refuses, even when he learns how Griffiths ended the relationship immediately and Mildred was the one who suffered this time.

Philip begins his clinical. Philip works in the outpatient clinic in the hospital and finds this work satisfying. Philip likes the patients and they like him as well. Philip does a clinical rotation and then a surgical one. During his surgical rotation, Philip treats a patient with a club foot similar to his own. During the examination the surgeon makes Philip take off his shoe and show his own foot. The surgeon suggests that there might be a surgical procedure that will help Philip walk better and he should consider it.

During his clinical rotation, Philip learns that Cronshaw is in London. Philip goes to visit him and finds that he is dying of cirrhosis of the liver. Philip begins to visit Cronshaw on a regular basis. When Cronshaw fails to show up at the usual restaurant several days in a row, Philip goes to his room and finds him ill. Philip insists the poet move in with him. Cronshaw agrees. Due to his disease, Cronshaw is often in a bad temper. To add to the difficulties, Cronshaw is often visited by a friend who is overlooking the publication of a book of Cronshaw's poems. Philip finds this man difficult and unwilling to help, but puts up with him because he makes Cronshaw happy. One day, Philip comes home from the hospital and finds that Cronshaw has died in his sleep. Philip arranges the funeral, a simple affair, much to the disappointment of the journalist. Afterward, the journalist writes an article that makes Philip look like a impediment to Cronshaw's rise to fame.

Chapters 79-86 Analysis

Philip is not willing to forgive Griffiths, despite the fact that he feels deeply guilty and has broken up with Mildred. Philip does want to ask Norah's forgiveness, but is disappointed to learn she is engaged to be married. Philip has realized he did Norah wrong and is happy for her, but sad for himself. Philip then throws himself into his studies. Philip enjoys his work and really likes his patients. The reader gets the feeling that Philip has finally found a career he will be good at and will enjoy. During his surgical rotation, Philip is told that there might be a surgery to help him regain more mobility in his foot. The reader sees this and wonders if perhaps Philip will not take the surgeon up on his suggestion.



Cronshaw comes to London and is dying. Philip, with his big heart, asks Cronshaw to come live with him. Cronshaw comes willingly, but seems angry and ungrateful later. Philip puts this bad behavior down to his disease, but cannot forgive the behavior of Cronshaw's friend who is often rude to him and never offers to help with expenses. When Cronshaw dies, Philip has to pay for the funeral and, for his efforts, gets nothing but criticism from the journalist friend of Cronshaw. It seems Philip is always doing the right thing and never getting anything in return.



Chapters 87-94

Chapters 87-94 Summary

Philip begins his inpatient rotation. Philip meets a man named Thorne Athelny who has come in for a mysterious jaundice condition. Philip and this man hit it off right away. When Athelny is released from the hospital, he invites Philip to come to Sunday dinner. Philip is happy to take him up on the invitation. At dinner, Philip meets Athelny's nine children and wife, Helen. Philip finds the family boisterous and pleasant to be around, despite the fact that Philip believes Athelny exaggerates his family tree to make himself seem more important than he is. Athelny is well educated and through him Philip develops a passion for Spain and the painter El Greco. Philip begins formulate a plan to visit Spain after he finishes school.

Philip becomes a regular visitor at the Athelny home on Sundays. One night Philip leaves the Athelny home late and has to walk to Piccadilly to catch the bus. While waiting, Philip sees Mildred. Philip follows her around to discover where she lives. Instead Philip discovers that she is selling herself for money. Philip speaks to Mildred and finds she is desperate for money. Philip suggests she come live with him and work as his maid until she can find more suitable work. Mildred is happy for the suggestion and moves in with her baby the next day. However, Mildred is confused when Philip insists that their relationship remain plutonic.

Mildred has not changed and she still likes to go to the music halls to see the shows. One night she talks Philip into going and they have a good time, but when Mildred attempts to turn the night romantic, Philip again resists her. They soon fall into a routine and Philip finds that he greatly enjoys having the baby around, despite the fact that Mildred is often difficult to get along with and costs him more money than he can afford. During the fall after Mildred comes to stay with him, Philip invests some money with his stockbroker friend and makes a good sum of money. Philip decides to take this money and have his operation. Afterward, Philip announces that he will take Mildred and the baby with him to Brighton for a vacation. However, the vacation is soured for Mildred when Philip insists on taking separate rooms. Otherwise, Philip finds the vacation relaxing despite Mildred's company.

Chapters 87-94 Analysis

Philip makes friends with a patient, Thorne Athelny. Athelny is a boisterous personality who is also intelligent. Philip finds him fascinating and enjoys his company. Soon Philip and Athelny become fast friends and Philip spends a great deal of time with Athelny and his family. After one of these visits, Philip catches Mildred selling herself on the street. Horrified, Philip takes her and her baby in, giving them a place to live until Mildred can find some decent work. Philip makes it clear, however, that this is going to be a platonic



relationship. Philip has finally learned his lesson as far as love for Mildred, but still has a huge heart and cannot sit back and watch her sell herself on the street.

Philip makes some money in the stock market and decides to use the money to have his foot worked on. Philip's experience in the stock market is easy and makes him think that it is a good way to make easy money, warning the reader that this idea might come back to haunt Philip one day. After the surgery, Philip takes Mildred to Brighton for a vacation near the sea. Philip insists on separate rooms and this upsets Mildred, who does not want anyone to know they are not married. Philip is annoyed by her lies, but he enjoys his vacation. Philip has grown quite fond of Mildred's baby and is happy to have the time off with her. The reader can only hope that Philip will not get his heart broken again, but Mildred's past behavior suggests that this might turn out to be the case.



Chapters 95-107

Chapters 95-107 Summary

Philip continues his studies, moving into the inpatient surgical rotation, spending his nights on call in the emergency room. Philip makes friends with a nurse with whom he has a discussion about suicide one night. The nurse believes most suicides are not about love, but money. Philip disagrees, since his thoughts turned to suicide the last time Mildred broke his heart. At the same time Mildred has become happy with her relationship with Philip. Mildred has decided that she is willing to marry Philip, but Philip has no interest in her any longer. Mildred tries to seduce Philip, but he rebuffs her. The next day Philip comes home to find Mildred has destroyed his home, taken the baby and gone. Philip is glad to be rid of her, though he will miss the baby. Philip sells what is left of his furniture and moves into a new room.

War breaks out in Africa and many of the medical students enlist in the military. Philip's stockbroker tells him that when peace comes it will be a good time to invest in African businesses. Philip gives him permission to invest for him when he believes the time is right. The stockbroker invests money at a time when it appears the war is about to end, but the tide of the war changes and it continues to rage. Philip loses all his money. Within a few weeks Philip is unable to pay his rent. Philip writes to his uncle for help but is refused. Soon Philip is forced to live on the streets. Philip tries to find work but it is difficult due to his lack of experience and his club foot.

Philip goes to Athelny's house for dinner one Sunday and discovers that Athelny has learned his situation. Athelny insists that Philip move into his home until he can find work and then suggests that Philip try to get work at the department store where he works. Philip is only able to get a job directing shoppers, but it provides a place to sleep, food, and pocket money. Philip takes to the work as best as can be expected, making few friends. Philip dislikes the fact that he rarely has time to himself, but is grateful to not be hungry any more. One morning, Philip is given the assignment of dressing the display window. Philip does well and is given the job. Then Philip designs a dress for a dance hall performer and is promoted to dress designer. Eventually Philip is given a raise for this promotion and things become easier, but Philip is still anxious to find a way to make the money he needs to return to medical school.

During this time, Philip avoids his old friends because he is ashamed of his change in station. However, Philip runs into Lawson one afternoon. Philip refuses to visit with him because he is ashamed of his lack of money. Lawson is clearly disappointed that Philip has rebuffed him. Before they part, Lawson tells Philip that Hayward, who went to fight in the war, has died. Philip is devastated by this news. Suddenly Philip is filled with the futility of life. However, it finally occurs to Philip that there is no point to life and therefore it is okay to live life any way a person sees fit. This gives Philip hope and lightens his spirits.



Chapters 95-107 Analysis

Philip invests in the stock market again during a war in Africa that promises to end soon. However the war does not end and Philip loses the last of his money. Philip is soon forced out onto the streets. Philip cannot continue medical school and must look for employment. However, no one wants to hire a man with no experience and a club foot that inhibits his ability to walk. Philip cannot rely on his friends for help since the only one around is Lawson and he is often without money himself. Philip is angry at the world for not helping him after all he has done to help others. Eventually, Athelney finds out about Philip's troubles and insists he moves in with his family. Athelney helps Philip get a job and get back on his feet.

Philip is ashamed of his new existence, but grateful to have food to eat. Philip works well and is eventually promoted to dress designer when he shows he can draw. Philip does not like the work and would rather go back to the hospital. Philip dreams of making the money he needs to return to school. When Philip runs into Lawson in the street, he is ashamed and wants to hide. However, Lawson sees him and wants to take him to lunch. Lawson feels sorry for Philip, but does not look down on him. Philip, however, cannot be friends with him because it reminds him of all he has lost. Philip then learns that Hayward died in the war. Philip is devastated. It seems to Philip that Hayward did nothing with his life and it is unfair he has died before he could do something meaningful. Then Philip realizes life is meaningless and he should stop looking for the meaning of life. This takes a burden from Philip's shoulders and makes him feel better about life.



Chapters 108-114

Chapters 108-114 Summary

Philip has been sneaking into the hospital to check his mail. One day he gets a letter from his uncle asking him to visit. Philip thinks that perhaps the old man is finally dying and he decides to go visit. Philip is hoping he will inherit enough money when his uncle dies to continue his studies. Philip finds his uncle ill, but not ill enough to die. Philip's uncle has changed little and is still selfish. However, Philip finds him afraid of dying, which he finds curious since the man has spent his entire life preaching the beauty of the afterlife. Philip returns to his work and waits for his uncle to die. The old man lingers longer than Philip had hoped.

Some months later Philip gets a letter from Mildred. Philip wants to throw away the letter, but discovers he cannot. Philip goes to her and finds her ill. Mildred has a sexually transmitted disease. Philip gives her medicine and warns her against participating in sexual activity. Philip begins to visit Mildred everyday, hoping to help her find a job. After several weeks Philip discovers that Mildred continues to sell herself. Philip leaves her for the last time.

Philip visits his uncle again over Christmas and finds him sicker than before, but still hanging on. Philip briefly thinks of speeding his death by increasing his pain medication, but decides he cannot live with the guilt. Philip's uncle lives until the following summer. Philip is called home in July and finds his uncle in bed. Philip stays with him, keeping him company until he dies. After the funeral, Philip learns that between the furnishings in the house and his uncle's investments, he has inherited more than five hundred pounds. Philip immediately returns to medical school. Philip's first rotation upon returning is midwifery. Philip finds the patients he works with poor and desperate, often grieved to have another mouth to feed. On Philip's final night in the rotation he is called to the bed of an eighteen year old girl. The birth goes well, but the girl begins to bleed. There is nothing he can do and the girl dies. Philip feels, due to the poverty she lives in, that this is the best thing that can happen to the girl.

Chapters 108-114 Analysis

Philip is anxious for his uncle to die because it will mean going back to school. Philip seems to have lost some of his compassion. However, the reader will remember how harsh his uncle was to Philip as a child and how he reacted to his own wife's death. These things combine to help the reader understand why Philip might not be sad to see his uncle die. Not only this, but his uncle allowed Philip to live on the streets rather than help him, an act which took away the last of Philip's affection for him. When his uncle finally dies, Philip wastes no time in returning to medical school and getting his dreams back on target.



Mildred comes into Philip's life again. Again Mildred is selling herself. The baby has died and Mildred is alone. Philip feels compassion for her still and helps her out. However, when Philip discovers that she has refused to give up selling herself even though he has told her she can spread the disease she has developed, Philip finally washes his hands of her for good. The reader can only cry in triumph that Philip has finally become smart about Mildred.

Philip does a midwifery rotation and a young woman dies in his care. Philip has seen the heartache of poverty and his own experiences have caused him to have a great deal of compassion for these people. When the young girl dies, Philip consoles himself by realizing she had a tough life ahead of her and perhaps it is best she died.



Chapters 115-122

Chapters 115-122 Summary

Philip continues to be a constant visitor at the Athelny home. Philip is present when a suitor comes to the home to court Sally. The family likes the young man, but Sally announces she has no intention of marrying the young man. Philip finds Sally a strange creature, but enjoys her company. For the following year, Philip works hard to finish his training. Finally Philip gets his diploma. Philip goes the next day to apply for a position at the hospital. Philip hopes to get more experience so he can get a place on a ship and see the world. While there, Philip is offered a temporary job working with a country doctor who is rumored to be difficult. Philip jumps at the chance.

Philip finds the country doctor, Dr. South, cranky, but soon breaks through his unpleasant veneer to find a kind man inside. Philip works hard and wins over many of his patients. When his time is over, Dr. South offers Philip a partnership. This is very prestigious, but Philip turns it down in favor of his dreams to travel. Dr. South is disappointed and tells Philip the offer still stands if he ever changes his mind. After his time with Dr. South, Philip goes to Kent to spend a few weeks with the Athelnys. Philip finds himself spending time with Sally. One night, Philip steals a kiss and finds it so passionate that he makes love to her in the bushes. The next day Sally confesses that she has been in love with Philip for a long time. While Philip does not believe himself in love with Sally, he is fond of her.

Philip returns to London and his work. Philip goes to walk Sally home every day. One day Sally confesses that she believes she might be pregnant. At first Philip is terribly upset, but soon he decides he might like to marry her. Philip writes to Dr. South and accepts his offer of partnership. A few days later, Philip goes to speak with Sally. Before Philip can tell Sally what he has decided, she announces that she is not pregnant. Philip feels this should make him feel relieved, but instead he is disappointed. Philip asks Sally to marry him anyway, realizing what he really wants is a family and to be loved.

Chapters 115-122 Analysis

Philip finishes his schooling and gets his diploma. Right away, Philip goes to work for a doctor temporarily. Philip finds the work enjoyable and the older doctor entertaining. When Philip is ready to go, the doctor offers him a partnership. This is highly unusual and an excellent offer for a doctor of Philip's experience. While Philip is pleased with the offer, he turns it down because he wants to travel.

Philip goes on vacation with the Athelnys. While there, Philip finds his feelings toward Sally changing. Philip and Sally spontaneously make love in the bushes. The next day Philip learns that Sally has been in love with him for a long time. Philip is surprised, unsure why such a beautiful girl with so many suitors should be in love with him. When



Sally tells him she might be pregnant, Philip resents it at first, believing he must give up his dreams. However, Philip soon realizes that Sally is his dream. Philip simply wants someone to love him.



Characters

Philip Carey

At the beginning of the novel Philip Carey is a small child of five whose mother has just passed away. Philip is ripped from his home and everything familiar and taken to live in the childless home of his aunt and uncle. Philip is lonely in his new home and finds it difficult to amuse himself in a home where silence is valued above the laughter of a child. In this home, however, Philip develops a love of books he will carry with him throughout his life.

While still young Philip is sent to boarding school. Philip has a club foot and this deformity causes him a great deal of torture at school when the other kids begin to tease him because of his limp and his inability to keep up with them during physical activity. Philip is an outcast at the school and is not able to make friends. Philip puts all his energies into his school work and quickly becomes one of the best students in his class. However, when Philip finally makes a friend and this friend unceremoniously drops him, Philip loses interest in school. Philip decides he would like to live abroad. Despite the objections of his guardians, Philip moves to Germany.

Philip finishes his studies while in Germany and elects to become an apprentice to an account when he returns to England. However, Philip finds this work boring and decides he would like to train to be an artist in France. While in France, Philip discovers that while he has the talent, he does not have the creativity to be an artist. Philip returns to London to study to be a doctor like his father. Philip soon falls in love with an unkind girl who treats him badly. Philip is a kind person, however, and takes the abuse of this girl even after his love for her has died.

After spending a great deal of his money trying to win his girl's affections, Philip soon finds himself destitute. Philip is forced to leave medical school and take a job in a shop. This is a very undignified job to take and Philip is humiliated by his circumstances. However, good fortune comes his way again when his uncle dies and Philip is able to return to medical school. About this time Philip discovers the affections of a young girl and decides he would like to marry her, despite his desire to see the world. Philip has been alone a long time and realizes all he has ever wanted is to be loved.

William Carey

William Carey is Philip's uncle on his father's side. William Carey is a clergyman. William is very strict and appears selfish to his young nephew, who sees him always concerned with his own happiness before that of the others around him. As a child, Philip sees his uncle as a cold man who does not like the sound of a child's laughter. Philip believes his uncle dislikes him as he knows that he disliked his mother. As Philip grows older and it comes time for him to decide on a profession, William has definite



thoughts that Philip should follow in his own footsteps. William believes Philip will have few choices of a profession because of his deformity. Philip refuses to listen to his advice, however. Philip makes many choices about his profession, changing his mind several times, before settling on being a doctor, a profession William does not believe is suitable for a gentleman.

When Philip falls on hard times and finds himself without money, he asks his uncle for help. Philip's uncle tells him that he will have to fend for himself. Uncle William tells him many times to be frugal with his money and does not see the need to save his nephew after he refuses to listen to advice. Philip is angered by this, especially since his uncle's refusal causes him to be forced to live on the streets. Philip becomes eager to see his uncle die so he can inherit the few hundred pounds he will need to return to medical school. Philip's uncle takes two years to die. When the time comes, there is no great reconciliation between the two gentlemen and Philip is only relieved to be able to return to his studies.

Louisa Carey

Aunt Louisa is Uncle William's wife. Louisa is a kind woman who spends her days taking care of her husband. Louisa is a childless woman who desperately wants children but is never able to conceive. When Philip comes to live with them, Louisa wants him to love her as his own mother, but Philip finds her often cold and uncomfortable. However, in an attempt to console her young nephew, it is Louisa who introduces Philip to books, a love he will carry with him the remainder of his life.

When Philip is older, he and his aunt forge an affection not unlike a maternal bond. When Philip decides to go to France and his uncle refuses to give him any traveling money, Aunt Louisa cashes in a savings account she has had for many years in order to stop Philip from pawning the few things he received from his father before his death. Philip is touched by this. Philip keeps in close contact with his aunt, so he is aware when she becomes ill. However, Louisa dies so suddenly that Philip is not able to return home before she is gone.

Mildred Rogers Miller

Mildred is a waitress at a tea shop when Philip meets her. Mildred is a pretty young woman, but Philip finds her terribly unattractive. However, when Mildred is continuously rude to him, Philip finds himself obsessed with making her notice him. Soon Philip realizes he is passionately in love with this woman despite the fact that he finds her repulsive. Philip asks her out and soon he and Mildred are seeing each other often. However, Mildred makes it clear that she is not interested in a love affair with Philip. Despite this, Philip sees romance in their every meeting and believes he will eventually win her over. All this comes to an end when Mildred tell Philip she is getting married to another man.



Philip is heartbroken over Mildred, but in time gets on with his life. Philip meets another woman and begins a new relationship. However, Mildred returns, pregnant and abandoned by the man she was supposed to have married. Philip learns that Mildred did not marry this man, but became his mistress. When he learned of her pregnancy, the man leaves Mildred for fear his wife will divorce him and take away his other children. Philip agrees to take care of Mildred until the birth of her child. Philip ends his affair with his new lover and becomes Mildred's constant companion, once again hoping to win her love.

After Mildred has the baby, Philip introduces her to a friend of his. Mildred and this other man hit it off and before Philip knows what is happening, they fall in love. Philip is devastated, but gives them money to go away with one another, hoping they will tire of each other. This does not happen, as Mildred is deeply in love. Mildred moves out of her rooms and disappears from Philip's life.

Sometime later Philip runs into Mildred again. Mildred is selling herself on the streets. Devastated by this knowledge, Philip invites Mildred and her baby to move in with him, but only as friends. Mildred agrees. Philip quickly falls in love with Mildred's baby and enjoys having her in his life despite the financial burden Mildred becomes. Mildred tries to convince Philip that they should get married, but Philip will not agree to it. When Philip is finally forced to tell Mildred he no longer finds her attractive, Mildred goes into a fit, destroying his apartment before taking the baby and leaving. Philip does not see her again for several years. When he does, Mildred is suffering a sexually transmitted disease and is still selling herself for money. Philip walks out of her life for good when he learns these truths.

Norah Nesbit

After having his heart broken by Mildred the first time, Philip throws himself into his studies. One day a friend asks him to be a fourth on a double date. On this date Philip meets Norah Nesbit. Norah is kind to him, kinder than any woman has ever been. Soon Philip gets into the habit of seeing Norah every day for tea. They are just friends at first, spending a great deal of time talking and sharing each other's confidences. Philip tells her about his love affair with Mildred and Norah tells him he is better off without her. Soon their friendship turns to passion and Philip finds himself in a comfortable relationship he never imagined he could have.

When Mildred walks back into Philip's life, he does not know what to do about Norah. Philip has never been in love with Norah, but he feels a great deal of affection for her and does not want to break her heart. However, Philip no longer wants to be Norah's lover. Eventually Philip finds himself forced to tell her the truth. Norah is terribly heartbroken, but she is not cruel to Philip. Norah is in fact quite kind. Sometime later, Philip goes to see Norah after he has broken up with Mildred again. It is too late, however. Norah is engaged to marry another man.



Thorne Athelny

While working in the hospital, Philip meets a patient named Thorne Athelny. Athelny is a talkative little man who takes an instant liking to Philip. Philip likes Athelny as well and is delighted when Athelny invites him to his home for Sunday dinner after leaving the hospital. Philip finds that Athelny has a wife and nine children at home. Philip instantly becomes a part of the family and greatly enjoys his visits to the Athelny home. When Philip loses all his money and is living on the street, it is the Athelnys who come to his rescue. Although they cannot afford it, they invite Philip to live with them for a time. Athelny also attempts to get Philip a job in the store where he works. This first attempt fails, but later Philip is able to get a lesser job in the same store. Athelny is a good friend to Philip.

Sally Athelny

Sally Athelny is the oldest daughter of Thorne Athelny. Sally is a quiet girl who seems more mature than her age. Sally takes care of her siblings and helps her mother out around the house as much as she can. When she is old enough, Sally goes to work in a dress shop to help with the family finances. Sally falls in love with Philip when she sees him after he becomes destitute. Sally will not entertain the attentions of any of the many boys who pursue her because her heart is set on Philip. When they are alone together during a vacation, Philip kisses Sally and finds her very passionate. They make love and Philip soon learns the depth of her affections. When Philip later learns Sally might be pregnant, he makes up his mind to marry her. Despite the news that the pregnancy was a false alarm, Philip still insists on marrying her. Philip is not in love, but Sally loves him and he feels a deep affection for her. Philip feels this is enough.

Hayward

Hayward is an Englishman that Philip meets while living in Germany. Hayward lives on a trust fund that allows him three hundred pounds a year. Due to this trust fund, Hayward does not have to work, so he spends his time moving from one place to another, enjoying the beauty of the world. Hayward and Philip become good friends, often exchanging letters and seeing each other when they can. Hayward settles in London while Philip is going to medical school. The two pals see each other often, spending time in a local bar with other friends. Hayward becomes bored with life, however. When war breaks out in Africa, Hayward decides to join the fight. However, Hayward dies after only a few weeks.

Harry Griffiths

Harry Griffiths is another medical school student living in the same house as Philip. Philip and Griffiths do not know each other well the first few years of Philip's time in school. However, when Philip becomes ill one day, Griffiths volunteers to care for him.



During this time Philip and Griffiths become very good friends. Philip makes Griffiths his confidant, telling him all about his love affairs with Norah and Mildred. Griffiths even gives Philip advice on how to break things off with Norah. When Mildred has her baby, Philip decides to introduce her to Griffiths, wanting to have the two people most important in his life to meet. Griffiths and Mildred fall madly in love. Philip is heartbroken, but offers to give the couple money to go away, hoping Mildred will get the affair out of her system and come back to him. However, Mildred falls deeper in love while Griffiths becomes bored with her. Griffiths eventually breaks it off with Mildred, but not before his relationship with Philip is forever ended.

Fanny Price

Fanny Price is an art student Philip meets while studying in France. Fanny is an unpleasant woman that no one in the class likes. Philip strikes up a friendship with her because he wants her help and because he feels sorry for her. However, soon Philip tires of her unpleasant ways. Philip also comes to realize that Fanny is not a very good artist. Philip does not have the heart to tell her so, however. Philip is busy with his own lessons and his friends, so he does not notice how desperate Fanny is to become a good artist. Philip also does not notice how poor Fanny is. One day, Philip gets a letter from Fanny asking him to come see her. Philip arrives and discovers that Fanny has hung herself. Fanny has had nothing to eat for days and kills herself out of desperation.



Objects/Places

Clock

Philip takes a clock from his mother's sitting room after her death, recalling that she once said she liked the clock.

Books

Philip discovers books as a young man growing up in his uncle's restrained home.

Pictures

Philip's mother has pictures taken of herself in the weeks before her death so Phillip will always remember how she looked.

Club Foot

Philip is born with a club foot and is deeply embarrassed by the deformity. This deformity causes Philip to suffer teasing in school, leading him to make the decision to leave school before his final examinations.

Dr. Carey's Watch

Philip's father leaves him a watch, his only inheritance from a father he never knew. Philip sells the watch in order to live in Germany.

Paintings and Drawings

Philip makes many drawings and paintings in his attempt to become a successful artist. A professional artist reviews these works and advises Philip to choose another profession. Some of these drawings are ruined when Mildred savagely destroys Philip's apartment some years later.

Letters

When Uncle William dies, Philip finds a great number of letters written to him and by him among his possessions. One of these is a letter from Philip's mother asking that William be a spiritual teacher to her son. Philip tears this letter up, believing he has let his mother down by not growing up to be more spiritual.



Blackstable

Blackstable in England is the small village where Philip's aunt and uncle live. Philip lives here the majority of his childhood and comes back to visit often as an adult.

King's School

King's School in Tercunbury is where Philip is sent as a teen to prepare for Oxford and the ministry. Philip's aunt and uncle hope he will become a minister like his uncle. However, Philip leaves school before the final exams.

Germany

Philip moves to Germany where he rooms with a college professor. In Germany Philip finishes his schooling and experiences living on his own for the first time. Germany is also where Philip meets long time friend Hayward.

Paris

Philip lives in Paris for two years, attempting to become an artist. After the death of a fellow student as well as his aunt, Philip decides he will never be a successful artist and decides to return to England.

London

Philip moves to London in order to apprentice with an accountant. Philip finds this work tedious and boring, leaving when the first year is up. Philip later returns to London to study at a hospital to become a doctor like his father. This is when Philip meets Mildred, his first love.



Social Sensitivity

Maugham regarded himself as a storyteller rather than a social analyst or critic, and thus his attitudes toward society are more indirectly than explicitly expressed. *Of Human Bondage* is primarily an existentialist novel concerned with the development of character and the molding of an individual life. The protagonist Philip Carey grows from boyhood to young adulthood, suffering from his overly emotional nature and losing his illusions.

As a ward of his uncle, the Vicar of Blackstable, he perceives conventional village life as restrictive and the people as intolerant, snobbish, and hypocritical. When he goes to the King's School, a Terenure boarding school, he discovers that these qualities persist in both masters and students. Seeking escape from his unhappiness, he travels to Germany to study, where he finds life more stimulating aesthetically and intellectually, although he learns that middle-class prejudices exist there also. Later, in Paris, where he lives as an art student, he experiences the exhilaration of freedom, yet he comes to realize most of the students' lives are failures.

After giving up art, he returns to England and settles in London, where he concludes that the English snobbishness lacks a firm base; for the military reverses of the Boer War raised questions about the aristocratic leadership that England valued so highly. Yet he comes to accept all of the limitations he finds in society, once he has discovered his own purpose in life. Far from rebelling against the social system, Philip finds a kind of personal happiness within the system at the novel's end.

Techniques

Arranging the narrative chronologically, Maugham offers readers a lucid, straightforward plot line. The style, marked by idiomatic, colloquial, and fluent English, approaches the ideals of simplicity, lucidity, and euphony that Maugham recommended.

The plot readily divides into important episodes, dependent upon Philip's location or his quest for a profession.

The trip to Germany, for example, convinces him that he does not want to be a clergyman, and the sojourn in Paris leaves him with a lasting interest in art but convinces him that he should not become an artist. Through trial and error and many false starts, he finally adopts medicine as a career.



Themes

Disability

Philip is a young man born with a disability. Philip has a club foot, meaning that the toes of one foot did not form properly in the womb. Philip walks with a permanent limp. Philip is deeply disturbed by his deformity, often holding his foot behind his other leg in order to keep it from being visible. This habit often draws more attention than it avoids. As a child, Philip's uncle often points out this deformity and the difficulties it will cause Philip as an adult. When Philip goes to school his deformity is noticed immediately by most of his fellow students. At first there is little reaction. However, during the activity period Philip is unable to participate. This lack of participation causes Philip to stand out to his peers. Many of these boys begin to tease Philip about his foot. The teasing causes Philip to withdraw from his fellow students. A few years into his schooling Philip makes a good friend. However, when this friendship begins to sour due to Philip's intense neediness, the friend turns on Philip and makes fun of the club foot.

Philip's club foot causes him to avoid social situations. In this way, the club foot has a huge impact on Philip's personality. Philip, as an adult, is shy and often avoids situations in which he is forced to be social. Philip also has trouble in romantic situations, often conscious of how the girl will react to his foot. During Philip's first love affair his foot is not an issue. However, this does not change Philip's overall view of his foot. With every new relationship Philip enters, his foot is like an elephant standing ignored in the middle of the room. Eventually a discussion takes place regarding the foot, with the new acquaintance telling Philip that the foot does not bother the person. However, Philip rarely believes this assertion. Philip is obsessed with the idea that people around him have negative thoughts about his foot. It is not until Philip meets Nora that he is told that the foot matters more to him than it does to others around him.

Throughout his life people attack Philip's deformity when they want to deeply wound him. Philip has allowed this deformity to form his personality due to this habit. Toward the end of the novel, Philip begins to recognize this about himself. Philip soon comes to realize that every person has a deformity of some sort. Some drink too much, some are unkind, and some cannot help but hurt the people around them. Philip thinks that his deformity is only more visible than those of other people. When Philip comes to see this, he learns to be grateful for his deformity and to see the good things it has brought to his life as well.

Acceptance

Philip spends a great deal of his life looking for acceptance. Philip is orphaned as a young boy and forced to live with an aunt and uncle he does not know. From the first day Philip's uncle makes him feel as though he is not wanted in their home. Uncle William is a strict minister who does not like the disturbance a small child causes in his



home. Not only this, but William and his wife are childless so they do not know what to do with a child. These things combine to make Philip feel unwanted and in the way. Later, when Philip goes to school, he is made fun of because of his deformity. Philip becomes something of an outsider at the school until he makes friends with one of the most popular boys in the school. Suddenly Philip feels as though he belongs. However, this friendship sours and Philip once again feels like a social outcast, like he does not belong anywhere.

After school, Philip moves around a lot, looking for a life and a profession that suits him. Philip makes lots of friends, but continues to feel as though he does not belong. Philip tries to be an accountant, but dislikes the work and has trouble getting along with his coworkers. Philip then tries to become an artist. Despite making a great many friends, Philip feels different from his friends. Philip feels art does not touch him emotionally the way it should and that he approaches his work differently from his friends. Once again Philip decides to change professions. Philip goes back to England and begins to train as a doctor like his father, hoping to find acceptance there. While training at a local hospital, Philip falls in love with a waitress. However, this waitress is only interested in being with a man who makes a great deal of money in order to provide her with the lifestyle she wants. Once again Philip fails to find acceptance.

Philip and Mildred spend many years together, using one another to attempt to get the things they need from one another. Both are looking for acceptance but not finding it from one another. Philip, however, finally finds acceptance. Philip learns that a young girl, the daughter of a friend, is in love with him. Philip soon begins to feel passionate toward this girl too and soon discovers that what he wants most from life is a home and a family. Philip turns to this girl for that satisfaction and in her finally finds the acceptance he has craved his entire life.

Religion

After the death of his mother and father, Philip is sent to live with his Uncle William, a clergyman. Uncle William is a rigid, strict man who force feeds Philip religion morning, noon, and night. When it is time for Philip to be educated, he is sent to a school that has a reputation for graduating a great many of the local clergy. Philip turns to religion himself in school in order to make sense of the cruelty he finds in the world. However, Philip soon begins to doubt his faith when he discovers his faith is not strong enough to convince God to repair his club foot.

Philip struggles with religion throughout his youth. Philip does not understand how a God who is supposed to be all forgiving can be so cruel as to not allow you into heaven in the wake of the simplest of mistakes. Philip lives his life in a cloud of guilt due to the teachings of his religion. When Philip meets a man who tells him it is possible to live a moral life without believing in God or religion, Philip quickly adopts these beliefs as his own. Philip is excited to brush off the restraints of religion. When Philip's uncle is on his death bed and begins to show fear at the idea of death, Philip is shocked and his ideas about religion are deepened.



After the death of his uncle, Philip finds a letter from his mother to his uncle expressing her desire that her son grow up to be a religious man. Philip is shocked by this letter partly because he did not know his mother was a religious woman. Philip is also ashamed because he feels he has let his mother down by shunning religion. However, Philip does not change his mind about religion.

Significant Topics

The two dominant themes are the need for emotional control and the inevitable pain of disillusionment.

Philip Carey, an orphan afflicted with a club foot, is excessively sensitive and shy and, as a result, reacts to life's adversities with greater than normal emotion. Only through suffering embarrassment, indignity, and pain does he finally arrive at a kind of stoic acceptance of suffering as his lot. An intensely painful love relationship causes him to question the relevance of happiness as a major purpose of life.

According to Maugham, life is a process of ridding oneself of illusions acquired during childhood. Philip recognizes hypocrisy in teachers and clergymen and finally rejects his religious beliefs. He adopts a scientific view of reality—that the universe and man are the products of natural forces and that consequently individual life has no meaning. Yet having rejected the illusions of his youth, he accepts the existential viewpoint that one can make a pattern of his life through exertion of will and thus can bring beauty to the experience of living.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is third person omniscient. The main part of the story is seen through the eyes of the main character, Philip Carey. A great deal of the narration is seen through Philip's eyes and is colored by his thoughts and emotions. However, at times the point of view shifts to other characters, such as Philip's uncle, showing the scene from the emotional point of view of that character. Often the switch in point of view happens in the middle of a scene, slipping from one character's mind to another's without any warning.

The point of view in this novel is often difficult to follow. When the narration moves from one character's mind to another there is often little warning, causing the reader to stop and figure out which character is talking in order to keep from becoming confused. However, when the point of view stays steady on Philip Carey, the reader sees the emotion that motivates this character and makes him a three dimensional character. If the point of view were either limited or seen through another character's eyes, the story would not have the emotional impact that is so important in a book of this nature. It is important that the reader know what Philip is feeling and thinking and that is why this point of view works.

Setting

There are many settings in the novel. Philip moves all around England, lives in Germany for a time, and spends time in Paris. The majority of the novel takes place in London. London serves as a backdrop to Philip's life, first representing a large, lonely town, then becoming more familiar and comfortable. When Philip loses all his money, London suddenly becomes a dark, forbidding place, but quickly returns to its familiar feel as Philip finds himself employment and a place to lay his head at night.

The settings of this novel are mere background to the story, providing a sense of culture and the exotic to readers who have not experienced these locations in their own lives. The settings explain the behavior of some of the characters. Philip, being born in England to a family of some class, is expected by this background to be cultured and refined. Philip lives up to this expectation perfectly. When Philip leaves England, his expectations are similar to those of the reader. The people Philip meets are expected to behave in ways that are on par with certain cultural stereotypes. This is why setting is important to the novel.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is precise English. Some of the language is old fashioned, filled with words that modern day readers may be unfamiliar with. The sentence



structure is often odd to the modern reader's ear. The dialogue is often stilted, constructed in such a way that the reader has to go back a second time in order to understand the full impact of the words spoken.

This novel was written during an era when language was spoken without the slang and simplicity that marks modern language. Due to this complex language, the novel is often difficult to read for a casual reader. However, the language illustrates the period in which the story takes place, transporting the reader back to a different time. The language has a beauty unique to its time period and can be appreciated by readers who do not mind a further complication in an already complicated novel.

Structure

The novel is divided into one hundred and twenty-two chapters. The chapters vary in size, some being as long as ten pages while others are no more than a page in length. Each chapter is self contained and follows a specific set of scenes or situations. The story contained within these chapters is linear, following the life of the main character, Philip Carey, from childhood till middle age.

There is one main plot. This main plot follows the life of Philip Carey as he grows from a child of five until just before his thirtieth birthday. Philip goes from being an orphan in his uncle's home, to boarding school, to living abroad. Philip pursues a career in accounting, then art, before settling on medical school. Through his changes in careers, Philip has love affairs, some with partners who return his affections and some who do not. Philip comes to realize what true love really means and what true friendship is. The main plot is linear and simple, telling a straightforward story without the complication of flashbacks or tangled subplots.



Quotes

"The day broke gray and dull. The clouds hung heavily, and there was a rawness in the air that suggested snow," Chapter 1, p. 1.

"Philip came gradually to know the people he was to live with, and by fragments of conversation, some of it not meant for his ears, learned a good deal both about himself and about his dead parents,"
Chapter 5, p. 11.

"Philip had led always the solitary life of an only child, and his loneliness at the vicarage was no greater than it had been when his mother lived," Chapter 8, p. 20.

"Philip was completely scared. He could not make out why they were laughing at him. His heart beat so that he could hardly breathe, and he was more frightened than he had ever been in his life. He stood still stupidly while the boys ran round him, mimicking and laughing; they shouted to him to try and catch them; but he did not move. He did not want them to see him run any more. He was using all his strength to prevent himself from crying," Chapter 11, p. 34.

"Philip was carried away by the sordid intensity of it. He seemed to see the world again in another fashion, and this world too he was anxious to know," Chapter 24, p. 105.

"Philip had not found it necessary to impart to his relations the change in his views on Christianity which had occurred in Germany; they could not be expected to understand; and it seemed less trouble to go to church quietly. But he only went in the morning. He regarded this as a graceful concession to the prejudices of society and his refusal to go a second time as an adequate assertion of free thought," Chapter 34, p. 131.

"Perhaps Philip would have settled down but for the agreement that if he did not like the work he could leave after a year, and get back half the money he paid for his articles. He felt that he was fit for something better than to add up accounts, and it was humiliating that he did so ill something that seemed so contemptible," Chapter 38, p. 150.

"He was in fact very drunk, but as he had not taken more than one glass of beer, it could have been due only to a more dangerous intoxicant than alcohol," Chapter 42, p. 174.

"He felt the best thing he had gained in Paris was a complete liberty of spirit, and he felt himself at last completely free," Chapter 53, p. 235.

"Philip did not surrender himself willingly to the passion that consumed him. He knew that all things human are transitory and therefore that it must cease one day or another. He looked forward to that day with eager longing," Chapter 62, p. 274.

"El Greco was the painter of the soul; and these gentlemen, wan and wasted, not by exhaustion but by restraint, with their tortured minds, seem to walk unaware of the



beauty of the world; for their eyes look only in their hearts, and they are dazzled by the glory of the unseen," Chapter 88, p. 403.

"He realized that he had deceived himself; it was no self-sacrifice that had driven him to think of marrying, but the desire for a wife and a home and love; and now that it all seemed to slip through his fingers he was seized with despair," Chapter 122, p. 564.

Adaptations

Of Human Bondage has had two successful film versions, although in both extensive cutting was necessary with the result that emphasis falls upon the unhappy love affair between Mildred and Philip. In 1934, Bette Davis starred as Mildred; the 1964 version featured Kim Novak.

The violence and suspense in Maugham's "The Letter" encouraged its stage adaptation as a thriller. Later two movie versions were released (1929, 1940). Maugham's novel *The Narrow Corner* appeared in a movie version in 1933.

The novel *The Moon and Suspense* was adapted as a stage play in 1925 and had a run of seventy-five performances before closing; the novel was adapted to the screen in 1942.

Toward the end of Maugham's life, movies were produced using several short stories in one movie length production, with the author appearing on screen to introduce his stories. In *Quartet* (1948), he was reportedly shocked by the censorship in some of the stories, particularly "The Colonel's Lady," which in the eyes of the producer demanded a sentimental conclusion. In addition, the movie included screen versions of "The Kite," "The Alien Corn," and "The Facts of Life." The movie *Trio* (1950) depicted three of the stories — "The Verger," "Mr. KnowAil," and "Sanatorium." *Encore* included film versions of "The Ant and the Grasshopper," "Winter Cruise," and "Gigolo and Gigolette." In 1952, the texts of these three stories appeared in a separate volume alongside their screen versions.

(Please see the entries on "Rain" and *The Razor's Edge* for further details on adaptations of Maugham's works.)



Topics for Discussion

Why does Philip's mother die? Why does Philip go to live with his uncle and aunt? Does Philip have any other options? Why does Philip's uncle look down on Philip's parents? Does Philip's uncle dislike Philip's mother? If so, why?

Discuss Philip's club foot. Why is this such a large part of Philip's life? How does Philip feel about his deformity? Is Philip's club foot a hindrance in his life? How does Philip deal with his club foot? In the end, is Philip's club foot an issue in his life? Does the club foot keep Philip from finding true happiness?

Discuss the loves in Philip's life. Is Philip in love with Emily? Is she really in love with him? Why does this romance end? Why does Philip fall in love with Mildred? Does Mildred ever come to love Philip? How does Mildred feel about Philip? Does Philip love Nora? How do Philip's feelings for Mildred compare with Nora's feelings for Philip?

Discuss Fanny Price. Why is Miss Price so cold to Philip? Does Miss Price love Philip? Why does Miss Price not tell Philip the truth about her situation? Why does Miss Price pick Philip to be the person to find her after she hangs herself? Why does she hang herself? How do you think Miss Price would have reacted if Philip had told her she was not a good artist? Do you think this could have changed the outcome? How did Miss Price affect Philip's life?

Discuss Mildred. Why does Mildred keep appearing in Philip's life? Why does Philip continuously take her in? The second time Philip takes Mildred back, why does he agree to pay for her needs during her pregnancy? Why does Philip later agree to pay for Mildred and Griffiths to go away together? Later, when Philip finds Mildred on the streets, why does he take her into his home? Is Mildred grateful? Why does Mildred destroy his home when Philip tells her he is not attracted to her physically?

Discuss love. Why does Philip feel that in all relationships, one person is in love and the other allows someone to love them? How does this describe Philip's relationship with Mildred? With Norah? With Sally? Is it possible to have a happy relationship in this way? Is it unfair to the one who is not in love? What about the one who is in love?

Discuss the title of the book. What does the author mean by *Of Human Bondage*? How is Philip a prisoner? Does Philip remain a prisoner throughout the book? Is it Philip's club foot that binds him? Why is Philip so concerned with the meaning of life? How does the obsession relate to the title of the novel?

Literary Precedents

Of Human Bondage is both a bildungsroman and an autobiographical novel.

Its emotions and themes are accurate in presenting those of Maugham's youth, although the narrative incorporates numerous fictional episodes and characters. Maugham is following in the footsteps of authors like Charles Dickens in *David Copperfield* (1849-1850) and Samuel Butler in *The Way of All Flesh* (1903). Like them he was content to narrate the work in the third person omniscient point of view, to arrange the narrative by strict chronology, and to draw heavily upon people he knew for characters in fiction. His art of the novel does not reveal significant innovation.



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