

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Where Angels Fear to Tread

by E. M. Forster

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Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. infer meanings about characters and events when the meanings are not explicitly stated.
2. discuss the contributions of each literary device to the overall rhetorical argument:
 - diction
 - foreshadowing
 - irony
 - polysyndeton
3. comment on whether the process of socialization is more harmful than helpful.
4. discuss the following themes in this story:
 - Morals that attempt to temper basic instincts are mere social constructs.
 - The culture of southern Europe is more in line with human nature than that of northern Europe.
 - Simply because a venture's outcome is certain failure does not mean that the venture itself will not provide a glorious experience.
5. point out the significance found in the name of Caroline Abbott.
6. identify examples of sarcasm and verbal irony, and relate these examples to the author's style.
7. compare and contrast various scenes in England and in Italy.
8. cite incidents from the story to illustrate the following theme: A culture that embraces humanity's flaws is more likely to provide contentment.
9. point out examples of foreshadowing and comment on how it helps to add interest to the story.
10. gain familiarity with vocabulary and usage unique to Forster's culture and time period.
11. recognize, explain, and assess the rhetorical weight of allusions to literature and mythology in the novel.
12. identify, analyze, and either defend, reject, or qualify the rhetorical argument of the novel.
13. assess the reliability of the narrator, and compare and contrast the narrator's point of view with that of Philip.

*All page references come from the Dover Thrift Edition of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, copyright 1993.*

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. What is the role of Italy in Philip's world-view? What part do reality and idealism play in this world-view?
2. Cite two incidents from the story which prove Philip believes in the anesthetic powers of beauty.
3. Compare and contrast the stories of Santa Deodata and Caroline Abbott. What rhetorical argument is supported by Miss Abbott's apparent transfiguration into a deity?
4. List three incidents from the story that support the following theme: the ethical mores of southern Europe are more in line with human nature than those of northern Europe.
5. Compare and contrast the description of the Herriton estate with the home that Lilia and Gino set up in Monteriano.
6. Discuss the role that the evening at the opera plays in Miss Abbott's rejection of English society.
7. Discuss the omens that appear throughout the story and their role in foreshadowing plot.
8. Analyze the various allusions to literature and mythology, and assess their contributions to the basic premises of the novel.
9. Discuss how diction is used to portray Philip's withdrawal from emotionally difficult situations.
10. Cite two examples of polysyndeton from the novel, and assess the device's contributions to the novel's main ideas.
11. Compare and contrast Harriet and Caroline Abbott.
12. Discuss the progression within Caroline Abbott's mind that leads her to go to Italy to save Lilia's baby, and contrast it with the progression that leads her to decide the baby should stay with Gino.
13. What leads to the break between Philip and his mother?

Where Angels Fear to Tread

I

Vocabulary

squired – accompanied
injunctions – orders
unwonted – unusual
virulent – passionate
acquiesced – agreed, in the sense of giving in
baleful – ominous

1. What is the first hint to the reader of a strain between Lilia and the Herritons?

2. What is the Herritons' opinion of Lilia's romantic selectivity? How is this an example of foreshadowing?

3. Why does Philip imagine that a trip to Italy will be good for Lilia? How is this an example of irony?

4. Explain Harriet's disdain for Italy.

V

Vocabulary

sordid – morally filthy

gauche – unrefined

commiseration – an expression of sympathy or pity

disparity – a difference

bounder – a man without ethics or scruples (primarily a British expression)

1. Explain the significance of Philip’s physical description.

2. Up to this point in the novel, Miss Abbott has seemed shocked by Lilia’s marriage to Gino Carrella. She left with Philip, claiming that she could not bear to stay there, and she cut off communications with Lilia from England. Mrs. Herriton reports that Miss Abbott has been able only to cry when confronted with any mention of Lilia’s condition in Italy. Consider Miss Abbott’s conversation with Philip from pages 47 to 49; how might all of this be an example of foreshadowing?

3. What difference between Philip and Miss Abbott’s world-views appears during this conversation?

VIII

Vocabulary

duplicity – treachery
ejaculations – violent outbursts
sacristan – an employee in charge of maintaining church property
epithet – an insult
satire – ridicule, generally done in a dry, sarcastic way
aesthetic – for the sake of appearances
somber – sorrowful
dandled – bounced gently on one’s knees, generally done with an infant

1. Philip encounters Miss Abbott in Santa Deodata church. Why does Miss Abbott demonstrate such scorn for him?

2. On the night they are to leave town, Philip unexpectedly finds Harriet with Lilia’s baby. She has followed her passion and has kidnapped the child. What is the significance of Philip’s reaction?

3. Why do you suppose Harriet sinks into mental illness after the wreck and the baby’s death?
