

Parrot and Olivier in America Study Guide

Parrot and Olivier in America by Peter Carey

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Plot Summary

"Parrot & Olivier in America" by Peter Carey is an intriguing novel about a French nobleman and his English servant immigrating to America. Due to the political discontent in France, Olivier goes to America to study the penal system in the new country, accompanied by his secretaire, Parrot. Both men find the opportunity for new lives overseas, but changing who he is proves to be more difficult for Olivier. "Parrot & Olivier in America" is an entertaining novel that explores the challenges that different social classes face in America.

Olivier is born into a family of French nobles who are tormented by the recent events of the French Revolution. Parrot lives in England with his father who works for a printer and Parrot tends to Watkins, an engraver and forger. When the printery is burned down and the printers are arrested, Parrot escapes. As an adult, Olivier attends democratic lectures with his best friend, Blacqueville, until Tilbot, Olivier's mother's friend, tells him that he is suspected of being a traitor and a spy and recommends that Olivier move to America. Tilbot also asks Parrot to accompany Olivier to America as the noble's secretaire, but Parrot's lover, Mathilde, is furious and sends him away, despite his intention to take her with him.

On the Havre, the ship to America, Olivier mourns the death of Blacqueville while Parrot laments the fact that Mathilde will not speak to him, though Tilbot bribed the captain to convey Mathilde and her mother to America with Parrot. On the ship, Olivier is befriended by Mr. Peek, a rich American banker, and when he agrees to sit for Mathilde to paint a portrait of him, Parrot's jealousy causes him to hate his new employer. In America, Olivier learns he cannot act against Parrot since the Comtesse de Garmont, his mother, assigned Parrot as his cosignatory, so without Parrot, Olivier cannot acquire any of his money. Parrot and Mathilde reconcile and Parrot quits his job. When Parrot is imprisoned after Olivier shoots a man, Olivier bails his servant out of jail as Parrot recalls meeting Tilbot on the moors after his father was arrested. Parrot was then taken on a ship to Australia, and Tilbot abandoned him during the journey.

After Parrot returns to Olivier's employment, they visit Mr. Peek's farm where Olivier meets and falls in love with Amelia Godefroy. Olivier and Parrot tour the Quakers' prison in Philadelphia and while visiting M. Duponceau's library, Parrot finds a book with one of his engravings. He then tells Olivier about his past and how he got involved with Tilbot who returned to look for him in Australia and convinced Parrot to leave his wife and child in order to become an artist in Paris. Olivier sends Parrot to New York to buy a French copy of Moliere's "Tartuffe" and Parrot finds Mathilde and her mother absent from the boardinghouse where he left them.

Parrot and Olivier travel to Wethersfield, CT to visit the Godefroy family and tour Wethersfield prison, and on the way, they become friends. As Olivier falls deeper in love with Miss Godefroy, he sends Parrot to New York for an extended vacation, allowing Amelia to act as his secretaire in his servant's absence. In New York, Parrot finds Mathilde living with Eckerd and a group which includes Watkins, and as Olivier



summons his servant back to Wethersfield, Parrot learns that his friends are burning homes in order to fraudulently obtain insurance money. Upon his return to Wethersfield, Parrot becomes involved with the town printer until he informs Olivier that he is leaving to pursue his own career plans.

Olivier's grief at losing Parrot is short-lived because Amelia agrees that he may ask her father's permission to marry her, and she arranges a trip for Olivier and Mr. Godefroy during which the Frenchman obtains permission to marry his beloved. Meanwhile, Parrot writes to Tilbot with a business proposal regarding selling books that he will print in Europe. Though Olivier is disgusted by the Independence Day celebrations he witnesses, he is still willing to stay in America because he loves Amelia. However, when she insists on marrying in France and Mr. Godefroy agrees, Olivier tells his future father-in-law that his family will not accept Amelia. She overhears the conversation and refuses to marry Olivier.

In New York, Parrot has bought a house and set up a printery. Olivier visits and is distraught at the loss of Amelia. Although he is offensive, Parrot treats him kindly because he knows his noble friend is disappointed in his hopes for love. Olivier wants Parrot to return to France with him, but Parrot refuses because Mathilde is pregnant. Olivier leaves alone and dejected. Parrot dedicates his history of their stories to Olivier, claiming that Olivier's fears about America are disproved by Parrot's life.



Section 1: pages 3-35

Section 1: pages 3-35 Summary

"Parrot & Olivier in America" by Peter Carey is an intriguing novel about a French nobleman and his English servant immigrating to America. Because of the political discontent in France, Olivier goes to America to study the penal system in the new country, accompanied by his secretary, Parrot. Both men find the opportunity for new lives overseas, but changing who he is proves to be more difficult for Olivier. "Parrot & Olivier in America" is an entertaining novel that explores the challenges that different social classes face in America.

A noble of Myopia, Olivier-Jean-Baptiste de Clarel de Barfleur de Garmont speeds through the gates to enter Chateau de Barfleur, his family home. The Garmont family is tortured by the obscenity and horror of the recent French Revolution, and this is obvious when Olivier finds parcels filled with dead pigeons. Maman is hysterical when the Comte de Garmont insists on cremating the birds, but a young child, Olivier watches without understanding the pigeons are victims of the Revolution. He manages to grab a piece of newspaper with which the birds were wrapped, and he conveys it into the woods. Olivier rushes into the oratory, wondering if God will protect him for the horrid thing he holds in his hand. Bebe tells the boy that his parents and grandfather were imprisoned in Porte Libre, and his grandfather was eventually killed at the guillotine. Because Olivier criticizes his family's timidity, Bebe praises the Comte's courage and objects that the king was a good man who was surrounded by vain and selfish people, which caused the overthrow of the monarchy and led France to Napoleon's thievery. When he turned seven during the summer of 1812, the Marquis de Tilbot, also known as the Hero of the Vendee, visits and the Comtesse bows before their guest who shows her a folio of engravings of exotic species. Some months later, Olivier panics at his mother packs her trunks, but he is soon made to understand they are going to Paris to greet the king; his father leaves first on horseback, and Olivier follows in a carriage with his mother, but Bebe refuses to accompany them to the city.

Olivier enjoys his journey to Paris with his mother and they meet the Comte de Garmont in Paris so that he can escort them to the family's home on the rue Saint-Dominique. Many things have been destroyed, but Maman remains cheerful in anticipation of the king's return. Olivier grows nervous as the king's arrival is continually delayed. He is relieved when he overhears his father talking to the duc de Blacqueville about the king's imminent return to Paris; however, he is devastated to learn he is being sent back to the Chateau de Barfleur with Odile, one of his mother's maids, and his protests are ineffective. When he returns to the Chateau de Barfleur, he behaves well, though he never forgets the king and continues envisioning the king's return. Olivier spends the summer studying with Bebe, but his parents write frequently. Olivier's parents return to the Chateau de Barfleur in March 1815, and when the Comtesse rushes to the pigeon loft in tears, Olivier follows and learns it is all over; Bonaparte has returned.



Section 1: pages 3-35 Analysis

Olivier always believes something cruel and catastrophic occurred before his birth, but his parents, the Comte and Comtesse de Garmont will never discuss it. He knows that the years before he was born in 1805 were filled with inventions of great beauty and terror, though he does not understand what exactly these inventions were. Maman suffers greatly, mourning her youth in Paris and missing the city that has been taken from her, and Olivier is jealous when she sings for guests, feeling "violent repugnance at this private act carried out in public view...she gave away a pleasure that was rightly [his]" (page 9). Olivier is also very close to the Abbe de La Londe, whom he calls Bebe, and Bebe treats him almost like a son. When Bebe joins him and looks at the newspaper clipping that shows an awful machine with the king's severed head beside it, Olivier asks who made the contraption and why. Bebe explains the father of Napoleon made it because it was considered a kinder means of execution. Olivier's life is good, although the image of the guillotine haunts him. Olivier does not like Tilbot, and his dislike is increased by Bebe's obvious aversion to the one-armed man. Arriving at the house on the rue Saint-Dominique, Olivier is happy the house of Garmont has been restored. He is also happy to learn his friend, Thomas Blaqueville, will also be moving to the rue Saint-Dominique so they will both be neighbors of the king, but Thomas' family has not yet arrived. Olivier is excited when his mother presents him with a new suit to visit the king, and he writes Bebe about the suit, that Thomas has arrived and to demand Bebe join them in Paris very soon. During the summer that Olivier spends at the Chateau de Barfleur while his parents stay in Paris, his mother's letters are kind and pleasant, but his father's are sophisticated and written as though Olivier is already a man as he tells him about the impression King Louis XVIII made when he visited. The letters omit that the Comte de Garmont is disadvantaged by not having fled France during the Revolution, and he has been granted the insulting prefecture of the Department of Maine-e-Loire.



Section 2: pages 36-58

Section 2: pages 36-58 Summary

John Larrit is nicknamed Parrot as a child and is still called Parrot in 1793 when the French begin chopping each other's heads off. He is close to his father, Jack Larrit, but never knows his mother. Jack begins working for Mr. Piggott, and they are given a room in the dormitory. The first and second days, Parrot is put to work delivering newspapers, but on the third day, Mr. Piggott asks him to climb up the chimney to retrieve one of the printer's chamber pots. Parrot's job is to take the twenty-year-old pressman, Algernon Watkins, his daily sandwich and remove his waste; Piggott threatens to murder the boy if he tells anyone about Watkins as none of the other printers know about Watkins' presence in the house. Parrot becomes friendly with Watkins who is an impressive engraving artist and begins teaching Parrot how to engrave with a burrin, though he frequently mocks the boy's attempts. At the end of every day, Parrot carries ten parcels downstairs, which he leaves inside the trap door to be taken in at night. One day, he finds that an item has spilled out from one of the parcels, and he immediately recognizes the power and danger of the forged assignat, the paper currency of the revolutionary government of France. Parrot places the forgery in his pocket because he cannot bear to destroy something so beautiful. A tall, one-armed Frenchman visits the Piggotts and Parrot mimics the man when he talks while they bathe in the river. While bathing Parrot, Jack finds the assignat in his son's pocket and unkindly reminds the boy not to mention it to anyone.

Jack Larrit confers with Weasel, another printer, about the assignat. The next morning, Weasel heads into the woods without a word to anyone, and when Parrot goes to Watkins' chambers that day, he feels guilty because he is certain Weasel went to the authorities. When Weasel returns two days later, everything calms, and Parrot is able to resume his lessons with Watkins. Parrot is sent to the next town to deliver wedding invitations, but he is accosted by a mob of harvesters who ruin the invitations. On the road, a gentleman, Lord Devon, offers him a ride home to Piggott's house, so Parrot climbs into the carriage with Lord Devon and his men, Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Pook. At the Piggotts's house, Lord Devon builds a fire in the fireplace and he reaches into the fire and withdraws a fistful of smoldering currency. As Parrot runs out the door toward Watkins' secret hold, Mr. Benjamin catches him. The house erupts into flames, and Mr. Piggott's broken body falls from the roof. He chains their feet while Mr. Pook holds them at gunpoint, and telling Mr. Benjamin to help chain the men, he threatens to shoot Parrot if the boy moves. Suddenly, the men are distracted by a burning angel running across the roof, and the printers yell for Parrot to run, cheering loudly as the boy runs into the woods.



Section 2: pages 36-58 Analysis

Parrot and his father are asked to leave Dartmouth after Parrot draws the bloody head of Louis XVI on a footpath, so they relocate to Dittisham where they fall in with a group of printers. When Piggott wants Parrot to tend to Watkins, Jack negotiates his son's wages, and Parrot climbs up the chimney where the frightful pressman threatens to come out if Parrot is late again. Years later, Parrot learns the house was designed by Nicholas Owens and includes many hidden rooms. While teaching the boy to engrave, Watkins draws a bird for Parrot and confides that he plans to produce and print the best book of birds in the world. Parrot knows the forgery is illegal, but he has no idea that thousands of assignats are forged to devalue the currency and destroy the Revolution. Jack Larrit tries to wash his son, but when he finds the assignat in Parrot's pocket, he does not speak until the Frenchman is gone. Jack comments "so that's the job then" (p. 54) before reminding Parrot to tell no one. When his father confers with Weasel, presumably about the assignat, Parrot knows he has betrayed Watkins, so he is too ashamed to take his burin lesson that Sunday. After Lord Devon takes Parrot back to the printery, Mrs. Piggott is terrified when Lord Devon tells her all foreigners must register with customs officials since she is French, and Lord Devon continues to harangue Mr. Piggott on this matter. Lord Devon begins talking about the fame of Piggott's house since it was built with all sorts of holes where traitors can be hidden. Though it is hot when Lord Devon builds a fire, no one will move away from the fire; "to admit the heat...would be to confess to something worse" (p. 64). After laughing that it is literally raining evidence, Lord Devon instructs the printers to let the house burn. The printers, including Jack Larrit, are arrested but Parrot escapes while Lord Devon and his men are distracted by Watkins running across the burning roof.



Section 3: pages 69-81

Section 3: pages 69-81 Summary

By the age of twenty-six, Olivier is a lawyer and he and Thomas live together in a small house on the rue d'Anjou. They study history and attend the lectures of Guizot, a Protestant from Nimes who forces them to understand that democracy cannot be reversed; they have no idea of the danger in attending these lectures. One dreary Monday, Olivier receives an invitation to visit Marquis de Tilbot who is in Versailles. At the hotel Juste, he finds Tilbot posing for a portrait which his servant, Perroquet, paints to hide his amputated arm. As they sit down to eat, Tilbot mentions the fact that Olivier and Thomas have attended many of Guizot's lectures, and Olivier is in a bad position because he is a Garmont; the liberals think he is a spy, while the monarchs believe he is a traitor, so he is in danger. The Comtesse, fearing for her son's life, has turned to Tilbot for help, and Tilbot insinuates that Olivier should flee to America. Early the next morning, Olivier rushes to Paris to warn Blacqueville against attracting the attention of spies at Guizot's next lecture. Rushing to the Sorbonne, Olivier finds Blacqueville and whispers that he should not attend Guizot's lecture. They meet at Les Lilas and Olivier relates what he has learned from his father. They agree they are honor-bound to defend the king, regardless of how much they disagree with his actions.

Section 3: pages 69-81 Analysis

In 1814, the Comtesse de Garmont rejoices that it is over. Louis XVIII returns to France, but the Garmonts are not as happy as expected since the Comte de Garmont is treated unfairly because he did not flee into exile with the king. Olivier and Thomas become deists as they grow up "aboard this teetering structure built between the old and new" (p. 70). When Olivier visits Tilbot at the hotel Juste, Tilbot introduces Olivier to Parrot as a man of many parts, foreshadowing Parrot's involvement in Olivier's life, as well as Parrot's mysterious nature. Tilbot quotes from Olivier's notes from a recent lecture of Guizot's, proving that someone was spying on Olivier. Olivier suspects that Tilbot was a member of the secret service which emerged during Bonaparte's regime. Tilbot further suggests that Olivier flee to America to avoid being punished for suspicions of being a traitor or a spy. When Olivier visits his parents at the rue Saint-Dominique, he is surprised to find them reading books about the Americans' prisons, and the Comte looks at Olivier thoughtfully as he suggests someone should go to America to learn about their penal system. On the pretext of giving him money for the day, he calls Olivier to his office where he whispers that the government is in a dire situation as the king plans to kill the remaining democracy which will lead to a public uprising. The Comte begs his son to return to Versailles and act with extreme caution. Before leaving Les Lilas where he meets Blacqueville, Olivier notices M. Perroquet sitting several tables away. Walking through streets where the guillotine once stood, now filled with poverty-stricken children, Olivier thinks they are fools of the Revolution: they have murdered his family only to have no one care for them since.



Section 4: pages 82-104

Section 4: pages 82-104 Summary

In July 1830, the French are again angered by the king, and so Parrot plays secret nurse to Olivier as the young man is unhappy with the king, but Parrot does not understand that Olivier, as a noble, is honor-bound to protect the king from the angry mob. The king charges past the nobles, carrying as much silver as he possibly can, and Olivier weeps to see the last of the Bourbons depart. During the second week of his new assignment, Parrot watches as Olivier swears fealty to a new king on his parents' orders. The government agrees that Olivier may study American prisons as long as he pays for the journey himself. Parrot is preoccupied with his lover, Mathilde Christian, an artist for nobles. They live together, caring for her mother, Mme. Christian. Soon after the fall of Charles X, Tilbot informs Parrot that he wants him to escort Olivier to America, but Parrot objects that he is too happy with Mathilde to leave Paris. Tilbot offers to allow Parrot to take Mathilde and her mother to America as well. At Mathilde's apartment, Parrot asks his lover to accompany him to America, but after she insists she cannot leave France, he promises he will not go without her, and peace resumes. She is working at her canvas when Parrot awakes, but she has returned to battle. She forces Parrot to leave, and he mourns the injustice of losing everything he loves yet again. He tells Tilbot he is ready to go to America.

Years earlier in 1793, Parrot is in Devon after his father is arrested and the printery burned to the ground. He encounters the one-armed Frenchman on his path through the moors and during their journey together, Parrot tries his best to help Tilbot who needs constant assistance. Eventually, they find a roof in the form of a warrener's destroyed cottage, causing Parrot to worry what has happened. He wakes in the morning as Tilbot unpicks a warrener's net, and when Tilbot is done, they go out to the moors, using the net to capture rabbits which they eat for several days. Parrot is frightened when he finds Tilbot biting a pelt as he twists pelts together, so he runs out to the moors where he finds a stone on which he engraves Tilbot's image. He returns to the cottage to find Tilbot nearly done making a rug from the furs. Holding Parrot to prevent him from running again, Tilbot makes the boy understand the rug is for him.

Section 4: pages 82-104 Analysis

Parrot is agitated that he is forced to spy on Olivier whom he refers to as Lord Migraine, but he has been with Tilbot for so long that he has come to accept it as his rightful place. When the House of Orleans forces Olivier to swear a second time because they do not trust him, Parrot wants to smuggle him to London immediately, but the Garmonts send him to buy more books about American prisons; Olivier is "being helped to develop an interest in penal servitude" (page 84). When trying to convince Parrot to accompany Olivier to America, Tilbot offers him a choice of houses in America since they are cheap there, and he explains Parrot will be Olivier's secretaire; he will act as spy and protector



of Olivier and his friend, Blacqueville, sending copies of their correspondence and dictation to France which the Comte de Garmont will submit to the government to prove his son's loyalty. In 1793, after fleeing from the printery, Parrot encounters Tilbot on the path along the moors, and they walk side by side, searching for a place to hide until Parrot is so tired that Tilbot carries him. The boy wakes to find the nobleman burning the food so he assumes the duty, unwittingly entering Tilbot's employ. Parrot follows Tilbot now as he once followed his father. He catches a fish which Tilbot eats, and Parrot patiently waits for his share, "too young to know the true strange nature of [his] life" (p. 100). At the warrener's cottage, Parrot considers running away as Tilbot makes a fire, but he falls asleep, waking to find Tilbot making rabbit stew. His belly full, Parrot returns to sleep. After returning to the cottage after his terror of seeing Tilbot biting a rabbit's pelt, Parrot surrenders finally after realizing the rabbit-skin rug is being made for him, and Tilbot strokes the boy's head as he cries, unsure what the future holds.



Section 5: pages 105-127

Section 5: pages 105-127 Summary

Olivier writes to his mother from the ship the Havre that his only friend in the world is dead and he is stuck alone at sea with the clown to whom he is dictating this letter. Blacqueville and Olivier visited the Countess S on Olivier's mother's orders, but when Monsieur d'Audloy called Olivier a traitor for going to America, Blacqueville challenged him to a duel and was killed. Olivier had planned to return to Paris, but when he presented himself to the captain to obtain a refund, he accepted a drink from the captain and awoke to find himself at sea. Parrot explains that the captain of the Havre accepts Tilbot's bribe to accommodate two additional passengers, but when Parrot finds Mathilde and her mother on board the ship, they refuse to even look at him, and his attempts at reconciliation are ignored. When the ship travels through a storm, Parrot vomits.

When Parrot vomits, Olivier asks the captain to send Parrot to the hold as he does not want to share his room with his sick servant. He is joined by Mr. Peek, an American who offers him advice: the Americans onboard will be offended by Olivier sending his servant below. Olivier confides that he believes Parrot drugged him, so Mr. Peek promises to help bring Parrot to justice when they reach America if Olivier will tolerate him while they are on the ship. After being bedridden for several days, Parrot emerges from his cabin in time to see Mathilde leave hers, but he does not understand why she is still ignoring him. She has turned to the Peeks to protect her. When Parrot finally finds Mathilde alone, she slaps him and accuses him of throwing her away like an old rag and forcing her to leave everything, but she will not be left behind. Olivier sees Mathilde slap Parrot and realizes she must be his lover. Fascinated by the artist, he decides having her will save him from some of his grief for Blacqueville. Agreeing to have his portrait taken, Olivier sits in the captain's chair as Mathilde paints him in his small cabin. When he inquires the price of the portrait, Olivier realizes he is a fool; he allowed his parents to arrange his financial matters due to his haste to leave Paris, and he awoke on the ship without a single coin.

Section 5: pages 105-127 Analysis

While writing his mother from aboard the Havre, Olivier is distraught with grief for his friend, and he is angry that Parrot took advantage of his drugged state to smuggle his paramour and her mother onboard. After boarding the ship and learning his beloved and her mother are on board, Parrot finds Tilbot playing solitaire in the captain's bunk as Olivier lies drugged at Tilbot's feet, showing that Olivier unjustly suspects Parrot of drugging him. As they set out to sea, Mathilde locks the door to her stateroom, leaving Parrot to share a cabin with Olivier. Parrot tries to talk to Mathilde through her door, but he is answered only with silence. Because he is a Garmont, Olivier refuses to allow anyone to see his rage or grief despite the hardships he endures. Olivier is befriended



by Mr. Peek who promises that Parrot will be brought to justice in America for drugging Olivier, but he advises Olivier to make up with his servant while they are on the ship to avoid alienating the other Americans. As they discuss American prisons, Mr. Peek tells Olivier about the lack of leisure in America as everyone struggles to better their own situation. Parrot is astounded by how Olivier slanders him in the letter he dictates to the Comtesse de Garmont. Parrot attempts to avoid both Olivier and Mathilde. Mathilde paints a flattering portrait of Miss Peek which she presents to Mr. Peek as a gift during dinner one evening, allowing Parrot to see how she acquires customers by offering a sample of her wares to be handed from one rich American to the next. Mathilde continues to treat Parrot coldly and his heart is broken by her feigned indifference. The way Mathilde treats Parrot intrigues Olivier who decides he must have her, so he agrees to sit for a portrait. Out of respect for his new friends' puritanical strains, he leaves his cabin door ajar. Olivier is distraught when he realizes that he does not have a single coin in his possession since he allowed his parents to arrange his financial matters.



Section 6: pages 128-147

Section 6: pages 128-147 Summary

The only passengers who treat Parrot humanely are Mr. Eckerd, a Jew, and his singer, Miss Desclee. Parrot is ready to kill Olivier when he notices the nobleman has his eye on Mathilde. The idea of what Olivier and Mathilde do in the locked cabin haunts Parrot. Olivier dictates a letter to his mother which Parrot transcribes. As Olivier tells his mother about sitting while Mathilde painted his portrait, Parrot continues to describe the devious things he imagines happened in the locked cabin, ending the letter by confessing the servant is writing since Olivier broke his heart. He rips the letter up and throws it to the wind, but the words still cause his heart to ache. Refusing to allow him to pay, Mathilde paints Mr. Eckerd in a wild, foreign beauty which causes the other passengers to withdraw their approval of Mathilde by the time they reach Long Island Sound.

As they reach the lower tip of Manhattan Island, Olivier cannot be distracted from the fact that he has only a letter of credit, written in English by his enemy, but no coins. Mr. Peek looks at his instrument and happily explains that the Bank of New York is convenient since Peek is the president; unfortunately, they cannot order Parrot's arrest since the Comtesse de Garmont made him Olivier's cosignatory with the bank, meaning Olivier cannot obtain any money from the bank without Parrot's signature as well. When Olivier reunites with Mr. Peek after going through customs, Mr. Peek hands him an envelopes with American banknotes, loaning him money until he can access his own. Mr. Peek drives him to a boarding house run by an Irishwoman of good character. Early the next morning, Olivier sets out to seek his servant, presenting his card at Parrot's inn.

Section 6: pages 128-147 Analysis

Though Olivier seems to cheer a bit from his mourning, he still treats Parrot poorly, not seeming to realize Parrot is a free man. He is horrified as he watches Olivier and Mathilde flirt, and though he plans to avoid them when Mathilde decides to paint Olivier's portrait, they insist he attend upon them. When Olivier asks Parrot about his money, Parrot does not tell him that he knows exactly where the letters of introduction to the Bank of New York are since he packed them, sending them away so he can search for them. Mr. Eckerd and Miss Desclee discuss a play in which Miss Desclee will play both parts, foreshadowing the play which Parrot goes to see in American much later, and when they disappear to work on it, Parrot rushes his enemy, throwing the portrait of Olivier into the sea and making himself a public madman so that Olivier is permitted to lock the door against his servant while sitting for his portrait. In the letter he dictates to Parrot, Olivier discusses his grief for Blacqueville and the national pride which the Americans carry too far. Parrot's jealousy causes him to write to the Comtesse de Garmont about the inappropriate things her son has done with Mathilde, but he rips the letter up and throws it to the winds instead of sending it back to France. Parrot describes how he first met Mathilde when she was commissioned to paint a mural in



Tilbot's home, and he drew for her to prove he is not just a footman. Six years later, her painting of Olivier holds such vitality that one would think she loved her subject. After she finishes the portrait of Olivier, she turns her attentions to Mr. Eckerd, and Parrot knows she is disgusted by her intimacy with an aristocrat as she always paints the poor after painting nobility, but the manner in which she depicts Eckerd causes the other passengers to withdraw their approval from Mathilde before they reach America. There is some confusion as the passengers present their papers to the American officials, but Parrot is tormented only by his loneliness and the sight of Mathilde and her mother. Arriving in America, Olivier notes that no one except Blacqueville could share his amusement with America. After looking at Olivier's banking papers and realizing that the Comtesse de Garmont assigned Parrot as Olivier's cosignatory so that Olivier cannot access his money without his servant, Mr. Peek leads Olivier off the boat to find Parrot and make peace with him. The customs official detains Olivier for nearly an hour after learning he has no money, despite Olivier's promise to return the next day with the money. Mr. Peek and Olivier take a carriage to the Bank of New York where Olivier meets the manager, promising to return later with Parrot. As they search for a suitable residence, they notice Parrot beneath the portico of Mr. Peek's preferred hotel with Mathilde and her mother, and Mr. Peek notes that at least Olivier now knows where his cosignatory is residing. Mr. Peek helps Olivier acquire lodging, and the next morning, Olivier visits the hotel where Parrot is staying, hoping to convince Parrot to accompany him to the Bank of New York to obtain some of his money.



Section 7: pages 148-165

Section 7: pages 148-165 Summary

When her mother slaps her face, Mathilde rushes into Parrot's arms and they make love while Mme. Christian goes to the market. Parrot writes to Tilbot to give his notice because Olivier insults his honor, threatens him and tried to seduce his wife. Parrot is too old to throw away the chance this new country provides him. Parrot tries in vain to find employment, eventually cashing in several of Mathilde's bank notes to pay for their room. He leaves the hotel to investigate New York and encounters Olivier who asks about Mrs. Larrit's health. When they are attacked by a group of ruffians who seize Olivier, Parrot beats one man with a piece of lumber. The rest of the men turn on Parrot, but Olivier shoots one of them in the shoulder. On Olivier's second Monday in America, Mr. Robert O'Hara visits and declares himself Olivier's servant. Producing a letter from Mrs. Dougdale as a means of introduction, he allows Olivier to understand that their Society for the Alleviation of the Miseries of Public Prisons expects him to be the French translator of their publication. Quickly occupying the highest levels of democratic society, Olivier is confused by the obsession with money and trade. He tours countless prisons. One afternoon, Mr. O'Hara visits Olivier to announce they will not tour the Bronx with a policeman because he has acquired two beautiful long-barreled pistols. He fits Olivier with a holster and leaves, planning to collect the Frenchman at 10 o'clock that night.

Section 7: pages 148-165 Analysis

Shortly after Parrot and Mathilde reconcile, their landlady knocks to announce Olivier wants to visit Mr. Larrit and after Parrot instructs her to say he is not home, she notes that Mathilde appears to be feverish. When Mathilde's condition worsens, Parrot is consumed with fear that his beloved will die, and he and her mother tend to Mathilde devotedly. On the third day, Olivier bursts into their room and, insisting they need a doctor, retrieves Dr. Halleck who claims Mathilde has smallpox and provides them with a paste. The paste makes her worse so Parrot, insisting he can treat Mathilde better, buys olive oil at the drugstore which he applies to Mathilde. Her health improves within a week, and though Olivier visits occasionally, she ignores him, crediting Parrot for saving her life. Parrot writes to Tilbot to inform his former employer that he wishes to quit, but his attempts at gaining employment in New York are unsuccessful. Parrot runs into Olivier while walking through New York, and he defends the young nobleman who defends Parrot in turn by shooting his assailant; it seems Parrot has much yet to learn about Olivier. Despite the hostile nature of his financial documents, Olivier lives quite well during his first fortnight in New York, though he is irritated to find that Parrot is not home whenever he calls. On his second Monday in New York, Olivier is accosted by Mr. O'Hara, a member of the Society for the Alleviation of the Miseries of Public Prisons which hopes that Olivier will translate their publications into French. When Olivier asks for a more suitable office, Mr. O'Hara leads him to the Athenaeum where he is made a

temporary member and given freedom of the house. Olivier does not understand the obsession with trade and money in America, but his association with the Society for the Alleviation of the Miseries of Public Prisons allows him to tour many prisons as he is supposed to do. Mr. O'Hara acquires two pistols so that he and Olivier can visit the Bronx without being accompanied by a policeman, and on stepping out into the night while waiting for O'Hara's return, Olivier has never felt so hopeful in his life.



Section 8: pages 166-185

Section 8: pages 166-185 Summary

Due to Olivier shooting a man, Parrot is sent to prison in the Tombs. A man in the next cell asks about Parrot's offense but ignores Parrot's reciprocal question, instead expressing concern for his ten-year-old son who is being held on the tier above. After reading from the Bible about how God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the man offers Parrot \$500 to take his son. Realizing the man wants him to kill his son because the boy witnessed his father murder his mother, Parrot lunges at the man but is beaten back and thrown into the lowest level of the Tombs where the boy is held. Parrot follows Tilbot to the Roborough Inn where they catch a ride to Plymouth. Seeing soldiers with coffins leading four chained men, Parrot recognizes his father as the man closest to the front, and his father turns and looks at him just before leaving his sight. Tilbot carries Parrot to a boat, bribing the captain with a handful of Piggott's forged bills. When the captain asks what Tilbot and Parrot will do in Australia, Parrot begs not to be sent to Australia in French, arousing Reverend Potter's interest. Dr. Bingham takes Parrot on the poop deck for air, but a large wave washes over the vessel, knocking Reverend Potter over. Parrot watches as Tilbot wraps his arm around the clergyman's neck and twists. Tilbot holds Parrot as the captain announces Reverend Potter broke his neck during the fall. On the day of Reverend Potter's burial, Parrot is horrified by the prisoners brought on deck. The captain eulogizes Potter, praising his work with teaching prisoners, before the body is thrown into the sea. At dinner that night, Mrs. Bingham announces it is her Christian duty to assume Reverend Potter's job of educating the prisoners, and when Dr. Bingham looks at Tilbot strangely, Parrot worries that Tilbot will be arrested and he will find himself alone yet again. In their cabin, Tilbot cuts open the rabbit-skin rug, pocketing a handful of forged bills and showing Parrot where the rest are stashed for the boy. Realizing Tilbot plans to leave him, Parrot hands his protector the portrait he engraved of Tilbot on stone and Tilbot promises to come back for him.

Section 8: pages 166-185 Analysis

Parrot is imprisoned due to Olivier shooting his assailant. Leading the prisoner to a cell, the warder is pleasant and sympathetic as Parrot tells him what happened. Parrot is angered by the prisoner who insinuates that he wants Parrot to kill his son, and when he is thrown into the same tier as the boy, Parrot is reminded of the youth he once was, leading to a tangent about the time he spent with Tilbot when he was a boy. In Plymouth, the young Parrot is distraught to see his father being led to his execution, but he accompanies Tilbot to the boat leaving England. When Parrot gets sick on the ship, Dr. Bingham nurses him. Tilbot pretends to be mute to hide his French accent from the British passengers who assume Parrot is his son. Parrot is terrified when he witnesses Tilbot kill Reverend Potter, and he fears for Dr. Bingham's safety when the doctor seems to suspect Tilbot of killing the clergyman. His main fear is that he will be left alone again if Tilbot is arrested. When Tilbot shows Parrot where he has hidden forged bills in the



rabbit-skin rug, Parrot realizes that Tilbot plans to leave him, so he bestows Tilbot with the engraving he made earlier of Tilbot. Though Tilbot promises to return for Parrot, the boy does not believe him, indicating his superior intuition that he does not trust Tilbot, though the Frenchman has been his protector since his father's arrest. Two days later, Parrot watches from the porthole as Tilbot and Dr. Bingham take a boat to Sugar Loaf.



Section 9: pages 186-222

Section 9: pages 186-222 Summary

It is an autumn morning in New York as Olivier stands at the entrance to the Tombs with Mr. O'Hara, Mr. Peek, several other gentlemen, Mathilde and her mother. Olivier borrows money from Mr. Peek to obtain justice, an "event impossible to conceive in France" (p. 189). When Parrot emerges from the prison, Mathilde charges him, but after thanking Olivier, Parrot informs him he cannot leave by himself because an innocent boy will be murdered if he is not released. Olivier claims he cannot help, and Parrot rushes back to the Tombs, causing Mathilde to attack Olivier. Matters are arranged, and the boy is released as the court is willing to commit the boy to the care of any of these gentlemen if they will feed him until the murderer is hanged. Discussing how the boy may grow up to be President of the United States since America offers the chance to improve one's lifestyle, Mr. Peek suggests loaning Mathilde money to buy a house, claiming he will profit on the loan or, if she defaults, he will reclaim the house and sell it for a profit.

Several days later, Olivier finds Parrot waiting on the stoop of his boardinghouse and learns Parrot has decided to remain in his service until Olivier is safely settled. While Olivier considers the offer, they go to the Bank of America to withdraw some of Olivier's money, some of which Olivier uses to pay his servant. When they go separate ways, Olivier is sure he will never see Parrot again, but the next day, Parrot informs him that they have been invited to a luncheon at Mr. Peek's house the next day. Peek takes Olivier on a tour of his farm which is improved by the presence of Miss Godefroy, a friend of one of Peek's daughters who is from Connecticut. At dinner, he learns that her father, Mr. Philip Godefroy, sits on the board of Wethersfield Prison, and after dinner, he is delighted to find himself walking with Miss Godefroy and talking about Moliere, though he is shocked that such an impropriety is permitted. The next day, Olivier writes four letters. The first, to Miss Godefroy, tells her he is planning a trip to Wethersfield soon and hopes to interview her father about the prison, but he also hopes that he and Miss Godefroy will have a chance to continue their conversation about Moliere. His second is a letter introducing himself to Mr. Godefroy and asking to interview the man. Olivier writes next to the Quakers in Philadelphia, asking to postpone his visit scheduled for the coming Friday. Though unable to tell her he is in love, he writes to his mother, telling of his work in the prisons. The next morning, Monday, Olivier instructs Parrot to copy the letters and have them dispatched by the fastest possible method, and Parrot performs his duties without any hint of the rebellion he had shown on the Havre. Unfortunately, Olivier's plans are interrupted when Mr. Peek returns the letter to Miss Godefroy, coldly explaining that she has already gone home, and Olivier understands he has offended his friend who expected him to marry one of his daughters. Then, Olivier receives a post from the Philadelphia Quakers begging him not to postpone the visit.

Early Thursday morning, Olivier and Parrot set out, arriving in Philadelphia twenty-six miserable hours later, at 9 A.M. on Friday morning. M. Duponceau escorts Olivier and



Parrot to their boardinghouse, and on the ride, Olivier asks the Frenchman where he can purchase a copy of Moliere in French; Duponceau owns a copy of "Tartuffe" but is reluctant to loan it to Olivier since the last time he loaned one of his books to a French noble, it was destroyed. After tending to his duties the next day, Olivier comments on the lack of wine at dinner and learns that Duponceau has a cellar filled with first-rate wines, so Olivier and Parrot accompany Duponceau to his home. In Duponceau's extensive library, Olivier chats with their host as Parrot flips through a large folio. When Olivier asks how he can obtain a pocket book of "Tartuffe" in French, Duponceau suggests sending his servant to New York, but Olivier is hesitant to send Parrot to New York for fear of what Peek is doing with Mathilde. Noting Parrot's look of madness as he looks at the book, Olivier decides to send him to New York anyway as Parrot cries out "I did this... This work is mine" (page 216), showing them a picture in the book. As a boy, Parrot is transported to Botany Bay by a forger, and after the forger left him, he was sent to be a servant to Major Grose. When he was thirteen years old, he was sent to work as an architect, and he was an artist at age eighteen. Tilbot returned for Parrot when the boy became a man. Parrot proves his claims by showing Olivier a map of Australia which is attributed to Captain John Larrit; Tilbot instructed him in drawing the map. Tilbot deceived Parrot into leaving Australia by convincing him that he would become an artist if he lived in Paris for only a year, so Parrot left his wife, son and home in Botany Bay, though he planned to return.

Section 9: pages 186-222 Analysis

Olivier stood by while his servant was unjustly arrested for fear of being involved in a public scandal, and at the boardinghouse, he was confronted by Mr. O'Hara who was distraught to learn Olivier had misplaced his pistol as it actually belongs to Mr. Astor who had entrusted it to Mr. O'Hara to have it polished. Mr. O'Hara stands upright, relieved after retrieving the gun, as they await M. Larrit's release. After Mathilde hands the boy some coins, he disappears into an alley, and Mr. Peek proposes to Olivier that they take a little ride. As they take a drive, Mr. Peek expresses pleasure that Olivier's cosignatory has been released, and Olivier is shocked that his friend "would think this entire performance had been undertaken for so base a purpose" (p. 192). Olivier is concerned by Peek's conversation about lending money to Mathilde, but he is shocked when Parrot decides to remain in his service until the noble is settled in America. When Peek invites Olivier to his farm, insisting Parrot and Mathilde accompany him, Olivier is concerned with Peek's intentions for Mathilde, but they make the rough journey the next day. Olivier is delighted to meet Miss Godefroy, and the sight of Miss Godefroy immediately changes Olivier's opinion of New York as she is beautiful, modest and gracious. He enjoys walking with her after dinner as well, but Olivier is unsure whether she is flirting with him; however, "to ask the question is to not understand her" (p. 202). The next day, Olivier writes to Miss Godefroy, Mr. Godefroy, the Philadelphia Quakers and his mother. Unfortunately, his letter to Miss Godefroy cannot be delivered since she has returned to Connecticut, and his intention to postpone his visit to Philadelphia is unacceptable as the Quakers have made arrangements for his imminent visit. In Philadelphia, Olivier and Parrot are greeted at the docks by five gentlemen wearing severe clerical hats, but Olivier cannot cease thinking about Miss Godefroy and how to



send his letter to her in Wethersfield. Olivier asks Duponceau about acquiring a copy of Moliere's "Tartuffe" in French, but Duponceau does not want to loan his copy since the last book he loaned to a French noble was destroyed. Olivier plots to convince Duponceau to loan him the book as he plans to recite it to Miss Godefroy when he visits Wethersfield. Looking through the book in which Parrot insists one of his engravings is printed, Olivier insists it is impossible that the art is Parrot's, causing Parrot to explain his past. Parrot shows that the book is authored by Tilbot, the man who saved and ruined his life only to save it again. Parrot admits Tilbot was the forger who abandoned him to the penal colony where Parrot tried to make himself an artist. Parrot explains that he left his family and his home in Botany Bay when Tilbot convinced him he could become an artist in Paris. Tilbot made him useful in Paris. Understanding that Parrot is telling the truth, Olivier wants to weep, but he has no right.



Section 10: pages 223-258

Section 10: pages 223-258 Summary

Parrot follows Olivier into Eastern State Penitentiary, noting Olivier's observations and his own. At the end of the day, Olivier asks Parrot to go to New York to find a good edition of a French play. Parrot boards the Phoenix in the morning, but when he reaches the boardinghouse in New York, he finds that Mathilde and her mother are gone. Following his father's example of specifying his wants to servants, Olivier tells Parrot what book to buy and when to return, so when he does not return on Monday, Olivier is impatient to be on the way to New Haven. Duponceau helps him make arrangements, but Parrot arrives just in time to attend Olivier on the Zeus; however, he tells Olivier that he bought "L'Impromptu de Versailles" since the bookstore does not carry "Cartouche" or "Tartuffe". Olivier insists he cannot recite from a picture book, and when he drops it in the Delaware River, Parrot jumps in to retrieve it. Parrot saves the book, suggesting Olivier can tell Miss Godefroy the ridiculous story of how Parrot bought the wrong book and comically performed it. After dinner that night, Parrot joins Olivier with a bottle of brandy and asks if he is going courting. Olivier asks about Parrot's wife and child in Australia, and admitting he does not know where they are now, the servant notes "it's a wonder how many lives a man can hold within his skin" (p. 243). He tells Olivier how his father was a good man, and though Parrot was transported by misadventure, he managed to find consolation in his art. When Tilbot retrieved him from Australia, he praised Parrot's work so that Parrot thought he was being elevated, yet he promised to return to his wife. Reaching the Godefroys' home, Olivier feels he has stumbled on the secret center of this new nation as he watches Miss Godefroy jumping across the yard. In his room later, Olivier finds a copy of "Tartuffe" on his bedside table and believes Miss Godefroy loves him.

Parrot thinks that it is obvious that Miss Godefroy loves Olivier by her attentions, but Olivier goes about his courting in a wrongheaded way, returning to Mr. Godefroy's company. Parrot hears Miss Godefroy playing a sad cello, and as he listens to Olivier discussing business with Mr. Godefroy in the library, it seems that she creeps nearer. The music ceases when Mr. Godefroy leaves the room, and after he returns, Parrot spends a boring afternoon, taking notes of the conversations between Olivier and Mr. Godefroy. When Olivier tries to climb into Mr. Godefroy's carriage for their journey to town, Parrot tells him he is climbing into the wrong carriage and pushes him. Olivier excuses his servant's behavior by telling the Godefroys that Parrot has just got some bad news. In Miss Godefroy's carriage, Parrot thinks he was foolish to leave Mathilde's side to serve an aristocrat and decides to turn in his notice and return to his wife, but he follows Olivier into the meeting hall in Wethersfield to listen to the boring movements.



Section 10: pages 223-258 Analysis

While following Olivier through Eastern State Penitentiary, Parrot thinks he should never have left Australia, but he and Aoibheann, his wife, had always talked about going home, not realizing they had a home together. Looking at Duponceau's folio made him realize he had thrown away his talent and decency; Parrot had been a better man in New South Wales. When Olivier asks if Mathilde is a good woman while looking strangely at his servant, Parrot thinks he will "kill any man who hurts her name or body" (p. 227). Olivier wakes Parrot that night to admit the book is for Miss Godefroy and to ask if Parrot is content with his life. As the Zeus departs the wharf that Tuesday morning, Olivier wishes Blacqueville were with him to see the Americans, a turbulent, ill-contented people whose pursuit for prosperity is accompanied by the fear that they have failed to choose the shortest route to prosperity. When Parrot stops in the cabin to tell Olivier he will save the book, Olivier is touched by his remorse since it is the first time Parrot has shown any sign that he truly wants to serve him. As Parrot suggests how Olivier can read "L'Impromptu de Versailles" to Miss Godefroy, Olivier begins to enjoy his servant's company, but Parrot's expression grows clouded when his employer asks about his wife and her mother. After telling Olivier about his wife and child in Australia, Parrot draws a woman, and understanding it is Parrot's first wife, Olivier reaches for it, but the servant balls it up and throws it into the night. In Wethersfield, Olivier is surprised to find that Miss Godefroy is prettier than he remembers, but rather than talk to her, he discusses Wethersfield Prison with her father. Olivier writes his mother, praising Mr. Philip Godefroy as well as Amelia Godefroy who he claims would be a terrible distraction if he had not resolved to have none. He assures his mother he has no intention of alarming her by taking an American wife, despite his inclinations to do so. When the Godefroys' house is filled with children in the morning, Parrot feels a pang as he thinks that his own son has grown up without him. Parrot is agitated that Olivier does not court Miss Godefroy correctly, as it is obvious the young American woman loves the French noble. At tea, Olivier tells a story about the French Revolution that makes Miss Godefroy weep and Parrot wants to tell his employer to go to her. He pushes Olivier aside when his employer tries to climb into Mr. Godefroy's carriage, suggesting Olivier should accompany Miss Godefroy instead, and when this draws the attention of Mr. Godefroy, Olivier provides an excuse for his servant's unseemly behavior. Parrot considers quitting his employment with Olivier, but he accompanies him to the meeting in Wethersfield. When Olivier is finally introduced, he is aglow as he claims that he has finally come home.



Section 11: pages 259-293

Section 11: pages 259-293 Summary

When Olivier arrives at Old Farm, he is numb with desire and terror from Amelia's beauty and daring. There is no difficulty in arranging to meet privately since it is America, and Parrot is the only person they seek to deceive. Olivier and Amelia meet at an early house, and as Amelia shows Olivier her father's landscaping, they talk about France and American democracy, yet Olivier's thoughts are consumed when wondering whether he can live in Wethersfield. He opens his arms, and Amelia comes to him. Parrot passes Olivier on the stairs and notices his stockings are wet. In the library, he finds Miss Godefroy with her quill ready to do his job of taking down dictation. Olivier dismisses Parrot for the day as his services are not needed. The next day, Sunday, Mrs. Godefroy expresses her disapproval of Olivier's broad religious doctrine, and Parrot worries he will be dismissed from his job after he tells Mrs. Godefroy that he is an atheist. On Monday, Olivier again dismisses Parrot's services, and when Parrot asks if he is losing his job, Olivier explains he has an important job for Parrot but will explain later. Returning from town that night, Parrot shakes Olivier awake violently. Olivier wakes Parrot in the morning, reminding him that he was angered when Olivier asked him to take a vacation for which Olivier will pay. Parrot searches for Mathilde in several locations before he is finally directed to a small dairy farm where Mr. Eckerd opens the door and Mathilde rushes into Parrot's arms. After Parrot bathes, he enters a room at the top of the stairs where he sees a hideously burned man, but he follows Mathilde to her room where they make love, and she explains that Mr. Eckerd helped her obtain insurance money for the burned house after Mr. Peek refused to pay because he claims she set fire to it intentionally. She then bought the dairy farm at a cheap price in partnership with Mr. Eckerd since she cannot insure it in her name.

Unable to sleep that night, Parrot finally sneaks into the first room and asks the deformed man's name; he tells Mr. Watkins he is the boy. Shaking with joy, Watkins calls Marie and tells her it is the boy. They praise Parrot for escaping, and Marie explains that he once knew her as Mrs. Piggott. When Parrot admits he is only a servant, Watkins tells him the "curse of great facility in a child is that it easily produces laziness" (p. 281). The next day, Parrot watches Watkins paint, and Mrs. Watkins tells him how she returned to the printery after the arrests and found Watkins; they saved each other. In 1793, she used some of the counterfeits to buy their journeys to America where Watkins planned to make a book of birds to sell to rich Americans. While sitting at the Bull Inn later, Parrot sees Mr. Eckerd emerge from his house and envies him as Parrot feels he no longer has a purpose in the world; he "was some poor wretch who has lost his station, returning home with a misery he cannot share" (page 289). When he returns to Mathilde, Parrot realizes she only dares paint things no one will buy because someone is paying for her, but when he asks how she acquires money, she offers to tell him at the theater on Friday night.



Section 11: pages 259-293 Analysis

By the time they reach Connecticut, Olivier considers Parrot his friend and he realizes the depth of his servant's love when Parrot pushes him from the carriage. Yet, Olivier's actions are calculated to hide the truth from Parrot since he is Tilbot's man and must alert the Comtesse de Garmont, and Olivier does not expect Parrot to dissemble on his behalf. Olivier is astounded but pleased to find that it is not difficult to arrange a private walk with Amelia Godefroy, and when she comes to his arms, he wonders who would not envy him. Parrot is worried when Olivier dismisses his services several days, allowing Amelia to act as his secretaire. When Olivier suggests Parrot take a vacation, they engage in an argument, during which Olivier learned that Parrot has not written the Comtesse de Garmont or sent her copies of Olivier's letters. Since the Zeus is out of commission, Mr. Godefroy conveys Parrot to New York in his one-horse chaise. In New York, Parrot goes to the house where he last saw Mathilde, but it is burned down. Her neighbors direct him to a boardinghouse on Broadway from whence he is directed to a small dairy farm where Parrot finally finds Mathilde living with Mr. Eckerd. As Mathilde tells Parrot about the fire at her former house, he does not understand why she looks to Mr. Eckerd for permission before telling him anything. Mathilde tells Parrot how she came to join Mr. Eckerd in a business arrangement, but Parrot is haunted by the sight of a man in one of the bedrooms in the house. These thoughts prevent him from sleeping, so he goes to the other room where he tells Mr. Watkins that he is the boy from the printery. Seeing a painting of a beautiful bird, Parrot recalls Watkins' ambition to produce a book of all the birds in the world, but as Watkins ignores the praise and asks what the boy has done, Parrot realizes that, in their years of conversations, they have elevated him to something he will never be: an artist. As Parrot excuses himself, he is jealous of Mathilde for constantly working to improve her art while he has wasted his talents.



Section 12: pages 294-317

Section 12: pages 294-317 Summary

Olivier imagines Amelia will replace Parrot as his secretary, making all three of them happy, but after several days of working together peacefully, he realizes that she underestimated the amount of work it takes to be a secretaire and that the occupation is duller than she anticipated, making it necessary for Olivier to fetch his servant back to Wethersfield so he writes Parrot requesting his return. Parrot frequently checks at the post office for letters from Olivier in vain, but when he thinks of Olivier's handwriting, he asks for letters to similar names as his own and finds that his last name had been smudged. Parrot walks through the city until he reaches Eckerd's Elysium where Eckerd's play will be performed. Olivier writes to Parrot again, hoping for his imminent return to Wethersfield since he trusts his servant. He also worries that his failure to return results from some harm that has befallen Parrot. At the end of Eckerd's horrid play about the French Revolution, Watkins emerges on stage, causing Parrot to fill with rage because Watkins is an artist, not a clown. After the play, Parrot is led to a small apartment under the roof where he tells Eckerd that the play was horrible, but Eckerd objects, asking what Parrot would do for Mathilde or Watkins. The room is filled with Watkins' engravings and Mathilde's paintings, and Parrot is upset by how little care they take to preserve their art. He carefully wraps one of Watkins' copper plates as he tells Eckerd that art survives countries. The group sleeps in the little apartment, so Parrot holds Mathilde on a single mattress. In the morning, Eckerd shows everyone an article in the "New York Sentinel" about their farm burning down and Parrot realizes his friends are scoundrels who have burned the farm for the insurance money. Parrot throws \$2 at Mrs. Watkins and secures the copper plate Watkins engraved. Before leaving New York, Parrot stops at the post office where he receives a letter from Tilbot. The Comtesse de Garmont fears her son is set on making a disadvantageous marriage and wants him to tell Olivier that the Abbe de La Londe is dying, hoping to shock him out of his bewitchment. Tilbot confesses that Bebe died last week, leaving it up to Parrot to decide what to do with the Comtesse's request.

Section 12: pages 294-317 Analysis

Since Amelia does not enjoy the job of secretaire, Olivier writes Parrot, requesting he return to his duties. While waiting for Parrot to respond to his request to return to Wethersfield immediately, Olivier releases Amelia from the chore, writing notes himself in German so he can write about Amelia without her being able to read it. She is more desirable than any other woman Olivier has met, and his mind is occupied with thoughts of marriage. When Parrot first receives Olivier's letter, he is relieved to learn his services are urgently required in Wethersfield, but then he sees the trip as no serious solution to his lack of purpose in the world. At Eckerd's Elysium, Eckerd greets Parrot, saying he is the only person who knows what they have done since he was with them when the concept was born on the Havre, but Eckerd insists the play will change Parrot's life.



Parrot's attendance at the play fulfills the earlier foreshadowing from the Havre when Mr. Eckerd and Miss Desclee were discussing the play. In Olivier's next letter to Parrot, he worries that some harm has befallen his servant due to the delay in Parrot's return. Olivier promises to write a letter of recommendation for Parrot so that anyone would hire him, but at present, his "services are required by the master of us both, I mean the book" (p. 305). Reunited with Mathilde in the theatre, Parrot asks where her money comes from, but she is saved from answering when the play begins. He thinks the play is awful, but the audience goes wild. After the play, Parrot feels his companions are parties to a plan from which he has been excluded, and he is irritated that they are selling their art cheaply when they might have benefitted from his experience in the world. The next morning, Parrot realizes that his friends have conspired to burn homes down in order to obtain insurance money, but when he accuses them of being scoundrels, they argue that this is art in America since no one will pay what they are worth. He buys a copper plate from Watkins and threatens to burn the theatre down if they burn any more houses. Before departing New York, Parrot receives a letter from Tilbot which informs him that the Comtesse de Garmont, afraid her son plans to marry an American woman, wants him to lie to Olivier that Bebe is dying, though Bebe is already dead. Tilbot allows Parrot to make his own decision as to whether or not to lie to his employer and friend.



Section 13: pages 318-340

Section 13: pages 318-340 Summary

Olivier is surprised to see Parrot return, and Parrot proposes that he will work hard to perform the labor Olivier requires, but he wants a horse and three hours each afternoon to be given to his own endeavors. About a week later, Mr. Godefroy expresses outrage and concern when his horse is seen in the shed of Mrs. Dover, a woman who is not above reproach, but Parrot assures Olivier that he is only renting a shed from Mrs. Dover. Soon, Olivier learns that Parrot is engaged in business with the town printer, Mr. Cloverdale, and when he is summoned to a town meeting, he shows that the printer is inept, leaving Wethersfield without a newspaper until after Independence Day. At the time, Olivier is engaged with writing about the American judicial system, and he often notices Parrot looking at him as though he has something to say. When Parrot tells him that Bebe has passed away, Olivier slaps him. Olivier knows there is no excuse for slapping his servant as he did, but Parrot only comments that it is obvious Olivier loved the man greatly. Parrot tells Olivier that the Comtesse wants her son to come home. Parrot informs Olivier that he is returning to New York and cannot be certain of his return, causing Olivier much consternation as he feels Parrot's work cannot possibly be more important than Olivier's work on penal servitude.

When Amelia teases Olivier about mourning for Parrot, he explains that he is grieving for Bebe, and she attempts to comfort him, not understanding why he kept this from her. As they walk, they discuss marriage, and dreaming of living in France, she gives Olivier her permission to ask her father's permission to marry her. The next morning, Mr. Godefroy moves his work to the library where he proposes that he and Olivier take a trip to Atlanta. Shortly after, Amelia enters the library and asks what Olivier said to her father's proposal, showing him that she has conspired to lock them together until they discuss the matter of her marriage to Olivier. In South Carolina, the subject is finally approached when Mr. Godefroy asks if Olivier plans to reside in America and Olivier asks for Amelia's hand in marriage. Mr. Godefroy, relieved that Olivier does not plan to take Amelia away from him, agrees happily. Olivier objects that Amelia is a flower of America and he does not believe she would be happy in France.

Section 13: pages 318-340 Analysis

When Parrot returns with a proposal concerning his job, Olivier is angry, but Parrot points out that the arrangement is to Olivier's advantage. Parrot's proposal basically consists of him being permitted several hours each afternoon to tend to his own business and to be loaned a horse. A scandal arises when the horse, which belongs to Mr. Godefroy, is seen in a less than reputable woman's shed. In response to this, Amelia tells Olivier that her father believes Parrot has smuggled his wife to Wethersfield, and commenting on how nice it would be to have a wife, she kisses him. Olivier loves Amelia and knows he must soon overcome his sense of duty to his mother and marry the



American woman, thus severing ties to his rank in France. When Parrot is questioned about his business with the town printer, he proves the printer is not well trained at his job. Parrot finally tells Olivier that Bebe has passed away, and Olivier responds by slapping him for impertinence. Olivier does not understand why his mother told Parrot instead of him, but Parrot will not betray the Comtesse's confidence by telling her son about her scheme. He only tells Olivier that his mother wants him to return to France. When Parrot assures Olivier that he is not spying on him for his mother, Olivier wonders who has reported to her. He suspects Mr. Peek at first, but since he knows his mother would never receive such an American, he realizes it is more likely that he betrayed himself with his dissembling letters. He knows he must make a decision, but to marry Amelia must result in abandoning France and joining the Union in every sense. Olivier is upset when Parrot informs him that he must go to New York and does not know if he will return; he believes Parrot is a fool when he shows Olivier an engraving of a bird on which he is staking his entire store, hoping to make his fortune in the world. When Olivier tells Amelia about Bebe's death, she tries to comfort him before they change the subject to talk about the possibility of their marriage, and she gives him permission to ask her father's permission to marry her. Though happy about the arrangement, Olivier cannot help imagining his mother's outraged reaction to his wife. Amelia arranges for Olivier and her father to go on a journey to Atlanta so that the issue of their marriage can be discussed. During the long journey, Amelia and Olivier write each other constantly, and the passionate letters convince Olivier that he has made the correct decision. When Mr. Godefroy and Olivier finally discusses Olivier's marriage to Amelia, Mr. Godefroy is relieved that Olivier does not plan to take his daughter away; this seems to foreshadow that Olivier's fear of his mother's disapproval will be groundless while Amelia's desire to go to France foreshadows a complication in the affair. Olivier writes Amelia that he is on his way to her. The only delay is a stop in Albany since Mr. Godefroy feels the Independence Day parade will make a real American out of Olivier. He signs the letter "your husband in his dreams" (p. 340).



Section 14: pages 341-364

Section 14: pages 341-364 Summary

Parrot writes Tilbot that he has told Olivier that the Abbe is dead and his mother wants him to return to France, but Olivier is happy with his present situation. He informs his former employer that he is now engaged in a different labor than what he was intended to perform, and he has a business proposition for Tilbot. He sends quality engravings with the letter, suggesting Tilbot may profit from the etchings of Mr. Algernon Watkins. Parrot and his business partners have obtained orders for a portfolio of such engravings in Boston, New York and Philadelphia, but he hopes Tilbot can help sell them in Europe. In Albany, Olivier is excited when Godefroy's friends insist he join them in the Independence Day procession as a dignitary, but he is not impressed with the procession which includes the participation of various industries and trades. He is eager to return to Wethersfield, but Godefroy insists on a delay to Kaaterskill Falls. Olivier's health degenerates as he wonders how he will live without France, and when he suggests he needs bleeding, Godefroy stops at a pond to retrieve leeches which he then administers to Olivier. As they reach Old Farm, Olivier feels his affection for the place will not lead to the dismantlement of the Chateau de Barfleur, but his joy at being reunited with Amelia is short-lived as she notices his nose is bleeding. During dinner, Olivier is embarrassed by the blood on his shirt, and as he walks with Amelia after dinner, she expresses her anticipation of seeing his home in France. In fact, she plans to marry in the chapel at the Chateau de Barfleur, but Olivier points out an American should not marry in France, meaning himself. When he insists they marry in Wethersfield, Amelia is sure he is embarrassed by her. Truthfully, Olivier is concerned that his parents will make both of them miserable if he presents her at the rue Saint-Dominique, and when Amelia confirms that he will not take her to France, she cries good night as she runs off into the dark. Thinking he hears Amelia downstairs later that night, Olivier makes his way to the library where he finds Mr. Godefroy. Godefroy claims he will not make his daughter miserable; it was selfish of him to make Olivier promise not to take Amelia away. When Olivier explains that French society will not be able to grasp Amelia's originality, Godefroy asks if he will tell her she is not good enough for France, but Olivier objects she is twice as good as any of them. Amelia enters, saying she has been listening long enough to break her heart. Mr. Godefroy follows as Amelia hurries from the room, and he returns to tell Olivier he is sorry but will take the Frenchman to a good inn at New Britain.

Section 14: pages 341-364 Analysis

Parrot writes to Tilbot briefly about Olivier and then largely about his business idea. Parrot plans to print a book of American birds, and he wants Tilbot to market it in Europe. He also sends a portrait of the house he has bought, and urging Tilbot to write back at his earlier convenience, he insists "we must recognize the need for our continued profitable relationship" (p. 345). At the Independence Day celebration in



Albany, Olivier is disgusted by the majority of the celebrations. He enjoys listening to the magistrate read the Declaration of Independence, but the lawyer who speaks afterward shames him when he refers to Olivier's presence as proof of America's prestige. Olivier "had entered the church a convert. [He] emerged as the son of the Comtesse de Garmont" (p. 350). At Kaaterskill Falls, Godefroy insists on getting behind the water, and though he is terrified, Olivier cannot be seen as a coward in front of his father-in-law. He fears America will suffocate him, but he yearns for his beloved. On the way back to Old Farm, Olivier needs to be bled due to his decreasing health, but his happiness is restored when he is returned to Amelia's arms. When they walk together after dinner, Olivier tries to dissuade Amelia from her idea that they should be married in the chapel at the Chateau de Barfleur. Amelia objects that he is a Garmont and a noble, but he notes that there are no nobles in America. Because of Olivier's refusal to marry in France, Amelia is sure he is embarrassed by her while in truth, Olivier is worried his parents will make both of them miserable. Offended, Amelia runs off, refusing to have Olivier if he will not marry her in France. Though Olivier does not love America, he loves Amelia and would gladly make his name in her country except she will not have him. When he goes to the library that evening in search of Amelia, Olivier finds Mr. Godefroy who gives him permission to marry his daughter in France, but Olivier objects that she will not be understood in France. Unfortunately, Amelia overhears this conversation and heart-broken, informs her father that she will not marry Olivier. Olivier is heart-broken at the brutality of the Americans.



Section 15: pages 365-381

Section 15: pages 365-381 Summary

Since he has become a peddler, Tilbot agrees to be a representative of Watkins' birds in Europe. He writes Parrot, praising the art and advising that he has procured forty-three subscriptions. Parrot buys a farm along Bloomingdale Road where Mathilde endeavors, once more, to produce "a canvas from whose heart would glow the light that was everywhere" (p. 368). One particular day, she summons Parrot when she sees a man traveling on the road toward their home, but Parrot realizes the disheveled man is Olivier. Parrot greets his friend and leads him to the house, able to tell his marriage prospects are ruined. While Parrot tries to acquire a bed for Olivier, he finds that the noble has fallen asleep in Parrot and Mathilde's bed, but they are proud to let him rest awhile in their large, handsome room. That night, Mathilde and Parrot share a pallet on the floor, and when they rise at dawn, Parrot fears he may not be able to evict Olivier from his room where the nobleman is still snoring soundly. Because Parrot treasures his bed and has no intention of Olivier lying in his bed a second night, he begins constructing a bed from the yellow pine he had promised Watkins could use to make a shelf, a fact that leaves Watkins quite disgruntled. As he works, he hears his bedroom window shut above him, and fearing he woke his guest, Parrot expects to find Olivier in a temper, but all he sees is injury and shames in Olivier's eyes. When Parrot tells Olivier he is making him a bed, Olivier claims he is quite happy where he is. Annoyed, Parrot returns to the yellow pine.

After dinner, Olivier and Parrot retire to Picnic Rock, a clearing between the house and the Hudson River. Olivier notes that he has arrived at an important moment in Parrot's life as Parrot now has a business of art. He tells Parrot that Mathilde's paintings are awful and that Parrot is blinded by love, but rather than be angry, Parrot feels sorry for his friend because he knows Olivier loves Miss Godefroy to distraction. Olivier asks Parrot to come to France with him, claiming that Parrot is a remarkable man and still will be remarkable in Paris. Parrot is flattered rather than insulted, but he cannot leave his wife, her mother and their child. Olivier sadly notes there is no place for him in America then before continuing to degrade and insult Americans and their lack of culture. Parrot does not get angry because he knows Olivier's heart is broken; in his pain that Amelia did not love him as he wished, Olivier reveals only his pessimism regarding life's possibilities. Olivier apologizes for behaving disgracefully, sighs as he embraces Parrot, and returns to the house alone. Parrot dedicates the book to Olivier, his patron even though they did not know it at the time. As he dedicates this account of their lives and travels to Olivier-Jean-Baptiste de Clarel de Garmont, Parrot tells Olivier that his fears are groundless; there is no tyranny in America and never could be, therefore Olivier's fears about democracy are unsupported by the truth. The proof of his error is in Parrot's life, found in this history compiled by John Larrit at Harlem Heights on May 10, 1837.



Section 15: pages 365-381 Analysis

Tilbot agrees to Parrot's business proposal and has even managed to acquire forty-three subscriptions. From the portrait Parrot sent of Mathilde, he is able to deduce that she is pregnant, so he advises Parrot to have no more children, although he is sure his former servant will go on living as he desires. Parrot settles down happily on a farm with Mathilde, the Watkins, Mr. Eckerd and a number of printers whom he employs. Olivier arrives one day, and from his disheveled appearance, Parrot can tell that Olivier's marriage prospects have been ruined. He takes pity on his friend and invites him to his home. Parrot is happy that Olivier has come to be one of them. Parrot and his housemates enjoy caring for Olivier and Parrot is filled with the childish passion to invite him to stay with them and write his book. Olivier takes possession of Parrot's bed, and Parrot and Mathilde are proud to provide a bed for the French noble. Though Mathilde is not sentimental about the French aristocracy, Parrot can tell she is moved by this impossible friendship. When they wake in the morning, Parrot begins building a new bed for Olivier, having no intention of relinquishing his bed a second night; however, when he informs Olivier of this fact, he is irritated by Olivier's arrogance when he claims he is content in Parrot's room. At dinner, Olivier charms everyone as he toasts various aspects of their home, but Parrot is irritated when he understands that Olivier has no intention of saying anything about the remarkable aspect of their situation, that Watkins and his wife are producing art that is sold in Paris for extraordinary prices and that Mathilde is able to paint whatever she pleases. While talking after dinner, Parrot is not angered by Olivier's insistence that Mathilde is not a good artist as Parrot believes because he knows his friend is still mourning the loss of his beloved and hopes of marriage. Though Parrot is hurt, "a man could not be angry with a child of the awful guillotine" (p. 380). Olivier wants Parrot to return to France with him, but when Parrot refuses to leave his wife and child, the noble notes there is no place for him in America as he insults the infant country. Olivier walks away, dejected and alone. Parrot places his dedication at the end of the novel because he is a citizen of a democracy and will not place it at the beginning as they do in Europe. He dedicates the book to Olivier, claiming that the proof of Olivier's mistakes about America is found in Parrot's success in the new country; Parrot is truly a classic rags-to-riches story for which America is famous.



Characters

Olivier-Jean-Baptist de Clarel de Barfleur de Garmont

Olivier-Jean-Baptist de Clarel de Barfleur de Garmont is one of the narrators and main characters in "Parrot & Olivier in America." Parrot frequently refers to him as "Lord Migraine." Olivier is born into a family of French nobles who are tormented by the recent events of the French Revolution. As an adult, Olivier attends democratic lectures with his best friend, Blacqueville, until Tilbot, Olivier's mother's friend, tells him that he is suspected of being a traitor and a spy and recommends that Olivier move to America. On the Havre, the ship to America, Olivier mourns the death of Blacqueville and is befriended by Mr. Peek, a rich American banker. When Olivier agrees to sit for Mathilde to paint a portrait of him, Parrot's jealousy causes him to hate his new employer. In America, Olivier learns that he cannot act against Parrot since the Comtesse de Garmont, his mother, assigned Parrot as his cosignatory, so without Parrot, Olivier cannot acquire any of his money. When Parrot is imprisoned after Olivier shoots a man, Olivier bails his servant out of jail. After Parrot returns to Olivier's employment, they visit Mr. Peek's farm where Olivier meets and falls in love with Amelia Godefroy. Olivier and Parrot tour the Quakers' prison in Philadelphia, and while visiting M. Duponceau's library, Parrot finds a book with one of his engravings, causing him to tell Olivier about his past and how he got involved with Tilbot who returned for him in Australia and convinced Parrot to leave his wife and child in order to become an artist in Paris. Olivier sends Parrot to New York to buy a French copy of Moliere's "Tartuffe."

Parrot and Olivier travel to Wethersfield, CT to visit the Godefroy family and tour Wethersfield prison, and on the way, they become friends. As Olivier falls more in love with Miss Godefroy, he sends Parrot to New York for an extended vacation, allowing Amelia to act as his secretaire in his servant's absence. After Olivier summons his servant back to Wethersfield, Parrot becomes involved with the town printer until he informs Olivier that he is leaving to pursue his own career plans. Olivier's grief at losing Parrot is short-lived because Amelia agrees that he may ask her father's permission to marry her and she arranges a trip for Olivier and Mr. Godefroy during which the Frenchman obtains permission to marry his beloved. Though Olivier is disgusted by the Independence Day celebrations he witnesses, he is still willing to stay in America because he loves Amelia; however, when she insists on marrying in France and Mr. Godefroy agrees, Olivier tells his future father-in-law that his family will not accept Amelia. She overhears the conversation and refuses to marry Olivier. In New York, Parrot has bought a house and set up a printery. Olivier visits, distraught at the loss of Amelia, and though he is offensive, Parrot treats him kindly because he knows his noble friend is disappointed in his hopes for love. Olivier wants Parrot to return to France with him, but Parrot refuses because Mathilde is pregnant. Olivier leaves alone and dejected. Parrot dedicates his history of their stories to Olivier, claiming that Olivier's fears about America are disproved by Parrot's life.



John Larrit

John Larrit AKA Parrot is one of the narrators and main characters in "Parrot & Olivier in America." He is nicknamed Parrot when he is a child and the name sticks with him for the rest of his life. Parrot lives in England with his father who works for a printer, and Parrot tends to Watkins, an engraver and forger. When the printery is burned down and the printers are arrested, Parrot escapes. Tilbot asks Parrot to accompany Olivier to America as the noble's secretaire, but Parrot's lover, Mathilde, is furious and sends him away, despite his intention to take her with him. On the Havre, the ship to America, Parrot laments the fact that Mathilde will not speak to him, though Tilbot bribed the captain to convey Mathilde and her mother to America with Parrot. When Olivier agrees to sit for Mathilde to paint a portrait of him, Parrot's jealousy causes him to hate his new employer. Parrot and Mathilde reconcile, and Parrot quits his job. When Parrot is imprisoned after Olivier shoots a man, Olivier bails his servant out of jail as Parrot recalls meeting Tilbot on the moors after his father was arrested. Parrot was then taken on a ship to Australia, and Tilbot abandoned him during the journey. After Parrot returns to Olivier's employment, they visit Mr. Peek's farm where Olivier meets and falls in love with Amelia Godefroy. Olivier and Parrot tour the Quakers' prison in Philadelphia, and while visiting M. Duponceau's library, Parrot finds a book with one of his engravings, causing him to tell Olivier about his past and how he got involved with Tilbot who returned for him in Australia and convinced Parrot to leave his wife and child in order to become an artist in Paris. Olivier sends Parrot to New York to buy a French copy of Moliere's "Tartuffe," and Parrot finds Mathilde and her mother absent from the boardinghouse where he left them.

Parrot and Olivier travel to Wethersfield, CT to visit the Godefroy family and tour Wethersfield prison, and on the way, they become friends. As Olivier falls deeper in love with Miss Godefroy, he sends Parrot to New York for an extended vacation, allowing Amelia to act as his secretaire in his servant's absence. In New York, Parrot finds Mathilde living with Eckerd and a group which includes Watkins, and as Olivier summons his servant back to Wethersfield, Parrot learns that his friends are burning homes in order to fraudulently obtain insurance money. Upon his return to Wethersfield, Parrot becomes involved with the town printer until he informs Olivier that he is leaving to pursue his own career plans. Upon his return to New York, Parrot writes to Tilbot with a business proposal regarding selling books that he will print in Europe. In New York, Parrot has bought a house and set up a printery. Olivier visits, distraught at the loss of Amelia, and though he is offensive, Parrot treats him kindly because he knows his noble friend is disappointed in his hopes for love. Olivier wants Parrot to return to France with him, but Parrot refuses because Mathilde is pregnant. Olivier leaves alone and dejected. Parrot dedicates his history of their stories to Olivier, claiming that Olivier's fears about America are disproved by Parrot's life.



Marie-Jean de Villiers, Marquis de Tilbot

Marie-Jean de Villiers, the Marquis de Tilbot is also known as the Hero of the Vendee but is most frequently referred to simply as Tilbot or Monsieur. He is a one-armed spy during the French Revolution which is why he ends up in England, rescuing Parrot after the fire at the Piggotts' printery. He soon abandons the boy on a boat to Australia, but Tilbot returns for Parrot when the boy is an adult, convincing him to leave his home and family to become an artist in Paris. He employs Parrot for many years and convinces him to accompany Olivier to America as the noble's secretaire at the request of Tilbot's good friend, the Comtesse de Garmont. Tilbot helps Parrot sell "Birds of America" in Europe.

Algernon Watkins

Algernon Watkins is a talented, twenty-year-old engraver at the Piggott's printery in Dittisham when Parrot is a boy and he teaches Parrot about engraving. Watkins is also a forger which leads to the printery being burned down and the printers being arrested; though he escapes, Watkins is severely burned in the fire. Parrot finds Watkins at Eckerd's farm in New York, and they conspire to publish "Birds of America", a book of Watkins' engravings. Watkins moves to Harlem Heights with Parrot, along with his wife, Marie, the former Mrs. Piggott.

Mathilde Christian

Mathilde Christian is a painter and Parrot's lover who unwillingly joins him in his journey to America. She is cruel to him on the ship to America because she is angry that he was going to leave her after she insisted he do so, but she reconciles with Parrot in New York. Mathilde becomes involved with Eckerd's schemes to burn houses to obtain insurance money fraudulently, but when Parrot opens his printery, she happily resides with him at Harlem Heights, free to paint whatever she desires.

Amelia Godefroy

Amelia Godefroy is the beautiful American woman that Olivier falls in love with after meeting her at Mr. Peek's farm. He visits her at her home, Old Farm, in Wethersfield, CT to court her and to become acquainted with her father. Amelia agrees to marry Olivier, and her father gives his permission, but Amelia wants to marry in France. When she overhears Olivier tell her father that they cannot go to France because his parents will not accept or understand her, Amelia refuses to marry Olivier.



Comtesse de Garmont

The Comtesse de Garmont is Olivier's overbearing mother who asks Tilbot to convince her son to go to America because she fears for his life due to the unsettled nature of politics in France at the time. She is also the reason Olivier does not want to marry Amelia in France since he knows his mother will disapprove of him taking an American wife.

Abbe de La Londe

The Abbe de La Londe, who Olivier calls Bebe, helps raise Olivier as a youth in France. The Comtesse de Garmont wants Parrot to tell her son that the Abbe is dying to convince her son to come home and prevent him from marrying Amelia Godefroy, but Parrot tells Olivier the truth, that Bebe is already dead. Olivier grieves extensively for the death of his friend.

Mr. Piggott

Mr. Piggott employs Jack Larrit and Algernon Watkins, among others, at the printery in Dittisham. He is killed during the arrests and fire at the printery, which occur because he hired Watkins to forge assignats to devalue the currency of the French Revolution.

Thomas Blacqueville

Thomas Blacqueville is Olivier's best friend in France and he plans to accompany Olivier to America. However, Blacqueville is killed by d'Audloy in a duel to defend Olivier's honor after d'Audloy calls Olivier a traitor for going to America.

Mr. Philip Godefroy

Mr. Philip Godefroy is Amelia's father who helps Olivier with his book about American prisons. He agrees that Olivier can marry Amelia after Olivier assures him he does not intend to take Amelia away to France. Mr. Godefroy changes his mind when Amelia is distraught that she will not be married in France, but when Olivier explains his parents will not accept her and Amelia refuses to marry him, Mr. Godefroy supports his daughter's decision.

Mr. Peek

Mr. Peek is a rich American banker who befriends Olivier on their journey to America on the Havre. He helps Olivier when they first reach America, but he is offended when his new friend is interested in Miss Godefroy instead of Peek's daughters. Mr. Peek loans Mathilde money for a house and forces her to insure it with him company, but when the



house burns down, he accuses her of arson and refuses to insure any more properties she buys. He also insures the farm that Eckerd buys and burns down.

Mr. Eckerd

Mr. Eckerd is the Jew that befriends Parrot on the ship to America. He is involved in the theatre with Miss Desclee, a singer and actress, and he also involves Mathilde with his arson scheme. At the end of the novel, Eckerd lives happily at Harlem Heights with Parrot and their associates.

d'Audloy

d'Audloy is the French noble who kills Blacqueville in a duel after calling Olivier a traitor for going to America.

M. Duponceau

M. Duponceau is the Frenchman who Olivier and Parrot befriend in Philadelphia, PA. It is in his library that Parrot finds his engravings in a book published by Tilbot.

Aoibheann

Aoibheann is Parrot's first wife in Australia who bares his son, but Parrot abandons his family and his home in Australia when Tilbot returns for him and convinces him he can become an artist in Paris.

Jack Larrit

Jack Larrit is Parrot's father who is arrested at the printery in Dittisham and executed for forgery.



Objects/Places

England

England is Parrot's home country when he is a child. He leaves with Tilbot after his father is arrested when the printery is burned down because of forgeries occurring there.

France

France is the main setting of the first third of the novel. Olivier is from France, but he is sent away because the political atmosphere causes his mother to think his life is in danger. After Amelia Godefroy refuses to marry him, Olivier returns to France.

America

America is the main setting of the majority of the novel. Parrot and Olivier relocate to America to compile a report about American prisons.

Chateau de Barfleur

The Chateau de Barfleur is Olivier's family home in the French countryside where he spends his childhood.

rue Saint-Dominique

rue Saint-Dominique is where the Garmont family has their home in Paris. The Comtesse lives on the rue Saint-Dominique after the king is restored to power.

Havre

The Havre is the ship that Olivier and Parrot take to America.

Dittisham

Dittisham is where Parrot lives as a child with his father when Jack Larrit is employed in Mr. Piggott's printery. Parrot flees when the printers are arrested for forgery.



Versailles

Versailles is where Olivier, as an adult, lives with his best friend, Thomas Blacqueville.

Guizot's Lectures

Guizot's Lectures about democracy interest Olivier and Blacqueville, but their attendance causes them to be seen as traitors and spies. Tilbot then recommends that Olivier and Blacqueville return to America.

New York

New York is where Parrot and Olivier first arrive in America.

Faubourg Saint-Antoine

Faubourg Saint-Antoine is where Parrot lives with Mathilde in France.

Tombs

The Tombs are the prison in New York where Parrot is sent after Olivier shoots a man who attacks them. Before leaving, Parrot rescues a young boy who witnessed his father murder his mother.

Wethersfield, CT

Wethersfield, CT is where the Godefroys live. Olivier goes to meet Mr. Godefroy and learn about Wethersfield Prison, though his true intention is to become better acquainted with Miss Amelia Godefroy. He plans to reside in Wethersfield after marrying Amelia.

Old Farm

Old Farm, in Wethersfield, CT is the home of the Godefroys.

Philadelphia, PA

Parrot and Olivier go to Philadelphia, PA to learn about the Quakers' humane prison.



M. Duponceau's Library

In M. Duponceau's library in Philadelphia, Parrot sees his engravings in a folio and tells Olivier and Duponceau about his past with Tilbot.

New South Wales

New South Wales is a penal colony in Australia where Parrot settles after being abandoned by Tilbot. When Tilbot returns, Parrot abandons his wife, his son and his home because Tilbot convinces him he can become an artist in Paris.

Eckerd's Elysium

Eckerd's Elysium is the name of the theatre where Parrot sees and is appalled by Eckerd's play about the Revolution. He is angry at his companions for their fraudulent house fires in order to obtain insurance money and threatens to burn the theatre down if they continue. He buys one of Watkins' engravings because he is convinced they can profit honorably.

Albany, NY

In Albany, NY, Olivier watches the Independence Day celebrations with Mr. Godefroy and is appalled, but he is still willing to become an American because he loves Amelia Godefroy.

Harlem Heights

Parrot buys a farm in Harlem Heights near the Hudson River where he establishes a printery to produce "The Birds of America." He lives there with Mathilde, Watkins, and a number of workers.

Dedication

Parrot places his dedication at the end of the book because placing it at the beginning is a European custom. He dedicates the book to Olivier, his unwitting patron, claiming that his life disproves Olivier's fears about America and democracy.



Themes

Aristocracy v. Commoner

A major theme in "Parrot & Olivier in America" is that of the difference between the aristocrat and the commoner. The two main characters and narrators present this theme in their different identities as Olivier is a French noble while Parrot is an English servant who was orphaned at a young age. The beginning of the novel demonstrates the differences in their upbringings as an aristocrat and a commoner. The difference between the two of them can also be seen in their opinions of the king; Olivier feels it is his duty to protect the king despite his disapproval of the king's actions while Parrot could not care less. Olivier is sent to America to protect him from the political environment and his possible execution while Parrot is persuaded to accompany Olivier as his servant and a spy for Tilbot and the Comtesse de Garmont. On the ship, Olivier is able to ban Parrot from the cabin they share and he is treated kindly by the passengers while Parrot is treated with disdain by all but Eckerd and Miss Desclee. Because of his elevated social status, Olivier feels it is his right to pursue a sexual relationship with Mathilde, Parrot's lover, causing Parrot to experience extreme jealousy and the desire to murder the nobleman himself.

In America, Olivier proceeds to treat Parrot like a servant, even when Parrot avoids him in his attempt to quit his employment. When Olivier shoots a man on the street who attacks them, the blame falls on Parrot who is imprisoned. Mr. Peek targets Mathilde, Parrot's wife, to loan money for a house, intending to gain interest on his investment. After Olivier acquires Parrot's release from prison, Parrot returns to Olivier's employment, and when they travel to Philadelphia, Parrot discovers a book containing his engravings in M. Duponceau's library; when he tells Olivier the story of his past, Olivier wants to weep for his servant but knows he does not have the right because of his privileged upbringing which does not allow him to truly empathize. In Wethersfield, Parrot is agitated by Olivier's political way of courting Amelia Godefroy, but Olivier's caution is partially due to his desire to hide his feelings from his servant for fear Parrot will report them to his mother. When Olivier summons Parrot back to Wethersfield after his vacation in New York, he is agitated by his servant's demands, but these demands reveal Parrot's acclimation to his new American environment in which everyone is offered the chance for advancement. While Parrot flourishes under these circumstances, opening a printery and becoming quite successful, Olivier fails to overcome his aristocratic upbringing. He insults his beloved, losing her, and in Harlem Heights, he offends Parrot. Olivier's disappointment leads to his claim that America has no culture and democracy will lead to tyranny before he returns to France. Meanwhile, Parrot thrives in America, and in the Dedication, he insists that his successes are proof that Olivier's fears are unfounded. This story shows the flexibility of the commoner when presented with a new environment while the aristocrat cannot overcome his early life to see the opportunity offered in the new country.



Love

One of the important themes in this novel is love as both Olivier and Parrot, love women in this novel. Additionally, both are happy at points with their loves, while they are miserable at other times. When Tilbot informs Parrot that he wants him to escort Olivier to America, Parrot objects that he is too happy with Mathilde to leave Paris, but Tilbot agrees that she may accompany him. However, when Parrot discusses the topic with Mathilde, she forces Parrot to leave and he mourns the injustice of losing everything he loves yet again. Though the captain of the Havre accepts Tilbot's bribe to accommodate two additional passengers, when Parrot finds Mathilde and her mother on board the ship, they refuse to even look at him. Parrot tries to talk to Mathilde through her door, but he is answered only with silence. When Parrot finally finds Mathilde alone, she slaps him and accuses him of throwing her away like an old rag and forcing her to leave everything, but she will not be left behind. Olivier sees Mathilde slap Parrot and realizes she must be his lover. Fascinated by the artist, he decides having her will save him from some of his grief caused by the death of his best friend. Parrot is ready to kill Olivier when he notices the nobleman has his eye on Mathilde. He is horrified as he watches them flirt and though he plans to avoid them when Mathilde decides to paint Olivier's portrait, they insist that he attend upon them. Throwing the portrait into the sea, Parrot makes himself a public madman so that Olivier is permitted to lock the door against his servant while sitting for his portrait. The idea of what Olivier and Mathilde do in the locked cabin haunts Parrot. Parrot describes how he first met Mathilde when she was commissioned to paint a mural in Tilbot's home and he drew for her to prove that he was not just a footman. Six years later, her painting of Olivier holds such vitality that one would think that she loved her subject. As they reach America, Parrot is tormented only by his loneliness and the sight of Mathilde and her mother. When her mother slaps her face, Mathilde rushes into Parrot's arms and they make love while Mme. Christian goes to the market. When Mathilde becomes sick, Parrot is consumed with fear that his beloved will die and he and her mother tend to Mathilde devotedly. In Wethersfield, Parrot thinks he was foolish to leave Mathilde's side to serve an aristocrat. After establishing his printery in Harlem Heights, Parrot and Mathilde live happily with a group of printers they employ, and Mathilde is free to paint whatever she desires without concern for selling her works.

Some time after their arrival in America, Mr. Peek takes Olivier on a tour of his farm which is improved by the presence of Miss Godefroy, a friend of one of Peek's daughters who is from Connecticut. The sight of Miss Godefroy immediately changes Olivier's opinion of New York as she is beautiful, modest, and gracious. Olivier is unsure whether she is flirting with him, but "to ask the question is to not understand her" (p. 202). While in Philadelphia, he plans to read Moliere's "Tartuffe" to her when he visits Wethersfield, but he is unable to obtain a copy of the play. Reaching the Godefroys' home, Olivier feels he has stumbled on the secret center of this new nation as he watches Miss Godefroy jumping across the yard. In his room later, Olivier finds a copy of "Tartuffe" on his bedside table and believes Miss Godefroy loves him. Parrot is frustrated with Olivier's attempts at courting, convinced his employer is pursuing the young American woman in the wrong manner. When Olivier arrives at Old Farm, he is



numb with desire and terror from Amelia's beauty and daring. There is no difficulty in arranging to meet privately since it is America and Parrot is the only person they seek to deceive. Olivier and Amelia meet at an early house and as Amelia shows Olivier her father's landscaping, they talk about France and American democracy, yet Olivier's thoughts are consumed when wondering whether he can live in Wethersfield. He opens his arms and Amelia comes to him, making him wonder who would not envy him. Olivier sends his servant away to New York, allowing Amelia to act as his secretaire in Parrot's absence. He is ecstatic when she agrees to marry him if he obtains her father's permission, but after he acquires Mr. Godefroy's permission, Amelia is distraught when Olivier refuses to marry in France. When she overhears him telling her father that his parents will not accept her, she refuses to marry him. Olivier leaves feeling disappointed, dejected, and devoid of hope. During this novel, Parrot's disappointment in love is reconciled, allowing him to live happily with his beloved. However, Olivier falls in love with a young American woman, but his aristocratic sentiments prevent him from being happy with her.

Friendship

There are several important friendships that play a large role in this novel. Firstly, the friendship between the Comtesse de Garmont and Tilbot leads to his interference with Olivier and assistance in sending her son to America. A very important friendship is that between Olivier and Thomas Blacqueville. These two French nobles have been friends since their youths, and as adults, they live together and attend Guizot's lectures; therefore, both of their lives are endangered as they are suspected as traitors and spies. Blacqueville is supposed to accompany Olivier to America, but unfortunately, the evening before their departure, Blacqueville is killed by d'Audloy in a duel to defend Olivier's honor because d'Audloy calls Olivier a traitor for defecting to America. On the ship to America, Olivier mourns the death of his best friend and he eventually decides to pursue Mathilde, thinking that will distract him from his grief. His love for Bebe causes him much grief later in the novel when Parrot reports his mentor's death.

Olivier and Parrot get off to a rough start since they meet in Tilbot's drawing room and Olivier believes Parrot has been spying on him. Things do not improve when Olivier is drugged on the Havre and taken away to America; an event that he incorrectly and unfairly blames on Parrot. On the ship, Olivier treats Parrot poorly and even pursues a physical relationship with Parrot's woman. In America, Olivier is agitated to learn that Parrot is his cosignatory without whom he cannot access his money. Parrot, angry at Olivier's attempts at Mathilde, refuses to aid him. When they encounter each other on the street, they are attacked by assailants, and despite their dislike for one another, they come to the other's defense. This event, unfortunately, lands Parrot in prison, but Olivier arranges his servant's release which leads to Parrot returning to Olivier's employment. In Philadelphia, Parrot tells Olivier about his past after finding his published engravings in a folio in M. Duponceau's library, and though the story makes Olivier want to cry, he knows he does not have the right. Before sending his servant to New York to purchase a copy of "Tartuffe", Olivier asks if Parrot is content with his life. When Parrot stops in the cabin on the ship to Wethersfield to tell Olivier he will save the book, Olivier is



touched by his remorse since it is the first time Parrot has shown any sign that he truly wants to serve him. Parrot saves the book, suggesting Olivier can tell Miss Godefroy the ridiculous story of how Parrot bought the wrong book and comically performed it.

Olivier begins to enjoy his servant's company, but Parrot's expression grows clouded when his employer asks about his wife and her mother. After dinner that night, Parrot joins Olivier with a bottle of brandy and asks if he is going courting. Parrot also tells Olivier about the time he spent in Australia, confiding in Olivier. By the time they reach Connecticut, Olivier considers Parrot his friend and he realizes the depth of his servant's love when Parrot pushes him from the carriage. Yet, Olivier's actions are calculated to hide the truth from Parrot since he is Tilbot's man and must alert the Comtesse de Garmont, and Olivier does not expect Parrot to dissemble on his behalf.

One demonstration of Parrot's loyalty is seen when he refuses to obey the Comtesse de Garmont in lying to Olivier that the Abbe de La Londe is dying because she fears her son plans to marry an American woman; instead, he tells Olivier the truth: Bebe is already dead. After being disappointed in his hopes for love when Miss Godefroy refuses to marry him, Olivier turns to Parrot, and though he is quite rude and offensive, Parrot treats his former employer kindly, taking care of him and even allowing Olivier to sleep in Parrot's own bed. Although Mathilde is not sentimental about the French aristocracy, Parrot can tell she is moved by this impossible friendship. Olivier wants Parrot to return to Paris with him and laments his solitude when Parrot refuses.

Parrot dedicates the book to Olivier, his patron even though they did not know it at the time. As he dedicates this account of their lives and travels to Olivier-Jean-Baptiste de Clarel de Garmont, Parrot tells Olivier that his fears are groundless; there is no tyranny in America and never could be, therefore Olivier's fears about democracy are unsupported by the truth. The proof of his error is in Parrot's life found in this history compiled by John Larrit at Harlem Heights on May 10, 1837.



Style

Point of View

The point of view of "Parrot & Olivier in America" is the first person, It is limited in view and reliable. Parrot and Olivier alternate in narrating the story and each of them tells the story from his own perspective. Their reliability is assumed as neither narrator is ever proven to lie. The switch back and forth between the two narrators from a first-person viewpoint is very important to the novel as it focuses largely on comparing the views of these two characters, an aristocrat and a servant, throughout their experiences in America.

The exposition and dialogue for each character in this novel are distributed fairly equally, but there is a slight bit more exposition as the narrators frequently describe the events and scenes in meticulous detail. Additionally, Parrot and Olivier occasionally provide some back story about their pasts and childhoods which is written as exposition primarily. This distribution allows Olivier and Parrot to comment and provide their viewpoints and opinions of various scenes and events which serves to show the contrast between the French noble and the English servant. The viewpoint of this novel alternates between that of Olivier and Parrot.

Setting

"Parrot & Olivier in America" is set in the real world during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The novel is set in England, France, America and, briefly, Australia. The characters are French, English, and American individuals of various social status. This is particularly important in the case of Parrot, a servant, as he is able to improve his lifestyle upon moving to America. England is Parrot's home country when he is a child. He leaves with Tilbot after his father is arrested when the printery is burned down because forgeries are created there. France is the main setting of the first third of the novel. Olivier is from France, but he is sent away because the political atmosphere causes his mother to think his life is in danger. After Amelia Godefroy refuses to marry him, Olivier returns to France. America is the main setting of the majority of the novel. Parrot and Olivier relocate to America to compile a report about American prisons. The Chateau de Barfleur is Olivier's family home in the French countryside where he spends his childhood. rue Saint-Dominique is where the Garmont family has their home in Paris. The Comtesse lives on the rue Saint-Dominique after the king is restored to power. The Havre is the ship that Olivier and Parrot take to America. Dittisham is where Parrot lives as a child with his father when Jack Larrit is employed in Mr. Piggott's printery. Parrot flees when the printers are arrested for forgery. Versailles is where Olivier, as an adult, lives with his best friend, Thomas Blacqueville.

New York is where Parrot and Olivier first arrive in America. Faubourg Saint-Antoine is where Parrot lives with Mathilde in France. The Tombs are the prison in New York where



Parrot is sent after Olivier shoots a man who attacks them. Before leaving, Parrot rescues a young boy who witnessed his father murder his mother.

Wethersfield, CT is where the Godefroys live. Olivier goes to meet Mr. Godefroy and learn about Wethersfield Prison, though his true intention is to become better acquainted with Miss Amelia Godefroy. He plans to reside in Wethersfield after marrying Amelia. Old Farm, in Wethersfield, CT, is the home of the Godefroys. Parrot and Olivier go to Philadelphia, PA to learn about the Quakers' humane prison. In M. Duponceau's library in Philadelphia, Parrot sees his engravings in a folio and tells Olivier and Duponceau about his past with Tilbot. New South Wales is a penal colony in Australia where Parrot settles after being abandoned by Tilbot. When Tilbot returns, Parrot abandons his wife, his son and his home because Tilbot convinces him he can become an artist in Paris.

Eckerd's Elysium is the name of the theatre where Parrot sees and is appalled by Eckerd's play about the Revolution. He is angry at his companions for their fraudulent house fires in order to obtain insurance money and threatens to burn the theatre down if they continue. He buys one of Watkins' engravings because he is convinced they can profit honorably. In Albany, NY, Olivier watches the Independence Day celebrations with Mr. Godefroy and is appalled, but he is still willing to become an American because he loves Amelia Godefroy. Parrot buys a farm in Harlem Heights near the Hudson River where he establishes a printery to produce "The Birds of America." He lives there with Mathilde, Watkins, and a number of workers.

Language and Meaning

The language in this novel tends to vary, depending on the narrator. Olivier's writing tends to be more stiff and formal, due to his aristocratic upbringing, while Parrot, as a servant, tends to write in a style that is more casual and informal. This difference is evidence of Olivier's superior upbringing that springs from his nobility. Both narrators generally write correctly in terms of grammar and composition. These varying writing styles are useful to comprehending the novel as it differentiates between the two narrators while allowing Parrot and Olivier to show their differing viewpoints, which are significant due to their opposing social statuses in France.

The language used in "Parrot & Olivier in America" characterizes the education and social status of the two main characters, a nobleman and a servant. The exposition and dialogue in this novel are distributed fairly equally, but there is a slight bit more exposition as the narrators frequently describe the events and scenes in meticulous detail. Additionally, Parrot and Olivier occasionally provide some backstory about their pasts and childhoods which is written as exposition primarily. This distribution allows Olivier and Parrot to comment and provide their viewpoints and opinions of various scenes and events which serves to show the contrast between the French noble and the English servant. The language aids the writing style by providing differing experiences, education and lifestyles, especially when Olivier and Parrot describe the same people or events from their differing viewpoints, demonstrating how different they



are as a result of their classes. Overall, the language is effective in showing the attitudes in the time period of these two opposing classes and nations.

Structure

"Parrot & Olivier in America" is comprised of twenty-eight chapters which are divided into 381 pages. The chapters range between three and thirty pages in length and are titled by the name of the narrator, Parrot or Olivier. Some of the chapters are divided into subsections as the length varies with some being very short and other chapters being quite lengthy. Additionally, the chapters are generally detailed and the amount of time that passes in a given chapter ranges from hours to months or even years during the narrators' flashbacks.

"Parrot & Olivier in America" by Peter Carey is an intriguing novel about a French nobleman and his English servant immigrating to America. Because of the political discontent in France, Olivier goes to America to study the penal system in the new country, accompanied by his secretaire, Parrot. Both men find the opportunity for new lives overseas, but changing who he is proves to be more difficult for Olivier. "Parrot & Olivier in America" is an entertaining novel which explores the challenges that different social classes face in America. The pace of the novel is fairly slow, but it is easy to read since the alternation between narrators helps keep readers engaged. Both Parrot and Olivier begin their narratives with back story about their childhoods, and they provide additional details about their pasts sporadically throughout the novel. The novel was very entertaining and comical at times while revealing a large amount of history about the French Revolution as well as likely attitudes of the nobles and servants about both the Revolution and the newly independent America.



Quotes

"I also am sick, but it is in no sense the same. I am, as I often declare myself, a wretched beast." (Olivier, p. 7).

"Man is born free and is everywhere in chains." (Parrot, p. 36).

"At Piggott's it was always ask no questions and you'll be told no lies." (Parrot, p. 53).

"Worse, we were overshadowed by our own family trees. I was a Garmont, but a lowly judge advocate." (Olivier, p. 71).

"You are a Garmont. The liberals see you and have no doubt you are a spy. The monarchists see you and know you for a traitor. You are in danger." (Olivier, p. 76).

"Is this why you murdered my grandparents and cousins, so you could have this, so you could gather in your beastly warrens and prisons and spread your vile calimnies and wish me dead while all these years no one has done a damn thing for you, and if you wish to see what has been done, why then, do not shout at me, a Garmont, sworn to protect and care for you with his last breath, but look instead at the new bourgeois houses along l'avenue de Neuilly. For this you spilled your blood and our blood- the bourgeois who turns his back upon the street, who eats your bread and drinks your blood while his fat arse blocks your way. Oh monumental figures of the Revolution, great figures of our past. Oh mammoth fools, mighty sansculottes, elephantine dupes." (Olivier, p. 81).

"Olivier de Garmont was unhappy with the king, but what I did not understand was that he was, so to speak, on the same team. So no matter what a nutter the king was, Olivier de Garmont was a noble, duty-bound to protect him from the mob." (Parrot, p. 83-84).

"I am certain you could not have imagined this confinement, or, if you did, I am sure you will beg God's forgiveness for abandoning your son to such a fate." (Olivier, p. 107).

"This is the servant writing to you, Comtesse, mother of Olivier. Your little Migraine is not who you imagine, I wrote. He is vile. He has stolen my love. He has broken my heart. And I send you this news in that very same hand, that now and in the future, will declare myself your most affectionate son." (Parrot, p. 136).

"I would not explain to an American what this noble lady had lost to the disgusting guillotine, nor would he learn that every night she lived the nightmare of her father's murder. She was singular indeed, but it was in no way amusing that she fought to save her son's life even when there was no threat to it. That was her scar. She gained it honorably." (Olivier, p. 143).

"But now you need Mr. Larrit to have his freedom. Without his signature, you cannot eat." (Olivier, p. 144).



"Forgive her, sir. She cannot help it. Happiness is always taken from her. It is her curse." (Parrot, p. 150).

"To serve you, Monsieur, is one thing, but M. de Garmont knows not my history or abilities. He insults my honor. He entirely lacks your grace and spirit. He has threatened me, and made himself foolish in attempting to seduce my wife. For this last I would not be blamed for murdering him, so this letter is a less painful way, for himself, of sundering the connection." (Parrot, p. 152).

"That's the Parrot for you. I wish he was another way." (Parrot, p. 182).

"For he- who had spent almost his entire life a student of his own noble Garmont courage, his Barfleur glory, having prepared himself to rebuff the citizens from Paris- he, Olivier-Jean-Baptiste de Clarel de Garmont, with no other thought but that he, The French Commissioner, must not figure in a public scandal, had stood by while his own servant had been unjustly arrested." (Olivier, p. 186-187).

"As Americans, we must allow the possibility. He may simply end up rich. My dear Olivier, this is not your ancient France. But if it were, that boy- if he showed similar initiative- might take possession of half the lands along the Loire. If he works hard. There are countless acres of America owned by no one, waiting to be taken. You want our American Avignon, it is empty. It is yours. I give it to you." (Olivier, p. 193).

"Was she flirting? To ask the question is to not understand her." (Olivier, p. 201).

"Was it not my mother who engineered my departure from my natural society, and now I was here, was I not still a man? I might be safe from the so-called July Revolution, but I was not safe from love." (Olivier, p. 203).

"You are here to study the Americans. There are nice distinctions that may not yet be obvious to you, although this will be very clear in time, and here is one: Our morality in France is shaped by each man's knowledge that he is shut in a certain sphere from which he does not hope to escape... Here, the road to riches and fortune is open to everybody, no matter from where they start... So there is a restlessness of spirit and a greed for wealth which it would be hard for you to understand." (Olivier, p. 215).

"I decided to forget. It would make me too angry to have lost so many years. I thought I will not count the days, and so I didn't." (Olivier, p. 218).

"Democracies and monarchies, it does not matter- the world is filled with poor men tortured by the state. The rich make an endless supply of them, and when the Americans won their independence the king must find a new place to put his prisoners. So- Australia was invented by the British, that whole dry carcass, its withered dugs offered to our criminal lips. Now that, sir, is a place of penance." (Parrot, p. 225).

"In this way a self-pitying boy grew to be an artist blessed to see what had not been seen in all of London. When I saw Duponceau's folio, I understood what treasure I had



thrown away. I had been more talented, more decent. I had been a better man in New South Wales." (Parrot, p. 226).

"It is strange, in New York and Philadelphia, to see the feverish enthusiasm which accompanies Americans' pursuit of prosperity and the way they are ceaselessly tormented by the vague fear that they have failed to choose the shortest route to achieve it." (Olivier, p. 237).

"It is a wonder how many lives a man can hold within his skin." (Olivier, p. 243).

"The curse of great facility in a child is that it easily produces laziness." (Parrot, p. 281).

"I did not think myself useless. That is, I woke as Parrot, he who is loved to death, is again the government, a Jacobin, a socialist, a man of the future, a traveler on the tides of history, subject to the laws of Newton but not to those of kings, a subject, yes, but always in proud and personal rebellion. Such was my distinctive character that lords and counts referred to me by name. The Empress Josephine was almost of my circle. I was true to myself. I was not no one, if you please." (Parrot, p. 288).

"What were the roots of my rage, I hardly knew. I had failed to use my own talents as my companions had. They thought they were my betters and I feared they might be right. They were arrogant. They were wrong. They thought that they alone could see. They had promoted themselves to be aristocrats of the senses. In this role they felt entitled to steal whatever gold they wished from public coffers." (Parrot, p. 314-315).

"My beloved annoyed me, I admit it. Yet so it is between couples of the deepest and most enduring affections." (Olivier, p. 328).

"She was conspiring to send me away with her father, to keep us locked together in a carriage until the matter of our marriage was raised and settled once and for all. Of course there would be democratic opposition to my nobility, but how could Amelia's loving determination not excite my pulse and predict the strength of our union?" (Olivier, p. 333).

"I was most excited, I confessed, and what a very peculiar and blessed feeling it was to stand safely inside the Revolution, so to speak, to be on the unquestioned side of good." (Olivier, p. 348).

"Perhaps it would have been enough to love Amelia, and then her father, and then the land itself, and so on. Yet I felt myself honor-bound to take all this wilderness and ignorance into my heart and embrace it, trusting that it would show, in time, not the coarseness and vulgarity of the Glorious Fourth but something new and fine and worthy of the Declaration." (Olivier, page 355).

"'There are no nobles in America.' I said this meaning: I shall be one no longer; it is impossible...'You will be a Frenchwoman because you are my wife, as I will be an American because I am your husband.'" (Olivier, page 360).



"French society has none of your vigor, your love of innovation. It is looking backward while it marches to its doom... They will not be able to grasp Amelia's originality." (Olivier, page 363).

"Mathilde's work in M. Proudhon's studio had left her with no single reason to be sentimental about the aristocracy of France, but when I saw her eyes I knew she was moved by this most impossible of friendships, perhaps the only example of its type the world has ever seen." (Parrot, p. 371).

"When you love a woman you impute to her the virtues you desire." (Parrot, p. 377).

"To him I say, in the fullness of my heart, sir, your fears are phantoms. Look, it is daylight. There are no sansculottes, nor will there ever be again. There is no tyranny in America, nor ever could be. Your horrid visions concerning fur traders are groundless. The great ignoramus will not be elected. The illiterate will never rule. Your bleak certainty that there can be no art in a democracy is unsupported by the truth. You are wrong, dear sir, and the proof that you are wrong is here, in my jumbled life, for I was your servant and became your friend. I was your employee and am now truly your progenitor, by which I mean that you were honestly MADE IN NEW YORK by a footman and a rogue." (Dedication, p. 381).



Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast Oliver and Parrot's attitudes toward America.

How does Olivier and Parrot's relationship evolve throughout this novel?

Why is Olivier sent to America?

Why does Amelia Godefroy decide not to marry Olivier?

What does Parrot decide to do to build his future in America?

Who is the Marquis de Tilbot and why is he important to the plot of the novel?

Describe Olivier's visit to Parrot before his return to France.

Who does Parrot dedicate his book to and why?