The Mill on the Floss

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE ELIOT

Mary Anne Evans (pen name George Eliot) was born in Nuneaton, Warwickshire, England, to Robert and Christiana Evans. Like Maggie in *The Mill on The Floss*, Evans didn't meet the conventional beauty standards of her day. Worried that their daughter would have little success finding a husband, Mary Evans's parents provided her with an education, which was uncommon for young girls to receive. After the age of sixteen, Evans continued her education independently, teaching herself from the wealth of books in the library of the estate where her father worked. She became the assistant editor of *The Westminster Review*, a left-wing journal, in 1951, which was an uncommon role for a woman. Many of her best-known novels, including *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), *Middlemarch* (1871–72), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), center on the interior and private emotional lives of people in provincial communities. By her own account, Evans used a male pen name in order to be taken seriously by the literary establishment, which often associated women's writing with "light" entertainment. Evans lived an unconventional life, openly living outside of marriage with George Henry Lewes, a married journalist. As a result, she was estranged from her brother Isaac for many years.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Mill on the Floss is set in the 1820s, in the period following the Napoleonic wars. In the wake of Britain's triumph, many of the inhabitants of St. Ogg's—a fictional town in Lincolnshire, a region in the northeast of England—feel confident about the British empire and its predominance in the world. At the same time, however, there are some suggestions of social and political unrest. Characters like Mr. Tulliver, Mr. Riley, and Mr. Deane make frequent reference to the "Catholic Question," which is a reference to the Roman Catholic Relief Act (1829). This piece of legislation finally made it legal for Catholics to openly practice their faith, vote, and sit in Parliament, after centuries of disenfranchisement in England (a Protestant country since the sixteenth century). Although this was regarded as a step forward for religious tolerance, some characters in *The Mill on the Floss* worry that civil liberties for Catholics will lead to rebellion and dissent, suggesting that anti-Catholic prejudice was still deeply held in provincial areas like St. Ogg's. In addition, *The Mill on the Floss* is widely regarded as George Eliot's most autobiographical novel. Maggie Tulliver is often seen as an avatar for Eliot, who also grew up as a bookish and intelligent girl in a rural community, a farm in Warwickshire, that didn't support her literary ambitions. Maggie's volatile relationship with Tom recalls Eliot's relationship with her brother, Isaac. Isaac disapproved of Eliot living with a man (George Henry Lewes) outside of marriage. He and Eliot were estranged for many years as a result, just as Tom rejects Maggie after her botched elopement with Stephen Guest.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

The Mill on the Floss is a bildungsroman—literally a "novel of education"—a book that centers on a young person's transition into adulthood. The bildungsroman was a very popular genre in nineteenth-century European literature. Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1850) and Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristam Shandy, Gentleman* (1759), are prominent examples. With its focus on the coming of age of a young girl, Maggie Tulliver, *The Mill on the Floss* recalls other classic bildungsroman focused on female protagonists, like Jane Austen's *Emma* (1815) and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). In particular, Brontë's Jane closely resembles Eliot's Maggie: both women are bookish, passionate, have a rich interior emotional life, and struggle with the restrictions placed on women's behavior and choices in nineteenth-century Britain. In focusing on the unique challenges facing a woman's coming of age, Brontë and Eliot subvert the traditional bildungsroman narrative by reminding readers that a woman's growth into adulthood often involves a conflict between her intellectual ambitions and her prescribed social role.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Mill on the Floss*
- **When Written:** Late 1850s
- **Where Written:** England
- **When Published:** 1860
- **Literary Period:** Victorian
- **Genre:** Novel
- **Setting:** St. Ogg's, a fictional town in Lincolnshire, England
- **Climax:** Tom rejects Maggie after her elopement with Stephen Guest, who was engaged to another woman.
- **Antagonist:** Mr. Wakem
- **Point of View:** Third person

EXTRA CREDIT

The Mill on Film. *The Mill on the Floss* was adapted as a film in 1937, and as a television series in 1978 and 1997.

PLOT SUMMARY

The Mill on the Floss centers on the childhood and young adulthood of Maggie and Tom Tulliver, two siblings growing up in the fictional town of St. Ogg's, Lincolnshire, England. The unnamed narrator, whose gender is never specified, dreams of Dorlcote Mill, the Tulliver family's ancestral home, and sees a little girl playing outside. The little girl, it is later revealed, is Maggie Tulliver. Inside the house, Mr. Tulliver and Mrs. Tulliver are discussing Tom's education. Mr. Tulliver admits that he never had much education himself, but wants to send Tom to school in the hopes that his son will go into business. On the recommendation of a family friend, Mr. Riley, decides to send Tom to study with Mr. Stelling, an Oxford-educated minister.

Maggie is delighted when Tom comes home from school for a visit, since she adores her older brother. However, upon his return Tom is angry with her because she failed to take care of his rabbits in his absence. He points out that he carefully saved up his money to buy her a gift, whereas she carelessly forgot to feed the rabbits and let them die. Maggie apologizes profusely and is very distressed at Tom's anger, so he eventually forgives her.

Mrs. Tulliver's sisters come for a visit as well. Maggie and Tom particularly dislike the bad-tempered Mrs. Glegg, who constantly criticizes them for being "naughty" and predicts they will come to a bad end. However, both children like playing with Lucy Deane, their sweet and pretty cousin. Maggie becomes so irritated with Mrs. Glegg's criticisms of her long **dark hair** that she runs upstairs and cuts off her hair with scissors. However, she quickly regrets this, since she is then roundly mocked by all the adults. On this same ill-fated visit, Mr. Tulliver gets in an argument with Mrs. Glegg. As a result, Mr. Tulliver decides to try to pay back the three hundred pounds Mrs. Glegg has lent the family, since he doesn't want to be beholden to anyone—and especially not his wife's sister.

Mrs. Tulliver visit her sister Mrs. Pullet for help, hoping to end the quarrel between Mr. Tulliver and Mrs. Glegg. During the visit, however, Maggie makes a spectacle of herself. Jealous that Tom and Lucy are playing together without her, she pushes Lucy into the mud, horrifying the adults. Maggie feels so rejected that she decides to run away from home to live with the gypsies, who bring her back to her parents that same evening. Meanwhile, Mr. Tulliver visits his sister, Mrs. Moss, since she owes him a significant amount of money that he hopes to get back. However, he doesn't have the heart to demand money from her, seeing her poverty and eight children to feed. Instead, he takes out a large loan in order to repay Mrs. Glegg.

At school with Mr. Stelling, Tom has a rather miserable time. He is ill-suited for Latin and geometry—the "gentlemanly" subjects that Mr. Stelling tries to teach him. Over the Christmas vacation, Mr. Tulliver initiates a lawsuit against a neighbor, Mr. Pivart, for allegedly infringing on his water power. Pivart is represented by a successful and crafty lawyer named Mr. Wakem. Mr. Tulliver has developed a deep-seated hatred of Wakem, so Tom is surprised when he returns to school to find that his fellow pupil is Philip Wakem, Mr. Wakem's son. Unlike Tom, Philip has a natural aptitude for study. However, since Philip has a physical disability, Tom looks upon him with some contempt. When Maggie visits Tom before going to boarding school, she and Philip connect over their shared love of books. Tom has an accident while play sword-fighting and Philip helps nurse him back to health. Both Tom and Maggie's school days come to an abrupt end, however, when Maggie tells Tom that Mr. Tulliver has lost the lawsuit with Mr. Pivart and will lose his mill, money, and property. He's also fallen off his horse and is now so ill that he doesn't recognize anyone save for Maggie.

Mr. Tulliver's debts have now mounted so high that he has to declare bankruptcy and sell the family's furniture. This is humiliating for Tom, who is the new head of the household, and very distressing to Mrs. Tulliver, who loves her linens, furniture, and other homewares. Despite these sufferings, Tom decides to respect Mr. Tulliver's wishes and not call in the loan from Mrs. Moss. He even destroys the note proving that Mr. Tulliver ever lent money to Mrs. Moss, in order to protect her from the creditors. Determined to make his fortune and pay back the family debts, Tom then goes to visit his wealthy uncle Mr. Deane to ask for a job with the shipping company Guest & Co. However, his uncle says Tom will only get a job if he has accounting and bookkeeping skills, and that Tom's gentlemanly education will be of little use to him.

Mr. Wakem decides to take revenge on Mr. Tulliver by buying Dorlcote Mill and retaining Mr. Tulliver as his employee. This arrangement is very humiliating, but Mr. Tulliver complies in order to support his family. However, he asks Tom to swear—by writing in the **family Bible**—that he will one day take revenge on the Wakems. After the bankruptcy, life at Dorlcote Mill is miserable. Mr. Tulliver is sullen and depressed, and Tom works all the time, obsessed with earning enough money to pay back the family debts. Lonely and desperate for companionship, Maggie begins secretly meeting with Philip in the wooded area behind the mill. Philip confesses that he loves her, and she tells him that she loves him too. However, after a year of these secret meetings, Tom finally finds out and is furious. Tom angrily confronts Philip and makes Maggie promise to never see Philip again without Tom's permission.

A few weeks later, Tom tells the family that he has finally earned enough money to pay off the family debts—by investing in a shipping venture with his old friend Bob Jakin. Tom explains that the creditors will be paid back at a dinner at a local pub. That night, Mr. Tulliver is elated at this victory after four years of hard work and suffering. On the way back to Dorlcote Mill, he runs into Mr. Wakem and tells him that he refuses to work

for him anymore. Mr. Tulliver's long-suppressed rage finally bursts out, and he brutally attacks Mr. Wakem, beating him with his horsewhip. Shortly afterward, Mr. Tulliver collapses and becomes very ill. Just before he dies, he tells Tom to get back the "old mill."

Since the loss of Dorlcote Mill, Tom has been lodging with Bob, and Maggie has taken a job as a schoolteacher. During a visit to Lucy's house, Maggie meets the charming Stephen Guest, Lucy's suitor and heir to the Guest & Co fortune. Maggie and Stephen are immediately attracted to each other, but attempt to repress their feelings out of consideration for Lucy and for Philip, who also visits the Deane household in an attempt to rekindle his romantic relationship with Maggie. Philip once again tells Maggie that he loves her and even persuades Mr. Wakem to sell Dorlcote Mill back to Guest & Co, making Tom the owner of the mill once again. But despite these attempts at reconciliation, Tom remains adamantly opposed to a marriage between Philip and Maggie.

Maggie, meanwhile, continues to struggle with her feelings for Stephen and with Philip's increasing jealousy and suspicion. At a ball given at the Guest house, Stephen kisses her arm and she runs away from him. While she is staying with her aunt Mrs. Moss, Stephen visits her and tells her that he loves her, arguing that it is wrong for them to marry other people if they love one another. Maggie continues to resist, telling him that she cannot ensure her own happiness by making others unhappy. However, one day, Stephen and Maggie take a boat out on the river on their own. Stephen deliberately rows far away from St. Ogg's and then proposes that he and Maggie elope and get married. Maggie is shocked, but agrees to take passage with him to Mudport, a nearby town. Once they arrive, however, she leaves him and takes a coach back to St. Ogg's, despite his protestations that they have gone too far to turn back now.

Back in St. Ogg's, a disgraced Maggie flees to Tom for comfort. However, he rejects her as a sister and tells her that he finds her behavior "disgusting." Maggie thus takes lodging with Bob Jakin and her mother. She finds employment as a governess with Dr. Kenn, the kind local vicar, but is an outcast in St. Ogg's. Since she has returned unmarried, people assume that she has slept with Stephen outside of marriage and condemn her for her conduct. Stephen writes a letter to Lucy exonerating Maggie from any part in the elopement, at which point Lucy visits Maggie and tells her she forgives her. Philip, too, writes a letter to Maggie in which he expresses his continuing love and assures her that he believes her side of the story.

One night, after days of heavy rain, Maggie wakes to find that the river has broken through the dams, and St. Ogg's has flooded. She dashes to a boat and rows to Dorlcote Mill by herself to rescue Tom. Tom is astonished that his sister has come all alone to rescue him, and they have a moving reconciliation in the boat. As they embrace, however, they are caught in the current and drown. In a final conclusion, Stephen, Lucy, and Philip, visit the shared grave of Tom and Maggie Tulliver, which reads, "in their death they were not divided."

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Maggie Tulliver – Maggie is Mr. Tulliver and Mrs. Tulliver's passionate and high-spirited daughter and Tom's younger sister. From a young age, she shows a marked aptitude for reading and learning—what her father calls "acuteness." However, her intellectual abilities are largely underappreciated. Her brother thinks that all girls are "silly," while her mother laments Maggie's rebelliousness, messiness, and lack of concern for her clothes, hair, and household domestic tasks like sewing. Maggie's aunts, Mrs. Deane, Mrs. Pullet, and Mrs. Glegg, think that she is a "contrary" child with peculiar habits. In this sense, most of the adults in Maggie's life do not understand or encourage her intellectual interests, focusing instead on her lack of traditional feminine graces. When she is a child, she feels so rejected by her family and community that she tries to run away to the gypsies (who she thinks will have long black **hair**, like her, thus ensuring her acceptance among them). As an adult, Maggie finds herself similarly out of step with social convention. In an era when marriage was the ultimate goal of a woman's life, Maggie goes against the societal grain by working independently as a governess and rejecting Philip's marriage proposal. Most notoriously, she elopes with her cousin's lover, Stephen Guest, but refuses to go through with the marriage due to her own moral scruples—a decision that makes her an outcast in town. This decision is typical of Maggie's determination to abide by her own internal moral code rather than that of society. Tom is the emotional center of Maggie's life, and her love for him is the motivation and principle that guides many of her decisions.

Tom Tulliver – Tom is Mr. Tulliver and Mrs. Tulliver's son and Maggie's older brother. He does not share her intellectual abilities and bookish qualities, but he is skilled at practical tasks like building, fishing, and working on the Tulliver family property, Dorlcote Mill. His father sends him to study with Mr. Stelling, with the aim of giving him "a good eddication" that will give Tom a chance at succeeding in business. However, Tom is ill-suited for studies in Latin and geometry. Tom is highly moralistic and has a well-developed sense of right and wrong, which he imposes on those around him. He tends to treat Maggie harshly when she does something that he deems a violation of his moral code, which is often. Tom has a difficult and traumatic initiation into adulthood when Mr. Tulliver goes bankrupt and later dies, leaving Tom responsible for the family's finances. Tom swears on the **family Bible** that he will take revenge against Mr. Wakem, the lawyer who spitefully ruined them. Tom becomes obsessed with making his fortune, paying the family debts, and buying back Dorlcote Mill, which

he eventually does. However, his success comes at a high personal cost: he becomes exhausted, stubborn, and even harsher in his judgments of Maggie. He rejects Maggie after her failed elopement with Stephen Guest, telling her he renounces her as his sister. However, brother and sister are reconciled at the end of the novel, when Maggie rescues Tom from a disastrous flood and the pair die in an embrace.

Mr. Tulliver – Mr. Tulliver is Mrs. Tulliver's husband and Tom and Maggie's father. He is generous, warm-hearted, and kind, particularly to his daughter (unlike other family members, he is very proud of Maggie's cleverness and encourages her reading). He financially supports his impoverished sister, Mrs. Moss, refusing to call in a loan he gave her for several hundred pounds, even when his own finances are in a disastrous state. However, he is also hot-tempered and stubborn. He feuds with his wife's family and takes out an unwisely large loan in order to avoid having to borrow money from his sister-in-law Mrs. Glegg, whom he hates. He constantly initiates lawsuits against his neighbors, convinced that they have been trying to steal his land, and he maintains a years-long vendetta against a lawyer, Mr. Wakem, whom he thinks is the cause of all his misfortunes in business. When one of Mr. Tulliver's frequent lawsuits ends in disaster and bankruptcy, Mr. Wakem buys the mill and makes Mr. Tulliver his employee. This enrages Mr. Tulliver, who makes his son swear on the **family Bible** that he will take revenge against the Wakems. Mr. Tulliver's revenge schemes continue until the day he dies, when he beats Mr. Wakem with a horsewhip.

Mrs. Tulliver – Mrs. Tulliver, Mr. Tulliver's wife and Maggie and Tom's mother, is described as attractive and good-natured but rather dim-witted. Her most passionate feelings are devoted to her furniture and family linens, which she cherishes, so the family bankruptcy and subsequent sale of her household items is particularly distressing to her. She is intimidated by her stronger-willed and wealthier older sisters, Mrs. Deane, Mrs. Pullet, and Mrs. Glegg, who criticize her for having disobedient and unruly children. Mrs. Tulliver frequently laments that Maggie is not more feminine and graceful, like Mrs. Deane's daughter, Lucy, and that Maggie has **dark hair** rather than blonde hair. However, Mrs. Tulliver loves and cares for her children deeply, and in their adulthood she is movingly supportive of her daughter, even when the entire village community rejects Maggie for her failed elopement with Stephen Guest. Even after Tom harshly rejects Maggie for this, Mrs. Tulliver tells her that "you've got a mother," suggesting that the loss of her family property has made her children all the more valuable to her.

Philip Wakem – Philip is the only son of Mr. Wakem, a wealthy lawyer who becomes the enemy of Mr. Tulliver, and by extension, Tom Tulliver. Philip has a physical "deformity," a hunchback, which makes him feel depressed and insecure. However, he is also very intelligent, sensitive, and gifted. He maintains an uneasy friendship with Tom—who admires Philip's intelligence but has contempt for his disability—when they both study with Mr. Stelling. When Maggie comes to visit Tom, Philip feels an instant kinship, since they share many intellectual and artistic interests. Philip falls in love with Maggie and begins meeting secretly with her in the woods around Dorlcote Mill, where he gives her books and encourages her reading and cultural interests. However, the hatred between the Wakems and the Tullivers thwarts their romance. Philip's love is further frustrated by Maggie's attraction to and elopement with Stephen Guest, even though she doesn't go through with the marriage. However, he ultimately forgives Maggie, apologizing for pressing his romantic feelings on her when she might not have felt the same. Philip's compassion and sensitivity make him an important figure in Maggie's life, since he is one of the only people to recognize and support her deeper intellectual and emotional aspirations.

Lucy Deane – Lucy Deane is Tom and Maggie's cousin. Demure, sweet, and beautiful, Lucy is in many ways the perfect emblem of Victorian femininity. Mrs. Tulliver frequently laments that Maggie isn't more like Lucy in looks and temperament. Known as the "belle of St. Ogg's," Lucy leads a leisured life of social outings and enjoys her family's comfortable wealth. However, Lucy does have some depth to her, as she also cares deeply for other people's happiness. For example, she delights in bringing Maggie to stay with her and trying to facilitate her marriage with Philip. She is in love with the wealthy Stephen Guest, her probable fiancé, and because of her trusting nature does not think the question the nature of his attachment to Maggie. She takes the news of Stephen and Maggie's elopement badly, falling ill for several weeks. However, she ultimately recovers and visits Maggie in her lodgings at St. Ogg's to tell her that she forgives her, an act of kindness and generosity that means a great deal to Maggie.

Stephen Guest – Stephen is handsome, charming, and wealthy—the son and heir to the Guest & Co shipping fortune. He is courting Lucy Deane, and it is generally understood that they will soon be engaged. Stephen feels genuine affection and love for Lucy, whom he considers the ideal wife for him. However, he also finds himself drawn to Maggie's unconventionality and passion. At first, he tries to deny his feelings for her, but later begins trying to persuade her to marry him. On a boating expedition, he rows the boat to a nearby town with the intention of getting Maggie to elope with him. He is confident of success, so he is astonished when Maggie refuses and returns to St. Ogg's—showing that his arrogance was misplaced in assuming that Maggie would want to marry him. He flees to Holland after the botched elopement but continues to write to Maggie and even asks again for her hand in marriage. After Maggie's death, he marries Lucy.

Mr. Wakem – Mr. Wakem, Philip's father, is a lawyer who incurs the hatred of Mr. Tulliver. Mr. Wakem isn't above taking some

revenge in his turn, by buying Dorlocte Mill and making Mr. Tulliver his employee. In retaliation, Mr. Tulliver beats him with a horsewhip, which only strengthens Mr. Wakem's permanent vendetta against the Tulliver family. However, he isn't always a cruel person: he clearly loved his wife, who has since passed away, and is very affectionate to his son Philip. When Philip bravely tells Mr. Wakem that he wants to marry Maggie, Mr. Wakem even overcomes his personal aversion to the Tullivers in order to try to facilitate Philip's happiness.

Mrs. Glegg – Mrs. Glegg is Mrs. Tulliver's eldest sister and Tom and Maggie's most hated aunt. She takes very seriously her rights and responsibilities as the oldest of the Dodson sisters, and tends to treat her family dictatorially, making loud judgments about Mrs. Tulliver's housekeeping and criticizing everything about her niece and nephew's behavior and physical appearance. Mrs. Glegg believes that the Dodson way of life is the highest standard to which others should aspire, and she frequently finds others wanting in that respect (particularly Mr. Tulliver, who she thinks is rude and hot-headed.) However, despite her irritable nature, she is the only Dodson family member who defends Maggie at the end of the novel, when Maggie has become an outcast as a result of her botched elopement with Stephen Guest. For Mrs. Glegg, family is the highest value, and she is fiercely loyal to her own kin.

Mrs. Pullet – Mrs. Pullet is closest to Mrs. Tulliver of all the Dodson sisters, since they share similar tastes in clothes and household furnishings. She is very emotional and cries easily, even at the misfortunes of people she doesn't know. She is married to a wealthy farmer, Mr. Pullet, who indulges her zeal for buying furniture and linens. She also keeps a spotlessly clean house, which is why she is horrified when Maggie pushes Lucy into the pond, getting mud all over her precious floors.

Mr. Pullet – Mr. Pullet is a "gentleman farmer," meaning that he has been made wealthy by his land holdings. He was thought a very good catch for Mrs. Pullet in marriage, and he funds her expensive taste in clothes and home furnishings. Tom thinks he is somewhat awkward, since he has little to say in family gatherings and spends most of his time sucking on peppermints.

Mr. Deane – Mr. Deane has come up in the world significantly by working as a manager for the shipping firm Guest & Co. Indeed, he is now considered a better catch as a husband than even Mr. Pullet, the wealthy farmer. He has a keen business sense, and both Tom and Mr. Tulliver have great admiration for his intelligence. After the Tulliver bankruptcy, Tom comes to Mr. Deane to ask for a job. Although Mr. Deane is initially skeptical about Tom's lack of bookkeeping experience, he ultimately becomes very fond of his nephew and even works to help him buy back Dorlcote Mill.

Bob Jakin – Bob Jakin was one of Tom's childhood friends. However, their friendship ended when he and Tom had a fight over a coin, and Tom was angered that Bob tried to "cheat." As adults, however, Bob proves a true friend to Tom and Maggie, whom he adores. He tries to give them his life savings to help them after the bankruptcy, and he partners with Tom in a prosperous investment that earns the Tullivers hundreds of pounds. When Maggie is disgraced after her elopement, he takes her and Mrs. Tulliver into his home and cares for her. Although Bob is not very articulate, he is very intelligent, as demonstrated by his investment savvy and brilliant salesmanship (he even manages to sell linens to the notoriously stingy Mrs. Glegg). Bob's friendship is a constant source of stability to both Tom and Maggie throughout the novel.

Luke Moggs – Luke is the head miller at Dorlcote Mill. He is fiercely loyal to the Tullivers and has known Tom and Maggie since they were children. Even when the family is no longer able to pay him, he prefers to remain with the Tullivers, demonstrating his life-long attachment to the family and the land.

Mr. Riley – Mr. Riley is one of Mr. Tulliver's friends in the neighborhood. Mr. Tulliver considers him very sophisticated and asks him for advice about Tom's schooling. In reality, however, Mr. Riley is nearly as ignorant as Mr. Tulliver of educational matters and makes a poor recommendation. Mr. Tulliver follows Mr. Riley's advice, sending Tom to an Oxford-educated minister named Mr. Stelling to be educated in Latin and geometry—subjects that fail to help Tom later in life.

Mr. Stelling – Mr. Stelling is an Oxford-educated minister, a fact that is very impressive to members of the local community like Mr. Tulliver and Mr. Riley. He has great ambitions to write books and become a man of influence, but seems to have little motivation to actually write. He takes in pupils to fund his expensive lifestyle, although he is not a very gifted teacher. He is unable to find a way to engage Tom in his studies, for example, since he decides that Tom is "slow." He teaches Latin and geometry to Tom and Philip, and only the latter excels in the classroom.

Mrs. Moss – Mrs. Moss is Mr. Tulliver's impoverished sister. She has eight children, and the Dodsons think she has married "badly," since her husband, Mr. Moss, is a poor farmer. She has borrowed a large sum of money from Mr. Tulliver, who thinks of asking for the money back when he needs it, though it would cause her family to lose their farm. However, Mr. Tulliver ultimately decides to allow her to keep the money and even destroys the note for the loan. Mrs. Moss reminds Mr. Tulliver of Maggie, and he hopes that by being kind to his sister, he will teach Tom to be kind to his own sister.

Dr. Kenn – Dr. Kenn is the kind and sympathetic minister of St. Ogg's. He is more open-minded than most people in the town and develops a particular friendship with Maggie. After her disgrace in the wake of her elopement, he employs her as a governess for her children when nearly everyone else has shunned her. However, he eventually is forced to let her go when false rumors emerge that he is planning on asking for her

hand in marriage.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Mr. Glegg – Mr. Glegg, Mrs. Glegg's husband, is notably miserly about his money, and he judges the Tullivers harshly for their bankruptcy in light of his own careful financial management. He is also baffled by Mrs. Glegg's continual bad temper, and tends to try to mediate between her and her relatives.

Mrs. Deane – Mrs. Deane is another Dodson sister. She is very proud of her pretty and charming daughter, Lucy. She dies midway through the novel, nursed by her sister Mrs. Tulliver.

Mr. Moss – Mr. Moss is Mrs. Moss's husband, who is a poor farmer. He and his wife have eight children and struggle to stay afloat financially, largely relying on a hefty loan from Mr. Tulliver.

Mr. Pivart – Mr. Pivart is one of Mr. Tulliver's neighbors. Mr. Tulliver initiates a lawsuit against him for allegedly siphoning off his water power. Since Mr. Pivart is represented by the very legally effective Mr. Wakem, this leads to catastrophic consequences, including the Tulliver family bankruptcy.

Kezia – Kezia is the family's maid. She can be bad-tempered and tends to reproach the children for little things. But like Luke, the head miller, she is very loyal to the Tullivers and prefers to remain by their side, even when they can no longer pay her salary.

THEMES

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MEMORY AND CHILDHOOD

Although *The Mill on the Floss* covers about fifteen years in the lives of its protagonists, siblings Tom and Maggie Tulliver, the story constantly hearkens back to their childhood. In the novel, seemingly trivial incidences in those early years later take on new significance. Maggie's conflict with Tom and her desire for his love and acceptance, for instance, is a thread that continues from their early lives at Dorlcote Mill, through their school years, and into their troubled adolescence and adulthood. Similarly, old grudges have a long afterlife. For example, for Mr. Tulliver, Tom and Maggie's father, the memory of his humiliation at the hands of Mr. Wakem (the lawyer who contributes to the loss of the mill) becomes a force of destruction, conflict, and death long after the originating incident. In *The Mill on the Floss*, memories of childhood can provide precious comfort against the harsh realities of adulthood, but they can also create a far-reaching cycle of stasis and pain.

When they were children, Maggie worshipped Tom and longed for his approval and affection. However, he tended to punish her harshly when she deviated from his value system and standards of morality, a pattern that continues into their adulthood. When Tom is away at school, for example, Maggie forgets to feed his rabbits. Upon later seeing that his rabbits have died, Tom is furious at Maggie and refuses to accept her apologies, sharply telling her, "I don't love you." This distresses Maggie so deeply that she cries in the attic and thinks of starving herself. After their family's bankruptcy, Tom forbids Maggie to talk to Philip Wakem, the son of the lawyer who has ruined them. When Tom finds out that she has been meeting Philip in secret—and that they have professed their love for each other—he is cold and unforgiving. He forces Maggie to never speak to Philip again and insults Philip's physical disabilities to his face. Remembering their childhood squabbles, Maggie tells Tom, "you have always been hard and cruel to me: even when I was a little girl [...] you would let me go crying to bed without forgiving me." Here, the patterns of their childhood—Maggie's transgressions, and Tom's self-righteousness and reluctance to forgive—perpetuate themselves into adulthood.

For Mr. Tulliver, the persistence of memory has destructive effects. Even over the course of many years, he cannot forgive or forget the actions of Mr. Wakem, who bankrupted him and then spitefully bought Dorlcote Mill, forcing Mr. Tulliver to work as his employee. Mr. Tulliver accepts the conditions of Mr. Wakem's offer, but he makes Tom swear on the **family Bible** that he will never forget the injuries done to their family and will one day take revenge. Tom promises that he will "make [Wakem and his family] feel it, if ever the day comes," ensuring that the cycle of hatred and revenge will continue over time. Even after Tom has managed to earn enough money to pay off the Tulliver family debts, Mr. Tulliver cannot let go of his old hatred of Mr. Wakem. Riding home from town the day the debts have been paid, he encounters Mr. Wakem and brutally beats him with his riding crop. That night, Mr. Tulliver collapses and dies, telling his family "I had my turn—I beat him." Even years after the bankruptcy, Mr. Tulliver was still preoccupied with taking revenge against the man he perceived as the cause of his misfortunes, rather than building a new life for his family. Obsession with the past, the novel suggests, prevents people from embracing the possibilities of the future.

Dorlcote Mill is closely associated with the Tullivers' family history. Even when it becomes financially untenable to stay at the mill, the family remains attached to the property because of the memories that have been made there. The narrator explains that Mr. Tulliver's chief motive in staying at the mill to work for Mr. Wakem is "love of the old premises where he had run about when he was a boy, just as Tom had after him." In this

way, Dorlcote Mill provides a link between the several generations of Tullivers who have owned the property. Mr. Tulliver sees similarities between his own childhood and his son's, and he doesn't want to disrupt that continuity. On his deathbed, Mr. Tulliver's dying request is that Tom should "try and get the old mill back." By referring to Dorlcote Mill as "the old mill," Mr. Tulliver highlights the mill's long history and importance to the family, as well as Tom's role in continuing that legacy. Tom's entire life and career after his father's death centers on this single task; he even turns down a promotion at the shipping company where he works, Guest & Co, in order to move back to the mill. Perhaps the final testament of Tom and Maggie's shared loyalty to their childhood home is her decision to return to the mill during a disastrous flood to try to rescue her brother, although she and Tom both drown in the attempted escape.

The past haunts the novel's central protagonists. Memories of their childhood continue to influence their behavior and decisions far into their adulthood, from Tom's obsession with buying back Dorlcote Mill to Maggie's preoccupation with earning her brother's affection and approval. As the narrator observes, "the thoughts and loves of these first years would always make part of their lives." For Tom and Maggie, this is both a blessing and a curse. In many ways, they are unable to free themselves from the family obligations, expectations, and grudges that shaped their childhoods. On the other hand, their bond with each other is a source of stability and continuity through the many changes in their lives and circumstances. The supportive power of deep history sustains them through their family's bankruptcy and their father's death, when Tom and Maggie cry together and promise that they will always love each other. Finally, Maggie's sacrifice of her own life for Tom demonstrates her the continuing power of her childhood emotional attachments.

KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE

The narrator of *The Mill on the Floss* describes St. Ogg's, the town where Tom and Maggie Tulliver grew up, as a place where "ignorance was much more comfortable than at present"—meaning the reader's present is a more "enlightened" age. Throughout the novel, both Tom and Maggie struggle with the smallness of their home town and its provincial, narrow-minded values. The less bookish Tom eventually manages to find a respected place for himself in this community by turning to practical forms of knowledge in trade and business. Maggie, by contrast, finds that her intellect, passion, and love of learning make her an outcast in St. Ogg's, putting her at odds with "respectable" society. As a result, Maggie retreats into a private, internal world of books, where she can imagine stories about far-away places. Even as an adult, Maggie retains this appetite for learning as a way of expanding the boundaries of her otherwise constrained existence.

St. Ogg's is a provincial community in which few people have obtained much schooling at the secondary school level, let alone a university education. Mr. Tulliver admits that he hasn't had much education himself, but hopes to help his son Tom have more prospects in life by enrolling him in school. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Tulliver's ignorance of what goes on in a schoolroom prevents him from adequately helping his son. For example, he takes the advice of a friend, Mr. Riley, who knows equally little about education. Mr. Riley recommends Mr. Stelling as a tutor for Tom solely based on the fact that Stelling has a degree from Oxford, which Riley finds very impressive. Mr. Stelling is in fact a poor tutor, since he has no gift for teaching and succeeds mainly in making Tom feel stupid. Furthermore, while Mr. Tulliver had hoped that Tom would learn bookkeeping, Mr. Stelling instead teaches him Latin and geometry—subjects appropriate for a gentlemanly education, but not for a practical career. When Tom visits his uncle Mr. Deane to ask for a job at a shipping company, he finds that his education has given him little preparation for life. Mr. Tulliver believes that he has given his son "a good eddication," but has actually spent hundreds of pounds on an education that is useless to Tom in practice. In this sense, Mr. Tulliver's hope to improve his son's lot in life through education fails because his ignorance about learning is self-sustaining and self-perpetuating, making him unable to choose the right teacher for Tom.

While Tom's education flounders due to the ignorance of the adults in his life and his own lack of intellectual aptitude, Maggie shows an early ability and appetite for learning. However, her desire to gain more knowledge is stifled by the small-mindedness of St. Ogg's society, which cannot tolerate such impulses in a woman. Mr. Tulliver is very proud of Maggie's cleverness, but he is also worried for her—since he says that a woman has "no business wi' being so clever." In other words, he is concerned that Maggie's love of reading will not serve her well in the only role allotted to her in St. Ogg's society as a wife and mother. Mr. Tulliver's friend Mr. Riley also disapproves, commenting that Maggie shouldn't read Daniel Defoe's History of the Devil because the devil is an unsuitable subject for a little girl. For Maggie, her relationship with Philip Wakem, who loans her books and provides her with the intellectual companionship she yearns for, is a precious reprieve from the repression of her daily life and routines, which consist largely of household chores. However, the family hatred of the Wakems, which cuts off her friendship with Philip, prevents her from taking advantage of that outlet for intellectual growth. Still, Philip's influence encourages Maggie to explore the parts of her nature that are drawn to art, books, and culture. "You will not always be shut up in your present lot: why should you starve your mind in that way?" Philip asks. Philip links intellectual exploration to freedom, suggesting that Maggie can transcend her social and

material circumstances by stimulating her mind.

Perhaps the foremost example of the deep-rooted ignorance of St. Ogg's are the Dodsons, Maggie and Tom's aunts and uncles. The Dodsons embody the provincial values of St. Ogg's, with their rigid standards of propriety and distaste for any behavior that falls outside those norms. They are a wealthy, "respectable" family and pillars of the community, but they also demonstrate exactly what is so oppressive about St. Ogg's and its ignorance of the wider world. All three of Mrs. Tulliver's Dodson sisters—Mrs. Glegg, Mrs. Deane, and Mrs. Pullet—dislike the Tulliver children. They constantly criticize Maggie for her long black **hair** and dark skin, which they think makes her inferior to the blond, rosy-cheeked Dodsons. Their contempt for a family member who looks slightly different from them demonstrates their small-mindedness, since they associate familial bonds with similarity in appearance. Because the Dodsons place a premium on appearances, they tend to look with suspicion on anyone who behaves in unconventional or unfamiliar ways, like Mr. Tulliver. In addition, because the Dodsons have never left their hometown, they have little knowledge of values and life experiences that don't mirror their own—hence their suspicion and distrust of unconventional people like Maggie and Mr. Tulliver.

A central theme of *The Mill on the Floss* is Maggie's struggle to escape the constraints of a small town society that doesn't share her values and stifles her intellectual interests. The narrator constantly comments ironically on the provincialism and ignorance of the town, while showing how Maggie retreats to the world of books to find the deeper love and connection that she craves. The novel suggests that ignorance doesn't just stop people from learning more about the world; it also keeps them trapped in roles and positions in life that oppress them and stop them from reaching their full potential. At the same time, however, reading allows Maggie to expand her worldview beyond the narrow reaches of her everyday life, suggesting that knowledge has the power to transform people's lives, even in a small town like St. Ogg's.

WOMEN'S ROLES AND SOCIAL PRESSURES

Even as a little girl, Maggie Tulliver is considered "contrary" and un-ladylike by her relatives. She speaks out of turn, reads too much, and engages in acts of rebellion like cutting off her **hair**. Her behavior is often contrasted unfavorably with that of her cousin, Lucy Deane, a model of perfect Victorian femininity. Lucy is sweet, obedient, and conventionally pretty, all of which are qualities valued in women in Victorian society. As Maggie and Lucy grow up, they experience womanhood in very different ways. While Lucy conforms to the social expectations of her gender, Maggie struggles against the restrictions placed on women's lives and choices and becomes a social outcast as a result. The contrast between the fates of these two women suggests that Victorian society tends to both idealize women and harshly punish transgressions against the predominant social and sexual order.

The social organization of St. Ogg's—and of British society in the mid-nineteenth century in general—emphasizes the status of women as property. As a child, Lucy is praised for the neatness of her clothes, hair, and appearance, whereas Maggie is shamed by her relatives for having messy hair or a dirty pinafore. This suggests that women are valued for their appearance and ability to please others. In her childhood, Maggie is also constantly reminded of her second-class status. Unlike Tom, she is not given a rigorous education, since her schooling is designed to prepare her to be a wife and mother. When she looks at her brother's geometry textbook, Tom reminds her that "girls can't do Euclid," and his tutor Mr. Stelling remarks that women "couldn't go far into anything." Although she shows significant intellectual aptitude, Maggie is thought unfit for higher study simply by virtue of her gender. Maggie's subordination to Tom is also brought to light in other, subtler ways. For example, her mother, Mrs. Tulliver, comments that she plans to pass on her best tablecloths to Tom, leaving to Maggie only "the large check [...] it never shows so well when the dishes are on it." Even in small household matters, men are given precedence and priority. Yet women in Maggie's position are unable to forge a separate identity from their family, as illustrated by Mr. Wakem's comment that "we don't ask what a woman does—we ask whom she belongs to." Mr. Wakem, the lawyer who feuded for a decade with Tulliver family, points out to his son Philip that he can't marry Maggie because of the family quarrel. It doesn't matter what Maggie *did* in this conflict; she is guilty merely by association, because she "belongs" to the male Tullivers. Lacking agency of their own, women's identities are subsumed into those of their husbands and families.

As Maggie grows into adulthood, she continues to struggle with her lack of agency in the world. In the wake of the Tulliver family's bankruptcy, Tom goes to work for a shipping company and begins to make his fortune. Maggie, by contrast, has to remain at home, submit to her circumstances, and wait passively for a change in her life. When they are children, Tom points out to Maggie that he has more financial power than her by virtue of his gender. "I've got a great deal more money than you, because I'm a boy. I always have half-sovereigns and sovereigns for my Christmas boxes, because I shall be a man, and you only have five-shilling pieces, because you're only a girl." This small discrepancy in their allowances as children mirrors the larger financial inequality between them as adults—a discrepancy that, in turn, further limits Maggie's autonomy. Tom reproaches Maggie for disobeying him in continuing her friendship with Philip Wakem behind his back. In response, she points out that his authority over her life is grounded in his social position: "because you are a man, Tom,

and have power, and can do something in the world." Maggie's inability to "do something" is a constant source of frustration to her, since she feels that it prevents her from helping her family or herself.

After her botched elopement with Stephen Guest, Maggie faces the full force of social rejection and alienation from St. Ogg's society. Because she has transgressed the bounds of acceptable feminine behavior, she lives as a virtual outcast. It doesn't matter that Maggie did not choose to run away with Stephen Guest, did not sleep with him outside of marriage, and did not marry him—simply by leaving St. Ogg's with a man, she is considered guilty. However, the narrator points out the hypocrisy of "respectable" society in these cases: "If Miss Tulliver, after a few months of well-chosen travel, had returned as Mrs. Stephen Guest […] public opinion […] would have judged in strict consistency with those results." In other words, if Maggie had married Stephen Guest after running away with him, she would have been accepted in the town as the wife of one of its most prominent citizens. Even though the "crime" was the same, she would have been retrospectively validated by the marriage. The narrator observes that Victorian society tends to either elevate women or cast them down. Lovers like to sit in a chair "a little above or a little below the one on which your goddess sits," the narrator explains, since "women are at once worshipped and looked down upon." This precept is borne out in the lives of Lucy and Maggie. The conventionally feminine Lucy is idealized as an angelic, beautiful, and "perfect" woman and future wife. By contrast, in eloping with Stephen Guest, the once desirable Maggie becomes a "fallen woman" who is now treated with contempt.

Maggie's passion, intelligence, and unconventionality are a poor fit for the narrow requirements and roles allotted to women in Victorian society. She is unable to reconcile herself to the passivity expected of women, and her acts of rebellion against those conventions lead to social alienation. *The Mill on the Floss* suggests that Maggie is unable to find creative, intellectual, and sexual fulfillment because of the limited choices available to women in her community.

TOLERANCE AND FORGIVENESS

The community depicted in *The Mill on the Floss* is a small one, and old grudges die hard. Many of the families living in the town of St. Ogg's have done so for generations, and people feel a strong sense of loyalty to their community and traditions. Often, this cleaving to tradition can take the form of intolerance towards those who deviate from social norms or who are thought to have shamed or betrayed their relatives. The clever, independent Maggie Tulliver encounters various forms of intolerance and prejudice throughout the novel, but also experiences compassion and forgiveness from those she has wronged—like Philip Wakem and Lucy Deane. Maggie longs for a more forgiving and generous world. She tries to make that world a reality in her final attempt to rescue her brother, Tom, from a flood that devastates the town, sacrificing her own life in the process. Throughout the novel, Tom and Maggie hold very different attitudes regarding forgiveness. Tom is highly principled, stubborn, and tends to believe that he is always right. Maggie, on the other hand, acknowledges her own flaws in such a way that makes her more compassionate in response to the failings of others. Their reconciliation before their deaths in the flood is thus a triumph of Maggie's compassion over Tom's often unforgiving adherence to principles.

Both sides of Maggie's family—the Dodsons and the Tullivers—are markedly intolerant and show a constitutional unwillingness to admit when they are wrong and forgive those who they think have wronged them. Mrs. Glegg, for example, is highly critical of not only her Tulliver relations but nearly everyone in the town, remarking that standards of etiquette, dress, and household management have fallen since her own youth. Her bad-temperedness comes from a strong conviction that her own values are the standard by which everyone else should live. In his own way, Mr. Tulliver is just as stubborn and unforgiving as the Dodsons. He constantly feuds with his neighbors and "goes to law" with them, initiating lawsuits over land management matters that eventually ruin him financially. He fixates on the lawyer Wakem as the cause of his misfortunes and makes Tom swear on the **family Bible** to hate the Wakems too, making forgiveness difficult and even impossible for the next generation. However, even Tom and Maggie's notoriously unforgiving family members can show a more compassionate and tolerant side. It is Mrs. Glegg, of all people, who stands by Maggie when she has been rejected by nearly everyone else in St. Ogg's. Although the town condemns Maggie for her elopement with Stephen Guest, Mrs. Glegg declares that she believes in her innocence—showing that compassion and forgiveness can appear even when least expected.

The examples of Philip Wakem and Lucy Deane also demonstrate the recuperative power of forgiveness. Philip was in love with Maggie, and Lucy was engaged in all but name to Stephen Guest, so Maggie and Stephen's elopement was a cause of great distress to both of them. However, Philip writes a long letter to Maggie in which he explains that he forgives her. In fact, he offers his own apology for pressing his romantic feelings on her when she may have not reciprocated them. Philip's willingness to accept Maggie's flaws and his own part in the tragedy that befell her shows an ability to emphasize with others that has been lacking thus far in Maggie's relatives. Lucy also forgives Maggie, visiting her in her lodging in St. Ogg's after the botched elopement to tell her that she understands Maggie never meant to hurt her. This compassion is a great comfort to Maggie, who is a social outcast in the town, and makes her feel that she made the right decision in giving up Stephen. For Maggie, the compassion of even one person can

soften the pain of rejection and intolerance from hundreds of other people, suggesting that forgiveness is one of the most powerful acts possible in human relationships.

The person by whom Maggie most hopes to be forgiven is Tom—but Tom is a stubborn character, much like their father, who tends to take a self-righteous attitude and hold tenaciously to his convictions. Even when they were children, Tom would often punish Maggie for small faults—like knocking something over or pushing Lucy—by reproaching her harshly. This coldness deeply distressed Maggie, who adored her brother and longed for his affection. When Maggie returns from her failed elopement with Stephen, she goes straight to Tom and asks him to forgive her. He tells her that he is "disgusted" by her behavior and will have nothing more to do to her, a response that plunges Maggie into despair.

Although Tom has spent much of his life criticizing Maggie and refusing to forgive her faults, their reunion in death is a final triumph of compassion and forgiveness over intolerance. Tom renounced Maggie as his sister, but she remained loyal to him as her brother, sacrificing her own life to try to rescue him from Dorlcote Mill. Tom is astonished at Maggie's appearance, clinging to her and calling her "Magsie," her childhood nickname. According to the epitaph on their shared grave—"In their deaths, they were not divided"—the grudges, intolerance, and personal stubbornness that had kept Maggie and Tom apart while alive can no longer "divide" them in death. The novel's ending thus suggests that the difficulties in Maggie's relationship with her brother fall away in their final moments, when brother and sister are able to forgive one another. Faced with death, Tom and Maggie realize that the bonds of family and shared history are ultimately the most lasting attachments of their lives. Whatever their differences, it is this ability to care for and have compassion for one another that trumps everything else. In this sense, awareness of the fleeting nature of life compels and rewards forgiveness.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

TULLIVER FAMILY BIBLE

With its soiled pages and notes in the margins from past Tullivers, the family Bible symbolizes family history, continuity, and loyalty. In many nineteenth-century British homes, the Bible was at the center of the household. In *The Mill on the Floss*, the Tulliver family Bible is no exception. Maggie describes the book as being heavily annotated by several generations of Tullivers, linking the physical object of the book to the family's long tenure at Dorlcote Mill. Maggie and her family are attached to the book precisely because it has been heavily used. It is no accident, then, that when Mr. Tulliver wants Tom to swear to take revenge against Mr. Wakem (the lawyer who financially ruined the family), he asks Tom to write his promise in the family Bible. For Christians, the Bible is a sacred text, so Tom is making a serious, faith-based commitment when he promises to take revenge on the Wakems by writing it in it. However, the family Bible does not only symbolize the power of religion and tradition in the lives of people like the Tullivers—by writing in this book, a prized family possession, Tom is symbolically expressing his loyalty to the five generations of Tullivers who have lived at Dorlcote Mill. Mr. Wakem has threatened this legacy, so it is fitting that Tom makes this promise by writing in a book that symbolizes the Tullivers' strength and continuity.

MAGGIE'S HAIR

Maggie's dark hair symbolizes her rebelliousness against the standards of female dress, behavior, and appearance that dictate her life. From a young age, Maggie's long, dark, and unruly hair marks her out as different from her mother's side of the family, the Dodsons. Indeed, Mrs. Tulliver constantly laments that Maggie doesn't have curly blonde hair, like her, Tom, and her Dodson sisters. In nineteenth-century Britain, blonde curls were idealized and associated with femininity, grace, and beauty. Maggie's much-praised cousin Lucy Deane, for instance, has perfect blonde curls. In contrast, Maggie's hair physically refuses to be bound up in the tight curls in which her mother tries to dress them, just as Maggie chafes against the restrictions placed on her gender. As a child, in a fit of anger, she cuts off her hair with scissors, symbolizing her desire to be free from those gendered requirements to be clean, neat, and pretty. The young Maggie even runs away for an evening to join a caravan of gypsies, convinced that she will find a home with people who have dark hair and dark coloring, just like her. That Maggie would run away from home for such a seemingly trivial reason suggests that she felt radically excluded and out of place as a child because of her hair. Her long dark hair is later regarded as beautiful by several of her admirers in adulthood, like Philip Wakem and Stephen Guest. Here, too, both men admire her hair because it makes her intriguingly different from other women. Whether praised or condemned, Maggie's hair thus always symbolizes her unconventionality and reluctance to conform to the restrictive standards that govern women's behavior and appearance in this period.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Oxford University Press edition of *The Mill on the Floss* published in 2015.

Book 1, Chapter 2 Quotes

"It's no mischief much while she's a little un, but an over-'cute woman's no better nor a long-tailed sheep—she'll fetch none the bigger price for that."

Related Characters: Mr. Tulliver (speaker), Maggie Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 12

Explanation and Analysis

Mr. Tulliver is concerned that Maggie is "over-acute," meaning that she is *overly* intelligent. That Mr. Tulliver thinks it is possible for a woman to be too intelligent suggests that intellectual abilities are not valued in women in the nineteenth-century provincial community of St. Ogg's. Mr. Tulliver clearly cares for his daughter, but he also worries for her future. It is "no mischief" (or no harm) for Maggie to enjoy reading and learning during her childhood, he says, but her intelligence won't do her any good when it comes time for her to marry. He compares an intelligent woman to a sheep with a long tail—just as a long tail doesn't make a sheep worth any more money, intellectual abilities don't make a woman any more valuable to a prospective husband. In other words, intelligence is, for a woman, an unnecessary attribute. This point of view suggests that Mr. Tulliver and others in the community think that women should devote their time and energy to housekeeping and family duties, rather than to intellectual pursuits.

Book 1, Chapter 3 Quotes

"I want him to know figures, and write like print, and see into things quick, and know what folks mean, and how to wrap things up in words as aren't actionable. It's an uncommon fine thing […] when you can let a man know what you think of him without paying for it."

Related Characters: Mr. Tulliver (speaker), Mr. Wakem, Mr. Riley, Tom Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 22

Explanation and Analysis

Although Mr. Tulliver does not have much education himself, he is very keen that Tom should have the advantage of a secondary school education. In this passage, he explains that he wants Tom to be educated so that he will have more opportunities in life than he had, thus associating knowledge with power and social status. He hopes that Tom will not only "know figures"—which is to say, accounting—but also use his education to more effectively communicate with others in the world. Mr. Tulliver frequently finds himself tripped up by his enemy, the lawyer Mr. Wakem, because Wakem is well-educated and is able to speak with subtlety and wit. Mr. Tulliver thinks it's "an uncommon fine thing" to be able to speak in this way, because it gives a person the power to assert themselves in the world without making them vulnerable to lawsuits or other forms of retribution. For Mr. Tulliver, then, Tom's education is not just about improving his son's social position. It also represents a form of verbal and intellectual power that he feels he has lacked in his own life.

Book 1, Chapter 5 Quotes

"I don't want your money, you silly thing. I've got a great deal more money than you, because I'm a boy. I always have half-sovereigns and sovereigns for my Christmas boxes, because I shall be a man, and you only have five-shilling pieces, because you're only a girl."

Related Characters: Tom Tulliver (speaker), Maggie Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

Even as children, Tom constantly reminds Maggie that she is subordinate to him because of her gender. For example, he points out that she is given a much smaller allowance than him, "because [she's] only a girl." The unequal distribution of resources between Tom and Maggie suggests that girls in this society are less valued than boys, and that a boy will be given more privileges, advantages, and freedoms. Furthermore, as Tom's comment demonstrates, the effect of such inequity is to teach children from an early age that boys are more powerful than girls—a message that Tom has clearly internalized and will cling to even in his adult life.

Life did change for Tom and Maggie; and yet they were not wrong in believing that the thoughts and loves of these first years would always make part of their lives. We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it—if it were not the same earth where the same flowers come up again every spring that we used to gather with our tiny fingers […].

Related Characters: Maggie Tulliver, Tom Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 39

Explanation and Analysis

The Mill on the Floss devotes a great amount of time to the mundane details of Tom and Maggie's childhoods, such as their playtime activities, rituals, and fights. The reason for this intense focus on the seemingly insignificant events of childhood, the narrator explains, is that those "thoughts and loves" of Maggie and Tom's first years will influence their lives for years to come. The narrator points out that memory has a powerful emotional component, and that people often love things in the world precisely because they associate it with old memories. Most of the things people love, the narrator suggests, have some sort of sentimental memory attached to it, and this is certainly also the case for Tom and Maggie.

Book 1, Chapter 8 Quotes

"Poor little wench! She'll have nobody but Tom, belike, when I'm gone."

Related Characters: Mr. Tulliver (speaker), Mrs. Moss, Mr. Moss, Tom Tulliver, Maggie Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 79

Explanation and Analysis

Although Tulliver considers asking for a return of the money he's loaned to his impoverished sister, Mrs. Moss, he ultimately decides against it—largely because he realizes that his relationship with his sister mirrors the relationship between Tom and Maggie. Mrs. Moss is utterly dependent on Mr. Tulliver for her life and sustenance. Similarly, Maggie will be dependent on Tom in adulthood. Mr. Tulliver's awareness that Maggie will "have nobody but Tom [...] when I'm gone" signals his awareness of the fact that conventional gender roles make women powerless to shape their own economic fate. Because Maggie has very few opportunities to earn a living on her own, she will be reliant first on her father and later on her brother (and perhaps, after that, on a husband) to provide for her financially. Mr. Tulliver's concern for her—as indicated by the exclamation "Poor little wench!"—suggests that he recognizes that such social structures can make life very difficult for women.

Book 2, Chapter 1 Quotes

"No; you couldn't," said Tom, indignantly. "Girls can't do Euclid: can they, sir?"

"They can pick up a little of everything, I daresay," said Mr. Stelling. "They've a great deal of superficial cleverness; but they couldn't go far into anything. They're quick and shallow."

Related Characters: Mr. Stelling, Tom Tulliver (speaker), Maggie Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 141

Explanation and Analysis

When Maggie comes to visit Tom at school, she is fascinated by his textbooks and asks if she can learn geometry as well. Threatened by the possibility that his sister might do better than him, Tom quickly looks for his tutor for reassurance that such subjects are not suitable for girls. Mr. Stelling's response in this passage demonstrates the power of the ideologies that deny women equal access to knowledge. While Mr. Stelling admits that women can be "quick" and clever, he argues that such cleverness is merely "superficial" and that women could not "go far into" any serious intellectual subject. Here even Maggie's obvious quickness is used against her, to imply that women are too intellectually shallow to pursue learning. The real point of such a statement, of course, is to maintain the status quo of conventional gender roles. Ironically, it seems that Maggie would be better suited for Tom's expensive education in Latin and geometry, as Maggie is a voracious reader, deep thinker, and a passionate learner (all things that Tom is not). Instead, she is sent to an all-girls boarding school to learn domestic skills, which stifles her intellectual abilities.

Book 2, Chapter 3 Quotes

"It's part of the education of a gentleman," said Philip. "All gentlemen learn the same things."

Related Characters: Philip Wakem (speaker), Tom Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 154

Explanation and Analysis

Tom struggles at school with Mr. Stelling, who tries to teach him Latin and geometry—subjects for which Tom has little aptitude. Philip, by contrast, has a gift for those subjects and

seems to enjoy his studies. In this passage, he tells Tom nonchalantly that he takes so easily to Latin and geometry because "it's part of the education of a gentleman." Here Philip associates "gentlemanly" education with various forms of elite knowledge. Latin is not of much use on, say, a working business like Dorlcote Mill. Tom has little skill at Latin, but is talented at practical tasks like building, fishing, and working on the mill. At Mr. Stelling's, however, those forms of practical knowledge are devalued, and Tom is made to feel stupid. Philip's comment that "all gentlemen learn the same things" points to the way that among the upper crust, only elite knowledge is treated as valid, while other ways of learning are stigmatized.

Book 2, Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ When they did meet, she remembered her promise to kiss him, but, as a young lady who had been at a boarding-school, she knew now that such a greeting was out of the question, and that Philip would not expect it. This promise was void, like so many other sweet, illusory promises of our childhood; void as promises made in Eden [...] impossible to be fulfilled when the golden gates had been passed.

Related Characters: Philip Wakem, Maggie Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 174-175

Explanation and Analysis

A major theme of *The Mill on the Floss* is the persistence of childhood memories and desires far into adulthood. Philip and Maggie's childhood meeting has a great impact on both of them: Philip falls in love with Maggie, and Maggie "remember[s] her promise to kiss him." Even as these memories continue to exert a powerful hold on their lives, however, they are also made "void" or impossible by the pressures and social realities of adult life. Having been at a boarding school and socialized into the roles and behaviors accepted of her gender, Maggie realizes that it is not acceptable for an unmarried woman to kiss an unmarried man.

The narrator compares childhood, a time of innocence and openness, to Eden, sharply contrasting it with the harsh realities of the real world. Just as Adam and Eve were banished from Eden, so too is Maggie unable to return to the sweetness and innocence of her childhood now that she has matured.

Book 4, Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ I share with you this sense of oppressive narrowness; but it is necessary that we should feel it, if we are to understand how it acted on the lives of Tom and Maggie—how it has acted on young natures in many generations, that in the outward tendency of human things have risen above the mental level of the generation before them, to which they have been nevertheless tied by the strongest fibers of their hearts.

Related Characters: Tom Tulliver, Maggie Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 249

Explanation and Analysis

At this point in the novel, the narrator admits that the lives of Tom, Maggie, and the other inhabitants of St. Ogg's might seem oppressively stifling, provincial, and limited. However, the narrator also argues that it is necessary to depict the "narrowness" of a sheltered and intolerant community in order to understand how that environment shaped the lives of Tom and Maggie. Indeed, the narrator sees Tom and Maggie as only two examples of the way that young people often struggle to lead more open-minded, adventurous, and progressive lives than the generations before them. (For example, Maggie chooses to work at a boarding school rather than staying home like a lady, as the Dodson sisters want her to do.) At the same time, however, the narrator recognizes that the ties of memory and childhood are very powerful, comparing those ties to "the strongest fibers of their hearts." The narrowness of St. Ogg's is thus reinforced and enabled by Tom and Maggie's continuing loyalty to their family and community.

Book 5, Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ While Maggie's life-struggles had lain almost entirely within her own soul, one shadowy army fighting another, and the slain shadows for ever rising again, Tom was engaged in a dustier, noisier warfare, grappling with more substantial obstacles, and gaining more definite conquests.

Related Characters: Tom Tulliver, Maggie Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 284

Explanation and Analysis

Both Tom and Maggie struggle a great deal in the aftermath

of Mr. Tulliver's bankruptcy. However, the narrator draws a sharp contrast between their two experiences. Maggie's struggle is interior, "almost entirely within her own soul," and involves an inward battle to subdue her emotions and desires. Tom, by contrast, has the more straightforward task of going into the working world and trying to earn enough money to pay back the family's debts. Because of her gender, Maggie experiences the world after the bankruptcy in a very different way. Unlike Tom, she can't work a job to earn money (other than taking in sewing), because very few jobs were available to women in nineteenth-century England. She has to remain at home and wait passively, whereas Tom can win "more definite conquests" and take control of his own fate.

Book 5, Chapter 4 Quotes

"But it isn't for that, that I'm jealous for the dark women—not because I'm dark myself. It's because I always care the most about the unhappy people: if the blond girl were forsaken, I should like her best. I always take the side of the rejected lover in the stories."

Related Characters: Maggie Tulliver (speaker), Philip Wakem

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 306

Explanation and Analysis

In this passage, Maggie makes a seemingly trivial observation to Philip that she feels sympathy for dark-haired women in stories—who often are less romantically successful than their blonde counterparts. This comment in fact reveals a great deal about Maggie's personality and psychology, suggesting that she is unusually compassionate and tends to "take the side" of what she considers to be the "unhappy" and "rejected" people. Maggie has suffered a great deal in her short life from her family's bankruptcy, her father's death, and her brother's coldness, and that suffering has made her more empathetic towards others. Because she has felt unhappy and rejected herself for most of her life, she is better able to feel compassionate towards others in the same situation. In this sense, her capacity to feel the pain of other people is closely linked to the pain she has suffered in her own life.

Book 5, Chapter 5 Quotes

"But you have always enjoyed punishing me—you have always been hard and cruel to me: even when I was a little girl, and always loved you better than any one else in the world, you would let me go crying to bed without forgiving me. You have no pity: you have no sense of your own imperfection and your own sins."

Related Characters: Maggie Tulliver (speaker), Philip Wakem, Tom Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 319

Explanation and Analysis

When Maggie meets Philip Wakem in secret, for instance, he harshly condemns her behavior as disloyal to the Tulliver family without listening to her explanations. In this passage, Maggie points out that Tom seems to "enjoy" having the moral high ground and punishing her for her supposed failings. Maggie is highly compassionate and empathetic, and she tends to keenly feel the pain of others. Tom, however, has little compassion for those who he feels have transgressed his moral code. Although she admits that she has made mistakes, Maggie also suggests that Tom is wrong to think that he hasn't made errors himself. She accuses him of having "no sense of [his own] imperfection." This lack of self-awareness makes Tom less humble and compassionate towards others, because he does not see the flaws in his own behavior.

Book 6, Chapter 7 Quotes

But the rain is to be depended on. You gallop through it in a mackintosh, and presently find yourself in the seat you like best—a little above or a little below the one on which your goddess sits (it is the same thing to the metaphysical mind, and that is the reason why women are at once worshipped and looked down upon), with a satisfactory confidence that there will be no lady-callers.

Related Characters: Lucy Deane, Maggie Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 378

Explanation and Analysis

The narrator observes that lovers tend to welcome the rain, because it keeps ladies indoors. Thus, a rainy morning is an

excellent time for a man to visit a woman he is courting (without any "lady-callers" or other female friends interrupting). However, this seemingly light-hearted observation soon becomes a bitingly satirical commentary on women's roles in nineteenth-century England. The narrator jokes that men like to sit either "a little above or a little below" women, since women are "at once worshipped and looked down on." The lives of the women in *The Mill on the Floss* tend to support this observation. Women who adhere to traditional gender roles—like the sweet and feminine Lucy Deane—are worshipped and treated as idealized "goddesses" whom everyone should seek to emulate. By contrast, women who transgress those norms—like Maggie after her botched elopement—are treated as dangerous and contemptible. In neither of these cases are women treated as men's equals.

Book 6, Chapter 8 Quotes

"We don't ask what a woman does—we ask whom she belongs to. It's altogether a degrading thing to you to think of marrying old Tulliver's daughter."

Related Characters: Mr. Wakem (speaker), Mr. Tulliver, Maggie Tulliver, Philip Wakem

Related Themes:

Page Number: 394

Explanation and Analysis

When Philip tries to persuade his father to support his proposed marriage with Maggie, Mr. Wakem at first balks at the idea of an alliance with the Tullivers, who have been his enemies for years. Philip points out that Maggie was never personally hostile to him and never participated in the quarrel. For Mr. Wakem, however, Maggie's personal behavior is irrelevant. What matters to him is her family identity, since "we don't ask what a woman does—we ask whom she belongs to." Mr. Wakem thinks Maggie "belongs" to the Tullivers, and not only because family loyalties and memories are paramount in this community. Mr. Wakem's opinion is also a comment on gender roles. For women, in particular, it is nearly impossible to forge an independent identity outside of family bonds. Mr. Wakem doesn't see Maggie as an independent person; he sees her as an appendage to her father and brother.

Book 7, Chapter 2 Quotes

If Miss Tulliver, after a few months of well-chosen travel, had returned as Mrs. Stephen Guest, with a post-marital trousseau, and all the advantages possessed even by the most unwelcome wife of an only son, public opinion, which at St. Ogg's, as elsewhere, always knew what to think, would have judged in strict consistency with those results.

Related Characters: Lucy Deane, Stephen Guest, Maggie Tulliver

Related Themes:

Page Number: 453

Explanation and Analysis

The narrator points out the hypocrisy and intolerance of the St. Ogg's community after Maggie returns from her botched elopement with Stephen Guest. Maggie's crime, supposedly, was running off with a man who was engaged to her cousin Lucy—even though the whole thing was Stephen's idea, and Maggie promptly demanded to be returned home. However, if Maggie had actually *married* Stephen, the narrator points out, the community would have accepted her warmly as the wife of the heir to the most prominent family in St. Ogg's. In other words, even though the offense was the same, the punishment would have been very different. The problem, then, is that Maggie has returned unmarried. People in the town thus jump to the conclusion that she has slept with Stephen outside of marriage, making her a social outcast in the eyes of "public opinion" (since premarital sex for women was stigmatized). The narrator suggests that people in the town tend to judge easily and draw quick conclusions without evidence—since public opinion "always knew what to think." In Maggie's case, she is judged not necessarily for doing something morally wrong, but for violating the socially sanctioned norms and rules of behavior for women in this historical period.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 1

The narrator stands on a bridge and looks at Dorlcote Mill, which is situated on the River Floss and the smaller River Ripple, near the village of St. Ogg's. The scene is peaceful, beautiful, and pastoral. Even the sound of the mill churning the water is described as a "dreamy deafness." From this vantage point on the bridge, the narrator sees a man with a wagon returning home with sacks of grain. The narrator imagines that the man is thinking of his dinner, which he will not be able to eat until he has fed his horses.

The Mill on the Floss begins in a tone of nostalgia, introducing a preoccupation with memory that will become a major theme of the novel. The narrator—whose name and gender are never revealed—appears to be someone with an intimate knowledge of Dorlcote Mill and St. Ogg's. He or she depicts a peaceful scene of slow rural village life, as exemplified in the image of a wagon returning home after a day of work.

The narrator sees a little girl also looking at the mill and thinks that she should go inside the mill to warm herself at the parlor fire. Thinking that his or her arms are feeling cold from resting on the bridge, the narrator wakes up, realizing that in fact he or she had fallen asleep in an armchair and had been dreaming of Dorlcote Mill as it looked on a February day many years ago. The narrator promises to recount what Mr. Tulliver and Mrs. Tulliver had been talking about inside the parlor on that day.

The narrator is nostalgic because he or she is seemingly familiar with Dorlcote Mill—for example, the narrator knows that the house contains a warm parlor fire. This place evidently contains powerful memories for the narrator, so much so that he or she dreams of Dorlcote Mill. The narrator's nostalgic dream then facilitates an introduction to the inhabitants of Dorlcote Mill, the Tullivers.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 2

Mr. Tulliver tells his wife, Mrs. Tulliver, that he wants their son, Tom, to get a better education than Mr. Tulliver himself had received. He doesn't want to make Tom "a downright lawyer," but he does want him to become something more than a miller or farmer—perhaps an engineer or surveyor. Mrs. Tulliver hopes that Tom will attend school somewhere close to home, so that she can mend his clothes and send him extra food. Mr. Tulliver agrees, provided the school is a place where students spend their time doing something other than "blacking the family's shoes, and getting up the potatoes." He decides to talk about Tom's schooling with Mr. Riley, a local appraiser and auctioneer.

Mr. Tulliver associates education with access to greater social and economic opportunities in life. He may not have had much education himself, but he recognizes how knowledge opens up a world that has not been available to him or to other poor, rural farmers. He wants Tom to do something other than agricultural labor—like "getting up the potatoes"—and he sees learning and knowledge as the route to a career in the professions. Notably, however, he imagines Tom as an engineer or surveyor—both careers based on practical forms of knowledge like bookkeeping.

Mr. Tulliver admits that Tom isn't the brightest child in the family, although he hopes Tom will become a professional businessman and set up shop in St. Ogg's. Tom's sister (Maggie) is far cleverer. Mr. Tulliver is concerned about this, since he believes that cleverness won't help a grown woman when it's time for her to marry. Mrs. Tulliver complains exasperatedly that her daughter's ways are very strange and "comical." For example, the girl wanders close to the river, forgets her chores, and sings to herself "like a Bedlam creature." Mrs. Tulliver admits that she is jealous of her sister Mrs. Deane, who has a very pretty and neat daughter named Lucy.

Despite his high hopes for Tom's education, Mr. Tulliver freely admits that it's his daughter, not his son, who has the most aptitude for study. It is striking that Mr. Tulliver acknowledges Maggie's intellectual abilities while maintaining that her only role in life will be a wife and mother. In fact, he worries that her cleverness won't make her any more desirable as a wife—and perhaps will actually lower her chances of finding a husband. Mrs. Tulliver, for her part, despairs at Maggie's lack of feminine graces. This suggests that neither Maggie's parents nor society in general value Maggie's interests and skills.

When Maggie comes into the parlor, Mrs. Tulliver reproaches her for going to close to the river and taking off her bonnet, messing up her hair. Maggie's dark hair is stubbornly straight, despite her mother's attempts to curl it "like other folks's children." Mrs. Tulliver tells Maggie to work on her sewing for her Aunt Glegg, but Maggie protests that she doesn't like sewing or her aunt. Mr. Tulliver laughs, although Mrs. Tulliver laments her daughter's lack of feminine graces. The narrator comments that Mrs. Tulliver is beautiful and good-natured but dim-witted, comparing her to one of Raphael's paintings of Madonna. The narrator wonders whether Madonna might have lost that calm and "somewhat stupid" expression if her child grew up strong-willed.

The narrator depicts Mrs. Tulliver as a highly conventional person who wants her daughter to embody traditionally feminine traits such as neatness, prettiness, and skill at domestic tasks such as sewing. Her hopes for Maggie, however, clash with her daughter's strong-willed resistance to convention. For example, despite all Mrs. Tulliver's efforts, Maggie's hair does not curl in the style fashionable for nineteenth-century British woman. The stubbornness of Maggie's hair thus becomes a metaphor for Maggie's resistance to conventional gender roles.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 3

Mr. Tulliver drinks a brandy with Mr. Riley, a well-educated man who refers to the Tullivers as "people of the old school." Mr. Tulliver praises Mr. Riley for his assistance in a legal dispute over the height of the water near the mill, remarking that he thinks Old Harry (the devil) created lawyers. He asks for advice about where to send Tom to school, since he wants his son to set up in a profession on his own rather than trying to inherit the family farm too soon. At the sound of her brother's name, Maggie stands up from her book and protests that Tom would never do any "mischief" to his father.

Although he hates lawyers and is constantly involved in lawsuits around his property, Mr. Tulliver also seems to have a peculiar reverence for them due to their impressive education, which is something he hasn't been able to enjoy himself. He believes that the devil creates lawyers, suggesting that Mr. Tulliver views their knowledge as something mysterious and even supernatural.

Mr. Tulliver proudly tells Mr. Riley about Maggie's reading abilities, although he also worries that a woman has "no business wi' being so clever." Mr. Riley asks Maggie what she's reading, and she explains that she's read Daniel Defoe's *History of the Devil* as well as John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Mr. Riley wonders whether the devil is an appropriate subject for a little girl to read about. Mr. Tulliver admits that he wishes Maggie had been the boy of the family, since she would be a match for any lawyer.

Once again, Mr. Tulliver shows his mingled pride in Maggie's intellectual abilities and his concern that such talents will be of little use to her as a wife and a mother. Indeed, her reading might even be an active demerit, as demonstrated by Mr. Riley's disapproving comments that Maggie is reading books inappropriate for a little girl. Mr. Tulliver's wish that Maggie had been a boy demonstrates that is her gender that prevents her from fully expressing her intellectual interests and abilities.

Mr. Riley suggests that Mr. Tulliver send Tom to study with Stelling, a parson with a Master of Arts degree from Oxford, who is willing to take on a pupil for one hundred pounds a year. Mrs. Tulliver worries about Tom growing up in the house of a bachelor, but Mr. Riley assures her that Stelling is married to a nice woman from a good family. Mr. Tulliver is concerned that a parson isn't the best choice for teaching his son to be a man of business, to which Mr. Riley responds that Stelling is a gentleman who can prepare Tom for any trade. Maggie asks Mr. Riley how far away Tom will have to go, and Mr. Riley reassures the family that it is only about fifteen miles.

Mr. Tulliver's own ignorance of schooling and education makes him overly reverential of people who have had some education. Although Mr. Riley is not very learned himself, Mr. Tulliver respects his opinions and gives them a great deal of weight. Similarly, both Mr. Riley and Mr. Tulliver are extremely impressed by the fact that Mr. Stelling has a degree from Oxford. This alone is considered sufficient qualification to make him Tom's tutor, although the two men don't actually know anything about Mr. Stelling's scholarship, talents, or teaching abilities.

The narrator observes that Mr. Riley had no ulterior or malicious motives in recommending Stelling, as he really was attempting to help the Tulliver family. He did not actually know Stelling personally, but had heard him recommended by a relative who had attended Oxford. Mr. Riley had forgotten most of his school Latin, and was consequently impressed by anyone with a university education. Besides, Mr. Riley knew Stelling's wife and assumed that her husband must be an upstanding gentleman. The narrator asks the reader not to judge Mr. Riley harshly for making a recommendation based on so little firsthand knowledge.

Mr. Riley's recommendation of Mr. Stelling—which is based on circumstantial evidence and little firsthand knowledge—exemplifies the tendency of St. Ogg's residents to jump to conclusions. Although Mr. Riley is in fact completely ignorant of Mr. Stelling and doesn't know him personally, he ventures an opinion anyway. Throughout the rest of the novel, the inhabitants of St. Ogg's frequently make conclusions based on incomplete evidence, just as Mr. Riley does here.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 4

Maggie wants to go with Mr. Tulliver to fetch Tom from school, but Mrs. Tulliver protests that it is too rainy for a girl to go out in her best bonnet. Maggie dips her hair in water in rebellion, and Mrs. Tulliver complains that people will judge her for having such a naughty child. Maggie runs upstairs to the attic, which is her retreat where she goes to be alone. Her "Fetish" is using her doll as a voodoo doll to vent her rage. Today she pretends the doll is her Aunt Glegg, whom she hates.

Maggie clearly feels oppressed by conventional gender roles, which demand she be constantly neat, pretty, and well-behaved, as demonstrated by her rage at having to wear her hair in a bonnet. Her rebellious acts with her hair and use of a "Fetish" to vent her anger suggests that those same strictures make it very difficult for her to express her emotions in her everyday life.

Maggie runs outside and enters the mill, where she loves to slide up and down the hay stacks. She talks to Luke, the head miller, and asks him whether he would like to borrow one of her books to learn about far-away people and animals, like Dutchmen and elephants. Luke responds that he doesn't need to know anything more than what earns his daily bread. Maggie admits that Tom isn't much of a reader either, although she loves him dearly and hopes they will always live together. She realizes that Tom's rabbits have died, and is very distressed that she has failed to look after them, as he asked her to do.

Luke is a typical inhabitant of St. Ogg's in that he feels little intellectual curiosity about the outside world. For him, the world beyond his community is not of much interest to his daily life. Maggie admits that the same is true of her brother, Tom. For her, by contrast, the world of far-away places is a source of intellectual stimulation and delight. She loves reading in large part because books allow her to learn about people, things, and experiences that are outside her own limited sphere of existence.

Luke comforts Maggie and invites her to visit him and his wife in their cottage. While there, Mrs. Moggs gives Maggie some bread and treacle. Maggie is particularly fascinated by a picture they have on their walls of the "prodigal son," a biblical character who abandons his family and spends all his inheritance before humbly returning home and being reaccepted by his family. Maggie comments that she is glad the father reaccepted his son, even after his misadventures.

Here, Maggie first displays one of her most prominent character traits: her tendency to feel sympathy and compassion for people who have done wrong. Although the prodigal son in the biblical story betrayed his family, Maggie feels instinctively compassionate towards him and is glad that his father forgives him. The story of the prodigal son also foreshadows an event later in the story, when Maggie almost elopes with Stephen Guest but humbly returns to her family in the hopes of finding forgiveness and compassion.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 5

Maggie and Mrs. Tulliver stand outside to greet Tom on his return from school. Tom tells Maggie that he has a present for her: he has saved up his money for the past quarter of the term to buy her a hook and fishing line so that they can go fishing together. He did this even though his friends physically fought with him because he wanted to save the money for Maggie's gift instead of buying toffee. Tom then finds out that the rabbits have died because Maggie didn't feed them. She offers to give him her money so he can buy new rabbits, but Tom refuses angrily, saying "I don't love you." He complains that he is a good brother to Maggie and saved up his money to buy her a present, whereas Maggie is always careless and forgetful with his things.

In contrast to Maggie's compassion, Tom has a very different understanding of justice and wrongdoing. He is very loyal and has a keenly developed sense of right and wrong, and he isn't afraid to stand up for what he thinks is right—as when he risks a fight with his friends to save money for Maggie's gift. However, he can also be harsh and unforgiving. Although Maggie apologizes profusely for neglecting to feed his rabbits, Tom treats her coldly and punishes her by telling her "I don't love you." While Maggie's impulse is to empathize, Tom finds it difficult to forgive.

Maggie cries and runs upstairs to the attic, where she thinks of hiding and starving herself. Meanwhile, at tea downstairs, Mr. Tulliver asks Tom where Maggie is and chides him to be good to her. He knows Maggie would never willingly leave Tom's side unless there had been a quarrel between them. Tom goes upstairs and sees Maggie, who begs his forgiveness. He offers her some cake, and they both cry. The narrator comments that children are very transparent about their emotions, while adults have learned to restrain themselves.

Tom eventually forgives Maggie because the bond between them—their shared history and love for one another—is stronger than his stubbornness. As the narrator observes, this is a pattern that will continue into their adulthood. At heart, Tom does love and care for his sister, even though he struggles to forgive her. In their childhood, they are much more emotionally open with each other than they will later become as adults, which makes forgiveness easier.


The next day, Maggie and Tom go down to the Round Pool to go fishing. Maggie asks Tom to put a worm on the hook for her. The narrator comments that Maggie worships Tom and finds his knowledge of matters like fishing very impressive, whereas Tom thinks Maggie is "a silly little thing" since "all girls [are] silly." Still, he is very fond of her and thinks they will always live together and be happy together, and never go change or go away to school. The narrator observes that in some ways, Maggie and Tom were right that they would always be together, since their love for one another and memories of their childhood will always remain a part of their lives.

From its opening chapters, The Mill on the Floss *emphasizes the lasting power of the events and emotions that shaped childhood experience. Some of these memories and behavioral patterns are positive, like Tom and Maggie's sibling bond and love for each other. Some of the residue from childhood, however, has more unfortunate consequences. From a young age, for instance, Tom clearly sees Maggie as his inferior because of her gender. His view of her as a "silly" girl who should bend to his wishes will have lasting implications for their relationship.*


BOOK 1, CHAPTER 6

Mrs. Tulliver has prepared a delicious puff pastry in preparation for a visit from her sisters, Deane, Pullet, and Glegg. She complains that Tom and Maggie are awkward around their aunts and uncles, and so are unlikely to get any inheritance from them. She compares Maggie unfavorably to Lucy Deane, a very sweet and obedient girl whom Mrs. Tulliver loves as if she were her own child. The narrator describes Mrs. Tulliver's family, the Dodsons, who are very convinced that they know the proper way to manage a household and tend to be suspicious of outsiders.

In the narrator's telling, the primary Dodson family trait is contempt, suspicion, and intolerance for all outsiders. This is because the Dodsons are convinced that their way of life—even in the case of small matters of household management—is always the superior way of doing things. This self-satisfaction and insularity leads to a rigidity and intolerance for others who don't share their priorities and values.

Whenever their Dodson relatives arrive, Tom and Maggie tend to run away for the day. Today, they sit under a tree eating jam puff pastries. Tom cuts the last pastry in half and tells Maggie to close her eyes and choose the side at random. She selects the side with the jam running out, and he sulks and runs off when she doesn't share it with him, which makes Maggie miserable. When she finds Tom again, he is with a local "naughty" boy named Bob Jakin, whose job is to scare the birds. Tom admires Bob's knowledge of different types of birds and tends to prefer his company to Maggie's.

This seemingly trivial incident between Tom and Maggie—an argument over who gets the better half of the puff pastry—is in fact very revealing about their relationship. When Maggie does something that displeases Tom (even if she does so unknowingly or accidentally), he tends to be harshly judgmental and slow to forgive. In this case, he punishes Maggie for a minor offense by playing with Bob Jakin and preferring his company to hers, which deeply distresses her.

Tom and Bob walk along the river with the Tullivers' dog, Yap, to go rat-catching. They play heads and tails for a halfpenny, and when Tom wins the coin toss, he demands that Bob hand it over. They fight, and Tom pins Bob on the ground, declaring that he hates a "cheat." As Tom walks away, Bob throws his pocket knife after him ineffectually. The narrator remarks on Tom's well-developed sense of justice and feeling that the guilty should be punished. Tom always tends to believe he has done the right thing, whereas Maggie always wishes she had done something different.

This contrast between Tom and Maggie—Tom always believes he did the right thing, while Maggie always wishes she did something different—is also indicative of their differing attitudes toward tolerance and forgiveness. Maggie tends to see more ambiguity, unsure about the correctness of her actions and the actions of others. Tom, on the other hand, firmly believes that he has the moral high ground in all situations, including in the fight with Bob Jakin. Tom says that he hates a "cheat," demonstrating his strict adherence to ideas of justice and fairness.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 7

Mrs. Glegg is a "handsome" woman, like all the Dodson sisters, but she dislikes buying new clothes, and her dress is out of fashion and slightly moldy. She complains that her sisters Deane and Pullet are late, but when Mrs. Tulliver offers her a cheesecake and a glass of wine, Mrs. Glegg sniffs that she never eats between meals. She also complains that the lunch is being served too late in the day, which violates typical Dodson practice. And she accuses Mr. Tulliver of wasting all the family money on lawsuits, leaving nothing for Tom and Maggie.

Mrs. Glegg's actions display the Dodson's intolerance to comic effect. Mrs. Glegg is so convinced that the Dodson way of life is correct and proper, that she takes issue with the time that Mrs. Tulliver serves lunch—complaining that the Dodsons always eat lunch early, and Mrs. Tulliver is serving it too late. Such preoccupation with trivial matters of household management demonstrates the rigidity of the code of conduct that dominates every aspect of life in this community.

Mrs. Tulliver is relieved when Mrs. Pullet arrives, dressed in a comically large silk dress and accompanied by her husband, Mr. Pullet, who is much shorter than her. Mrs. Pullet is crying, and informs her sisters that old Mrs. Sutton has died of the dropsy. Mrs. Glegg scolds her for carrying on about people outside the family, since she thinks she shouldn't care about people who aren't family members. But the narrator remarks that Mrs. Pullet can afford to do so, since she married a "gentleman farmer" and lives a life of leisure. Mrs. Tulliver, Maggie, and Tom all prefer Mrs. Pullet to the bad-tempered Mrs. Glegg. Mrs. Pullet, for her part, thinks it's a shame that Mrs. Tulliver has such "naughty, awkward children," whom she thinks take after the Tulliver side of the family rather than the Dodson side.

Mrs. Glegg's attitude toward Mrs. Pullet's grief over the death of a neighbor demonstrates Mrs. Glegg's extreme loyalty to her family and contempt for outsiders. For Mrs. Glegg, it isn't worth crying about anyone who isn't a Dodson—suggesting that loyalty to family takes precedent over all other values, including compassion. Mrs. Glegg also criticizes Mrs. Tulliver for Tom and Maggie's "naughty" behavior in terms that emphasize the difference between insiders (Dodsons) and outsiders (the Tullivers and everyone else). By suggesting that Tom and Maggie get their bad behavior from their Tulliver blood, Mrs. Glegg demonstrates her stunning lack of tolerance for people outside of her immediate family circle.

Mrs. Deane arrives with her daughter, Lucy, and Mrs. Tulliver thinks it's a shame that her own daughter doesn't have such pretty blonde curls. Maggie greets Lucy warmly, but doesn't like the attentions of Mrs. Glegg, who talks to the children as if she considers them "rather idiotic" and criticizes Maggie's messy **dark hair**. Lucy asks if she can stay to play with the Tulliver siblings. The narrator explains that Mr. Deane is a manager for a company called Guest & Co, and that the Deanes are doing much better than anyone had anticipated.

Everyone in the family seems to unfavorably compare the rebellious and "awkward" Maggie with Lucy, who is always perfectly well-behaved. This contrast between the two girls is symbolized by their hair. Lucy's hair is blonde and curly, a popular style for nineteenth-century British women. Maggie's hair is dark, straight, and unruly, symbolizing her subversion of traditional gender roles.

Mrs. Tulliver tells Maggie to go upstairs and brush her **hair**. Maggie goes to the attic with Tom and cuts off her hair, hoping that she won't have to hear any complaints and criticisms anymore. She very quickly regrets what she's done, however, realizing that she looks ridiculous. As she sits on the floor and cries, refusing to come down to dinner, the narrator remarks on how difficult it is to recall the real pain everyone felt as children, even when their troubles were supposedly "trivial."

The narrator points out that the emotional turmoil of childhood can have far-reaching effects into adulthood. For example, Maggie's attempt to cut off her hair—and her subsequent regret and humiliation—prefigures the struggles she will have later in life as she navigates the expectations for women in her community.

Tom persuades Maggie to come down to dinner, but she soon regrets it, since Mrs. Tulliver shrieks, and her aunts and uncles begin criticizing and shouting at her. Mr. Tulliver, however, defends her and "takes her part," which Maggie finds very comforting.

Although Maggie is subjected to judgment and intolerance from most of her family, the sympathy of even one person can make a great deal of difference. Mr. Tulliver's habit of "taking her part" thus makes Maggie feel very close with him.

Mr. Tulliver sends the children outside so he can announce his decision regarding Tom's education to the family, explaining that he wants Tom to go into business rather than inheriting the family farm. The uncles are perplexed as to why Mr. Tulliver would send Tom to a clergyman. Indeed, the narrator comments that Mr. Pullet barely knows what a clergyman is. Mrs. Glegg protests that it makes little sense to send a boy to school when he has no financial prospects. Mr. Tulliver takes offense at this and begins quarreling with Mrs. Glegg, who points out that she has loaned money to the Tullivers.

Mr. Tulliver's decision to send Tom to school perplexes Tom's aunts and uncles, demonstrating their provinciality and lack of respect for education. For Mrs. Glegg, education is linked only to future financial prospects. She sees no reason for Tom to go to school if he doesn't stand to inherit a fortune, suggesting that she sees knowledge as the province of the wealthy. In contrast, Mr. Tulliver sees education as a way to position Tom to enter into the business world rather than agriculture, thereby improving Tom's lot in life.

Mrs. Glegg leaves in a huff, and the other women go outside to see to the children. Mr. Tulliver is pleased to be able to discuss politics with Mr. Deane, whom he greatly admires. They discuss the Duke of Wellington, a prominent politician and military hero of the Battle of Waterloo, and the "Catholic Question"—the question of whether Catholics in England should be allowed to vote and openly practice their religion. The men are afraid that greater religious tolerance would lead to the country being "utterly the prey of Papists and Radicals."

People in the town of St. Ogg's are not only intolerant towards their family members and neighbors. During this time, most people in England were Protestant, but a bill in Parliament was proposed to allow for greater religious tolerance for Catholics. Mr. Tulliver and Mr. Deane's fear of this bill (and of people they call "Papists and Radicals") reveals their prejudice towards all people who are different from them and thus considered threatening.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 8

Mrs. Tulliver points out that it would be difficult for the family financially if Mrs. Glegg were to demand the return of her loan of five hundred pounds. Mr. Tulliver claims angrily that he won't be beholden to his wife's sisters. The next day, he goes to visit his sister, Moss, and her husband. The narrator explains that Mr. Tulliver has a two thousand pound mortgage on his farm, one thousand pounds of which he gave as dowry for his sister when she married. Now, Mr. Tulliver plans to call in three hundred pounds of that loan.

The relationship between Mr. Tulliver and his sister, Mrs. Moss, is one of financial dependence. When she married, she relied on him to give her a "dowry"—a payment made by a woman's family members to her husband. The convention of giving a dowry on a woman's marriage underscores that women in this society have no economic power on their own and must rely on the financial generosity of male relatives.

Mr. Tulliver arrives at the Moss family farm in Basset, a ramshackle and run-down parish. Mrs. Moss appears with a few of her eight children and inquires after Maggie, of whom she is particularly fond, since Maggie takes after their side of the family. Mrs. Moss says that she hopes Tom will always care for his sister, just as Mr. Tulliver has always cared for her. When Mr. Moss arrives, Mr. Tulliver goes to talk with him in the garden. He begins by criticizing Mr. Moss's farming and financial prospects, before asking for the return of three hundred pounds of the capital he's given them. Mr. Moss protests that he will have to sell the farm in order to repay the Tullivers.

Mrs. Moss's current financial situation further demonstrates the extent of her dependence on men in her life. Because Mrs. Moss has married a poor farmer, she is in bad financial straits and can do little to change her prospects. Mr. Tulliver's anger at his sister's husband suggests that he feels his sister has made a bad economic calculation. Marriage is often considered a romantic and emotional choice, but the emphasis on such practical and financial considerations suggests that in this society, marriage is the only way that women can support themselves financially.

Mr. Tulliver curtly tells Mr. Moss to raise the money. Mr. Tulliver rides away from the farm, but before he's gotten far, he thinks of Maggie—"Poor little wench! She'll have nobody but Tom, belike, when I'm gone"—and feels pity for his own sister. He returns to the Moss farm and tells Mrs. Moss that he won't be calling in the loan after all. Mrs. Moss thanks him and gives him a colored egg to give as a gift to Maggie. As he rides away, he reflects that being harsh on his own sister might in some way teach Tom to be hard on Maggie.

Mr. Tulliver ultimately relents and takes pity on his sister because he thinks of his own daughter, Maggie. His observation that "she'll have nobody but Tom" demonstrates that Mr. Tulliver recognizes that Maggie will be dependent on Tom, just as Mrs. Moss is now dependent on Mr. Tulliver himself. The exclamation "poor little wench!" shows he is aware that this is a disempowering arrangement for Maggie and that he worries for her.


BOOK 1, CHAPTER 9

Back at the house, Maggie has a difficult morning. In preparation for the visit to Garum Firs, Mrs. Pullet's farm, Maggie is forced to endure a visit from the hairdresser and to wear her best Sunday clothes, which make her uncomfortable and irritated. While building card houses with the other children, Tom praises Lucy's house and calls Maggie "stupid." Maggie knocks over Tom's house of cards, which makes him angry and distresses her. Tom continues to favor Lucy for the rest of the day.

Maggie's physical discomfort in her "best" clothes mirrors the discomfort she feels at being forced to conform to standards of conventional femininity more generally. When she acts out and tries to express her anger, she incurs the irritation of Tom and immediately feels distressed. This childhood interaction suggests just how little scope Maggie has to express her thoughts and feelings (especially those that go against the societal grain) without fear of punishment.

Garum Firs is a beautiful farm and house, but Mrs. Pullet refuses to allow the children to touch anything (in case they dirty her polished stairs and floors), which ruins the children's fun. Mrs. Pullet takes Mrs. Tulliver, Maggie, and Lucy, into her "best room" to show them her extravagant new bonnet. She even cries over it and says that she hopes the women will remember this bonnet when she's dead. Meanwhile, Tom talks downstairs with Mr. Pullet, whom Tom thinks is rather stupid but very rich.

The Pullets are wealthy, but although they have a beautiful house and luxurious possessions (like Mrs. Pullet's extravagant bonnet), this abundance doesn't seem to have made them any more generous. Indeed, they seem to care far more about their polished floors than welcoming their nieces and nephews, suggesting that the family prioritizes appearances to the detriment of other values, like emotional warmth and hospitality.

When the women come downstairs, Mr. Pullet plays everyone a song on his music-box. Maggie is overwhelmed by the beauty of the music and enthusiastically hugs Tom, spilling his cowslip wine and infuriating the Pullets for disturbing their spotless house.

Music moves Maggie deeply, demonstrating her passionate nature and desire for higher forms of artistic and intellectual stimulation. However, this is completely lost on her relatives, who merely criticize her for being messy.

The adults send the children outside to play, while Mrs. Tulliver talks with the Pullets about the fight with Mrs. Glegg and her family's financial situation. Mrs. Pullet says that Mrs. Tulliver was always her favorite sister—since they liked the same fabric patterns, spots rather that stripes—but that Tom and Maggie are rude, and Mr. Tulliver is squandering the family's money. Mrs. Tulliver tearfully asks Mrs. Pullet to help end the quarrel between Mr. Tulliver and Mrs. Glegg, since both are too proud to apologize. Mrs. Pullet agrees to drive over to Mrs. Glegg's house and convince her not to call in the loan.

Mrs. Pullet claims that Mrs. Tulliver is her favorite sister, but this statement is comically based on appearances. She claims to love Mrs. Tulliver simply because they admire the same patterns, not because they share any deeper emotional bond. Indeed, her other comments about the Tulliver family, like her critiques of Tom, Maggie, and Mr. Tulliver, display a striking lack of compassion for her supposedly favorite sister.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 10

Just then, Lucy appears in the doorway smeared with mud. When the children went outside to play, Tom continued to give preference to Lucy because he was annoyed with Maggie. He invited Lucy to look at the pond with him and left Maggie behind. When Tom told Maggie that "nobody asked *you* to come," Maggie pushed Lucy into the muddy pond. Tom promptly brought Lucy to the house and told the maid that Maggie is to blame.

Maggie's habit of acting out in brief expressions of rage and distress—like pushing Lucy into the mud—suggests that she finds it very difficult to express her emotions in healthier ways. This is because, as a girl, she is constantly told to be polite, neat, and demure. Her outburst of frustration suggests that she struggles to bottle up her feelings in the way she is expected to.

The Pullets are horrified by having so much mud in the house, and take this as another indication that the Tulliver children are very naughty and will come to a bad end. Felling like a "truly wretched mother," Mrs. Tulliver goes outside to find her children, and Tom informs her that Maggie is missing. After a search around the house, they decide that she must have walked home, so they go to look for her there.

Here, the Dodson aunts demonstrate their usual rush to judgment without evidence. Rather than inquiring further into the situation between the children (which would have revealed that Tom was bullying Maggie), they immediately condemn Maggie and suggest that this supports their prior expectation that she would come to a bad end.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 11

Maggie decides to run away from home and join the gypsies in Dunlow Common, an open field near St. Ogg's, where her family can't find her anymore. Since she has always been told that she looks like a gypsy, she thinks she will be accepted and respected among them. On the road from the farm, she encounters a beggar and gives him a sixpence, he laughs at her, and she thinks it's because of her **hair**.

Maggie feels so rejected by her family that she decides to run away from home. Her fixation on the gypsy camp suggests that she is looking for people who, unlike her family, would accept her for who she is. Having been told that she is different from other girls—with her long dark hair and dark coloring—she looks for people who share those characteristics.

Walking through the fields, Maggie encounters a little boy and a woman with a baby, who invites her to join their tent. Sitting around the fire, the gypsies call her a "little lady"—which Maggie likes—and admire her dress and bonnet. Maggie finds them very "agreeable" and promises to tell them all about what she's read in books. She asks for her tea and treacle, but one of the gypsies scowls at her, and a fight breaks out in a language Maggie doesn't understand. Maggie begins to feel very hungry, confused, and alone. The gypsies are nothing like the romantic image she expected, and she begins to suspect that they are thieves and will cut her up and eat her.

It turns out that Maggie's knowledge of gypsies is flimsy, as it is based entirely on what she has read in books. Her knowledge is thus severely limited and largely inaccurate. For instance, she does not seem to realize that the gypsies are impoverished and nomadic, and thus will not have middle-class English rituals like "treacle and tea." Her sudden realization and fear at being alone in the world with strangers—who she is worried might harm of even kill her—demonstrates her awakening from childhood fantasies to adult realities.

Two men come into the tent, and Maggie asks to go home to Dorlcote Mill. One of the men takes her home to St Ogg's on his donkey, and Maggie is terrified for the entire ride until they encounter Mr. Tulliver on the road home. Mr. Tulliver gives the gypsy five shillings for returning his daughter, and Maggie promises never to run away again. To her surprise, she never receives any punishments for her behavior, since Mr. Tulliver spoke to the rest of the family on her behalf.

Although Maggie's family dynamic is largely characterized by intolerance and rejection of Maggie's "odd" ways, here, the family seems to forgive Maggie and accept her mistakes. For Mr. Tulliver, the safe return of his daughter from a potentially dangerous situation trumps any punishment for misbehavior. This forgiveness means a great deal to Maggie, and suggests that she and her father have a special bond and understanding.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 12

Mr. Glegg and Mrs. Glegg live in St. Ogg's, an ancient fishing village first built by the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons. The narrator recounts the legend of St. Ogg, a ferryman on the river Floss who supposedly carried the Virgin Mary across the river whenever her heart desired it. The town suffered a great deal of fighting during the English Civil War, but things have been relatively calm since then. The "Catholic Question" has caused some new controversy, since some people believe that the local preacher is "siding with the Catholics." The town is a place where "ignorance was much more comfortable than at present."

Narrating from a vantage point in the supposedly more enlightened present, the narrator calls St. Ogg's a place where "ignorance" was "comfortable." This suggests that people in the town are set in their ways and tend not to inquire much about the outside world, finding it more comfortable to leave their preconceptions unchallenged. For example, the town is prejudiced against Catholics simply for the reason that they are a minority population in Protestant England and are thus perceived as threatening.

Mrs. Glegg constantly criticizes not only the other inhabitants of St. Ogg's, but also Mr. Glegg's passion for gardening and even his "blandest propositions" and suggestions. Mr. Glegg marvels at his wife's "contrariness," given that he provides so well for her financially and spends most of his time trying to earn and save money. That morning, Mrs. Glegg is still fuming from her quarrel with Mr. Tulliver and accuses Mr. Glegg of siding with the others and against her. Mr. Glegg suggests that Mrs. Glegg should hire a lawyer and find a good investment for her money, rather than calling in the loan now. This pacifies Mrs. Glegg, and she agrees to let the Tullivers keep the money for now.

Mrs. Glegg is notoriously bad-tempered, but Mr. Glegg's description of her as "contrary" suggests that he perceives her comments as specifically violating the norms of appropriate womanly and wifely behavior. He thinks that since he provides for her financially, she ought to be more grateful and docile. But perhaps Mrs. Glegg is contrary precisely because her life as a wife in a provincial town is so constrained. Her constant snipes might be the only outlet she has for expressing her emotions.

BOOK 1, CHAPTER 13

When Mrs. Pullet and Mr. Pullet visit Mrs. Glegg the next day to mediate the quarrel, Mrs. Glegg readily agrees to let the Tullivers keep the money. Mrs. Pullet then tells the story of how the Tulliver children behaved at her house yesterday. Mrs. Glegg predicts that they will come to a bad end.

The Dodson sisters seem to have no interest in learning more about Maggie's emotional or inner life. Instead, they are eager to confirm their first impressions. They have decided that Maggie is a "naughty" child, and are happy to have their opinions validated by her unruly behavior.

Just when it seems like the family quarrel has come to an end, Mr. Tulliver sends a letter to Mrs. Glegg telling her that the five hundred pounds will be repaid, and that he has no desire to ask anything of her. This letter offends Mrs. Glegg and makes the family breach impossible to repair. Worse, Mr. Tulliver now has to take out a loan for five hundred pounds from a client of Wakem's.

It was entirely possible that Mrs. Glegg and Mr. Tulliver could have repaired their relationship. However, both are too stubborn to forgive one another. Mr. Tulliver felt humiliated by the idea of owing money to his sister-in-law, and Mrs. Glegg was offended by Mr. Tulliver's ungratefulness. This lack of mutual compassion leads to unfortunate consequences for Mr. Tulliver, who has to take out a loan from a third party.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 1

At King's Lorton, the house of Mr. Stelling, Tom is miserable. He had enjoyed playing with the other boys at his old school, but under the care of Mr. Stelling, he has no other schoolmates. His schooling is also now much more difficult, as it requires the study of Latin, when Tom really preferred working at Dorlcote Mill. Rev. Stelling is an ambitious man who hopes to rise in the ranks of the church. He spends much more than he earns in order to maintain himself and Mrs. Stelling in great style. He hopes to find more pupils to increase his income, so he wants Tom to progress quickly in his studies to attract other students.

Mr. Tulliver has sent Tom to Mr. Stelling so he can get a good education, but Tom finds that knowledge is not much valued at King's Lorton. Mr. Stelling is focused on his career and has lavish tastes, so he takes in pupils for financial benefit rather than because he is passionate about teaching. He also sees Tom as a walking advertisement for his school—he wants Tom to progress in his studies so that Mr. Stelling can attract more students, not because he cares a great deal about Tom's education.

Tom does not understand Mr. Stelling's jokes—like a pun on the Latin word for "roast beef"—which make him feel "silly." Mr. Tulliver and Mrs. Tulliver were pleased with the Stellings when they brought Tom to King's Lorton, but it soon becomes apparent that Tom is entirely unsuited for Mr. Stelling's brand of education. Tom has no talent for Latin and little understanding of who the Romans were, and Mr. Stelling considers Tom "very dull" for his failure to remember his conjugations. Tom wishes he could please his tutor, and prays at night "to remember my Latin."

Mr. Stelling thinks Tom is ignorant and "very dull," and it is indeed true that Tom is far from an exemplary student. But Mr. Stelling, too, is ignorant of the needs of his pupil and of the duties of an educator more broadly. He lacks the imagination to engage Tom in his schooling. Furthermore, because he has a narrow understanding of knowledge, he fails to see that Tom might have other skills (in, say, practical education) that might be worth cultivating as well.

Because the Stellings don't want to pay for a second nurse, they use Tom to watch their oldest child, Laura. Tom plays with the little girl but longs for a friend closer to his own age. He is pleased when Maggie arrives for a two-week visit, promising to help him learn his geometry and Latin. Maggie and Tom visit Mr. Stelling's study, where he shows her his textbooks. The unfamiliar words fascinate Maggie, and she asks Mr. Stelling if she can learn Euclid as well, although Tom protests that girls can't learn geometry. Mr. Stelling responds that he thinks girls are "quick but shallow."

Although Tom has been far from successful in school, he is still eager to show that he can do something that his sister can't. Although Maggie clearly has more natural aptitude for reading and learning, both Tom and Mr. Stelling are dismissive of women's intellectual abilities. Mr. Stelling's counterintuitive claim that women's "quickness" is actually a mark against them—because it makes them "shallow—demonstrates that nineteenth-century British society was invested in restricting women's access to education.

Tom admits that Maggie's visit really did help him improve at his lessons. He counts the days eagerly until Christmas vacation, when he can go home. The narrator points out that the places where a person grows up have a powerful emotional appeal simply because they are familiar, not necessarily because they are "superior."

The narrator has previously admitted that Tom and Maggie's community is far from ideal in many ways, with its stifling provincial ignorance. However, the narrator also points out that the idea of home, however flawed, has a powerful emotional appeal simply because of all the memories that have been made there.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 2

It is the Christmas holidays, and Mr. Tulliver is increasingly furious at a neighbor, Mr. Pivart, who plans to irrigate his lands further up the river, supposedly stealing some of Mr. Tulliver's share of water power for his mill. Mr. Tulliver suspects that Mr. Pivart's lawyer, Wakem, put Mr. Pivart up to it. Mr. Tulliver is particular enraged at Wakem because he has recently had to take out a loan from one of Wakem's clients, and because Wakem represented the other side in a recent legal dispute about building a bridge on Mr. Tulliver's property.

One of Mr. Tulliver's most prominent character traits is his strong conviction that his neighbors are trying to infringe on his rights—hence his constant "going to law" and initiating lawsuits over matters of property management. This tendency towards intolerance and grudge-holding leads to escalation of disputes, like the conflict with Mr. Pivart and Mr. Wakem, that might have been more easily resolved had Mr. Tulliver not been so stubborn and combative.

Mrs. Tulliver tells Mrs. Moss that she has begged Mr. Tulliver not to "go to law" with Mr. Pivart. As this dispute unfolds, the Tullivers learn that Wakem is also sending his son to school with Tom, to study with Mr. Stelling. Despite his rage at Wakem, Mr. Tulliver is secretly pleased that his son will have the same advantages as the son of a lawyer.

Despite his hatred of the Wakems, Mr. Tulliver is still pleased that Tom will have the same education as a lawyer's son. Indeed, this seems to validate Mr. Tulliver in his choice of tutor, suggesting that he closely associates knowledge and education with class status and social opportunity. Of course, what he fails to realize is that his son is receiving a narrow education that lacks any of the practical skills (like bookkeeping) that Tom will need to succeed in the business world.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 3

When Tom returns to school, Mr. Stelling informs him that he has a new companion—Philip Wakem, the fifteen-year-old son of the lawyer Wakem. When Tom first sees Philip in the study, he thinks that Philip is rather pale and puny, and dislikes the idea of having a humpbacked boy as a companion. However, he sees that Philip's drawings are very good, which inclines Tom to like him. Philip also offers to help Tom with his Latin lessons. Tom confides that he hates Latin, but Philip says that it's "part of the education of a gentleman."

Philip's comment that Latin is part of "the education of a gentleman" points to the way that certain forms of knowledge are valued and associated with higher class standing. To be a "gentleman" is to lead a life that does not involve manual labor and thus to study subjects that might seem esoteric and lofty, like Latin. Philip feels very comfortable in a "gentleman's education," while the more working-class Tom struggles with those subjects.

Philip loves his studies and enjoys the stories of the Greeks in *The Odyssey*, which he promises to tell Tom. Feeling intimidated by Philip's knowledge, Tom asks him if he wants to go fishing—an area where Tom knows he is superior—but Philip says he thinks fishing is a waste of time.

Tom tries reassert himself by emphasizing his skills at activities requiring practical knowledge— like fishing—in contrast to the bookish knowledge of the schoolroom.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 4

As they settle in to their lessons together, Tom and Philip maintain an uneasy friendship. Tom likes Philip's stories and his help with Latin, but Philip sometimes has bad moods—related to a "sense of his deformity"—that make him irritable. Besides, Tom can't forget that Philip is the son of his father's enemy, Wakem. Tom, meanwhile, makes little progress at his education. He takes drawing lessons from a local draughtsman, Mr. Goodrich, but struggles with drawing. Mr. Stelling responds to Tom's lack of natural ability at Latin by pushing him all the harder, rather than teaching him something for which he is more suited.

Despite their personality differences and the deep-seated hatred between their families, Philip and Tom manage to become friends—of a sort. Tom is able to appreciate Philip's talents and skills that he doesn't share, like his facility for storytelling and his knowledge of books. Tom's ability to feel compassion and tolerance for someone different from him suggests that the Wakems and the Tullivers might be able to find some common ground, especially thanks to the younger generation.

Tom begins taking drilling lessons with Mr. Poulter, an old soldier who fought with the Duke of Wellington against Napoleon. Tom asks Philip to come outside to see him sword-fight, but Philip angrily refuses, feeling humiliated by the prospect. Tom responds by shouting at him and calling him an "imp" and his father a "rogue," leaving Philip in tears. Meanwhile, Tom gives Mr. Poulter five shillings in exchange for his sword, so that Tom can play at being a soldier when Maggie arrives for her visit.

Tom clearly remains insecure about his own lack of scholarly success compared with Philip's seeming ease at his studies, which is why he likes to remind Philip of his practical knowledge and skills, like sword fighting. Philip, for his part, is humiliated by any reminders of his inability to participate in those activities. Both Tom and Philip thus demonstrate more regard for the form of knowledge for which they are individually better-suited.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 5

After their fight, Tom and Philip speak to each other only when necessary, namely because Philip can't forgive Tom for calling his father, Wakem, a rogue. Maggie, on the other hand, finds Philip very intelligent and interesting. Philip, too, is struck by the "unsatisfied intelligence" in her eyes, which he compares to a princess turned into an animal.

Philip's comparison of Maggie to a princess trapped in the body of an animal suggest the degree of intellectual repression of women in this historical period. Merely because she is a woman, Maggie's intelligence is doomed to remain "unsatisfied" and untapped.

Tom brings Maggie upstairs to show her his new sword. He makes her close her eyes while he dresses himself in a turban and blackens his cheeks. Then he draws his sword and claims to be the Duke of Wellington. This terrifies Maggie, who screams and jumps on the bed. While he's play-fighting, Tom accidentally falls and drops the sword on his foot.

Maggie's emotional response to Tom's playacting—she screams in terror at the appearance of his sword—suggests her highly compassionate and sensitive nature. While for Tom the dress-up is all in good fun, Maggie tends to be very emotionally affected by art, music, and performance, once again underscoring her intellectual abilities and emotional depth.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 6

As Tom recovers from his injury, Philip feels compassion for him and sits with Tom and Maggie often, telling them stories from Greek tragedies. This thaws the enmity between them, and Tom, Philip, and Maggie become close friends. One day, when Maggie and Philip are alone in the study, Philip asks if Maggie would love him as much as Tom, if he were her brother. She kisses him and says that she will never forget him when she goes away to boarding school, and that she will kiss him again whenever she sees him.

Tom has not always been kind to Philip: he has mocked his physical disability and insulted his family. However, Philip's forgiveness and compassion when Tom is injured allows them to become friends again. Perhaps precisely because Philip knows what it is to suffer from a disability, he is particularly empathetic and compassionate when Tom is temporarily in a similar position.

When Mr. Tulliver comes to collect Maggie and take her to school, she tells him that she loves Philip. Mr. Tulliver says that it's fine for Tom and Maggie to be kind to the boy, but tells them to remember that he has Wakem's blood in him too. After this admonition, Tom and Philip return to their old state of slightly uneasy friendship.

The truce between Tom and Philip turns out to be short-lived, since Mr. Tulliver reminds Tom and Maggie of the enmity between their two families. In this sense, Mr. Tulliver's inability to forgive traps the next generation in the same pattern of old grudges.

BOOK 2, CHAPTER 7

Once Maggie goes to school, she rarely sees Philip. She sometimes sees him on the streets of St. Ogg's during the holidays, but knows now that it wouldn't be appropriate for a young lady to kiss a gentleman, so can't fulfill her promise. Worse, Mr. Tulliver initiates the lawsuit against Mr. Pivart, who Wakem represents. Mr. Tulliver tells Tom to avoid Philip at school. Tom, meanwhile, comes to the end of his school days, having grown into a tall and handsome sixteen-year-old, with a few "vague, fragmentary, ineffectual" scraps of education under his belt.

Unlike Tom and Philip, Maggie's education at a boarding school has largely consisted of learning what is considered "proper" and "respectable" for a woman. She thus knows now that it would not be appropriate for her, an unmarried woman, to kiss Philip. While Tom and Philip's education—however "ineffectual"—has consisted of scholarly knowledge, Maggie's education has been primarily designed to train her in her proper social role.


Maggie, now thirteen, comes to visit Tom at Mr. Stelling's. She tells Tom that Mr. Tulliver has lost the lawsuit with Mr. Pivart and will lose his mill, money, and property. Mr. Tulliver has also fallen off his horse, and is now very ill and doesn't recognize anyone but Maggie. Tom is shocked by this development, since he had always believed that his father knew best and was a competent and successful man, even though he seemed to have less money than some of their family members and neighbors. Maggie and Tom take a coach for home. The narrator observes that they are going into "a thorny wilderness," the "golden gates" of their childhood having closed behind them.

The Tulliver family's bankruptcy marks the end of Tom and Maggie's childhood in several ways. It puts their schooling to an end, since their family can no longer afford the fees, and because the children are now needed at home. In a broader sense, it also represents an end to the innocence and comfort of childhood. Before, Tom and Maggie had complete confidence in their father and were convinced that he knew best. Their transition into adulthood thus involves painful disillusionment as they realize the extent of their father's flaws and mistakes.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 1

When Mr. Tulliver first learns that he has lost the lawsuit and will have to sell everything, he feels oddly calm and thinks he will find a solution. Still, his finances are in exceedingly poor shape. His friend Mr. Riley died a few years ago without repaying him the two hundred and fifty pounds he owed him, leaving Mr. Tulliver in the lurch. Worse, Wakem urged the creditor from whom Mr. Tulliver borrowed five hundred pounds to call in his loan, so Mr. Tulliver was forced to put a bill of sale on all his furniture as security. Although Mr. Tulliver once scorned the idea of asking the Dodsons for anything, he now thinks Mrs. Tulliver should go to her wealthy sister Mrs. Pullet to ask for a loan. The narrator reflects that poor people can just as proud and tragic as the rich and great.

Mr. Tulliver's tragic flaw is his lack of flexibility and inability to admit when he is wrong. His stubbornness in the case of his conflict with Mrs. Gregg, for example, caused him to unnecessarily take out a large loan and mortgage his family's furniture. His grudge-holding and pride results in ongoing lawsuits, which have similarly tied up the family finances in endless disputes with the lawyer Wakem, who in turn has taken revenge on Tulliver by calling in his creditors. Even before the bankruptcy, then, Mr. Tulliver's inability to forgive people whom he perceives have wronged him has caught the family in a cycle of debt and legal trouble.

Mr. Tulliver writes a letter to Maggie at boarding school asking her to come home. He then goes to see his lawyer, Mr. Gore. The clerk hands him a letter which contains disastrous news: the owner of Mr. Tulliver's mortgage has sold everything to Wakem—making Wakem by default the creditor of everything Mr. Tulliver owns. At this news, Mr. Tulliver falls off his horse and gravely injures himself.

When Mr. Tulliver writes to Maggie and asks her to come home, her childhood literally and symbolically comes to an end. Maggie and her father are very close, so it is natural that he should turn to her in a time of need. At the same time, however, it is precisely his reliance on Maggie that ends her school days and makes her prematurely responsible for caring for her family.

Mr. Tulliver is only able to recognize Maggie out of all his family members. Mrs. Tulliver's sisters take this misfortune as a judgment on the family, since they have always disliked Mr. Tulliver. Maggie, meanwhile, goes to fetch Tom from school and tells him that Wakem now has a mortgage on Dorlcote Mill. Tom is furious at this news and tells Maggie to never speak to Philip again.

The family's reaction to this news demonstrates their characteristic intolerance. The Dodsons take the bankruptcy as a confirmation of their existing prejudices against Mr. Tulliver, which recalls the way they perceived Maggie's unruly behavior as support for their existing belief that she will come to a bad end. Mr. Tulliver, for his part, becomes even more stubborn and prejudiced against Wakem—a hatred that now even extends to Wakem's son.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 2

Tom and Maggie find the bailiff in their house, come to repossess everything they own to pay Mr. Tulliver's debts. This is very humiliating for Tom, who begins to blame Mr. Tulliver for their misfortune. They find Mrs. Tulliver crying in the basement as she looks at all her "precious things," such as her monogrammed table linens and teapots. She rails against her husband for bringing them to this disastrous point and says that they will have to go to the workhouse. Tom promises to find a job and support the family.

Mrs. Tulliver's response to the family crisis demonstrates women's lack of control over their economic lives in this period. She is angry at Mr. Tulliver because she has no way of changing their family's financial destiny and can only stand by and watch as their household possessions are sold. For women, then, marriage dictates the course of their lives and fortune in life.

The way Tom and Mrs. Tulliver are speaking about Mr. Tulliver angers Maggie, and she runs upstairs to sit at her father's bedside. Tom comes up and sits beside her, remembering that they have "one sorrow."

Tom and Maggie band together in compassion at this difficult time, recognizing that they are both sharing the same traumatic experience. This foreshadows the end of the book, when Tom and Maggie are once again united in the midst of tragedy.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 3

The Dodson aunts and uncles arrive at the Tulliver house to consult about the family. Mrs. Pullet and Mrs. Deane promise to buy some of Mrs. Tulliver's linen and china in order to keep it in the family, but Mrs. Glegg protests that they should be talking about more pressing financial needs. She warns Mrs. Tulliver that she is now entirely dependent on her family for everything and should be "humble." Furthermore, Mrs. Glegg demands that Maggie and Tom should come into the room as well, so that they can also humble themselves and know that they should be grateful to their relatives.

The Dodson sisters display a notable lack of sympathy and compassion for the misfortune of their family members. Rather than supporting the Tullivers in their time of need, they self-righteously feel that the bankruptcy is a moral failing on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver. Although she agrees to help, Mrs. Glegg demands that Tom and Maggie should be "humble," using this moment to assert her power over her now-poor relatives rather than freely offering them love and assistance.

Mrs. Tulliver continues to beg her sisters to buy her monogrammed china, since she hates the idea of her initials going out into the world outside the family. The aunts and uncles tell Tom that he must work hard now and use his education. Tom points out, however, that if they plan to support him and Maggie, it might be better for them just to pay the debt now and save his mother from the humiliation of losing her furniture. When the aunts refuse, Maggie stands up and tells them she doesn't want any of their money, if they are going to be so unkind to their family in a time of need.

Tom points out that it makes more sense for his aunts and uncles to simply give the family money now to save them from having to sell their furniture, rather than promising financial support in the future. This is a sound argument, and the aunts' refusal suggests that they are not motivated by compassion and the desire to help. Instead, they plan to use the promise of financial support as a way of controlling and subjugating the Tulliver family.

Just then, Mrs. Moss arrives. She tells the family that she is very sorry for her brother and wishes she could pay back the three hundred pounds she owes him—but she and her husband would lose everything if they did that, and she worries for her eight children. Mr. Glegg points out that if Mr. Tulliver goes bankrupt, they will be obliged to pay the money anyway. Tom says that he doesn't want to take money from Mrs. Moss, because he knew that his father would never want to impoverish his sister, and Tom wants to respect his father's wishes. He thus decides to destroy the note proving that Mr. Tulliver ever lent any money to Mrs. Moss, in order to protect her from the creditors.

Mrs. Moss, who is impoverished, has a notably more compassionate response to the Tulliver bankruptcy than the Dodson sisters, who are wealthy. This suggests that wealth does not necessarily make one more generous and compassionate. Similarly, in this moment of dire need, the Tullivers continue to show kindness and compassion towards those less fortunate than themselves. By destroying the note, Tom makes it impossible that Mrs. Moss will ever repay the borrowed money, prioritizing her well-being over financial gain.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 4

Tom, Maggie, Mr. Glegg, and Mrs. Moss go upstairs to look through Mr. Tulliver's chest and try to find the note for the money he loaned to the Moss family. The sound of the chest lid slamming shut wakes Mr. Tulliver, who has a brief moment of lucidity. He tells Tom to pay his debts—especially fifty pounds owed to Luke—and not to call in the money from his sister, and he apologizes to Mrs. Tulliver for leaving her poorly off. He also asks Tom to punish Wakem for what he's done to the family.

Mr. Tulliver's instructions to Tom demonstrate the best and worst of his character. On the one hand, he is extremely and stubbornly loyal, choosing to prioritize repayment to the family servant, Luke, and to protect his sister from his creditors. On the other hand, he is similarly stubborn in being unable to forgive Mr. Wakem, demanding that Tom take revenge rather than moving on and focusing on rebuilding the family finances.

Mr. Tulliver slips back into his coma, but Tom is now determined upon two courses of action: to repay the money to Luke, even from his and Maggie's own savings, and to destroy the note for the loan to Mrs. Moss. The narrator observes that Tom is much sharper on matters like this than Latin and geometry.

Tom takes Mr. Tulliver's wishes very seriously, demonstrating the similarity in their characters. Both are very principled but tend to be rigid and uncompromising, preferring to hold a grudge rather than forgive.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 5

The next day, Tom rides into St. Ogg's to ask his uncle Mr. Deane if he can help him find a job. Tom admires Mr. Deane's success at Guest & Co and hopes that he might also attach himself to a company in which he could also rise in the ranks. On the way, however, he has an unpleasant encounter with a few men at a pub who accuse him of looking down on others because of his gentlemanly education. Furthermore, when Tom sees Mr. Deane, his uncle is less than impressed by his schooling in Latin and says Tom will only get a job if he has accounting and bookkeeping skills. It's no use for someone like him to know Latin, Mr. Deane says, so the expensive education Mr. Tulliver paid for was a waste.

Ironically, Mr. Tulliver's fixation on getting Tom a good education does not have the desired payoff. Mr. Tulliver gave Tom a gentlemanly education in subjects like Latin and geometry, whereas what Tom really needed was a practical education—one suited for the realities of a life in business. Unlike Mr. Stelling, Mr. Deane values practical skills like accounting and bookkeeping. Outside the schoolroom, then, the hierarchy of different forms of knowledge turns out to be very different. Latin turns out not to be very relevant at all in this alternative system of value.

At home, Tom tells Maggie sadly that Mr. Deane said he was too young and ill-educated to find a good position. Maggie lightheartedly offers to teach Tom bookkeeping, but Tom reacts severely, telling her that she should stop "putting [herself] above people," as she does with their aunts and uncles. Maggie runs away in tears. The narrator observes that Maggie thinks books are full of love and kindness, but finds the real world sadly lacking in those qualities.

Tom's rebuke to Maggie that she is "putting [herself] above people" suggests that he now has little tolerance for her intellectual ambitions. As Tom and Maggie grow into adulthood, Tom becomes more severe in policing her behavior in her expected role as a daughter and sister.


BOOK 3, CHAPTER 6

The estate sale is very distressing for the family, and everyone is in a bad mood. But at tea-time, a visitor comes to see Tom in the study. It is Bob Jakin, the local boy whom Tom had fought with as a child. Tom is at first wary around him, but is touched when Bob offers him nine sovereigns to try to help in the family's financial struggle. Tom refuses to take his money, but thanks him and shakes his hand. Maggie comes in and is horrified to see that most of the family's books have been sold. However, she too is touched by Bob's offer. Although she refuses the money, she tells him that she hopes they will be friends in the future.

Maggie is particularly horrified by the sale of the family's books, because it represents the increasingly narrowing scope of her ability for intellectual growth and stimulation. In the wake of the family's bankruptcy, books are considered nonessential. At the same time, however, the kindness of Bob Jakin is a great comfort to Tom and Maggie. This underlines the ability of even a single person's compassion to make a difference in the lives of those around them. In addition, Bob Jakin's kindness foreshadows an even greater act of kindness he will do for Maggie and Mrs. Tulliver near the end of the novel, when he generously allows them to live with him.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 7

Mr. Tulliver begins to recover physically, but his financial ruin continues. He must be considered "failed"—meaning that his house and mill will be sold. Prompted in part by Lucy's concern for her cousins, Mr. Deane tries to persuade Guest & Co to purchase the mill, add steam power, and keep Mr. Tulliver on as manager. He also finds a job for Tom in the warehouse, as well as helping him get evening lessons in bookkeeping.

Mr. Deane's plan for the mill highlights the impact of new technologies and forms of knowledge on traditional industries. He wants to add steam power in order to increase profits and efficiency—a form of knowledge completely inaccessible to Mr. Tulliver, but one enabled by the practical education Mr. Deane is now giving Tom.

Mrs. Tulliver decides to go visit Wakem to try to persuade him not to bid for Dorlcote Mill at auction. Her meeting with him, however, has precisely the opposite effect. Although Mr. Wakem had not planned to bid against Guest & Co, he decides to do so in order to humiliate Mr. Tulliver by buying his land and retaining him as a servant. He does this not because he particularly hates the Tullivers, but as a "soothing, flattering" way of exerting his power in St. Ogg's.

Mr. Wakem's decision offers a chilling illustration of the consequences of failures of compassion. The narrator points out that Mr. Wakem is not particularly evil or vengeful; he simply takes the opportunity for a petty act of revenge. Instead of forgiving and being the bigger person, he compounds the damage to the Tullivers and himself by holding a grudge.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 8

Mr. Tulliver comes downstairs for the first time since his injury. The family isn't sure how or when to tell him that Mr. Wakem has bought the mill and intends to employ Mr. Tulliver as his manager. The aunts and uncles think this is a good arrangement, as it will allow Mr. Tulliver to support the family again, but Mrs. Tulliver despairs of ever overcoming her husband's stubbornness and hatred of Wakem. As he talks with Maggie and Tom, Mr. Tulliver appears lost in the past, confusing events from several years ago with the present.

Mr. Tulliver's inflexibility and intolerance continue to sabotage his ability to protect his family. As the aunts and uncles point out, Mr. Wakem's offer is actually a generous one, since it allows the family to stay at the mill and live in their ancestral home. However, Mr. Tulliver's continued hatred of Mr. Wakem prevents him from seeing this silver lining—where another person might see an opportunity, Mr. Tulliver sees only another attempt to humiliate him.

Maggie and Tom tell Mr. Tulliver that he is now a bankrupt, but Tom promises to pay back all his debts one day. Mr. Tulliver predicts bitterly that he will not live to see it, although he hopes that at least he's given his soon "a good eddication." Mrs. Tulliver then breaks the news that Wakem has bought the mill and land, and Mr. Tulliver must work for him. Hearing this, Mr. Tulliver seems utterly defeated, telling her that "we shall never be young again."

Mr. Tulliver's comment to Mrs. Tulliver suggests that he compares the happy, promising days of their youth unfavorably to their present circumstances. At the same time, Mr. Tulliver places his hope in the next generation, and particularly in his son's "good eddication." Unfortunately, however, Mr. Tulliver has not given Tom the practical education he needs to succeed.

BOOK 3, CHAPTER 9

Mr. Tulliver decides to work for Mr. Wakem, since he wants to protect and provide for Mrs. Tulliver. Also, he is very attached to Dorlcote Mill, which is the only home he's ever known, and he can't think of living anywhere else.

The idea of home has a powerful emotional appeal. These memories and attachments induce Mr. Tulliver to remain at Dorlcote Mill at all costs, even in these debilitating and humiliating circumstances.

When Tom gets home, Mr. Tulliver calls him into the parlor. He explains that although he's decided to submit to Wakem, he will never forgive him for what he's done to their family. He asks Tom to swear—by writing in the **family Bible**—that he will remember what Wakem did to his father, and to promise to take revenge and "make him and his feel it, if ever the day comes." Maggie begs Tom not to sign the Bible, but Tom agrees to do as his father says.

Maggie begs Tom not to sign the family Bible because she knows it will trap him in a cycle of revenge that makes forgiveness impossible and may exacerbate the family's suffering. By asking Tom to sign his name in the family Bible, Mr. Tulliver connects him to previous generations of Tullivers and reminds him of his duties to the family name—motives that Tom finds powerfully persuasive.

BOOK 4, CHAPTER 1

The narrator pauses to reflect that the lives of the Tullivers and Dodsons must seem very "sordid" and insignificant. However, the narrator explains that it is necessary to depict this "oppressive narrowness" in order to understand the forces that have shaped Tom and Maggie's lives.

The narrator points out that ignorance, as much as knowledge, can have a powerfully shaping effect on young minds. The limitations and "oppressive narrowness" of St. Ogg's irrevocably influenced the course of Tom and Maggie's lives.

The narrator points out that the Tullivers' bankruptcy appalled the Dodsons because they saw poverty as a moral failing that threatened the respectability of the family. Their mantra was to be "rich and honest," not "poor and honest." For the Dodsons, doing the right thing for the Tullivers meant "correct[ing] them severely" for breaching standards of propriety.

The Dodsons' lack of compassion for their relatives is a form of self-righteousness. In their understanding of the world, financial solvency is linked to morality. Thus, they believe they have the right to judge the Tullivers because they think that people who fail financially must have done so through lack of proper management.

BOOK 4, CHAPTER 2

After the bankruptcy, life at Dorlcote Mill is miserable. Mrs. Tulliver is bewildered at her misfortune; Mr. Tulliver is sullen and uncommunicative. Tom has little to say to Maggie anymore, since all of his energies are now devoted to financial success and paying back the family debt. Mr. Tulliver worries for Maggie, thinking that "she had a poor chance for marrying, down in the world as they were." He still adores his daughter, but is no longer as openly affectionate as he was before, since he's become bitter and depressed.

Maggie is lonely and intellectually under-stimulated after the bankruptcy, since she gets little attention from Tom. Mr. Tulliver's worry that Maggie now has "a poor chance for marrying" underscores the link between marriage and financial prospects. Women's primary social role was to marry (and then be dutiful wives and mothers), but marriage was primarily an economic calculation, and Maggie no longer has the money to make her an appealing choice to potential suitors.

BOOK 4, CHAPTER 3

One day, the Tullivers receive a visit from Bob Jakin, Tom's childhood friend. Bob brings a package of books for Maggie, concerned that the family have had to sell most of their books. Maggie is touched by Tom's gesture, but she is increasingly depressed at her lack of intellectual stimulation and the melancholy air of her household. She is reminded that she has only her school books left, when she longs for "Scott's novels" and "Byron's poems."

Maggie's desire to read and learn is frustrated by the lack of books in her household—and notably, even her school books don't seem to provide much intellectual stimulation. She mentions wanting to read the novels of Walter Scott and the poems of Lord Byron, but her education at boarding school does not seem to have provided her with that opportunity. It seems that Maggie was intellectually deprived even when she was supposedly receiving an education.

As she looks through Bob's package, Maggie finds a book by Thomas a Kempis, a fifteenth-century Christian writer. Maggie is very moved by Kempis's Imitation of Christ, which recommends that people model their own lives after Christ in renouncing worldly desires. Maggie decides that she should place her trust in God and look forward to the next world, rather than trying to find fulfillment in this one.

Maggie is drawn to Christian writings on submission and self-denial at the same time as she is struggling with the narrowing of her life and opportunities. She comes to the conclusion that it is better to suppress her intellectual and artistic longings rather than perpetually yearning after something she can't have.

Inspired by these Christian writings, Maggie adopts an attitude of submission and self-denial. She reads only theological books and spends her time caring for her family, doing household chores, and taking in sewing to earn extra money for the family. Mrs. Tulliver is amazed that her daughter is "growing up so good," but Mr. Tulliver continues to worry for Maggie's marriage prospects.

Mrs. Tulliver is pleased that Maggie is finally being "good"—which is to say, Maggie has suppressed her intellectual and creative life in favor of the world of household chores. This point of view foregrounds the limiting nature of women's roles and the sort of behavior that Mrs. Tulliver would consider "good."

BOOK 5, CHAPTER 1

Walking in the Red Deeps, the woods near the mill, Maggie encounters Philip Wakem, who is now twenty-one years old. Philip confesses that he has thought of her often since their last meeting as children, and now finds her very beautiful. He asks her if she still reads, as she used to when she was a little girl, but Maggie says that she has tried to part with everything she cared about as a child.

Maggie links the end of her intellectual ambitions to the end of her childhood. When she was younger and life seemed hopeful, she loved to read. Now, however, she has renounced books because they are a painful reminder of a world of learning and stimulation that is no longer accessible to her.

Philip gives Maggie a book and asks if he can come and walk with her in the woods sometimes. Maggie declines on the grounds that the hatred between their families would make it impossible for them to be friends. Philip protests that Maggie should not "starve her mind" by denying herself friendship, company, and intellectual stimulation. They end the conversation without resolving the question of whether they will keep meeting like this, although Philip is determined to see Maggie again.

Maggie thinks of her intellectual self-denial as Christian patience and submission to the will of God. Philip, by contrast, sees this choice as a kind of "starvation." His choice of words suggests Philip values the world of art and books so much that to live without such knowledge would be a form of painful deprivation comparable to physical starvation.

BOOK 5, CHAPTER 2

The narrator observes that Maggie's struggles have all been internal, whereas Tom's battles have been outside of himself and thus he can gain more "definite conquests." Tom is increasingly successful in business and has gained the respect of his Dodson aunts and uncles. One evening, Tom encounters Bob Jakin, who offers to include Tom in a business venture involving shipping goods to foreign ports. Tom is enthusiastic about the idea, but Mr. Tulliver refuses to release the family's small savings in order to invest in the venture.

Both Tom and Maggie have faced challenges after the family bankruptcy, but because of their respective genders, their struggles are of a very different nature. Tom has had to earn money to pay back the family debts—a difficult task, but one that has measurable progress. Maggie, on the other hand, is trapped in a static state, unable to take any concrete action in the world because there are so few jobs open to women.

Tom decides to ask Mr. Glegg to provide the startup funds to invest in the shipping business. When Tom and Bob visit the Gleggs, Bob not only convinces Mr. Glegg to invest in the shipping business, but even gets the notoriously stingy Mrs. Glegg to purchase some cloth and linen from his knapsack. Tom is very pleased with this outcome, convinced that his fortunes will continue to grow. He congratulates himself on having worked hard in order to deserve these rewards.

As the Tulliver fortunes start to turn around, Tom is quick to attribute his success to his own hard work. However, this conviction that he alone is responsible for these rewards makes him intolerant towards others whom he perceives as less deserving and hard-working. This is a flawed understanding of success, since in fact Tom also had help along the way—from Bob Jakin, for instance.

BOOK 5, CHAPTER 3

Maggie meets Philip again in the Red Deeps, determined to tell him that it is impossible for them to continue meeting like this. However, she agrees to stay for a while to talk to him. Philip urges her to give up her posture of self-denial and to embrace art, music, and literature again. He sings her a song, "Love in her eyes sits playing," since he knows that Maggie loves music.

Philip, who is in love with Maggie, has clearly begun linking her intellectual deprivation to emotional deprivation. He also seems to hope that Maggie will be more receptive to his feelings if she opens herself up again to reading and knowledge.

Philip suggests that they wouldn't be doing anything wrong if they were to meet each other "by chance" in the woods again. The narrator notes that although Philip had little hope that Maggie would ever return his feelings, he couldn't resist rationalizing his decision to continue seeing her, since he'd had little joy in his life thus far.

Although Philip clearly cares for Maggie, he lacks the empathy and compassion to see that his behavior here—pressuring her to meet in secret, despite the opposition of their families—will cause pain for both of them. His love paradoxically makes him blind to her feelings.

BOOK 5, CHAPTER 4

A year later, Maggie and Philip are still meeting in the woods to exchange books and talk. Maggie tells him that she disliked the last book he gave her because it featured a blonde-haired protagonist, whereas she would like to read a story "where the dark woman triumphs." Philip tells her that he thinks she is more beautiful than blonde Lucy Deane, but Maggie laughs and says that she usually takes the side of the dark-haired girls because she "care[s] the most about the unhappy people."

Maggie and Tom's seemingly lighthearted conversation is in fact very revealing about Maggie's unusual capacity for empathy. She explains that she feels compassion for dark-haired women in stories because she tends to be drawn to the rejected and unhappy. This is because she herself has felt rejected and unhappy throughout in her life. In this sense, her difficult life experiences have made her more sensitive to the pain of others.

Philip confesses that he is in love with Maggie and hopes she could love a man whom "other women were not likely to love." They finally kiss, after Philip reminds her of her childhood promise. Maggie replies that she loves him as well and would like to make him happy, but will do nothing to distress Mr. Tulliver. Philip agrees not to ask that of her, and says that he is content to wait another year for another kiss.

Maggie's compassionate nature seems to draw her to Philip just as it draws her to the rejected love interests in the stories she reads. Philip suggests that she can love a man whom "other women were not likely to love"—which is to say him, a disabled man—because he knows that she has an empathetic personality and capacity for love.

BOOK 5, CHAPTER 5

At tea with the Dodson sisters, Mrs. Pullet mentions Philip's name, and Maggie blushes. Tom sees this and becomes suspicious. That afternoon, he follows Maggie and confronts her while she is on her way to the Red Downs to see Philip. Maggie admits that she and Philip have been meeting secretly. Tom is furious, and demands that she swear on the **family Bible** never to see Philip again—or he will tell Mr. Tulliver everything. Maggie agrees to swear on the Bible.

Tom makes Maggie swear on the family Bible to renounce Philip. Significantly, this is the same ritual that Mr. Tulliver used to make Tom swear to take revenge on the Wakems. In both cases, the family Bible reminds Tom and Maggie of their obligations to the generations of Tullivers who have lived at Dorlcote Mill and owned this very Bible, suggesting that the ties to the past are more important than present desires.

Tom then walks Maggie to the Red Downs, where he confronts Philip. Tom threatens Philip with dire punishments if he should ever try to speak or write to Maggie again, and taunts him for his physical disability. After this distressing interview, Maggie reproaches Tom for his cruelty, pointing out that he has always seemed to enjoy punishing her and being in the right. Tom is still cold, telling her that she must obey his wishes, since she has no power in the world, and he is the head of the family.

Maggie aptly diagnoses Tom's moral flaw: he is always convinced that he is right, and so he tends to be harsh and unforgiving when people violate his ethical standards. She points out that he has always treated her this way, even in childhood, when small infractions—like forgetting to feed his rabbits—would be met with coldness and a refusal to forgive.

BOOK 5, CHAPTER 6

A few weeks later, Tom tells the family that he has finally earned enough money to pay off the family debts. Mr. Tulliver, Mrs. Tulliver, and Maggie are overwhelmed with joy. Tom explains that Mr. Deane has organized a dinner at a local pub with the creditors, at which time they will be paid back in full. Mr. Tulliver is delighted and wants to hear all about Tom's business venture with Bob Jakin. That night, even after all this joy, Mr. Tulliver wakes from a nightmare and tells his wife, "I thought I'd got hold of him."

Mr. Tulliver's dream suggests that he is still fixated on taking revenge on Mr. Wakem. This demonstrates that grudge-holding and an inability to forgive can endure despite a change in material circumstances. Even though the family debts are paid, and Mr. Tulliver has no more reason for anger and despair, he still cannot let go of his deeply held hatred and desire for revenge.

BOOK 5, CHAPTER 7

After four years of despair, Mr. Tulliver starts to feel more like his old self again. The dinner is a great success, and Mr. Tulliver gives a speech in which he thanks God for the aid of his good son, Tom. He even regains some of his old talkativeness, explaining to his fellow diners that he had spent a great deal of money on his son's education.

Poignantly, Mr. Tulliver is still convinced that he has given Tom a good education. In actuality, Tom's gentlemanly education was completely devoid of practical skills and failed to help him succeed in the business world. However, Tom never corrects his father on this point, perhaps in an act of kindness.

On his way home, Mr. Tulliver encounters Mr. Wakem and proudly tells him that he won't work for him any longer. Mr. Wakem fires him on the spot and orders him to leave Dorlcote Mill. Mr. Tulliver refuses to let Mr. Wakem's horse pass by, and instead he rushes at Mr. Wakem with his horsewhip. Wakem falls off his horse, and Mr. Tulliver begins flogging him brutally. He only stops when Mrs. Tulliver and Maggie run out of the house and pull him off Mr. Wakem.

Mr. Tulliver's attack on Mr. Wakem is all the more brutal for being so sudden after many years of repression and toil on Mr. Tulliver's part. The shocking instance of physical violence suggests that, far from forgiving Wakem, Mr. Tulliver had been contemplating revenge for many years—leading to a cathartic outburst the moment he had the chance.

After this incident, Mr. Tulliver collapses and falls very ill. Maggie, Tom, and Mrs. Tulliver rush to his bedside. Barely able to speak, Mr. Tulliver tells Tom to "get the old mill back." Maggie begs Mr. Tulliver to forgive the Wakems, but Mr. Tulliver claims that "I don't forgive him [...] I can't love a raskill." He tells his family that "I had my turn—I beat him," and dies. As the coroner arrives, Tom and Maggie go downstairs. Maggie asks Tom to forgive her, and they embrace and cry together.

Mr. Tulliver's inability to forgive leads to one disaster after another for his family: the loss of Dorlcote Mill, public humiliation, and his own death. Conversely, however, Tom and Maggie's reconciliation at their father's bedside offers a more hopeful vision of forgiveness. By asking Tom to forgive her, Maggie expresses her commitment to her family and her brother whatever their differences.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 1

The action shifts to St. Ogg's, where eighteen-year-old Lucy Deane is being courted by Stephen Guest, heir to the Guest & Co shipping fortune. Although Stephen has not yet formally proposed, he believes that the sweet, docile Lucy—known as the "belle of St. Ogg's"—is the perfect wife for him. Lucy tells Stephen that her cousin Maggie is coming to stay, but decides to play a trick on him: she tells him that Maggie has blonde hair and blue eyes, like Mrs. Tulliver. They would like to invite Philip Wakem as well to join the family party, but Lucy explains that there are tensions between the Wakems and the Tullivers. She decides to write a note to Philip explaining that Maggie will be visiting.

Stephen thinks that Lucy is the perfect wife for him because she has all the qualities valued in women in nineteenth-century Victorian society. She is beautiful, generous, sweet, and seems comfortable in conventional femininity and in her social role. As the heir to a shipping fortune and member of the most prominent family in St. Ogg's, Stephen needs a wife who will be socially acceptable in these ways. However, his valuation of her primarily in those terms suggests that their relationship may not be grounded in emotional intimacy.

Stephen and Lucy sing a charming duet before Stephen leaves for the day. Lucy plays with her dog, Minny, and her horse, Simbad. The narrator reflects that Lucy genuinely enjoys pleasing others—it makes her happy to give Maggie her best room, for instance. Lucy is generous and doesn't tend to treat other women with jealousy and suspicion.

The narrator comments that Lucy is an exception to the judgment and intolerance that generally pervades the social environment of St. Ogg's. Lucy doesn't tend to see other women as her romantic competition and genuinely wants the best for others, including Maggie.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 2

When Maggie arrives, Lucy tells her all about Stephen, blushingly observing that he is very handsome. There is a stark contrast between the two women: Maggie is tall and very plainly dressed, while Lucy is slight and wears fashionable silks. Maggie's life teaching at a boarding school has been very dreary, but Lucy promises to put her on a "discipline of pleasure" during her visit, which she promises will involve much music and merriment. She begins by giving Maggie one of her brooches. Maggie laughs at how much Lucy enjoys making other people happy.

When they were children, Lucy and Maggie exemplified very different models of femininity. Lucy was known for being obedient, docile, and pretty, whereas Maggie was considered "naughty" and rebellious. In adulthood, Lucy has continued to adhere to convention in her dress and appearance. Maggie, on the other hand, eschews the fashionable silks worn by the ladies in the neighborhood and wears strikingly plain clothes.

Lucy mentions that Philip Wakem sometimes comes to sing with them. Maggie tells her that she always liked Philip and has no objection to seeing him. Just then, Stephen arrives. He is shocked at Maggie's appearance, since Lucy had made him expect a short blonde girl. As they make their introductions, Maggie and Stephen are obviously attracted to each other. Stephen tries to change the subject, bringing up the upcoming charity bazaar. All the ladies in town have been sewing "fancy-work" to sell at their stalls. Maggie admits quietly that she can only do plain sewing, since that was the work she did to earn extra money for her family. Lucy is embarrassed at this admission, but Stephen is fascinated. It gives "greater piquancy," or power, to her beauty, and makes Maggie seem unlike other women he's known.

Stephen is attracted to Maggie not just because of her beauty, but because of her various differences from the other women of St. Ogg's. For one, she wears plain clothes and is unusually tall for a woman. For another, she freely admits to her poverty and to her need to support her family financially. All these characteristics indicate that Maggie is unconcerned with social convention, which sets her apart from other women and thus appealing to Stephen. Paradoxically, Stephen is attracted to Lucy precisely because she is *conventional—even as his powerful connection with Maggie is based on her rejection of those social roles.*

Stephen, Maggie, and Lucy discuss Dr. Kenn, the local vicar, a very pious man who gives away two-thirds of his income. Maggie thinks that this is "wonderful." They then discuss literature. Stephen thinks that "it is always pleasant to improve the minds of ladies by talking to them at ease on subjects of which they know nothing," and so proceeds to give them a long explanation of a recent theological treatise. Fascinated by this, Maggie then lays down her sewing and gives Stephen her full attention. Stephen is very affected by Maggie's intense gaze, but Lucy doesn't notice and is simply pleased that Stephen is proving how clever he is.

Stephen and Lucy seem to think Dr. Kenn is rather eccentric for giving away all his money, while Maggie thinks he is "wonderful"—demonstrating once again her unusual levels of compassion and sympathy for others. Stephen's way of interacting the women on intellectual subjects suggests that he enjoys regarding women as his intellectual inferiors. Lucy seems perfectly comfortable with considering Stephen cleverer than herself. Maggie, on the other hand, seems intensely engaged in this discussion, demonstrating her passion for knowledge and learning.

Stephen proposes that they all go take a boat on the river, secretly hoping that this will allow him to touch Maggie's hand. The narrator denies that Stephen has fallen in love with Maggie at first sight, but admits that her touch was not "entirely indifferent" to him. For her part, Maggie thinks it is "very charming" to be helped out of the boat by someone taller and stronger than herself, since she has never felt that way before. Back at the house, Mrs. Pullet is horrified by Maggie's shabby clothes and gives her one of her old dresses to wear. Mrs. Tulliver and Mrs. Pullet admire how beautiful Maggie has become, although they still lament her "brown skin."

Maggie typically rejects conventional gender roles, both because of lack of opportunity (her family's poverty impeded her social life) and personal preference. However, she enjoys Stephen's courtly gesture in helping her into the boat and even submits to being dressed up by Mrs. Pullet, although she had hated those sorts of attentions when she was younger. This suggests that the appeal of conventional gender roles is not entirely lost on Maggie. Even so, however, her family still criticizes her dark complexion, marking her difference from other women.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 3

That night, Maggie struggles to fall asleep. She finds her mind very stimulated, not necessarily by Stephen, but by "a world of love and beauty and delight" that had previously been closed to her. Lucy comes into the room and laughs at Maggie for not having changed into her nightdress yet. She tells Maggie that she has invited Philip to come and stay. Maggie explains that she can't see Philip because she swore to Tom that she wouldn't meet him again without his permission.

The narrator's description suggests that it is not necessarily Stephen himself who delights Maggie and attracts her romantic interest. Rather, his and Lucy's leisured and privileged world— "a world of love and beauty and delight"— appeals to Maggie because it stimulates her appetite for knowledge and growth, after years of repression and hard work.

Lucy confesses that she loves Stephen, and prompts Maggie to reveal her secrets as well. Maggie tells Lucy the story of her romance with Philip and the obstacles facing them. Lucy thinks this is "very beautiful" and promises to help work a reconciliation between the Wakems and the Tullivers.

By trying to help Maggie and Philip, Lucy demonstrates that she is more tolerant than others—like Mr. Wakem or Tom, who have held on to their ancient grudge towards one another. Unlike them, Lucy sees no reason why Philip and Maggie should be kept apart.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 4

Maggie goes to visit Tom at Bob Jakin's house, where Tom is now lodging after the loss of Dorlcote Mill. She tells him that Lucy wishes to invite Philip to dinner, but promises that she won't speak to him in private or encourage his romantic advances. Tom agrees to this, but tells Maggie that he worries about her lack of judgment and thinks that she could be "led to do anything." Maggie is very hurt by his opinion of her and protests that she has borne the fall in their fortunes as best she could. Tom complains that she has "taken a situation"—meaning a job—when he wanted her to "be a lady" and stay at home.

Even though the Tulliver family sorely needs the extra income, Tom is still resistant to the idea of his sister "taking a situation"—a job at a boarding school. Instead, he wants her to stay home like a "lady" and allow him to provide for her financially. This suggests that Tom associates certain gender roles—in this case, women refraining from paid work—with social status and class standing. It seems that Maggie's decision to take a job is compromising to Tom's own masculine identity.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 5

Mr. Deane calls Tom into his office and applauds him for doing so well at Guest & Co for the past seven years. In recognition of his hard work, Mr. Deane informs Tom that the partners plan to give him a share in the business. Tom thanks him but asks instead that Guest & Co might buy back Dorlcote Mill for him. He explains that Wakem might be willing to part with it, since the current overseer is a drunk and has been running the business into the ground.

After years of hard work, Tom is finally offered a concrete financial reward: a share in the Guest & Co business. However, all he seems to care about is getting back Dorlcote Mill. His decision to reject Mr. Deane's offer and ask instead for the return of the mill suggests the powerful appeal of Tom's childhood memories and desire to honor his father's last wishes.

Mr. Deane promises to consider Tom's suggestion and to explore the possibility of buying Dorlcote Mill. However, he expresses some skepticism, asking whether Tom might like to do something else instead. However, Tom says that "there's nothing else I care about much," which strikes Mr. Deane as rather sad in a young man of twenty-three.

Mr. Deane recognizes that Tom's obsession with getting back the Tulliver family property is rather sad. Instead of looking to his own life and future, Tom is trapped in the past and in his own memories, unable to accept a new opportunity when it comes his way.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 6

When Maggie makes her first appearances in St. Ogg's "good society," she is much admired for her beauty. However, fashionable people tend to find her rather unsophisticated, since she is inexperienced in the social world and completely ignorant of "coquetry" or how to act around men. Maggie, for her part, very much enjoys partaking in Lucy's leisured life and rediscovering pursuits such as horse-riding and playing the piano.

The narrator points out that what excites Maggie about her new life is not so much the admiration she receives, but the exposure to a world of art, music, and culture that had previously been denied to her. Maggie's life at Dorlcote Mill was intellectually under-stimulating, so life with Lucy is a welcome change.

One evening, Stephen visits the house while Lucy is out preparing for the charity bazaar. He tells Maggie that he has come to drop off some sheet music for Lucy, but stays for a while to talk with Maggie. The atmosphere between them is tense, until Stephen mentions Philip's name, at which point Maggie quickly busies herself with her sewing. Perceiving that he may have offended her, Stephen invites Maggie for a walk in the garden. They stroll arm and arm, saying nothing. When Stephen leaves, he realizes that he is in love with Maggie. As he sits in the billiard room, he contemplates her eyes, which he thinks are filled with "delicious opposites." Maggie, for her part, struggles with her feelings and wishes she was back in the Red Deeps with Philip, when everything seemed simpler.

Stephen thinks that Maggie's eyes are filled with "delicious opposites," suggesting that he is drawn to her because he finds her interestingly different from other women. He values Lucy because she is straightforward, whereas he values Maggie precisely because she is not—suggesting that he may not actually want the sort of woman that social pressures dictate he should want. Maggie, on the other hand, is experiencing a transformation from ignorance of the world of men and courtship to newfound knowledge. Her desire to be back in the Red Deeps with Philip points to a wish on her part to return to that place of ignorance and innocence.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 7

The next morning is very rainy, and the narrator remarks that lovers prefer rain because it gives them an excuse to visit the ladies they are courting. The narrator also observes that lovers prefer to sit either "slightly above or slightly below" the lady, since women are at once both worshipped and looked down on.

The narrator wryly comments on the way that conventional gender roles deny depth and complexity to women, making them either angels to be "worshipped" and looked up to, or subversive, fallen women who are "looked down on" for defying social norms.

Philip visits Lucy's house and sees Maggie for the first time since their separation. In front of Lucy, they at first make only casual conversation. However, once they have a moment alone, they share a tender moment and clasp their hands. Maggie tells Philip that Tom has consented for them to see each other on social occasions. She explains that she will soon be taking up another position working at a girl's boarding school. Philip asks whether there might be another alternative, but Maggie professes that it would be "intolerable" for her to rely on her brother for support.

Even Philip, who is normally more sympathetic to Maggie's need for independence and self-definition, seems surprised that she would feel the need to find a job and earn an independent income. Although he respects Maggie intellectually—perhaps more than anyone else—it seems clear that his vision of a life with Maggie as his wife would not involve her working outside the home. In this sense, it seems that marriage with anyone would represent a certain confinement to particular social roles for Maggie.

When Stephen arrives, Philip feels irritated by his "strong presence and bright voice." Stephen and Maggie treat each other with ostentatious coldness to try to cover up their feelings. The group decides to play some music, and Stephen sings while Maggie sews. Maggie is highly sensitive to music, and she cannot conceal her strong emotional response to his singing. Philip notices Maggie's impassioned expression and feels jealous.

Music has always moved Maggie, even when she was a young child. Her response to Stephen's singing—which is not particularly accomplished—suggests that her life thus far has been lacking in artistic as well as intellectual stimulation. Again, her attraction to Stephen perhaps has less to do with him than the world of art and culture that he offers.

Philip sings "I love thee still," which Maggie takes as an indication of his continuing feelings for her. However, while she finds this touching, the song brings her "quiet regret" rather than "excitement." Stephen then sings a jaunty song that makes the whole room come alive. As he is performing, he notices that Maggie is in need of a footstool, which he casually puts at her feet. This simple courtly act delights Maggie, and Philip resentfully observes the expression on her face.

Philip's song hearkens back to an earlier and simpler time in his and Maggie's relationship, reminding her that "I love thee still." However, Maggie is now more experienced and knowledgeable than she was then. Her stay with the Deanes has opened up a world of feeling and experiences with men that make Stephen's courtly gesture seem more appealing and "exciting" than Philip's regretful song.


Mr. Deane enters the room, putting an end to the music. He asks Philip about whether Mr. Wakem has gotten tired of farming, a line of inquiry that puzzles Lucy. That night, she pulls her father aside and asks why he is so suddenly interested in Mr. Wakem's business ventures. Mr. Deane admits that Guest & Co is interested in buying back Dorlcote Mill, but makes her swear not to tell anyone about it. Thinking to help Maggie and Philip, Lucy tells her father that she thinks Philip will help persuade Mr. Wakem to sell the mill. She asks her father to do anything in his power to buy the mill, although she won't reveal the reason why Philip would be willing to help. Mr. Deane is confused, but trusts in his daughter's good intentions.

Even as the attraction between Maggie and Stephen grows stronger and more obvious, Lucy is still persuaded that Maggie loves Philip and wants to help them be together. In the possibility of buying back Dorlcote Mill, Lucy sees a possibility for reconciliation and forgiveness between the Tulliver and Wakem families. Her lack of suspicion about Maggie and her fiancé attests to Lucy's warm and trusting nature, which leads her to think the best of people.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 8

Lucy tells Philip about her scheme to get Guest & Co to buy Dorlcote Mill for Tom, thus hopefully soothing some of the enmity between the Tullivers and Wakems. Hoping that this will allow him to marry Maggie, Philip seizes the opportunity to talk to his father. He asks Mr. Wakem to come into his study on the pretense of showing him some recent sketches. Although Mr. Wakem can now only climb stairs with difficulty, he indulges his son.

Philip's hope that Mr. Wakem might be able to forgive the Tullivers and allow Philip to marry Maggie is not entirely misplaced, given that Mr. Wakem shows a different side with his son. He clearly loves and cares for him deeply, as demonstrated by his willingness to climb the stairs to see his son's drawings.

Philip shows Mr. Wakem two drawings he has made of Maggie as a girl and as a young woman. He confesses that he has loved Maggie since she was a child. At first, Mr. Wakem responds with fury, calling Philip ungrateful and threatening to disinherit him. He asks how Philip could possibly consider marriage with the daughter of a man who attacked him. Philip tells him that he thinks revenge is a base motive, and that in any case, Maggie is not responsible for Mr. Tulliver or Tom's behavior. Mr. Wakem retorts that "we don't ask what a woman does—we ask whom she belongs to." He ends the conversation angrily, and father and son don't speak for several hours.

Mr. Wakem demonstrates that he is still holding on to old revenge motives and is unable to forgive the Tullivers. More profoundly, however, his response is also notable for the way his enmity extends to Maggie as well. Philip points out that Maggie is not responsible for the behavior of her father and brother. But Mr. Wakem does not seem to view Maggie as an independent person with her own views. Rather, he sees women as "belonging to" their families, suggesting that gender roles in this period denied women independent agency.


When Mr. Wakem returns to the attic, however, he is in a much calmer mood. He reflects that he has seen Maggie in church and thinks she is very beautiful. He muses that she must be fond of Philip, if she agreed to meet him in the woods. Philip reminds Mr. Wakem how much he loved his own wife—who is now dead—and that he hopes to find a similar happiness with Maggie. At this, Mr. Wakem is touched and agrees to accept Maggie as a daughter-in-law, and even to sell the mill. However, he draws the line at forgiving Tom.

Mr. Wakem arguably shows more tolerance and flexibility than Mr. Tulliver in that he is ultimately able to put aside his own grudges in order to facilitate Philip's happiness. Mr. Tulliver thought that Mr. Wakem was the devil, but Wakem's response here suggests that he is a more complicated figure who loves his wife and son and is willing to sacrifice a great deal for Philip.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 9

At the bazaar, Maggie makes a great impression in her white muslin dress and attracts many male customers to her stall, where she is selling mittens and hats that she has sewn. Lucy and Stephen observe as Mr. Wakem approaches Maggie, and Lucy whispers to Stephen that the family quarrel may soon be healed. Stephen notices that Philip seems to be watching Maggie very closely. Given the evidence of Lucy's comment, Mr. Wakem's approach to Maggie, and Philip's odd behavior, Stephen begins to suspect that there is some romantic connection between Maggie and Philip.

Maggie's plain sewing and plain clothes attract many customers, demonstrating her appeal again as a woman who subverts conventional gender expectations. Lucy is delighted by Mr. Wakem's approach to Maggie because it seems to suggest forgiveness and reconciliation on the horizon. Unbeknownst to her, however, further grudges are brewing between Philip and Stephen, as Stephen begins to suspect the romantic nature of Maggie and Philip's relationship.

Stephen places a hand on Philip's shoulder and says that Maggie looks very sullen today. Recognizing this as a ruse, Philip calls him a hypocrite and both men storm out of the bazaar. Maggie, meanwhile, is miserable at this strife. Seeing her tears, the local vicar, Dr. Kenn, approaches her table. He speaks gently to her and tells her he will always be available to help her, which Maggie finds very touching.

Philip calls Stephen a hypocrite because he recognizes that Stephen is only pretending not to like Maggie by calling her "sullen"—in fact, he has fallen in love with her and deceived Lucy. Despite Maggie's distress at this in-fighting, Dr. Kenn's compassion does a great deal to cheer her, demonstrating Maggie's susceptibility to kindness and even one moment of compassion.

The narrator reflects that although Maggie's vanity was gratified by all the attention she received at the bar, her sense of duty was stronger than her vanity. Consequently, that night, she tells Lucy that she has to leave to visit her aunt Mrs. Moss and then to take up a new position teaching at school. Lucy is hurt by Maggie's sudden departure, just when things seems to be working out between Maggie and Philip. Lucy asks whether Maggie doesn't love Philip enough to want to marry him, but Maggie protests that her only reluctance is due to Tom's opposition to the marriage.

Maggie seems to be using Tom's stubbornness and the lack of forgiveness between the Tulliver and Wakem families as a way of justifying her own attraction to Stephen and lack of clarity about whether she wants to marry Philip. Just when it seems that there might be a way to get around the Tulliver-Wakem feud, Maggie's feelings shift, suggesting that it is possible to grow out of the emotional attachments of childhood and adolescence.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 10

Before Maggie leaves, she attends a grand dance at Stephen's house. Although Stephen pretends to be indifferent to her, he feels jealous when he sees her dancing with other men. Finally, they find a moment to be alone together in the conservatory. Trying to avert her eyes from Stephen, Maggie reaches up to smell a rose. Stephen seizes her arm and kisses it, but Maggie quickly snatches it away, asking what right he has to insult her. She runs from the room, increasingly convinced that she must renounce Stephen—since their happiness will cause pain to others.

When Stephen kisses Maggie, she asks why he thinks he has the right to "insult" her, suggesting that a respectable unmarried woman should feel insulted by this gesture. However, this reaction seems more a product of social convention than Maggie's actual feelings, since she has clearly developed a romantic attraction to Stephen. In this sense, Maggie is torn between socially sanctioned conventions around sex and gender and her own inclinations.

Philip steals out to Maggie's carriage before she leaves for Mrs. Moss's house. He asks her again why she has to go away, when it looks as if Guest & Co will be able to buy back the mill. She tells him that she could never marry him without Tom's approval. Philip asks whether that is the only reason why they have been kept apart, and Maggie firmly tells him yes—although Philip still isn't quite satisfied.

Maggie still cares about Philip, as demonstrated by her reluctance to hurt him. However, her attachment now seems more nostalgic and related to the shared memories of their time at the Red Deep. For Maggie, those romantic feelings have faded, whereas for Philip, those feelings still motivate his life and behavior.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 11

After Maggie has been at Mrs. Moss's for four days, Stephen arrives and asks to speak with her. They walk together in the woods near the house, although Maggie expresses concern about the propriety of her being alone with him. Stephen confesses that he is "mad with love" for her and asks whether she loves him too. He argues that if they love one another, they must break off their engagements with Philip and Lucy. It is "natural" for them to be together, he tells her, because they can't help having fallen in love. Maggie, however, replies that she cannot pursue her own happiness at the expense of others.

Maggie and Stephen's argument about what is "natural" reveals their differing views of their obligations towards others. Stephen thinks that love is natural, and thus that he has an obligation to ensure his own happiness. Maggie, by contrast, thinks that the bonds of family and duty—like her childhood bonds with Lucy and Philip—are also "natural." She feels obligations primarily to others rather than towards herself, perhaps as a result of a deprived and lonely childhood.


Stephen agrees to give her up, if that's what she wants, but asks for one kiss first. Maggie returns to Mrs. Moss's house in tears. She tells her aunt that she wishes she had died when she was fifteen, because it was much easier to give things up then.

Although Maggie had a relatively unhappy childhood and adolescence, she looks back on those times as a simpler period of her life, when she was ignorant of the temptations that now beset her.


BOOK 6, CHAPTER 12

There is a family gathering at Mrs. Pullet's house, in light of the good news that Mr. Wakem is willing to sell Dorlcote Mill back to Guest & Co. Mrs. Pullet and Lucy begin consulting about which linens they will give Mrs. Tulliver, who is also returning to the mill to keep house for Tom. Mrs. Glegg and Mrs. Pullet very much disapprove of Maggie "going into service" and working as a teacher, when she could remain at home with her family and make a good marriage.

The Dodson sisters associate an upswing in the fortunes of the Tullivers with a corresponding restriction in Maggie's freedom. They think a woman should direct her primary energies towards making a good marriage, and they disapprove of her teaching job. This suggests that they believe paid work lowers a woman's value as a marital prospect.

Lucy finds a way to have a private conversation with Tom. She tells him that Philip loves Maggie, hoping that Tom will be softened by the return of Dorlcote Mill. Tom, however, is immovable and maintains that he will never consent to any relationship with the Wakems.

Tom finds no way to forgive the Wakems no matter how much the Tulliver fortunes recover. This suggests that grudge-holding is a product of a mental and emotional block, not necessarily material circumstances.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 13

Over the next few days, Maggie experiences a great internal struggle. She is tempted by the possibility of seizing some happiness for herself, after so many years of pain. Lucy notices that Maggie seems depressed, but attributes this to Tom's continuing opposition to her marriage to Philip. Hoping to bring Maggie and Philip together, Lucy suggests that they should take a boat out on the river together. Meanwhile, Philip pays close attention to the interactions between Stephen and Maggie. He notices one interaction in which Stephen whispers "dearest" to Maggie, and goes home in the "wretched certainty" that Maggie loves Stephen.

Maggie is conflicted about finding happiness with Stephen because she knows that her happiness will be at the cost of Lucy and Philip's pain. This demonstrates one of her most prominent character traits: her compassion and ability to empathize with others. Her intimate understanding of what it means to suffer makes her unwilling to inflict suffering on others. Suffering, in Maggie's case, has made her more tolerant and forgiving of others, and more susceptible to understanding and feeling sensitive to their emotions.

The next morning, Philip is too distressed and ill to go on the boat, and Stephen offers to take his place. Maggie protests, but eventually agrees to go out on the boat alone with Stephen. She allows him to row the boat for a while, but eventually notices that they have passed out of St. Ogg's and are now in unfamiliar waters. Stephen confesses that he has deliberately rowed too far away from town so that they can elope and get married. At first, Maggie is horrified, but she can't bring herself to tell him to stop the boat.

Maggie is oddly passive in the boat with Stephen, although he has rowed the boat away from St. Ogg's without her permission. This is because she is conflicted, but also perhaps because her experience as a woman has often disempowered her and made it difficult for her to exert her agency. Maggie has been powerless at home for years, so it is not necessarily surprising that she should struggle to assert herself here as well.

Eventually, Stephen and Maggie pass a steamer boat on route to Mudport, the nearest large town. They pay for passage and sleep on the boat that night. Stephen is entirely happy, believing that Maggie will soon be his. Maggie, for her part, feels as if she is in a dream.

Stephen's confidence that Maggie will be "his" demonstrates his belief that a woman's role is to be passive and conciliatory. He has essentially made the decision about their marriage for Maggie, taking her free will and choice away from her and treating her like property that can be won.

BOOK 6, CHAPTER 14

That night, Maggie dreams of St. Ogg rowing the Virgin Mary in a boat, just like in the legend. However, when she looks closer, she sees that the Virgin is Lucy, and the boatman is Tom. She wakes up horrified by the wrong she has done to people who she loves and cares for. When they arrive in Mudport, she tells Stephen that she is going to leave him now and return to St. Ogg's. Stephen argues fervently with her, telling her that he will die first, and that she is ruining both their happiness. Maggie tells him calmly that she could not enjoy a happiness that was based on denial of her duty and what she believes is right.

Thus far, Stephen and Maggie's trip in the boat has disempowered her and taken away her ability to make an independent choice, even when her role as a woman has often made that difficult. By telling Stephen that she wants to return to St. Ogg's and doesn't wish to marry him, Maggie regains her agency in the situation and restores her own moral compass. Stephen tried to pressure Maggie into marriage by taking the choice out of her hands, but she refuses to give up her free will and independence.

Stephen points out that the wrong is already done, and that it is "madness" for Maggie to go back to St. Ogg's without marrying him, given what people will say. Maggie declares that she plans to confess everything and beg for forgiveness. In despair, Stephen finally tells her to leave him. Maggie boards a coach for York and then back to St. Ogg's.

Stephen thinks it is "madness" for Maggie to return to St. Ogg's because he knows that people will assume that they have slept together outside of marriage. Maggie will thus become a "fallen woman," since she has transgressed social norms around sex and gender by going somewhere alone with Stephen.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 1

Five days after her departure from St. Ogg's with Stephen, Maggie returns to Dorlcote Mill, hoping to find sanctuary with Tom. When Tom sees her, however, he is prepared for "the worst that could happen—not death, but disgrace." He tells her that she has ruined herself by engaging in this relationship with Stephen, and that he washes his hands of her and will no longer call her his sister.

Tom's rejection of Maggie devastates her because she has always loved and forgiven Tom, whatever the circumstances. However, just as when they were children, he seems unable to forgive her when he believes she has violated his moral code—in this case, he goes so far as to no longer call her his sister.


Watching from the doorway, Mrs. Tulliver exclaims, "you've got a mother!" and packs her things to leave Dorlcote Mill with Maggie. They go to Bob Jakin, who takes them in. Bob shows Maggie his baby daughter, who he has named after her. He doesn't ask any questions about Stephen, but does ask Maggie if she owes anyone a "grudge." Maggie replies that she doesn't want to see anyone punished for doing wrong, since she's done wrong enough herself.

In stark contrast to Tom's stubbornness, Mrs. Tulliver readily forgives and supports her daughter, which is somewhat surprising. Maggie's comment to Bob also demonstrates her very different attitude toward forgiveness. Unlike Tom, Maggie has a keen sense of her own flaws and mistakes, and she doesn't want to see others punished for errors that she knows she has shared herself.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 2

The narrator observes ironically that if Maggie had returned to St. Ogg's as Stephen's wife, the world might have judged her quite differently. As the wife of the town's wealthiest man, she would have been received in all the best households and accepted as a member of the community. However, since she has returned unmarried, she is scorned and treated as an outcast.

The narrator points out the hypocrisy of St. Ogg's society on matters of sex and gender roles. Society doesn't scorn Maggie for taking another woman's fiancé—they treat her with contempt because they believe Maggie and Stephen have had premarital sex. It is only because Maggie returned to the town unmarried that she is treated with contempt.

Hoping to find some way to earn her living, Maggie visits Dr. Kenn, who had been kind to her before. She tells him everything, and Dr. Kenn believes her, explaining that Stephen has written a letter to his father and Lucy, exonerating Maggie from any part in the elopement. He suggests that Maggie might come and work as a governess for his children, an offer she gratefully accepts.

One notable exception to the judgment and intolerance of St. Ogg's is Dr. Kenn. Kenn doesn't jump to conclusions about Maggie and believes her account. He even offers her a job with his family as a governess, an intimate position that attests to his kindness and trust in her.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 3

Meanwhile, Mrs. Tulliver goes to visit Mrs. Glegg and ask for her help. Surprisingly, the usually judgmental Mrs. Glegg is very much on Maggie's side. Having also read the letter that Stephen sent Lucy, she believes that Maggie is innocent and has taken to harshly castigating anyone who speaks ill of her niece. She even confronts Tom, but Tom is too stubborn to revise his prior position. She tells Mrs. Tulliver that Maggie is welcome to come and live with her.

In the wake of Maggie's disgrace, tolerance and forgiveness come from a very unlikely source: the notoriously judgmental and narrow-minded Mrs. Glegg. Here, however, Mrs. Glegg does not rush to judgment of her niece. Instead, she forgives and fiercely defends her against the rumors in the town. Mrs. Glegg's loyalty to family is clearly stronger than her belief in town gossip.

Mrs. Tulliver passes on the news to Maggie that Lucy has gone to the seaside for her health, but is feeling much better. Maggie remains very concerned for Philip, until one day she receives a letter from him. Philip writes that he believes her and that he understands she tried to be faithful to him. He apologizes for pressing his romantic feelings on her when he knew that she didn't feel the same way about him. He ends by offering his forgiveness and continuing love and friendship. Maggie sobs at this kindness.

Philip's letter brings Maggie great comfort not only because he forgives her. In contrast to the intolerant and blinkered quality of many people in St. Ogg's, Philip also shows the ability to reflect on his own flaws and imperfections. He thus asks Maggie for forgiveness as well, since he realizes now that he may have pressured her into a romantic relationship with him when he suspected that she was in fact reluctant.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 4

Dr. Kenn works hard on Maggie's behalf to try to find her some employment, but finds that no respectable woman in St. Ogg's is willing to employ Maggie. Meanwhile, rumors begin to spread that Dr. Kenn himself wishes to marry Maggie, which embarrasses Dr. Kenn and forces him to release Maggie from employment in his household.

Although Dr. Kenn is a compassionate and forgiving man, he is still sensitive to public opinion. The rumor that he means to marry Maggie demonstrates Maggie's status as a "fallen" and thus sexually available woman.

Maggie learns that Lucy is going to the seaside with Stephen's sisters. However, before Lucy leaves, she makes a secret visit under cover of darkness to Maggie's lodgings. Lucy tells Maggie that she forgives her and understands that Maggie never meant to hurt her. She even says that she admires Maggie for her bravery and strength in giving Stephen up, when few people would have done so.

Even though Maggie has suffered from social rejection and isolation, she is greatly comforted by Lucy's forgiveness. Lucy also seems to understand the difficulty, as a woman, of making the choice that Maggie made. Lucy tells Maggie she is "brave" because she understands the social censure to which Maggie has been subject as a result.

BOOK 7, CHAPTER 5

A few weeks later, Maggie is up late at night and can't sleep. The narrator relates the terrible heavy rains of the past few days, which have swollen the river and made some people anxious about flooding. Maggie, too, has had a difficult few days. First she was let go by Dr. Kenn, who could no longer keep her on as governess in light of the rumors that he planned to marry her. Then, she received a letter from Stephen. After the botched elopement, Stephen fled to Holland, but now he is back in Mudport and begs her to reconsider and marry him. Feeling desperate and rejected, Maggie thinks of writing a response that simply reads "Come!" However, she suppresses this impulse in herself, remembering the joy she felt at being forgiven by Lucy and Philip.

Maggie has had a miserable time since her return to St. Ogg's. She has been thrown out of Dorlcote Mill by her own brother, gossiped about, sexually harassed, and most recently, fired. It is thus unsurprising that she would think of turning to marriage with Stephen as a way of regaining her "respectability" and being reaccepted into society once again as a married woman. However, Maggie refuses to hurt Lucy and Philip, and despite all her suffering, she is happy that they have forgiven her. This suggests that she values those deep emotional connections and relationships over mere social convention and the opportunity to be a lady.

Maggie kneels to pray, but as she does so, she feels a pooling of water at her feet. She runs upstairs to wake Bob and tell him to evacuate his family. Thinking of Tom at Dorlcote Mill, she runs to Bob's boat and picks up an oar. Before Bob can stop her, she begins to row to the mill, determined to rescue her brother. In a dreamlike state, she passes through floating detritus and flooded streets, looking for familiar landscapes to orient her.

In the moment of disaster, when the town begins to flood, Maggie's first thought is of Tom at Dorlcote Mill. This suggests that the bonds of family and memory are remarkably persistent, despite the deep rift between her and her brother. She looks for familiar landmarks as she rows through the streets, underlining again the guiding and shaping power of memory.

Finally, Maggie sees the top of Dorlcote Mill, which is flooded up to the first story. She shouts for Tom, whose head appears at the window. Tom explains that Mrs. Tulliver is safe at her sister's house. Maggie pulls Tom into the boat, and he is astonished that she has come to rescue him by herself. Overcome, he simply says "Magsie," her old childhood nickname. Maggie and Tom begin to row the boat to try to rescue Lucy, but before they make it, they are swept away in the current. Just before they drown, they cling to each other "in an embrace never to be parted."

In sharp contrast to Maggie's powerlessness when Stephen rowed her in the boat away from St. Ogg's without her permission, here Maggie takes back her agency and makes a free choice to row the boat and rescue her brother. Tom's astonishment and gratitude demonstrates that sibling bonds are stronger than grudges. They have a final reconciliation before their deaths, ending their lives on a note of acceptance and forgiveness rather than stubbornness.

CONCLUSION

Five years later, all traces of the destruction of the flood have vanished. Dorlcote Mill has been rebuilt, and the Tulliver family graveyard is quiet again. Philip, Stephen, and Lucy often visit the grave marking Tom and Maggie's burial place. Philip always visits alone, whereas Stephen and Lucy visit together (they have since married). The inscription on the tomb reads: "In their death they were not divided."

Maggie and Tom's sibling relationship was difficult and riddled with grudges. However, the inscription on their tombstone provides a reminder that they were inextricably bonded together and could not be "divided" for long. Their death is presented as a reconciliation and forgiveness, and a final end to the divisions that kept them apart in life.

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