

Staying On Study Guide

Staying On by Paul Scott

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Staying On Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Chapter 1.....	6
Chapter 2.....	8
Chapter 3.....	10
Chapter 4.....	12
Chapter 5.....	14
Chapter 6.....	16
Chapter 7.....	18
Chapter 8.....	20
Chapter 9.....	23
Chapter 10.....	25
Chapter 11.....	27
Chapter 12.....	29
Chapter 13.....	31
Chapter 14.....	33
Chapter 15.....	35
Chapter 16.....	37
Characters.....	38
Objects/Places.....	42
Themes.....	44
Style.....	46
Quotes.....	49
Topics for Discussion.....	51



Plot Summary

Staying On takes place in early 1972 in Pankot, India. The story begins and ends with the death of one of the main characters, Tusker Smalley, from a heart attack. This occurs shortly after he receives a letter from his landlord, the owner of the adjacent hotel. In between the two descriptions of this event, the reader becomes acquainted with Tusker, his wife Lucy, and an assortment of people in their lives and memories.

Lucy and Tusker have been married for 40 years and have been in India for all of that time except for one short trip to England. Tusker was a Colonel in the British Army, forced into early retirement when India gained its independence from Great Britain and the British military departed for home. He chose to "stay on"; first to assist the Indian transition, later with a private firm, and finally in retirement. Lucy agreed at first, but was not consulted in the final decision to stay in India after retirement. She is not happy remaining after all the other British families left. Although she loves Tusker, she feels quite isolated and afraid of what will happen to her if he dies first.

After opening with Tusker's death, the story transitions back to Tusker's first heart attack about three months earlier. Tusker is agitated over the state of the garden and believes that Mrs. Bhoolabhoy (their landlord) is not fulfilling the terms of their lease. Lucy is determined that Tusker will get well so she will not be left alone. This leads her to conspire with Ibrahim, their servant, to hire a new gardener. They let Tusker believe that Mrs. Bhoolabhoy has hired the gardener, a deception that Mr. Bhoolabhoy assists with.

As Tusker recovers from his first heart attack he notices, but does not ask about, the new gardener. Tusker spends much of his time reading and commenting on a small history of Pankot. Lucy seems to move more into the past, reliving their travels and better times.

A letter from England sends Lucy down memory lane. She conveys a great deal of history in imaginary conversations with a prospective visitor, David Turner, whom the reader never meets. Through this mechanism, Lucy and Tusker's background is revealed along with their feelings, fears, and hopes. Much of the book revolves around Lucy's frustrations with Tusker, their current lack of funds, and the attitude Tusker had towards work and advancement that has placed them in this situation. Lucy does work up the courage to demand an accounting from Tusker on what income she would have should he die first. This leads to what she regards as the first and only love letter she has received in her life, given to her by Tusker just the day before he dies. It confirms that she will have little income and few options other than to stay on. There is also a great deal of time spent in gaining insight into how other characters view Lucy and Tusker.

Mr. Francis Bhoolabhoy is as different from his wife as Lucy is from Tusker. He loves the hotel, which he managed before marrying his wife, and is devoted to his work at the church. Francis and Tusker are friends and often spend Monday evening "being convivial" while Lucy goes to a movie and Mrs. Bhoolabhoy plays bridge. Pankot is his



world and he is very happy there, although that world begins to crumble around him during the course of the book. Mrs. Bhoolabhoy originally bought the hotel in an effort to gain entrance into a larger consortium and she succeeds in her efforts during the course of the story. Mr. Bhoolabhoy is very upset about the likely changes, including having to write a letter essentially evicting the Smalleys from their place. This letter apparently causes Tusker's fatal attack.

The end of the book literally repeats some of the opening paragraphs but the reader now knows what has lead up to the delivery of the fateful letter and Tusker's reaction to it.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

Chapter One opens with the death of Tusker Smalley, one of the main characters. The reader is given a great deal of background and is introduced to many of the other characters and many of the locations in the story while learning the immediate incidents that led up to Tusker's death on a Monday morning in April, 1972.

Tusker and Lucy Smalley have been living in The Lodge, an annex to Smith's Hotel, for ten years. Smith's was once the only hotel in the Pankot Hills, but it has clearly seen better days. Most of the business now goes to the Shiraz, which is new and five stories tall.

Smith's is owned by Mrs. Bhoolabhoy and managed by her husband Mr. Bhoolabhoy. Mrs. Bhoolabhoy suffers from migraines, and it is due to her current migraine that Tusker's death is discovered. The Smalley's dog, Bloxsaw, is howling in their garage and Mrs. Bhoolabhoy sends her husband over to complain. He discovers Tusker's body.

Mrs. Bhoolabhoy is an arresting person. She is very heavy, wears flowing clothes to fit her large size, and has an extremely assertive personality. She is quite wealthy and sees no reason why she should not always have her way. She married Mr. Bhoolabhoy after buying the hotel, which he had been managing for the previous owner. He is slight, quiet, and much younger. Although they are very different and often disagree, they are also in love.

This morning Mr. Bhoolabhoy is required to write a letter to Tusker and Lucy Smalley. Although the content of the letter is not revealed at this time, it is clear that Mr. Bhoolabhoy dreads writing it and believes it will upset Tusker and Lucy. He and Tusker are friends, spending many a convivial Monday evening sharing drinks and stories while their wives are out; Lucy Smalley to the movies and Lila Bhoolabhoy to play bridge. He must write the letter twice before his wife will agree to sign it. Minnie, Mrs. Bhoolabhoy's maid, delivers the letter.

Soon after the letter is delivered, Mr. Bhoolabhoy is sent to the Smalley's again to complain about their dog barking. He checks with Minnie and learns that although she delivered the letter to Ibrahim, the Smalley's servant, Mr. Smalley was indeed at home at the time. Lucy Smalley is at the hairdresser. Ibrahim was going to the hairdresser to wait for her since Tusker had sacked (fired) him again, the fourth time that year, and Ibrahim believed Lucy would fix things again. It is in this setting that Mr. Bhoolabhoy discovers Tusker's body.



Chapter 1 Analysis

This book opens with the death of a character; a death that will also form the ending of the story. It can be viewed as foreshadowing in a way, as the reader sees the reactions of various other characters and thus gains insight into how they will interact in the time leading up to Tusker's death. The reader meets many of the prominent characters in the book through this time and visits several of the main locations as well.

Viewing human reactions to tragedy is generally very revealing of a person's underlying character. This is true in this case, as Mrs. Bhoolabhoy thinks immediately of herself and her money while Susy the hairdresser thinks of Lucy Smalley and does her best to break the news gently. Mr. Bhoolabhoy falls somewhere in between as he feels sorry for the loss of his friend but also realizes the manner of his death gives him some leverage over his wife. This type of opening gives the reader some indication of what to look for as the story develops, reducing the suspense in one way but making the reader more aware of the implications of minor actions in another way.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Chapter Two begins with more discussion about Tusker's death and the events leading up to it. The reader learns that the servants had for weeks expected a letter, likely concerning the future of the Smalley's residence at the Lodge. Servants' gossip rarely reaches the people they work for, however, and did not in this case. The reader is also introduced into the complex world of servant and employer relations. In colonial India before the British left, there were very specific expectations between servant and employers, with long-time servants treated like family. Ibrahim still treats Lucy and Tusker in that manner, looking after the old couple much as he would children.

The story transitions from a description of Ibrahim's duties to Tusker's illness three months earlier. Tusker has been unable to get out much and, during his convalescence, he notices that the garden and lawn area of The Lodge are no longer being cared for by the mali (gardener) from Smith's. Ibrahim believes that the agitation Tusker feels over this change actually gives him interest in living again while Lucy believes it once more makes Tusker ill. Lucy and Ibrahim spend quite a bit of time debating this different of opinion with no clear resolution. Lucy goes to Mrs. Bhoolabhoy to complain about the change and is told that the old mali resigned. Ibrahim knows that he was sacked.

Tusker spends quite a bit of time reviewing documents in his box about the conditions of their lease on The Lodge. He first believes that Mrs. Bhoolabhoy has violated the conditions of the lease. He then finds a later letter leading him to believe that other than their occupancy of The Lodge and the amount they pay to rent it, most of the conditions of the lease are no longer in effect. Lucy convinces him not to do anything until Mr. Bhoolabhoy returns but in her mind, she is debating what to do.

During this time, Mr. Bhoolabhoy has been away on business in Ranpur. The speculation among the hotel servants is that he not only conducted business, but also had a brief affair with an entertainer called Hot Chichanya. The general feeling is that he deserves the pleasure if it indeed occurred.

Chapter 2 Analysis

In this chapter, the reader learns more about the main characters in the book. The reader is also introduced to the intricate dance of employee/employer relationships in postcolonial India in general and specifically with the Smalley's and Ibrahim. There are two separate worlds existing in the same space, with very different views of events based on different sets of information. While the servants are aware of the attitudes and expectations of their employers, the employers are generally oblivious to the servants' world.

The reader also gains an insight into the marriages of both the Tuskers and the Bhoolabhoys. For the Smalley's, it is clear that Tusker believes he is charge, while in fact Lucy does most of the work behind the scenes. For the Bhoolabhoys, Francis works behind the scenes, although Lila is clearly a very dominating and controlling person in charge of their finances.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Chapter three opens with Lucy and Ibrahim discussing the possibility of hiring a boy to work as mali in their garden. They discuss the ramifications, including the need to borrow tools from Smith's Hotel as they do not have gardening tools. How to pay the mali is also discussed, with Lucy deciding that she can provide funds to Ibrahim but that Ibrahim must do the actual hiring, supervising and paying.

The discussion of how to feed the mali and Ibrahim's thoughts on his current eating arrangement leads to a flashback. Ibrahim remembers formal dinners at the Pankot Rifles Mess, when the British were still in charge in India, and his father was still alive. Ibrahim has one of the formal tunic and trouser sets his father wore and remembers fondly the proper way that British officers got drunk.

The last time he had been to the Mess with Lucy and Tusker was just prior to Tusker's first heart attack. The attack occurred in the middle of the night with Tusker in a very undignified position on his "throne" in the water closet. Ibrahim assists Lucy in getting Tusker to bed before the doctor arrives, reflecting all the while that flush toilets should have been installed in The Lodge when they were installed in the hotel. He feels it does not reflect well on his people, the Smalley's.

He continues to remember how he assisted Lucy even after the doctor left but then transitions back to the present and the discussion on what and how to pay a mali. There is a rhythm to the negotiations between Lucy and Ibrahim, making it clear that these two have done this before. They discuss the various possible ways that Tusker could find out about the mali, but Lucy decides in the end that they cannot think of everything. They must wait for Mr. Bhoolabhoy to return from his trip however, in order to discuss the loan of tools.

On the day Mr. Bhoolabhoy returns, Ibrahim is supposed to let Lucy know immediately, but on that day no one in the Smalley household is speaking to anyone else. This is apparently something that happens regularly, if not frequently. Mr. Bhoolabhoy (Billy-Boy to Tusker) comes over in the evening to visit and he and the Smalleys spend a convivial evening. Ibrahim is certain that Lucy will be angry with him for not alerting her to Mr. Bhoolabhoy's return, but all he hears later is that Tusker is unhappy that Billy-Boy has not mentioned the state of the garden. Lucy decides the next day to put her plan into effect.

Chapter 3 Analysis

It becomes clear in this chapter that Ibrahim has a great deal of nostalgia for the old ways under British rule. The rules of behavior were clearer and a servant's status was based on his employer's status. Civility was commonplace and there was an established

pattern of behavior. The end of the British colonial era clearly brought changes to all levels of Indian society and those changes were unwelcome to a number of people, not just the British.

The reader also gains much more knowledge about the relationship between Ibrahim and Lucy. They are clearly used to dealing with each other and have formed patterns of behavior. It is still possible for Ibrahim to be surprised by Lucy. He first thought Lucy wanted a boy for herself, not as a gardener, and is disappointed and relieved to find he is wrong. Life is perhaps a bit too predictable, but that predictability is still comfortable.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Lucy visits Mr. Bhoolahoy early the next day and confirms that no new mali will be hired. Ibrahim later confirms that the tools from the old mali are available to use and that Mr. Bhoolahoy will assist Lucy and Ibrahim in their deception of Tusker concerning who has hired the mali. Mr. Bhoolahoy even has a boy to suggest making it easier to point to his involvement.

Joseph is first seen sleeping on the porch at St. John's Church. Mr. Bhoolahoy is a lay preacher there and found the boy on a Sunday morning when the Reverend Steven Ambedkar was coming on his once a month visit to conduct services. Francis gave him some food and later saw Joseph in the churchyard, trimming grass to pay for his meal. At this time, the reader also meets Susy Williams, the church pianist as well as a local hairdresser and a member of an old local family. Susy learns that Joseph came up from Ranpur looking for work and Mr. Bhoolahoy confirms on his trip to Ranpur that Joseph worked for the sisters in the convent there and was a good worker.

When Ibrahim speaks about finding a mali, Mr. Bhoolahoy remembers Joseph and recommends him. Ibrahim inquires about what wages Joseph would want and Mr. Bhoolahoy replies he had never paid Joseph cash but only supplied food, shelter, and a convivial occupation. He believes Joseph will work very reasonably.

Ibrahim negotiates Joseph's salary with Memsahib (Lucy) with thoughts of making a small profit for himself. They do reach an amount agreeable to both, although Ibrahim does not know how Lucy will find the extra money, and Joseph comes to work. On Joseph's first day, he is shown all of the old tools. It is clear by the way he cleans and fixes them that he is a good worker and truly enjoys gardening. He begins by cutting part of the overgrown lawn, hauling away the clippings, and then aerating the area with an old fork. When Ibrahim asks why he is doing that Joseph responds that the grass, like all living things, must breath. Ibrahim is touched and begins to like the boy.

The only disappointment in this arrangement is Tusker's lack of response. He says nothing while Mr. Bhoolahoy is showing Joseph what to do, mentions nothing to Lucy or Ibrahim, and does not seem to see Joseph even when he is working very close. Ibrahim and Lucy decide not to mention anything to him.

Chapter 4 Analysis

This chapter serves mainly to introduce Joseph. Although Mr. Bhoolahoy and Ibrahim find him simple because he does not immediately ask about money, it is clear that Joseph truly enjoys gardening and is mostly concerned about doing a good job and pleasing his employer. Because of that attitude, he is perhaps the most straightforward



and honest character in the book. There is no doubt about what is important to him or that he will do his best work always.

The reader also gains some insight into how important the church is to Mr. Bhoobhoy, which is a bit of foreshadowing about how he will react to happenings later in the story. The reader is also left to wonder if Tusker will ever acknowledge the new mali and what the consequences of the deception being practiced by Lucy and Ibrahim will be.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

This chapter opens with a discussion between Ibrahim and Joseph while they are eating a supper prepared by Minnie. Minnie works at the Smith's Hotel and is also Ibrahim's lady. She listens in while Ibrahim educates Joseph on the people he is now working for and their peculiarities. Ibrahim indicates that both Lucy and Tusker are fine English people who have been in India for over 40 years, but that they can also both have days where they were a bit cracked or as Ibrahim puts it "they did not know what time of day it was." He indicates that this is due mostly to their age.

Ibrahim also talks about his family, especially his brother-in-law who moved to London. Ibrahim escorted his sister there to rejoin her husband after he had made enough money for a good business and home, which Ibrahim got to see while he was there. Joseph asks mainly about gardens. He dreams of working in some of the famous gardens that he has heard about through the sisters in Ranpur. Ibrahim points out that working in the garden here gives Joseph experience, and with enough experience, anything may happen.

Ibrahim also discusses the possibility of getting sacked, something that happens to him regularly. Generally either Lucy or Tusker will have a day where they do not know the time of day, fire him, and then the other one will rehire him in a day or so. Ibrahim makes sure Joseph knows that if Ibrahim is sacked, Joseph is too. Ibrahim does not want to risk being replaced. The discussion turns into a lesson on English idioms, many of which Joseph does not really understand. Ibrahim is waiting for Joseph to ask what his pay will be, but Joseph only wants to know if all will be well if he does his work well.

Joseph continues working hard in the gardens and they are beginning to look good again. Tusker continues to ignore him, but is improving and getting out of the house. On March the 1st, Tusker goes out alone for the first time and Lucy decides he is well enough that she can go to the movies that night. Tusker also will have company as Mr. Bhoolahoy is coming over to be convivial.

March the 1st is also accounting day for Lucy and payday for Ibrahim. When she gives him his money and the amount for the gardens, Ibrahim is pleased to see that the amount is a bit less than they agreed on but not much less. In an odd way, he is proud of Lucy and her bargaining skills. They also talk about reservations for the movie and Lucy asks Ibrahim to come too, as they did before Tusker got ill. Ibrahim remembers going to the movies as a boy with his father's Sahib and learning English. It is a fond memory and he looks forward to the evening.



Chapter 5 Analysis

In this chapter, the reader first meets Minnie, Ibrahims' lady. Mostly the reader gets better acquainted with Ibrahim. He truly cares for Lucy, but as a rascal, he cannot give up trying to earn a few extra pennies through a sharp bargain. He also cares for Minnie, and is starting to care for Joseph, but does not want to show that openly. As with many sly rascals in literature, they do not want to show that they have feelings, perhaps believing it leaves them vulnerable. There is also foreshadowing in the discussion of sacking and what might happen.

The reader also begins to see that Lucy has a strong attachment to the past. She loves the old music, playing it in secret, and remembers old days with a fondness missing in the present. She is not living in the past, but the reader can begin to see the possibilities of her doing that.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

As Chapter Six opens, Lucy receives a letter from England along with a newspaper clipping about the death of a former commander in the Pankot Rifles, a military group that was in Pankot at the same time Tusker was stationed there. Before she can truly respond to the letter, Tusker comes home in a good mood, a distinct change from past weeks. He wants to go out for lunch and they settle on lunch at the Shiraz, although Lucy is quite concerned about the expense. Tusker is in his element, greeting many acquaintances. Lucy is determined to enjoy his good mood but also continues to worry about the expense and wonders if he will ever mention the mali.

The following day Lucy pens a sympathy note to Sarah Layton about the death of her father, using information from the newspaper clipping. Lucy had known Sarah 25 years earlier but has not been in contact for many years. The short note expands into a lengthy ramble covering a number of happenings over 25 years. The reader learns the Lucy and Tusker stayed on after the rest of the English military left to assist the new government, and then Tusker took a job with a commercial firm. They have only been back to England once in 40 years. Lucy also conveys some information about Minnie who used to work for Sarah's family.

As Lucy contemplates her life after sealing the letter, the reader learns more about her background. She had two brothers who were killed in a motor accident. Her father died next and then her mother. Lucy is convinced her mother died of a broken heart because all the important people in the family (the males) were gone and Lucy had never counted for anything. Lucy is obviously feeling sorry for herself. As she leaves to mail the letter and run errands, she stops to compliment the mali on the garden, in sight of Tusker.

Tusker observes Lucy speak to the mali and in a side observation to himself, decides the mali is not part of his imagination. As no one had mentioned the mali to him he was not sure whether he was imagining the man. He decides to continue his silence until someone else speaks, although he observes that the garden is now in good shape.

After this digression, Tusker resumes note-taking on a library book about old Pankot, but soon begins reminiscing about experiences he and Lucy have had. Tusker married Lucy on a trip to England without asking his commanding officer's permission and believes that move limited his future promotions. Lucy was "only" a Vicar's daughter, not a Bishop's daughter, but Tusker does not seem unhappy at all about the impact. He actually enjoyed doing all the military paper work and moving from post to post, seeing new areas of India. It is also obvious that Tusker is very fond of Lucy and glad to be married to her although he rarely tells her.



The reader is also treated to a discussion about the Smalley's birthday celebrations, which are used as a way to repay hospitality over the course of a year. Lucy finds hers easy to plan as she always likes to have the party and invite people. Tusker often wavers between not having a party and having one until the last minute, making it difficult for Lucy. Lucy is thinking about this as she returns from errands, since Tusker's birthday is approaching and she finds a letter from Sarah Layton waiting.

Chapter 6 Analysis

This chapter provides a great deal of background on Tusker, Lucy, and their early time in India. Through memories from both of them, we begin to understand how they feel for each other and what history may have shaped those feelings. It is also clear that neither one is very good at speaking openly to the other; whether it is because of fear, habit, tradition, simple inability to communicate well or some other combination of factors remains unclear. This inability to communicate, however, has shaped many of the facets of their lives. They make assumptions about what the other one wants or thinks rather than just asking, and this approach to living tends to make life more difficult and less rewarding.

The reader also finds out that Tusker has indeed seen the mali but was afraid that he was imagining things since no one had said anything about the mali. It is another example of how a lack of communication causes problems: Lucy does not want to upset him by mentioning the mali, and Tusker is upset because no one has said anything.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

This chapter continues the readers' journey of discovery into the Smalleys' past. Lucy reads the letter from Sarah Layton, and launches into a string of memories and imagined happenings. Sarah discusses the lives and deaths that have occurred in her family as well as telling about all the children and grandchildren that have come since they left India. She also mentions a young student of her husband, David Turner, who will be visiting India shortly and may call on the Smalleys.

Lucy reads the letter twice and it brings forth many reactions. She is nostalgic for old Pankot and lonely for other English people, especially women. She is suddenly willing to face the fact that Tusker may indeed have another heart attack and not survive, which would leave her alone in India with uncertain finances. Her view of Tusker's ambitions is very different from his; he delighted in doing paper work and not taking on the work that would win promotions while she despaired of the same actions. His lack of ambition caused her a great deal of embarrassment with other military wives.

Sarah has also asked if David can bring anything to Lucy, and as she begins a short note to request her special blue hair rinse (hair being her "only vanity") Tusker interrupts her work with a question. He is still reading the book on old Pankot and is finding errors he wants to ask Lucy about. Lucy responds with uncharacteristic outrage. She spends several pages berating him over his concentration on errors in the book that are unimportant, his ability to ignore real errors, and she uses the tirade to lead into issues she has with how he has treated her. She believes she was treated with condescension because she had worked as a secretary rather than leading the life of leisure that other officer's wives had. She also states that his way of dealing with people deprived her of friends and that he had not supported her interests. She then intersperses a question on how she would be left if he dies first. It is a first rate tirade but also perhaps indicative of some instability on Lucy's part: she readily mixes past and present. It is a challenge at times to decide if she is speaking to Tusker or to herself.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Psychologists would have a field day with this chapter. Lucy reveals feelings about social structure in India and England as well as her relationship with Tusker. Insecurities and lack of communication abound. Lucy does not know much about their long-term finances even though she manages the household budget, so she does not know what will happen if Tusker dies first. She is also not comfortable asking him about this - she believes he will not give her an honest answer.

Lucy reveals a strong need for the structure that existed under British rule in India. Social and racial roles were defined and everyone knew how they were expected to



behave. She also expresses a feeling of isolation because there are no other British of their class remaining in India - everyone they associate with "black." Finally, she expresses a distrust of everything Tusker says. She believes he is no longer reliable and his words cannot be trusted.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

As this chapter begins, Lucy is searching for an old photo that Sarah Layton has mentioned, which shows Sarah and her current husband along with other family members and the Smalleys while they were all in Pankot. Upon finding the photo, Lucy launches into an extended imaginary dialogue between herself and the young David Turner, who has not yet arrived. She snaps at Ibrahim when he asks about plans for the day and then returns to her dialogue.

Lucy rambles on about Professor Perron and how they had wondered if he was interested in Susan, the younger sister, or Sarah Layton. She reveals old stories of their mother drinking and Susan stealing her sister's beaus. She talks about how Sarah and Tusker got on well when they worked together and that perhaps they were both laughing at the British world in India. She compares Perron to Toole, a man she had a crush on in her youth. She likely would have kept going with her one-sided conversation if Ibrahim had not once more interrupted with questions.

Lucy heads for the small graveyard at the church she used to attend regularly, where the Layton family plot is located. She is checking on the gravestones so that she can show them to David Turner. She realizes it has been a long time since she has attended church. She reassures herself that she does not mind dark-skinned preachers but also acknowledges that she does not like being the only white face in the church. She begins to carry on her conversation with Mr. Turner again, describing her mother, Emily Large, and her brothers, David and Mark, all of whom ganged up on her. Her father was her only advocate in the family.

Lucy hears the sound of clipping and turns to investigate the sound. She notices that the graveyard is neat and well tended and then almost runs into Mr. Bhoolahoy. Mr. Bhoolahoy is equally surprised but very pleased to see Lucy at the church. The reader learns that he has a true admiration and fondness for Lucy, and sees a gentle English lady in her. He also enjoys observing Tusker and Lucy together, imagining that he is seeing an example of a typical British couple, affectionate and reserved. He believes that by observing the Smalleys and other people he will learn more about human interactions, a favorite subject of his. He apologizes for startling her.

Somehow, meeting Mrs. Smalley causes Mr. Bhoolahoy to lapse into a memory of all his activities the day before. It was Sunday and Mr. Bhoolahoy fulfilled many of his administrative duties at St. John's Church, including greeting Rev. Stephen Ambedkar during his monthly trip to Pankot. Susy, who arranges the flowers and plays the piano, shares these duties. Susy is also Mrs. Smalley's hairdresser. Mr. Bhoolahoy reminisces in his mind about the previous reverend, Thomas Narayan, a much more easygoing reverend and more involved in the congregation at Pankot.



This Sunday Father Sebastian, who has been described as very black even to Indian eyes, accompanied the reverend. Susy and Mr. Bhoolahoy also wonder about the title "Father," deciding he is perhaps Church of England. Father Sebastian is very complimentary about the church and the care of the churchyard, which Mr. Bhoolahoy attributes to the young mali, Joseph. Father Sebastian also asks for some photos of the place so he can include pictures of the building in an article he is writing. Susy believes that Father Sebastian is coming to replace Reverend Ambedkar.

In a private conversation with the reverend, Mr. Bhoolahoy learns that the Father will be standing in at least for a while at the reverend is looking at a promotion. The reverend is also trying to promote ecumenicalism in India as a way to strengthen Christianity, but not to change the church to Catholic. Father Sebastian preaches the service and charms Susy, Mr. Bhoolahoy, and the rest of the congregation with his preaching and sense of humor. He may be Catholic, but he is clearly more like the former reverend Thomas Narayan.

On returning to Smith's from all his church activities, Mr. Bhoolahoy finds Mrs. Bhoolahoy (Lila) in a very good mood, something rather unusual. Lila invites him into her room for an evening of eating and drinking and reveals during that time that she has just bought her way into a hotel consortium. She is elated but Mr. Bhoolahoy is worried about the cost and how she may have raised the money. He is afraid she has sold Smith's, the only thing besides his church activities that he is invested in. He does not ask much that evening as they eat, drink, and make love. The next morning after he has quietly crept back to his room, however, his worries erupt into real fear about what she has done.

Mr. Bhoolahoy returns to confront Lila. He gathers his courage and outlines what he believes she has done: given the consortium the rights to tear down Smith's and use the land to expand the Shiraz in exchange for her participation in the consortium. He makes it clear that he values Smith's, his own good name, and the customers, and that he has never viewed the hotel as a parcel waiting to be developed. He also questions how he fits into her future, as he does not want to leave Pankot and travel the world, a dream she expressed the night before. He leaves as she yells at him, knowing he will pay for his statements in the future.

Chapter 8 Analysis

This chapter delves more deeply into the backgrounds and personalities of both Lucy and Mr. Bhoolahoy. It is clear that Lucy slips very easily into the past and into her own imagination, carrying on imaginary conversations about past times in Pankot with people she has known and people she has not yet met. In many ways, the past is more comfortable for her than the uncertain future she faces if Tusker dies first. The reader is lead to wonder how firm her grasp on reality is. She does have one strong anchor and that is her belief in keeping within the structure of what "should" be. For example, younger matrons should address her as Mrs. Smalley, not Lucy, no matter how long they have known her. She, herself, should present an image befitting a retired Colonel's



wife. She has carried this belief system for decades and it gives her a structure that supports her.

Mr. Bhoobhoy actually views Lucy as very strong, competent, and caring. He contrasts her favorably with Lila, so Lucy is obviously maintaining the outward appearance she values. He also is looking at his world and wondering how he will fit into it in the future. It is obvious in this chapter that the church is very important to him. He sees changes coming and feels both excited and fearful, as he does not know how those changes will affect him. The same is occurring at Smith's, which he has managed and loved since long before he met and married Lila. He fears he does not have the strength to stand up for himself or the things he cares about, but he does try by confronting Lila over the deal with the consortium. Mr. Bhoobhoy has been easy going and does not have the type of structure that sustains Lucy. It is clear that he will need a different tactic to survive the coming changes.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Mr. Bhoolabhoy leaves the hotel thinking how hard it would be for Tusker and Lucy if they have to leave the Lodge and find another place to live. He is unsure how to act if he sees them, as he does not want to lie but also does not think he should mention the possibility and risk causing Tusker another heart attack. In this state of mind, he arranges for a photographer to stop at the church to take photos for Father Sebastian and then he heads there himself, looking for peace of mind.

Although the church is as beautiful as always, he finds more confusion in his mind than peace. The harder he tries in his mind to compose a confession and ask God for guidance, the more actions come into his mind that he feels guilty about. He thinks about making love to Lila, but not for the purpose of procreating. He is sorry he did not speak up sooner to ask about the consortium and the business trips and that he yelled at her rather than offering good counsel. He remembers the affair with the Hot Chichanya as well as other indiscretions prior to his marriage. He is most sorry for anything that will happen to the workers at Smith's and to the Smalleys because he did not speak up sooner. All during this private (internal) confession, the faint sound of clippers rests in the back of his mind until suddenly his mind translates that sound into bulldozers already come to tear down Smith's. He runs out the church door and almost runs into Mrs. Smalley in the churchyard, bringing the reader back to where his mental review began.

Lucy observes that Mr. Bhoolabhoy looks less formal than usual, with no coat or tie. She finds the sight rather attractive and is not upset when he comments he had been thinking of her. Hearing the clipping sound again they both see Joseph working on the gravestones. Mr. Bhoolabhoy begins talking to him in Hindi and Lucy is afraid he is scolding Joseph. Mr. Bhoolabhoy replies he is only making sure that Joseph is just working at the church in his spare time. Lucy asks Joseph if he speaks English, and on learning that he speaks fairly well and reads a little, she asks what he reads. Joseph, with the help of Mr. Bhoolabhoy in Hindi, replies he reads the gravestones as he cleans them and tries to say a prayer for the people.

As Joseph shows her some of the stones, Lucy's romantic fantasies take over for a bit and she pictures Joseph as a strong, silent, sensitive young man that could be the object of romance. This thought passes as the photographer arrives and wants to take a few photos of Lucy and the young mali by an old gravestone, the gravestone that happens to be that of Mabel Layton, the one she had been coming to see.

Mr. Bhoolabhoy, still upset, works to send Lucy off before he says anything about the consortium deal. He promises her some free prints of the photos, which makes her very happy. He also tries hard to convince her not to go to the club for lunch, as he fears she will run into Mrs. Bhoolabhoy. He makes up a story about Mrs. Bhoolabhoy having some



kind of fever and not knowing what she is saying. Then he indicates he too might have been exposed and should not come that evening to visit Tusker. He generally is running ideas together and not making a lot of sense, but Lucy does not seem to notice and bids a gracious farewell as she leaves for the club.

Chapter 9 Analysis

This chapter is very much a continuation of the previous one. There is further development of Mr. Bhoolabhoy's character as he seeks peace at the church. He has sought comfort there since he was a child and it is clearly a central support in his life. The reader may wonder if Mr. Bhoolabhoy would turn to full time work at the church if other parts of his life disintegrate; perhaps the church is his support as structure and expectations are Lucy's support. There is a further glimpse into Lucy's active imagination and her rather romantic view of many males other than Tusker. Although she is the one now looking after Tusker in many ways, it is also clear that she needs someone to support her and keep her on track. The public facade and the private reality do not meet.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Lucy travels slowly to the Club in a tonga, an old-fashioned horse-drawn conveyance. As she travels, she falls once more into an imaginary conversation with Mr. Turner, anticipating his arrival. The Club is on a hill and riding in a tonga affords a magnificent view of Pankot and the surrounding valley. Lucy mentions that the narrow roads were built to accommodate horse traffic more than cars. Traveling up the hill, Lucy comments on numerous things such as the bazaar, the Pankot Rifles compound, how the Shiraz blocks the view of Smith's and other places, and of the location of the Rose Cottage and other bungalows above the Club.

Thinking of the Rose Cottage, she begins to travel down memory lane again, remembering her first view of Pankot as she was coming over the mountains and how lovely Pankot looked. She remembers thinking she might be as happy in Pankot as she had been in Mudpore, the only other place in India she had truly been happy. Thinking of Mudpore reminds her of how she first met Tusker.

Lucy was working at a firm in London that handled an inheritance for Tusker. She typed all the letters, posted them to Tusker via a bank in Bombay, and had developed a very romantic view of India and of Tusker, based mostly on her imagination. The job itself was her first time away from home and also her first time meeting people on her own outside her family, so she was still quite naive. Tusker showed up at the office while home on leave and they gradually got acquainted as he came in for appointments.

Lucy takes a detour at this point, commenting on how small the inheritance is and that the income from it ceases on Tusker's death. She is very worried about how she will survive if he dies first, since his army pension also stops and she is left with the Widow and Orphans fund payment. She refers to a loss of capital through some debacle, but then refuses to say more, stating only that military positions do not pay well. Lucy also comments on the strict hierarchy in the military wives society: this extends not just to a colonel's wife versus a major's wife, but also to the time in service down to the day. She sounds almost bitter about that structure, although at other times the structure seems a comfort to her.

Lucy picks up with her time in London. She has participated some in theater, playing background roles, and longed to have a speaking part on stage. She is disappointed that Tusker never supported her when an opportunity arose to participate in a play after they were married. She also makes a point of saying that, although he was not what she expected after reading all his letters from India, he was also not a disappointment. It is not clear whether she is trying to convince her imaginary visitor or herself of this.

Lucy's time in India clearly has not been what she expected. She speaks of a metaphorical cloud over Tusker's sun: for her it was gradually growing the whole time



they had been in India except for the time in Mudpore. She enjoyed Mudpore for itself, but also enjoyed it because Tusker was happy with his work there. There were no other British people and there was no hierarchy to be wary of. She wonders, too, whether the need to simply support Tusker as a military wife and not be her own person has been the cause her unhappiness.

Chapter 10 Analysis

Lucy's imagined conversation with her anticipated visitor again takes her down memory lane and is very revealing of the circumstances that have shaped her. She imagined India and Tusker to be romantic and adventurous. Instead, she has found as tight a structure as the vicarage in England where she grew up. Lucy realizes that some of her unhappiness is her fault for not standing up for herself, but she also blames Tusker for not listening to her and supporting her. It is also strange that the structure she depends on is also a source of discontent.

Although Lucy goes through most of this chapter carrying on a conversation with someone who is not there, it seems more like reminiscing rather than senility. The picture she paints is of two people moving through life together but rarely sharing or communicating. She has some good insights when she looks back over her life, and one could wish that she had gained those insights sooner so she could have acted on them earlier in life.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Lucy and Tusker attend the Menektaras' Holi party, a Hindu spring fertility festival that precedes Easter. Lucy looks forward to the party because it is held in the garden of the Rose Cottage, one of her favorite places. She is also very comfortable with Coocho Menektara, another colonel's wife. Coocho is Indian rather than British. They both have the same expectations in their social interactions. The party itself is a more gentle celebration than what occurs in the streets, with small applications of blue, purple, and crimson dyes to wrist and forehead symbolizing the many colors of fertility and reproduction.

Once at the party, however, Lucy is embarrassed by Tusker's behavior. He opts to join the children in their games and comes back with his clothes covered by the dyes and likely ruined. He has several drinks and proceeds to tell loud stories to his host and then slips and falls, knocking himself out. Lucy does not see him do this and is afraid he has had another heart attack. Dr. Mitra assures her that Tusker will be fine and drives them home. Lucy continues to be worried about Tusker's health and how long he will live but does not ask any more questions.

The following week Lucy goes to her Monday movie and comes home to find the house empty. It takes her a few minutes to find a note from Tusker indicating he and Billy-Boy (Mr. Bhoolabhoj) have gone to the Shiraz. He assures her when he gets home that he did not drink much and is perfectly all right, but Lucy is still upset.

Perhaps in response to Lucy's mood, Tusker suggests that they attend church together on Easter Sunday, a very unusual move for him. He indicates that he wants to meet the new black Father since he might be the one to bury both Lucy and Tusker. Lucy is not happy about his language but is glad to attend church with him. Although she has doubts when first seeing Father Sebastian, she is very pleased with the service. She is not pleased with Tusker after the service as he badgers Father Sebastian until he agrees to come to Monday dinner the next time he is in Pankot.

The following Monday is Tusker's birthday. He has decided not to have his birthday buffet but indicates a desire to go to lunch with Lucy and accompany her to the movies that evening. She is surprised and pleased with his gesture. That day also a letter arrives from David Turner setting a time for his visit later in April and Lucy is pleased.

Chapter 11 Analysis

The reader sees in this chapter that, despite her fears and frustrations, Lucy is very fond of Tusker. She worries about what will happen to her if he dies first but she also truly worries about him. There is a glimpse, too, of how Tusker feels about Lucy. When she stays out one day and shows signs of being independent and doing things on her own,

he responds by being more affectionate and trying to think of her. It seems perhaps that he also cares for her but is completely clueless both on how to express his affection and on how his usual actions and manner of speech affect Lucy. He does recognize when she is upset and tries to act differently in response. The reader sees two sad old people that need each other but they either do not know how to or are afraid to express their needs.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

Mr. Bhoolabhoy is having a very bad weekend. Saturday begins with an argument with Mrs. Bhoolabhoy during which she actually pushes him and yells at him in front of the servants. Mr. Bhoolabhoy is horrified and Mrs. Bhoolabhoy is furious. Her deal with the consortium is being renegotiated, not to her benefit, and she blames Mr. Bhoolabhoy. He insists he merely asked questions about what was included and did not tell her to renegotiate. He accuses her of being so greedy that she grabs for too much and ends up losing profits. She responds by giving him notice as manager of the hotel, to which he responds there soon will not be a hotel to manage, as she wants to pull it down anyway.

As Mr. Bhoolabhoy tries to leave, Lila sends one last parting shot. She tells him to write a letter to "the Smalley man" warning them that after July 1 there will be no more extended tenancy and occupancy will be only week-to-week. She wants the letter that day. Mr. Bhoolabhoy is distraught, and fears the letter will cause Tusker to have another attack. Lila does not care, and tells Mr. Bhoolabhoy that the letter would not need to be sent now if he had not caused the contract to be redone.

When Mrs. Bhoolabhoy later asks about the letter, Mr. Bhoolabhoy says he will not have time to write it that weekend. Mrs. Bhoolabhoy finally says he must write it by Monday or she will divorce him. She also says that if he writes the letter she may forget about his indiscretions in Ranpur. He is surprised to find out that she knew about that and feels defeated.

Sunday he arrives at the church early but finds little peace there, either. Susy does not arrive early and when she does arrive with Father Sebastian, Mr. Bhoolabhoy feels excluded. Susy and Father Sebastian decorate the church with flowers and then the Father asks Mr. Bhoolabhoy to come outside and talk. He asks about Mrs. Smalley and whether she was the same lady in some of the photos. On finding out that she is, the Father comments that he is dining with them on Monday. Mr. Bhoolabhoy feels more left out, as that is usually his evening with Tusker.

At this point Lucy is approaching the church. Her mind is wandering elsewhere as usual; she is remembering a number of romantic films and how her brothers had teased her about her reaction to the films. From there, her memory wanders to the man who was her first sexual fantasy, her uncle's driver. She had observed Toole during her teenage years and created many fantasies around him without ever following through on them. He disappeared midway through her last summer at her uncle's place. She did not find out until a number of years later that he had quit so he could try to find his girl who had been sent away by her family.



Lucy comes back to the present as the service is ending. She and the rest of the congregation are surprised as the organ is played for the last hymn. It had not been functional for a long time. When she asks Father Sebastian about it as she leaves, he answers that a little technology and a lot of faith were involved in fixing it. He confirms she was in the photos and she confirms he is coming to dinner on Monday. On the spur of the moment, she also asks him to bring Susy.

Chapter 12 Analysis

Many story lines are coming together in this chapter. Mrs. Bhoorabhoy is pushing Mr. Bhoorabhoy to write the fateful letter to Tusker. Mr. Bhoorabhoy is very worried about the impact on the Smalleys, echoing Lucy's fears about Tusker's health and what will happen to her if she is left alone.

Mr. Bhoorabhoy is questioning his marriage as well as his place in the church; he seems to wonder if his failures in his marriage and business life are affecting his ability to function well in the church. He is feeling very isolated. All actions foreshadow many upcoming life changes for the major characters, and the changes are not of their choosing.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

As Lucy walks home, she begins to regret inviting Susy. Susy is of mixed white and Indian blood (Eurasian) and Lucy has never socialized with Eurasians. While she does not think of herself as prejudiced, she has very specific ideas on the role people of different races should fill, and Eurasians are middle class workers. At the same time, she realizes that Susy is her oldest acquaintance in India.

Lucy used to go to Susy's mother, Mrs. Williams, to get her hair done when Susy was just a small child. Susy learned her trade from her mother and when Lucy and Tusker returned to Pankot, Mrs. Williams had been dead for several years and Susy started doing Lucy's hair. They both enjoyed movies and talking about the old times. Susy came to The Lodge to do Lucy's hair, as Lucy was not comfortable in the new salon. Susy was the one to suggest the blue rinse that Lucy is so fond of in her white hair. Lucy may never admit it because of her strong feeling about how she should relate to Eurasians, but in truth, Susy is probably the only female friend she has in India. Lucy has been going to the Seraglio Room for a while now since Susy lost the lease on her own business and started working there.

When Lucy gets home, she finds Tusker sitting on the veranda. She is looking forward to going to Smith's for dinner, but Tusker announces that they are not going to Smith's anymore nor are they getting food from Smith's. They will do their own cooking. When Lucy asks why his only answer is because he said so. Lucy points out that the mistress of the house usually decides what to do about food and cooking. She states that she is not about to start cooking now and that Tusker would need to purchase a stove that works and hire a cook if they are to eat at home. She does offer to poach him the egg he wants, but then finds that the pan is dirty. In the argument that follows, she actually throws the pan at Tusker.

The incident causes Lucy to remember the only other time she had hit him. It was just before he went into forced retirement, having refused an offer to return to England without consulting her. This decision had lead to Tusker and Lucy staying on in India, as they could not afford to return home on their own. This thought leads Lucy to again wonder what will happen to her if Tusker dies first, but on the way to speak to him, she finds a note by the phone in Tusker's writing from David Turner.

At that moment, Tusker stalks in. He is determined to cook his own egg. He also references the call, stating that Lucy was making a fool of him. When she tries to sit him down and tell him about David, Tusker states that since he already talked to David he doesn't need any more information. Bit by bit Lucy determines what David's schedule is, when he is arriving, and what reservations need to be made. Tusker is still being difficult. He states he no longer wants an egg and will not go to Smith's so Lucy goes alone for her dinner.



While Lucy is eating, Mrs. Bhoolabhoy sails through the dining room. When Lucy asks her about reserving a room for David Turner, Mrs. Bhoolabhoy responds by asking about the shears that need to be returned. Lucy is confused until Mrs. Bhoolabhoy references the use of gardening equipment by Lucy's mali and then states Tusker was even less help as he did not acknowledge that he and Lucy had a mali. Lucy realizes Tusker had been mad about the confrontation with Mrs. Bhoolabhoy and not about David Turner.

Chapter 13 Analysis

There is the feeling in this chapter of an impending climax. Tusker finds out about both their company and the mali, items Lucy had kept from him out of fear for his health. Having known since the beginning of the book that Tusker will have another attack, it becomes clear what steps lead up to it. It seems ironic that the act of keeping information from Tusker to protect him may actually hasten his demise.

The reader also gains more insight into how the Smalleys came to stay on and why Lucy holds Tusker responsible. This is truly at the root of many of their conflicts since she does not feel like she was considered at all in the decision. She is very afraid she will have to live with Tusker's decision on her own and that his death will leave her alone and with no resources. She is in her heart and head very afraid of facing the future alone.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Lucy returns from dinner to find that Tusker is out somewhere. She and Ibrahim discuss what they should prepare for dinner the next day when Susy and Father Sebastian are expected. They discuss various options for hors d'oeuvres and the difficulties of cooking chicken on their hotplate. Part-way through, Lucy does not feel well, probably due to too much gin, and Ibrahim helps her to bed for a nap. She does remember to ask Ibrahim to make sure the shears are returned to Mrs. Bhoolabhoy, and comments that she thinks Joseph left them at the churchyard.

When Lucy wakes up later, Tusker has come in and then gone out for dinner. He has left Lucy a note, which Ibrahim gives her. On the outside, Tusker invites her to join him at the club but Lucy decides to stay home and read the letter. She tells Ibrahim she will just have tea, no dinner. He asks if Tusker truly knows about the mali and whether Joseph still has a job. Lucy tells him she still wants the garden cared for no matter what Tusker thinks and not to fire Joseph.

Once Ibrahim has left, Lucy settles in with her tea, puts old records on to dance to, and re-reads the letter. It is the clear statement of what she would have should something happen to him first. It is also something more: it is the first and only love letter Lucy has ever received. Tusker lays out the finances first, showing a modest pension. Lucy can live on it but likely not in the manner they now live. He then discusses what happened to a few windfalls and why he had made several choices including staying on. He apologizes for acting the fool and not being more responsible with the money. He also apologizes for acting the idiot in general after he left the army, what Lucy has always thought of as his change in personality. He closes by saying he cannot speak of these things and finds it difficult even to write about them. He also expresses his love for Lucy and states how good a woman she has been for him.

Lucy is still worried about the finances, but amazed by the letter. She goes to sleep with it under her pillow.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Tusker's letter is truly the heart of this chapter. Lucy has asked before what her status would be and it seems that Tusker realizes he owes her that information. Perhaps it is some manner of foretelling on his part, some innate knowledge that he does not have long in the world, since he gives Lucy something even more in his declaration of love.

The reader also sees again how much Ibrahim cares for Lucy and tries to take care of her. In some ways he seems more like her family than Tusker, although he views her (and Tusker) more like children that need to be taken care of. For all of Lucy's thoughts

that whites and native Indians should mix only in certain ways, it appears that those same native Indians are the people who really take care of her.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

This chapter starts with Lucy planning her day with Ibrahim. She outlines what she wants him to do for Tusker and then what she wants from the market. At the same time, Mr. Bhoolahoy is dealing with Lila's Monday morning headache in a repetition of parts of Chapter One. Lila is demanding that Mr. Bhoolahoy write the letter telling the Smalleys they will need to look for other lodging.

Mr. Bhoolahoy is also agonizing over the fact that the organ in his church has been repaired due to Father Sebastian's initiative, not his. Father Sebastian, Susy, Joseph, and several others conspired to surprise him during the church service but Mr. Bhoolahoy feels useless rather than honored.

Lucy leaves for her hair appointment and Ibrahim proceeds to fix Tusker's breakfast as Lucy has directed him to. Tusker is combative, wanting to know why flowers were not watered and then wanting Ibrahim to walk Bloxsaw and purchase shaving soap. Ibrahim tells Tusker that he needs to walk the dog later and run Lucy's errands first. He explains about all of Lucy's lists, the live chicken he must get, preparation for dinner, and the coming guests.

Tusker asks for the list and then asks for the money Lucy gave Ibrahim for the errands. He tells Ibrahim to walk the dog, get his (Tusker's) shaving soap, and forget the other errands. Ibrahim mentally is comparing Tusker to his brother-in-law, a very unflattering comparison. When Ibrahim tries once more to explain about the errands, Tusker pays him wages owed and then fires him. Ibrahim leaves, but returns once to deliver the letter from Mrs. Bhoolahoy about vacating the place. Ibrahim and Joseph then go to wait for Lucy outside her hair appointment to begin negotiations about reinstatement.

Mr. Bhoolahoy finds Tusker clutching the letter in his hand, dead in the garden. He runs back to tell Lila who tries to send Mr. Bhoolahoy back to reclaim the letter. As he realizes she is nervous about the letter, he also realizes she is not infallible and that perhaps he does not have to do everything she asks for. They both run back to the Lodge only to find Dr. Mitra rising from Tusker's body with the letter already in his pocket.

The scene moves to the hair salon where Susy and then her supervisor are finishing Lucy's hair. Lucy is surprised as Susy's boss has never even noticed her before, but she appreciates the attention. She has a sudden realization when she looks in the mirror after they are done that she is old. She does not feel attractive and wants to leave rapidly, but the chapter closes with Susy coming in alone, presumably to tell her about Tusker's death.



Chapter 15 Analysis

This chapter brings the reader around full circle to where the book began. Having seen all the events leading up to Tusker's death, there is a greater understanding of the personalities involved. The reader also sees the pain of both Lucy and Mr. Bhoobhoy surrounding the events and perhaps for the first time Ibrahim's true feelings about Tusker are illustrated. He and the other Eurasians clearly like Lucy but he has little but contempt for Tusker. This is a bit off since Lucy has very clearly defined lines about white and Eurasian roles, but she also is a truly caring person who does her best to be kind to everyone. She reaps the benefit of that attitude by how people respond to her, particularly in this crisis.

There is also a highlight on Mr. Bhoobhoy and his relationship to his wife. He has felt like he has no options other than to do her bidding, but he has a sudden revelation that she, too, is human and can make mistakes. He starts to believe that perhaps he can be a man and still be her husband.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Lucy is almost overwhelmed by the number of people calling to express condolences over Tusker's death, and sending notes and cards to her. Although she thinks it is because Tusker had many friends, it is really that she, Lucy, has many friends who want to support her. Ironically, all the people are Indian, not British, the very class that she does not believe she should be close friends with. She is offered many places to stay for as long as she needs to, but prefers to stay in her home. Susy, in particular, is very kind in offering a permanent home if needed.

Lucy requests that Ibrahim spend the night in the Lodge so that she will feel safe. Lucy and Father Sebastian arrange for that and leave, but when Lucy awakes in the middle of the night, she finds that Ibrahim, Minnie, and Joseph have all stayed to look after her. She is touched but determined not to cry, fearing she will break down completely if she does. It is very important to her to remain in control of herself and attend to all the matters of the funeral. She gets some brandy and heads back to her bedroom.

Lucy does not feel entirely well and ends up sitting on the loo (her toilet), thinking about Tusker. She decides that she will still have David Turner come as it may distract her, although it will also be difficult showing him around due to all the memories she has of being places with Tusker. She imagines the conversations with him, and practices what to say.

At the end, Lucy has a conversation with Tusker. She wants to know how he could leave her there alone, something she had long feared. Despite all the offers of support and assistance to Lucy, it is clear she does not want to be in India and feels alone and abandoned while Tusker has gone on home.

Chapter 16 Analysis

This chapter does not reveal anything new, but does re-emphasize themes the reader has seen before: Lucy's fear of being alone, her feeling that the British and Indians should not (or could not) be close friends, and the genuine caring her Indian acquaintances and servants have for her despite her dated viewpoint. She truly does not think she is better than the Indians, just different, and believes that some groups should not mix for both their benefits.

Although Lucy is feeling very lost and alone, the reader also sees that she has some skills that may help her get through this time and survive, including her determination to take one day at a time and deal with things even though she does not see exactly how she will do that. Lucy is much stronger than she gives herself credit for and she does have more friends than she realizes; they will help her move on.



Characters

Mrs. Lucy Smalley

Lucy grew up in England as a vicar's daughter. She had twin brothers whom she did not get along with particularly well, a father that she loved, and a mother who favored the men in the family and did not value Lucy at all. Lucy was always a good girl trying her best to help the family, and led an orderly, structured life. She met Tusker when he came from India to the office she was working in to settle some business affairs. He stayed on longer than the business required and eventually proposed to Lucy. She accepted the proposal, envisioning a romantic life in India with Tusker. The reality was quite different; she is still trapped in a very structured social environment and with a man who does not ever quite live up to what she expected. There were indeed good times and places in India that Lucy enjoyed; but to her, England was still always home, even though all her family died long ago and she has spent more of her life in India than England.

Lucy has very structured ideas on how people should act and interact. Her upbringing as a vicar's daughter and then her marriage to someone in the British army has reinforced that attitude, since the social rules in the army, in particular, were very specific. A wife's social rank was very closely tied to her husband's rank, even to the date of seniority between officers of otherwise equal rank. Tusker got things off to a bad start in India for Lucy by not asking his commanding officer for permission to get married, and Lucy felt that they never recovered from that. Her inherent kindness of spirit gains her some status and friends, but her lack of independence frustrates her. She never really confronts Tusker about things she disagrees with him on, thus letting things fester in her mind. Lucy is representative of many women of her time; not really happy nor unhappy, but discontented and thinking life should somehow be different. Despite the mismatch of priorities, Lucy does love Tusker and feels lost when he dies.

Colonel Tusker Smalley

Tusker was a career military man in the British army, but not a highly ambitious one. He was most content as an administrative person, out of the spotlight, cleaning up other administrators' messes. Tusker never quite seems to learn how to get ahead or how to involve Lucy in the marriage. Tusker made several major decisions without consulting her, such as refusing a transfer back to England in his job after the army, or squandering retirement funds on gambling. Tusker went through what he refers to as "the longest male menopause in history" after his retirement. Lucy simply refers to it as his "change" since he completely changed how he acted and responded to people. It appears to be a reaction to his discovery that he would never be wealthy despite many years of work: a childish acting out response. He has a tendency to say exactly what he thinks rather than displaying tact, and that has limited his ability to get ahead in both his professional life and his social position.



One area where Tusker has not expressed himself concerns his feelings for Lucy. He loves her and counts on her, but the letter he writes to her shortly before his death is the first love letter he has ever sent her. It actually appears to be the first time he has ever really expressed how important she is to him. It is difficult to imagine him surviving without her. Tusker lacks Lucy's inherent kindness, has often acting in a very petty manner, and is viewed with interest but not with true caring or compassion by his acquaintances. Tusker and Lucy form a rather odd pair, although this pair has lasted for 40 years.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim is Tusker and Lucy's servant. His father was a servant to a British Sahib before him and Ibrahim is carrying on the family tradition with the only British Sahib left in Pankot. As in many societies, the status of a servant is dependent on the status of the employer, and to work for a British Sahib gives Ibrahim status. He is truly devoted to Lucy. He views Tusker as an interesting eccentric that he can learn from but not as a really nice person that he cares about. Ibrahim escorted his sister to England many years ago, and still views himself as somewhat elevated above other servants due to that trip as well as to his current position.

Mr. Francis Bhoolahoy

Mr. Bhoolahoy was the manger of Smith's Hotel for many years before Mrs. Bhoolahoy purchased it. They met because of her purchase and later married, but he continued on as "Management" to her "Ownership," a statement on how they act in their marriage as well, although it is clear there is a great deal of physical passion between them. Mr. Bhoolahoy loves the hotel and had a great deal of pride in how it was maintained in the past. He is very upset as it becomes clear to him that Mrs. Bhoolahoy does not intend to maintain the hotel. In fact, she would like to tear it down for a new development. Because she is much richer than he is, Mr. Bhoolahoy does not believe he can do anything to effect her actions until close to the end of the book when he discovers that she is not infallible. This gives him hope that he could become a more equal partner in the marriage and influence her for the better.

Mr. Bhoolahoy's other passion is the church. He is a Christian Indian, a minority at that time. He has been assisting with St. John's Church for many years, filling in on weekends when a visiting reverend could not come and working to maintain the building. He is especially interested in the organ and getting it restored to working order.

Mrs. Lila Bhoolahoy

Mrs. Bhoolahoy is an Indian of Punjab descent, a different sect than her husband. She is primarily interested in wealth and power. She had visions of joining a consortium when she first purchased Smith's Hotel, only to see them build the Shiraz in direct competition with her. When the opportunity arises later to join the consortium using the



hotel as her entry, she does not hesitate. She wants to travel the world and is not much concerned on the methods she uses to achieve that goal.

Although it is clear that she has a strong physical attachment to Mr. Bhoolabhoy, it is never clear what other feelings there may be. This is not her first marriage and one must wonder about her motives. Although she does worry about appearances, it is only a concern on how it will affect her business. For example, she is not worried about sending a letter to the Smalleys to terminate their long-term occupancy of The Lodge, but she is very concerned about trying to retrieve the letter when she finds out Tusker has died upon reading the letter: she does not want her part known.

Minnie

Minnie is Mrs. Bhoolabhoy's servant and Ibrahim's lady friend. She keeps Ibrahim up to date on the gossip from Smith's Hotel. She is also linked to Lucy and Tusker in that as a child, her mother was a servant to some of their friends. These same people have asked Lucy to host David Turner for a few days and to tell him about historic Pankot.

Susy

Susy is Lucy's hairdresser, as was Susy's mother. She is of Eurasian decent and because of that, Lucy does not quite view her as an acceptable friend. She is, however, Lucy's oldest acquaintance in Pankot, and Lucy always treats her with kindness. They share gossip about the old days. When Tusker dies, it is left to Susy to tell Lucy, woman to woman. Susy is also the pianist and organist in the same church that Mr. Bhoolabhoy assists in.

David Turner

The reader never meets David Turner, but he is the object of many of Lucy's one-sided conversations about her history in India and Pankot. He is a student of the husband of an old friend and is coming to India to learn about the British years there. Lucy spends a great deal of time in imaginary conversations with him, and it is through that device that the reader learns a great deal about Lucy and Tusker.

Joseph

Joseph is the young mali, or gardener, who Lucy hires with Ibrahim's help to take care of the garden. It is a conspiracy between Lucy and Ibrahim to make Tusker think that Mrs. Bhoolabhoy has hired him, but the fact that they never mention Joseph to Tusker makes Tusker think for a while that he is imagining the mali. Joseph also helps around the church by trimming the vegetation around the graves.



Father Sebastian

Father Sebastian is the new vicar for St. John's Church. Many of the members are hesitant to accept him at first, as he is very black, and he wishes to be addressed as "Father," leading them to believe he is Catholic. After hearing him preach, however, the members seem much more accepting that he is a good man.

Bloxsaw

Bloxsaw is the Smalley's dog. He is the object of a number of arguments over who should walk him, including an argument right before Tusker's death, which causes Ibrahim to be fired again.



Objects/Places

Pankot, India

Pankot is the hill town where Lucy and Tusker live. It housed a British regiment during British colonial times and still has a colonial feel, although the people in charge are now the upper-crust Indians. Because of its location near the mountains, it is relatively cool for India and draws many tourists.

The Lodge (Annex)

This is the bungalow attached to Smith's Hotel where Lucy and Tusker live. It is an older building, and is comfortable but not fashionable. The kitchen is barely functional so the Smalleys often eat at the hotel.

Smith's Hotel

Smith's was the original hotel in Pankot. At one time, with regular transportation to the train depot and back, it was the place to visit. Lack of maintenance over the years has made it shabby, especially in comparison to the newer hotel, Shiraz, but it still has a great deal of character.

The Shiraz Hotel

The Shiraz is the new high-rise hotel, expensive and glittery but lacking personality. It has drawn business away from Smith's and changed the Pankot landscape by blocking many of the old views.

The Garden

The garden is a small area between the Lodge and Smith's hotel. It was being cared for by a mali as part of the lease, but when Mrs. Bhoolabhoy did not offer the Smalleys a new lease, she fired the gardener. Lucy hires a new gardener without telling Tusker. It is the cause of a great deal of conflict in the story.

The Club

The club is a holdover from the British occupation and is the place all the military officers and wives go. To be there is to belong to the gentility and therefore is illustrative of status.



St John's Church

St John's is the church that Mr. Bhoolabhoy, Susy, and the Smalleys (occasionally) attend. It is an historic church dating to the 1880s and is treasured by Mr. Bhoolabhoy as a place of peace.

The Rose Cottage

The Rose Cottage was the home of the commander of the British regiment when the regiment was stationed in Pankot. For a while after the British left, Lucy and Tusker lived there and Lucy has fond memories of the gardens. Current, the Indian commander of the local military lives there. The commander is a social acquaintance of the Smalleys. It, too, is an historic building.



Themes

Societal Evolution

This story is set in a time of considerable change. The British colonial empire is evaporating piece by piece and countries like India are establishing their own societies with new rules. Old ways of doing business or conducting social engagements no longer apply, and people caught in the transition react in various ways. The Smalleys, and perhaps Mr. Bhoolabhoy, are lost in a new world that is leaving them behind. Mrs. Bhoolabhoy is part of the force creating that new world where financial worth is becoming more important than family or honor.

Within this climate there are still things that remain unchanged. Whether the society is English or Indian, a social structure remains firmly in place. There is an accepted way to behave and an accepted class hierarchy. A British "blueblood" and an Indian General will equally look down on the Eurasian shopkeeper who is representative of the growing middle class. They are vested in maintaining their status and ignoring, or at least not facilitating, societal change. This inconsistency frustrates yet also reassures Lucy and Tusker. They never quite reached the heights of society and wealth that they aspired to, a situation that frustrated them, and yet their status in that society is familiar and thus in many ways remains comfortable.

It is perhaps a comment on humans in general that, as a whole, we resist change. The Indians take over from the British but the structure changes little. Those that have little to lose, such as the poorer merchants and the workers, are most supportive of changes to improve their status. Those with wealth are content with the status quo. How fast and how far a society changes depends on the balance between these two forces and in *Staying On* it appears that change will happen, although not rapidly.

Nostalgia

For many people the past is more real than the present. Often they view it fondly through a haze of time, although others have a sense of regret over past life choices. Lucy, in particular, wanders back to events that happened long before. She seems to use this as a way to escape realities of the present that she does not want to face, such as Tusker's poor health or their deteriorating finances. The prospect of having a visitor that wants to learn about the old days gives her a valid reason to dig out old photos and revisit places in Pankot she has not seen in a while. She spends a great deal of time remembering her time in England, too, wondering if different choices made then could have changed her life. This type of escape is not uncommon in older people, but at times, it is difficult to tell if Lucy is completely distinguishing past and present.

Although Tusker is not as verbose about his visits down memory lane, he also speaks fondly of his early years in the army. He was young and still had hopes of being



successful. His definition of success, however, did not match that of Lucy or his army superiors, and the promotions came slowly. Now he is caught in a trap of his own making with few options for change and feels like he is just hanging on.

Others also view the past with longing. Mr. Bhoolahoy remembers the past glories of Smith's Hotel and longs to bring back its glory. He also remembers the last pastor of the church fondly, believing his own participation was more appreciated by the former pastor. Susy ran her own business, rather than working as a lower level helper in a large salon. Even David Turner, whom the reader never meets, is coming to India to learn about the past. With few exceptions, the characters do not look forward to the future.

Illogical Pairings

The relationship of marriage is examined from several different viewpoints using two relationships as examples through the course of this book. The Smalleys have been married for 40 years but still do not really communicate. Lucy is outgoing and verbal while Tusker only wants to fade into the background. Lucy entered the marriage with romantic notions and expectations concerning the sexual aspect of marriage, which Tusker has not come close to fulfilling. Tusker proposed to Lucy without clearing it with his commander and suffers the consequences for the rest of his career, as has Lucy. Neither Lucy nor Tusker expresses their feelings to each other except on rare occasions, yet in musings to themselves they both know they would be lost if left alone. Their pairing is not logical, although not quite a case of opposites attracting each other. It is clear that there is some type of dependency between them that has allowed the marriage to endure and fulfill some need.

The Bhoolahoyes are also a nontraditional pairing, with few hints of romance. They do not share a common interest in religion, hotel management, or friends. There is clearly a physical attraction between them, which they often equate with love. Mrs. Bhoolahoy is the ruling presence in the marriage based on her ownership of the hotel and personal wealth. Mr. Bhoolahoy feels like a subordinate more than a partner. At times, he appears to be a plaything for his wife. Again, without any apparent logic, these two are committed to the marriage and appear to be ready to stay together no matter what happens.

Of interest also is how others view the couples. Most people see the Bhoolahoyes relationship clearly as an institution built mainly on sex and convenience. Theirs is the more direct relationship. The Smalleys are viewed less consistently. Mr. Bhoolahoy views them as a perfect example of a sedate English couple. Ibrahim, working so closely for them, has a clearer view of them. He knows Lucy for a kind person, but has an almost contempt for Tusker because of the way he treats Lucy. Others simply view the Smalleys as an odd pairing, made more extreme by old age.



Style

Point of View

Staying On is written mainly in the third person with the exception of portions of the text where the characters are reminiscing or having conversations. Since Lucy and Tusker tend to switch back and forth between talking to themselves and talking to others, much of the nature of the dialogue changes often. When the characters are doing something, the third party observer describes the activities. It gives the feeling of someone looking on rather than participating.

When any of the characters is reminiscing or carrying on imaginary conversations, then the first person is used. This has the effect of making those conversations seem more current than the activities that are actually occurring in the present. This effect may also be caused by the characters themselves living as much in the past as in the present, which makes the timeline rather fluid. The story moves slowly and is mostly a character study.

By starting the story with the death of a character and ending the story with the same death, there is also a circular feel to the story. In fact, almost the entire story occurs in the past as the author leads up to the main even for a second time. Some parts simply occur much farther in the past relative to the story actions. The story itself occurs over about three months.

Setting

The story is set in Pankot, India in 1972. Pankot was headquarters for one of the British regiments when they still controlled India, and then became headquarters for an Indian regiment that took over. It is a prosperous area in the hills with a growing tourist industry due to a moderate climate. It is in a transition period at the time of the story; horse drawn tongas mingled with motorcars and indoor plumbing was not universal.

The British brought their civilization and customs with them when they controlled India and the Indians that took over running the country adopted many of the British ways. Society, particularly the government and military segments, was very structured and everyone was expected to act in a manner appropriate to their place in that structure. People like Tusker that acted outside that structure might be tolerated if they had been around for a long time but they were not truly accepted.

There is also a growing middle class composed of Eurasians and some native Indians, all interested in expanding their businesses and making money rather than maintaining the genteel society. At the time of the story, there was still limited social contact between the groups and thus not much conflict, either. Old loyalties to place and family were still important in business but no longer the only way to get things done: change is in the air.



Language and Meaning

The language in the book can be difficult to follow at times. When the characters are speaking to themselves or carrying on an extended conversation, the sentences tend to get very long. One sentence may run on for half a page. The reader has to go slowly to understand where the emphasis is on the phrases and what the speaker really means. This can be especially true when Lucy is speaking, since she not only runs on for a while, but she rarely states her thoughts directly.

Flashbacks, or periods of reminiscing, are used a great deal in this book to fill in details about the people and their relationships. Using the device of a potential visitor that is interested in history works well to tie all the information together and lets the reader cover 40 years of history in a few pages.

There are a number of Indian terms scattered through the text. Since they are used repeatedly and consistently, these terms add to the local feel without making it difficult to read. There are also many places where terms or language are used such as they are in England rather than in the United States. In other places, the language is simply dated since the book was written 35 years ago. All these items add to the period feel of the book but do make it more difficult to comprehend.

Structure

Staying On is divided into sixteen chapters. Chapters one and two discuss Tusker Smalley's death, as do chapters 15 and 16. The difference between the two sets of chapters is in the background the reader has concerning the incident. In the first two chapters, the reader has not yet met Tusker and by the end of the book, Tusker is a familiar, if not totally sympathetic, character.

The second part of chapter two through chapters three and four cover the hatching of the plot to hire a new mali by Lucy and Ibrahim to tend the garden without Tusker's knowledge. Chapter five introduces Joseph, the mali, and also the movie traditions of Lucy and Ibrahim. In chapter six, Lucy gets a letter from England announcing the passing of an old acquaintance, and begins her correspondence with another person from England. Tusker also mentions to himself that he sees the mali and reminisces about his marriage to Lucy and earlier times in India.

Chapter seven introduces the potential visitor from England, David Turner, via more letters to and from England, and includes a major rant by Lucy at Tusker about his past actions. Much of their married history is discussed as well. Chapter eight continues with Lucy's reminiscing. It also conveys a great deal of information about Mr. Bhoolahoy, including his work with the church and his marriage to Lila. Chapter nine continues the information on Mr. Bhoolahoy.

Chapter ten returns to Lucy's reminiscing. Chapter eleven moves on to social events; a holi party, Tusker's birthday, and Easter Sunday at church where Tusker invites the new



priest over for dinner. Chapter twelve deals with the restoration of the church organ and more of Lucy's memories. Chapter thirteen has many threads in it; background on Susy, Tusker's learning about the mali and David Turner's visit and his subsequent refusal to eat at Smith's, and more background on Tusker and Lucy. In Chapter fourteen Lucy gets the written statement she wants from Tusker on their finances in the form of a love letter, leading directly into the chapters on Tusker's death again.



Quotes

"Mrs. Bhoolabhoy, who had jowls and favored sarees in pastel colors such as salmon pink which emphasized the fairness of her skin, was a martyr to several things, among them, migraine. On the mornings when she kept to her room, work at Smith's Hotel came virtually to a standstill. The slightest percussive sound was more than she was prepared to bear. The hotel was hers, Mr. Bhoolabhoy merely its manager, whom she had married. Mrs. Bhoolabhoy weighed sixteen stone. Her husband was constructed on more meager lines." (Chapter 1, p. 1)

"She showed no interest in any kind of religion, in any kind of hereafter, only in the here and now and in how this might be arranged to her advantage." (Chapter 2, p.18)

"She had a faraway look in her eyes as if looking back into places she's walked in her long-ago shoes." (Chapter 2, p.21)

"He's not capable of sustaining shocks, nor capable of surviving while in a constant state of petty annoyance." (Chapter 3, p. 32)

"Yes, from the beginning I had a sad life," she repeated. "A life like a flower that has never really bloomed, but how many do?" (Chapter 6, p. 67)

"My only ambition ever has been to survive as comfortably as possible." (Chapter 6, p. 71)

"Tusker and I do not truly communicate with one another any more," she told the empty living room. "His silence is his silence and my loquacity is my loquacity but they amount to the same thing. I can't hear what he is thinking and he does not hear what I am saying. So we are cut off from one another, living separate lives under the same roof. Perhaps this is how it has always been between us but only become apparent in our old age." (Chapter 7, p. 78)

"...but because a hierarchy was a hierarchy and a society without a clear stratification of duties and responsibilities and privileges was no society at all" (Chapter 7, p. 79)

"It was you, Tusker, who made me a dogsbody because a role of dogsbody for yourself was the one you had chosen to play. But at least you might have gone on playing it and not begun to freak out the moment you left the army. People do not understand when they find an apparently mature man acting in an entirely different way from the one to which they are accustomed and what people do not understand they dislike or fear and they do not easily forgive the person who is the cause of these disagreeable emotions." (Chapter 7, p. 85)

"At the deepest level we do not know what the other one is thinking or feeling and you might think that after forty years of marriage we could have got around to that." (Chapter 10, p. 142)



"The view from the back was that of an old man, thin, frail, intolerable to live with, intolerable to think of as one day not being there because then she would have nothing to live for herself." (Chapter 11, p. 156)

"I still think we were right to stay on, though I don't think of it any longer as staying on, but just as hanging on, which people of our age and upbringing and limited talents, people who have never been really poor but never had any real money, never inherited real money, never made real money, have to do, wherever they happen to be, when they can't work any more." (Chapter 14, p. 195)

"Oh, Tusker, Tusker, Tusker, how can you make me stay here by myself while you yourself go home?" (Chapter 16, p. 216)



Topics for Discussion

Discuss the place religion has in Mr. Bhoolabhoy's life.

Contrast the relationships of the Smalleys and the Bhoolabhoy's.

Discuss Lucy's attitude towards Indians, both Eurasians and the pure Indian upper class.

Discuss the influence of Lucy's family on her life.

Discuss why Tusker felt he had to "stay on."

Contrast Ibrahim's attitude towards Lucy versus his attitude towards Tusker.

Describe any changes that occurred in the structure of the society due to the British withdrawal.

Explore why Mr. Bhoolabhoy feels left out when others surprise him by restoring the church organ.