

- 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 presence", "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 messages 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'"
 - 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
 - “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” postpones 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
 - although this is undermined -- “talk almost like a gentleman”
 - 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”
 - “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”
- “tranquillity of the present setting”
- “in the calm that surrounds this pond”
- Pond as a mirror - Narcissus -- forces self-reflection and thinking about his behaviour
- 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
 - Both literally and figuratively
 - Literally -- great care in choosing the suit; described them in the prologue; clear deliberation
 - Figuratively -- the 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”
 - “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
 - “utter nonsense” based on “complete ignorance”
 - “nothing vexes me more ... than to hear this sort of nonsense being repeated”
 - “a stature to dwarf most of these persons”
 - “this sort of nonsense” -- repetition of “nonsense”, as if trying to convince himself
- Attempt to justify “thirty-five years’ service”
 - “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

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