Restoration Study Guide

Restoration by Rose Tremain

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

Restoration is a historical novel set in London, England during the 17th century, approximately 1660-70, during the reign of King of Britain Charles II. The principal character is Robert Merivel, who tells in the first person his coming of age story from age nine. He is a half-educated physician and surgeon. He leaves school when, following the death of his father, the King's glove maker, the King out of respect appoints Merivel as physician to the palace dogs. His status increases until the King orders him to marry the King's mistress Celia, as part of a scheme to hide her from the public eye as his mistress. He sets Merivel up with a manor, a thirty-room mansion in Norfolk and all the amenities.

However, Merivel ultimately commits the mortal sin. He falls in love with Celia, and as a result the King banished him from the palace and royal courts. Merivel ends up joining his best friend, Pearce, a Quaker, at an isolated and primitive Mental Health Hospital, run by other Quakers. During his stay there, his friend Pearce dies. He makes love with and impregnates a patient, whom he has no feelings for, and he is banished from the facility with Katherine, the patient, in tow. She ultimately has his baby and dies in childbirth. The female baby is named Margaret and left with a wet-nurse. Lost again, Merivel bounces aimlessly around London during the waning days of the London plague, all the time longing to be with the King again, whom he considers like a God. He becomes progressively more and more frustrated and then he becomes ill. After his collapse and coma, he is restored by the King to a room in his former mansion. His future and his health are left up in the air.

Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary

The title "Beginnings" (plural) accurately describes Chapter 1. The year is 1664. We meet Robert Merivel, in the first person. He first describes his thirty-seven-year-old body in very disparaging terms. He is very dissatisfied with all his appendages and describes his stomach as large and freckled and looking like a flight of moths has landed on it. He is balding and wears a wig, which often becomes sweaty and itchy.

His first beginning is many years before, in 1636, when Robert is nine years old. Using kitchen utensils, he performs an autopsy of a starling (a small bird). This leaves a lasting impression on him. The second beginning, in 1647, is while he is attending Caius College, Cambridge (medical school), where he performs autopsies and meets his friend Pearce. While there, he meets a man with an open chest wound which exposes the man's beating heart. Merivel touches and squeezes the heart, and its bearer does not feel the touch. The third beginning occurred as Merivel's father, an able and determined craftsman is appointed the King's (Charles II, after regaining his throne) glove maker. This is Merivel's first experience with royalty. The King shows him and his father the King's clock collection. Merivel makes a less than stunning appearance. In the fourth beginning, his father's workshop and residence burns to the ground, killing both Merivel's parents. Out of sympathy, the King offers him a place in his court if he is able to heal the King's dog, which he does. Merivel becomes in charge of the health of the palace dogs. Suddenly, Merivel, in the year that follows, is in the lap of luxury. He is well liked by the court for his humor, and he has a never-ending supply of girls. However, in the fifth beginning he is ordered by the King to marry the King's youngest and favorite mistress, for very interesting and dubious reasons.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

Merivel makes it very clear, in 1664, in the time of his favor by the King, that humanity has abandoned honorable lives and royal titles as the definition of its people and adopted a new "Age of Possibility." He sees himself as a pioneer in this "new" age and notices the failure of even his closest friend (and his deceased mother) to notice the change. French clothing and mannerisms have begun to come into good repute, and it appears that Merivel indulges in them on more than rare occasions. At this point, he "has it made" so to speak, and his satisfaction with himself is evident as he is able to see himself as he is, laugh at himself and at the same time enjoy himself and his popularity. He is quite social. However, he admits at this point he does realize he knows little about the world and his role in it. He embraces this realm of possibility, which he sees as erasing the former barriers of status and position and honor. He welcomes an age of learning, experimentation, broadening of horizons and accomplishment. He sees living life as seeking after quality, rather than royalty or title.

Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary

Indeed, the marriage to Celia Clemence, that is the ceremony and party, is fun and games for Merivel. The marriage has been arranged so that the King's other mistress, Barbara Castlemain, who knows something is afoot between the King and Celia, will be pacified. If Celia is a married woman, the King can continue both affairs with a minimum of turbulence. The wedding and ceremony is therefore a sham, a fraud on the King's subjects. Merivel doesn't like Celia, and Celia loves only the King. Following the traditional meeting between Merivel and Celia's father (who probably is in on or knows about the scam) and the courtship of the bride, (all the meetings between prospective bride and groom are held in the King's presence with Celia devoting all her attention on the King) comes the wedding day and night. The couple is thrown into the wedding by the crowd of well wishers, and Merivel is made to disrobe. A purple ribbon is tied around his "prick." The couple is then alone, for about one minute. The King bursts in, gets naked and begins making love to Celia in front of Merivel. Merivel tries to ignore this, but when he peeks and sees the King between Celia's legs, he knows he has to get out of there. He ends up making love to a village floozy on his wedding night.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

The restored King, in 1662, is portrayed as being able to do as he pleases, with the consent and blessing of his subjects. Unlike the dictators of today (or the figurehead royalty) the King keeps his people happy, many times doling out rewards to his particularly loyal servants. Merivel himself gets an estate with a mansion and enough salary to fix it up "like a King." Merivel has been in charge of the health of the kingdom's dogs, but he now becomes a full time "husband," complete with the prestige, title and wealth required.

This chapter parodies today's rulers, who are constantly engaged in a keep-away game with the public while they spin a web of deceit. Sometimes they are found out, and the subjects are surprised. The people and the press take sides, selling their spin for or against the issue. The public becomes so confused that they ultimately say the hell with it and hate their government even more. Of course, the King holds much more power. Dissenters are made to reside at the dreaded Tower (of London) or leave their heads at the guillotine. Today, all that is lost is power and reputation, until the offender waits out public opinion and starts over.

Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary

Stuck at home with nothing to do after the extensive furnishing on the mansion at the village of Bidnold is done, Merivel takes up painting. With his overactive imagination, he fancies himself a great artist. However, he learns soon enough that he can't paint. Since he is familiar with the human body from medical training, he thinks he would be more successful with a human subject as a model. He picks a good-looking barmaid, Meg Storey, with large attractive breasts. He convinces her, by promises and offers of money, to be his model. Soon, he is painting her, naked except for underpants, draped in a beguiling way with a shawl. Now he begins to be satisfied with his drawings, except that he becomes very aroused while painting the woman and is unable to focus. In between modeling times, she is completely on his mind. He becomes frustrated because he can't capture her dual nature in the painting, and he gives up, sending her home. Merivel also meets and begins an affair with his next-door neighbor, Lady Bathurst, whose husband has Alzheimer's disease.

Merivel's dog, Minette, becomes very ill. Not trusting himself to cure her, he goes looking for the local doctor at a favorite pub, where coincidentally Meg Storey works. Upon not finding the doctor, with his dog deathly ill at home, he ends up wrestling (making love with) the large-breasted Meg on the floor of a storeroom. He still cannot find the doctor, and after his other escapades, he arrives home very late to the dead carcass of Minette.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

Merivel is very imaginative and has high expectations when he embarks on a new project, such as the painting in this chapter. This is also evident upon his furnishing of his mansion. He has a music room, but he plays no instruments. He has a billiard room, though he has never played. He has a card room, but he knows only two games. Finally, he has a studio, though he had never painted before. Although he enjoys mixing colors, he is entirely dissatisfied with his first painting of a man's buttocks and thighs. He is convinced that the painting is one-dimensional due to his lack of knowledge of shadowing and light. Then he goes on to Meg, the live model, but he finds he cannot accurately capture on canvas the subtle blending of both her beautiful and vulgar natures.

Merivel doesn't give up. Upon Lady Bathurst's referral, he begins painting lessons from Elias Finn, who immediately criticized his use of colors, the only thing about painting Merivel enjoys and thinks he can do right. At some point, the wise man saves himself a lot of embarrassment and says "Hey, I can't paint; there must be something else for me." Merivel is not a wise man. He is a dreamer and an imaginer.

Part 1, Chapter 4

Part 1, Chapter 4 Summary

This rather metaphysical chapter begins with Merivel mourning the loss of Minette and feeling lonely for some contact with his King, who has seemingly abandoned him. To that end, he composes an honest letter to the King revealing his feelings and asking for some acknowledgment from His Highness. However, three months later, the King has not responded. Merivel's painting instructor Finn, who has fallen on hard times and is living in Merivel's neighbor's barn, has been begging Merivel to use his influence with the King to get him a job in the royal court. Merivel rudely dismisses Finn with a lecture about the commercialism of that age and intimates that if Finn desires him to use his influence he must pay up. The truth is that Merivel no longer has any influence but seeks to put Finn off for a time. The next week Finn brings a birdcage with a bird in it as a down payment. He describes the bird as an Indian Nightingale, who has returned from a world tour on the high seas. However, later, Merivel's friend Pearce tells him that he has been duped, and the voice of the bird is that of a common blackbird. Merivel does not believe him. However, while they are outside attempting to prove/disprove the theory, Celia arrives for the first time at the mansion in a carriage drawn by gallant gray horses. Merivel wonders at her. He sees a negative change in her appearance and feels sorry for her. He wants to greet her but can't remember her name.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

Pearce, who has been earlier defined as of the Quaker religion, carries on a religious discussion with Merivel about God, which has characteristics of a conversation that might take place centuries later in our times. Merivel was raised by pious parents who he believes had no sin. Merivel believes that any love he had for God as a result of that relationship vanished upon their untimely deaths, in a fire that has hardened Merivel into believing that if God does exist, he is cruel. However, he believes that God most likely doesn't exist. Merivel is now of a materialistic nature. He loves his lust for women, the grandeur of his surroundings and the commercialism of his age. Pearce, on the other hand, notes that suffering is redeeming and that the sufferings of Merivel's parents in the fire allowed their sins to pass from them. Pearce has quit college and resigned himself to selfless work with the most insane, in an institution. Interestingly as well, Merivel has transferred his love of God to love for his King, which he finds greater than the love of any woman. However, just as he has been betrayed by God, so the King seems to have abandoned him.

Part 1, Chapter 5

Part 1, Chapter 5 Summary

Celia moves in and immediately isolates herself in the marigold room of the mansion, after a few mean looks Merivel's way. Lady Bathurst (Violet), Merivel's next-door mistress, has to be consoled that Celia's moving in with Merivel doesn't change things. She is apparently convinced after a tumble on the couch with her lover. Merivel feels a great deal of sympathy for Celia, since he knows the King has banished her. He forces his way into her bedroom to express his feelings to her. However, when he mentions that they both have shared "a portion of the King's love," Celia goes into a tirade. The love, she says, was a deception. She goes on to "explain" to Merivel that he was chosen to participate in the sham marriage because he is the only person stupid enough, foolish enough and dense enough to accept the assignment. The King never loved him but arranged the marriage for Celia, and the King knew Merivel would go along with the sham like a puppy. She goes on to say she begged the King on her hands and knees not to make her marry that idiot.

Merivel of course is devastated. He seeks solace with his pal Pearce. Pearce tells him a story about a patient in his mental ward who is ultimately cured by expelling in her excrement a large worm. He opens Merivel's world by telling him Celia is right, that his love for the King is misplaced and a foul thing in his nature. His love for the King will now be evacuated from him like a turd. The putrefied stool will carry out the foul source of poison and decay, taking with it the worm of hope.

Part 1, Chapter 5 Analysis

The type and cast of Merivel's illness of hanging on to "hopeless hope" is analogous to Pearce's story of the woman mental patient. She comes to the facility a raving maniac who spreads excrement on herself and has to be chained to a wall. When all methods of treatment fail, her cure is left to nature. Her body finally evacuates the cause of all her problems - the worm. This is similar to Merivel healing the King's dog by leaving it alone. In addition, Pierce radically believes the fatal fire has burned out the sin in Merivel's parents. He goes on that devils are present in the mentally ill, and those devils have to be chased out by extreme chastisement, torture and unbelievable cruelty. In Merivel, he sees that being confronted by Celia with the painful, devastating truth casts the devil from him so he can enjoy a new freedom.

Many religions, down through the ages, have believed as Pearce does (Catholics and Protestant Christians among them) and engaged in self flagellation, the inflicting of knife wounds and other forms of self torture to become righteous. Although the mental health field has thankfully gone beyond these primitive methods of treatment, the Bible does say that, "those whom the Lord loves he chastens" (Hebrews 12:6).

Part 1, Chapter 6

Part 1, Chapter 6 Summary

After Pearce leaves, Merivel discovers Celia in his withdrawal room (his sanctuary when things got a little much), admiring the "Indian Nightingale." This time Celia is civil to him, and they have a pleasant conversation. When Celia wants to hear the bird sing, Merivel gathers his oboe and plays it for the bird. Because his playing is so bad, he and Celia burst into uncontrollable laughter while the bird sings away. They leave on good terms, and Celia accepts Merivel's invitation for supper.

While at supper, a letter arrives from the King summoning Merivel to London by the morning. Merivel leaves immediately, and after the twelve-hour ride, he meets the King at his Psychic Garden. The King explains that Celia has asked the King to give up his other mistresses and love only her. For this the King has banished her. The bottom line is that the King wants Merivel to carry a message to Celia that if she abandons her demands and becomes happy with the creature comforts she has, then she can return to the palace in two months. In return the King reiterates all the benefits that have been bestowed on Merivel and bribes him with them. Following that, the King spikes Merivel's drink with a drop of what amounts to 17th century truth serum. Except for babbling about his love for the King and begging to return to his Majesty's courts, the King gets nothing unexpected from Merivel while he is under the influence. Merivel, on the other hand, gets a headache and does not see the King again that trip. The King leaves Merivel a letter telling him what he has done.

Part 1, Chapter 6 Analysis

The King with his truth serum is a paranoid ruler, a type of Richard Nixon. Not only does the King personally interrogate the sober Merivel, but he questions him also under the influence of a truth serum. He is like Nixon who just could not be reassured that everyone wasn't out to get him, forcing drastic mistakes on his part. When the King finally finds out to his satisfaction that Merivel has been leaving his mistress alone, he vanishes, with no apology, leaving only a note telling Merivel what he has done. He is unconcerned that Merivel became a blabbering, weeping fool before the King while under the influence of the serum. According to Pearce, this foolish display should not bother Merivel, as any such experience imparts righteousness to the sufferer.

Part 1, Chapter 7

Part 1, Chapter 7 Summary

The chapter begins with Merivel quickly leaving Whitehall, the residence of the King, and landing at the Leg Tavern, where a mess of Starling meat and a few beers cure him of the aftereffects of the King's truth potion. Feeling in good spirits, he proceeds to the residence and laundress workshop of Rosie Pierpont, his old flame (one of many) and immensely enjoys her fleshly charms. Then, wanting to go to Kaw, where Celia has been hidden by the King, which he knows is only accessible by boat, he rents a Tilt-boat and a driver.

Merivel must pay extra for the journey because of the darkness. During a conversation with the boat operator, who Merivel nicknames Fox, Merivel learns that the operator once saw the King on this lake, sailing in the same direction. The pair eventually arrives at the dwelling Kaw, even hidden from view from the lake. According to Fox, this is where the King disembarked. Strangely, the house is full of people making merriment. All the while, Merivel is rehearsing in his mind what he will say to Celia, following his meeting with the King. After contracting a fever and lying up for a week, he arrives home to find Sir Joshua, Celia's father, playing music in the music room. He is told that Joshua is there to take Celia home, and Merivel is surprised at his depth of feeling in not wanting that to happen.

Part 1, Chapter 7 Analysis

From the outset, Merivel intends to disobey the King and tell Celia anything else that may comfort her and make him look good. Does he have designs on this girl he has barely had a couple of conversations with? Not only does this type of conduct cross the King, but Celia (his wife) is also a paramount issue with Merivel's next-door lover Violet. Are his feelings so strong regarding Celia that he will take such risks? Is he napve enough to not be aware of possible grave consequences of an affair with Celia? Violet's temper is well known to him, even if he does think it attractive. What Merivel contemplates telling Celia is that the King has disowned her, and it is likely he will never summon her back. He will go on (as Pearce has done to him) to try to convince her to give up any hope of ever possessing or being used again by the King. As we shall see, what he finally does say to Celia is much more egregious, atrocious and self-serving.

Part 1, Chapter 8

Part 1, Chapter 8 Summary

As Merivel listens to the music coming from the music room the night he returns, he hears a heavenly female soprano voice echoing through his ears and entering his heart. It can only be Celia, and Merivel suddenly realizes what originally attracted the King to her. Merivel decides then and there that he does not want to lose that voice by her going home. Arm in arm in the garden, he gives her his version of the message from the King as follows: The King has given no promises, but he wants her to stay at the Bidnold Manor until she learns "the changeful nature of things." He goes on that the King has appointed Merivel to be the judge of when she has attained this knowledge, and Merivel will report back to the King when this has occurred.

Merivel and Sir Joshua decide together that this change will come through her singing and music. Merivel attends a wild party at Lady Bathurst's where a Countess shows off her breasts in public and everyone drinks to excess. Merivel finds it difficult afterward to acquire or maintain an erection with Violet and can only do it when he fantasizes about other women. Mostly he thinks about his wife Celia. At the end of the chapter, Merivel receives a gift from the King of very finely crafted surgical instruments. Carved on the handle of the sharpest knife are the ominous words: "Merivel, Do Not Sleep."

Part 1, Chapter 8 Analysis

Merivel is full of pity for himself. Always yearning for what he doesn't have, he fails to realize what he does have. Merivel is once again wounded psychologically, this time at Lady Bathurst's party. Many of the King's royalty are present and some Merivel had known at the court. They all seem to know that Merivel has never slept with his wife, and they surmise that Celia will not grant him entrance to her bedroom. Merivel is teased unmercifully about this by such guffaws as, "I hear she won't lay a finger on you," "how does it feel being locked out of your bedroom," and that Merivel should be the lead in a play entitled "Sir Willingly Deceived." Outwardly, Merivel takes this with a smile, but inside he loses his good humor. He figures out that the basis of this teasing is pity. Later he muses that in social circles he will only be pitied, even though the true answer is that Merivel has not given thought to entering Celia's bedroom. He finds this a perfect opportunity for self-pity in that he has married the woman with the most beautiful voice in London, and even though she stays in his house, he will never gain her respect, kiss her or feel her dainty white hands on his ugly face. It sounds like Merivel needs a little more realism from Pearce, but unfortunately Pearce is gone and unable to provide guidance.

Part 1, Chapter 9

Part 1, Chapter 9 Summary

Merivel becomes hung up about people in Russia and wonders how they stay warm in the winter. He visits Trench, his father's tailor and furrier, and orders ten raccoon tabards with wool lining for himself and all his household staff. Life otherwise becomes routine, with Celia becoming extremely bored. One night in his studio, where he has fallen asleep while drawing, Celia awakens him. The "Indian Nightingale" is ill. Merivel finds the bird on the bottom of the cage and obviously sick. To impress Celia, who begs him, he agrees to try and save the bird. He gives the bird a potion from a known apothecary, a green liquid body cleanser called Pill Fortis, while Celia sings to the bird. In the morning they awaken to find the bird dead, lying in a pool of greenish slime. Celia is so upset by the bird's illness that she ends up in Merivel's arms for comfort, to his delight. Of course, he misinterprets her motive. The bird is duly buried next to Merivel's dog Minette.

Two days later, Merivel receives a visit form a local Justice of the Peace, Sir Nicholas Hogg, who informs Merivel that he has been appointed "Overseer of the Poor" for that area. His job is to distinguish between the Idle (who are too lazy to work) and the Impotent (the real poor who have a license to beg). The Idle he is to put to work, and to the Impotent he is to donate food, money or whatever they need most. Taking his appointment with legitimate seriousness, Merivel meditates a great deal about the poor and makes a thoughtful ten-point list of their attributes and why they should be cared for.

Part 1, Chapter 9 Analysis

Merivel learns that only those who are well off financially are chosen to be Overseers, since they can spare money and goods for the Impotent. The entire incident reflects the rich's napve attitude toward the poor and homeless, both then and today. The government throws money and food at the problem, and the rich assuage their consciences by doing the same thing. This does little but protract the problem by providing food and shelter, but giving no real incentive or opportunity for the poor to change their fate. Here, a wealthy individual decides who is able to work, who goes to jail and who will live off government income for the rest of their lives. Merivel treats his job with thoughtfulness, though he may come into it with no conception of poverty and what it means.

Merivel's "who are the poor" list is a very interesting study of how the poor are regarded. In the sixth and seventh items on the list, Merivel notes that Jesus loves the poor, while the nobility in his time believe only in the poor and homeless' inherent wickedness, and this in a supposedly pious country. Merivel also writes that for most nobility, the poor are regarded as another race entirely, entirely inferior. Merivel concludes that the poor are

human just like everybody else. This experience, even at its inception, is an eye-opener for Merivel, who admits he has formerly given the poor little or no regard.

Part 1, Chapter 10

Part 1, Chapter 10 Summary

Merivel has a puzzling dream of the King. In the dream, his eyes start crying blood. The King tells him in the dream that he, Merivel, "did not know the first rule of the cosmos." Merivel awakes in real tears, not knowing why he is crying or the meaning of the dream. In his imagination, he asks the King what he should do about his melancholy over Celia. The imaginary King tells him that "he would learn in secret."

Finn, the painting instructor, arrives dressed in fine clothes and a periwig, a far cry from his appearance in rags the last time Merivel saw him. Finn has spent all of his money on a fine set of clothes in order to secure a meeting with the King. As a result, the King commissions him to paint a portrait of Celia, with the promise of a small job in the court if he does well. Celia is delighted, reading into it that the King must care for her or why would he want a portrait? Merivel's reaction is the opposite. He is enraged and jealous that Finn will be spending so much time with his wife. He angrily tells Celia that the portrait could just as well be a kiss off, simply a reminder to the King of the good old days. To top matters off, Celia has invited her music instructor, Herr Hemmel, to travel from London to instruct her. There will be two houseguests, both uninvited by Merivel! The chapter ends with Merivel searching for a homeless couple he had seen earlier in the day, in his professional, political capacity.

Part 1, Chapter 10 Analysis

Merivel, like so many of us, exults in his ability to be a recluse emotionally, hiding his true feelings from the world. First, he is jealous of Finn for acquiring a conditional promise of a job in the Royal Courts, something Merivel is most desirous of having. Then, he's jealous over Finn being able to spend time with Celia for long periods, while she is scantily clad. He is also jealous of Celia's reaction to Finn, her joy at having the picture done and the way she treats Finn, even flirting with him. Merivel does not reveal his inner emotions. His outward reaction is to limit the portrait-making time to an hour a day, on the grounds that Celia is too busy with her music. Merivel observes the posing and painting, and he sees Celia's beautiful smile, which she has never given him. This smile makes her the most beautiful creature on earth, to Merivel. To top things off, Celia tells Merivel to let her go back to London after the portrait is completed. If he doesn't, she says she will go back on her own. Merivel is devastated once again and drowns his sorrows in drink and Meg the barmaid. Merivel only feels safe revealing his true feelings to the prostitutes and barmaids, not to his peers. Merivel, in all his deviousness, begins to formulate a secret plan involving Herr Hemmel, to restore to himself to what he thinks he wants.

Part 1, Chapter 11

Part 1, Chapter 11 Summary

Merivel has his thirty-eighth birthday. He is born under the sign of Aquarius, the water bearer, which he imagines as a stooped old man with a yoke carrying two buckets of water. Merivel, who is still pining because of Celia's lack of attention to him, makes plans for the special day including a small party that evening. Merivel's secret plan is to learn to play the oboe well so that he can then play with Celia. To that end, he has his first music lesson from Herr Hemming, and Hemming, less that impressed with Merivel's playing, takes the oboe himself and shows how it is really to be played.

Merivel takes delivery of his furs and dons one himself, to his delight. Merivel is suddenly called away to the small surrounding village. There he meets Reverend Sackpole, who tells him about a young girl. This girl has been uncharacteristically emotionally distraught for some time. Her parents send her to "Wise Nell," a fortuneteller who is believed to be an apostate Christian and possibly a witch. After the girl has spent three hours with Nell, she comes out raving about, "drinking poison from the nipple of the neck of Satan." Merivel is requested to inspect the "thing" on Nell's neck that everyone has seen to determine whether it could be a nipple. Merivel inspects the thing and secretly concludes to himself that it could be a nipple. However, he tells the Reverend it is only a cyst, and he immediately flees from the village. While with Nell, she tells Merivel that he is due for a fall from grace. He returns home, cancels the party, sees Celia gliding down the stairs in a beautiful dress and concludes he has done the one thing he couldn't do. He has fallen in love with his wife!

Part 1, Chapter 11 Analysis

Nell is portrayed as the typical type of woman to be suspected of witchcraft in the 13th through 18th centuries. Witchcraft is a most feared happening in any village at that time. The result of being accused of witchcraft is death for the witch, usually decided through a lot of rumor and fear and few facts. Wise Nell has for years acted as the church parish's midwife and is known to have some type of a gift of healing. However, she hasn't been seen at church lately, and the villagers now regard her with suspicion. The last straw is the death of the young girl, presumed to be at the hands of a witch. Nell, on the other hand, proclaims to Merivel that her healing is by and for the Lord, and she knows not why the young girl died, claiming she had only given her a potion of the blood of swallows, birds of summer and "symbols of a man's ease." Merivel, in his poor mental state and with one-half a medical education, concludes the "thing" on her neck, being brown and puckered, could be a nipple, but he doesn't let it be known to the Reverend or the villagers. If he had told the Reverend his true thoughts, it would have been a death sentence for Nell. She might have been tortured, in the hopes that she would confess her evil status. In the midst of Merivel's material and sensual life, he commits an act of thoughtfulness and selflessness, if only through omission.

Part 1, Chapter 12

Part 1, Chapter 12 Summary

On the night of his birthday, having cancelled the party, all Merivel can think of is being alone with Celia. He convinces Celia to come to the roof with him, purportedly to look through his telescope at the stars. Merivel puts his coat around her shivering shoulders and invites her to peer through the scope. While she is doing this, he grabs her in a bear hug from behind. Celia protests, but Merivel turns her around and begins kissing her neck and her lips. Celia cries out and struggles. She finally spats in his face, struggles free and escapes. Merivel, aware of what he has done and the probable consequences, retreats into his room and stays there for days, all the while trying to draft an apology letter to Celia.

While he remains isolated, he receives a letter from a seaman informing him that Old Man Pierpoint, his lover Rosie's husband, has drowned, and that Rosie is requesting thirty shillings from him. In the old days, he would have dropped everything, gone to her with thirty shillings and consoled her for a few days, but now his grief is too great. He writes Rosie a letter (which Rosie can't read), but he doesn't send it. His neighbor Degeulasse de Gourly comes by with a cure for the various illnesses Merivel has suddenly contracted over the last few days, but Merivel ends up giving him a proposed cure for his inflamed skin. Merivel finally drafts a simple three-line apology to Celia and has it delivered to her room.

Part 1, Chapter 12 Analysis

Merivel has had a persistent, undiagnosed illness ever since the King administered his homemade potion to him. The disease seems more stress-related than anything else. Merivel's has much in his life to give him stress. He outright lies to Celia about the King's message to her. His failing plot to learn the oboe so he can play duets with Celia is filled with stress. His infatuation with Celia (not to be confused with real love) is just as stressful as the plots that revolve around it. His jealousy of Finn, and Celia's attention paid to Finn, cause more stress. Celia's continues to be cold to him, and the Wise Nell incident is really scary. Most recently, his advances to Celia on the roof push him over the edge. These stressors have even affected his shallow love life, as he has all but abandoned his former lovers Meg Story, Victoria Bathurst and Rosie Pierpont. All of this is now compounded by the awful anticipation of the anger of the King when he finds out that Merivel has made a move on his mistress. In response, Merivel takes a hot bath.

Part 1, Chapter 13

Part 1, Chapter 13 Summary

Will, the servant, removes Merivel to bed and comes to find out he has contracted measles. For two weeks, Merivel is incapacitated in his bed, sleeping sixteen hours a day. He awakens to discover that Celia, her maid, Finn and Heir Hummel, portrait completed, have left the house in the King's royal coach. Feeling really sorry for himself now, a week later he receives a summons from the King to go to London. He and Will take a coach and make the journey in three days, meeting the King at one of his royal tennis courts. Merivel, still weak from the measles, is made to play the King in seven games of tennis. Merivel wins only one and must put up with the King's ridicule. They retreat to the Psychic Garden where the King drops his bombshell. He is evicting Merivel from Bidnold manor. He explains that he has to sell it, to help finance his trade war with the Dutch. Merivel does not expect this and begs the King to reconsider. The King thinks Merivel has now made himself worthless to him by spoiling the King's deception and advises Merivel to return to the medical field, among the paupers, and help with the plague now already infecting London. After delivering this final blow, he leaves Merivel in the garden, at least with his head intact. Merivel vows never to go back to Bidnold.

Part 1, Chapter 13 Analysis

One cannot ignore the religious symbolism present in this exchange between the King and Merivel. Merivel commits the one sin he is forbidden, falling in love with his own wife. This is reminiscent of Eden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve, too, commit the one act forbidden them. The King (God) cannot forgive Merivel. Merivel is banished from his Eden, the mansion at Bidnold, and cast into the cruel world of futility to work for his bread with the sweat of his brow, or his scalpel, like the rest of humanity. The King is as wise as God (indeed he is believed ordained to the thrown by God) as he rejects Merivel and tells him to grow up. He recalls to Merivel the story of the man with the hole in his chest. Merivel could feel the man's heart. The man tells Merivel he does not feel Merivel's hand and thus has a heart with no feeling. Merivel had told the King that the story proved hearts had no feeling, and the King had said he believed Merivel, adding that his heart had no feeling either. What kind of God is the King, then? He is not a God of the heart. He is more a God of the material, the worldly and the sensual.

The King continues that Merivel can no longer be Celia's husband because Celia can't stand him now. He accuses Merivel of becoming too soft and allowing the disobedient act of love to happen. Merivel, like Eve, thinks, "the devil made me do it." Like Adam and Eve, used to the life of ease, in control of everything, Merivel is suddenly cast out into a world that seems unbearable. Merivel responds, when it is clear that the King will not relent, that he is just plain scared! However, the King (God) is not moved and

predicts Merivel will either make it or not depending on how he adapts. The King is not sympathetic, since he had been a man on the run prior to becoming King.

Part 1, Chapter 14

Part 1, Chapter 14 Summary

Merivel bids good-bye to his servant Will, who weeps as Merivel leaves. He makes his way to the Tower of London, now a monument to dead English kings. He visits the animals now kept there, lions, tigers and the like, with the names of dead kings including Henry, Edward, Charles and James. Upon beholding these mangy animals, the full terror of his banishment hits him. Leaving, he travels to Rosie Pierpont's. He stays with her a while, but he realizes he can't stay there permanently and journeys on to Bath and the ancient Roman Pools, where he immerses himself in the warm waters. After a few hours of daydreaming upon his former life and checking out the women, he decides the waters are not as cleansing as advertised and makes his way back to London. Once there, he receives his belongings, consisting of very little, but enough cash to last a little while and his horse Danseuse.

From London, Merivel makes the three-day trip to Pearce and the Whittlesea Hospital for the insane. He meets a tall large man, Ambrose, at the gate, who will not let him enter until he reads the writing above the gate. Merivel reads it: "Behold I have refined thee but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" (from The Bible (KJV) Isaiah 48:10). Presently he meets Pearce, now called John, who runs with gladness to embrace his friend Merivel.

Part 1, Chapter 14 Analysis

The exact meaning of being "refined but not with silver" has probably been lost in antiquity. However, scholars have interpreted it to mean: 1) that purification will not come with money; 2) the process of purifying Israel is not the same as the silver purification process; or 3) that the nation of Israel will never become completely pure, like silver, but will remain human. Another potential meaning is that God has not purified Israel with the most extreme heat of testing. The temperature required to purify silver is extreme, even higher than that required to melt gold, intimating that Israel's repentance has not reached the place of absolute purification (i.e. melted like silver) but more as the dross (a by-product of smelting or purifying). More purification (perfecting) is needed. This idea applies to Merivel. He has certainly been tested by this time by the furnace of affliction, but he has not been destroyed in the process by testing so intense as to completely purify silver. His life has been spared, which is probably the realization he comes to at the Tower of London, the place of death, prison and execution. Merivel has further work to do, and he will endure more testing and refining before he can reach the refining heat required to purify silver.

Part 2, Chapter 15

Part 2, Chapter 15 Summary

A month after arriving at Whittlesea, Merivel looks back on the previous thirty days. He reports that he is now called Robert, not Sir Robert as he would have liked, but just plain Robert. He has grown skinny on the meager fare fed him, and he is now engaged in menial labor. The hospital is run by five persons, excluding Robert. Ambrose is the man in charge. He is assisted by Pearce, two sisters named Hannah and Eleanor, Edmund and the youngest worker Daniel. All are devout Quakers. Merivel finds out right away that Pearce, now called John, is quite critical of his former lifestyle and feels Merivel belongs at the hospital. Merivel is taken on a tour of the hospital, which consisted of several separate buildings. First, there is the George Fox building, housing forty men who are kept busy by using a great loom to make sailcloth for local fishing vessels. Then, the team visits the Margaret Fell building, housing for the women. In this building is Katherine, the woman whose story Pearce told earlier, who expelled the worms in her excrement and was healed. Finally, Merivel comes to the William Harvey building, housing for the most insane. There, all patients are chained to posts, sixteen men and five women, exhibiting scars from where they have mutilated themselves or where "treatment" has been rendered, such as bloodletting and trepanning (using a brace and bit on the skull). At evening, the six workers again visit the three buildings and gently "tuck in" the residents for the night. A rotating pair checks again at two in the morning. Finally the six Keepers have their nightly meeting, consisting of quiet discussion about and meditation upon God and Jesus.

Part 2, Chapter 15 Analysis

Who could not comment on the quality of mental health care rendered in the 17th century? Can you imagine bloodletting as a cure for psychosis or mania? Can you imagine wrenching the skull into a different shape with a brace and bit, called trepanning? At least there is no overmedication. It is entirely up to the six workers to keep the inmates calm and sedated. Everyone who sleeps (and some inmates don't) is allowed a bed of straw. A bucket is issued to each, for urine and excrement, which is dumped outside in the morning. Even though the Quaker workers seem selfless and well meaning, their modes of dealing with the insane are so lacking in knowledge that they do no good. What does this say about good intentions? Merivel, standing in the William Harvey building, aptly asks Ambrose if the hospital has ever cured anyone. Ambrose' response is that man doesn't heal anyone, but only Jesus, if and when He wants to. Noting that some of the women are very young, twenty to twenty-five, he inquires of Ambrose how someone so young could become insane. Poverty, abandonment and various forms of misfortune, he answers.

Indeed, Katherine has apparently been better since the expulsion of the worms, but she still sleeps only one hour per night. She rips her bedclothes into shreds each night and

rarely speaks at all, even though she is given every herbal treatment available. Before "Jesus" partially cured her, she had been chained to a post in the Harvey building, so both her behavior and her situation are dramatically different. Could her improvement have more to do with her new location than with the worms she expels? The book makes us wonder how much control we have over anything and whether the things we believe are causes are actually causes, or just an illusion.

Part 2, Chapter 16

Part 2, Chapter 16 Summary

April comes still, quiet and warm, with early blooming of the indigenous flowers. The smell of the flowers enchants Pearce to no end. Merivel has entered the medical, surgical part of mental health treatment. Every day, a bloodletting takes place, usually performed on the cephalic vein in the temple area of the head, in the neck or on the arm of the patient. Although Merivel is not sure, insanity is considered a liquid thing that must be drained from the body. This seems a barbaric and cruel way to excise fluids to Merivel, and he thinks, *Why not take up an activity where the fluid is evacuated naturally, like sweating or weeping?* Piepold is a Harvey resident and a murderer, who spends his days dreaming up ways of killing people, especially ways of murdering Merivel now that he has arrived. Merivel fears him at night, but in the day he lingers to hear all of the ingenious ways Piepold dreams up for the task. Later, when the female patients are walking and skipping around the great oak, their daily exercise routine, Merivel has his first real conversation with Katherine about the cause of her illness. Her husband dramatically traumatized her by leaving. Katherine demonstrates by walking around the tree with her "leaving step," her imitation of her husband's gait as he left her.

Later, Merivel, encouraged by the scent of fresh flowers, speaks up for the first time at the nightly meeting, expounding his recently compiled theory that insanity is a progressive disease and, if caught early enough, can be more easily cured. Pearce ends the chapter by revealing that he has always wondered what the scent of a flower was really composed of.

Part 2, Chapter 16 Analysis

This chapter expounds on the theme of April flowers and the effect of spring on the patients, the staff here and humanity in general. Spring is a time of new beginnings, and every patient in the asylum needs a springtime in life. Hidden beneath this touching story is the struggle of a physician doubting himself and the medicine he practices. Phlebotomy is the order of the day at Whittlesea. As Merivel notes, "the degree of suffering felt by a man who has his head held over a bowel while a scalpel opens a vein in his temple" he cannot calculate. However, Ambrose, also a physician, believes as much in medical science as he believes in Christ. "In the bright blood let by this means, I can smell the choler," he says. Merivel feels like apologizing to each patient by saying, "Forgive me for I know not what I do." He has not once seen phlebotomy cure anything. The patients are quiet for some time after the procedure, but within hours they return to the same state as before, now with the pain of the wounds to contend with. Many times the wounds do not heal. Merivel sees many patients with festering wounds in their arms from multiple bloodlettings.

Part 2, Chapter 17

Part 2, Chapter 17 Summary

Merivel begins to hang out with Katherine more, and she opens up to him more about her past and present life and her resulting "condition." Merivel rubs her feet at night, and finally she is able to fall asleep, albeit for short periods of time. Merivel, along with Eleanor, makes her a doll out of rags, and she makes a "nest" of straw for it that she calls Bethlehem.

The plague has begun to take hold in London and surrounding areas of Britain. The residents are becoming suspicious of everyone else, imagining them as plague carriers, and the six decide to no longer grant entry to anyone at the institution, including patient visitors. Katherine's mother comes, and against Merivel's objections, she is turned away. However, she is allowed to leave a gift for Katherine. Another group of visitors, a ragged-looking family, relatives of Piepold the murderer, come to the gate. They are denied entrance. When Merivel discovers this, he rides after them. However, his horse Danseuse runs so fast that he throws Merivel off and runs away. Merivel never finds the family. Seeing Merivel riding away and fearing abandonment again, that night Katherine tries to hang herself. Katherine, who confesses she loves Merivel, is then chained up in William Harvey.

Part 2, Chapter 17 Analysis

Katherine's treatment of the doll is symbolic of a connection with Jesus, and the doll's bed is named after Jesus birthplace, in a bed of straw in a manger. Katherine seeks a connection with something spiritual, as shown through the doll, and at the same time, she tries to fill her need by sensual, material acts of physical love.

The plague is a reoccurrence of the Black Plague that swept through Europe in the 1300s, killing ? the population of Europe, or about 250,000 people. The plague is caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pestis* that is carried by rats and transmitted to humans by the fleas of infected rodents.

Part 2, Chapter 18

Part 2, Chapter 18 Summary

Merivel is busted for the special relationship he has created with Katherine. She apparently loves him, but Merivel feels only pity for her and the selfish desire to cure her to show that it can be done. Ambrose sets guidelines for his seeing Katherine. He can visit her for one half hour per day with no night visits.

The six Keepers plan a dance for the patients, and Daniel (on the fiddle) and Merivel (on the oboe) are to provide the music. They rehearse in front of the other staff, to the others' delight. The first date for the dance is rained out, the "dance floor" becoming too muddy, but on June 30 the dance goes forward. It gets off to a slow start, but when Daniel and Merivel play the *Teritelle de Lyon*, the patients begin to dance as only the mentally ill can. It is a great success.

That night, a woman unexpectedly turns up dead in William Harvey, upsetting the patients there, who are already peeved that they were not released to participate in the dance. Merivel makes an illegal visit to Katherine that night, and as he is rubbing her feet, she comes on to him sexually. Merivel barely resists. Can he keep up his resistance for long? Merivel also receives a letter from Will. A French nobleman has purchased the Bidnold manor. Nobody likes the new owner, especially since he does not pay the servants any wage at all.

Part 2, Chapter 18 Analysis

This chapter speaks to the ethics of mental health care in the 17th century. The ethical violation Merivel commits is that of creating a dual relationship, a special relationship with a patient (Katherine) that has more than one nature. He his her doctor, but their relationship is also personal. This personal relationship is dangerous both to Katherine's feelings and to the care of the other patients. Mental health workers are charged not to engage in conduct with patients that could foreseeably harm them. The test in foreseeable harm is whether the conduct primarily benefits the patient or the therapist. Dual relationships can be any relationship outside the therapeutic treatment such as the patient shopping for the therapist, being his secretary and of course sexual relationships. Merivel's relationship with Katherine is clearly an unethical dual relationship and obviously foreseeably (and in this case actually) damaging. Merivel has spent an inordinate amount of time with her, in full view of other patients, who watch the couple making love and want to have the same thing done to them also.

Merivel knows or should have known that Katherine is developing a fondness for him outside the treatment being rendered. He ethically should have stopped this wrong relationship in its tracks, instead of protracting it. Merivel allows this personal and self-gratifying relationship to continue despite the fact that he has no romantic feelings for

Katherine. As it is, it almost costs Katherine her life and who knows what damage it has caused to the other patients in the "dorm." Again, in this chapter, the sensual and spiritual sides of Merivel are in conflict. As a doctor, he wants to cure Katherine. By talking to her, he helps her and moves toward this goal. Still, he is tempted by his lustful nature. His sensual, self-gratifying side leads him into potentially harming her.

Part 2, Chapter 19

Part 2, Chapter 19 Summary

Ambrose, Pearce and Merivel perform an autopsy on the dead woman from Harvey, discovering that she has died from heart failure due to her blood becoming too heavy and thick to be pumped by the heart. After the operation, Pearce reveals for the first time that he is suffering from severe lung pain, an inability to breathe and sweats. At the nightly meeting, Edmund reveals that he has lost his contact with God and wants to know a cure for his resulting loneliness. He reveals some dreams he has been having, and Merivel sympathizes because he too has had many dreams he was puzzled about. Edmund is finally gently told he can find God again in the scriptures. Merivel examines Pearce and finds his lungs to be abnormally full of fluid. He notes that Pearce has lost a significant amount of weight, and he is skin and bones. Merivel is concerned, and against Pearce's objections, he confines Pearce to bed and treats him with herbal remedies. After three weeks, Pearce begins to improve. Merivel receives a letter from Will informing him that his horse, who had run away, has turned up at Bidnold. Will offers to deliver it to Merivel if and when he comes to London. Katherine has also been excessively flirting with Merivel during his daily visits. One night, not being able to resist, or not caring, he goes to Margaret Fell and has sex with Katherine. They have kinky sex, with perverse religious connotations, and Merivel loves it even though he calls it profane.

Part 2, Chapter 19 Analysis

" and significant in mental health treatment (psychotherapy). King David says that God "gives to his beloved even in their sleep." The true nature of dreams and their function is still discussed and argued over today.

Part 2, Chapter 20

Part 2, Chapter 20 Summary

Merivel's sexual relationship with Katherine continues nearly every night for five weeks. In the day, Merivel feels guilty about it and seeks forgiveness from God, but by night his lust gets the better of him. Once again, he makes the midnight visit to Margaret Fell. Katherine loves Merivel. Merivel doesn't love Katherine and is in it only for the sex, which he enjoys.

Pearce has a ladle he keeps with him and sleeps with at night. One night, after one of Merivel's escapades, Pearce tells Merivel he has lost his ladle. Merivel discovers that Pearce's physical condition has taken a turn for the worse. Merivel finds the ladle, and this begins a ten-day period of watching Pearce begin to fade away. After ten days, Pearce dies. A wake and funeral are held. At the funeral, Merivel is finally able to express his true feelings to Pearce that he was never able to express during his life. In a way, he is mad at Pearce for going away and leaving him alone. To Merivel, Pearce was the one who always told him the truth and was usually always right.

Part 2, Chapter 20 Analysis

Merivel reveals his feelings for Pearce at the wake and funeral. He recalls Pearce's despair at the greed and selfishness of his age. Merivel remembers him saying that even the creative spirit has gone "a'whoring" and that the lady Piety has given birth to Luxury, the wanton daughter, prophetic even to this day. At the funeral, Merivel manages to put his relationship with the deceased into words. He acknowledges that Pearce has taught him many things, most importantly not to be blinded by passion, although Merivel doesn't seem to have learned that lesson well. He remembers Pearce saying that he knew he seemed harsh at times, but that he was most harsh to those he loved much. Hidden herein is a discourse on the Quakers who are staunchly religious but with a love for others that is born of their fierce persecution. Surely they have borne the furnace of affliction and been refined with great heat, and they are to be taken seriously in their selfless, albeit maybe too religious, lifestyle.

Then Merivel changes gears and says that he is waiting for a word, a truth to be revealed to him, not by Pearce, but by himself to himself. For the first time, he realizes and says that despite his affection for women, Celia included, he has only truly loved two people in his life - Pearce and the King. Although Pearce in life tried to discourage Merivel's love for the King and for Celia, Merivel acknowledges that those two men have exerted the most influence in his life. He loves them for it. This realization, if it becomes a permanently gained insight, is at least a step in the right direction toward Merivel's quest of self-realization and his place in the world. Finally, although Pearce wills Merivel his ladle, Merivel buries it with his friend.

The two people Merivel professes to love in his life are symbolic of two opposing forces governing his life. Pearce is Merivel's conscience. He is the force of thoughtful restraint. In psychoanalytic terms, he is the superego. In terms of the book, he is the spiritual side of life. The King is a force that pulls Merivel toward the sensual and the material. He is the id, in psychoanalytic terms. Although the King is a God figure, Pearce is more godlike. The King is a God of material and sensual things.

Part 2, Chapter 21

Part 2, Chapter 21 Summary

After Pearce's death, Merivel uncharacteristically becomes a loner. He begins to hate Katherine, the most recent object of the sin of lust. His sensual ways caused him to lose the King's favor, and now it causes him to lose his friends at the asylum. Finally he is confronted by Ambrose, who tells him he has to leave Whittlesea. Not only that, but he must take Katherine with him because she is pregnant. Merivel tries to protest, but Ambrose is firm that the direction has come from God. Merivel finds out that since he has not visited Katherine since before Pearce's death, she has begun acting as crazy as before, not sleeping, crying, screaming and repeating "Robert." As soon as she reunites with Merivel, she calms down and begins to sleep again.

Merivel decides to go to London, so he and Katherine set out by wagon. Katherine, who has seen nothing but the inside of an asylum for the last many years, loves the otherwise unexciting journey. Merivel's thoughts turn again to Celia and his new apology he would make to her for all the suffering he has caused. Even so, he fulfills his duty to Katherine. He feels the baby in her stomach. He takes her on a rowboat ride and otherwise entertains her. Upon arrival in London, the couple make for Katherine's mother's house in a suburb of London called Cheapside. There, he meets her mother, the widow Frances Elizabeth. She makes a living writing letters for people, having learned to write from her deceased husband, a patent clerk. As Merivel goes to bed that first night, Katherine falls asleep on his arm.

Part 2, Chapter 21 Analysis

Love is a healing force. Without it, Katherine is consumed by her emotions of fear and grief to the point that she cannot act normally or even sleep. With what she perceives as love, although very napve, Katherine is able to function almost normally. Merivel of course does not love her, but the healing works because he becomes the loved object. During their journey, they stay in the town of March for two days awaiting a coach to London. Merivel takes Katherine street shopping, and while shopping they see a man doing bird imitations. When it is Katherine's turn to choose a bird, she chooses a blackbird, which the man imitates softly and correctly. Later, Merivel takes her rowing on a nearby lake in the warm English afternoon. As Merivel tries to explain their surroundings, Katherine becomes enchanted with trailing her hand in the water, like a child. At one point, she breaks into laughter just as a child would. All Merivel feels is weariness and pity for her childishness. Katherine, in her ignorant bliss, never notices Merivel's indifference but continues in her world of imagined love.

Part 3, Chapter 22

Part 3, Chapter 22 Summary

While roaming London and Cheapside, Merivel meets a group of "Plague Flagellants," who go about whipping themselves. When asked why they do it, they answer that by doing so they do not feel the pain of the plague-ridden city, only their own pain. Wondering how a physician could help with the plague, Merivel finds a formula in one of Pearce's old books for a preventive potion for the plague. He has an apothecary make up a batch, and he gives the first batch to a woman whose husband has died of the plague. When weeks later the woman is not sick, she spreads the word of the plague "prophylactic" she has taken. From then on, Merivel has no trouble selling it.

With Katherine becoming very large with child, Merivel's birthday comes and goes with no fanfare, since he keeps it secret. Soon thereafter, in a pub, he reunites with Finn. Finn tells him he and Celia have taken her portrait to the King, but the King didn't like it. Finn argued with the King and ended up being thrown in the Tower for eight months. Merivel invites him to stay at Frances Elizabeth's house with them, and so he moves in with Frances Elizabeth's blessing. Katherine begins to give birth, but the baby is too large to be delivered naturally. Katherine is too weak to push effectively. Surgery is the only answer, which will probably result in the death of the baby and possibly the mother. When a surgeon can't be found, Merivel performs a caesarian birth, of a girl, alive.

Part 3, Chapter 22 Analysis

Performing a successful caesarian operation, without anesthetic, with primitive instruments, is no small feat for anyone. Merivel, in the emergency, remains perfectly calm, with no fear, and barks out orders to the six attending women like a sergeant. Two are to hold down Katherine's upper body, and two are ordered to hold down the legs. The other two assist Merivel, including the trained midwife. Merivel cuts into the skin and then through the peritoneum into the abdomen, with copious amounts of blood flooding the "operating table." As the women try to control the bleeding without clamps by soaking it up with lint, Merivel cuts transversely into the lower third of the womb. Parting the incision, he feels a head. Since Merivel's hands are too big, he holds the incision apart, and the midwife performs the delivery by placing her right hand like a shoehorn below the baby's head and gently levering it out. To everyone's surprise, it is a girl and alive. Just as Bones on Star Trek calls 20th century medicine barbaric, so we of this century would place what Merivel does in the same category.

Part 3, Chapter 23

Part 3, Chapter 23 Summary

During the surgery, Katherine lapses into a coma that does not subside after the delivery. The baby cannot suck on Katherine's teat, since it gives off a bitter liquid. The baby is taken to a wet nurse. Merivel decides to name the girl Margaret, after his mother and after the Margaret Fell building at the asylum. Merivel stays with Katherine all night and even remembers a type of phlebotomy that may help. As he opens a vein in her arm, her eyes open, and she stares at Merivel. After the stare doesn't abate, he realizes she is dead and closes her eyes. Everyone cries except Merivel. To his credit, he doesn't say any flowery words at the funeral, realizing they would not be from his heart.

Merivel finds time to converse with Finn about how he can make a living painting portraits, starting with painting a portrait of Merivel. In the weeks following, Merivel's portrait takes shape, and on the day it is finished, a stable boy delivers his horse to him. Merivel is very happy with the painting. He pays Finn seven shillings for it and takes off on his horse to Rosie Pierpont's. They have a great weekend, and Rosie is apparently doing well, as she is eating fine food and is dressed better than Merivel has seen. At "home," Merivel makes a sign to go under Frances Elizabeth's "Letters Written" sign. Merivel's sign identifies him as a surgeon. Then Finn hangs a "Portraits Painted" sign under that.

One morning, in the summer of 1666, Merivel rises early and decides to go to the river and watch the sun come up. While there, he secretly sees the King out for a morning ride on the river with his skiff.

Part 3, Chapter 23 Analysis

Merivel's lack of emotion regarding Katherine and the baby, in view of how he has given both life, is a paradox. He is overjoyed at his portrait and the delivery of his horse, but he is unfeeling about his deceased wife and child. Merivel still embodies the desire for material possessions. His God is not of the spiritual but of the material, and King Charles II is, if nothing else, a material and sensual man.

Finn becomes successful using Merivel's advice, even though Merivel was secretly glad to see Finn arrive penniless, as a payback for ratting on him to the King about Celia. When Merivel sees the King through the bushes at the river, the same old emotions begin to flow again, just as with a Deity, which is how Merivel perceives the King. The three things he wants most in life have eluded him, probably because they are not right for him. They are the King, Celia and Pearce. Instead, he has a daughter, a business and friends, but he is not satisfied. Frances Elizabeth likes him so much that she begs him to continue to stay at her house, and Finn also if he wants. As the song goes, we

can't always get what we want, but sometimes we get what we need. Merivel doesn't realize that.

Part 3, Chapter 24

Part 3, Chapter 24 Summary

At Finn's studio later, Merivel spies a painting of a woman that looks like his mother. It is the portrait of a haberdasher's wife. The wet-nurse wife of the moneylender is still caring for Margaret, the baby, and this stirs in him imaginations of what it would be like to raise his daughter.

After seeing the King on the river, Merivel writes to him inviting himself for a visit. Finally, he receives a note from the King inviting him to Sunday dinner. In preparation, Merivel visits the tailor for a set of new clothes. He also visits the wig maker and the shoemaker. At the dinner, it turns out that all is forgiven by the King, and he and Merivel have a long, in-depth conversation. The King has grown tired of Celia, no longer cares anything about her and has sent her packing. He and Merivel actually laugh at the fix Merivel got into as a result of her. The King even says that if he took his new girlfriend on a roof to see Jupiter, he would turn and cup her breasts rather that look toward the stars.

Suddenly, word comes that there is a great fire burning in London, and the King's full attention is drawn to that. Merivel starts out to save his daughter, but being unable to get there, he comes upon a burning house with a woman still inside. Nobody will go in to save her, so Merivel, falsely believing his mother is in there, rushes in and pulls her from the flames. She is a haberdasher's wife, but not his mother. He gives a woman standing nearby his physician's card in case the woman needs treatment.

Part 3, Chapter 24 Analysis

Firefighting in the 1660s was different and much more futile than today. In this story it is reported that an east wind has spread the fire into a ? mile wide swath. One way of stopping the fire is to burn a block of houses, hoping the fire will stop at the firebreak. However, the fire has a habit of blowing coals past the empty space and continuing to burn. Buckets are inadequate to even slow the burn, and of course there is no running water. The smoke is so thick that Merivel loses his way, and the streets are crowded with evacuees.

The King's head is turned by another beautiful face quickly, without much thought, and Celia is forgotten, abandoned and evicted from her house. She is set loose without even a pension for faithful service! As soon as this is related to Merivel, his "love" for Celia vanishes instantly, and he is able to join in the King's sarcastic mirth regarding the whole incident. This is another testimony to Merivel's shallowness and lack of ability to sustain any real feelings for the opposite sex. His only real loyalty is to his deceased friend and a rascal known as the King.

Part 3, Chapter 25

Part 3, Chapter 25 Summary

The next day Merivel returns home to Frances Elizabeth and Finn. He warns them of the fire danger, but they pay no heed, believing the adjacent firebreak will prevent the fire from reaching the house. However, that changes, and suddenly the cry goes into the streets that Cheapside is lost and to get whatever you can from the doomed dwellings and flee. Most of Finn and Elizabeth's belongings end up on Merivel's horse, quite a load. The next morning Merivel rides to the wet nurse's home and finds Margaret in fine shape. She and her husband have prayed for safety from the flames and are not touched by them. Next, Merivel visits Rosie Pierpont. She is distressed by the soot that has stained all her laundry. Merivel asks if he can stay with her for a while. When Rosie says okay, she insists on money, Merivel realizes how Rosie has gotten all the fine things she has - by selling herself. This bursts Merivel's bubble. He had believed he was the only one.

Merivel rents a couple of small rooms in London, practices medicine and leads a solitary life. He loses considerable weight, is tired all the time and has begun hallucinating and forgetting things. Although he can't find anything wrong, he thinks he is dying. He finally writes Will, and with Will's joyful permission, Merivel invites himself to Bidnold Manor. He finds the place full of memories and newly tastefully decorated, even though he has been told the new owner is probably not coming back. The new owner hasn't paid the King for the mansion. At dinner the night after his arrival, Merivel mysteriously lapses into a coma. He awakes with stubble and a feeling that much time has elapsed. Outside, he meets the King, who, as a reward for Merivel saving the wife of his hat maker from the fire, gives Merivel a lifetime lease on the tower room of the mansion. The curtain closes as Merivel imagines getting his daughter and holding her and raising her for as long as he can. His health is left up in the air.

Part 3, Chapter 25 Analysis

The title of the book comes into focus in this chapter. Merivel has lost his parents but found a God-like love in the King, whom he has served with his life, including participating in a scheme to deceive. Finally, his lust causes him to lose all he had, and he is thrown out and abandoned, like Celia. The King's advice to Merivel is for him to grow up. The King is not sympathetic because he too has been displaced and had to work his way back (to restoration). Merivel, the napve dreamer, is "tested by the furnace of affliction" and is ultimately made to shoulder responsibility. In other words, he is "refined but not [perfect] like silver." Who is truly perfect, though? Because of his imperfection, Merivel ultimately looks beyond himself and accepts the place where fate [or God] has led him. The real restoration does not necessarily evolve into an earthly restoration of what was, a return (for Merivel) to the King's lifestyle. Merivel does not return to great luxury, only to reasonable accommodation and the King's good graces.

The real restoration is in the soul, a change of nature so to speak. The furnace of affliction, which is not joyful while it occurs, results in a refining. Merivel comes back to a place in the world where he has comfort and where he can think about Margaret again.

Characters

Robert Merivel

The main character and storyteller is Robert Merivel. He ends up with half a medical education and earns a living as a surgeon and physician, although his knowledge and abilities are not impressive. He describes himself as balding, with his remaining hair sandy brown and wiry "as hog's bristles." He needs a periwig, and his ears are uneven size. His forehead is splattered with freckles, and his nose is too flat. He loves to feel woodwork and loves astronomy. His stomach is large and freckled, and at night it looks like a group of moths have landed there. His eyes are blue and limpid. He's not tall but wears high-heeled shoes, popular at the time. His clothes are often unkempt, and he has a baby face described by his mother as angelic. He describes his nature as erratic, immoderate, greedy, boastful and sad. He also has an addiction to sex, and he is napve and emotionally unpredictable. He ends up loving and respecting the very people who put him in his "furnace of affliction," his best friend Pearce and King Charles II.

Despite this, Merivel is wise in business and ultimately takes advice from those whom he respects. He is willing to take risks to get what he wants. He has potential in many endeavors, but because of his childish nature, he fails through much of the story. However, as it turns out, Merivel is the ideal candidate for a restoration. As Jesus said, "I didn't come for the well, but the sick because the well have no need of Me."

The King of England Charles II

Charles is a Stuart (Steward), the ruling of family of Britain from 1603 until 1714. Charles II restores the Stuart family to power in 1660, after the Stuarts are excluded from rule during the rule of Mary Queen of Scots and her son James VI. The King is a wise and perceptive man. He has been King of Scotland previously but is defeated in battle by England. For some time he is exiled and hunted as a murderer. Due to his former exile, he has "street smarts" as well.

Charles displays some street *vices* as well. At one time, he has two mistresses, is entertaining "showgirls" and still keeps his Queen at home. He is a shrewd politician, managing to keep the public satisfied, until adverse circumstances (plague, fire) erode his support. He is not above corruption to keep what he wants, even to the point of engaging Merivel to act as a surrogate husband for his mistress Celia to keep the relationship from public and private knowledge. Apparently, it is not proper for the King to have a mistress so young. For purposes of the story, to Merivel, the King is God and the absolute ruler of Merivel, his dreams and aspirations. The King also dabbles in biology, manufacturing potions of different sorts in his own personal apothecary lab. He makes the truth serum he gives to Merivel. However, he ultimately rewards Merivel again for selfish reasons, when Merivel saves the King's hat maker's wife.

Pearce

Pearce is Merivel's best friend, confidant and advisor. They meet in college where both are studying anatomy. Pearce is a devout Quaker and has a spiritual wisdom and perception. He is slightly featured with thin, white hands. His face is habitually gray-toned and appears flaky, and he has green eyes. He is largely withdrawn and speaks softly. He has no apparent vices, unlike Merivel. In fact, they are almost extreme opposites, literary foils of each other. Pearce is scientific minded and an avid reader of scientific books. He has a stern opinion on almost everything but usually only expresses it to close friends. Pearce himself says he is only harsh to those he loves most, such as Merivel. He is Merivel's conscience, and Merivel bounces many things off him because he values (if not always agrees with) Pearce's opinion. Pearce ends up choosing a vocation consistent with his personality, that of a caretaker of the very mentally ill in an isolated location. He is content with manual, selfless work, as are most Quakers. He very much disagrees with Merivel's brush with royalty, but he keeps quiet, believing Merivel will find out for himself. Pearce dies unexpectedly of one of the diseases of the time with no cure.

Celia Clemence

Celia becomes central to Merivel's story. Among her talents recognized by the King are her singing voice and her utter obedience to him. Merivel describes her as having hazel eyes, pretty, small-featured and about twenty. Her skin is pale and without blemish. Her hands are tiny. Her hair is weak brown and done up in ringlets and curls, to her shoulders. Her breasts are meager and her feet narrow. She is, according to him, not a woman of his taste, since she is too refined and holds her back too straight. Her feminine curves are too modest. Compared to some of Merivel's women, she is as a mouse to a hawk. She endures the sham marriage with grace. Celia knows what privileges are accorded her by the King, but in her youth she chooses to jeopardize her position by demanding that she become the King's only mistress, for which he rejects her. After she leaves Bidnold, we hear no more of her until Merivel finds out later in the story that the King has ultimately rejected her for good.

Elias Finn

First, Finn is Merivel's art teacher. He describes himself as a "portraitist" and travels on foot from house to house in London seeking to paint the inhabitants. His face is gray and gaunt. His wrists are very thin. He has a shifty, uneasy glance, and his lips are "sweetly curvaceous" (almost feminine). His voice is "honeyed" and polite, and he exuded a sensitive persona, also slightly feminine. Knowing of Merivel's connections with the Crown, he begs Merivel to obtain him a place in the King's courts. Merivel, having no such influence any more, puts him off and lets him be semi-content to teach Merivel painting.

Later Finn is commissioned by the King to paint Celia's portrait in exchange for a place in the Courts if the King is pleased. He moves into Merivel's mansion for that purpose. Merivel ends up being jealous of him. While Merivel is sick in bed, Finn secretly leaves the mansion with Celia, but the King rejects his painting and ultimately imprisons him for being insubordinate. Merivel sees him next at the home of Katherine's mother. Finn moves in there, begins painting portraits for money upon Merivel's advice and ultimately becomes a couple with Frances Elizabeth.

Merivel's Father

Although Merivel's father dies in a fire in his workshop, Merivel recalls him many times. He is a strict disciplinarian and a devoutly religious man. He has a nose like "a Roman Emperor," large and straight. He is very skilled at his trade, and he is noticed by the King and made his chief glove maker. Merivel is made to go to church by the family every Sunday, and this is probably why Merivel turns out to be so rebellious. Merivel loves his father, somewhat as he loves the King, as a God-like figure. Merivel makes the statement once that his father is so righteous he undoubtedly is in heaven. Of course Pearce corrects him. No man is righteous in himself, but both Merivel's parents are refined by the fire from which they die.

Meg Storey

Meg is a local barmaid at the Jovial Rushcutters tavern near Bidnold. She is beautiful and has large, teasing breasts, sandy hair and a curvy figure. She has a wild, vulgar nature befitting a successful barmaid and also a loving understanding side. She is Merivel's first model in his brief painting career. Merivel, after staring at her naked body for a few days, decides he wants her for more than her posing, and so at a later, date she becomes "one of Merivel's girls" who can listen to his problems and at the same time be vulgar and wild in bed. Merivel ultimately gives up on her portrait because he cannot depict on canvas her dual nature. Merivel is screwing her while his dog Minette dies at home.

Rosie Pierpont

Rosie is the operator of a laundry service, married to a ferryman who is gone a lot. She frequently receives Merivel for fun and games that she doesn't get from her husband. She is introduced early in the book when Merivel's father walks in on them having sex prior to Merivel's first meeting with the King.

Merivel sees her throughout the story, usually at times of crisis in his life. She is always pleased to see him, and he brings gifts on each visit. She is not physically described except that she reminds Merivel of Meg Story. In the end, after thinking Rosie wants only him, Merivel finds out she is a prostitute.

Violet Bathurst

Violet is Merivel's next-door neighbor, with whom he carries on for some time, if never falling in love with her. She is married to a man thirty years her senior, who lost his memory in a hunting accident two years previously. Merivel describes her as handsome, witty and smart. She is jealous of Merivel's "wife" Celia, especially when Celia comes to live with Merivel. She is also an outlet for Merivel to voice his troubles, and she refers Finn to him following his complaint to her about his failure at painting. Merivel is very influenced by Violet's feelings and finally gives her up when he "falls in love" with Celia. Violet is apparently very passionate in bed.

Mr. (Lord) Bathurst

Bathurst is a hunter who lost his memory in a hunting accident two years prior when he was thrown from his horse, which then stepped on his ear. Although Bathurst can't even remember who his wife is, every morning he takes his dogs and goes fox hunting. He is a somewhat comical character in that most of the time he doesn't remember anyone, but sometimes he becomes lucid and wants to have sex with his wife. For some strange reason, he remembers Merivel. He calls him Merryville and is heard thundering his name from his hunting fields, "Welcome, Merryville." Merivel frequently takes meals with the Bathursts and notes that Bathurst serves good wine. He talks drivel but expresses it with passion, farting and thumping the table for emphasis. Merivel is having an affair with Bathurst's wife. He notes that he should feel bad about deceiving Bathurst, but not being prone to "Godliness or guilt like Pearce," his conscious doesn't bother him.

Will Gates

Will Gates is Merivel's faithful servant. He is entirely devoted to Merivel. Will loves him and always responds to his needs. He is older than Merivel and is like the faithful butler portrayed in our films. He always is there when Merivel needs him. Weeping, Will misses Merivel terribly when Merivel is banished from Bidnold.

Frances Elizabeth

Frances Elizabeth is Katherine's mother. Merivel and Katherine take up residence in Cheapside with her when they leave Whittlesea. She is a tall, fleshly, lonely widow of forty or forty-five who is only too glad to have her daughter, Merivel, and later Finn, descend on her household. She ends up a couple with Finn, who continues to reside with her after Merivel leaves. She makes a living writing for people who cannot write at one cent per word. Merivel describes her writing skills as very poor and her spelling as very bad. Her late husband was a patent clerk and taught her to write.

Objects/Places

Whitehall Palace

Whitehall is the palace of the King and the place where Merivel lives for two years in unabashed luxury, abundant fellowship and the nightly favors of women. He is the joker and the fool of the palace. As such, he is included in nearly every activity.

Merivel's descriptions of the palace are entirely his own, and he describes what he remembers best. The palace has a gallery, which opens into the Stone Gallery hallway leading to the Royal apartments, where the King lives. Inside the King's massive apartment, or suite, is the drawing room where the King conducts some of his business, although it is restricted and not every guest is received there. The room is filled with clocks, over two hundred of them, and these are the King's pride and joy. The fireplace is under a vast marble mantel. A thirty-foot Persian carpet graces the entryway immodestly and leads to the large gilded doors. Adjacent to the room is the King's bedchamber with the canopied bed, candle sconces and the walls brocaded through the room and the bedroom. Merivel, at first given medical charge over the health of the seventeen palace dogs, is given a two room apartment, with all the amenities. Within the King's great manor are fruit orchards, tennis courts and gardens galore. In the "court" there is constant entertainment - games, croquet courts, comedians and an endless supply of women. The King believes that the world is small, consisting only of the shadow of his great palace and manor.

Bidnold Manor in Norfolk, England

Bidnold is the residence given to Merivel for his use as husband to the King's mistress Celia. It is a twelve-hour horseback ride from London and is set in the country. The manor is Jacobean with a moat bordered by a substantial park containing wild animals, such as deer. The mansion contains thirty rooms. The interior is drab, reflecting the Puritanical bent of the former owner, but it doesn't stay that way for long. Merivel makes use of most of the rooms, except the room in the tower, the one to which he is ultimately given lifetime lease. As stated earlier, he designates a music room, a billiards room, a card room, a painting studio, a study and his favorite, the withdrawing room. He redecorated the entire mansion from his own adequate pocket with fine Chinese furniture. He hangs the walls with ruched vermilion taffeta and has the chairs upholstered in scarlet, fuchsia and gold. In his Withdrawing room, he has a carpet from Chengchow, China of elaborate design that required a thousand days on the loom to complete. The mansion is designed for entertaining and furnished with scarlet sashes, bilberry shawls, ruby slippers, pink bonnets and yellow plumes for the guests. A small village lies close to the manor.

Whittlesea Hospital in Earls Bride

Earls Bride is a shabby "village" with a thin straggle of poor cottages but nowhere to buy provisions such as ale, forge materials for the horses or dairy products. To Merivel, it looks like a drowned and shipwrecked place, with the residents enduring an eternal monotony. The hospital is a cluster of barns built around a lime-washed low-roofed house. Around the buildings there is a flint and clay wall with an iron gate built into it, presumably to hold in the lunatics. Beyond the gate is a courtyard called the Airing Court, with a floor of cinders and a single oak tree growing in the center. The women patients march around the Airing Court for exercise and air, and the Quakers believe it has healing powers.

As mentioned, the rooms/barns are residences for the patients. Gregory Fox is the residence for the men. Margaret Fell is the residence for the women, and William Harvey is the residence for the most insane men and women. In Fox, forty men are distributed in two rows the length of the barn. With the large loom in the room, they make sails for local fishing ships. In Fell, the women sleep similarly, on beds of pallets and straw, with waste buckets beside them, which are dumped only in the morning. Entering Harvey is like entering hell. There is only one window and no light. The patients are chained to posts, and all have scars from much bloodletting "treatment." The six Keepers live in the house, which has a kitchen, dining room and small rooms for sleeping. Merivel comments that his room is the size of one of his closets at Bidnold.

Bathurst Estate

Bathurst is a manor like Merivel's with sufficient woods to hunt in and a lavishly furnished mansion. The Bathursts entertain there frequently, but they entertained more when Mr. Bathurst was well. The invitees include royalty. Merivel attends a bash there where the Countess exposes her breasts and allows the guests to fondle them.

Kaw

The house where the King keeps Celia stashed is called Kaw. The reader never sees inside, but the house is hidden very well. It is accessible only by boat, and even as it is approached by boat one has to know it is there or one will miss it. It is obviously the site of parties, as Merivel observes when taken there by the ferryman.

Bath, England

A layover for Merivel, Bath has turn-of-the-century Roman baths that are still operational in the 17th century (although they are not today). Not much is said about the city, but Merivel soaks in the supposedly healing warm waters while there. The pools are divided into male and female baths, but each is visible to the other. Merivel ends up deciding the waters are not magical and leaves soon after arrival.

Frances Elizabeth's Home

Frances Elizabeth's house is narrow and dark and overheated by fires upstairs and down to ward off the plague that has visited Cheapside already. The place smells of smoke, old varnish and camphor. The windows are narrow and grimy. Merivel's small room reminds him of a room he had previously while he was a student.

Cheapside

The town of Cheapside is a suburb of London. When Merivel and Katherine arrive, the air has a foul smell, and the city seems to possess a strange quietness, like the quietness of snow. It is as if the city has fallen into a trance. Merivel can only blame it on the plague. A funny incident happens in this town. Katherine has to piss, so she squats in the street. She says that when pregnant one has to do it wherever one is. At that exact time, her mother comes out of her house, and the meeting is awkward to say the least.

Town of March

Merivel and Katherine are forced to spend two days in March awaiting a couch to Cambridge. It is a boring town, but Katherine is entertained by it. There, she is entertained by the man who makes bird-sounds and Merivel rents a rowboat and sails the local lake.

Themes

Restoration

Since this work had a Biblical, religious and spiritual theme it is appropriate to look at the word restore in a Biblical sense. In *Old Testament Hebrew,* restore means: Turn back, turn to, return; to restore, recover, bring back; most often translated "return." Restoration is most used in the Biblical sense to indicate God restoring the nation of Israel to its own land and later in Christ restoring all of creation to its original state.

However, in actual practice, there can be no restoration to a past that is already behind us. One may return to the original place, activity or station in life in the physical realm seen with the eyes, but when one is finally "restored" to something, one is a totally different person mentally and spiritually than the person who started out on the journey. To take an example of the restoration of mankind in a spiritual sense, in the story of the Garden of Eden, man is the ruler and benefactor of a virtual paradise and has a oneness with God. After creation is cursed to futility, man has always sought (consciously or unconsciously) to return to the Garden. However, if mankind were restored to a Garden of Eden, he would have thousands (maybe millions) of years of added experience.

Merivel's story parallels to some extent the story of the Garden of Eden. He is in his paradise with the King in the beginning of the book. However, his own nature causes him to be cast out from the court and separated from his King, much as Adam and Even were cast out of the Garden and separated from God. His own nature continues to haunt him in all aspects of his life to follow.

When Merivel is finally "restored" to the King and to the things that are really important to him, he has (according to the King) finally grown up and has become something more than the Merivel who started the journey years before. The refining of the furnace of affliction has been applied to his life, and through this suffering he had become worthy of his restoration. As mankind is promised reunion with God, Merivel receives reunion with the King. Through his journey, he has grown wiser.

Religion and Spirituality

There is a very strong spiritual and religious theme running throughout the book. Scriptures from the Bible are quoted and used in context of the story. Wisdom is featured prominently as an aspect of spirituality and as something to be desired and sought after. This is pointed out through the life of our hero Merivel, who for most of the book is the antithesis of sound judgment and wisdom.

Merivel is an example of the fleshly indulgences that can change the course of events in a life. His lust for Celia leads to his banishment from the kingdom and all that he has aspired to. His lust for the mentally disturbed Katherine causes him to be exiled from

Whittlesea. His fleshly desires never produce satisfaction for him, only a longing for more. As the Apostle Paul aptly states, "the flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit wars against the flesh." Vacillation between desire for spiritual fulfillment and desire for material fulfillment is Merivel's downfall.

However, Merivel magically ends up absorbing a couple of great spiritual principles. First, in all his sufferings, even if they are generated by his own acts, he is put through the fire, the "furnace of affliction" and the "refining" process, and changed. (He is, however, not made perfect, as silver.) There is also that final promise which we all try to lean upon: "God causes all things to work together to those He loves, are called for his purpose" (Romans 8:28). These elements worked within Merivel to cause a salvation (or restoration) he could not have attained by himself. It ends up being a gift, and all his former life does for him is to prepare him for that day.

The Times

Restoration is a historical novel and as thus places an emphasis on the history of Britain's monarchial times, social, religious and sectarian. Historical facts are prevalent throughout the book. The reign of Charles II, beginning in 1660, is a historical fact. At that time the Stuarts, the ruling family for hundreds of years, are restored to the throne through Charles. Charles' reign is called "The Restoration." The black plague actually sweeps through London in 1664-65 and kills over 75,000 people. There is a great fire in London around this time as well.

The functioning of the monarchy and the royalty of the time are featured in the novel. Although only seen through the eyes of Merivel, who sees it as a wonder, the absolute rule of the King is portrayed as well. As King, he has whatever he wants, with the end always justifying the means.

The vocations of the common people are vividly portrayed: the midwife, the glove maker, the hat maker, the servant, the painter, the stable person, the letter writer, the neighborhood apothecary and more. There are many pubs (or ale houses) described, and the atmosphere of each comes across realistically. However, the occupations of physician, surgeon and mental health worker are most prominently portrayed.

Merivel (and Pearce) are physicians and surgeons, despite having only a half of a medical education. Their occupations are not as highly admired and compensated as today. They are regarded as commoners' vocations, as when the King tells Merivel to go among "his people" and practice medicine. All surgery is done without anesthesia, and germs, cleanliness and the preventing of infection are unheard of. Bloodletting is apparently the physician's bread and butter. The prevailing thought is that all disease thrives in the blood, and if you let enough out, the disease will be eradicated or weakened. The same is apparently thought about mental health care as well, and bloodletting is the primary treatment rendered to the insane or mentally ill. The only medicines are herbs and herb and vegetable combinations. Astrology is consulted in rendering care, as well as the application of religious doctrines. Medicine is practiced

just as it has been since the time of Aristotle, and in reality it has only progressed beyond that stage in the last 120 years.

Style

Points of View

The story is told entirely from the first person perspective of Robert Merivel, the narrator. The author chooses an actor and observer who sees things in entirely his own way, colored by his likes, lusts and personality, good and bad. Merivel, despite the historical nature of the novel, seems almost as if he could be living in the 21st century. His thought processes and observations are consistent with mankind both in this time and Merivel's time. He searches for himself, for reason, for meaning in life, for pleasure and happiness and for luxury, money and comfort. Of course, then as now, all this is subject to life's intrusions on our hopes and goals.

The author remains very true to the first person perspective. The story is told entirely from Merivel's point of view and carries in the telling his biases and limited viewpoint. Some stories told in the first person may also describe scenes and events outside the narrator's contemporary observations and knowledge, in order for the author to tell *his* story. Here, we see only what Merivel sees and how he sees it. The story is presented in a matter-of-fact way. It is never judgmental or morally critical of the narrator's conduct. (After all, who is judgmental of his own conduct?) The narration is morally judgmental in some respects involving Merivel's view of others. The description of places is from Merivel's perspective only and thus many details are left out in favor of the first person perspective. The same is true of the descriptions of people. As a result of the point of view, we become intimately acquainted with Merivel and understand him, even if we do not agree or sympathize with him. We personally participate in his spiritual journey of change and "restoration." The story is ultimately a character development story, using the characters and circumstances as anvils whereon this first person is shaped and comes of age.

Setting

The book is set in the mid-1600s in London and the surrounding areas of England. Britain is under the rule of Charles II, who, as a Stuart, is set upon the throne in 1660 after conflicts between Britain and the Scots. No Stuart has held the throne for more than fifty years. The period of Charles' reign is known as the Restoration, when the Stuarts are restored to the throne, and occurs near the end of the English Renaissance period. Charles immediately gains the favor of the people and royalty alike with his *Declaration of Breda,* which restores property rights, amnesty and liberty of conscience. Charles, who is personally and as King a prominent character in this story, is, as we know him historically as well as through this book, intelligent and resourceful. Years before, he had been elevated to the throne of Scotland but lost a great war to England. He was a hunted man for sometime, living on the run, surviving only with the help of friends. This is why he is not sympathetic with Merivel and his plight, as he feels he has been in the same position of having lost all.

Historically, Charles is known more for his vices than his virtues, and this is set forth vividly in the story. The story is set in an atmosphere of extremes. The King's palace and manor and Merivel's Bidnold show extremes of riches and royalty. The settings of an isolated mental hospital with no amenities whatsoever and later the home of a common woman show the extremes of the impoverished. Merivel goes from a life of leisure to manual labor and hardship of the worst kind. The story is set in a historically accurate time period when a great Plague sweeps through London killing 75,000 persons. It is set in a time of great satisfaction with the rule of Charles II, although that changes later in history. The setting includes a place of prominence for two women from opposite extremes - the beautiful Celia with the fair skin and the exquisite manners and Katherine, a commoner who once suffered from extreme mental illness. Also, Merivel's relationships with prostitutes (or loose women) are featured, and he not only extracts sensual pleasures from them but also makes them confidants in his troubles as they arise.

Language and Meaning

The language used is simple and easy to read either by an avid reader or an average reader. Although this is a historical piece from the 17th century, it could just as easily be a contemporary piece set in the 21st century. The characters could have been from our time, and the plot as well, with some adjustments to allow for changes in society. When the historical settings and references are needed to tell the story, the historical perspective comes to the forefront. The writer describes 17th century medicine and mental health care, clothing, foods, appearance and styles. The dialog could be 21st century. While reading the book, you are surprised by its simplicity.

Structure

The novel consists of three Parts. There are fourteen chapters in Part 1, seven in Part 2 and four in Part 3. The chapters each bear a name that refers to something that occurs in the chapter, and it is not always something obvious or important to the story. The chapters are of equal length, around twenty to twenty-five pages. Essentially, the story consists of five distinct parts: 1) Merivel before meeting the King; 2) Merivel in his royalty role both in the palace and in his manor; 3) Merivel at the Bedlam hospital; 4) Merivel and Katherine both at Whittlesea and in London, Cheapside and 5) Merivel after Katherine, including his ultimate Restoration.

The author breaks the story into three Parts: 1) Merivel up to the time of his banishment from Bidnold; 2) From the time of banishment to leaving Whittlesea and arriving at and residing in London and 3) Katherine's death, Merivel's period of loneliness and the birth of his daughter. The novel is packed full of events of interest, chapter by chapter, as Merivel is taken through his adventures on the way to his eventual restoration. The structure of the writing is very straightforward and understandable. The vocabulary is interesting enough for the experienced reader and simple enough for the novice. The plot is straightforward, but it contains deep hidden meanings not apparent on the

surface. Someone not familiar with religion or psychology or the complexities of close human relationships may not understand some levels of meaning. If they do not, the story is not sacrificed for them, only the hidden richness and irony the author is demonstrating along with the story.

Quotes

The insane were informed by Pearce that Christ was in them "as surely as if he were the very blood that moves in a circle out from your heart and to it again." Pearce, p. 214

Merivel after his first sexual encounter with Katherine: "...she [Katherine] began to whisper to me that at last we were together in God's house. And though God may never forgive me for this, I confess I was excited by this blasphemy, and I did with Katherine in the space of an hour, I did whatever she ask of me and more that my own mind could devise. And this was no simple act of Oblivion, but a love of the most profane kind." p. 271

"And so *au revoir*, Merivel. I shall not say *adieu* for who knows whether, at some time in the future, History may not have another role for you." King, p. 183-84

"Any love I had hitherto felt for God, I had given to the King."

"...I have done the one thing the King believed me incapable: I have fallen in love with my wife." Merivel, p. 157

"There is an interesting dichotomy between His [Christ's] belief in their [the Poor's] nobility and the nobility's belief in their inherent wickedness." Merivel, p. 127

"Though you bleed, Merivel, yet you have not understood the First Rule of the Cosmos." King to Merivel in a dream, p.129

"It's an Indian Nightingale. It has traveled the seas." Finn, p. 53

"For this knowledge must be the beneficial evacuation of nature, the rank and putrefied stool that, foul as it is, carries out and away the far fouler source of poison and decay - the great worm of hope." Pearce, p. 76

"Love has entered me as a disease, so stealthily. I have not seen its approach nor heard its footsteps. My mind recognizes the folly of it and yet I still boil and burn with it, precisely as with a fever." Merivel, p. 160-61

"Does an unrequited love make a corpse of the lover?" Merivel, p. 163

"...the true Saint loves all men and yet none in particular." Ambrose, p. 143

"I have refined thee, Merivel. Behold I have refined thee, but not as silver, not as silver." Merivel's thoughts attributed to God, p. 199

"Love is the means [to cure]." Ambrose, p. 288

"...we can never truly unknow what we have known or unsee what we have seen..." Pearce, p. 266

Topics for Discussion

Does an all-seeing, all-knowing force exist in the universe that can direct the steps of a man for his ultimate good?

How has mental health treatment changed over the years from the 17th century?

Can the King be in any way justified in his behavior throughout the story?

Describe how Merivel is restored.

Discuss life in the 17th century as opposed to life now. What are the differences and similarities?

Discuss how spirituality and religion play a part in the story.

Is love an effective cure for illness, mental or physical? How? Discuss.