

The Siege of Krishnapur Study Guide

The Siege of Krishnapur by J. G. Farrell

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Plot Summary

The novel begins in the weeks just prior to the uprising and massacre at Captainganj and the siege of the British community of Krishnapur. It is 1857, and British rule in India is coming under attack because of the use of Ensign rifles that go against religious beliefs. In Calcutta, life goes on as usual, with various amusements for members of the upper class. George Fleury and his sister arrive from England, and they socialize with the Dunstaple family and with Mr. Hopkins, the Collector, whose wife is returning to England. The group picnics and meets officers from the Captainganj, and Fleury meets his competition for Louise Dunstaple's attentions, Lieutenant Stapleton.

When chapatis (a type of flat, round bread) begin to mysteriously arrive around the soldier's camp, or cantonment, in Krishnapur, the Collector is the only one to sense trouble brewing. He has mud ramparts erected and goes to Calcutta to warn other officials of the impending danger. His warnings are ignored, and not long afterwards there is a brutal rebellion at Captainganj which leaves many British soldiers dead. All of the soldiers, the British citizens and the Eurasians take shelter in the Residency area. Fortifications are erected and the small group defends itself against a series of attacks by sepy, the Indian natives who were employed by Britain as soldiers.

As the siege progresses, various moral and practical tensions arise. Native Christians are not allowed to enter the compound in an effort to save food supplies, and there is debate over the allocation of food and the burial of bodies. Conditions deteriorate as the siege progresses, and faith in religion and "cultured" society is put to the test. The Padre becomes convinced that Fleury needs to renounce his sins, and the priest becomes increasingly fervent in his lectures and in his discussions with the Collector. Fleury and Louise become closer as the siege progresses, as do Harry and the "fallen girl," Lucy Hughes. During one of her tea parties, a swarm of chockchafer insects lands on Lucy, and the two young men scrape the bugs off her naked body. The Collector becomes ill, and he fights a vicious fever as a final retreat is made into smaller and more secure fortifications. Hari and the Prime Minister are kept unofficially as hostages in the hopes of diminishing the enemy attacks, though the Collector eventually lets the men go.

As cholera attacks the community, Dr. Dunstaple becomes obsessed with Dr. McNab's incompetency, and in an attempt at winning an ongoing public argument, Dr. Dunstaple drinks a lethal vial of rice water, a liquid from a cholera victim. Near the beginning of September the group becomes desperate, and hunger and despair set in. Social customs are almost entirely ignored, and an auction is attempted, where Rayne is shown up for his unethical bidding and an unequal distribution of the now depleted food stores.

Throughout the siege, the enemy attacks many times and the defending community members survive by luck or various military tactics. Eventually, a large attack occurs, and the British retreat to their final stand, the banqueting hall. Every possible object is used as ammunition—from stones to statue heads—and a relieving army finally arrives to save the besieged group. Fleury and the Collector meet many years later in Pall Mall as

they go about their business in London. The Collector's attitudes about culture and progress have been drastically changed by his time in Krishnapur.



Part 1 Chapter 1

Part 1 Chapter 1 Summary

The novel opens with a description of the vast expanse of land that surrounds travelers on their way to Krishnapur, a town that housed the administration of the British government in this part of Northern India during the era of the British occupation. Mr. Hopkins, the Collector, is in charge of the cantonment, and the first signs of trouble arrive in February of 1857 when boxes of chapatis mysteriously arrive around the Residency and the British compound. Mr. Hopkins attends a meeting of the Krishnapur Poetry Society, where several of the local women, wives of administrators and other officials, read their verses and suffer the criticism of the Magistrate, who also lectures his audience on phrenology, a now-obsolete study of the shape of the human skull. The Collector becomes aware that trouble may be brewing in the region and decides to have a trench built around the Residency as a precautionary measure.

Part 1 Chapter 1 Analysis

The seemingly barren plain that surrounds Krishnapur represents the vastness of the land and the natural rhythms of the native inhabitants. There is no "civilization" in the landscape from the British visitor's perspective, and he sees this place as barren and hostile. Even this early in the novel, we get a sense of the power of the land and of the colonial attitudes that disregard traditional ways of life in favor of imported, British ideas of comfort and culture. This opening chapter also draws the reader into the narrative, since the reader must travel across time and great distances to enter the world presented by the author. The Collector, Mr. Hopkins, is introduced in this chapter. He is a central character in the novel who continues to lead the British settlement during the siege.

We are introduced to the daily life in the settlement by seeing the Magistrate, a rational and forthright man, criticize the women's attempts at poetry. Bored and constrained in this small outpost of British society, the women are thought to need a cultured distraction to take up their time. When the Magistrate takes over leadership of these meetings, the poetry group changes from a democratic structure to one of autocracy, with the circle of women dissolving into a straight line where the Magistrate rules and passes judgment on their writing. This can be seen as a criticism of British colonial culture, which at the time relied upon hierarchy and patriarchal authority to rule over its subjects. Several times in the novel, parallels will be drawn between attitudes toward women and toward the native inhabitants of the land.

Tension is introduced in this chapter, since the first signs of trouble are implied by the mysterious arrival of chapatis around the Residency building. There have been rumors of trouble and rebellion elsewhere in India, but in general the British scoff at the idea of danger. Because of this attitude, Mr. Hopkins' decision to build a trench is seen as

foolhardy and wasteful. When the siege starts, however, this trench will prove to be essential.



Part 1 Chapter 2

Part 1 Chapter 2 Summary

George Fleury and his sister Miriam arrive in Calcutta before continuing on to Krishnapur. The British residents in the area are glad to meet the new arrivals from England, since the cold season becomes tiring and their social circle is limited. Fleury and Miriam meet a host of characters whom they will come to know a great deal better as the novel progresses: Louise Dunstaple, Dr. Dunstaple, and Mr. Hopkins, whose wife is departing for England. Harry Dunstaple has stayed behind in Krishnapur.

At the Dunstaple house, the doctor takes Fleury into his confidence, and the older man is jovial and friendly. However, when the doctor knocks over a vase, he lets the blame fall on Fleury as the ladies enter the room. A picnic is suggested, and the Dunstaples and their guests go to the Botanical Gardens, where they happen to meet with a group of officers and young ladies. Lieutenant Nigel Stapleton, one of Louise's suitors, is present. The members of the party all drink wine and play various games. Fleury's interests in nature and poetry are overshadowed by the laughter and military conversation of the young officers.

The soldiers discuss some unrest in the native regiments at Barrackpur, another outpost, but the young men scoff at the idea of potential danger in their own area. Only the Collector is worried by this news, and he stays behind in Calcutta to warn others while the rest of the group prepares for their return to Krishnapur. At first, the Collector visits many of the important British households, but soon the residents tire of hearing his pessimistic warnings. The Collector's trips by foot around the city become somewhat of a running joke. Fleury and Miriam stay on with the Dunstaples for several days, and they all attend a ball before returning to Krishnapur. The men get to catch a glimpse of the famous General Hearsey, and Fleury and Louise dance while the young man's mind is preoccupied with ideas for his book on civilization.

Part 1 Chapter 2 Analysis

During the winter, the British residents occupy themselves with parties and balls. At these events, many of the mothers attempt to set up their eligible daughters with young officers. This is a focus of the cold season, since young men are in short supply in British India. Fleury and his sister arrive in the middle of the cold season, and they are welcomed warmly since they bring news and fashions from England. Fleury has much to learn about the lifestyle and culture in India under British rule. One of his pet projects is to write a small book about civilization and his experiences in this culture. Fleury's romantic disposition is exaggerated, and throughout the novel we will see it contrasted, sometimes humorously, with the "manly" and practical skills of the military man.

This chapter is important because we meet Fleury's love interest, Louise. The two characters dance a *gallope* together at the ball. Earlier, Fleury also met his competition for Louise's affections, Lt. Stapleton. The culture and propriety of the ball is contrasted at the end of the novel with the reeking, starved beings that Fleury and Louise will become. There are continued signs of the trouble implied by the arrival of the chapatis in the first chapter. Everyone except the Collector ignores this warning sign. The British are overly confident, and the general gaiety of the picnic at the Gardens highlights the ignorance and opulence of the British lifestyle in India. The image of the ragged natives who watch the games in the gardens will soon be replaced by the picnicking Indians who watch the progression of the siege from a nearby hilltop. Soon it will be the small group of British in Krishnapur who are ragged and starving, awaiting rescue from their ordeal.



Part 1 Chapter 3

Part 1 Chapter 3 Summary

Harry Dunstaple has stayed behind in Krishnapur. He rides out to accompany Fleury, Miriam and the dog Chloe on the final leg of their journey to Krishnapur. The richness of the sights and sounds is new to Fleury as they pass through a bazaar. A man stops them in the street and asks Harry to go to a nearby bungalow to try and help a drunken English lady who claims she will kill herself. The travelers continue on to the Joint Magistrate's bungalow, where Fleury and his sister will stay. Harry's boredom (and fear of snakes) is relieved by an invitation to the Residency for dinner. During the meal, the guests discuss the differences between spiritual and physical progress. The Padre and Fleury argue. The younger man expresses himself freely, but feels that he ends the discussion in disgrace.

The next day, Miriam visits the other ladies while Fleury ventures through some abandoned bungalows and yards to meet other young men at Rayne's compound. Fleury is scared by the sound of jackals in the nearby vegetation and by a statue of an Indian God, Lord Bhairava. Fleury meets Ford, Burlton, and Rayne. The other men drink and make merry. They are disrespectful to the native servants, calling them by nicknames such as Ant and Monkey. Lieutenant Cutter arrives on horseback, and Fleury is taken aback when the officer charges into the bungalow, attacking harmless objects in the room. Fleury is identified as a "griffin," a new arrival to the colony, ignorant of the ways of life in British India.

Part 1 Chapter 3 Analysis

The dog that Fleury buys for Louise as a symbol of his love highlights the vanity and pretense associated with traditional courting. Chloe's blond curls remind Fleury of Louise. At this point, Harry and Fleury have little in common. Harry's interests revolve around practical and military matters, while Fleury's interests include poetry and music. Fleury feels overwhelmed by the bazaar and the mix of new sights and sounds that confront him. He is also frightened by the statue of the Indian god, which shows that his respect for the Indian culture is tempered by his fears and prejudices. At the Residency, Fleury is impressed by the marble staircase, which is a physical symbol of power and prestige, second in the area only to the opulence of the Maharajah's palace. During the meal, the women of the party are generally silent or support their husbands' opinions. An unspoken but commonly accepted view of women in the 19th century casts them as weak-willed and unfit for intellectual pursuits.

The main focus of this chapter is the discussion of progress. The Padre describes his awe at several exhibits that were on display at the Great Exhibition. Fleury argues that the physical improvements to the society need to be accompanied by more important spiritual improvements. Fleury gets carried away in his rebuttal, and ends up feeling



embarrassed at his views, since many members of the party, including Louise, seem to disagree with him. At Rayne's, Fleury is initiated into the social circle of several local men. Their drunkenness is again a sign of the irresponsible rule the British imposed during this time, and their overconfidence will soon be crushed by the attack at Captainganj. The British interaction with Indian servants contains inherent racism, representing a typical colonial attitude that associates the colonized peoples with lower rungs of the social hierarchy. In this case, Indian servants are compared with insects and animals.



Part 1 Chapter 4

Part 1 Chapter 4 Summary

The Collector and Dr. McNab survey the mud ramparts that the Collector has had erected around the Residency compound. The men speak of religion and duty towards one's household. The Collector believes that he treats his children well, but when they appear at the door, his youngest daughter Henrietta steps back shyly from his embrace. The Collector later talks with the Magistrate about whether or not the ladies and children should be brought into the safety of the Residency. News of trouble in Meerut has had little effect on the apparent peace at Krishnapur and nearby Captainganj, but the Collector receives a report of fires in the native lines. Captain Jackson arrives from Captainganj, and the soldiers decide that the planned cricket match that will go ahead. A week goes by, and news arrives of a massacre in Delhi. The British residents of Krishnapur intend to remain calm, and the Collector feigns confidence while trying to improve the fortifications in subtle ways. He plays a game of croquet against his daughters and wins, as he knew he would.

Part 1 Chapter 4 Analysis

The Collector's discussion with Dr. McNab shows his growing concern with the safety of the British citizens in his care. As usual during this era, the Collector has strict control over his children, and his sense of duty and decorum overshadows his ability to relate to them in what we might, today, think of as a caring way. Dr. McNab pretends to ignore the Collector's youngest daughter's rejection of her father's embrace. When General Jackson arrives, he brings some comic relief, since he uses physical objects as reminders for what he is supposed to be discussing. The General wants to discuss the cricket match and downplays the Collector's worried questions. The General wants to put on a strong show of confidence to diminish the risk of attack. The British residents of Krishnapur are divided into two camps, one "bolting" party in favor of taking shelter in the Residency immediately, and the other "confident" party who want to show no fear in the face of the unrest breaking out in other areas of the country.



Part 1 Chapter 5

Part 1 Chapter 5 Summary

Fleury and Harry travel to the Maharajah's palace with the Collector and Miriam, who will take a tour of the opium factory. The men discuss the "effeminate" upbringing of the rich natives, who are blessed with an easy life and no hard work. When the two young men arrive at the palace, they notice soldiers who seem to be lounging at their posts. The Maharajah's son puts on a show of being British by sitting in a chair made of antlers, eating a boiled egg and reading a British magazine as the guests enter the room. Harry feels unwell and pretends that nothing is the matter. Soon, however, he must lie down, and the Prime Minister looks after him.

Hari, the Maharajah's son, takes Fleury on a tour of the palace. They visit the Maharajah's opulent chambers, where Hari's father sleeps in a bed of pillows. An escaped cow comes through the room, much to Hari's embarrassment, and the two men continue on to the armory. Fleury is shocked to see a servant smashing a glass that he has just used. Hari then narrates the history and uses of many ancient objects. Fleury soon loses interest and begins lecturing the prince about the uselessness of material things. Hari becomes self-denigrating, picking up on his guest's disinterest.

Unable to stop himself, Hari continues pointing out object after object, many of which have great historical significance. Hari, obviously angry now, refers to his own culture as "backwards" and purposefully tries to make Fleury react. Hari makes a daguerreotype (an early form of photograph) of the other young man, clamping Fleury's head in a vice and exposing them both to strong chemicals while he vents his anger at Fleury's condescending attitudes. The two young men end their afternoon on a sour note, with Hari implying that Fleury is a very backwards man.

Meanwhile, the Collector has been showing Miriam around the opium factory with the help of Rayne's assistant Mr. Simmons. As they leave the factory by carriage, they see a member of a Hindu sect running naked through the woods carrying a burning pot. The Collector expresses his admiration for the intensity of the Hindu's beliefs and shouts out his views about progress and civilization while Miriam, lulled by the opium fumes from the factory, falls asleep.

Part 1 Chapter 5 Analysis

Again in this chapter Fleury is confronted with gender stereotypes associated with the male world. Harry criticizes the upbringing of the rich Indians as "effeminate," though the Collector has taken a liking to the young prince and his adopted British ways. When the two young Englishmen meet Hari, he puts on a show of being "civilized" in ways that the visitors will find reassuring. Instead of sitting on the ground, he seats himself in a chair made out of antlers—a seat that cannot be comfortable. Hari's tutorials in the English



language and culture are well-intentioned but sometimes humorous. As readers, we get the strong impression that the young man wants to impress his guests, and we can understand his growing frustration as Fleury unintentionally dismisses the great technological discoveries of Indian culture. Though the two young men have the potential to be great friends, Fleury's unwitting blunders and condescension cause a rift that leaves the two on bad terms. Hari's anger is represented in the physical constraint he uses while preparing the daguerreotype.

Hari's father is almost a caricature, since the author depicts him fast asleep in opulent surroundings, breaking wind as a servant adjusts pillows as he shifts in his sleep. The Maharajah lives in luxury and is allowed to indulge his vices, as is seen in his collection of pornographic paintings. Hari is incredibly embarrassed when the cow appears in the chamber. The intrusion of the cow represents the rustic life that underlies the Indian folk culture, the side of Indian culture that Hari wishes to hide from his new friends. The Collector shares Fleury's ability to sympathize with the Indians to a certain extent. Both wish to see positive things in the native culture but cannot escape their own prejudices and feelings of superiority. The Collector feels morally superior to the Indians, though when he shouts out his self-centered views about progress, Miriam falls asleep. The man's voice echoes out, symbolically, over the vast and empty landscape.



Part 1 Chapter 6

Part 1 Chapter 6 Summary

For several years, there has been a disagreement between the Magistrate and the local farmers. The landowners deal with the yearly flooding of the nearby river by sacrificing a goat and praying, while the Magistrate argues for the installation of reinforcements to the riverbank. The men argue, and after the Magistrate leaves, the Indians laugh behind his back. They know before the Magistrate does that a massacre has just occurred at Captainganj, and they bet on whether or not the Magistrate will make it back to the cantonment alive. Meanwhile, the Collector has allowed a mosque to be left standing near the edge of the cantonment ramparts. The General arrives, wounded, and describes the sepoy rebellion and the massacre of the British soldiers that has just taken place. Back at the Maharajah's palace, Fleury makes his way through the labyrinth of rooms, trying to locate Harry, who is still feeling ill and is being followed about by the Prime Minister. Dr. Dunstaple sends word about the massacre, and the two young men return home on horseback, passing the lounging members of the Maharajah's army. Harry is upset that he does not have his pistol with him.

Part 1 Chapter 6 Analysis

The religious and superstitious beliefs of the local peoples are represented by the landowners who argue with the Magistrate about the yearly flood. Both parties believe the other to be ignorant and foolish. The Magistrate believes in science and reason, and the landowners believe in tradition and religious ritual. In this chapter, the Collector reflects on the Magistrate and his extremely rational approach to the world. The Collector believes in a mixed approach that values reason and progress but is also open to emotions. In his study, the Collector is surrounded by objects which symbolize his belief in science and technological innovation. He is also surrounded by statues and other objects that represent his belief in literature and the arts.

As in the previous chapter, Harry's attitude about the threat of Indian rebellion represents an overly confident approach typical of many of the British occupying India. Harry is disappointed that when there is finally some action, he is unarmed. The men's journey back to the Residency will be retold with much bravado. As in many other British cantonments, Krishnapur is vulnerable because the citizens have ignored the warning signs of unrest in the country. The massacre at Captainganj has destroyed a great deal of the British military presence in the area, and all of the soldiers who escape come to the Residency for shelter.

The "visit" that the General pays to the Collector this time is in contrast to his last visit, when he ignored the danger of an uprising against the British forces. This time, the General is brought into the building wounded, showing how quickly the situation has changed in the area. The British had hoped that the Maharajah's army would come to

their defense, but as Fleury and Harry leave, they see that the army is stationary. The soldiers seem to lounge about as usual. Clearly, they will not come to the rescue of the British colonizers.



Part 1 Chapter 7

Part 1 Chapter 7 Summary

Harry and Fleury ride out to warn the indigo farmers to come into the safety of the Residency. All of the residents move out of their homes and take up refuge in the Residency itself, since it is surrounded by the trench that the Collector has had erected. The Collector gives orders calmly and effectively. Many residents bring all of their possessions along, and these are piled outside the main building and in the hallway. Dr. Dunstaple and Dr. McNab will now both be working together to help many of the wounded soldiers. Dr. Dunstaple criticizes his colleague's use of ants as stitches, a practice the other doctor has picked up from native use. In the evening, Harry boasts about the danger he and Fleury have gone through, riding alone in the dangerous open country.

That night, the Collector awakes to the pleasant smell of wood-smoke, which he later learns is coming from outlying bungalows that have been set on fire. Much thought goes into planning a strategy for survival and defense. The British think there is little threat from the area of the riverbank and the melon fields, so they send the elderly Major Hogan with several men and a cannon to defend that area from the banqueting hall just in case. The native town and mosque line one side of the area, and the Dunstaple's house, Cutcherry and rampart are situated on the other side. Harry and Fleury go to the banqueting hall along with Barlow and several aging Sikhs. Several disagreements erupt over the storage of food in the Church, the use of graveyard space, and the necessity of attaining a *futwah*, an official order from the religious leaders, for special permission to destroy the mosque, which threatens the cantonment's defenses. Harry and Fleury set out into town to rescue Lucy, the "fallen woman," who refuses to leave the dak bungalow despite the danger. They try to convince her not to kill herself, but they return home as night approaches.

Part 1 Chapter 7 Analysis

The possessions which line the hallways and pathways in the Residency are symbols of materialism. Though they are fleeing for their lives, the British residents will not part with objects such as stuffed birds, statues, clothing and other items. As the siege progresses, the British residents will be totally dependent on the Collector's leadership and will look for signs of strength or deterioration in his morale. All the outlying citizens, including farmers and the "disgraced" English lady, are contacted and requested to take shelter at the Residency. The two doctors work frantically to save the soldiers wounded in the attack at Captainganj. The first tensions between the two are seen in Dr. Dunstaple's criticisms of the other doctor's methods. Harry and Fleury are sent to the banqueting hall, though the British leaders think that there is a low risk of attack from the direction of the melon beds.



Several enormous statues of philosophers' heads, assumed to be made of marble, face out from the building. Harry tries to show Fleury how to load and fire the cannon, but Fleury does not pay attention because he is distracted with other, more poetic thoughts. Several moral issues come up in this chapter, as the British citizens try to hold on to convention. Food is stored in the church, and permission will be sought to destroy the Mohammedan mosque, despite the Collector's misgivings that destroying the mosque is sacrilegious. Harry and Fleury still see themselves as brave heroes, and they would like to start shooting at the native attackers immediately, though there are none, at the moment, to be seen.



Part 1 Chapter 8

Part 1 Chapter 8 Summary

A time of tense waiting ensues, since after several days there have been no attacks from the sepoys. This gives the British time to prepare defenses. The General dies from his wounds, and the British discuss what to do with the native Christians and Eurasians who hum and wail just outside the Residency gates, pleading to be taken into protection. The Padre becomes obsessed with the idea of Sin and attempts to weed it out in the small group of citizens who are now under siege. He becomes zealous in his sermons, despite the fact that there are hardly any people attending church. He ends up lecturing to the bins of food at the back of the church. Fleury and Harry again leave the Residency enclave to visit Lucy Hughes, the "fallen woman," and she still refuses to come in to safety. The young men decide that a woman will have to invite Miss Hughes to return.

Part 1 Chapter 8 Analysis

Moral problems plague the group. The Collector must decide whether to leave the native Christians and Eurasians to their deaths outside the gates, or whether to bring them in to safety and risk the depletion of an already meager food supply. The Padre's zealous sermon about sin is a sign of his growing worries. As the siege progresses, he will become more and more convinced that personal sins are the cause of God's fury at the besieged group. His intense efforts seem to be wasted, since he lectures to an almost empty church. Also, the question of Miss Hughes' morality is important. She has been jilted by a young officer, and because of her shame she is ostracized by others in society. The men plan on having another woman invite the shunned girl to return, since this would be a sign of social acceptance. Neither man can think of a good reason to convince Lucy not to commit suicide, and their attempt to save her is a sign of the chivalrous natures they believe they possess.



Part 1 Chapter 9

Part 1 Chapter 9 Summary

Fleury visits the Sunday School, hoping to spend time with Louise. He gets into an argument with the Padre and, in his excitement, almost drops the infant he is holding. The children each receive a much-coveted piece of candy. The Padre asks them to give the treats away to the sullen native Christians at the gates, who promptly throw the candy away. Fleury and Louise walk with Fanny, and he lectures Louise excitedly about the need to bring a "civilization of the heart" to India, which would do more than bring material changes to the culture (p. 125). Meanwhile, a pariah dog is attracted to Fleury and tries to make advances on the young man's ankles. Louise decides she will write to Miss Hughes and ask her to come into the compound. Later in the evening Lucy arrives at the Residency.

That night, the rebelling natives set the rest of the cantonment on fire. The Collector has guests up for dinner in his room, and they pass an awkward meal. The Collector's mind wanders, and he looks distressed as he thinks of electroplating technology. He doubts whether the general populace will ever appreciate great art, even when it can be reproduced and displayed in their own homes. The others in the group look at the Collector's countenance and read distress and discouragement into his expressions. Vokins comes in frequently with messages about various buildings being set on fire.

The Collector argues with the Magistrate about the poor in society and whether or not the model houses on display at the Great Exhibition (Prince Albert's Model Houses for the Labouring Classes) were built for altruistic reasons. After dinner the Collector finds Hari and the Prime Minister sitting dejectedly in the study in the dark. Hari criticizes the Collector for detaining him and for abusing his trust. Earlier, Hari had argued with his father and vowed to lead the Maharajah's army to help the British. Only Hari stands up for the British, and the Prime Minister follows him.

Part 1 Chapter 9 Analysis

Questions of religion and morality are important in this chapter, since the Padre sees himself, like many missionaries and colonizers have, as bringing light into the darkness of the primitive or heathen world. His token act of charity is to give the native Christians candy. This is an ironic and unimpressive gesture, since these individuals are doomed to die when the rebelling forces attack. They no longer fit into the Indian culture, since they have been converted to British and Christian views, and they are in this predicament because of the presence of the colonizing forces in India. However, they throw the sweets away because they are, underneath, still Indian and believe in the caste system, which dictates that foods touched by casteless individuals is not fit for consumption.



Fleury's arguments with the Padre center on issues of British rule, and the type of progress and benefits that the British hope to bring to the country. The arguments between these two characters will increase as the siege progresses, ultimately reaching an almost comic level, as the Padre begins to believe that Fleury's sins and heresy will lead to God's wrath.

Another symbol that is developed in this chapter is that of the dog Chloe and the pariah dogs. Fleury associates Louise with the blond tresses of the lapdog he has bought her. This indicates a prevalent view of women at the time that is repeated often in the novel: that females are weak-willed and frivolous. At this stage, Fleury idealizes Louise. Near the end of the siege, the patina of social norms and decorum will have dissolved, and the "cultured" dog will become very similar to its uncouth and wild relative, represented by the disgusting and lustful pariah dog that is attracted to Fleury's ankles. Similarly, the cultured norms that the society holds will be broken down by the hunger and distress caused by the weeks of siege.

Hari's journey to join the besieged British citizens is also important. Hari represents a privileged class of Indian citizens who desire progress and change for their country. Hari believes that British rule will bring about positive changes, and with the help of a private tutor from England, he has attempted to adopt British culture and master the language. However, he is disappointed and angry when he takes a stand to lead his father's army to defend the British. Only the Prime Minister follows him. Clearly, members of the general population do not support the British rule of their country. The British betray Hari when they detain him. He turns his anger against himself and keeps himself in uncomfortable circumstances in the dark study. The Collector realizes and regrets his betrayal, but he pretends that Hari is being "invited" to stay. He also feels that Hari's presence helps to protect the rest of the British citizens.



Part 2 Chapter 10

Part 2 Chapter 10 Summary

The Collector sleeps in and misses doing a round of inspections before the attacks begin. The Padre, however, makes a round of the ramparts and prays fervently. He hands out fliers to all of the men. Fleury and Harry, who have taken up positions at the banquet hall, want to get in on the action, and they decide they can shoot at any natives under certain conditions and within a specific range, although they are not under attack at their post. Both young men think they see some swarming or shadows in the melon beds, but neither wants to sound the alarm in case they are wrong. All of the other soldiers at their post are either elderly or, like Fleury, totally inexperienced in war.

Without warning, the enemy attacks, swarming towards them from the melon beds near the river. Several of the pensioners are killed, and Barlow is knocked from his chair. Harry is hit in the groin with a brick. He recovers and moves quickly to help the surviving men load the cannon. Though they are ill-equipped and undermanned, they manage to load and shoot the cannon. Fleury's mind wanders as he works, and as the assault continues the young men's stamina flags. They send word that they need more men but receive the reply that no men are available to help them. The enemy is attacking from all quarters. Vokins brings this message and, scared for his life, takes refuge in the shadows, only to realize that he is hiding among a pile of dead bodies. General Hogan awakes, hung over, only to be shot and killed. Harry is relieved, since this means he can now take control. and he will not have to defer to the incompetent General's orders.

Part 2 Chapter 10 Analysis

The Collector's role in the besieged society is one of leadership and responsibility. He begins a regular habit of making the rounds of the ramparts and observing the action, hoping to increase his men's morale with his presence. The morning that the attacks begin, he oversleeps, missing the beginning of the action. The Padre, now even more obsessed with redeeming the souls under his care from the sins they have committed, stumbles through the dark in his fervent, if slightly misguided, attempt at helping the situation.

In this chapter, a transformation takes place for Harry and Fleury. Surrounded by elderly, incompetent or terrified men, they must almost single-handedly load and fire the cannon, a task meant for a larger team of able and experienced men. The cannon will be their great defense in the ongoing attacks, though we know from information inserted in a previous chapter that this brass cannon will become inaccurate after hundreds of firings.

The naive bravado with which the two young men begin the chapter (hoping to shoot at any Indian moving over the plain before them) soon gives way to fatigue and real labor

as they fight to keep the cannon loaded and firing. Their request for more men is simply denied, and at this point, they still do not know the severity of the sepoy attack and that the compound is being attacked from all directions at once.



Part 2 Chapter 11

Part 2 Chapter 11 Summary

The Collector makes his rounds of the defenses as the attack continues. He tries to keep the men's morale up by making his presence known on the defense lines. He walks by a collection of animals lying in the shadows of the church. This group is made up of dogs, a mongoose and an escaped monkey still in a sailor's hat. Nearby, another group of dogs shelters in the shadows. This group is mainly pariah dogs, mangy and vicious. The Collector thinks about the problems of poverty at home and here in India and then makes his way on his rounds to the Cutcherry building. Alone in his study, he is surprised by a musket ball fired into the room. It hits one of his statues and ricochets across the room, causing the Collector to hide and confront his fears.

Part 2 Chapter 11 Analysis

The rose shriveling in the Collector's lapel symbolizes his attempt at continuing a cultured and inspiring role within the group of besieged residents. Though he would like to appear cheerful and hopeful, the Collector's positive outlook slowly fades as the siege progresses and the people in his care suffer greater hardships. This is symbolized by the rose wilting in the heat as the Collector makes his rounds.

The animals sheltering in the heat are also important symbols. The two groups of dogs represent the boundaries drawn between cultured and impoverished groups within a society and between nations. For now, the dogs preserve their social distinctions. Similarly, the society under siege keeps up pretenses of culture and decorum until conditions deteriorate further. It is also significant that both groups shelter near the church, since this represents reliance on traditions and institutions. The author uses some humor in including a monkey and a mongoose in the "cultured" group of dogs, perhaps alluding to the "animal nature" of some people's souls. Also, the pariah dogs remind the Collector of the problems of poverty at home and abroad. He is a sensitive man and feels troubled by the suffering of others.



Part 2 Chapter 12

Part 2 Chapter 12 Summary

Harry attempts to give his inexperienced men a crash course in military procedures. He shows them how to load and use the Enfield rifles. Harry lectures the men on how to judge distances, but the information is met with uncomprehending looks or by rote repetition. Fleury's mind wanders during Harry's lecture. The Padre arrives, claiming that he needs to root out and remove the heresy that is attacking members under his ministry. He begins to think that Fleury harbors heretic ideas, and he deliberately questions the young man to elicit a renunciation of these sinful beliefs. While the priest lectures on God's powers and wonders, citing examples from nature that show perfect design, the men labor at loading the cannon. Fleury argues that God is more of a spiritual and moral force than an all-powerful designer of the physical realm.

As this is going on, the enemy forces attack. Harry holds his fire, not wanting to waste any shot. The men shoot the cannon and work desperately to reload. The enemy reaches the ramparts and begins to massacre the Eurasians and planters who are defending that structure. The cannon is fired again, and the enemy pauses, seemingly awed by the enormous marble statues.

In the confusion, Harry and his men lead a counterattack on horseback. Fleury kills a sowar, a mounted Indian soldier, and is then pursued by another sowar and nearly killed. At the last minute, Harry arrives to save his friend, and the two men return to the banqueting hall as the enemy infantry retreat. The Padre appears again, insisting that Fleury agree that there is Divine design in nature. Exhausted from the battle, Fleury gives in. The Padre does not let Fleury voice his objections and prays fervently, believing that this change in attitude has helped to repulse the enemy attack.

Part 2 Chapter 12 Analysis

As the men at the banqueting hall wait for the attack, the atmosphere is filled with tension. Harry's attempt at drilling the men in how to use guns and cannons fails, since the men are terrified and distracted. He tries to teach his thrown-together team how to use Enfield rifles, the rifles with grease-loaded bearings that caused the initial rebellions in the country.

The 19th-century interest in scientific and religious matters is also highlighted in this chapter. This was a time when previously unquestioned views about God's supremacy and the "grand design" of the universe were being challenged by new scientific discoveries. The author has chosen to play out this intense debate by throwing Fleury and his scientific notions in an enclosed area with the Padre, whose central goal is to root out sin and who tries to make Fleury denounce his heretic notions. The battle is set against a comic and distracting narrative by the Padre, as he lists all kinds of examples



from nature that prove God's design of the universe. As the men reload the cannon, Fleury fleetingly thinks of animals adapting to fit their environment. In the heat of the battle, he forgets this thought, which would have given Fleury claim to the revolutionary ideas we now attribute to Darwin.

As the enemy swarms over the ramparts, it is the sight of the imposing marble statues that stalls the attack and allows the men to reload and fire the third cannon round. The dust cloud from the cannon creates confusion and causes the enemy to retreat. Harry and Fleury show that they are truly courageous by riding out into the fleeing army and attacking the sepoy. Fleury's fear when the sepoy attacks him is shown in the way the other man seems to get larger. The attacker becomes almost a caricature, as he draws his spear back for the kill. Harry saves Fleury's life, linking the two men in their adventures in battle. When the men are safely back at the banqueting hall and the Padre reappears with his non-stop narrative, Fleury is too exhausted to argue. The Padre rejoices at having saved Fleury's soul, feeling personally responsible for the enemy's retreat.



Part 2 Chapter 13

Part 2 Chapter 13 Summary

The Collector has breakfast with his daughters, and he is conscious of them watching him through the telescope as he completes his daily rounds of the ramparts. The sepoys continue to attack, but their efforts are not efficiently organized since they lack central leadership and strategy. The Collector goes to the billiard room, where the ladies have staked out bedding areas. The women share in some tasks, but many quarrels have broken out over services, food and space. Class distinctions are still adhered to even in this challenging and cramped situation. The women bring their complaints to the Collector, and he tries to solve their problems.

After dividing some food supplies among the ladies, the Collector goes to the records room, where he talks with Fleury and the Magistrate about the work of the British in India. The men go outside, where a rocket lands but does not explode. Fleury is sent to get mustard powder for Dr. Dunstaple, since there has been a suspected case of cholera, while the Collector visits the sick and dying men in the hospital. Dr. Dunstaple looks harried and begins to voice his opinions about Dr. McNab's incompetence. He reads a passage from some notes that Dr. McNab took while his wife was on her deathbed. A sick soldier sings a ditty about the Crimean war, and this noise accompanies Dr. Dunstaple's loud diatribe against his colleague. Fleury brings the news that Mrs. Scott has gone into labor, and the Collector indicates that he should go to Dr. McNab for help, since Dr. Dunstaple seems to be over-worked.

Part 2 Chapter 13 Analysis

The Collector's strained relationship with his daughters is representative of the ways in which Victorian ideas of decorum and authority interfered with relationships within the family and between the sexes. He begins to realize that his relationship with his daughters is not ideal. Before, for example, he believed that their complete subservience to his will was normal. Now he begins to feel that something is not right in their total dependence on him. He feels conscious of his responsibility towards his children and the entire community, and he feels "suspended" in the eye of the telescope and his daughters' anxious attention.

In this chapter the Collector is also confronted with his feelings towards women. When he goes to the billiard room, he feels that the room, once a calm and peaceful male retreat, has been taken over by the sensual and bickering group of women. He feels aroused by the sight of the women's bodies, since the heat is unbearable and most of the fan-bearers have quit, leaving the women no choice but to discard some of their layers of clothing. The Collector fights his feelings of attraction and puts on a very authoritarian demeanor to try and counterbalance his feelings.



Fleury and the Magistrate join the Collector in the records room to discuss the effect of British rule on India. The men are literally "padded" and protected by piles of documents as the attack rages outside the ramparts. The Collector discards Fleury's ideas as naïve and strange, since the younger man takes offense at the assumption that the British are naturally superior to the Indians. The harsh glare of the sun brings the Collector back to reality and to his worries as he steps outside the Cutcherry.

His ideals about culture and the good that the British have done are left behind in the safety of the bureaucratic building. He is then faced with the sickening sounds and smells of the hospital and begins to see the first signs of Dr. Dunstaple's compulsive need to criticize Dr. McNab. Dr. Dunstaple shows the Collector graphic examples of suffering and criticizes all of Dr. McNab's methods, pointing particularly to the other's written record of his wife's death. The first signs of cholera are suggested in this chapter. This will become the main source of conflict between the two doctors in the subsequent chapters and will lead to Dr. Dunstaple's animated public lectures and eventually to his death.



Part 2 Chapter 14

Part 2 Chapter 14 Summary

The Collector makes his way towards Cutter's battery, continuing on his rounds of inspection. The pariah dog appears and tries to approach the Collector's ankles, but he kicks the dog away. The Collector notices that the enemy sharpshooters have been trying to shoot down the Union Jack flag and that the smell of offal from the butchery is becoming unbearable. There are dead horses on the lawn, and the Collector thinks of better days as he crosses the once-lush expanse of grass. Meanwhile, the British plan to dig a tunnel out under the enemy lines and create a large explosion that will damage the enemy's ammunition supply. It is dangerous to risk so much powder on this task, but Cutter believes that they will gain some time and possibly capture some enemy cannons by carrying out the maneuver. A further dilemma centers on the problem of provisions: some individuals want the goods of deceased members of the community to be auctioned off, and others want them to be shared.

The Collector is attacked by the monkey, and he notices that the pariah dogs and animals of prey are fat and healthy, while the domesticated dogs are sickly and thin. The Collector thinks about science and how it helps to structure society and provides a sense of comfort. He continues on to the last stable, where Hari and the Prime Minister are being kept. Hari is demoralized and argues with the Collector about his loyalty to the British, stating that he will never go into battle to kill his own brothers and sisters. Hari is excited, however, about the "scientific" practice of phrenology. He has a book on the subject and has shaved the Prime Minister's head to explore the topic further.

The Collector leaves and helps the Padre dig graves. He digs until he is exhausted and weeping. He returns to the Residency, where he embraces Miriam on the stairs as she is hunting for pearls from a broken necklace. He continues on to his room alone and hides under the desk as a stray musket ball ricochets around the room. As he falls asleep, he hears the cries of Mrs. Scott giving birth elsewhere. The baby is stillborn, and Mrs. Scott dies later that night. Dr. McNab stays up late into the night, writing notes about the cesarean section and the events that transpired that evening. During the night, the attack on the small community continues.

Part 2 Chapter 14 Analysis

The Collector continues his rounds, noting the deteriorating conditions in the community. In this chapter, the emphasis is on the smells, inconveniences, arguments and hardships that are increasing. In addition to the constant danger of enemy fire, as the Collector experiences in his room, the area is beginning to smell. Dead animals and offal litter grounds that were once lush lawns where ceremonies and celebrations were held.



Again, there is an emphasis on the two groups of dogs, the symbolic "cultured" group represented by Chloe and other domesticated dogs and the "uncultured" pariah dogs and their companions, glutted from feasting on carcasses. Like the domesticated dogs, the residents of the community are not used to these trying conditions, and they suffer. The escaped monkey, now returned to the wild, tries to remove the sailor hat that was tied on when it was in captivity. The monkey's attack coincides with the attack of the sepoy forces, and both are equally incomprehensible to the Collector. He has believed the British presence to be beneficial to India, and he has never considered the potential injustices of colonial rule.

In this chapter we also see a heightening concern over food and rations. There is discussion of auctioning off goods, and a moral question of communal sharing versus a capitalist/class-based distribution of the goods to the highest bidder. Hari and the Prime Minister are now truly captives, living in unacceptable lodgings where tigers were once kept. The Collector feels guilt at seeing Hari's physical and emotional state deteriorate, but he also feels he must act for the good of the community. Hari's one interest is phrenology. Sadly, we now know from looking back at this area of scientific inquiry that its theories were wrong and that there are no scientifically proven links between the size of areas of the head and certain faculties or sensibilities in the human personality.

By the end of the chapter, the Collector faces his guilt and his worries, and he symbolically steps down from leader to community-member by taking on the physical task of digging the grave and burying the dead. Perhaps some of the Collector's ideals are also questioned and laid aside as the Collector works. Coinciding with this is the physical death of Mrs. Scott and her baby. This represents the end of the hopes and dreams the British had in India and again emphasizes the end of the hopefulness and idealism of the community under siege. However, Dr. McNab's pen continues moving well into the night. The scientific age continues to progress steadily, even as other changes take place in British colonial culture.



Part 2 Chapter 15

Part 2 Chapter 15 Summary

On July 7th, Cutter's plan is put into action. The tunnel has been completed, and Cutter successfully lights the fuse and causes a large explosion under the enemy lines. Fleury, Harry, Lieutenant Peterson and others form a sortie party to attack the confused enemy forces. Fleury has invented a two-pronged spear he calls the "Fleury Cavalry Eradicator" which is unfortunately not strong enough to actually kill the two sowars it pierces. The enemy soldiers escape, and the other end of the weapon accidentally catches in Mr. Rose's clothes and lifts him off the ground.

Fleury is offended when Harry hands him a nail and calls him a fool when he does not know what to do with it, but he succeeds in spiking one of the enemy cannons, leaving it disabled. The advancing party returns to the safety of the Residency compound, having captured a six-pound cannon and a howitzer. As the men retreat, Fleury and Harry go back to try and save Lieutenant Peterson, but the soldier is hit again as they struggle to get him back in the saddle. Fleury attempts to retrieve his locket, but he cannot remove it. The man dies and the two young men race back to safety while enemy fire sounds at their backs.

Part 2 Chapter 15 Analysis

This chapter involves a fairly straightforward battle scene, where the fortunes of the small British community seem to turn around. By their carefully planned military maneuver, the besieged group disrupts the enemy's superior position by a surprise attack. Several cannons are disabled, and some smaller weapons captured. Fleury's invention, and his reminders to Harry that it is his birthday, show that he is still idealistic, slightly naïve, and occupied by his own self. However, both men show courage and bravery by riding out into the enemy lines. They risk even greater danger by returning to try and save their colleague Lieutenant Peterson, and Fleury is now part of the community of men who have fought together, risked their lives for each other and seen a friend die in battle.



Part 2 Chapter 16

Part 2 Chapter 16 Summary

The women, who pray while the counterattack is carried out, congratulate the men as they return. A birthday celebration is held in Fleury's honor and attended by Miriam, Louise, Harry and Lucy. Louise begins to see Fleury in a new light, admiring his bravery. She has sewed Fleury a green coat for his birthday, made from the billiard table covering, and he will soon wear this every day, along with a cap featuring a peacock feather in its brim. Louise, usually very attentive to her appearance, has been trying to hide the spots and boils that are appearing on her face. She is worried about her father, but Harry brushes her worries aside. Miriam advises Louise to talk to Dr. McNab, who believes the other doctor is just over-worked.

Miriam and Louise banter about each other's "conquests," and Louise notices that Dr. McNab seems happy and chivalrous when he is around Miriam. Louise also confides in her friend that she is worried about Harry's interest in Lucy, since Lucy would not make a suitable marriage partner. The Collector drops in on the small birthday-party gathering and samples some of the pudding that the women have been able to make with salvaged rations. His spirits are briefly uplifted, but he soon becomes consumed with his worries and responsibilities. He returns to his inspections of the fortifications and then helps dig graves for those killed in the earlier counterattack.

Part 2 Chapter 16 Analysis

This chapter gives us insights into the experiences of the women in the novel. The way that their society has conditioned them, the women are fairly powerless. They do help the doctors in their tasks, and later Lucy will make ammunition, but in general the women are seen as delicate and spend most of their time in the billiard room. As the men fight, the women stay indoors praying. Some semblance of the pre-siege culture is seen in the birthday celebration that is held for Fleury. Though the situation is difficult, the young people have pooled their resources and found the means to make a pudding dessert. Seeing this small gesture of civilized culture briefly lifts the Collector's spirits. At the end of the chapter he returns to many hours of grueling labor digging graves, thinking about social inequality. His sense of morality and guilt about social classes is increasing, and he does a self-inflicted penance by digging graves.

Louise, who is normally very aware of her beauty and keeps a certain elevated distance from the men who admire her, is now faced with boils on her skin and horrible personal hygiene. She keeps up some of her old pretensions, however, since she believes that the ladies of the upper classes still smell less than those who are socially inferior. We also see how helpless Louise is in helping her father. She sees that Dr. Dunstaple is suffering and having fits of rage against Dr. McNab, though she does not feel that she can speak to him directly and honestly.



In this chapter we also see how Louise and Miriam banter about interest from the men. This competition is masked by friendly compliments. We learn that Harry is particularly overbearing when he is in Lucy's presence, a sign that he is likely attracted to her. Louise has true cause for concern, because the girl would not normally be allowed to socialize with her brother. Lucy's ruined reputation makes her dangerous to an unmarried man like Harry. Finally, the potential for romance between Fleury and Louise is presented in this chapter, since Louise is impressed with Fleury's bravery in battle. Though she now thinks he is less conceited than he used to be, she has sewn him a bright green coat (sure to draw attention) and a cap featuring a peacock feather, itself a symbol of self-interest and pride.



Part 2 Chapter 17

Part 2 Chapter 17 Summary

The Padre is busy digging more graves, and the Collector arrives to help him. There are three men to be buried: Lieutenant Peterson, Jackson the Crimean war vet and Donnelly, a Roman Catholic. Father O'Hara arrives, and there is a dispute over which of the canvas-covered bodies is Donnelly, since he will have to be buried in a different area. The Collector ends the dispute by pointing to one of the bodies. The Padre is ecstatic when Fleury arrives, since he has just been thinking about the young man. The Padre is convinced that Fleury must adhere to German rationalist beliefs, which question major tenets of Christian theology. While the Padre tries his best to corner Fleury in argument, Fleury answers evasively, his mind on the party and how he acted in front of Louise.

The Collector continues on his rounds, and he is almost hit as he considers how he used to believe that his own era was the epitome of all ages. He is troubled by thoughts of poverty and wonders if science will ever be able to solve the world's problems. He inspects the new defenses. He then plans a new retreat strategy based on the "velocipede" invention, the forerunner of the bicycle. Two lines of defense will run first around the Residency and the churchyard, and then around the banqueting hall. Ford begins work on the new defense strategy, and the Collector goes to the Cutcherry. He then returns to his room, thinking about how the present culture is really based on those that went before it. He falls asleep after eating dinner and contemplating the disheveled state into which his room has fallen.

Part 2 Chapter 17 Analysis

The Padre is still obsessed by rooting out sin, and the harsh conditions add to his mental distress. He begins to believe that the troubles at Krishnapur started when Fleury arrived, and in his desperate state he jumps to the conclusion that Fleury's heretic beliefs must be to blame for the suffering and the siege. When Fleury arrives at the graveyard, his mind is full of his own bravery and thoughts of Louise. The Padre takes Fleury's evasive answers to mean that the young man is indeed a heretic, siding with the German rationalists. As the Padre argues, he digs more and more quickly, symbolically entering the earth (and the grave) as he gets carried away in his own fervor. Fleury states that he is interested in the moral truths of the Bible. He is not concerned, as are the Padre and many of his contemporaries, with proving that the events described in the Bible can be verified scientifically and given accurate dates.

Further tensions exist in the community over religion. The priests fighting over the burial of identical bodies is the author's satirical take on the battles fought over religious issues. To end the debate, the Collector steps in and uses his authority, randomly picking one of the bodies and claiming that this is Donnelly. He realizes that more



important matters are at stake than the squabbling over the plot of land where a body is to be buried. In terms of character development, he distances himself from values that belong to his own era and to upper class British society. He realizes that his own era is perhaps not the pinnacle of culture he thought it was. The disarray of his room symbolizes his self-doubt and his misery.



Part 3 Chapter 18

Part 3 Chapter 18 Summary

The besieged citizens wait impatiently for the monsoons to arrive. Both Mrs. Bennett's baby and Lieutenant Cutter die. The well-liked orphan Mary Potter faints from sunstroke, and Fleury carries her to the infirmary. Unfortunately she also passes away, and the community feels deprived by this loss. At the death of the orphan, Dr. Dunstaple begins to rave in earnest, and he is ordered to stay in bed and rest. When he returns to the wards a few days later, he meticulously redoes all of the dressings applied, in his absence, by Dr. McNab. Meanwhile, rumors of further upheaval and rebellion against British rule filter into the camp.

The Collector visits Hari in the tiger house, where he notices that the captive's personal hygiene has declined. Food and straw are littered all over the enclosed living area, and the stable smells like urine. This is too much for the Collector to witness, and he tells Hari and the Prime Minister that they are free to go. They shake hands with the Collector. Hari says he does not forgive the Company nor the Collector, but he does forgive his "good friend, Mr. Hopkin" (p. 227). Hari gives the Collector his book on phrenology as a parting gift. The Collector watches with his telescope as his men stop their firing, and Hari leaves the besieged area. As the Collector watches Hari leave, he feels sad that he will likely never see the young man again. He also hopes that Hari will not tell anyone about the true state of affairs in the besieged British community.

Part 3 Chapter 18 Analysis

The captive British citizens look forward to the monsoon, because they hope it will bring relief from the heat, the stench and enemy fire. Though the residents are becoming accustomed to death and suffering, everyone is affected by the seemingly random and unwarranted death of the orphan Mary Potter. Dr. Dunstaple finally has a mental collapse, which he expresses in his ravings on any topic that comes to mind. He is reluctant to give up his practice to Dr. McNab's care even for a few days.

The Collector's moral battle over what to do about Hari and the Prime Minister comes to a conclusion in this chapter. On the one hand, he feels that their presence protects certain areas of the territory from attack. On the other hand, Hari used to be a friend, and he has now been transformed, quite literally, into a captive animal. The Collector decides to let Hari and his companion return home, but he is shocked by the physical and emotional deterioration and despondency that has arisen from their captivity. Hari's despondency can be seen as a metaphor for the effects of colonialism and captivity on any once independent nation.

Despite Hari's anger at the mistreatment he has suffered, he is willing to forgive his friend. He is very careful to distinguish between the institutions that Mr. Hopkins



represents (the Crown corporation ruling India and Great Britain itself) and the person behind the title. While Hari cannot forgive Mr. Hopkins in his official role, he is morally mature enough to forgive the man he once respected as his friend. Thinking that he is making a gesture of goodwill, Hari leaves the Collector the phrenology book. The Collector accepts the book, but it is a useless gift, since he does not believe in phrenology and laughs at the Magistrate's belief in this pursuit.



Part 3 Chapter 19

Part 3 Chapter 19 Summary

The Collector notices that his eye has become more inflamed, and he becomes ill. He does not want to go to the hospital, since he is sickened and disheartened every time he goes there. Instead, he stays in his room, giving the Magistrate temporary authority. The Collector is delirious. He watches through the telescope that burns against his inflamed eye as the retreat to the smaller defensible area is carried out. He watches Harry trying to fight off the sepoy attack, while Fleury lounges nearby after having helped several other men dig the trenches for the gunpowder. He also notices the fat pariah dog nearby, salivating at the thought of the feast it will soon have. The retreat is dangerous, since as the men abandon the ramparts there is a risk that the retreat will become a "route." The enemy may make a forcible attack and surround the men if they do not make it back to the trench in time.

The women have already moved from Dr. Dunstaple's house, which is now being abandoned. Lines of explosive run from the Cutcherry building around the perimeter of the old fortifications. The British hope that these explosions will slow the enemy advance and give the men time to retreat to safety. As the explosions occur, the onlookers on the hill cheer. The attacking forces hesitate and confusion ensues as what seems to be snow rains down from the sky. This is actually the paperwork from the now defunct Cutcherry, and the confusion caused by the blinding "snow" gives the men enough time to reload their cannons and hold off the next surge of the attack. The Collector feels dissociated from his pain. His eye is throbbing now, since he was unfortunately looking at the Cutcherry when it exploded. Fleury rests against the new rampart and reads one of the salt reports that has been set loose in the explosion. He then turns to the Bible and tries to pick out immoral passages that will embarrass the Padre and prove the priest wrong.

Part 3 Chapter 19 Analysis

The Collector is aware of his responsibility to the group within his care, and he does not want to admit his own weaknesses, in this case his worsening illness. He is aware that the others look to him as an example, and any weakness in himself may be catastrophic to the community. The Collector knows how dangerous the retreat is. If it goes wrong, then the entire community will be destroyed. However, he has not had very much choice in the matter, since his men are overworked, and more of them are dying every day. The old fortifications are simply too large to be sufficiently protected for much longer. This crucial maneuver is narrated with a touch of delirium, since we watch the proceedings from the Collector's perspective, as he trains his burning eyes on the telescope and watches the scene below. At the height of his delirium, the Collector yells out that tea shall be served on the lawns again, showing his subconscious wish for the battle to be over and for things to be as they were in the peaceful days of firm British rule.



Both Harry and Fleury are active in the retreat, though we also see the other, more romantic side of Fleury coming through as he relaxes at several points in the day and later turns his thoughts to outwitting the unrelenting Padre. The author again uses satire in this scene, as the Cutcherry's demise saves the retreat from turning into a "route" and prevents the demolition of what is left of the British community in Krishnapur. Ironically, the stacks of paperwork associated with the Company's rule fly up into the air and confuse the attacking forces. The author is clearly making a point about bureaucracy and the usefulness of the reports and paperwork that made British rule in the area possible.



Part 3 Chapter 20

Part 3 Chapter 20 Summary

Fleury comes up to the Collector's room to borrow a book and finds that the other man is ill. He goes to Dr. McNab, fearing that it is cholera, but the doctor assures him it is erysipelas, a bacterial infection. Dr. McNab asks Miriam to look after the Collector, and she stays by Mr. Hopkins' side while he suffers from delirium and fevers. Louise arrives with tea, and the two women talk in relative privacy since the Collector is semi-conscious. The women discuss the increasing number of fires on the nearby hills, and openly discuss the possibility that rape and murder could occur if the siege the enemy camp won. Louise thinks about how her beauty used to be the only thing that mattered to her, and how her life revolved around how many admirers she could attract.

The women discuss Harry's growing attachment to Lucy and the inappropriateness of this marriage match. Miriam understands Louise's concern for her brother but also believes that other dangers outweigh the danger of an unsuitable marriage partner. The women think that they hear guns far away, but their attention is distracted by the rain that starts to fall and continues throughout the night. The Collector's face is still inflamed, and he lies in a delirious stupor until morning. His illness may be linked to his realization that India will no longer be the same and that the dream of Britain bringing progress and civilization to this country is now gone forever.

Part 3 Chapter 20 Analysis

In this chapter, Miriam and Louise deal with the events around them. We learn that Miriam has not allowed herself to feel an attraction to any particular man since her husband's death. She does not want to become caught up in the emotions of attachment and suffer again like she did when her husband died. Also, she likes being independent, and she realizes she does not want expectations imposed on her behavior because she is a woman. She knows that this would happen if she were to remarry. Dr. McNab compliments Miriam, saying that the Collector will be in good hands while she cares for him. The sigh he expresses as he leaves the room is enigmatic, but we later realize it is a sign of his attraction to her.

Miriam and Louise have, by this point, developed a strong friendship based on the hardship they have gone through. Miriam is still the more outspoken of the two, since by now she does not give a second thought to calling a bearer to help the Collector relieve himself of his "natural functions." The women agree that back in regular society, Harry will probably forget his attachment to Lucy and choose a partner from his own social circle. Louise is still concerned with propriety, since she believes that her brother's potential inappropriate choice of mate is as worrisome as the idea of her own death. In this chapter, we see that Louise has developed as a character. She now examines her previous behavior and feels ashamed of the airs she used to put on.



The author plants the possibility that relieving forces may be on their way, when the women think they hear distant gun fire. However, this is only mentioned briefly and is overshadowed by the rains that finally arrive, bringing at least a physical change to the characters' environment. Miriam's lifted spirits at the end of the chapter are caused by the first drops of rain, which are symbolic of the change that will soon arrive with the relieving forces.



Part 3 Chapter 21

Part 3 Chapter 21 Summary

The Collector's illness continues, and his children are terrified that he will die. The rains arrive, and the sepoy's build shelters to wait out the rainy season. Members of the besieged community discuss making an escape. The plan is rejected since it would be too dangerous and there is nowhere they could go. Five days pass, and Miriam watches over the Collector, losing track of night and day. At one point, she is called to help Dr. McNab with an amputation. Miriam suffers from discomfort brought on by the heat, mosquitoes and lack of personal hygiene. Finally, the Collector begins to recover. He notices that outside everything is lush and green. Inside, all of his leather goods and articles of clothing, such as his boots, are covered in mold, and his notepaper is unusable because of the moisture. He tells Miriam that she must not stay in his room alone with him because her reputation could be compromised. She answers that reputations have ceased to matter.

Part 3 Chapter 21 Analysis

Though the rains originally provide a change in the environment and stir up hopes of escape or rescue, the continual downpour creates despondency. It is difficult to wade through the mud between the fortification areas. The rain also brings the water levels up on the river, and the heat increases again, bringing with it an unbearable smell of offal. The victims of the siege begin to realize that it is too late to be fully saved. Many men have died, and India has been drastically changed in the last several months. The British idealism of bringing progress and positive role models and change to Indian society is destroyed in the hearts of the siege victims by this time.

Though Miriam is by the Collector's bedside for days on end, there are no romantic overtones in the situation. Miriam rejects the traditional sense of propriety and social convention that would restrict a woman from being alone while caring for an unmarried man. The Collector, however, thinks of Miriam's reputation, expressing traditional and socially sanctioned views. However, as he stares at his moldy boots, he wonders if even his soldiers will be covered in mold. The old way of life and his previous beliefs are decaying and temporary. He has to take stock of the hopeless situation, and he has to face some of his old assumptions about "obeying the rules" (p. 246) in personal and cultural matters. When he looks in the mirror, symbolically looking into his own beliefs and his own soul, he finds that his beard has grown in. It is tinged with a surprising shade of red, which the Collector associates with the redheaded "atheistical" and "free-thinking" Magistrate (p. 246).



Part 3 Chapter 22

Part 3 Chapter 22 Summary

Lucy again threatens that she will commit suicide. Harry and Fleury try to reason with her, and they attempt to gather contributions to buy sealed food for her at an auction. Barlow does not see why Lucy and the O'Hanlons should be favored over the Eurasian women and refuses to contribute to the young men's fund. Lucy soon begins to host tea parties for her "favorites," and this seems to cheer her up, since she enjoys the company of men. The supplies are so low that tea consists mainly of boiled water, but the guests put on a show of being enthusiastic.

The chockchafer season begins, and great clouds of black bugs cover everything. During tea one afternoon, a swarm of these bugs arrives through an open window, landing on everything. The insects are particularly attracted to Lucy, and they land in thick layers as she tries to sweep them off. She begins to undress to rid herself of the insects, until she is naked beneath them. Both she and the O'Hanlon girls faint. Harry and Fleury hesitate about the propriety of the situation but then run to rescue Lucy while Ram fans the O'Hanlon girls. The young men bring Lucy to the banqueting hall, and Fleury tears the covers off his Bible, using them to scrape the bugs off. They find her pubic hair disturbing, since they have never seen such a thing on the statues of nudes. Miriam and Louise arrive, late for tea, accompanied by the Padre. The three are shocked at the scene they find: an unconscious, half-naked girl accompanied by two young men with torn Bible covers in their hands.

Part 3 Chapter 22 Analysis

Despite Lucy's ostracism among some of the women, she becomes popular with many of the men. She chooses "favorites" and invites the European men to tea, purposefully excluding Vokins, who she deems to be a servant. Clearly, some reminders of the social hierarchy are present in the small society. Lucy likes to be the center of attention, and she hesitates to invite other women to her parties. The men enjoy Lucy's company, and they pretend to want more tea even when they are full know that the water supply is diminishing. When the black bugs swarm into the room and cover all available surfaces, Lucy and the O'Hanlons react in a way that is acceptable for women at that time: they faint. First, though, Lucy acts provocatively, stripping off her clothing and giving the men intermittent views of her naked body. Despite a slight hesitation about the propriety of the situation, the men rush to help Lucy. Fleury believes he is being practical and inventive by using the covers of the Bible as razors to remove the insects.

The two young men see and almost touch a young woman's naked body, something that was certainly not allowed at the time in proper British society. They brush the insects off, and their actions mimic that of a sculptor revealing the woman's form from within marble or other material. Their innocence is indicative of the sexual inexperience



that was required of young men of their social standing. They are surprised by the presence of pubic hair since they have not seen this on sculptures or in books. When Miriam, Louise and the Padre arrive, they are horrified. Fleury's innocent comment about needing help to clothe the naked girl adds to the tension at the end of the scene and to the comedy of the situation.



Part 3 Chapter 23

Part 3 Chapter 23 Summary

It is the beginning of August, and the situation has deteriorated. The graveyard is too dangerous to use, and adult bodies are dumped into one of the old wells. Two babies are born. One dies, but the widowed Mrs. Wright's girl survives and is christened "Hope." The community faces heat, discomfort, food shortages and growing despair. Mrs. Wright's baby is christened, and the Collector is named godfather. As a rainstorm approaches and the Padre's voice drones on, the Collector's mind wanders. He feels everyone's eyes on him, searching for signs of weakness. He thinks about how he has started doing his own laundry, though Miriam and his daughters have offered to do this for him. He considers the role of women in society, and he wonders whether they should be treated differently and allowed access to education. He convinces himself against this, however.

As the baptism continues, the Collector regrets that he may never live to a peaceful old age. He thinks about Mr. Bradley's death and how the Magistrate's cynical comments accompanied the other man's pious final words. The Collector's belief in God is becoming difficult to sustain, and he fights off atheistic thoughts as the Padre continues the ceremony. The Padre addresses the Collector directly, and in front of the entire gathering, Mr. Hopkins is asked to denounce the devil, materialism and sensual desires. The rain cloud hovers over the group, and the rain begins as the Padre finishes the ceremony. The Collector feels upset that the Padre has taken so long, because his Louis XVI table will get soaked in the rain.

Part 3 Chapter 23 Analysis

The community takes a great interest in Mrs. Wright's new baby since it is a sign of hope at a point of incredible discomfort and despair. Everyone looks to the Collector for signs of weakness, since he is their source of hope and strength. This strain is beginning to affect the Collector, and he has practiced putting on a neutral demeanor while letting his mind drift. Ironically, he must make a public renunciation of materialism and other vices while he worries about the safety of his Louis XVI table.

Though the Collector must keep up the appearances of being devout and strong, he begins to act in slightly eccentric ways. The Collector's decision to do his own laundry, for instance, is a major affront to social protocol. This decision is met with surprise and gossip, since some members of the "bolting" group see it as a sign of mental instability. The previous *dhobi* (a low-ranking servant who does the laundry), who had been steadily increasing his prices, disappears. He is offended that the group's leader, the Collector, is now doing tasks assigned to one of the lowest social ranks. By this time, the physical suffering in the besieged area is unbearable. The heat and humidity is at its worst in August, and hunger is a pressing concern. Other social rules have been

discarded. The decision to abandon the use of the graveyard represents the level of fatigue and unconcern for social niceties. Instead, the dead bodies are dumped unceremoniously in the abandoned well.



Part 3 Chapter 24

Part 3 Chapter 24 Summary

Lucy holds another tea party. Her mood has improved since the incident with the chockchafers, and she is calm and accommodating most of the time. The Magistrate sips his "tea" (made of hot water) and thinks about how the river levels have now risen. Downstream the land will flood again, and the embankments will erode as they do every year without the intervention of British engineering. He thinks of the natives and their sacrificial goats, and how this represents the human ignorance that has been prevalent throughout the centuries. The Magistrate notices that Miriam and Louise have not been friendly with Lucy since the incident with the insects, but he decides it must be due to their jealousy over the success of the tea parties. The Magistrate is fascinated with the back of Lucy's head, believing that if he could either see the area or feel the heat it produced, he would be able to bring scientific proof to his phrenological inquiries, since he believes that Lucy exemplifies amative characteristics, those of sexual love.

The rains continue, and the ramparts begin to dissolve into walls of sliding mud. On the perimeter of the fortifications, vegetation is lush. The enemy could approach without warning. However, nothing grows on the ramparts, and as they melt, desperate attempts are made to restore them. Shifts of men work in the rain shoveling mud onto the walls, but without success. The Collector orders pieces of furniture to be brought outside to help prop up the ramparts and keep the earth in place. Soon all kinds of objects are added to the fortifications, regardless of sentimental value. This is met with complaints, since the community members are very attached to their possessions. To combat the vegetation encroaching on the edges of the defenses, Harry suggests firing chain shot. The Collector brings down a British file that won a competition against a French file during the Exhibition. When Harry asks where to begin firing, the Collector answers "please yourself" (p. 269) and goes up to bed, despite the fact that it is still morning.

Part 3 Chapter 24 Analysis

Lucy's tea parties are the last vestiges of social rituals in the community. Louise and Miriam have been shunning her for implicating their brothers in the scandalous scene that the other women witnessed. The Magistrate wants to "take advantage" of Lucy but not in the way we would imagine. He wants to use her as proof of his phrenological theories. It is clear that the Magistrate believes that science is the answer to world problems. He sees other cultures as primitive and ignorant, and he wishes that they would become enlightened and follow the progress and industry that is occurring in England. The author cleverly brings in both sides of the issue, since we see the landowners laughing at the Magistrate's ignorance much as he laughs at theirs.



The other main focal point of this chapter is the deteriorating fortifications. The besieged community realizes that it will be destroyed if the ramparts continue to melt. The community members complain as the Collector orders their furniture and possessions removed from the Residency and used in the fortifications. As readers, we can empathize with the Collector, who does not seem to be upset and is perhaps pleased as the various prized, sentimental and useless possessions are carried away.

Harry's plan to fire chain shot is certainly a wise move, and this adds to the community's fortifications when little else is going well. The Collector reflects on how proud he had been at the Exhibition when the English files won over the French. Like Louise, he now realizes his foolishness and conceit. His previous priorities mean little now. When he tells Harry to begin the firing wherever he wants, he is giving up his authority. This is a major break in protocol for a leader, and a moment of intense despair for others in the community. Though others believe that he is suffering from a mental breakdown, the Collector's decision to go up to bed early can be seen as, at last, his admission that he is not able to make all the decisions for the group nor go on tirelessly without others to support his role as leader.



Part 3 Chapter 25

Part 3 Chapter 25 Summary

Harry and Hookum Sikh walk around the fortifications firing chain shot into the jungle. The community's problems increase. An epidemic of cholera is rumored to be starting, and the ramparts continue to melt and be reinforced between the intermittent periods of rain. The flies are so thick around the Padre as he reads Bible passages to the dying men that he sometimes imagines the flies are part of the text itself. The conditions in the hospital are horrendous, with the sick and dying crying out in pain.

A debate over the proper treatment of cholera victims erupts. Community members write the name of their chosen doctor on a card that they keep with them at all times. Sometimes people cross out one doctor's name and write the other's, if convincing arguments are made on one side. At the end of a church service, Dr. Dunstaple strides to the front of the room and criticizes Dr. McNab's methods. He challenges the other man to justify his treatment methods. Louise weeps with humiliation, and the Magistrate intervenes, trying to keep the peace. Dr. Dunstaple cites numerous examples that support his claim that cholera is transmitted by "damp air." He justifies his treatments by using scientific jargon that impresses the gathered crowd. He then calls on the other doctor to justify his rice water theory, which posits that cholera is passed by bodily fluids. Dr. McNab admits that the medical profession is still confused by the disease. He states his reasons for believing that the disease is caused by the transfer of bodily fluids and then outlines his treatment methods.

The Magistrate watches the proceedings, bemused that the crowd is more impressed by Dr. Dunstaple's oration than by Dr. McNab's rational and dry discourse. The Magistrate also notices that Dr. McNab's reference to acupuncture in the East alarms the onlookers, who now associate this with his treatment methods. Dr. Dunstaple breaks in again with heated criticism, and the Padre asks the doctors to stop their arguments since they are in the presence of the altar. Dr. Dunstaple seems to be ready to punch the Padre, but his wife and Louise lead him away instead.

Part 3 Chapter 25 Analysis

The dreadful conditions in the hospital represent the increasing suffering in the community. The flies surrounding the Padre as he reads to the dying men are symbolic of the level of filth and discomfort affecting the group as a whole. Resources are becoming scarce. Harry's use of chain shot to clear areas in the jungle is a smart idea but also wastes precious powder that is needed for other ammunition. The group now has sightlines cleared around the fortifications so that a surprise attack is less likely. This is lucky, since the group would stand no chance against a forceful direct attack at close quarters.



The focus of this chapter is the discrepancy between various diagnoses and treatments for cholera, a disease that caused epidemics in Europe for many centuries before the disease was understood and proper treatment was possible. At the time that this novel is taking place, the medical profession was divided as to the causes and appropriate remedies for the disease. The author has chosen to represent this in the debate between the two doctors. Dr. Dunstaple uses his powers of convincing narrative and his passionate belief in his ideas to win over the crowd. Dr. McNab, who represents the new and controversial theory that cholera is passed by bodily fluids, suffers from prejudice and a dismissal of his ideas because his arguments go against readily accepted theories. Also, his narrative style is dry and rational and lacks the quotations from well-known sources that Dr. Dunstaple uses. The Magistrate's thoughts and his outburst at the end of McNab's discourse ("pure reason!" p. 280) are humorous to readers familiar with the history of medicine and how ridiculous Dr. Dunstaple's arguments now seem. The Magistrate looks out over the crowd and sees how the people are swayed by reputation and emotion, and how easily they jump to conclusions, ignoring true scientific argument.



Part 3 Chapter 26

Part 3 Chapter 26 Summary

The Collector recovers slowly, and the Magistrate continues to act as leader. The Magistrate realizes that his faith in social change and his belief in people has been eroded. When he is approached about holding an auction for food goods left behind by those who have died, he barely hesitates before giving his consent. Most of the community members are starving now, and when the auction starts they are so desperate that they put themselves in debt on future earnings in order to bid. At the auction, the prices are so exorbitant that only a few people can afford to bid. Most of the auctions are won by Rayne, who has been in charge of the food stocks and is the only person in the community who does not look starved.

Part way through the auction, the people realize that food is being auctioned to several men who likely will not be able to afford the prices they are offering. Rayne has hired these men to bid on his behalf. The Collector demotes Rayne and gives a speech, attempting to lift everyone's spirits. He tells them that a relief force must be on its way, and he cancels the sales from the auction, saying that the goods will be divided between the entire garrison or else among the sick. He puts Mr. Simmons in control of the food stores and says some final words about how the community will stick together whatever happens. His speech is met with silence and then with copious applause.

The Collector is pulled from the stairs by Dr. Dunstaple, who continues his arguments against Dr. McNab. The doctors argue about the various pieces of evidence that confound the medical establishment. The Collector intervenes and suggests a compromise: that members of the community will try to abide by both doctors' recommendations to try and ward off the disease. The doctors continue citing evidence, and again Dr. Dunstaple's arguments win over the factual accounts supplied by McNab. The meeting concludes in chaos when enemy fire erupts in the room. As the crowd runs for cover, some food is taken, and Dr. Dunstaple takes out a vial of rice water from a cholera patient and drinks it in front of Dr. McNab.

Part 3 Chapter 26 Analysis

The Magistrate has undergone changes to his character. He has now lost the ideals he held about social change and his goals for bringing about social reform. Instead, he believes that everyone in society is stupid. His beard glows a bright red for a moment in the sun, symbolizing the strength of the ideals which he has lost. His thorough disgust with humanity is seen in the ease with which he agrees to let the auction go forward. Previously he would have argued vehemently against such an unfair dispersal of resources.



Rayne is the only member of the group who does not appear to be starved. He has been taking advantage of his post in the food store area, feeding himself while others go hungry. The Collector is disgusted with this show of greed, and his disgust is compounded by learning that Rayne has hired several men to bid for him during the auction. The goodwill and hope inspired by the Collector's speech is short-lived, since Dr. Dunstaple eagerly takes over the podium and continues his tirade against Dr. McNab.

Again, the Magistrate watches as the crowd is awed by the first doctor's references to acclaimed sources and as the crowd is confused and bored by Dr. McNab's stronger and more rational arguments. Also, the members of the community are starving, and they are surrounded by the goods that have been up for auction and out of reach. Several people take advantage of the chaos when shots are fired. Some food is stolen, while Dr. Dunstaple makes a climax of all his arguments by drinking a tube full of the rice water that Dr. McNab claims carries the cholera disease.



Part 3 Chapter 27

Part 3 Chapter 27 Summary

After the Collector cancels the auction, rumors start up about his communist ideas, and people desperately start trading jewelery and other precious goods for small amounts of preserved food. Hoarded goods are eaten up, since people fear that everything will be taken and shared equally among the entire group. Mr. Simmons shows the Collector that there is basically no food left in the Commissariat, and there is only a small amount of rice left in storage at the church. The Collector then realizes that ammunition and powder stores are also incredibly low. Rations are decreased again, and each person receives only a handful of dal and flour. Even with this meager amount, supplies will likely last only several more weeks.

Fleury watches as Chloe scares a sepoy out of his hiding spot, and the dog tries to play with the soldier, running after him as he tries to shoo her away and lunges at her with his saber. Fleury is frustrated as Ram moves extremely slowly to prepare his gun and shoot the sepoy. The sepoy dies, and his face is promptly eaten by Chloe. Fleury orders Ram to kill the dog and then retreats to the banqueting hall where he thinks depressing thoughts while watching a group of flying ants shed their wings. He poses with a candle nearby, hoping that Louise will find him in this state of melancholy, but she does not join him since Dr. Dunstaple has now come down with symptoms of cholera.

The doctor claims that he only drank water from the vial, and he demands to be kept in seclusion and cared for by Louise and a native attendant. When Dr. Dunstaple becomes increasingly ill and falls unconscious, some of Dr. McNab's treatments are used. When the doctor is conscious again, he insists that these treatments be stopped and that his own remedies be used. This happens several times. Dr. Dunstaple becomes increasingly enraged each time he regains his senses. Finally, the native assistant is ordered to lock everyone out, and Fleury and Miriam wait out on the veranda hoping for news. Dr. Dunstaple dies in the night, reportedly of a heart attack.

Part 3 Chapter 27 Analysis

Hunger and near-starvation have set in, and all supplies are running dangerously low. The Collector is forced to take desperate measures and reduce the rations again. Everyone is weak with fatigue and hunger, and death by starvation is becoming more and more likely. Fleury witnesses the final transformation of his dog Chloe into a savage wild animal. Chloe still remembers her domesticated life, since she wants to play with the sepoy she brings out of hiding. However, she has truly lost all of her cultured habits since, like the pariah dogs, she immediately sets to eating part of the dead man's body. This parallels the changes in the British community. All semblance of normal cultural functioning is gone, though memories of other times still dictate some behaviors.



Fleury's hunger is so great that he wishes he had spent more of his time eating and less of his time thinking poetic thoughts. Despite this acknowledgment, he retreats to the banquet hall and poses in a romantic and melancholy stance, hoping that Louise will come and see him in this posture. It seems that some of Fleury's interests and pretensions have not left him, though his suffering has changed his perspective and his beliefs. The ants that shed their wings are an image that he associates with the futility of all effort and all enterprise. Despite his suffering and his bravery during the military maneuvers of the siege, he is still, at heart, a romantic poet.

Dr. Dunstaple's illness is an extremely forceful argument in favor of Dr. McNab's theories, and the sick man's stubbornness leads to a quick death by cholera. The community in general does not see Dr. Dunstaple's death as a sign of failure, however, since they firmly distrust Dr. McNab's theories. There is general confusion and misquotation of things that Dr. McNab said, though Dr. McNab shows incredible maturity and compassion. He tells the Collector that he believes that the people are just confused and that he forgives all of the people who gossip about him.



Part 4 Chapter 28

Part 4 Chapter 28 Summary

It is now the end of August, and the rainy season has ended. The hilltop observers return in large numbers, assuming that the finale is about to arrive with the total destruction of the British community. Food becomes an obsession in the Residency area, and the people under siege watch as the natives picnic on the hill above them. People take desperate measures to obtain food. A horse is killed, and one of the men wastes precious shot killing sparrows for a pie. Rotten meat is attached to fishhooks and flung over the wall in an attempt to catch a pariah dog or another wild animal.

Fleury trades several precious pieces of jewelery and other possessions to Rayne and receives two pieces of sugar, which he makes into a "cake" for Louise's birthday in early September. He also buys a teaspoon of tea for ten pounds. He agrees that the debt will be paid by his heirs or estate if he dies before he is able to pay. The cake turns out to be rock hard, which gives Louise difficulty because she is suffering from scurvy and her teeth are loose. Louise starts to cry and then tries to be in a better humor for Fleury's sake. In the billiard room, she cries herself to sleep among other women who also regularly weep.

Part 4 Chapter 28 Analysis

Conditions are now intolerable for the struggling community. Malnutrition and some degree of starvation have set in. Only the Collector complains at the wasted ammunition when Mr. Worseley shoots a thousand sparrows to make a pie. The pariah dogs, which were once considered to be diseased and disgusting, are now seen as fine catches to be made into dinner. Perceptions and normal behaviors are now skewed, so that Fleury finds it acceptable to barter his gold cuffs, a silver snuffbox, and a pair of shoes for two lumps of sugar.

The situation is so horrible that Louise cries in front of Fleury. This is a major change in character from the beginning of the novel, when Louise took great pains to be aloof and cool in front of others, especially young men. Though Fleury means well, his cake is rock hard. It is not this that makes Louise cry, however. She has missed her periods for several weeks and cannot tell anyone about her worries that she is barren. Even though she can cry in front of Fleury, she still cannot share these worries with him. Others are too busy or too preoccupied to listen to her problems. In addition, Louise's vanity suffers a blow. She suffers from scurvy, and her teeth may fall out. In all likelihood, her missed periods are signs of gross malnutrition.

The crowds on the nearby hill increase, since they can sense that the end of the British community is near. The author has created a clever reversal, since early in the novel the Dunstaples took Fleury and Miriam to picnic in the park, and the family ate and drank

with carefree British officers as the hungry natives looked on. Ironically, the British are now starving and staring covetously at the picnics being unpacked by natives on the hill.



Part 4 Chapter 29

Part 4 Chapter 29 Summary

The sepoys bring in more men and equipment in preparation for a large attack, which they hope will end the siege. On September 12th, Mr. Ford warns that signs of an attack are imminent. The enemy's magazine cache is just out of reach, so the British cannot destroy it with their cannons. The Collector privately wonders if the sepoys are planning a major assault because relief efforts are getting near. He gathers everyone together and warns them that an attack will probably be mounted the next morning. The few stores and provisions that are left are brought, with the women and children, to the banqueting hall, where the group will make its last stand. They make a plan to destroy themselves and the banqueting hall if defeat seems near. Vokins dislikes this idea but also dislikes the idea of dying at the hands of the "negroes out there" (p. 309). The Collector tries to reassure the group that a relief effort is making its way to them, but most do not believe him.

The Padre prays and encourages every person present to repent. He then gives a small sermon on justice and punishment, focusing on a passage where God collects and purges the wheat by burning it in the fire. He asks for forgiveness if he has offended anyone during his ministry, and then he pauses to rest. After the closing words, the Collector selects several pistols for himself and Miriam. The rest are sent down to be distributed at the banqueting hall. He finds Hari's book on phrenology and reads the section on the organ linked to hope. On the way downstairs he finds a beetle, which he offers to the Magistrate. When the Magistrate declines, the Collector eats the beetle.

Part 4 Chapter 29 Analysis

The reason for the sepoys mounting a strong attack at this time is unclear. They may be simply trying to end the siege, or else they may be pressured to make the attack because a relieving force is on its way. The Collector's decision to retreat to the banqueting hall is dangerous, since there is no running water, but its fortifications are stronger than those at the Residency area. The Collector's announcement to blow up the hall is the decision to choose an honorable suicide over potential terror, humiliation, rape and murder. The Padre's final speech to the group is difficult because of his emaciated body and his complete exhaustion. The speech about God's judgment and wrath is in line with the Padre's character and with his growing paranoia throughout the siege that he has been inept in his duties and that sin has remained in the group, thus leading to the group's punishment.

The Collector worries that he has not done enough to inspire hope in his charges, and he feels personal remorse for the recent suicide of one of the young men. Again, he considers the pride he felt at the Exhibition over the pistols that he distributes. As readers, we are shocked to see the Collector eat the beetle like a delicacy. This is a

poignant image of a once-cultured man who is on the edge of starvation but still has the civility to offer the morsel of food to a colleague before eating it himself.



Part 4 Chapter 30

Part 4 Chapter 30 Summary

Early the next morning, prayers ring out over the plain. Fleury finds the "singing" beautiful. Fleury inspects his array of weapons, including a heavy pistol from the Collector's collection. Hari prepares the cannons, using the women's stockings to help load the brass cannon, though its muzzle has been distorted from overuse. The Collector sits on the roof so that he can give the order to retreat when it is necessary. He feels giddy with exhaustion and hunger, and he shouts out orders to stand to arms when he hears the first signs of the enemy's approach. The sepoys let out a war cry, and the Collector waits until they are within firing distance to give the order to shoot the cannons. He gives the order too soon, however, and the sepoys advance over the ramparts. Half of his men fend them off, and the other half retreat to the Residency area and the hospital. They have not had enough time to fire a second round.

Quite a few men are saved when Rayne, Fleury and a group of Sikhs and Eurasians lead a counterattack. Fleury confuses the sepoys by twirling his saber around as fast as he can, while the Collector shouts orders that go unheard as he and Ford load their cannon with all kinds of miscellaneous objects. Once their men are safely back in the buildings, they shoot the metal objects at the sepoys below, leading to gruesome wounds or death. Ford is shot and dies. As the Collector attempts to make his way downstairs, the flagpole is shot down and pins him to the ground, where he is caught for several moments in the folds of the flag.

Downstairs, his men retreat as planned from room to room, where new sets of weapons have been placed in waiting. Fleury was not supposed to be in the area, since Harry had sent him with a message just as the fighting began. He does not know about the plan to gradually retreat. He goes upstairs with a fifteen-barreled pistol to try and fire on the enemy from above, ignoring the church bell which signals the order to retreat. While he is examining the gun, a sepoy arrives and attacks. Fleury has trouble with each of the weapons in his small collection, and he ends up saving himself after a long battle that involves a jump onto the chandelier, clinging to the sepoy's back, and several attempts at strangling the sepoy with a violin string. Finally, Fleury trips over the pistol that refused to fire previously. All fifteen rounds are spent on the sepoy, who dies instantly. Downstairs, the men are retreating much faster than planned, which might mean that others will be "outflanked" before being able to reach the entrance to the trench leading to the banqueting hall and the rest of the garrison. Cannons firing from the banqueting hall reinforce this fear.

The Collector and a team of Sikhs hold off the attacking sepoys at the door to the drawing room and again at the last doorway to the hall, and as the sepoys advance, layers of dead bodies get stuck in the doorways. Hookum Singh rings the bell for the final retreat, and the "veteran assault force" kept as reserves enters the fray, causing chaos until they are removed. The Magistrate and several planters arrive and are sent



back to the banqueting hall with the old men. The Collector and the Sikhs are in danger of being cut off and killed, except that at that moment Harry decides to fire a cannon over its recommended elevation and try to hit the enemy magazine. The explosion of the enemy's ammunition supply makes the sepoys hesitate, thinking there may be an attack from behind. The Collector and his men have time to retreat to the trench and to safety.

Part 4 Chapter 30 Analysis

This chapter can be thought of as the climax of the novel, since the British colonists in Krishnapur have survived almost three months of siege, and they face their final confrontation with the enemy. The author provides a blow-by-blow commentary on how the enemy attack is progressing. He shows us the Collector retching with hunger and exhaustion while preparing a cannon with metal odds and ends from statues, kitchen utensils and other incongruous objects. The Collector is also symbolically tangled in the Union Jack when the flagpole is finally shot down. His physical struggle mimics his internal struggle with the ideal of bringing culture and progress to India. He still does not really understand why the rebellion against the British is happening.

Fleury also briefly faces his attitudes about the Indians. He feels moved by the prayer that is heard before the battle, and he feels drawn to finding out more about the depth and complexity of the Indian culture. However, he is soon distracted by preparing his weapons, and he misses this opportunity to move towards cultural understanding. Several characters show courage and prove themselves in battle. The Collector puts himself and his team of Sikhs in danger by holding off the enemy in the doorways of the Residency, giving the other teams of men time to retreat to safety. Harry saves the Collector and his team by successfully blowing up the enemy magazine. Fleury shows his preoccupation with intellectual pursuits by dismantling the faulty pistol during the attack and then single-handedly fighting off a strong enemy soldier. He uses a variety of improvised and sometimes comical techniques. The superior technology displayed at the Great Exhibition is shown to be unreliable, since the 15-round pistol malfunctions, only to set off all of its rounds at the last minute, which saves Fleury's life.

A significant number of comical moments are found in this chapter. These include the scene where the Collector fights back a wall of dead bodies at the doorway; Fleury's innocent comments to the soldier when he is about to be attacked; the use of marbles, kitchen instruments and pieces of metal sculpture in loading the cannon, bringing about a very painful death to the sepoys below; and the team of veterans who are incompetent and bring only chaos at a critical moment in the retreat.



Part 4 Chapter 31

Part 4 Chapter 31 Summary

The Collector sits in a high throne that juts out of the rampart near the banquet hall, discussing the Great Exhibition with the Padre. The priest is now so weak that he must be carried about, and he has trouble finding bearers as he attempts to continue conversations with various people who do not want to listen to him. The Collector is starving, and he realizes that his community is almost totally out of ammunition. The enemy will soon realize that stones and metal objects are being used as ammunition, and they will lead another large attack to end the siege.

Miriam is weak and ill, and Louise is now working at Dr. McNab's side tending to the sick and wounded. She has lost all of her modesty, and does not mind that her dress is ripped almost entirely up one side, giving others a view of her emaciated body. Everyone is now stick-thin from near starvation. The Sikhs refuse to drink from the same water as the Europeans, and they dig a well for their own use. Lucy is talented at making cartridges, and she is given the responsibility of constructing cartridges with the last of the supplies. Bodies are now unceremoniously dumped over the walls of the compound. Father O'Hara dies, and the Padre gives his consent for the other priest's religious mementos to be used as ammunition. Harry has trouble loading a cannon with one of the metal sculpture's heads, and he sits down by the cannon and weeps at the powder that has been wasted.

The Collector worries, since the spectators above the melon beds have disappeared and the sepoys are unusually silent. This probably means that an attack will soon be mounted. The Padre follows him, criticizing an article on the Great Exhibition that likens the human scientific endeavor to God's understanding of and rule over the natural world. The Collector's mind wanders as the Padre denounces the Exhibition as "The World's Vanity Fair," stating that The Crystal Palace was built in the form of a "cathedral of Beelzebub" (p. 337). The Collector has not been listening and answers noncommittally that this is a matter of opinion. The Padre, enraged, grabs the Collector by the neck. At this moment, Lieutenant Stapleton appears, bringing word that the relieving force has arrived.

Lieutenant Stapleton has asked to be the first to ride up to the besieged area and announce the rescue. He is shocked to see the skeletons lying outside the rampart walls, and he feels lucky that, in their terrible state, none of the siege victims shot at him as he rode up with news of the relief effort's arrival. He has an awkward reunion with Louise, who is bone-thin and smells disgusting. Fleury arrives and the three stand about awkwardly. The General calls for blankets as well as sherry and soda. At first the survivors are giddy, and then they all pass out and are carried away by litter-bearers. The Padre arrives as the General and the Collector are attempting a conversation, and the priest gives numerous examples of things featured in the Exhibit that go against



God's word. The General turns his thoughts to how he will be represented in the painting that will be made of the rescuing army's arrival at Krishnapur

Part 4 Chapter 31 Analysis

The final two chapters of the novel are a denouement where the siege ends and the survivors and their rescuers meet and face an awkward reunion. The rescuing party's ignorance of the suffering that has occurred is seen when the General asks for alcoholic beverages. The survivors are half-starved and dehydrated, and alcohol is probably one of the worst things they could have at this point. Also, he calls for blankets as an afterthought, mostly so that his men do not get any ideas about the unattractive but shoddily-clothed ladies. The awkwardness of the reunion is most poignantly seen in Lieutenant Stapleton's reaction to seeing Louise again. For six weeks, he has been fantasizing about what he will say to her if he finds her still alive. However, when he sees the shape that she is in, all of his prepared speeches disappear from his mind. Fleury arrives, and the three individuals stand around awkwardly, since Fleury now has an advantage over the other man as Louise's suitor.

Even at this point in the siege, the Padre has not let go of his obsession with his duty to God, and he continues to follow the Collector around, questioning him on the Great Exhibition. The Padre's already skewed perspective has been distorted even further, and he now claims that the Great Exhibition was built as a temple to the devil. Before the relieving forces arrive, the Collector sits on his decrepit "throne" and accepts a change in his fundamental beliefs. The throne in the rampart wall tips forward and threatens to throw the Collector to the ground whenever he gets excited and voices a strong opinion. Instead, he has decided to become milder in his opinions, and he admits that feelings are just as important as technical progress. Similarly, the severe discomforts of the siege have changed Harry's personality. He weeps openly when powder is wasted on the jammed cannon. The entire group has a difficult time adjusting to their new situation. Lucy weeps at the cartridges that are now no longer needed, and in general the arrival of the rescuing army is met with shock instead of the expected rejoicing.

Two other symbols are important in this chapter. First, the metal statue heads that are used as cannon shot make a point about culture and intellect, since several well-known philosophers' and literary artists' "heads" (Keats, Shakespeare and Voltaire, for example) make excellent weapons. The philosophers' heads that look out from between the pillars at the banquet hall are also important symbols. Earlier, they helped to confuse the enemy army since they seemed to be a display of power. Now, however, it is obvious that they are not made of real marble. They are pocked and chipped, and they seem to be diseased. These figures, symbolic of Western culture and its influence in the world, are not what they appear to be. They are not as solid and infallible as they once seemed.



Part 4 Chapter 32

Part 4 Chapter 32 Summary

The Collector travels over the plain, leaving Krishnapur. He is struck by the vastness of the plain and the size of the country. He watches the plains go by and notices the villages that seem so small against the landscape. He passes two men using bullocks to draw water from a well. Back in England, everyone returns to their regular lives. The Collector cancels his membership in all of the societies he used to participate in and begins to take walks through the poorer neighborhoods of London. As he ages, he goes out less regularly and begins reading the newspaper from cover to cover. Both the Collector and Fleury put on weight as they age.

Twenty years later, the two men meet by chance one day in Pall Mall in London. They have a strained conversation and share personal news. Fleury has married Louise, and they have several children. Harry has married Lucy, and they still live in India. Harry is now a General and is on a hunting adventure in Nepal. The Collector speaks fondly of McNab, and Fleury informs him that McNab eventually married Miriam. The two also still live in India. The Collector tells Fleury that he has sold all of his paintings and sculptures. He tells the young man that culture is "a sham" (p. 343). Fleury disagrees, arguing that ideas and art are important and that culture helps people to set ideals. He has to rush off to an appointment, and he hurriedly says goodbye to the Collector. The Collector lives on until 1880, and near the end of his life comes to the conclusion that a nation is often shaped not by ideas but by "other forces, of which it has little knowledge" (p. 343).

Part 4 Chapter 32 Analysis

As he leaves Krishnapur for good, the Collector reflects on the vast size of the country and on the insignificance of the siege in relation to India's history. He notices men drawing water from a well and realizes how ignorant he has been about the traditions and daily life in India. His last image of the country, one that he remembers always, is of the cyclical and repetitive activity of the men drawing water in the middle of the dry and inhospitable plain. Everyone else returns to their regular lives, putting the siege behind them. Both Fleury and Harry marry the women they became close to during the siege in Krishnapur, and Miriam makes another practical choice by marrying Dr. McNab.

Both the Collector and Fleury become portly, representing the ease of life back in England. Also, perhaps they enjoy food and drink so much because of the deprivation they lived through during the several weeks of near-starvation. Fleury has become opinionated and has continued to value culture and art, though he is now materialistic in the same way the Collector was at the beginning of the novel. This can be seen in his pride in his art collection.



In contrast, all of the Collector's ideas about culture and progress seem to have disappeared, and the neutral stance that he began to take on at the end of the siege is exaggerated in his old age, as he reads the newspaper from cover to cover without giving priority to any particular article or piece of information. His long walks in poorer areas also point to a new concern with poverty, which developed during the siege. Perhaps he is also recognizing the cruelties and shortcomings in his own culture, which he used to believe was superior to countries such as India.

Fleury rushes away from the meeting with the Collector since he has an appointment with a "young lady of passionate disposition" (p. 343). This information is enigmatic, though it does imply that Fleury still enjoys the company of young women and has not given up his romantic ideas. In general, Fleury has returned to a very normal bourgeois life and still adheres to his ideals about art and culture. The Collector, on the other hand, loses many of his beliefs and symbolically rejects materialism and the ideals of culture that he once held.



Characters

The Collector

Mr. Hopkins, the Collector, is the official who is in charge of the British community in Krishnapur. His official duties are eclipsed by the beginning of the siege, and he becomes a leader of the small group of British colonials who are trapped in the building complex around the Residency. One of the Collector's main goals is to keep everyone's spirits up as the siege progresses. He continues to adhere to cultured habits, even when most social graces have been forgotten. For example, the Collector offers the black beetle he finds to the Magistrate before eating it himself, and he is concerned about Miriam's reputation when she stays with him during his illness.

The Collector undergoes some major changes in his beliefs during the siege. When we first meet him, he is a loyal British subject who believes in the superiority of the British culture. He believes in Britain's altruistic goals for the country they occupy. He is also enamored with the Great Exhibition, and at the beginning of the novel we see how conversation often turns to this event. The Collector believes in progress as well as art, as can be seen in his collection of inventions and reproduced metal sculptures. The Collector soon becomes concerned with the issue of poverty in India and turns a critical eye to the problems in his own society. In his official capacity, he must save the people under his care, and to help with this he keeps Hari prisoner. However, the Collector is saddened and ashamed at Hari's dishevelment and emotional collapse, and he eventually lets the younger man go.

At the end of the novel, we see the Collector become rotund and introverted in his old age. His basic attitudes have shifted drastically, and his old beliefs about culture have disappeared by the time he tells Fleury that culture is a sham. After the siege, the Collector gives away his art collection, and he begins to walk through the poor areas of town. He begins to read the newspaper indiscriminately from cover to cover. Clearly, he does not feel attuned to the times, and his once firm judgments about progress and the benefits of the British culture have given way to moderate attitudes and even a neutral feeling about his own society.

The Collector is an intelligent man, and he is the first and only member of the British cantonment to heed the warning signs of the impending rebellion. He is also a man who can make decisions wisely and quickly, since he decides to have mud trenches built despite disapproval from most other members of the community. The Collector is also a very responsible individual and takes the group's problems to heart. He puts himself in danger by doing daily rounds of the fortifications, hoping to keep up the defenders' morale.

There is the potential for romance between the Collector and Miriam, but this amounts to little more than a quick embrace on the stairs. By the end of the novel, the Collector realizes how small and insignificant the siege was when compared to the vast plain



outside Krishnapur and the vastness of India and its history. His whiskers have grown in a surprising "free-thinking" red (like the Magistrate's) during the siege, and the Collector has survived bouts of doubt and a severe fever. By the end of the siege, he has perhaps lost his faith in culture and in God, though during the siege he keeps up the appearances of normal beliefs in front of his charges.

George Fleury

Fleury, as he is known, is a dapper young man who arrives with his sister Miriam in Calcutta. Fleury is a romantic at heart, and his tendency towards romanticism leaves him behind the times, since most people are interested in science and technological progress. Fleury's romanticism can be seen in his love of poetry and in the way his mind wanders from practical tasks at hand, such as an attack being underway. There are also rumors that he played violin at night near some ruins, and near the end of the siege he strikes a melancholic pose as he sits at the banqueting hall and watches the white ants' wings flutter down about him. Fleury also displays quite a bit of self-interest. Louise first assumes that he is conceited, and he inspires jealousy by arriving in "London fashion." Fleury's self-interest is also represented in the green coat that Louise makes for him. In a time of war it is particularly impractical, and the cap with its peacock feather is also a sign of pride.

Fleury's belief system, values and behaviors go through major changes during the siege. He learns how to fire a cannon, and he accompanies Harry on several sorties and counterattacks on the enemy. He becomes close friends with Harry, a military man with whom he would never ordinarily associate. In this way, Fleury joins in the "male" world and builds a strong bond with Harry by fighting by the other man's side. In the midst of his starvation at the end of the siege, Fleury wonders why he spent so much time on poetry and so little on eating. When he returns home to England, he becomes rotund and lives a satisfied bourgeois life, leaving aside some of the pretensions of his youth. Fleury originally plans to write a small book about his time in India, and he has lofty ideals about the need for emotional and spiritual progress and civilization that the British can bring to India. Though he changes considerably during the siege, we see that he still believes in his old ideals once he returns to England, since he collects art and talks to the Collector about the importance of culture.

Fleury's love interest is Louise Dunstaple, and he thinks about her constantly. He buys the lapdog Chloe for Louise because the dog's golden curls remind him of her. However, he never gets up the nerve to give Louise the dog. During the siege the dog loses its façade of culture, and it becomes like a pariah dog, feeding on human remains. Fleury and Louise eventually marry and have many children. He succeeds in building a bond with the once aloof young woman through their weeks of hardship. As Louise's suitor, he wins over his competitor, Lieutenant Stapleton.



Harry Dunstaple

Harry is a young man with military interests at heart. He is Dr. Dunstaple's son and Louise's brother. Harry attended military college at Addiscombe thanks to a reference from Fleury's father, who had political sway at the college. Harry is interested in all things military, and he has no use for the old fashioned and romantic ideals that interest Fleury. Harry represents a very masculine and practical type of person. He knows a great deal about all kinds of weapons and warfare. Harry's knowledge might be the reason why the British community in Krishnapur survives the siege.

Harry becomes close friends with Fleury as the siege progresses, and the two young men hunger for adventure at the outset of the danger. At the opening of the novel, Harry's mother is glad that he is posted at Captainganj, so that Harry will not be tempted into an unsuitable marriage by one of the eager girls and their pushy mothers in Calcutta. During the siege, Harry develops a growing attachment to Lucy Hughes, whose reputation has been ruined. He tries to persuade her not to commit suicide, and at one point he and Fleury save Lucy from swarming black flies by scraping them from her body. After the siege, Harry and Lucy marry, and though Louise is worried that this match will ruin her brother, it seems that the couple are happy. They stay in Asia, and Harry is rumored to be on a tiger hunt in Nepal.

Louise Dunstaple

At the beginning of the novel, Louise is described as a young woman whose pale beauty is envied by other young women in Calcutta. Louise has many suitors among the officers, and she and her mother put on airs of being indifferent to the attention from the men, though they both enjoy it. Louise is vain and caught up in her own beauty, but as the siege progresses, she suffers from boils and scurvy, which causes her teeth to become loose. She used to be untouchable and disdainful in front of the men, but by the end of the siege she has let a large tear in her dress expose her sides and her breasts to anyone who cares to look. Her modesty and self-interest have disappeared, and when Miriam becomes too weak to help Dr. McNab, it is Louise who, surprisingly, works relentlessly at the doctor's side.

At first Louise is not interested in Fleury, since she finds him self-centered. However, she warms towards him as she sees him act bravely when the fighting begins. Her growing fondness for Fleury is seen in the coat and cap she makes him, impractical as it may be to wear bright green under enemy fire. By the end of the siege Louise, like everyone else, is reduced to a starved and odorous state. When Lieutenant Stapleton, one of her favored suitors, arrives with news that the relief force has arrived, the two have little to say to one another. Louise marries Fleury, and the two live in London and bring up a large family.



The Padre

At the beginning of the novel, the Reverend Hampton is a fit and friendly man, full of a simple faith in God and confident in his role in the community. He worries slightly about his ability to fulfill his duties to God as he ministers to the community. During the siege, the Padre loses all perspective, as is understandable in a situation of constant danger, suffering and near-starvation. His worries multiply and become an obsession. He becomes convinced that sin in the British community lead to the suffering they are enduring. He becomes convinced that God's wrath began in earnest when Fleury arrived, and he follows the young man around, trying to convince Fleury of God's perfect design of the universe. He also attempts to get the young man to recant his sinful and atheistic attitudes. The Padre's sermons become more and more concerned with rooting out sin and with the theme of repentance. He comes to believe that repentance will save the besieged group and that it is his duty to root out the evil in the group.

The Padre also turns his neurotic attention to the Collector. He becomes convinced that the Great Exhibition was a vain and pompous celebration of materialism, and he gets violent with the Collector, grabbing him and telling him that the Exhibition hall was created in the form of a cathedral for the devil. By the end of the siege, the Padre is so weak that he looks skeletal. He must make an effort to complete his christening sermon and his speeches. He must find bearers to carry him around since he is too weak to walk, and it is in this comical state that he carries on his one-sided conversation with the Collector just before the relief efforts arrive. The Padre also has a conflict with Father O'Hara, the Catholic priest, and the two argue over the correct burial of bodies. Ultimately, burials are given up and bodies are simply dumped down an old well or over the side of the ramparts.

Hari

Hari is the Maharajah's son, and he represents the new generation of Indians who grew up under British rule. believing that colonial rule would bring progress and improvement to their country. Hari was educated by a British tutor, and he tries to mimic "cultured" British behavior in front of Fleury and Harry. Hari is contrasted with his father, who represents the luxuries and indulgences of traditional royalty.

Fleury's visit is important, since Hari tries to impress the young man and show him treasures from his father's collection. He is greatly affected when Fleury's mind wanders, and the prince's guest seems indifferent to the treasures Hari is showing him. Hari becomes self-deprecating and finally shows his growing anger at Fleury's indifference by forcing the other man to sit with his head clamped in the chemical-laden air while he makes a daguerreotype of him. Hari's interest in daguerreotypes and phrenology proves that he is trying to understand and be assimilated into the dominant Western European culture. Though there is a potential for understanding and friendship between the two cultured and educated young men, a series of misunderstandings leads to hostility between them.



Hari is the only person who makes a stand to save the British when the siege begins, showing his loyalty to the colonial power. However, he is not rewarded by this move. The army does not follow, and only the Prime Minister accompanies him to the Residency area, where the two men are kept in poorly masked captivity. Hari's physical and emotional well-being is destroyed by the treatment he receives, and he is symbolically a caged and exotic animal, like the tigers who used to reside in the stable where Hari and the Prime Minister are housed.

Hari becomes more and more angry, telling the Collector that he would never fight his own people and murder his own "brothers and sisters." When Hari gains his freedom, he tells Mr. Hopkins that he does not forgive the Collector nor any of the British officials, but he does leave on friendly terms with the private citizen, his friend "Mr. Hopkin." Hari's idiosyncratic English is important to his characterization, since he mimics British phrases that his tutor likely used, and he makes mistakes that identify him as a speaker whose first language is not English.

Miriam Lang

Miriam is Fleury's widowed sister. She is reliable and practical, and she is a great help to the community by helping Dr. McNab in his tasks. Miriam and Louise become good friends as the siege progresses, and they banter with each other in light competition over the attention they gain from the men in the company. Miriam has some potential for a romantic relationship with the Collector, but this does not come to fruition. Miriam decides that she would rather not marry again, since she does not like to be restricted by men's ideas about what a woman should be. She does embrace the Collector on the stairs, briefly, before continuing with what she was doing, and she also takes care of him while he suffers from his fever.

By the end of the siege, Miriam has rejected all of her culture's beliefs about propriety and behavior. She does not mind looking after the Collector, though in other times this would have been scandalous since they are alone in the room together. She is also bolder than Louise, and Miriam does not shy away from subjects such as bodily functions and the potential rape and murder that may await them at the end of the siege. After the siege, Miriam stays in India and marries Dr. McNab. She has made a good match, since these are two of the most practical individuals that we meet in the novel.

Dr. Dunstaple

Dr. Dunstaple is an old school friend of Sir Herbert Fleury's. This is why Fleury and Miriam come to visit the Dunstaples when they arrive in India. Dr. Dunstaple is known as a jovial fellow. He enjoys pig-sticking and other sports, and most people in the community think of him as a friendly and competent doctor. When the siege starts, Dr. Dunstaple is forced to work in close quarters with Dr. McNab, a colleague he distrusts.



Dr. Dunstaple becomes suspicious of Dr. McNab's theories and practices, becoming particularly worked up about the causes and treatment of cholera.

As the siege progresses, Dr. Dunstaple is terribly overworked, and he begins to speak passionately about his distrust of the other doctor. He suffers from strained nerves and is given bed rest after an episode of passionate ranting. He begins to lose perspective, like many other characters do under the circumstances, and his distrust of McNab becomes the focus of his thoughts. Dr. Dunstaple takes several opportunities to lecture the entire cantonment about Dr. McNab's inadequacies. He cites well-known medical authorities and uses an emotional oration style to win over his audience. Dr. Dunstaple cinches the argument by publicly drinking a vial of the rice water that McNab claims contains the cholera disease. He becomes ill and dies of the disease, locking himself in a room and refusing the other doctor's treatments, making sure that his native attendant announces that he died of a heart attack. Even after his death the general consensus is that Dr. Dunstaple was not wrong.

Dr. McNab

Dr. McNab is one of the most practical characters in the novel. He is rational and scientific in his approach to his patients, and he is forgiving of Dr. Dunstaple despite the abuse that he suffers from the other man. Dr. McNab's practice of medicine is quite forward thinking for the time, and in general members of the community greet his ideas with skepticism, even if they see that he is competent in his work in all other ways. Dr. McNab has learned about native stitches using ant pincers, and he has read reports on acupuncture and on the latest (and most disdained) arguments about the treatment of cholera.

When he speaks in public, Dr. McNab keeps a calm demeanor, and though his arguments are sounder than those of his opponent, the audience misinterprets what Dr. McNab says. They side with Dr. Dunstaple's more emotional appeal and his reference to well-known authorities. Like Dr. Dunstaple, Dr. McNab is overworked, yet he does not seem to suffer from this as much as his colleague. Miriam often works beside him, and Dr. McNab's attraction to the young woman is only hinted at briefly in an enigmatic sigh he gives as he leaves the room one day. After the siege, Dr. McNab marries Miriam, and they stay on in India.

The Magistrate

The Magistrate, Mr. Willoughby, is one of the Collector's companions during the siege. Both the Magistrate and McNab share some of the Collector's interests in science and progress. The Magistrate has red whiskers. To the Collector, these become the symbol for the reformism and freethinking that he associates with the Magistrate. The Magistrate is also an atheist, and he makes cynical (and, to us, perhaps comical) remarks to a man who dies in his arms and says his last prayers with only the Magistrate as witness. The Magistrate is authoritarian by nature, as can be seen by his



"rule" over the poetry society, and how the group changed from an open circle where discussion was possible into a row of victims awaiting his witty and brutal judgment.

The Magistrate is also a believer in the "science" of phrenology, an area of inquiry that we now know to be based on faulty ideas, not scientific fact. The Magistrate wants to prove to himself that phrenology is valid, and he finally gets up the nerve to try and touch the back of Lucy's head. She is offended by this behavior, and the Magistrate likely learns of his mistake when the "organ" of amativeness he hoped to find is not present. Despite this belief in phrenology, the Magistrate is an intelligent and rational man. He and the Collector are the only ones to truly listen to what McNab is saying in his arguments about the treatment of cholera. We see the community members through the Magistrate's cynical perspective during McNab's final speech. The Magistrate calls out that the audience members are foolish and that McNab's arguments are too rational for them. Indeed, he is right, and the crowd sides with the other doctor.

Lucy Hughes

Lucy is the "fallen" young woman who lives in the dak bungalow outside of the cantonment area. She is stubborn and claims she is suicidal. These claims inspire Harry and Fleury to try and save Lucy. They want to bring her into the Residency area for safety, and they try to think of reasons she should not kill herself. Lucy is a very beautiful and sensual woman, and she may be threatening to take her own life to get attention from men. In part, however, her suffering must be real, since she is ostracized by the rest of the British society, especially the women, because she has been seduced by an officer before marriage and thus lost her status and respectability. When Lucy returns to the cantonment, she is tolerated by the other women, but she still feels excluded. She compensates for this by holding tea parties for the men, where she can be the center of attention. She enjoys picking favorites. and she often does not invite women to these last social rituals that exist in the small community.

When the chockchafer flies arrive in swarms, Lucy is covered in thick layers of the bugs, and she sheds all pretenses of modesty by stripping off her clothing and fainting. She later claims she does not remember anything after the first insect landed on her, emphasizing that she is not always entirely forthright. At the very end of the siege, she copies the tear in Louise's dress, which allows everyone a view of her sides and her breasts. Lucy becomes very useful since she is skilled at making cartridges with the small amount of materials that are left. Lucy does not adapt well when the relieving forces arrive. She weeps since her ammunition is now no longer needed. Lucy eventually marries Harry and stays in India with him, despite Louise's worries that it will be a bad match.

Lieutenant Stapleton

Lieutenant Stapleton is the General's nephew and Louise's other main suitor during the season that Fleury arrives. He accompanies the picnicking party when Fleury and his



sister first arrive at the Dunstaples,' and Louise seems to favor him. He dreams about Louise for the six weeks that the relieving force marches towards Krishnapur. However, he has idealized Louise and cannot adjust to the state in which he finds her. His competition with Fleury is emphasized during the moments after the siege ends when the three young people stand around awkwardly. Fleury has an advantage since he can get closer to Louise. He does not mind the circling flies nor the smell.

The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is a quiet and reserved character. He follows orders and trails after Hari wherever the young man goes. We do not gain much understanding of the Prime Minister's motivations or personality traits. Instead, he is almost an appendage to Hari, and he loyally follows the lead that Hari takes. Like Hari, the Prime Minister suffers when he is kept at the cantonment during part of the siege. He even permits Hari to shave his head in an attempt to locate various phrenological organs.

The Maharajah

Hari's father is the ruler of the area and enjoys the luxuries that traditional royalty are given in India. His wealth is seen in his immense palace, which the young Englishmen find difficult to navigate. The Maharajah's character and opulent lifestyle is an exaggeration of the unfair distribution of wealth that exists in the country. The Maharajah sleeps and breaks wind while the visitors are present, and a pillow bearer adjusts pillows beneath his limbs as he sleeps. He also owns explicit sexual paintings, which Hari realizes are in bad taste as soon as his guests say they prefer not to see them.

When Fleury and Harry visit, they interpret the Maharajah's army to be lazy and undisciplined. The British have been counting on the Maharajah and his forces to come to their aid when the siege occurs, but the Maharajah is obviously content to see the British leave the country, and he takes no action against the rebelling forces, even when his son is in the cantonment and under attack.

Mr. Rayne

Rayne is the head of the opium factory nearby. He and his friends roust Fleury for being a griffin, or a newcomer to India, and they scare the young man by their jests, which include having a man on horseback ride right into the room. Rayne is the only member of the besieged group who stays a normal weight once rations are reduced. He has a very questionable morality, which is revealed when the Collector finds out that Rayne has hired other men to bid on his behalf at the auction. Also, Rayne has likely been stealing from the food stores, since he is healthy and robust when the others are starving. He is replaced by Mr. Simmons, who learns that the food supplies are almost completely gone. Rayne and his friends are also racist and take superior attitudes with the natives. They name their servants after animals, demeaning them by calling them things like "monkey" and "ant."



Ford

Ford is the railway engineer. He and the Collector stay on the roof and fire a cannon full of bizarre metal objects at the sepoys below during the last retreat of the siege. He is shot by the enemy while up on the roof.

Father O'Hara

Father O'Hara is the Catholic priest in the community. He and the Padre argue over the burial of several tightly sealed dead bodies when the siege first begins and social customs such as proper burial are still followed. When Father O'Hara dies, some of his personal effects include religious objects that are used as ammunition.

Mrs. Dunstaple

Mrs. Dunstaple is the doctor's wife and mother to Louise, Harry and Fanny. She worries that her son will be captivated by a young woman in town. She herself tries to find a suitable partner for her daughter Louise. During the winter months, female members of the British society in Calcutta are bored, and they enjoy showing off their daughters at the races and at various balls and celebrations.

Mrs. Hopkins

Mrs. Hopkins is the Collector's wife. Near the beginning of the novel, she prepares for her return to England. It was fairly common practice for wives of officials to return to England for part of the year or else for several years on end.

Mrs. Hampton

Mrs. Hampton is the Reverend's wife. As is seen fit for a lady of her station, she backs up what her husband says in conversation but does not venture any arguments of her own.

Vokins

Vokins is the Collector's manservant. He takes his job seriously, as can be seen when areas of the cantonment are set on fire and he steps into the room during dinner to announce each newly reported incident. Vokins is afraid for his life, and he accidentally cowers in a pile of dead bodies during the first attack of the siege. Vokins does not like the plan to blow up the banqueting hall. He realizes, however, that he will likely die in any case if the enemy reaches him.



Hookum Singh

Hookum Singh is a Sikh who works with Harry in the efforts to defend the British fortifications.

Barlow

Barlow is an official from the salt agency. He is on the team of men sent to the banqueting hall during the first attack.

Major Hogan

Major Hogan is an elderly and quite inefficient military man who is considered to have been "too long in the East" (p. 103). Luckily for Harry, Major Hogan wakes up from a nap and is shot soon after the first attack starts on the banqueting hall. This gives Harry authority over the team of men.

Fanny Dunstaple

Fanny Dunstaple is the youngest child in the Dunstaple family. She is tired of being given attention by her sister's suitors.

Lieutenant Cutter

Lieutenant Cutter is one of Louise's favorites from the previous season. He is an animated young man who enjoys the games in the grove during the picnic. He gives bear hugs to some of the ladies during one of the games, and Fleury looks on, annoyed, sure that Lieutenant Cutter has been cheating. During the siege, Cutter plans and lays the mine that helps defend the Residency area and distract the attacking soldiers.

General Hearsey

General Hearsey is well known throughout the area because he stood up to the mutinous sepoy under his command.

General Jackson

General Jackson is the elderly military man who is in command of the soldiers at Captainganj just prior to and during the sepoy rebellion. In his old age, he brings certain objects with him to remind him what he is talking about. When he visits the Collector, he focuses on the upcoming cricket match when he should be heeding the Collector's



warnings of trouble with the native soldiers. He is injured in the rebellion at Captainganj and dies several days later.

Mr. Simmons

Mr. Simmons is Mr. Rayne's assistant at the opium factory. He is very shy, and he is nervous when he gives Miriam a tour of the factory. The Collector chooses Mr. Simmons to oversee the food stores once Rayne's greed and immorality are discovered.

Lieutenant Peterson

Lieutenant Peterson leads the sortie that meets the attacking sepoys during the explosion of Cutter's mine in the enemy camp. He is shot on the way back to safety, and Harry and Fleury turn back to try and save him, though he does not make it.

Mrs Scott

Mrs Scott's baby is stillborn, and she dies during childbirth.

Ram

Ram is one of the elderly pensioners who mans the banqueting hall with Harry and Fleury.

Ant

Ant is one of Rayne's servants. He is called by this demeaning nickname instead of by his real name.

The dhobi

The *dhobi* is the laundry man. His prices go up exponentially as the siege progresses. He quits when the Collector joins him one day and washes his own laundry.

The Collector's daughters

The Collector has several daughters, who are quite firmly under his authoritarian control. Worried for their futures, they watch him every day as he does the rounds of the ramparts. The Collector wishes he had a closer relationship with his daughters, but the convention of the time dictates that they maintain a formal relationship. His youngest daughter shrinks back shyly when the Collector tries to embrace her.



Mrs Ross

Mrs Ross is Mrs. Rayne's friend. Fleury thinks she is tactless and unwomanly, since she speaks her mind during the dinner conversation.

Sir Herbert Fleury

Sir Herbert is Fleury's father, an old school friend of Dr. Dunstaple's. Sir Herbert Fleury's wife died twenty years ago while they were in India, and Fleury comes to India in part to visit her grave.

Mrs Wright

Mrs. Wright is a widow. She gives birth to a baby girl near the middle of the siege, and the new baby takes the focus away from some of the suffering. The baby is named Hope, and the Collector is named her godfather. The Padre leads the christening ceremony.

Mrs Bennett

Mrs Bennett's baby dies, and the Collector feels sorry for her when he notices her at the christening ceremony for Mrs Wright's baby.

The O'Hanlon sisters

The O'Hanlon sisters are at Lucy's tea party when the chockchafers arrive. They faint immediately.

Mr. Bradley

When Mr. Bradley is dying, the last person he sees is the Magistrate, who has some cynical remarks in response to Mr. Bradley's final prayers.

Burlton

Burlton looks after the treasury.



Objects/Places

The Great Exhibition

This Exhibition was held in an immense cathedral-like structure (The Crystal Palace) in London in 1851. It highlighted inventions and technological advances of the age, emphasizing Britain's role in the industrial revolution.

The possessions

These objects that the British residents of Krishnapur brought with them when they retreated for the safety of the Residency are used to prop up the rampart walls.

The pariah dogs

These wild dogs are nasty and full of mangle. They thrive during the siege since they eat human remains. One pariah dog is particularly attracted to Fleury.

Chloe

Chloe is the domestic dog that Fleury buys. He intends to give the dog to Louise as a gift to win her heart, since the dog's blond curls remind him of Louise. Chloe becomes half-wild during the siege and plays "hide and seek" with a sepoy before eating his face once the man is dead.

Captainganj

Captainganj is the military outpost several kilometers away from the British cantonment at Krishnapur.

The Ensign rifle

The Ensign rifle starts the sepoy rebellions, since some of the Indian soldiers have a moral problem with the use of grease in arming the rifle.

The Residency

This is the main building in the cantonment, with a wide and impressive staircase and many rooms used by the Collector in his official duties. The Residency becomes part of the small group of buildings that are fortified during the siege.



The Cutcherry

The Cutcherry contains thousands of stacked official documents. When it explodes as part of the retreat to the banqueting hall, the "snowfall" of pieces of paper surprises the enemy.

The Fleury Cavalry Eradicator

This is the complicated and ineffective weapon that Fleury designs and uses.

The brass cannon

Harry instructs the small team at the banqueting hall on how to use this cannon. The men are shorthanded but are able to load and shoot the cannon. The cannons are important in the defense of the besieged area.

The chapatis

Piles of chapatis arrive in the cantonment and in the Residency just before the rebellions begin. The Collector is the only one to recognize this as a sign of potential trouble.

The Billiards Room

This room used to be a calm area of male retreat, but it is now the sleeping quarters for the women.

The chockchafers

These black insects come in droves and land on everything in sight. They arrive during Lucy's tea party, and she strips down as the insects land on her in increasing numbers. Fleury and Harry shave the bugs off of her with the bookends of Fleury's Bible.

The banqueting hall

This is one of the strongest buildings in the area and easily defensible, though it lacks a well or fresh water. Harry, Fleury and several elderly gentlemen are posted here when the fighting begins.



The marble statues

Amid the pillars at the entrance to the banqueting hall are several busts of famous philosophers. These are thought to be marble but turn out to be fake, since they are pocked by enemy fire.

The stable

Eventually the hospital is moved to the area that used to be the stables. Hari and the Prime Minister are kept in one of the stalls where wild tigers used to be kept.

The cholera "rice water"

Dr. Dunstaple drinks a vial of clear liquid thought to be rice water: liquid taken from a cholera patient. He dies from cholera soon after.

The Union Jack

The British flag still flies over the besieged area, as a symbol of the British presence. This is a target for the sepoy sharpshooters.

The statue heads of Voltaire and Shakespeare

When the siege victims run out of ammunition, they load their cannons with any metal they can find. The Collector's metal statues are filed down and used as cannon shot. Voltaire's head gets stuck in a cannon, wasting precious powder, though Shakespeare's head does considerable damage to the enemy lines.

The ramparts

Before the trouble begins, the Collector orders mud trenches and ramparts to be created around the Residency and surrounding buildings. Everyone thinks this is ridiculous, but in the end these fortifications are necessary for survival. The rains threaten to destroy the ramparts, so furniture and miscellaneous possessions are used to help prop them up.

Calcutta

Fleury and Miriam first meet the Dunstaples and Mr. Hopkins in Calcutta. British society members in Calcutta spend the winter months amusing themselves with races, dances and other celebrations. They are eager to see new faces since the society is fairly close-knit.



The phrenology book

The Magistrate's interest in phrenology is taken on by Hari, who studies a book on phrenology with great interest. He gives this book as a token of forgiveness to the Collector, who has no use for it.

The violin string

Fleury uses a violin string to try and strangle an enemy soldier in one-on-one combat.

The green coat and cap with peacock feather

Louise makes Fleury a coat and a cap for his birthday. She uses material from the billiard tables.

Themes

Progress and Culture

In the mid-1800s, massive changes in technology and industrial progress were bringing changes to society as a whole in Britain. The Great Exhibition, which featured hundreds of new inventions, epitomizes the spirit of the times, which emphasized progress and the positive changes that could be brought about through mechanization and technology. However, this intense period of change caused difficulties in other areas of society. The Padre, for example, is at first happy to praise a church structure featured at the Exhibition. However, such an emphasis on physical progress meant that there was a danger to spiritual and emotional matters. This is what Fleury means when he argues against the Padre. Fleury is "behind the times" since he is still a romantic at heart. For him, emotional and spiritual matters are just as important as the scientific inquiry of which he is also capable.

During the siege, the Collector is forced to face some of his deeply held beliefs about technological progress and the frenzy of invention that was hitting his society. At the beginning of the novel one of his favorite topics of conversation is the Great Exhibition, and he is proud of the reproduced metal art objects that he owns. He is equally proud of the various inventions he has collected, from machines used in farming to pistols, files and a prototype of the bicycle. Throughout the course of the siege the Collector is forced to confront his pride in his nation and in this physical progress. Many of his prized objects are used for defense (i.e. placed along the ramparts with the rest of the possessions) or are found to be faulty in some way. The Collector comes to realize that culture must be about "the heart" as well as the intellect.

One of the main arguments with which the British justified their presence in India was that they were helping to bring progress to the country. When the Indians rebel against the British presence, the British residents in the area question whether their presence has indeed brought about positive changes in the colonized culture. At the end of the novel, the Collector gives up his enthusiastic and often repeated views about culture and progress. He agrees with the Padre, though in a less zealous manner, that the danger of materialism accompanies all of this progress in scientific and technological domains. Fleury, however, seems to become more fully in tune with the times. He gives up some of the romanticism that is associated with the previous era and becomes an avid collector of art, showing that he still believes in the emotional and spiritual side of culture. He also takes on some of the Collector's old materialism by forming a collection.

Colonial Power

The British presence in India was that of a colonizing power ruling over a colonized people. The British held positions of power, while the traditional rulers (such as Hari's father the Maharajah) coexisted with the British rule and compromised so that they



could continue their way of life. The author draws a poignant and almost satirical portrait of the individuals affected by British rule. There is the Maharajah, who continues his luxurious lifestyle regardless of what the British do and who will not be sad to see the British leave his country. It is important to note that he does not send his army to defend the British community once the siege begins.

Next, Hari is an example of a British-educated member of the upper classes in India who is caught between the two cultures. He believes in the rhetoric that argues the British are in India to bring progress to the nation. However, he is saddened and disillusioned when he is held captive and forced to stay in the besieged area once he voluntarily goes there. Only the Prime Minister follows Hari once the rebellion begins. The author uses satire to show how the Prime Minister is merely a shadow of the true rulers of the country, the royal families. Indeed, the Prime Minister is hardly characterized at all in the novel. He is simply a meek man who loyally follows Hari around, putting up with all kinds of discomforts and dangers and never saying a word.

Finally, the author gives us a picture of the regular subjects under colonial rule. The attendants at Rayne's bungalow are called by nicknames chosen by the young men because of the servants' resemblance to insects or animals. This is truly degrading, though it is thought to be normal among these British men. Also, Harry makes comments on the "effeminate" upbringing of the upper class Indians, and he comments on giving a native a thrashing, which shocks Fleury but does not seem to be an uncommon practice. It is also normal for the British to picnic and enjoy themselves, eating, drinking and frolicking in the park while groups of natives look on, obviously poor and unable to enjoy what they see before them. The author turns this situation on its head and makes his British community members face hunger and near starvation while rich natives feast nearby. However, the author does give his British characters one major saving grace in their attitudes toward their own presence in the country. Generally, they have good intentions, and men like the Collector truly believe that British rule is the best thing for India. He is confused and saddened by the rebellion that takes place, and he is probably not aware of the problems and inequalities caused by the very rule that he has believed in so strongly.

The Erosion of Civilized Society and Rules of Behavior

As the siege progresses, the rigid behavioral codes and norms of the British community break down. For upper class Victorians such as the Collector, propriety and duty were highly esteemed values. There were strict rules about the interaction between the sexes. Modesty was a prized characteristic in women, and being outspoken was thought to be crude and inappropriate. Women were thought to be weak and ill-suited for tasks other than domestic ones. Men were supposed to abide by strict rules of propriety as well. For instance, being alone with a woman (such as when the ill Collector is alone with Miriam) would have been judged irresponsible on the man's part, since this would risk ruining the woman's reputation.



There were also very strong differentiations between classes and ages, so that the Collector treats his children formally and strictly. As the siege progresses, however, the author shows us formal Victorian society under a microscope as it begins to dissolve under the pressures caused by the siege. The lack of space, resources and food all put stress on the community. Also, as hunger and desperation set in, many cultural rituals are thrown aside. An important symbol that the author uses to highlight this theme is that of the dogs who live in and near the besieged area. The "civilized," once-domesticated dogs suffer greatly but eventually give in to their savage natures and eat human remains by the end of the siege. The pariah dogs, uncouth and savage to begin with, flourish in the harsh wartime conditions.

Like the domesticated dogs forced into eating humans, who were once their companions and masters, the British community members lose, one by one, all of the trappings of civilization. At first, the hierarchy is adhered to, especially by the women, who divide their sleeping area into different regions and divide the domestic tasks based on social rank. Regular capitalist habits are followed, as is seen in the trading of food goods and the attempt at an auction, where those with more money would be able to get some of the few remaining resources once everyone is facing near-starvation. This, however, is rejected since the control of the food supplies has been unfair, and Rayne (representing the wealthy in society and wealthy civilizations) has taken advantage of his access to food and hoarded it while others (representing the poor and disadvantaged nations) practically starve.



Style

Points of View

The novel is written in the third person point of view, which gives the reader insight into many different characters in the besieged community. The author uses omniscient narration, which means that the story includes the thoughts and perspective of multiple characters. *The Siege of Krishnapur* narrates the struggle of an entire settlement of people who take shelter in the Residency and the surrounding buildings. The third person point of view is essential to showing how different characters react to the deteriorating situation. We see the Collector deal with the first signs of trouble, and we get a strong sense of the scorn and ridicule pointed at him from other members of the British community in Calcutta. Similarly, we see how Fleury changes throughout the novel and how relationships are forged between many of the main characters.

The author does not only give us insight into individual perspectives. He also describes the general attitude toward decisions that are made and particular characters' actions. For example, the author takes a moment to describe Vokins' thoughts as he learns of the plan to blow up the banqueting hall area as a last and honorable act of self-destruction if the enemy wins. We also follow many of the subplots with interest, since we have a direct "ear" to Fleury's infatuation with Louise (and his hopes to impress her), to the Magistrate's scorn of the ignorant landowners and the ignorant British community members as they snub McNab's arguments and to the Padre's growing fervor and obsession with Fleury's sins. Though the author paints a picture of a large and varied group, we gain a sense of empathy for many of the main characters through the author's use of omniscient narration. Readers are often allowed to see things from the perspectives of several characters involved in a scene, and this gives an added depth to the novel.

Setting

The novel is set in the spring of 1857 in Northern India. The British community thrives in Calcutta and Krishnapur, and everywhere—including the nearby military base of Captainganj—people are ignoring the first signs of trouble brewing among the native regiments. The novel opens in Calcutta, a large city where the British community amuses itself by holding balls and picnics and other amusements. Settings used in the opening chapters include the Botanical Gardens, the Dunstaple's house, and the hall where a ball is being held. After this, the setting is limited to the area around the Residency and what is left of the British cantonment at Krishnapur. Members of the British community, as well as many Eurasians, Sikhs and native attendants all crowd into the Residency and the other buildings within the fortifications that have been hastily erected by Collector. Space is cramped, since everyone brings as many possessions as they can carry and these items fill the rooms and hallway of the Residency building.



The enclosed space puts strain on the relationships between the characters as the siege progresses. Characters are in constant danger and face hardships such as the heat, lack of food, disease and decreasing morale. The ramparts and the mud walls become crucial to survival, as do the facades of the stone buildings. What was once a bureaucratic area used for official business (with a Cutcherry, a treasury, the Residency building, the banqueting hall and several houses including the Dunstaple's Krishnapur residence) now becomes the setting for daily life for an entire community. As the enemy advances, the British group retreats into areas that are more easily defensible. Around the besieged area is the native town, the rest of the British cantonment which has now been burned by the rebelling forces, a mosque which is eventually pulled down for safety, the river and the melon beds facing the banqueting hall and of course the vast dry plain that surrounds everything.

Within the fortified area, much of the action takes place in the banqueting hall, where Harry and Fleury fight off the first attack; the Collector's study, which becomes drastically altered during the siege; the billiard room, which is now the ladies' sleeping quarters; and the Cutcherry, which is blown up as part of the last retreat to smaller fortified quarters. The stables are converted to hospital quarters, and part of this area are used to house Hari and the Prime Minister while they are unofficially held captive. Two other locations outside the fortified area are also used in the novel: the opium factory, which Miriam and the Collector visit, and the Maharajah's palace, which Fleury and Harry visit, and where they meet Hari for the first time. The novel ends back in England, with Fleury and the Collector meeting in a public area in London some twenty years later.

Language and Meaning

The author's style is eloquent and easy to follow. Transitions from longer descriptive passages lead easily into dialogue and action. The style of writing might seem more formal than we are used to in contemporary novels. Longer descriptive passages and long sentences with several dependent clauses add to this impression of a more traditional form of storytelling, as was the convention in non-experimental literary novels until perhaps twenty or thirty years ago. If the reader is North American, she or he may notice some differences in language, since the book is written from a British perspective.

Farrell's style and vocabulary also follow the period in which the work is set. Dialogue often revolves around issues and topics that were popular at the time (duty, scientific progress, a crisis in religion and so on), and this has an impact on the vocabulary and pacing of the conversation. Some Indian words are found throughout the novel, showing how the British in India were not immune to some influences from the culture around them. Dialogue is generally very witty and to the point and is balanced by description of characters in action. The author's voice is often heard guiding the reader, as is implied in the "Points of View" section describing omniscient narration. However, this technique is not often used today, and so it is refreshing for the contemporary reader to be "led" into the setting by an entire paragraph focusing on the physical details of the place



before a character is introduced and action starts. An example of this is found in Chapter 7 which begins: "Picture a map of India as big as a tennis court with two or three hedgehogs crawling over it . . . each hedgehog might represent one of the dust-storms which during the summer wander aimlessly here and there over the Indian plains. . ." (p. 96).

Structure

The novel contains 32 chapters and an Afterword. The work is divided into four parts. Part 1 includes chapters 1-9. Part 2 includes chapters 10-17. Part 3 includes chapters 18-27, and Part 4 concludes the novel with chapters 28-32. Part 1 chronicles the events that precede the siege, including the Collector's attempt to warn other officials in Calcutta, the rebellion at Captainganj, and the retreat to the fortified area around the Residency. Part 2 follows the middle part of the siege, where the garrison and the rest of the community fight off the enemy attacks but are still strong enough to lead several offensive sorties themselves. By Part 3, conditions have worsened, and this section follows the increasing suffering endured by those under siege. Part 4 describes the final few days of the siege, when conditions are at their worst and death seems imminent. In the middle of this section, the relieving force arrives, and the siege victims must adjust to this enormous change.

The last few chapters are quite short, and jump to twenty years later, when Fleury and the Collector meet by chance in Pall Mall. In this short exchange the author summarizes what has happened to several of the main characters whose lives we followed during the siege. An Afterword by the author references the historical basis for the novel and gives thanks to many sources which the author used.



Quotes

"The Collector had been astonished, on hearing of the mutiny of the 19th at Berhampur, at the lack of alarm in official circles over this development. Later he heard that General Hearsey had been obliged to address the sepoy at Barrackpur to reassure them that there was no intention of forcibly converting them to Christianity, as had been suspected." (p. 30)

"But Hopkins had gone further. Not only had he returned to India full of ideas about hygiene, crop rotation, and drainage, he had devoted a substantial part of his fortune to bringing out to India examples of European art and science in the belief that he was doing as once the Romans had done in Britain." (p. 31)

"But it is probable that the majority of people in the cantonment could not make up their minds as to the best course to follow. While the 'confident' party recommended calm and indifference, and the 'nervous' party were all for bolting to the Residency, the majority voted now for one course, now for the other, and sometimes even for both at once. . . ." (p. 67)

"Fleury had wandered over to the Residency hoping to find someone to have a chat with, perhaps even Louise if he were lucky. . .but everything was in turmoil. All the men were working in a frenzy to throw more earth on to the ramparts before the sepoy had a chance to attack. . .they did not even appear to see Fleury standing there amiably in his Tweedside lounging jacket." (p. 104)

"Hari, firmly on the side of Progress, had insisted on leading the Palace army to their defense. But the Maharajah had declined to let him do any such thing. The whole country was rising to put the *feringhees* and their vassals to the sword; his own power was certain to increase once the Company was destroyed." (p. 134)

"Yet when the Collector piously gave to the poor, it was to the English poor, by a fixed arrangement with his agent in London; he had accepted that the poverty of India was beyond redemption. The humans he had got used to, in time. . .but the dogs never." (p. 152)

"The Collector had been discoursing in an objective way on the perplexing question of why, after a hundred years of beneficial rule in Bengal, the natives should have taken it into their heads to return to the anarchy of their ancestors. One or two mistakes, however serious, made by the military in their handling of religious matters, were surely no reason for rejecting a superior culture as a whole." (p. 171)

"In spite of his difficulties with the Eradicator Fleury came very well out of the attack. He and Harry had both behaved with great bravery in full view of everyone. . .Perhaps, if one takes the long view, this gallant action might be seen as a solstice in Fleury's life, for from now on as the days went by he grew steadily less responsive to beauty and steadily more bluff, good-natured, and interested in physical things." (p. 202)



"At the same time the Collector realized with a shock how much his own faith in the Church's authority, or in the Christian view of the world in which he had hitherto lived his life, had diminished since he had last inspected them." (p. 211)

"The Collector lit the oil-lamp on the table beside a dish of *dal* and a chapati which his daughters had left for his supper; his shattered bedroom slowly materialized out of the darkness, the splintered woodwork, the broken furniture, the wallpaper hanging in shreds from the shrapnel-pocked walls; this once beautiful, complacent, happy, elegant room was like a physical manifestation of his own grieving mind." (p. 219)

"In some respects, Louise could not help thinking, Miriam was just like a man the way she said things. . .sometimes even worse. What on earth would people think if Miriam started talking of a gentleman's natural functions in front of the wedding guests when she and Fleury got married; in some ways the prospects of such a solecism seemed more terrible to Louise than the possibility of one or both of them not surviving the siege." (p. 239)

"Perhaps it is our fault that we keep them so much in idleness? Perhaps we should educate them more in the ways of the world? Perhaps it is us who have made them what they are?"

"But the Collector was no better at suspecting himself of faults than of virtues. 'But no. It's their nature. Even a fine woman like Miriam is often malicious to the others of her sex.'" (p. 257)

"The Magistrate knew, alas, what would be happening when this great volume of water reached the depression made by the giant's footprint in the river a few miles away. . .The embankments which he had vainly tried to have reinforced by the *zemindars* would now be brimming and beginning to overflow. . .within a few hours the country around the embankments would be flooded and ignorance, stupidity and superstition would have triumphed once more as they have triumphed again and again in human affairs since time began!" (p. 261-262)

"Something clearly had to be done, and done quickly, for the ramparts were not diminishing at a steady rate. . .the longer the rain lasted, the more quickly the ramparts melted." (p. 264)

"Ladies and gentlemen, I need not tell you how we are ravaged by this disease cholera in Krishnapur! Many have already departed by way of this terrible illness, no doubt others will follow before our present travail is over. That is the will of God. But it is surely *not* the will of God that a gentleman who has come here to practise medicine. . .I cannot dignify him with the name of 'physician.' . .should send to their doom many poor souls who might, with the proper treatment, recover!" (Dr. Dunstaple, p. 274)

"With an effort the Collector removed his eyes from the food and looked at the crowd assembled to bid for it. How starved they looked! Only Rayne, standing on the stairs with his fingers idly drumming on the lid of a tin of Scottish shortbread, still looked as



sleek as he had before the siege. Was this because Rayne had been in charge of the Commissariat?" (p. 282)

"Prices had already quadrupled during the siege; now a frenzy of economic activity took place in which more than one lady gave a handful of pearls for a bottle of honey or a box of dates. This was regarded by many of the erstwhile members of the 'bolting' party as the twilight of reason before the Collector's increasingly communistic inclinations demanded that you give up not only your stores, but perhaps your spare clothes, and, who knows? maybe even your wife as well." (p. 292)

"Once again the Padre urged his listeners to repent because now the most dangerous time of all was at hand, and he repeated the words he had read earlier: 'His fan is in his hand, and he will purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the barn; but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.'" (p. 310)

"A look of despair, of righteous anger came over the Padre's face. Suddenly, to the Collector's astonishment, the Padre gripped him by the throat and shouted: 'A matter of opinion! The Crystal Palace was built in the form of a *cathedral*! A cathedral of Beelzebub!'" (p. 337)

"'Well, we've relieved you, eh?' said the General to the Collector, trying to break the ice. 'Nick of time, what.' This Collector-wallah was a devilishly hard fellow to talk to, he was finding. He'd heard stories about him in Calcutta and half expected something of the sort. Mind you, he'd probably been through a sticky time. 'Now, where's that sherry pawnee?'" (p. 339)

"Crossing for the last time that stretch of dusty plain which lay between Krishnapur and the railhead, the Collector experienced more strongly than ever before the vastness of India; he realized then, because of the widening perspective, what a small affair the siege of Krishnapur had been, how unimportant, how devoid of significance. As they crept slowly forward over the plain his eyes searched for those tiny villages made of mud with their bamboo groves and their ponds; and though the plain was perfectly flat the villages were somehow hidden in its folds, blending with it. When they paused near one of the villages to rest the horses the Collector remained in the carriage and watched the men drawing water from the well, drawing it up in a huge leather bag with the help of their bullocks, and he knew that the same two men and two bullocks would do this every day until the end of their lives." (p. 341)

"Half anxious to be on his way, for he had an appointment with a young lady of passionate disposition, Fleury asked the Collector about his collection of sculpture and paintings. The Collector said he had sold them long ago.

"'Culture is a sham,' he said simply. 'It's a cosmetic painted on life by rich people to conceal its ugliness.'

"Fleury was taken aback by this remark. He himself had a large collection of artistic objects of which he was very proud." (p. 343)



Topics for Discussion

Discuss Fleury's character as a symbol of the changing times in which he lives. What qualities, beliefs and actions associate him with "the times," and does this change as the novel progresses? You may want to discuss events that change him, i.e. his friendship and shared experiences with Harry. How do the final pages of the novel confirm or complicate the argument you have developed?

Research the historical basis for the novel. Discuss the siege depicted in the novel as it relates to the larger political landscape at the end of British rule in India. What kind of portrait of the colonizing powers does the author paint? Are there faults you can find with it, or has it been idealized? In what ways does the author sympathize with the British colonizers? In what ways does he criticize them? Cite specific examples from the text in your response.

In the novel, there are several chances for cultural understanding. Identify several of these moments, and discuss why these opportunities are missed. Can you find any overarching reasons for the conflicts that arise? Discuss these reasons (or the lack thereof).

Argue for or against the following statement: *In the mid-19th century, women and children were the subjects of colonial Victorian power, as were Indian citizens under British rule.* Cite and discuss a number of passages and examples to back up your argument. Identify specific attitudes and actions that show these similarities. In either case, a close reading of passages involving racist, sexist or superior attitudes is important. You may also want to look at the Collector's relationship with his daughters, his attitude to women, Miriam's thoughts in marriage and Fleury's thoughts on the discussion at the dinner table.

Choose from one of the following characters and chart the changes in attitude, values, self-understanding and behavior that occur between the beginning of the novel and the end of the siege: the Collector, Fleury, Louise or the Padre.

The 19th century witnessed a crisis of faith in the church and in traditional religious belief. Why did this occur? Discuss this in relation to the text. You will want to discuss the conflict posed by scientific discoveries of the time and other changes in social structure that had an impact on people's belief in the church. Next, discuss specific characters, actions and arguments that occur in the novel. Is this crisis of faith a significant theme in the novel, and/or is it linked to any other themes you can identify? Some research of secondary sources will be necessary if you choose to respond to this essay question.

Take a detailed look at the symbolism of the pariah dogs and the domesticated dogs that is developed in the novel. What do the dogs represent, and how do the various groups fair as the siege progresses? Look also at the monkey in the sailor's hat who attacks the Collector. What do these animals represent? Analyze the changes in



Fleury's relationship with Chloe, and discuss the scene in which he asks Ram to take the dog's life. Link this to a larger theme in the novel, i.e. ethical behavior in times of suffering, culture and civilization, loyalty or courting behavior/relationships between the sexes.

Chart the dissolution of "civilized" society into the hunger-ridden and desperate people that the British siege victims become. Are there noticeable stages that you can use to label or track these changes? Discuss physical changes and actions (i.e. the decision to use the possessions to prop up the ramparts) and the coinciding value or social rule that this has now rejected (i.e. materialism).