Conundrum for Stevens -- wants to be regarded as belonging to aristocracy, be a ‘great’ butler
  ○ Wants to be something he criticises through criticism of Hayes Society

Uses his father to explore dignity -- retaining a sense of professionalism throughout a life
  ○ The tiger incident -- the tiger represents the wild, lack of control, otherness, foreign.
    ○ Shooting of the tiger = wiping out otherness and foreignness
    ○ Set in India -- imperialism, possible link to fascism and Nazism?

His father -- an imposing physical figure, strikes the reader as powerful and even menacing
  ○ “Dark, severe présence”, “powerfully rebuking” -- relationship with his father is based on fear
  ○ Later, however, he becomes frail and ageing -- the power of time

Absent mother -- part of Stevens’s difficulty in expressing emotions to a woman
  ○ Tragic loss of brother -- very difficult family background

Day Two -- Morning, Salisbury

Empty, eerie -- early morning.

Emptiness reflects Stevens’s loneliness -- “not a soul to be seen”, “no sound to be heard”, “in these quiet moments as I wait for the world about to awake” -- waiting for the world to wake, not only alone but truly lonely

No relaxation, no proper sleep -- extremely early waking hour -- “It was then still dark”
  ○ Anxiety from being away from Darlington Hall, consumed with thoughts of what’s ahead
  ○ Routine is instilled in him -- years of service, he is used to getting up in early morning

“mist affecting my view” -- highly symbolic of his personal view being affected. Lack of clarity about himself

Early morning -- possibility of a beginning, contrary to the title

Still heavily preoccupied with the letter “going over in my mind again passages from Miss Kenton’s letter”

Gives an excuse for calling her Miss Kenton instead of Mrs Benn -- “have not seen her once since she went to the West Country to become ‘Mrs Benn’”

But the letter gave him “extra cause to continue thinking of her as ‘Miss Kenton’” -- desperately clinging onto the past, wants to remember her as Miss Kenton

Anxiety over seeing someone again after such a long time

“sadly, … her marriage is finally to come to an end” -- purposeful and hopeful mention of the end of her marriage. Proper and insincere in emotion; but reveals the true purpose of his visit -- she is newly single.
  ○ BUT this is not stated in her letter, “it would seem” -- imagining the best outcome

Confusion -- whether the letter “does not make specific the details” or “states unambiguously”
  ○ Contrast of “unmistakable message” and “general nuance” -- he is seeking a deeper meaning

Attempts to express his own feelings through what he imagines her emotions to be
  ○ “she is pondering with regret decisions”
  ○ “deep in middle age, so alone and desolate”
  ○ “returning to Darlington Hall would be a great comfort to her” -- is that his emotion or hers?
  ○ Masks his emotion through indirect expression. Covert realisation of his loneliness
  ○ “a life that has come to be so dominated by a sense of waste”

Harsh expressions -- “alone” and “desolate” -- bitter tone, hypocritical, feels bitter of envy?

After revealing his emotion, returns to something more familiar and safe -- “professional viewpoint”
  ○ “Miss Kenton would prove the perfect solution to the problem”
  ○ Purposeful and impersonal, mathematical language

Admires Miss Kenton -- “an intelligent woman”

Stevens dissects the letter, Ishiguro presents it in fragments -- the contents of the letter underlie the novel
The conference 

Compares himself to a general preparing for battle 

“military-style pep talk”, “contingency plans”, “devised with utmost care a special staff plan” -- rigorous preparation 

His father -- “as though some supernatural force possessed him”, “such youthful vigour” 

Extremely patronising of Miss Kenton -- “great inexperience”, “fourth or fifth time” pointing out her failings 

Putting profession above emotion -- “could not afford to give it much thought” -- about Miss Kenton’s behaviour 

Absolutely dedicated, proves himself as a butler -- “I remained standing there ready to relieve his discomfort at the first opportunity” 

Proves himself under difficult and awkward and difficult circumstances -- talking about “the birds and the bees”. Particularly difficult for him as he finds intimate relationships awkward 

“beyond the call of duty” -- extent of Stevens’s loyalty to Lord Darlington 

“geese”, “flowers and shrubs” -- no experience of personal relationships. Awkward 

Comical tension between him and Miss Kenton -- describes her as “extremely annoying”, “childish behaviour” 

Surprised to see his father’s health deteriorate -- the tray had “for some reason” taken on “an obstinate immobility” 

Father clearly unwell -- “ashen colour”, “beads of sweat” 

Close observation demonstrates his worry and preoccupation 

“I was a little uncertain as to how to proceed” -- does not know how to function in unfamiliar situations, in personal relationships 

“I stood hesitating in the doorway” 

“it seemed undesirable” to leave him -- not an expression of emotion, quite a professional lens 

Only worried about his father condition slightly -- “In the meantime” -- priorities the conference 

Awkward interaction with his father on his deathbed: 

A lot of repetition: 

“I hope Father is feeling better now” -- five times 

“The situation is rather volatile” -- twice 

unsure of what to say, afraid of his father, no connection between them 

“we can talk again in the morning” -- ultimate rejection 

Heartbroken, does not know how to proceed with the situation 

His father is “proud” of him -- confesses a feeling, an emotion -- that Stevens does not reciprocate 

Poignant neglect of his father’s attempts to communicate -- uses profession to escape 

“I’m afraid we’re extremely busy now” 

A martyr to his work? 

His father also prioritises work -- “Everything in hand downstairs?” 

Speeches made at the conference: 

Decline of aristocracy 

Mr Lewis calling the gentlemen “just a bunch of naive dreamers” 

Lord Darlington -- “He is a gentleman. … A classic English gentleman” 

“international affairs today are no longer for gentlemen amateurs” 

“The days when you could act out of your noble instincts are over” 

“you here in Europe don’t yet seem to know it” 

Condemning aristocracy; indicates the decline of the gentry -- as opposed to prosperity of America, new money 

Triumph, “loud murmur of assent with several ‘hear, hear’s’” 

Lord Darlington’s response “met by the loudest burst of approval yet, followed by warm and sustained applause” -- nationalist ideas. Triumph
Assesses the batman professionally -- “butler, valet, chauffeur and general cleaner”

Does not deny his speculation “You’re one of them top-notch butlers” from “big posh houses” -- grandness appreciate by Stevens
  o although this is undermined -- “talk almost like a gentleman”
  o Contrast with the batman’s working class dialect -- “guv”, “really posh geezer”

Denies having any association with Darlington -- “Oh no, I am employed by Mr John Farraday”

Clear general contempt towards Lord Darlington -- “that Lord Darlington”, “eyeing me carefully”

Stevens pretends to be clueless about his own behaviour -- “meaningless whim” “distinctly odd behaviour”

Changed attitude from the first encounter with the old man
  “the pond … was but a small detour” -- willing to divert from his planned route

Reference to the past -- “like the one in which I had first noticed the alarming smell”
  o “a little over half an hour ago”

Description of the pond
  “a most charming spot”
  “An atmosphere of great calm pervades here”
  “pleasant shade”
  “the quiet of these surroundings”
  “tranquility of the present setting”
  “in the calm that surrounds this pond”
  Pond as a mirror - Narcissus -- forces self-reflection and thinking about his behavior

Pond -- stagnation, lack of change or moving forward -- represents Stevens stuck in the past

“sustaining damage to my travelling suit” -- afraid that his carefully constructed persona will crumble
  o Both literally and figuratively
  o Literally -- great care in choose the suit; described them in the Prologue; clear deliberation
  o Figuratively -- he lies he keeps telling himself; the impression of a gentleman that he gives to others

The ‘mock’ episode:
  Theme of truth vs. deception -- repetition of “mock” emphasises the deceitful nature of Stevens’s narrative
  Repetition of “caused embarrassment”
  Stevens blames his behaviour on “the ways of this country”
  o “it is not customary in England for an employee to discuss his past employees”
  Contrast between Stevens’s stifling formality and Mr Farraday’s more informal language “man” “OK”
  Continues to lie to himself

Tries to persuade himself and the reader in Lord Darlington’s greatness
  o “utter nonsense” based on “complete ignorance”
  o “nothing vexes me more … than to hear this sort of nonsense being repeated”
  o “a stature to dwarf most of these persons”
  o “this sort of nonsense” -- repetition of “nonsense”, as if trying to convince himself

Attempt to justify “thirty-five years’ service”
  o “my chief satisfaction derives from what I achieved during those years, and I am today nothing but proud and grateful to have been given such a privilege” -- contradicts his behaviour