

Rules of Civility Study Guide

Rules of Civility by Amor Towles

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Plot Summary

"Rules of Civility," the first novel by Amor Towles, chronicles a transitional year in the life of a young woman in Manhattan. Katey Kontent narrates her own journey through the year 1938, from the future perspective of 1966, after she runs upon photographs of a man named Tinker Grey. Tinker had been important to her in 1938. Katey sees two images of Tinker at an art exhibit. All of the images had been taken in the late 1930s and early 1940s on New York subways, with a hidden camera. One image, taken in 1938, features Tinker in cashmere but not necessarily happy. The other image, taken in 1939, features Tinker in threadbare clothing but with a hint of a smile.

Katey and her friend, Eve Ross, meet Tinker on New Year's Eve in 1937, and the three develop a friendship. Tinker seems attracted to Katey, but then the three are in a car accident that seriously injures Eve. Tinker moves Eve into his luxury apartment, feeling obligated to take care of her. Katey is a secretary at Quiggin & Hale, a law firm, but soon she realizes that the job is a dead end and a disservice to the dreams her father had when he had left Russia for America. The novel includes many references to the melting pot that is Manhattan, and how immigrants retain their heritage while attempting to embrace all America has to offer.

Anne Grandyn is Tinker's wealthy and sophisticated godmother. Katey looks to her as an example of how to dress and behave, in order to move up in society. Tinker embraces the "Rules of Civility," given to him by his mother when he was a boy, written by a young George Washington. Katey admires Tinker's sense of style, but she also suspects that someone else helped decorate his sleek apartment. When Tinker and Eve travel to Key West, Katey is jealous. When they return, Tinker tells Katey that he and Eve are trying to make a go of it. They introduce Katey to a wealthy man named Wallace Wolcott, but he seems more interested in playing with his spoon than in paying attention to Katey. Katey happens to meet Tinker's brother, Hank, who refers to a woman in Tinker's life as a manipulative cunt. Katey assumes Hank means Eve, but he does not. Crafty Eve engineers a trip to London and Paris with Tinker, which they mostly spend apart. Anne tells Katey that she doesn't disapprove of Tinker and Eve, but she always thought Tinker would be attracted to someone who could challenge him intellectually.

Katey reminisces about her father, who had raised her after her mother left. She remembers that he had taught her to appreciate the simple things, but in 1938 Katey's life is becoming more and more filled with luxuries. She realizes that Anne probably decorated Tinker's apartment. When Katey receives a promotion at work that seems more like a dead end, she quits and wrangles a job with a Russian literature publisher. He warns her that the pay will be low and the job has no prospects, but a week later he helps Katey to obtain a better position at Conde Nast, where she will help launch a new gossip magazine called "Gotham." But while at her brief literary job, Katey becomes friendly with a group of young socialites who don't need big paychecks, and she insinuates herself into their social circle. One wealthy young man, Dicky Vanderwhile, is interested in Katey. He knows all of the young, white, wealthy people in New York, and



he likes to crash parties. Katey runs into Wallace at one such party. Wallace invites her to go shooting. Katey sees a new side of Wallace, who is from old money and who does not feel the need to dress ostentatiously. Katey comes to appreciate his charms and values, but they do not connect romantically. The two become fast friends, however, and she helps him organize his affairs before he goes off to war. He had enlisted to assuage his guilt over having been born with too much. Tragically, Wallace is killed overseas.

Tinker proposes to Eve and she refuses, much to Tinker's relief. Eve goes off to Los Angeles, never to return. Tinker tries to rekindle romance with a receptive Katey, but then Katey discovers that Tinker is actually the paid plaything of Anne's, not her godson, and his apartment and business position are all subsidized by her. Disillusioned, Katey turns to Dicky Vanderwhile for frivolity and companionship. That relationship is doomed from the start, and Dicky is man enough to tell Katey she has been too hard on Tinker, who had, after all, raised himself up from hardship, unlike others who inherited their wealth. Katey and Tinker try once again to build a relationship, but Katey can't see him in quite the same way and a newly free Tinker yearns for a modest life. Ultimately, Katey finds great success with the magazine, "Gotham," and years later she marries a wealthy man of upstanding character. The novel is laced with references to art, literature, and photography.



Matthew 22:8-14, Preface

Matthew 22:8-14, Preface Summary

"Rules of Civility" chronicles Katey Kontent's journey through 1938, a year in which her life is shaped by four people: Eve, Tinker, Wallace, and Dickey. Eve is her beautiful and spunky friend, who is disfigured in a car crash. Eve stagnates for a while in the care of Tinker, the man who had been driving the car, but eventually Eve learns how to flaunt her facial scar and maneuver her injured leg with charm, confidence, and flair. Eve leaves Tinker for Los Angeles. Tinker is an attractive man who sells securities and has all the finer things in life. Katey is attracted to him until she learns that he is a sham, the paid lover of his benefactor. A contrite Tinker abandons his possessions in favor of simplicity and freedom. Wallace Wolcott is a charming man, born of old money, who wears sweaters with holes but has a kind heart and depth of character. He feels guilt over having been born with too much, but then he dies abroad after enlisting to fight. Dickey Vanderwhile is a charming young man, born to wealth but adrift, living for the moment. Dicky helps Katey to see Tinker in a more charitable light, then goes on to become a responsible adult with a family. While interacting with these four, Katey moves up in social circles and employment. She is well-read and muses often about art and literature. She is also conscious of the multi-ethnic culture that is Manhattan, especially since her father had come to America from Russia years before. She ultimately finds her place, becoming a magazine editor and marrying a wealthy man of solid moral character.

Matthew 22:8-14: This is a biblical parable about wedding guests - "For many are called, but few are chosen" (p. 7).

Preface: The narrator of the story is Katey Kontent. On October 4, 1966, the narrator and her husband, Val, attend a photographic exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art, a black-tie affair titled "Many Are Called." The images were taken between 1938 and 1941 on the subways of New York. They were horizontal photographs of subway riders, taken with a hidden camera. The subjects, unaware they were being photographed, had relaxed their public personas and revealed something of their inner selves. Most of the guests at the exhibit are not looking at the images, because they are too busy enjoying champagne. Most of the guests also ignore the photographer, Walker Evans. To Katey, who was a young woman in the 1930s, the portrait subjects look like ghosts. She was sixteen when the Depression hit, having been duped by the glamour of the 1920s. To Katey, the photographs of Walter Evans represent a chastened humanity. Katey notices a portrait of someone familiar, Tinker Grey, dated 1939. Katey knows he would have been twenty-eight. He is ill-shaven and dirty, wearing a threadbare coat, and yet his eyes are alert and he has the hint of a smile. Val vaguely remembers that his brother knew a Tinker Grey, a banker. Because Katey and Val didn't start seeing each other until they were in their thirties, Val has no knowledge of Katey's relationship with Tinker Grey. To remove the wrinkle from Val's brow, Katey explains that Tinker had been in her circle of friends, but she hadn't heard his name since before the war. Val's brow relaxes.



The image brings back memories for Katey, memories of 1938 that she does not want to share with her husband. The memories are not especially shocking, but Katey does not want to dilute them. As Katey and Val make their way toward the exit, the faces in the photos look at Katey. She sees another portrait of Tinker, but this time he is clean and wearing cashmere. Val is happy, thinking that Tinker's fortunes improved, but Katey points out that the Tinker in cashmere was from 1938, while the threadbare Tinker was from 1939.

Matthew 22:8-14, Preface Analysis

Matthew 22:8-14 is a biblical parable about being called but not chosen, or, in the context of this novel, being called to join social circles that do not quite fit one's character or desires.

Much is made of the hidden camera photographs taken by Walker Evans. Evans is a real photographer, and he actually took photos of subway passengers in the late 1930s and early 1940s. He arranged for a debut exhibit of his subway images in 1966. He had hesitated to show them before, because the intimacy of the portraits struck him as an invasion of privacy. The two images of Tinker as described in the novel, taken during the time Tinker knew Katey and then a year after, foreshadow a change of fortune for the man. Over the course of the novel, which mostly takes place in 1938, the reader will learn what befalls Tinker and why his well-being is so important to Katey.



Wintertime - Chapter 1: The Old Long Since, Chapter 2: The Sun, the Moon & the Stars

Wintertime - Chapter 1: The Old Long Since, Chapter 2: The Sun, the Moon & the Stars Summary

Chapter 1: Katey Kontent and her beautiful blonde roommate, Eve Ross, go to The Hotspot, a nightclub in Greenwich Village, on the last night of 1937. The club is not a celebratory place. In 1937, people who have money or romance go to places with full orchestras, not a quiet club with a jazz quartet. Eve had grown up fairly wealthy, in Indiana, with a Negro maid. Her father helped her get a job in New York as a marketing assistant at Pembroke Press. Eve and Katey both stay at Mrs. Martingale's boardinghouse, a haven for young single women. Eve wants to make it on her own in New York, so she stops accepting money from her father. She even returns an envelope he sent, containing fifty ten-dollar bills. Together Katey and Eve scrimp to survive in Manhattan. Their plan for New Year's Eve is to make three dollars stretch as far as possible, but they drink faster than planned. Eve flirts with the musicians, and then a handsome man named Tinker Grey enters the club. Eve calls dibs. Tinker has brown hair, blue eyes, and a star-shaped blush in each cheek. He carries a cashmere coat worth at least five hundred dollars. He is obviously meeting someone. He orders a drink, and then realizes he had draped his coat over a chair at Katey and Eve's table. He apologizes and buys the two girls drinks. Tinker says he is waiting for his brother, Hank, but Hank never arrives. Tinker grew up in Massachusetts, went to college in Providence, and currently works for a small firm on Wall Street. Katey muses that he means he was born in the Back Bay, attended Brown, and works for a bank his grandfather founded. Tinker excuses himself for a moment, and after a while the girls begin to panic, thinking he has stuck them with the bill, but then he returns with a bottle of champagne to ring in the new year. They make resolutions for each other. Tinker says the girls should be less shy, and the girls laugh. Eve says Tinker should get out of his ruts. At first he is taken aback, but then he gives his approval. Katey and Eve arrive back at their boardinghouse at two in the morning, self-satisfied. Katey reaches into her pocket for her unspent nickels, to save them like always, but instead she finds Tinker's gold lighter. His initials are engraved in a fine Tiffany font, but below are less skilled characters, "1910-?"

Chapter 2: The next morning, Katey and Eve leave an unsigned message at the Beresford, the building where Tinker lives, instructing him to be at a certain intersection at a certain time, if he ever wants to see his lighter alive. When they meet, Eve asks how he is doing with his ruts. Tinker jokes that he has been doing the usual things and that he needs help. The girls blindfold him and lead him through the crowded streets of Manhattan. They remove Tinker's blindfold near the back entrance of a movie theater.



Eve hangs an old bra nearby to distract an usher when he steps outside to smoke, and the three sneak inside to see a Marx Brothers movie. Afterward, Eve hails a cab. She gives directions to a place called Chernoff's, somewhat secret, located under the kitchen of a kosher restaurant. Russians and their enemy émigrés both spend time there, glaring at each other from opposite sides of the dance floor. Katey had introduced Eve to the place, and Eve loves it as a way to thwart her father and her Indiana upbringing. Tinker comments that this is their second alley of the day, the back entrance of the movie theater being the first. They walk through the restaurant kitchen, descend a stairway, enter a freezer, then exit out a false door in the back into the nightclub. Tinker thinks his brother would like Chernoff's, and also that he and Katey would probably hit it off. After a rousing performance by Russian musicians, Katey leaves for the powder room and runs into the owner, Chernoff. He asks about the young man with her and Eve, and comments that Tinker can't belong to both of them for very long.

Wintertime - Chapter 1: The Old Long Since, Chapter 2: The Sun, the Moon & the Stars Analysis

The first section of the main story is called Wintertime.

Chapters 1 and 2 set up the basic characters of and relationships between Katey, Eve, and Tinker. Katey and Eve are young and fun-loving, willing to break a few rules, and Tinker is fascinated by them. He is from a different social circle. This is the Tinker of the 1938 museum photograph, elegant, clean, and wearing cashmere. Mention is made of Tinker's brother, Hank, a painter, but Hank does not appear in these chapters. Tinker's lighter, featuring two different font styles and the suggestion that he will not live forever, hints at a secret meaning. At the end of Chapter 2, Chernoff foreshadows the fact that Katey and Eve cannot share a handsome and charming man such as Tinker for long, without heartbreak.



Wintertime - Chapter 3: The Quick Brown Fox, Chapter 4: Deus Ex Machina, January 8

Wintertime - Chapter 3: The Quick Brown Fox, Chapter 4: Deus Ex Machina, January 8 Summary

Chapter 3: Miss Markham manages the secretarial pool for the law firm of Quiggin & Hale, where Katey works. Each woman is assigned a letter of the alphabet, which lights up on a board whenever that secretary is needed. Katey is the letter Q. A new girl makes the mistake of typing her fastest, 100 words per minute, on her first day. Now she is expected to type that fast all of the time. Katey rationalizes that when someone types faster, she is actually paid less per word. On January 5, Katey is summoned by Miss Markham for an important phone call. The caller turns out to be Eve, wondering about their plans with Tinker for the following night. Katey gives the details, then Eve wants to know how Katey got that information.

Katey, as it turns out, had been having lunch at a diner earlier that day when Tinker showed up, and the two shared food and conversation. Katey was a regular at that diner, because she could watch the parade of New Yorkers, including immigrants, pass by the window. Tinker enjoyed the novelty of a new place and wondered if it is the secret place Katey goes when she wants to be alone. Katey confided that she liked to frequent old churches between services. Tinker explained that he brokers sales of businesses owned by certain wealthy families. He also explained that he had bought his gold lighter, monogrammed with his initials, as a reward to himself after his first big paycheck. Tinker's brother didn't approve of his job or the lighter, so Hank had the amateurish dates added, to remind Tinker to seize the day. Tinker revealed that he feels trapped, always on the move but going nowhere.

During the afternoon's phone call between Eve and Katey, Katey lies about how she knows the details of their date with Tinker. Then, at her keyboard, Katey misspells "chief" as "thief."

Chapter 4: By Friday night, January 6, Katey had confessed about her lunch with Tinker. Eve is clearly jealous. even changing her dress when Katey compliments her on it. When Tinker arrives in a Mercedes coupe, Eve insists on driving. Tinker realizes something is bothering Eve. Eve drives recklessly, seemingly charmed, zigzagging through traffic, but they arrive safely at the 21 Club, per Tinker's directions. It is his turn to show the girls his world. Eve is the youngest woman in the restaurant who is not an employee, and she is dressed to attract attention. The staff know Tinker by name. Over martinis and complementary oysters, Eve confesses that she had been jealous. She had even planned to spoil the evening, to teach Tinker and Katey a lesson. Now, instead, she toasts to getting out of ruts. Tinker starts a game, asking a series of



questions, such as, what they were afraid of as kids. Katey judges Eve's answers to be the most clever. Eve says, for example, that the year she would choose to relive is "the upcoming one" (p. 92). They all drink, at Tinker's suggestion, to being less shy. A tall, elegant woman approaches their table, questioning their toast. Tinker seems embarrassed, but the woman introduces herself as his godmother, Anne Grandyn. She calls Tinker "Teddy." Katey and Eve laugh, because Anne's presence makes Tinker seem sixteen. When Anne leaves, Eve is cheerful but Tinker is dejected. Katey asks Tinker if he would rather leave the restaurant. Tinker seizes at the suggestion, to Eve's disappointment. At the coat check, Eve takes Katey's flapper jacket instead of her own coat. They decide to go back to Chernoff's, and Tinker drives on the icy road. He slows to make a turn, and their car is hit by a milk truck. The car flies across the intersection and into a lamppost. Eve is thrown through the windshield. Katey climbs out of the car to find Eve, with her face "as raw as a cut of meat" (p. 99). Katey has to turn away, but Tinker cannot take his eyes off of Eve.

January 8: Tinker leaves the hospital at last, after holding vigil for Eve during her reconstructive surgeries. He has his first cigarette in four years, offered to him by one of the surgeons. The surgeon explains that Eve will probably be ready to leave the hospital in a few days. She will need Tinker at his best. The surgeon assumes Tinker is Eve's husband, until Tinker explains that they are just friends, but they had been in the car accident together.

Wintertime - Chapter 3: The Quick Brown Fox, Chapter 4: Deus Ex Machina, January 8 Analysis

Katey lies to Eve about her chance meeting with Tinker at her favorite diner, because she rightly assumes Eve will be jealous. Clearly, the three cannot continue for long as a triangle. Katey exhibits her guilty conscience at the keyboard, when she accidentally types "thief." The title of Chapter 3, The Quick Brown Fox, refers to an old typing exercise that uses all letters of the alphabet: The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Eve inadvertently foreshadows a tragic year to come, when she says that the year she would most want to relive is "the upcoming one" (p. 92), daring the fates. The title of Chapter 4, Deus Ex Machina, refers to an abrupt, unpredictable plot twist that solves a dilemma, in this case a car crash. The tragedy solves the dilemma of which girl Tinker will spend his time with. Eve, the one severely injured, will be his clear and unavoidable choice.

January 8 is written from the point of view of Tinker, rather than Katey, but in the third person, detached. This detachment mirrors Tinker's outlook at the hospital.



Springtime - Chapter 5: To Have & to Haven't, Chapter 6: The Cruellest Month

Springtime - Chapter 5: To Have & to Haven't, Chapter 6: The Cruellest Month Summary

Chapter 5: By late March, Katey has a new apartment, using money given to her by Eve's father for Eve's share of their rent at the boardinghouse. It was the same envelope of fifties that Eve had sent back to her father months before. Katey has taken to playing contract bridge alone at home, moving from chair to chair. The phone rings, and to Katey's surprise the caller is Tinker. He asks if she will come over. He has to go to his office and he doesn't think Eve should be left alone. The last few weeks, he admits, have been tough.

Tinker had led the vigil at Eve's bedside for days after the accident, while girls from the boardinghouse came and went. Eve's father came as well. Eve woke up on the fifth day. She would not go back to Indiana with her father. She could not return to the boardinghouse, because she could not navigate the stairs with her injured leg. Tinker offered to let her convalesce in his apartment, with an elevator, a doorman, an extra bedroom, and kitchen service. Eve accepted Tinker's offer without a smile. For a while, Katey had joined Tinker and Eve for dinner every night at the Beresford. Sometimes Eve seemed to stare vacantly, but then Katey realized she was staring at the black stitches on her face. Eve rejected Katey's offer to remove the mirror. Each night Katey and Tinker would whisper about Eve's condition, until one evening when Eve said she loved Katey but wanted her to stop coming. Katey understood. It was no longer about dibs on Tinker or a game, but rather a matter of survival.

On this night in March, Katey arrives at the Beresford and Tinker thanks her for coming, saying once again that Eve should not be alone. Eve is elegantly arranged on a sofa. Up close, Katey can see the scar on Eve's face, the slight droop on one side of her mouth, and the skin grafts on her leg. After Tinker leaves, Katey tells Eve she looks good. Eve says she "can't stand that sort of crap" (p. 120). She is tired of the fine food prepared for her. She drags her left foot behind her when she walks across the room. Eve wants no small talk, but asks Katey to read aloud. Tinker had brought novels by women, but Eve is tired of them. Hemingway is better. Eve asks Katey to start anywhere but the beginning. Katey realizes she enjoys the novel that way, because all characters seem to have equal weight and every bit of dialogue is an innuendo. Eve falls asleep, and Katey studies four studies of gas stations by Stuart Davis in the apartment, all in primary colors. Katey explores further, noting that Tinker seems to be sleeping in the maid's room. A primitive social realist painting of a freight dock hangs there. It does not match the décor of the rest of the apartment. Katey suspects someone else selected the furniture and accessories. Among Tinker's books is a book of Washingtonia, with an inscription to Tinker from his mother, dated for his fourteenth birthday. It includes a list of



rules for life, composed by a teenaged George Washington. Many rules had been underlined by a young Tinker. Katey returns to the living room, but Eve is gone. Katey finds her on the terrace. Eve comments that many spend their lives in New York, "like a mouse in a maze" (p. 131), but never see this view of the skyline at night. Tinker doesn't like Eve to go on the terrace, because he is afraid she will jump, but Eve reminds Katey that she is a Catholic. Katey helps Eve into bed. Eve tells her it's okay for her to leave, but Katey had promised Tinker she would stay. When Tinker comes home, he mentions that he might take Eve to Palm Beach for a few weeks. Katey approves. They talk about many things, and for a moment they are transported to their lunch at the diner, months before, when their lives were full of possibilities. Tinker gives Katey a tentative kiss, but she lets him know without words that they will go no further. Shortly thereafter, Tinker takes Eve to Palm Springs.

Chapter 6: Katey goes to work, goes home, and saves money. She had recently received a postcard from Eve and Tinker, with an arrow pointing to their hotel balcony, and a hand-drawn sign that said no jumping. One day after work Katey notices Charlotte Sykes, the speedy typist, on the platform. Charlotte is carrying official documents that should have been left at the office. On the train, Charlotte sits next to Katey and chatters. A chambermaid sits across from them, perhaps remembering when she was young, beautiful, and hopeful. Charlotte exits the train without her documents, and Katey resigns herself to chasing after Charlotte. She finds her several blocks away, talking in Yiddish with her grandmother. Katey tells Charlotte that the lawyer who graduated from Harvard has a trust fund to fall back on, if he is ever dismissed. On her way home, on foot, Katey passes many immigrants and thinks about their lives. She pretends not to recognize an unemployed man with whom she had gone to school. Someone else remarks that the trouble with being born in New York is, you have no New York to run away to.

Springtime - Chapter 5: To Have & to Haven't, Chapter 6: The Cruellest Month Analysis

The second section of the main story is called Springtime.

Katey is not sure of her place with Eve and Tinker. Romance between Katey and Tinker is out of the question, but Eve seems unhappy living with him. Their places have been set by the circumstances of a car crash. The mystery remains as to who decorated Tinker's apartment, with its perfect décor but a possible feminine touch.

Katey resigns herself to the fact that Tinker and Eve are away in Florida. She spends time alone, playing cards. Around town Katey notices immigrants, all trying to make their way in a new country. She enjoys watching them and contemplating her progress. They remind her of her Russian roots. A stranger gets to the crux of the matter, remarking that when you are born in New York, you have no New York to run away to. Katey is, in fact, a native New Yorker, with nowhere to run to. She feels trapped in her world, just as Tinker and Eve feel trapped in theirs.



Springtime - Chapter 7: The Lonesome Chandeliers, Chapter 8: Abandon Every Hope, Chapter 9: The Scimitar, the Sifter & the Wooden Leg

Springtime - Chapter 7: The Lonesome Chandeliers, Chapter 8: Abandon Every Hope, Chapter 9: The Scimitar, the Sifter & the Wooden Leg Summary

Chapter 7: After Eve and Tinker return home from Key West, Eve invites Katey to round out the table at a dinner party they are hosting. Katey arrives. Eve looks lovely, tanned and with a glint in her eye, wearing diamond chandelier earrings. The disadvantage of being late, Katey discovers, is missing out on drinks before dinner. The other guests are a stockbroker nicknamed Bucky and his wife, Wyss, and also a single man named Wallace Wolcott. Bucky and Wallace are Tinker's childhood friends. Wallace is clearly intended to be a partner for Katey, but she dismisses him because he has a speech impediment, stalling in mid-sentence, and also because he seems disinterested. Katey feels out of place at dinner, amidst talk of hunting and swimming. She heads off to the powder room in the master bedroom and notices that Eve no longer sleeps alone. Eve joins her and confides that Tinker didn't give her the diamond earrings, but in fact she found them in a drawer and just started wearing them. Tinker never said a word. When Tinker and Katey later find themselves alone, Tinker tells her that he and Eve are trying to make a go of it. Katey answers that she knows, and that she approves. She vows to herself that she will not be the one to tear them apart, if anyone ever does. Bucky wants to discuss a railroad acquisition with Tinker, since Tinker has the whole concession, and Wyss chastises her husband. Wallace works to change the subject. In the elevator after the party, Bucky remarks that Tinker has risen from the ashes like a phoenix. Katey wonders to herself what excuse she might make next time she receives a dinner party invitation

Chapter 8: Katey runs into an acquaintance from the boardinghouse, Fran Pacelli. Fran's family is in the trucking business and Fran uses colorful language. She invites Katey for a drink, and they head to an Irish bar she recommends, with a sign that says, "No Ladies" (p. 170). Soon Katey realizes that Fran's plan was to run into a man she likes, named Grubb. Grubb works for Pacelli Trucking. Other men are there as well, arguing, and Katey realizes they are discussing the artist, Cezanne. A man called Hank thinks Cezanne is a hack. Then Katey realizes that Hank is Tinker's brother, and that he had painted the dock scene in Tinker's bedroom. Katey knows that Hank's viewpoint is trendy, and that he is following in the footsteps of Stuart Davis. Hank thinks the Lucky Strike Cigarette logo is a thing of beauty, shapes with purpose. Meanwhile, Fran is in Grubb's lap. Katey feels insulted that Tinker had thought she would like his brother. She



surprises Hank by mentioning Tinker. Hank calls the woman in Tinker's life a "manipulative cunt" (p. 178), and Katey accuses Hank of imitating the work of Stuart Davis. She is sure Hank's friends don't know he relies on a trust fund to live the life of a starving artist.

Another day, Fran invites Katey to the runarounds at Belmont, an early-morning event in which horses run individually in order to become familiar with the track. Fran insists that the runarounds are more fun than the actual race. Katey is highly skeptical, but she agrees to attend. Katey comes to appreciate the runaround, with the variety of people in the stands: gamblers, fans, owners, and trainers. She admires a wealthy man through binoculars, when she is interrupted by Anne Grandyn. Anne comments that the man is self-made. While some women would want to be the woman on his arm, Anne would rather plot to be in the man's shoes. Katey admires Anne's self-possession and confidence. By the same token, Anne thinks Eve could do better than holding on to Tinker for security.

Chapter 9: On June 9, Eve picks Katey up in a brown Bentley. The driver, Michael, takes them to the Explorers Club for a drink. Eve wears her pulled back, not hiding her scar, hinting of experience and glamour. Use of the Bentley is a gift from Wallace. Eve doesn't hide her limp, but rather draws attention, swinging her injured leg forward "like a man with a clubfoot" (p. 198). The host seats them in the middle of the room, "so that Eve's allure could be appreciated by all" (p. 198). Katey realizes that Eve has engineered events so that she can take a luxury excursion to London with Tinker. Eve had once said that she would like to be Darryl Zanuck, the movie director, and now she is directing events in high style. About a week later, Fran shows Katey a newspaper clipping from the social columns, mentioning that Tinker and Eve won a scavenger hunt on the Queen Victoria, on their way to London. They won five nights at a London hotel and a private tour of the National Gallery.

Springtime - Chapter 7: The Lonesome Chandeliers, Chapter 8: Abandon Every Hope, Chapter 9: The Scimitar, the Sifter & the Wooden Leg Analysis

Katey has a miserable time at the dinner party because she is the odd person out. Wallace seems to be of no interest, but Katey does not consider that he might be shy. The mystery around Tinker increases, both because of Eve's mysterious earrings and Bucky's remark that Tinker rose from the ashes like a phoenix.

In the small world known as Manhattan, Katey encounters Tinker's brother, Hank. Katey sees him as a pretentious imitator of the painter Stuart Davis, and she realizes that the painting in Tinker's room must be a Hank original. She does not like the way Hank insulted Eve, calling her a manipulative cunt, but she does not stop to consider that Hank could be referring to someone else. Also in the small world known as Manhattan, Katey runs into Tinker's godmother, Anne. Katey sees Anne as someone to emulate.

Anne is a progressive woman who believes young women should aim to snag their own fortunes, rather than merely marry into them.

Eve is orchestrating events for herself and Tinker, much like the movie directors she admires. This could in fact be evidence that Hank is referring to Eve when he speaks of the manipulative woman who is ruining Tinker's life. She does not love him, nor does she respect him.



Springtime - Chapter 10: The Tallest Building in Town, Chapter 11: La Belle Époque, June 27

Springtime - Chapter 10: The Tallest Building in Town, Chapter 11: La Belle Époque, June 27 Summary

Chapter 10: On June 22, Katey takes a deposition, then has lunch in Central Park. She spots Anne Grandyn and impulsively follows her to the Plaza Hotel, thinking to herself that in polite society one probably shouldn't follow an acquaintance into a hotel. The savvy Anne knows she is being followed. She leaves a calling card for Katey in the lobby, inviting her upstairs. In Anne's suite, Katey notices that her style matches the décor in Tinker's apartment. Anne expresses disappointment that Katey still works for Quiggin & Hale. Katey notices that Anne isn't wearing a bra. Anne doesn't live in this suite, she explains, but she finds it to be a convenient location for her office, with room service, a shower, and easy access for visitors. Anne questions Katey about Tinker and Eve, then notes that, while they light up a room, she always envisioned Tinker with someone who would challenge him intellectually.

At home, Katey receives a letter from Tinker, in London. He writes about a church he visited, offering many charming details. Katey crumples the letter and throws it in the trash. Katey reminisces about her father. He had raised her, after Katey's mother left them. As he lay dying, when Katey was nineteen, he offered her the advice that everything would be all right as long as she appreciated the simple pleasures, like the first cup of coffee in the morning. Katey's cup of coffee is the works of Charles Dickens. But today, with her mood soured by Tinker's letter, she takes no pleasure in Dickens.

Chapter 11: On June 24, Katey's birthday, she is summoned into the office of Miss Markham, who manages the secretarial pool. Katey thinks she is about to be reprimanded, but instead the prim and proper woman offers her a promotion, to replace the pregnant lead clerk. To Katey's discomfort, Miss Markham refers to her as "quintessentially Quiggin" (p. 229). Katey must act as an example to the other girls, and in exchange she will receive an increase in status, pay, and responsibility. Katey sees the opportunity as more of a punishment than a reward.

Back at home, she receives a birthday telegram from Tinker and Eve, saying that they will be extending their stay in London yet again. She takes the telegram's suggestion to "turn the town upside down" (p. 232) to heart, and gathers what is left of the money Eve's father had given her. The next day, Katey splurges on a white dress with blue dots, and coordinating red hair. She then wears her new items to a fancy French restaurant, dining alone, garnering the attention of an older couple who admire her dots. Katey knows her father did not approve of fancy restaurants, of all luxuries, because after the money is spent there is nothing to show for it. For Katey, on the other hand,



fine dining is the ultimate luxury, the ascendancy of civilization above the "doldrums of necessity" to the "ether of the finely superfluous" (p. 239). When the alcohol and the chicken stuffed with truffles prove to be too much for her stomach, Katey is forced to leave.

Katey reminisces about the one time her Uncle Roscoe had taken her out to dinner, shortly after her father died. Katey asked him for stories about her father. Uncle Roscoe told her that, when he and Katey's father arrived in the U.S. from Russia, her father gathered their Russian currency in a soup pot and burned it, even though the money could have been easily spent in Russian neighborhoods. She thinks about the brothers' hope for the future when they arrived in America. The next morning, she quits her job at Quiggin & Hale.

June 27: Tinker is in London, with Eve. To compensate them after Eve was stuck in an elevator, the hotel had moved them to a luxury suite. Their belongings were meticulously placed, exactly as they had been in the original room, including a calling card from Anne. Tinker offers Eve a tour of the city, but she tells him to go on without her, because she has scheduled appointments for hair, nails, and royal etiquette lessons. Tinker buys some shoes, then heads to a park to read. Earlier he had told Eve that he had bought a travel guide, but in fact he had bought a copy of Thoreau's "Walden," with thoughts of Katey.

Springtime - Chapter 10: The Tallest Building in Town, Chapter 11: La Belle Époque, June 27 Analysis

Katey thinks she is being savvy and sneaky when she follows Anne one day, but the woman one-ups her with an invitation to come upstairs. Katey realizes that Anne must have decorated Tinker's apartment, given the similarity in style, but she spends no time considering what that might imply. Katey is more concerned about the fact that Tinker is in Europe with Eve, to the point that she cannot bear to read a letter from him, even though he is playing up to one of her favorite pastimes, which is spending time alone in a church.

Katey has a failed splurge at a fancy restaurant, with her father's disapproval ringing in her ears. She is and always will be his daughter, saving her nickels and wondering if she deserves luxuries, no matter what her circumstances might be. In her father's honor, remembering his strength and optimism about America, Katey quits her job at Quiggin & Hale, even though she has no other prospects. This is a brave if reckless action. After all, Katey just finished blowing much of her savings on a dress with dots and a too-rich French meal.

Tinker is highlighted in London on June 27, in the third person. His division from Eve is evident. Even though they are ostensibly having fun, winning a scavenger hunt and receiving a lucky room upgrade, they are not enjoying a united experience. Eve schedules back-to-back beauty and etiquette appointments. Tinker offers to tour with Eve, but he lies about purchasing a guidebook when, in fact, he had purchased



"Walden" in memory of Katey. Katey, of course, back home in New York, knows nothing of this.

Anne seems too involved in her godson's life, as evidenced by the calling card from her in Tinker and Eve's room.



Summertime - Chapter 12: Twenty Pounds Ought & Six, Chapter 13: The Hurlyburly

Summertime - Chapter 12: Twenty Pounds Ought & Six, Chapter 13: The Hurlyburly Summary

Chapter 12: Nathaniel Parish, a senior fiction editor at Pembroke Press, specializes in Russian literature. A younger rival, who speaks of the death of the novel, is Martin Durk. Katey tracks down Nathaniel Parish at his usual lunch spot, then asks him if he is Martin Durk. She explains she is supposed to meet him for an interview, then she strategically drops a book of Russian plays. Of course, Katey reads Russian and has opinions about Chekhov. She feigns surprise to learn that he is Nathaniel Parish. All of this is a ploy to gain employment with him, and her plan works perfectly. Mr. Parish warns her that she won't have enough work, the pay will be low, and the position will be a dead end. Unfortunately, the position pays only half of what Katey made at Quiggin & Hale, a sad fact that she only realizes when she receives her first check. The other girls who work there are from wealthy families and don't really need the money. One of the wealthy girls, Susie Vanderwhile, invites Katey to join her group after work. Unlike the Quiggin & Hale girls, who would walk to a modest place for a drink and then take the train home, the Pembroke Press girls hail a cab and go to elegant places to meet others from their social class. Katey is thus ushered into a new circle of friends, including Susie's brother, Dickey Vanderwhile, who knows everyone in New York, at least, "everyone white, wealthy and under the age of twenty-five" (p. 269).

Katey finds that the two advantages of working for Pembroke Press are, first, that everyone assumes she is from a wealthy family, and second, that it is her entrance to working at Conde Nast, with editor Mason Tate. Mr. Parish encourages Katey to join Mr. Tate as an editorial assistant, rather than stagnate with him. Katey objects at first, but ultimately she meets with Nathan Tate. His questions are more about her background than her ability. He admits that he "cannot abide debutantes" (p. 277). Their meeting has not been an interview, he explains, but rather an offer. He wants her to work as his personal assistant, not editorial, along with another young woman, to help him launch a society magazine called "Gotham." He plans to run them both ragged until January, then let one of them go. But meanwhile, her pay would double, her hours would triple, and her purpose would quadruple. Katey accepts. In just a week, Katey has moved from a dead-end job to the start of a promising career, and gone from a dwindling circle of acquaintances to a high-class social circle.

Chapter 13: Mason Tate's other personal assistant is Alley McKenna. She is a petite brunette with a high IQ and cat's-eye glasses. Flirting and sexy clothes will get them nowhere, because Mason Tate prefers men. Each day, the two are given a list of sundry



tasks to perform, and they also function as guards at the door to Mason's office. Alley suggests that she and Katey should work together, covering for each other, so that in January Mason will not know which of them to keep. Katey agrees. After work, Katey and Alley sometimes go out for cake, then Alley laments that neither of them have dates. But after they part, Katey slips into the restroom and changes into a nice dress, then meets her new society friends for a night on the town. One night Dicky Vanderwhile leads the group through a back hedge, to an estate known as Whileaway, to crash a party for one of the Hollingsworths' sons. Dicky is somewhat acquainted with a different Hollingsworth. They get drinks from the bar, then Katey purposely falls a few steps behind the group. She is amazed at how aimless her new friends seem to be, since they are recent graduates of the country's finest schools. However, she knows that soon they will receive their trust funds and secure positions in society. Katey sizes up the party attendees, as Mason Tate would have done. She spots Wallace, the man from Tinker and Eve's dinner party who speaks in halting sentences. Wallace explains that the Hollingsworths throw a party for each son during the summer, then on Labor Day they throw one giant shindig to which everyone is invited. Katey remarks that she is not on the everyone list, and Wallace asks if she would like to trade places with him. Wallace remarks that he had intended to call Katey, to keep a promise he had made during the dinner party, but they are interrupted by fireworks and Dickey before Wallace can explain. The group leaves the party the way they came, through the hedges, and Dickey drops everyone else off before Katey. He asks if she would like to go for a nightcap, but she declines. Dicky is sad because they never got to dance. Dicky and Katey share wordplay from Shakespeare's play, "Macbeth," saying they shall meet again "when the hurlyburly's done" (p. 298).

Summertime - Chapter 12: Twenty Pounds Ought & Six, Chapter 13: The Hurlyburly Analysis

The third section of the main story is called Summertime.

Katey exhibits extraordinary cunning and intelligence in the way she lures Nathaniel Parish into offering her a job. She pretends to be interested in working for his rival, appealing to his competitive nature, and she fumbles a book to reveal her familiarity with Russian literature. Clearly, Katey has the ability to be manipulative, every bit as manipulative as her friend, Eve. Katey uses her position to advantage also, by insinuating herself into a social group way beyond her means.

Luck is a friend as well, thrusting Katey into a better position at Conde Nast. New York may be a rat maze or drudgery for some, but for those with skill and a bit of luck, the sky is the limit.

Katey's luck continues, because her new friends like to crash parties of the well-to-do. At one such party, Katey reconnects with Wallace from Tinker and Eve's dinner party. Katey realizes that there is more to Wallace than she first thought, and that he is a desirable bachelor. Dicky tries, but fails, to make a romantic connection with Katey, but it seems that her days of playing cards alone are over.



Summertime - Chapter 14: Honeymoon Bridge, Chapter 15: The Pursuit of Perfection

Summertime - Chapter 14: Honeymoon Bridge, Chapter 15: The Pursuit of Perfection Summary

Chapter 14: Wallace fulfills his dinner party promise, which was to take Katey shooting. Katey dresses in khaki pants and a white shirt, as she imagines Anne Grandyn would dress. Wallace, from old money, wears a sweater with holes in the sleeves. He compliments her newly red hair, still in halting sentences. They agree not to talk about Tinker and Eve. Wallace's hunt club is run-down, but with impeccable service. Wallace patiently shows Katey the parts of a gun and teaches her how to shoot several, including a machine gun like the one that killed Bonnie and Clyde. As they make their way outside to shoot skeet, they run upon Bitsy Houghton, a long-time acquaintance of Wallace. She calls him Hawkeye. Katey enjoys the feeling of shooting, the confidence-building nature of it. Over sandwiches, Katey remarks that Wallace knows the first names of everyone, from waiters to people at the front desk, always treating people with respect. Wallace enjoys simple pleasures, despite his wealth. Silences between Katey and Wallace are comfortable, and as the day wears on, the stall in his sentences all but disappears.

Another day they meet at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, not to look at paintings, but to look at elaborately designed antique guns. After, Katey makes a point of calling Wallace's driver, Michael, by name. They lunch at a restaurant in his office building. As he often does, Wallace traces circles on the table with his spoon. Katey notices that his watch has a black dial with white numbers. It was his father's, he explains, an officer's watch, dark so it would be less likely to draw fire. When Wallace is called away to discuss a business matter, Bitsy sits down with Katey. She asks how Katey knows Wallace, then advises Katey that she shouldn't wait for him to smooch her first, because he is very shy.

The following evening, Wallace drops by Katey's apartment. He admires her book collection, sorted by type, with the transcendentalists needing a lot of sun and the Russians under the bed, like mushrooms. He teaches her a card game called Honeymoon Bridge. Katey attempts to kiss him, but their teeth clack. The two laugh. They realize that they are comfortable together, fond of each other, but that their friendship is just a diversion until real love arrives.

Chapter 15: At Conde Nast, Nathan Tate strives for perfection for his new magazine, "Gotham." He asks Katey which photo of Bette Davis is her favorite, and Katey chooses one in which the actress' attention to a young man causes jealousy in his young wife. Nathan Tate approves her choice. He remarks that photography can freeze an instant,



revealing much, wreaking havoc. After work, Katey dresses to meet Wallace. Wallace has decided to leave his life behind, feeling he has been given too much, even though he had doubled the family business since inheriting it. He plans to go to Spain and join the Republican forces. Until he departs, he spends a great deal of time with Katey, and she expands her Conde Nast pursuit of perfection to running errands with Wallace. Nothing is too good for Wallace. When he expresses regret that he will not be home for Christmas, Katey suggests they should shop and wrap for everyone and deposit the gifts with his lawyer for delivery on Christmas Eve. As they draw up Wallace's list of friends and family, Katey reflects that many girls would kill to get their hands on it. On wrapping night, as they wrap, Katey wonders which gift will be for Little Wallace, Wallace's namesake. Wallace had promised him something special. Toward the end of the evening, Wallace removes his father's watch with the black dial and wraps it for his young relative.

Wallace, like many other WASPy types, has family photos in his hallway, memorializing people and places. To Katey, this custom used to seem odd, but now she finds it endearing. In her family, the photos were there to remind you of your ancestors' sacrifices. One photo on Wallace's wall features his class at St. George's, where he first met Tinker. Katey searches for Wallace, then for Tinker. Wallace shows her that Tinker is at the far left of the photo, and then appears again at the far right. This is a trick of timing, he explains. To photograph the whole class, an aperture moved slowly across a negative, exposing part of it at a time. Tinker had run from one side to the other at just the right moment to be captured on film twice. Wallace tells Katey that Tinker was forced to leave the school shortly after the photo was taken, because his father had lost everything. Tinker finished school in Fall River, then put himself through Providence College, then got a job as a clerk and worked his way up. Katey realizes she had misjudged Tinker when they first met. Katey suddenly wants to see Tinker again, to have a second chance at a first impression. She realizes that she and Tinker hadn't come from opposite sides of the threshold, but rather, from the same side.

Wallace leaves town the next day. Riding home with the driver, Michael, Katey realizes that, just as Wallace's belongings will be dismantled and stored, she must stow away her brush with perfection.

On the following day, Katey hears rumors of a diamond for Eve. She also receives an embossed invitation to the Hollingsworths' Labor Day party, an invitation surely obtained for her by the "right fine Wallace Wolcott" (p. 344).

Summertime - Chapter 14: Honeymoon Bridge, Chapter 15: The Pursuit of Perfection Analysis

Katey spends time with Wallace and comes to understand the relaxed nature of old money. Wallace doesn't dress to impress or focus on luxuries. He is, in essence, the very opposite of Tinker. Their time together shooting hints at romance, but the two realize they are meant to be just friends, albeit very good friends.



Much is made of the transcendent nature of photography in the novel, as exemplified by the two images of Tinker at the exhibit in the Preface, as well as in Chapter 15, in the school photo featuring two Tinkers on opposite sides of the group. Katey notices the difference between her family's attitude toward photos, as memorials to those who sacrificed in years past, compared with wealthy Protestant families, who display a mass of photos to chronicle their joys and experiences.

Wallace's father had worn a watch with a black dial, to help protect him from enemy fire in his days as an officer. Wallace's decision to give the special watch to his young relative, just when he himself is about to go off to war and danger, seems to be a bad omen.



Summertime - Chapter 16: Fortunes of War, Chapter 17: Read All About It, Chapter 18: The Now and Here

Summertime - Chapter 16: Fortunes of War, Chapter 17: Read All About It, Chapter 18: The Now and Here Summary

Chapter 16: At Whileaway on Labor Day, Katey enters with the other invited guests, but she still feels as if she should be sneaking in through the hedges. Mr. Hollingsworth is congenial when he realizes Katey is the young lady Wallace had asked the family to invite. He offers to share any information about Wallace that she might want to know. In a powder room, Katey finds an earring that she is sure belongs to Eve. She does not want to encounter Tinker and Eve, freshly home from Europe. She tries to escape, but is stopped by Bitsy. Bitsy commiserates about Wallace leaving and says she wants to be fast friends. Then Bitsy's husband tells a story, saying that Tinker had just run the Hollingsworths' boat aground while trying to propose to Eve. Katey heads for the front door once again. She notices one of the Hollingsworth sons, in a white dinner jacket, standing aloof from the goings-ons. Mr. Hollingsworth appears, and Katey apologizes for leaving so soon. She says she isn't feeling well. Mr. Hollingsworth calls his son, Valentine, the one in the white dinner jacket, and asks him to drive Katey to the train station. Valentine is silent most of the way, but he drives Katey home. He is glad for an excuse to leave the party. At work, Katey reworks a letter dictated by Mason Tate in the heat of emotion, smoothing it a bit. Later in the day he calls her into his office and asks her to try reworking an article written by an established interviewer, to see if she can make him sound more like Hemingway.

Chapter 17: Katey is awakened at two in the morning by a knock on her door. The police have found a woman passed out in an alley, without a purse, with Katey's library card in her pocket. The woman is Eve, as it turns out, wearing Katey's flapper jacket that she had been wearing on the night of the car accident. The police deduce that Eve and Katey are prostitutes, based on Eve's scars and drunkenness. They give Katey Eve's possessions, which consist solely of a diamond ring big enough to skate on. Katey takes Eve to her apartment and puts her to bed. No one answers the phone at the Beresford. Katey throws the flapper jacket in the trash.

On the following morning, Eve talks about what a bore France had been. Katey gets to the point, showing Eve the ring. Eve explains that Tinker had proposed to her on the boat, but she didn't accept. Instead, she asked why Tinker didn't just drive her into another lamppost. Tinker insisted she should think about it. Then Tinker ran the boat aground, and Eve just relaxed and watched him struggle. She says it was "the first three hours of peace" (p. 369) she'd had in half a year. Katey realizes that Eve fooled



everyone who thought she had been angling for a proposal for months, using her disfigurement to best advantage, when all the time she had other plans. Eve confesses that she and Tinker don't really even like each other, but that he proposed because she was pregnant. Eve had gotten an abortion in Paris, but hadn't told Tinker yet. Eve doesn't know what she will do next, but she might visit her parents in Indiana. She thinks Tinker will go back to Europe.

A few nights later Katey's phone rings, and she suspects it might be Tinker. Instead, it is Eve's father, wondering if Katey knows where she is. She had planned to take a train to Indiana, but didn't show up when her parents went to meet her. They eventually learn that Eve extended her ticket to Los Angeles with no explanation. Katey realizes Eve will sell the diamond ring and her one earring to start a new life.

A few days later, Tinker calls Katey. He feels he has made a hash of 1938. However, Tinker's voice has a sound of relief, that he no longer has to continue a charade with Eve. He invites Katey to join him at the Wolcott's camp in the Adirondacks. Katey agrees, then wonders if she made the wrong decision. She takes out the letter Tinker had written from London, the one she had thrown away and then salvaged, and reads it with new eyes.

Chapter 18: Katey discovers that the Wolcott's camp is actually a two-story mansion. Tinker starts to give Katey a tour, then notices she is exhausted after a full day of work and travel. While Katey goes to bed, she hears Tinker secure the doors and then turn off the generator. The lights go out, except for the kerosene lantern by Katey's bed. She reads a few pages of her Agatha Christie mystery, a new discovery on this trip, for she had dismissed mysteries as lesser literature. The next morning, Katey checks the room where Tinker slept and discovers he has been reading "Walden," and even highlighting some passages. At breakfast, Tinker and Katey are wearing nearly identical outfits, khakis and white shirts. Tinker has stubble and a relaxed demeanor. He invites her hiking, and Katey responds that she doesn't hike and has no boots. Of course, the Wolcott place has an abundance of gear, and soon the two are hiking up Pinion Peak to a vantage point with a breathtaking view of the lake. While hiking, they talk about Eve. Tinker says the news of Eve going to L.A. is surprising right up until the moment you hear it. Hollywood doesn't know what it is in for, he comments. Katey realizes he is not heartbroken, but merely discussing an old friend for whom he wishes the best. Katey begins to think maybe she is a hiker, after all. They share sandwiches and Tinker reminisces about hiking in the Adirondacks with his brother, Hank, when they were boys. Katey realizes those must have been the last happy days before his father lost his fortune and Tinker had to leave St. George. Tinker reveals that he has been reading "Walden," and that at first it was too much, a man alone philosophizing, but then it turned out to be "the greatest adventure of them all" (p. 394). Back at the mansion, in front of a cozy fire, Tinker confesses that he hadn't just run into Katey back in January at the diner, before the accident. He had followed her from work. He had found her fascinating, because she has an "inner tranquility," with "poise and purpose" (p. 396). They go to their separate rooms for bed, and Katey thinks about "Walden." Thoreau advises people to find and follow their pole star, and to celebrate the now and here. Katey makes her way down the hallway to Tinker's room, to change their lives forever.



At the end of their weekend, Katey takes a train home. Tinker stays behind, to sort things out, not knowing how long he will be. Katey starts to read her Agatha Christie novel and finds half of a playing card, instructing her to meet Tinker at the Stork Club on September 26.

Summertime - Chapter 16: Fortunes of War, Chapter 17: Read All About It, Chapter 18: The Now and Here Analysis

Katey attends a Labor Day party at Whileaway as an invited guest, due to the thoughtfulness of Wallace, but she feels out of place. Ironically, a member of the Hollingsworth clan, Valentine, is destined to become the husband of Katey years hence. This is only evident from the Preface, since Valentine has little to say to Katey when he drives her home from the Labor Day party. They share a commonality, however, in that neither wishes to witness spectacles, such as Tinker and Eve being towed to shore after Tinker's marriage proposal.

Katey is aghast when the police think she and Eve are prostitutes. This incident highlights the danger of a snap judgment. Katey, of course, has rushed to judgment many times, notably in the cases of Tinker and Wallace. Given new information Katey has learned about Tinker, along with the fact that he is no longer involved with Eve, Katey cannot wait for the second chance at a first impression of Tinker.

Katey and Tinker rendezvous at the Hollingsworths' place in the Adirondacks, enjoying a simple time together, straight out of "Walden," without the many complications of their everyday lives. Tinker confesses his attraction to Katey, and reveals that their chance lunch at a diner months before took place only because he had followed her. Clearly, Katey does not have the instincts of an Anne Grandyn, to know when she is being followed. She does, however, have the confidence and boldness to journey down the hallway during the night, to make love with Tinker in the Adirondacks. Tinker plays into Katey's love of games and adventure when he plants an invitation to meet again, written on half of a playing card, tucked in the pages of her current mystery novel.



Summertime—Chapter 19: The Road to Kent, September 30

Summertime—Chapter 19: The Road to Kent, September 30 Summary

Chapter 19: Katey calls in sick on September 26, the day she is to meet Tinker. She treats herself to breakfast, then she visits a salon to become a redhead once again, to please Tinker. Katey calls Bitsy to see if they can meet for lunch, then she visits a nearby bookstore. Against all odds, she stumbles up a book of writings by George Washington, including the 110 maxims Tinker had taken to heart as a boy. Katey arrives at the Chinese restaurant ahead of Bitsy and she waits, standing by a crimson screen decorated with dragons. Just as Bitsy arrives, Katey sees Anne Grandyn at a table. Then she sees Tinker make his way to Anne's table. Katey hides behind the screen, not wanting to be seen, because she wants to surprise Tinker with her red hair. She gestures to Bitsy that Tinker is there with his godmother, and Bitsy is bewildered. Tinker is Anne's banker, says Bitsy, not her godson. Then Anne rubs her hand along Tinker's thigh. Anne pays the check and Tinker doesn't flinch. Anne sees Katey and waves. Tinker looks over and turns gray, his charms collapsing. Katey rushes out of the restaurant, and Tinker chases after her. She asks him if this is what she has been waiting for, and then she slaps him. Bitsy catches up and asks Katey what is going on. She hails a cab, stops at her bank for cash, and takes Katey to the Ritz for lunch instead. Katey shares her whole story, from meeting Tinker on New Year's Eve, to meeting Anne Grandyn, to the accident, to Eve's time with Tinker, to Katey insinuating herself into wealthy circles, to her recent time spent with Tinker in the Adirondacks. Bitsy says it's a "Grand Canyon of a tale" (p. 414), and offers Katey the advice to "keep it up!" (p. 415). Katey goes home to dissect the past, in light of her new information. She realizes that the night Tinker asked her to stay with Eve while he went to the office, he spent with Anne. She realizes that when Hank referred to "that manipulative cunt," he meant Anne, not Eve. She realizes that Tinker's great skill as a lover was learned in the company of Anne. She realizes that Tinker didn't see George Washington's rules as moral aspirations, but rather as advice on social advancement. Then Tinker calls and Katey reads some of George Washington's rules to him, mocking him, and then she hangs up. Tinker tries to call again Katey knocks her phone to the floor, unanswered. The next morning, Kate goes to work to find a wheelchair with a red cross in place of her desk chair. She is in trouble with her boss for pretending to be sick.

September 30: Tinker meets Hank late at night, in the rain, planning to give him money from his latest windfall. He doesn't know when he will have more. Hank doesn't want the money, since it comes from Anne. Tinker says he earned it for both of them, and then Hank punches him. Hank never told Tinker to make money by selling himself. Hank bends over, to pick up the money, Tinker assumes. But instead Hank picks up the



Panama hat Tinker had been sheltering inside his coat and puts it on Tinker's head. The hat shrinks in the rain.

Summertime—Chapter 19: The Road to Kent, September 30 Analysis

Katey finally learns the truth, that Tinker is Anne's paid companion, compensated for fulfilling her physical needs. Katey goes over every incident in her mind, noticing the many clues she had passed over in the moment. Katey, like most of us, is guilty of going through life seeing only what she wants to see. Not only that, but Katey is also guilty of presenting herself as someone she is not, when she socializes with her wealthy new friends who don't know her true modest background.

Presented in the third person from Tinker's point of view, Tinker meets his brother late at night on September 30, intending to share his final payment from Anne Grandyn. Hank will not accept what he thinks of as dirty money, and he punches Tinker instead, then crowns him with a shrinking hat, surely purchased for Tinker by Anne. Tinker likes to assuage his guilt, saying he is just trying to help Hank by sharing his windfalls, but Hank will have none of it. There is no doubt about who Hank considers to be the "manipulative cunt" in Tinker's life.



Fall - Chapter 20: Hell Hath No Fury, Chapter 21: Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Tempest-Tost, Chapter 22: Neverland

Fall - Chapter 20: Hell Hath No Fury, Chapter 21: Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Tempest-Tost, Chapter 22: Neverland Summary

Chapter 20: Katey learns to appreciate the works of Agatha Christie, partly because they are formulaic. In her mystery novels, everyone gets what they deserve. At work, Katey bears her punishment for playing hooky and does extra work to regain her place in Mason Tate's good graces. At home, she receives an invitation to meet with Anne Grandyn. Katey tears up the invitation, then considers what she should wear. Hercule Poirot wouldn't turn down such an opportunity, she rationalizes. Katey meets with Anne. Anne remarks that Katey is rather well-read for a working-class girl, and Katey replies that all of her well-read friends seem to be working-class, because reading is the cheapest form of entertainment. Anne contradicts that sex is the cheapest form of entertainment. Katey responds, "not in this house" (p. 438), and Anne laughs. Anne explains that she didn't know Katey and Tinker were having a relationship. There is a difference between physical needs and emotional needs, she explains, and she and Tinker have a perfect understanding. Anne hopes Katey can be included in this understanding, so everyone gets what they want. Katey realizes that Anne thinks Tinker is with her, so she explains that she doesn't know where Tinker is. This throws Anne off her strategy. As Katey leaves, Anne says that the world is run by those whose wants outstrip their needs.

Shortly thereafter, Katey sees Tinker, but she calls him Teddy. They go to a coffee shop. Tinker looks as if he hasn't slept. Tinker admits that the exclusive holdings he manages are Anne's, and that she had offered him the opportunity to move to New York when he was a bank clerk. The Beresford apartment is Anne's, of course. Katey tells him that the police had thought she and Eve were prostitutes, when Eve was found passed out in an alley, and Katey points out the irony. Tinker responds that she is being unfair. Katey suddenly can't see how she found Tinker attractive, when he is so obviously a fiction. Wallace, on the other hand, is genuine. Tinker explains that he was planning to end things with Anne that day when Katey saw them in the restaurant. Katey asks if Tinker what his mother would think if she could see him now. He walks out.

Katey goes to Dicky's apartment and asks for a tour, even though he is clearly getting ready to leave. When they reach what Dickey calls the lavatorium, Katey admires the large claw foot tub and asks if he would like to give it a spin. Dicky no longer cares about going out, but hurries to remove his clothes and fill the tub with bubbles. Dicky offers a brush and Katey tosses it aside, telling him, "I'm next to godliness" (p. 457).



Chapter 21: Katey is accompanying Mason Tate on an interview of a grande dame, even though they believe she is too well brought up and too dull to provide gossip suitable for their premiere issue. On top of that, Mason is still mad at Kate for missing work. They pass the Beresford, Katey spies the doorman, and she has an idea. She suggests that they should interview former doormen, no longer employed, because they know everything about everyone who passes through the doors of New York's finest apartment buildings. He considers the idea, then allows her to place an ad, staking her career on the notion. During the three days the ad runs in New York papers, some of her coworkers whistle "Taps" when she passes by. On the day the doormen are invited to visit Conde Nast, the building's security guard informs Katey that she has not only two doormen in the lobby, but a whole group of them stashed in the stairwell. Irish, Italians, and Negroes all stand as she approaches.

Chapter 22: Katey goes to a jazz club called the Lean-To with Dicky and some friends. Katey and Eve had frequented the same club in days past. Tonight Katey is wearing a choker with a one-carat diamond, a gift from Dicky. During lively conversation, Dicky admits that his secret talent is making paper airplanes. While Dicky has no ear for structured classical music, he instinctively understands jazz, with its casual style and improvisation. Katey spots an ill shaven and thin Hank in the club, and they go outside to talk. Hank bums two cigarettes from her, and another from a passerby. Katey tells him she doesn't know where Tinker is, since they had a run-in. Hank explains that the scandal isn't the fact that Tinker pretends to be an Ivy Leaguer, but rather the fact that people are impressed by such things. Despite his background, Tinker has many talents, including speaking five languages. Plus, Tinker has a sense of wonder, which can't be taught in any school. He tells Katey that their father gradually lost the family's money, and they moved to smaller and smaller houses. Their mother had set aside some money for Tinker's education, but when she went to the cancer ward their father found the money and took it. In one way or another, Tinker has been trying to get back into his prep school ever since. Hank asks for money, Katey gives him two tens, and he is on his way. Back in the club a saxophone player asks Katey about Eve. He and some others miss her, he explains, because she has a real ear for jazz. Katey is surprised, because she had always imagined Eve was just flirting with the musicians, mixing with the Negroes, in rebellion against her Midwestern upbringing. Katey appreciates this little gift of knowledge about her friend. At Dicky's apartment, they order sandwiches and dine on his terrace. Across the street a man is playing piano in his robe, with his terrace door open. Dicky and Katey write song requests on paper, then Dicky constructs fantastic paper airplanes and flies them with amazing accuracy. Several actually land on the man's terrace. This is the first time Katey has seen Dicky concentrate on one thing for a length of time, rather than flit from thought to thought. With his last sheet of paper, Dicky writes a note as if from Peter Pan, asking for reinforcements, and sails it to a fourteenth-floor nursery across the way, spreading joy and magic.



Fall - Chapter 20: Hell Hath No Fury, Chapter 21: Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Tempest-Tost, Chapter 22: Neverland Analysis

The fourth section of the main story is called Fall.

Katey meets with Anne, at Anne's invitation, and the older woman explains that she, Tinker, and Katey can all have what they want if they can reach an agreement. For Anne, Tinker is merely filling a physical need, for a price. Tinker is free to be with Katey. Anne sees no real betrayal, only a business transaction.

Tinker does not appreciate the irony that the police had accused Eve and Katey of being prostitutes. He says Katey is not being fair, even though he sells himself for money. Katey cannot understand how she ever found Tinker attractive, now that he is so clearly a fiction. All of us are fictions, though, to some degree. The photographer Walker Evans understood this when he shot his secret subway images, capturing people with their guard down, with no pretensions. That is why he waited for nearly thirty years before he exhibited the images publicly, because he felt the violation of privacy.

Katey visits Dicky and aggressively offers herself to him, to erase her hurt at being duped by Tinker. With Dicky, Katey is the superior one, older and wiser, the one in control, much like Anne Grandyn but with no money changing hands.

When Katey suggests to Mason Tate that they could obtain juicy gossip from former doormen, she does not consider the violation of trust that would entail. She does not equate her own humiliation with that of theoretical members of society. Mason Tate, eager to make "Gotham" a success, has no qualms with the idea.

Kate's anger with Tinker subsides somewhat after a chance encounter with Hank, when she learns more about Tinker's life after he had been forced to leave prep school. She is just as guilty of jumping to all negative conclusions, she realizes, as she had been guilty of assuming all positives in the past. Dicky, full of innocence fun like crashing parties and making paper airplanes, is an excellent diversion, never mind the fact that Katey had had no interest in him prior to being hurt by Tinker.



Fall - Chapter 23: Now You See It, Chapter 24: The Kingdom Come, Chapter 25: Where He Lived and What He Lived For

Fall - Chapter 23: Now You See It, Chapter 24: The Kingdom Come, Chapter 25: Where He Lived and What He Lived For Summary

Chapter 23: Anne Grandyn visits Katey in her apartment on a Sunday afternoon. Katey calls her Mrs. Grandyn. Anne apologizes for putting Katey in the position of playing the fool. Katey admires Anne's ability to twist things. But Anne never broke a trust with Katey, she merely found a way to fulfill a need. Anne remembers living in an apartment similar to Katey's, with warped floors and exposed pipes, to Katey's surprise. Anne explains that, although she was born rich, she was sent to live in her nanny's apartment for a year when her parents separated, because her father had been a philanderer. Anne reveals that she was inspired by Katey to revisit Dickens, but she still prefers the modern novel, as exemplified by Hemingway and Woolf. As Anne prepares to leave, she offers Katey the use of the Beresford apartment for a year, by way of making amends. Katey refuses, but Anne leaves the key on a stack of books as she exits. Katey follows Anne into the hallway. Anne compliments Katey, because most women growing up as she had would be "up to their elbows in a washtub by now" (p. 490). Such a compliment catches Katey off guard, and she notices that once again Anne is not wearing a bra. Anne kisses her, lipstick to lipstick. Katey pulls her closer, as if to kiss again, then she shoves the keys down Anne's pants.

Chapter 24: Fran has moved in with Grubb, and she invites Katey to a party at their place. She even bought a scaloppine mallet, to prepare Veal Pacelli for his birthday. Katey sees a new apartment and a scaloppine mallet as symbols that Fran is on top of the world. Fran denies this, saying that she is happy and wants to have five kids with Grubb, but Katey is the one destined to reach the top of the world. At Fran and Grubb's party the next evening, everyone wears pants. Their walls hold a series of paintings by Grubb, featuring bare-chested coat check girls as modeled by Fran, with eggplant-colored silver-dollar aureoles. In the midst of these is a Hank Grey original, depicting a theater marquee in the style of Stuart Davis. Katey wonders if Hank is in attendance. A party guest who knows Hank tells Katey that he is gone. He explains that Hank came into a windfall and threw himself a big party, and at the end he and his friends dragged his paintings to the roof and burned them all, and after that no one saw him again. Katey asks if he overdosed, and the man explains that Hank is alive, but he enlisted. Katey asks how Hank got the windfall, and the man says he sold several Stuart Davis paintings. Katey goes to her apartment for the evening, rather than to Dicky's as has



become her habit. She calls Dicky and he accepts her decision, to well brought up to ask why. Katey understands why Hank had to treat the money with disregard, because it had come from Anne. While Katey is thinking, Bitsy calls with the news that Wallace Wolcott has been killed. On December 15, after work, Katey visits St. Patrick's to mourn Wallace. She muses that all the people of valor are gone - Eve, Hank, and Wallace. Left behind are the ones who are driven by their wants - Anne, Tinker, and herself. Although there are many empty pews, someone comes and asks to sit with her. Katey turns, and it is Dicky. He explains that he looked for her at work and Alley told him to check the churches. Katey is surprised that Alley is so aware of her habits, but grateful. Dicky thought she would be in this particular church, he explains, because she hadn't been in the last three. Dicky asks why Katey hadn't come to see him for a few days and the two walk outside to talk. Katey tells him the whole story, as she had told Bitsy, except trying to make it funny. The humor falls flat. Dicky is quiet, and then he says that perhaps Katey is being too hard on Tinker. Tinker was ousted from prep school, Dicky observes, then he was lured to New York by Anne, then he was attracted to Kate but obligated to take care of Eve, then he was brushed off by both Eve and Hank. Katey looks down at the ground. Dicky asks if Katey still has feelings for Tinker. Katey's every impulse is to say no, and to kiss Dicky instead, but she admits that the truth is, yes. She sees the effect her answer has on Dicky. Dicky has the fortitude to say that following Washington's "Rules of Civility" is actually impressive. Dicky doesn't think he could follow more than a few rules at a time. Dicky observes that if everyone could fall in love with the perfect person, there would be less fuss about love. Katey suddenly wants to see Tinker, and she suddenly knows where to find him.

Chapter 25: Katey heads to Hank's old apartment on Gansevoort Street, and sure enough, a few of his belongings are there. She finds Tinker on the roof. She expects to find him miserable, but when he turns around she sees she is wrong. He looks happy, then braces himself for another onslaught of accusations. But Katey weeps that Wallace is gone, and the two embrace. For a while they talk about Wallace, then Katey apologizes for the way she treated Tinker in the coffee shop. He replies that she had been terrific, just what he needed. Tinker talks about growing up in Fall River, how he knew Morse Code instead of baseball scores, and how he dreamed of being a merchant marine. Katey tells Tinker about the strategy of interviewing doormen for "Gotham," and as she describes it the concept makes her feel squeamish. Tinker remarks that the idea is ingenious and that people such as himself deserve it. Tinker admits that he encouraged Anne's advances and that he should have told Katey everything from the start. Tinker leaves for firewood and Katey checks his belongings. He has sold his monogrammed items but kept a stack of books, including "Walden" and "Rules of Civility." They spend the night on mats on the floor, at a respectful distance, and the next morning Katey leaves for work. She returns in the evening, and the two go to the diner Hank had painted, with the Open All Night sign. Tinker remarks that he is going to take Thoreau's advice, to let his affairs be as two or three, rather than a hundred. He asks if Katey would like to join him. She replies that it would be nice to have everything first, before giving it up. They spend the night together again, and the next day Tinker is gone. In a note he says Katey always gave him a glimpse of what might have been, and he plans to start each day by saying her name. The note is signed "Tinker Grey 1910 - ?" in homage to his lighter. He left behind most of his belongings, but he took



"Walden." Katey sees that he left behind a painting by Hank and Washington's book. She takes them home, knowing that some day Tinker will regret leaving them behind. Katey's sense of loss is mingled with relief.

Fall - Chapter 23: Now You See It, Chapter 24: The Kingdom Come, Chapter 25: Where He Lived and What He Lived For Analysis

Anne's visit and apology to Katey have lesbian undercurrents, from Anne's lack of a bra to her offer of the Beresford apartment, and finally to the lipstick on lipstick kiss. Katey continues the theme, as it were, by pretending to pull Anne close for another kiss and then putting her hand down Anne's pants, but it is only a ruse to deposit the Beresford keys there.

Fran and Grubb offer a satisfying glimpse at real love with no pretensions. Fran is thrilled to cook for him, bare children for him, and bare her body for the sake of his art. Fran and Katey debate who is truly on top of the world, and the reader is left to decide that as well.

Katey understands why Hank felt compelled to fritter away the windfall he gained by selling Tinker's Stuart Davis paintings. Katey feels a new respect for him, ironic since she had once felt insulted that Tinker thought Katey would like Hank.

Sweet and young Dicky, of all people, does the most to set Katey straight about Tinker, at the expense of his own relationship with Katey. He makes Katey see that Tinker tried hard to be accepted, but was rebuffed at nearly every turn. Dickey makes Katey feel ashamed.

Katey and Tinker come together in their mourning of Wallace. Katey is surprised that Tinker, living in Hank's old apartment, seems to be doing so well. He is, in fact, relishing his new-found freedom. Katey feels ashamed, once again, when she relates to Tinker her great idea about using former doormen to gather gossip for her magazine. Tinker praises her ingenuity, however, even lumping himself in with those who deserve to be exposed. When Tinker leaves, presumably for adventures abroad, Katey has the grace to gather his most precious possessions for a future time. By this gesture she shows forgiveness and, perhaps, understanding as well. And, just as Tinker had felt relief when Eve left him, Katey feels relief that Tinker is gone.



Fall - Chapter 26: A Ghost of Christmas Past, December 30; Epilogue - Few Are Chosen; Appendix - Rules of Civility

Fall - Chapter 26: A Ghost of Christmas Past, December 30; Epilogue - Few Are Chosen; Appendix - Rules of Civility Summary

Chapter 26: On December 23, Katey eats slices of ham and studies her proof of the premier edition of "Gotham." The cover features a nude woman behind a five-foot model of an apartment building, with skin showing through selected windows and curtains drawn on others. Katey had come up with the idea and Mason challenged her to find a woman willing to pose for the image. Katey smiles, knowing that behind certain closed curtains are eggplant-colored, silver-dollar aureoles.

Earlier in the day Mason had given Katey the ham and the proof as rewards for a job well done, and he announced his intention to keep both Katey and Alley as his assistants. He said Katey should thank her sponsor, and Katey promised to call the Russian lit editor, Mr. Parish. Mason said Katey needs to keep a closer eye on who her friends are, because the person who had secured this position for Katey was none other than Anne Grandyn.

At home, while Katey eats ham and reads Agatha Christie, there is a knock at her door. A package is delivered by a young attorney, a Christmas gift from Wallace. The gift is a beautiful 1894 Winchester rifle with ivory and floral scrolling "you could have worn to your wedding" (p. 529).

December 30: Tinker is working on the Hell's Kitchen wharf as a longshoreman. The men have slowed, trying to stretch out their work until an impending strike by the tugboat engineers causes them to lose their jobs. He works alongside a Negro named King, from Harlem. When their shift is over, Tinker and King find a pile of sugar from a broken bag. They each scoop some into their pockets, because whatever is left will just go to the rats. Tinker invites King to walk with him a while, but King has a family to go home to. He sees a ship about to depart for Argentina, but he wants to save some money to spend abroad before he applies for a position aboard ship. From the end of a pier he views Manhattan, beautiful and full of promise, with some windows glowing brighter, lit by those with "poise and purpose" (p. 535) like Katey. Manhattan is so wonderful that he wants to always be approaching it without ever quite arriving.

Few Are Chosen: The Epilogue takes place on the last night of 1940. Katey is celebrating with a group of friends, including Bitsy. 1939 had brought war to Europe, Katey muses, but it also brought the end of the Depression to America. The Second



World War is still a distant idea for Americans. In an Italian restaurant, Kate receives a note from Hank, sitting nearby, looking handsome in his military uniform. Katey reflects that four people had been central to her life in 1938, and now she hasn't seen any of them in over a year. Dicky had been sent to Texas by his father, to work on an oil rig, to make an impression on him. Dicky fell in love, then went to Harvard Business School, served in the South Pacific, worked in the State Department, and had three children, despite many predictions about him. Eve remains in Los Angeles, becomes a confidante of Olivia de Havilland, and arranges an April Fool's Day call to Kate, intimating that she is passed out in an alley with Katey's number in her pocket. Eve says she will never return to New York and the Rockies are not high enough. Wallace died, of course, but left a lasting influence by leaving Katey a trust of \$800 per year, enough to keep her from settling for just any man who might make advances. Tinker, she is sure, is somewhere abroad, having grand adventures with no need for "Rules of Civility." Katey greets Hank, who buys her a drink. He asks if she has seen Tinker, then reveals that Tinker is actually in New York. Katey is truly surprised. Hank says that Tinker is scruffy but happy on the inside. For a while Katey looks for Tinker as she goes about her business, but over time she stops looking.

But then she runs into him, in a sense, at last, at the Museum of Modern Art in 1966. Home from the museum, Katey and her husband Val enjoy a quiet meal. Val senses that Katey wants some time alone. Their hallway contains a collection of photographs from their years together, beginning with an image from 1947. Katey's favorite image is from their wedding, a photograph of Katey and Val with his father, Mr. Hollingsworth. She ruminates about how life is a series of choices, seemingly unimportant at the time, that forge a path. Katey considers herself lucky to have had so many amazing choices to make in the span of a single year, back in 1938. For a while, after leaving Tinker's last apartment in 1938, Katey had said his name every day, but over time she lost the habit. But for many days beginning in 1966, Katey begins her day with the name Tinker on her lips.

Rules of Civility: The Appendix contains the actual text of The Young George Washington's "Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation."

Fall - Chapter 26: A Ghost of Christmas Past, December 30; Epilogue - Few Are Chosen; Appendix - Rules of Civility Analysis

Katey basks in her success with "Gotham," including an elaborate first cover featuring her nude friend, Fran, with strategic parts hidden behind a model of an apartment building. One final blow to Katey's perspective on the world comes when Mason Tate reveals that Anne Grandyn had pulled strings to secure the "Gotham" job for Katey.

Wallace makes a gesture from beyond the grave, with a Christmas present delivered by his attorney. Wallace has given her a beautiful rifle in memory of their special day



together, shooting targets and skeet. Wallace was one of the noble ones, who always thought of others before himself.

Tinker, depicted in third person once again, is working on Hell's Kitchen wharf. When his shift is done, he thinks about adventures he might experience and he admires the Manhattan skyline. The best part of Manhattan, he decides, is the approach, rather than living within. He sees lights in many windows, but some burn brighter, with poise and purpose, much like his early impressions of Katey.

After the Preface and four seasonal sections, the novel ends with an Epilogue and an Appendix.

The Epilogue features one last meeting at the end of 1940 between Katey and Hank, during which Hank reveals that Tinker never left New York. The four people who had been most pivotal in Katey's life in 1938 are distant memories by 1940, but always a part of her.

The reader knows that soon, in 1941, Tinker's likeness will be captured one more time in a New York subway by photographer Walker Evans. Tinker will appear threadbare and dirty, but content.

Thoughts of Tinker bring Katey joy in 1966, but a sort of joy she chooses to keep private and not share with Val. Val, a good man with a good upbringing, does not pry. Katey and Val are comfortable, in love, and, in their own way, on top of the world.

After the conclusion of the novel, Amor Towles attaches the public domain text of The Young George Washington's "Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation." The text is provided for the reader's amusement and enlightenment, but no indication is offered as to which passages a young Tinker found the need to highlight.



Characters

Katey Kontent

Katey Kontent is the main character in "Rules of Civility." She is tall and attractive, with chestnut coloring. In 1938 she is twenty-five, living on her own in Manhattan. She grew up in Brooklyn, New York. Her mother left the family and her father passed away when Katey was nineteen. At the beginning of 1938, she works in the secretarial pool of Quiggin & Hale, but she eventually quits and uses her wits to land a job with a Russian literature editor, and then with an editor at Conde Nast, helping to launch a new magazine. Similarly, Katey works her way up in social circles, using her charm, humor, and intelligence to fit in. When she needs time alone, she visits churches between services.

Katey and her friend, Eve Ross, strike up a friendship with Tinker Grey, a charming young man who brokers coal mines and such. Eve calls dibs on Tinker, but he seems to be more attracted to Katey. A car accident changes everything, because Tinker feels obligated to take care of the disfigured Eve.

Katey is well-read. Her favorites are the works of Dickens and Thoreau's "Walden," but she is also familiar with Russian literature, because her father came to America from Russia as a young man. As the novel progresses, Katey discovers the orderly charm of Agatha Christie mysteries.

In the 1966 Prologue, Katey is the wife of Valentine Hollingsworth, but he is referred to only as Val at the time, to avoid spoiling the plot.

Theodore

Tinker Grey is a handsome young man of twenty-eight in 1938, with brown hair, royal blue eyes, and a star-shaped blush on his cheeks. He grew up in Massachusetts. He sells coal mines and other securities. He lives in uptown Manhattan at the Beresford, a 22-story apartment building. His apartment is sleek and modern, with art deco accessories and Stuart Davis paintings.

In the Prologue, set in 1966, Katey and Val spot two candid photos of Tinker in a museum art exhibit. The image labeled 1938 features a clean-shaven Tinker in cashmere, not especially happy. The image labeled 1939 features a dirty, ill-shaven Tinker in threadbare clothes, but with a smile. Tinker's journey from one condition to the other is an important subplot of the novel.

Katey assumes Tinker is from a wealthy family, but such is not the case. Tinker's father lost what money the family had, and Tinker was forced to leave prep school. He worked his way through college and took a job as a bank clerk, which is how he met Anne



Grandyn. By 1938 Tinker is the paid lover of Anne, and she bankrolls his lavish lifestyle. Katey is devastated when she learns of this arrangement.

Tinker's mother had given him a copy of George Washington's "Rules of Civility," and he uses them as a guide to social advancement.

Evelyn Ross

Eve Ross grew up in Indiana, at the upper end of the socioeconomic scale. She is a natural blonde with blue eyes and dimples, and she is a true beauty. She arrived in New York in 1936 and landed a job as a marketing assistant at Pembroke Press, due to her father's influence. Eve and Katey met at Mrs. Martingale's boardinghouse, where they both are living in 1938.

Eve is disfigured after a 1938 car accident with Tinker and Katey, and Tinker feels obligated to take care of Eve. Eve feels imprisoned and ugly, but over time she learns to manipulate those around her and use her scar to glamorous advantage. Eve turns down Tinker's proposal of marriage, shocking everyone who assumed she was angling for such an offer, and then she leaves Manhattan for Los Angeles. Eve is witty, elegant, and a jazz aficionado.

Valentine

Val is Katey's husband in 1966. He is featured in the Prologue, but he makes only one brief appearance in the main chapters of the novel. Val and Katey first meet at a 1938 Labor Day party at his family's estate, Whileaway, but they do not begin a relationship until years later. Val is in mergers and acquisitions.

Walker Evans

Walker Evans is an actual photographer from the era. He took a series of candid portraits between 1938 and 1941, in the subways of New York City, using a camera hidden in his coat. His images are viewed publicly for the first time in 1966, in an exhibit titled "Many Are Called," at the Museum of Modern Art. Evans had been concerned about violating the privacy of the portrait subjects.

At the exhibit in the Prologue, main character Katey Kontent notices two photos of Tinker Grey, one taken when he was well off and another when he was down on his luck. During the exhibit, most of the guests pay more attention to the champagne than to Walker Evans. Walker Evans' inclusion in the novel adds a layer of authenticity to the story.



Mrs. Martingale

Mrs. Martingale runs the boardinghouse where Katey and Eve live when they first come to New York City. She is strict about curfew.

Miss Markham

Miss Markham manages the secretarial pool at the law firm of Quiggin & Hale. She is in her fifties. She wears her long, thick hair in a bun. In her younger days, she probably could have married one of the partners at the firm. She enforces a strict code of conduct in the office. She offers Katey a promotion, but Katey sees it as more of a life sentence.

Wallace

Wallace is a friend of Tinker Grey, a few years older. He has a speech impediment, due to shyness, that causes him to pause in mid-sentence. Wallace is from old money and feels no need to dress ostentatiously. He wears moth-eaten sweaters. He teaches Katey to shoot and he shows her a simple way of living, thinking of others before himself. He makes a point of treating everyone with respect, regardless of their social position. Wallace enlists to fight abroad, due to his guilt over being born with too much, and he is killed in action.

Anne Grandyn

Anne Grandyn, who introduces herself to Katey and Eve as Tinker's godmother, actually pays Tinker to be her lover. She provides him with an apartment and enough money to support his lavish lifestyle. She has short blonde hair and refined features, and she is tall. She has emerald earrings the size of gumdrops, matching her eyes.

Throughout much of 1938, Katey sees Anne as a model of behavior and fashion, until she learns the truth about Anne and Tinker.

Henry

Hank is Tinker's older and shorter brother. He is a painter, emulating the style of Stuart Davis, and he lives in the West Village in Manhattan. Tinker describes Hank as "unwavering" (p. 42). Hank disapproves of Tinker's arrangement with Anne, and he refuses to benefit from Tinker's windfalls. Hank helps Katey to see Tinker in a new light, as someone who felt the need to invent an ivy league persona even though he is intelligent and speaks five languages.



Charlotte Sykes

Charlotte Sykes works for Miss Markham at Quiggin & Hale, with Katey. On her first day at work, she made the mistake of typing 100 words a minute, setting up high expectations from the start. Charlotte leaves some important papers on the subway one afternoon, and Katey tracks her down to return them.

Fran

Fran Pacelli lives at the boardinghouse run by Mrs. Martingale at the beginning of 1938. She once snuck in through the boardinghouse window, wearing nothing but high-heel shoes and a Dodgers uniform. Fran does everything she can to attract a man named Grubb. Eventually, Fran and Grubb marry. Grubb often paints Fran topless, highlighting her eggplant-colored aureoles. Katey features a nude photo of Fran, with strategic parts covered, on the cover of the first issue of "Gotham" magazine.

Grubb

Grubb works for Pacelli Trucking. He is also a painter. He is a tall, thin redhead. He argues with Hank Grey about Cezanne. Grubb marries Fran Pacelli, and the two plan to have several children.

Nathaniel Parish

Nathaniel Parish is a senior fiction editor at Pembroke Press, who specializes in Russian literature. Active and respected before the war, he has settled into a complacent existence, not taking on new authors. Katey concocts a series of lies to gain his attention and obtain a position as his assistant. Nathaniel Parish encourages Katey to leave him for a better position at Conde Nast.

Susie Vanderwhile

Suzy works with Katey during her brief time at Pembroke Press. Katey is the only woman at Pembroke Press who actually needs her paycheck to live. The others, including Susie, are from wealthy families. Susie introduces Katey into her social circles, and everyone just assumes Katey is one of them. Susie is the sister of Dicky Vanderwhile.

Dicky Vanderwhile

Dicky is a young socialite. He knows everyone in New York who is white, wealthy, and under twenty-five. He urges his friends, including Katey, to sneak into parties uninvited. He and Katey share a brief romance after Katey is disillusioned by Tinker. Despite



Dicky's seeming immaturity, he helps Katey to realize she has been too harsh in her judgment of Tinker. Dicky is the brother of Susie, and he makes extraordinary paper airplanes.

Mason Tate

Mason Tate works at "Conde Nast." He hires Katey to help him launch a new society magazine called "Gotham." He is handsome, in his mid-fifties, and interested in men.

Alley McKenna

Alley is petite, with a high IQ and cat's-eye glasses. Alley is Mason Tate's assistant, along with Katey. Mason Tate plans to fire either Katey or Alley after a probationary period, but Alley suggests an alliance between herself and Katey so that they can both retain their positions.

Bitsy Houghton

Bitsy Houghton is a friend of Wallace, through her brother. Her husband's name is Jack. Bitsy's family is wealthy, from Pennsylvania. She is a skilled horsewoman and shooter. Bitsy encourages Katey to make the first move on Wallace, if she is interested, because Wallace is so shy. When Katey learns the whole truth about Tinker, Bitsy encourages Katey to continue as she is, making her way in the world.

Mr. Hollingsworth

Mr. Hollingsworth is the wealthy owner of the Whileaway estate. Katey and Dicky crash a party there, and later Katey is invited to another party at the estate, at the request of Wallace. Mr. Hollingsworth offers to tell Katey anything she might want to know about Wallace. Ironically, Mr. Hollingsworth eventually becomes Katey's father-in-law, when Katey marries his son, Valentine.



Objects/Places

Museum of Modern Art

The Museum of Modern Art in New York hosts a photography exhibit in 1966, as described in the Prologue of "Rules of Civility." The photographer, Walker Evans, took candid photos of people on the New York subway, between 1938 and 1941.

Great Depression

The Great Depression, a time of economic hardship which began in 1929, is coming to an end in 1938, when the main plot of "Rules of Civility" takes place. The United States economy will get a big boost when the country becomes embroiled in World War II.

The Hotspot

The Hotspot is a nightclub in Greenwich Village. Katey and Eve meet Tinker there, on New Year's Eve, 1937.

The Beresford

The Beresford is a 22-story apartment building in uptown Manhattan. Tinker lives there, in an apartment paid for by Anne Grandyn. Eve moves in with him after a devastating car crash.

Lighter

Tinker carries a gold lighter, which he bought for himself early in his career. He had his initials engraved on it, in a Tiffany font. His brother, Hank, had the lighter engraved with the additional characters, "1910-?" to remind Tinker to seize the day, and to express his disapproval of the arrangement between Tinker and Anne Grandyn.

Thoreau's

Katey is fond of "Walden," by Henry David Thoreau. The book advocates a simple lifestyle. Tinker reads the book, inspired by Katey, and he deems it to be a grand adventure. By the end of 1938, Tinker embraces Thoreau's philosophy.



The Young George Washington's

Tinker's mother gave him a copy of George Washington's "Rules of Civility" when Tinker was fourteen. He highlighted certain passages and took the rules to heart, as a strategy for moving up the social ladder. The complete list of rules is included as an Appendix to Amor Towles' novel, "Rules of Civility"

Stuart Davis paintings

Tinker has a collection of Stuart Davis paintings in his apartment, courtesy of Anne Grandyn. Tinker's brother, Hank, paints in the style of Stuart Davis. When Tinker moves out of Anne's apartment, he gives Hank the paintings. Hank sells the Stuart Davis paintings and burns his own, wanting nothing to do with Anne's money.

Whileaway

Whileaway is the estate owned by the Hollingsworth family. Katey attends two parties there, one as a crasher and one as an invited guest. Katey meets Val, her eventual husband, at Whileaway.

Themes

Rules of Civility

"Rules of Civility" is the title of Amor Towles' novel, and also the shortened title of George Washington's rules for social behavior. George Washington's rules are included in the Appendix. Many characters in the novel are concerned about appearances, often over substance, so following rules of acceptable behavior is crucial. Tinker Grey understands this, and he uses George Washington's rules as a primer for social advancement. Katey Kontent takes social cues from the wealthy people she meets, Anne Grandyn in particular, as she tries to climb the social ladder. Wallace Wolcott, in counterpoint, follows his own rules of decency, not for social advancement, but rather because he wants to do what is right. He makes it a point to call everyone by name, no matter their social station, out of respect. Ultimately, he garners more respect than those who pursue more superficial strategies. By the end of 1938, after Tinker's life falls apart, he rejects everyone else's rules and pursues a simple lifestyle, as promoted by Henry David Thoreau in "Walden."

The Photographic Moment

Amor Towles is very interested in the fleeting moment, as captured in a photograph. A moment in time is isolated and frozen, captured forever, sometimes telling quite a story.

The two images of Tinker Grey, on display at the 1966 art exhibit, reveal two very different men. The Tinker of 1938 is well-dressed and well-groomed, but he does not seem happy. The Tinker of 1939 is shabby and dirty, but clearly happy. The candid shots, taken when Tinker's guard is down, reveal his truth.

Mason Tate, at Conde Nast, is drawn by a photo of the actress Bette Davis, in which she is clearly making another woman jealous. He understands that a volatile image is more compelling than a group shot with all smiles.

Katey Kontent orchestrates a photographic moment for the cover of "Gotham" magazine, in which her nude friend poses behind a model of an apartment building, with curtains strategically drawn to hide parts of the model's body. This, unlike the other images discussed here, is an engineered moment, akin to painting.

Walker Evans, who took many candid shots of subway riders between 1938 and 1941, with a camera hidden in his coat, struggled with his right to put those images on display. He worried that the images were a violation of privacy. Of course, by the time Amor Towles wrote "Rules of Civility," in 2011, hidden cameras had become omnipresent in the world.

Immigrants and Minorities in America's Melting Pot

Manhattan is populated with immigrants, both new and established. Katey Kontent enjoys watching them go about their lives, struggling to maintain their heritage while blending into the great melting pot of America. Katey's father and uncle immigrated to America from Russia when they were young men, seeking freedom and opportunity. Katey's father burned their Russian currency in a soup pot shortly after their arrival, making a personal statement of independence, even though the money could have been spent in the Russian neighborhoods of New York. Katey uses that story as inspiration to quit her dead-end job at Quiggin & Hale. Katey is proud of her heritage, and yet she chooses not to use her given name, Katya. She is blending into the great melting pot as well. References are made, throughout the novel, to Negroes, Italians, and others, who are not yet allowed to assimilate into the upper levels of society in 1938. Katey develops a strategy to use some of the downtrodden classes to take a stab at the wealthy. She places an ad for unemployed doormen, hoping they will tell stories suitable for publication in the gossip magazine, "Gotham."



Style

Point of View

"Rules of Civility" is written primarily from the point of view of Katey Kontent, a twenty-five-year-old woman trying to make her way alone in Manhattan. Katey speaks in the first person, frequently offering her impressions as asides. However, four non-chapters, labeled only by date, are written from the point of view of Tinker Grey, a love interest of Katey. These non-chapters are printed in a different font, setting them off from the rest of the novel. Tinker's words and actions are written in the third person, with no glimpses into his mind.

Setting

"Rules of Civility" takes place in the Manhattan of 1938, when America is recovering from the Great Depression. Manhattan is a melting pot of ethnicities, some newly arrived from other lands, some the sons and daughters of immigrants who came years ago. The main character, Katey Kontent, travels in many different circles, from young people with little money to the very wealthy, from those who appreciate simple pleasures to the excessively pampered. Important to the plot is an art exhibit featuring photographs of New Yorkers on the subway, caught unaware in a moment in time in the fast-paced city. Many come to New York seeking their fortunes, but, as a stranger remarks at one point in the novel, the trouble with being born in New York is having no New York to run away to.

Language and Meaning

The language used by main character Katey Kontent reveal her to be intelligent and well-read. The objects and slang of 1938 help to establish "Rules of Civility" in time. Examples include steno, skivvies, deco, gadzooks, Patsy, spats, skedaddle, nincompoop, smithereens, fandango, shindig, doozy, cadged, and filched. References to historical events, including the Great Depression, the Hindenburg, and the Great War, anchor the story in time. Many characters reveal their social status, or lack thereof, by the words they choose. Of course, social climbers, including Katey and Tinker, use language of the upper classes and references to the arts to create the desired effect.

Structure

"Rules of Civility" is written in four sections, corresponding to the four seasons of 1938, along with a Prologue, an Epilogue, and an Appendix. The Prologue is set in 1966, preparing for the flashback that makes up the bulk of the novel. Within the seasonal sections are titled chapters, plus each season ends with a non-chapter, labeled with a specific date. Each seasonal section begins with a candid photo of people on the New

York subway, images from the art exhibit featured in the Prologue of the book. The Epilogue moves about in time and serves to give final perspective on the events of 1938. The Appendix contains George Washington's "Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation," which is prominent in the story.



Quotes

"The pictures captured a certain naked humanity. Lost in thought, masked by the anonymity of their commute, unaware of the camera that was trained so directly upon them, many of these subjects had unknowingly allowed their inner selves to be seen."
Preface, p. 13

"I was sixteen when the Depression began, just old enough to have had all my dreams and expectations duped by the effortless glamour of the twenties. It was as if America launched the Depression just to teach Manhattan a lesson."
Preface, p. 15

"How the WASPs loved to nickname their children after the workaday trades: Tinker. Cooper. Smithy. Maybe it was to hearken back to their seventeenth-century New England bootstraps - the manual trades that had made them stalwart and humble and virtuous in the eyes of their Lord. Or maybe it was just a way of politely understating their predestination to having it all."
Chapter 1, p. 39

"—Who's the young man? Yours or your friend's?
"—A little bit of both, I guess.
"Chernoff smiled. He had two gold teeth.
"—That doesn't work for long, my slender one.
"—Says you.
"—Says the sun, the moon and the stars."
Chapter 2, p. 66-67

"With over a millennia of heritage behind them, each with their own glimpse of empire and some pinnacle of human expression (a Sistine Chapel or Gotterdammerung), now they were satisfied to express their individuality through which Rogers they preferred at the Saturday matinee: Ginger or Roy or Buck. America may be the land of opportunity, but in New York it's the shot at conformity that pulls them through the door."
Chapter 3, p. 73-74

"In a new white dress, she was reclining on one of the couches with one arm behind her head and the other at her side. It was a been-here-all-my-life sort of pose. With the lights of the city draped behind her and the martini glass on the carpet, she looked like an advertisement for being in a car wreck.
"It was only when you got closer that you could see the damage."
Chapter 5, p. 118



"—You break it, you've bought it. Right?"

Chapter 5, p. 122

"Starting on page 104 made Hemingway's prose even more energetic than usual. Without the early chapters, all the incidents became sketches and all the dialogue innuendo. Bit characters stood on equal footing with the central subjects and positively bludgeoned them with disinterested common sense. The protagonists didn't fight back. They seemed relieved to be freed from the tyranny of their tale. It made me want to read all of Hemingway's books this way."

Chapter 5, p. 124-125

"—It's funny. The skyline at night is so breathtaking and yet you could spend a whole lifetime in Manhattan and never see it. Like a mouse in a maze."

Chapter 5, p. 131

"—Cezanne painted the world.

"—All those fruits and ewers and drowsy dames. That wasn't the world. That was a bunch of guys wishing they were painters to the king.

"—I'm sorry, but I'm pretty sure the painters who curried favor did history paintings and portraits. Still lifes were a more personal form.

Hank stared at me for a moment.

"—Who sent you here?

"—What?

"—Were you the president of your debating society or something? All that may have been true a hundred years ago, or whatever, but after being soaked in admiration, one generation's genius is another's VD."

Chapter 8, p. 177

"As we walked, I could see that in her own way Eve had mastered her limp. Most women would have tried to make it disappear. They would have learned to walk like a geisha - taking small invisible steps with their hair turned up and their gaze turned down. But Eve didn't hide it at all. In her blue floor-length dress, she swung her left leg awkwardly in front of her like a man with a clubfoot. Her heels marked the wooden floor in rough syncopation."

Chapter 9, p. 198

"It seemed like every country in the world had stamps of statesmen and motorcars. Where were the stamps of the elevator boys and hapless housewives? Of the six-story walkups and soured wine?"

Chapter 10, p. 221



"Uncompromising purpose and the search for eternal truth have an unquestionable sex appeal for the young and high-minded; but when a person loses the ability to take pleasure in the mundane - in the cigarette on the stoop or the gingersnap in the bath - she has probably put herself in unnecessary danger."
Chapter 10, p. 223

"For me, dinner at a fine restaurant was the ultimate luxury. It was the very height of civilization. For what was civilization but the intellect's ascendancy out of the doldrums of necessity (shelter, sustenance and survival) into the ether of the finely superfluous (poetry, handbags and haute cuisine)?"
Chapter 11, p. 239

"Dicky was a genuine mixer. He took relative pride and absolute joy in weaving together the strands of his life so that when he gave them a good tug all the friends of friends of friends would come tumbling through the door. He's the sort that New York City was made for. If you latched yourself onto the likes of Dicky Vanderwhile, pretty soon you'd know everyone in New York; or at least everyone white, wealthy and under the age of twenty-five."
Chapter 12, p. 269

"—It's funny about photography, isn't it? The entire medium is founded on the instant. If you allow the shutter to be open for even a few seconds, the image goes black. We think of our lives as a sequence of actions, an accumulation of accomplishments, a fluid articulation of style and opinion. And yet, in that one sixteenth of a second, a photograph can wreak such havoc."
Chapter 15, p. 323

"There it was again. That slight stinging sensation of the cheeks. It's our body's light-speed response to the world showing us up; and it's one of life's most unpleasant feelings - leaving one to wonder what evolutionary purpose it could possibly serve."
Chapter 16, p. 352

"How was Mrs. Ross bearing up? She was like someone in mourning, only worse. When a mother loses a daughter, she grieves over the future that her daughter will never have, but she can take solace in memories of close-knit days. But when your daughter runs away, it is the fond memories that have been laid to rest; and your daughter's future, alive and well, recedes from you like a wave drawing out to sea."
Chapter 17, p. 377

"Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! I say, let your affairs be as two or three, and not a



hundred or a thousand."

Chapter 18, p. 388 (as quoted from "Walden," by Henry David Thoreau)

"—Right from the first, I could see a calmness in you - that sort of inner tranquility that they write about in books, but that almost no one seems to possess. I was wondering to myself: How does she do that? And I figured it could only come from having no regrets - from having made choices with . . . such poise and purpose. It stopped me in my tracks a little. And I just couldn't wait to see it again."

Chapter 18, p. 396

"—That's a Grand Canyon of a tale, she said. A mile deep and two miles wide. "The metaphor was apt. A million years of social behavior had worn away this chasm and now you had to pack a mule to get to the bottom of it."

Chapter 19, p. 414-415

"When I ran into Hank and he referred to that manipulative cunt - he wasn't referring to Eve. He probably didn't even know Eve. He was referring to Anne, the hidden hand that made all things Tinker come to life.

"And you better believe I remembered how subtle a partner Tinker had been in the Adirondacks - how clever; how inventive; how he had surprised me; how he had folded me; reversed me; explored me. Sweet Jesus. I wasn't even close to being born yesterday, but not for one minute had I let myself dwell on the obvious - that he had learned all of that from someone else; someone a little more bold , a little more experienced, a little less subject to shame."

Chapter 19, p. 417-418

"I slipped into a Marlene Dietrich picture at the Ambassador. The picture was an hour under way, so I watched the second half and then stayed for the first. Like most movies, things looked dire at the midpoint and were happily resolved at the end. Watching it my way made it seem a little truer to life."

Chapter 20, p. 445-446

"It was suddenly inconceivable that he had seemed so attractive. In retrospect, he was so obviously a fiction - with his monogrammed this and his monogrammed that. Like that silver flask in its leather sheath, which he must have topped off in his spotless kitchen with a tiny little funnel - despite the fact that on every other street corner in Manhattan you can buy whiskey in a bottle that's sized for your pocket."

Chapter 20, p. 450-451

"—The scandal here isn't that Teddy plays it off like an Ivy Leaguer. The scandal is that that sort of bullshit makes a difference in the first place. Never mind that he speaks five



languages and could find his way safely home from Cairo or the Congo. What he's got they can't teach in schools. They can squash it maybe; but they sure can't teach it.

"—And what's that?

"—Wonder."

Chapter 22, p. 472-473

"When some incident sheds a favorable light on an old and absent friend, that's about as good a gift as chance intends to offer."

Chapter 22, p. 477

"Eve, Hank, Wallace.

"Suddenly, all the people of valor were gone. One by one, they had glittered and disappeared, leaving behind those who couldn't free themselves from their wants: like Anne and Tinker and me."

Chapter 24, p. 502

"—For once, I'm going to try the present on for size.

"—You're going to let your affairs be as two or three, and not a hundred or a thousand?

"—That's it, he said. Any interest?

"—What'll it cost me?

"—According to Thoreau, nearly everything.

"—It'd be nice to have everything at least once before giving it up.

"He smiled.

"—I'll give you a call when you've got it."

Chapter 25, p. 520

"Once you're in a doorman building, no one comes knocking ever again."

Chapter 26, p. 527

"For however inhospitable the wind, from this vantage point Manhattan was simply so improbable, so wonderful, so obviously full of promise - that you wanted to approach it for the rest of your life without ever quite arriving."

December 30, p. 536

"Life is less like a journey than it is a game of honeymoon bridge. In our twenties, when there is still so much time ahead of us, time that seems ample for a hundred indecisions, for a hundred visions and revisions, we draw a card, and we must decide right then and there whether to keep that card and discard the next, or discard the first card and keep the second. And before we know it, the deck has been played out and the decisions we have just made will shape our lives for decades to come."

Epilogue: Few Are Chosen, p. 554

Topics for Discussion

Why does the author include a Prologue to his novel, featuring a photographic art exhibit? What is the significance of the two portraits of Tinker Grey? Why does Katey choose not to share her feelings about Tinker with her husband, Val?

What is the author's view of the photographic process, as evidenced by the Walker Evans subway photos, the class photo featuring two Tinkers, images gathered for "Gotham" magazine, and the WASPy tendency to line a hallway with family photos?

What common bonds cement the friendship between Katey and Eve? What is the nature of their relationship with Tinker, prior to the car accident that disfigures Eve? How does the car accident change the dynamics between the three?

How does Eve cope with her disfigurement, as the novel progresses? Why does Eve reject Tinker's marriage proposal? Why does Eve leave Manhattan for Los Angeles?

How do immigrants add to the fabric of Manhattan? Why is Katey fascinated with watching immigrants go about their lives? How is Katey influenced by her father and uncle, who came to America from Russia as young men? Why does Katey choose not to use her given name, Katya?

Compare Tinker's use of Washington's "Rules of Civility" and Katey's emulation of Anne Grandyn, as models of behavior for social advancement. Compare Tinkers' and Katey's social deceptions, as they live their lives in 1938. Which characters in the novel feel no need to hide their true selves?

Discuss the importance of art and literature as themes in the novel. What is the philosophy behind the works of Walker Evans, Stuart Davis, and Hank Grey? What is the significance of Thoreau's "Walden," George Washington's "Rules of Civility," the works of Dickens, and the works of Agatha Christie in the novel?

After Katey learns that Tinker is the paid lover of Anne, how does Katey's opinion of him change? How is Katey's opinion modified, after discussions with Bitsy, Dicky, Anne, Hank, and Tinker himself? Why are Katey and Tinker ultimately unable to connect as a couple?

Which characters in the novel strive to be someone they are not? Which characters refuse to practice such deception? How does main character Katey evolve, in the course of the novel, with regard to showing her real self?

What is the main theme of "Rules of Civility?" What is the main conflict? How is the conflict resolved or not resolved? What world view does author Amor Towles wish to convey to the reader?