

## **Contemporary Literature**

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Good morning. So, we are going to start with the remains of the day by Kazuo Ishiguro who was born in 1954. He was born in Japan, he's of Japanese origin and settled in Britain. He attended the University of East Anglia and his debut novel was A Pale View of the Hills which was written in 1982. Along with Salman Rushdie, Ian McEwan, Martin Amis and Julian Barnes, he is considered the fabulous for or the fab for of our generation. He won the booker in 1989 for his novel The Remains of the Day which we are going to do in for the next few classes.

His other works include The Unconsolable, When We Were Orphans and Never Let Me Go which is considered a kind of a genre bending novel written in 2005 with and it is part science fiction and part boarding school memoir. Many critics and reviewers consider Never Let Me Go as his best work till date. The remains of the day is particularly important because of the way it has been structured. Of course, Ishiguro had already established his reputation with his debut novel A Pale View of the Hills, but after winning the booker for the remains of the day in 1989, he suddenly shot into the limelight.

It was also if most of you would know perhaps that it was made into a memorable film of the same title The Remains of the Day by it was a Merchant Ivory production starring Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson. So, in the novel has three main characters Mr. Stevens, Miss Canton and Lord Darlington. I will erase this. Mr. Stevens, Miss Canton and Lord Darlington. Stevens is an old world butler of a very famous place, of a very famous house rather Darlington house which is owned by Lord Darlington, an important political personality as well as a very wealthy landowner. So, Mr. Stevens whose father also was a butler and he has inherited his father's skills as a butler par excellence and he is in the service of Lord Darlington. So, he is a main character as well as a narrator.

One of the key elements of The Remains of the Day is the way the story unfolds. So, the narrator as we consider Mr. Stevens the narrator of the novel but many people consider Stevens as an unreliable narrator and why is he considered an unreliable narrator? We

will see as the novel unfolds. So, Stevens as we see him today, he is reminiscing on his life and whatever remains of his life. So, therefore, the very poignant title *The Remains of the Day*.

it is not just the day but the remaining days of Stevens life. He is an ageing butler who is motoring across England and the period is 1956, a few years after the Second World War. So, set in 1956 but much of the action takes place during the pre Second World War era and the immediate years that follow the World War. while motoring across England in 1956, we find Stevens reflecting on his life in service all the years that have gone by. So, all the memories come rushing by as he takes a few days of his service.

Stevens had served Lord Darlington, an English aristocrat with unquestioning loyalty. unquestioning loyalty is another theme of *The Remains of the Day*. Loyal to home and how to what degree should one remain loyal to one's superior or to one's so called masters that is also a major motive or major theme of *The Remains of the Day*. Stevens is described as a person who had an unwavering faith in Lord Darlington's greatness and what is that greatness, we will soon see. But now, today he looks in his memories and there are doubts about the true nature of Darlington's greatness and he also starts questioning his own faith in the man he once served so faithfully.

So, therefore, the novel is a nostalgic piece. He reminisces and also he looks back with a tinge of sorrow and with a hint of regret. So, coming back to the major themes of the novel, what we can say is one major and recurring theme is that of emotional repression. We have already seen that it is also a story of unquestioning loyalty. Ishiguro is also concerned with how public image or how public world impinges upon private selves, the way you conduct yourselves in public and the way you are actually in private life.

So, how do these collide? How do these two worlds collapse into each other? *The Remains of the Day* is also a story of tragic self-deceptions and self-justifications. So, when we talk about why is Stephen such an unreliable narrator is because he is a combination of all these traits. He is emotionally repressed, he is self-deceptive and he keeps justifying himself throughout the novel and therefore, his reliability as a narrator has often been questioned. One particular characteristic of Stephen's role is the values he represents and this has often been taken as a hallmark of Ishiguro's writing. He says a lot within a very limited space.

He compresses, but he also suggests a lot. So, what we find in Stephen's characters are the values he represents and what are those values? First, knowing one's place in a social hierarchy and when we talk about having unquestioning loyalty towards one's superior, that means that we are great believers in the ideals or in the ideas of social

hierarchy. Ishiguro through Stephen's also questions one's belief in the so-called great leaders and remember, we are talking about the period of the Second World War and the few years preceding the Second World War and then, of course, the unquestioning loyalty to authority. So, all these serve the anti-democratic political tendencies of the time in which *The Remains of the Day* is set. So, the novel can be read as a book of nostalgia and memory, an exploration of the relationship of the ordinary people to politics and diagnosing the social and psychological conditions in which fascism can take root and thrive.

The setting is England and the key places that Ishiguro takes us to are of course, Darlington Hall where most of the action is focused, then Salisbury, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and Weymouth. So, all these are places in England and we come across these places as Stephen's motors through the countryside. Now, one important, one major thing about *The Remains of the Day* is the way Ishiguro chapterizes the novel. So, it begins with the prologue and the prologue is its title as prologue, July 1956 Darlington Hall. That means, we are from the beginning, we are told that which the specific era and the specific time, specific space and place of the novel, the setting of the novel.

Then we have day one as Stephen starts motoring through the British English countryside. So, we have evening Salisbury day one, day two morning Salisbury, day two again afternoon Mortimer Pond in Dorset, day three morning Taunton Somerset, day three evening Moscombe near Terristock, day four afternoon Little Compton, Cornwall and day six, just notice day five is missing, day six evening Weymouth. So, this is the way he constructs or structures the novel. Now when we look at chapterization like this, what impression do we get? We get the impression that perhaps the novel begins at a place called Darlington Hall, but it is spread over a period of five or six days and the action is centered on all these places which I mentioned here, but it is not. This is not the way the action actually takes place.

The novel rather is deceptively titled and deceptively chapterized. So, although it alludes to certain days and places and raises expectations of a record of events that occurred on a specific days at a specific places much like a diary, it looks, it gives the impression of a memoir, of a diary. However, the balance stills heavily in favor of Darlington Hall. Almost all action takes place here. So, it is actually Mr.

Stevens' memories of Darlington Hall from all those years ago. So, in a way, Stevens' six-day motor travel through the English countryside turns into a time travel and becomes a journey of memories. What actually, what we actually find is a review of what his life has amounted for him. So, as we find narration of occurrences in the present

and description of the scenic delights of the countryside, we feel that less narrative space is occupied in these places and more in the remembrance of the past. So, Stevens is a man who remains in the past and he looks back towards his past as his life comes to an end.

I would like you to look at the very opening paragraph of the remains of the day and just see this is the prologue Darlington Hall, July 1956. It seems increasingly likely that I really will undertake the expedition that has been preoccupying my imagination now for some days. An expedition I should say which I will undertake alone in the comfort of Mr. Faraday's Ford an expedition which as I foresee it will take me through much of the finest countryside of England to the west country and may keep me away from Darlington Hall for as much as five or six days. The idea of such a journey came about I should point out from a most kind suggestion put to me by Mr. Faraday himself one afternoon almost a fortnight ago when I had been dusting the portraits in the library. In fact, as I recall I was up on the step ladder dusting the portrait of why cannot whether be when my employer had entered carrying a few volumes which he presumably wished to return to the shelves. On seeing my person he took the opportunity to inform me that he had just that moment finalized plans to return to the United States for a period of five weeks between August and September. Having made this announcement my employer put his volumes down on a table seated himself on the chalon and stretched out his legs. It was then gazing up at me that he said you realize Stevens I do not expect you to be locked up here in this house all the time I am away.

Why do not you take the car and drive off somewhere for a few days you look like you could make use of a break you could make good use of a break. Now this is a prologue and we are told that this when Stevens is narrating this particular incident it seems increasingly lightly that I really will undertake the expedition. He is also telling us about an event which happened fortnight ago where his current employer we have been talking about Lord Darlington who owns the Darlington hall, but now we are told that the current owner of the Darlington hall is one Mr. Faraday. So notice this Mr. Faraday and Lord Darlington. So definitely Mr. Faraday is not a distinguished personage at least in of course you know a lot of it depends on the social hierarchy in England and Mr. Faraday being an American he cannot be given the title of a lord, but he is an American and now he is the current owner of Darlington hall we are told and all these things have happened Stevens has been approached by Mr. Faraday while he was dusting the portraits and he was once asked whether he would like to go on an expedition to the English countryside and while here I would like to draw your attention that this technique of narrating an incident beginning at one point and taking us back it is very common in literature.

We are talking about Gerard Genet's theory of order and duration here. We are looking

at a technique which has already we are looking at a particular incident which has already occurred and Mr. Stevens is reflecting on whatever has already occurred. So how the novel is ordered and how the novelist constructs or employs the technique of duration that is what we are seeing here. From here I would like to take you to Mr.

Stevens opinion on the question of what is a great butler. See throughout when I was introducing the novel to you we were talking about the idea of knowing one's place in a social hierarchy and belief in great leaders of course and unquestioning loyalty to towards authority. So the question what is a great butler that actually arises in the novel and Stevens who prides himself on being a perfect butler he tries to respond to this. So this is what he says to the best of my knowledge for all the talk this question has engendered over the years there have been very few attempts within the profession to formulate an official answer. The only instance that comes to mind is the attempts of the Hayes society to devise criteria for membership.

You may not be aware of the Hayes society for few talk of it these days but in the 20s and the early 30s it exerted a considerable influence over much of London and the home counties. In fact many felt its power had become too great and thought it no bad thing when it was forced to close I believe in 1932 or 1933. The Hayes society claimed to admit butlers of and it is in open inverted promise only the very first rank. So when we talk about social hierarchy belief in the so called stratifications and ranks in society then there are very few countries that can beat England and here we find a very good example of how the idea of stratifications permeates down from top to bottom. So there are rankings even among the butlers and what the only criteria for getting a membership to this Hayes society was it will admit butlers of only the very first rank.

Now what is the very first rank? Much of the power and prestige it went on to gain derived from the fact that unlike other such organizations which have come and gone it managed to keep its numbers extremely low thus giving this claim some credibility. So it was very difficult to get membership to the Hayes society because they would admit people only who was the so called first rank butlers and therefore the membership was extremely difficult to get and naturally there were very few members. Membership it was said never at any point rose above 30 and much of the time remain closer to 9 or 10. This and the fact that Hayes society tended to be a rather secretive body lent it much mystique for a time ensuring that the pronouncements it occasionally issued on professional matters was received as though weighing on tablets of stone.

So it was like 10 commandments. The reference here is to Moses' 10 commandments you know professional certain you know sayings which are engraved on stone which cannot be challenged. So we are talking about that kind of a society but one matter the

society resisted pronouncing on for some time was the question of its own criteria for membership. Pressure to have these announced steadily mounted and in response to a series of letters published in a quarterly for the gentleman's gentleman the society admitted that a prerequisite for membership was that an applicant be attached to a distinguished household. Though of course the society went on this by itself is far from sufficient to satisfy requirements. It was made clear for the more that the society did not regard the houses of businessmen or the newly rich as distinguished and in my opinion this piece of outdated thinking crucially undermined any serious authority the society may have achieved to arbitrate on standards in our profession.

Who are the people who are not considered first rank household? The newly rich and businessmen. So one has to be a born aristocrat and how do you define that and that was the job of the society. So they would accept only those people who are in the service of the really distinguished and the really aristocratic households. So naturally tall demands and it was very difficult to get in. In response to further letters in a quarterly the society justified its stance by saying that while it accepted some correspondence views that certain butlers of excellent quality were to be found in the houses of businessmen.

The assumption had to be that the houses of true ladies and gentlemen would not refrain long from acquiring the services of any such persons. One had to be guided by the judgment of the true ladies and gentlemen argued the society or else we may as well adopt the proprieties of Bolshevik Russia. So you see England is really sophisticated whereas Russia is not perhaps it is a country of very common people. This provoked further controversy and the pressure of letters continued to build up urging the society to declare more fully its membership criteria. In the end it was revealed in a brief letter to a quarterly that in the view of the society and I will try and quote accurately from memory.

The most crucial criterion is that the applicant be possessed of a dignity in keeping with his position. No applicant will satisfy requirements whatever his level of accomplishments otherwise if seem if seen to fall short in this respect. For all my lack of enthusiasm for the Hayes society it is my belief that this particular pronouncement at least was founded on a significant truth. If one looks at these persons we agree are great butlers.

If one looks at say Mr. Marshall or Mr. Lane it does seem to me that the factor which distinguishes them from those butlers who are mere extremely competent is most closely captured by this word dignity. What is dignity? What is true dignity according to Mr. Stevens is again exhibiting grace under pressure, exhibiting unquestioning loyalty to the masters and knowing their place in the social hierarchy. What Ishiguro does in the remains of the day is question these stagnated beliefs. What happens to a society when

its people themselves believe unquestioningly in the greatness of their leaders? What happens to a society when people keep their opinions to themselves because they have an unflinching faith in their in the so called upper in their upper crust of society? What happens and that according to Ishiguro there is trouble ahead if we encourage these tendencies and now I will take you to the place when we find the other important character from the remains of the day and which is Miss Kenton.

So Miss Kenton is one of the housekeepers who is employed by Mr. Stevens. Mr. Stevens is a butler. His duties include taking care of Lord Darlington's personal needs and also running the household very efficiently so that the master is not disturbed with the day to day problems of running the household and another important factor is that there is no lady in the house.

So the entire household is run on the strength of Mr. Stevens and an army of servants. I mean we have a big list of servants who are employed by Mr. Stevens to work very diligently in the Darlington hall and Miss Kenton is the housekeeper who has recently been recruited by Mr. Stevens and the moment we see Miss Kenton, we meet Miss Kenton.

We know that she is everything that Stevens is not and there and lies the conflict in the story because these two are poles opposite. One is total order that is Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton is quite a rebel. She questions, she interrogates. She is not the one who takes things lying down and therefore, much of this story is about the conflict between these very strong characters Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton. Before we meet Miss Kenton, we will go to this place. This is the chapter is day to morning in Salisbury. Mr. Stevens wakes up in a small hotel in Salisbury and says, strange beds have rarely agreed with me and after only a short spell of somewhat troubled slumber, I awoke an hour or so ago. It was then still dark and knowing I had a full days motoring ahead of me, I made an attempt to return to sleep.

This proved futile and when I decided eventually to rise, it was still so dark that I was obliged to turn on the electric light in order to shave at the sink in the corner, but when having finished, I swigged it off again. I could see early daylight at the edges of the curtains. When I parted them just a moment ago, the light outside was very pale and something of a mist was affecting my view of the baker shop and chemist opposite. Indeed, following the street further along to where it runs over the little round bagged bridge, I could see the mist rising from the river, obscuring almost entirely one of the bridge poles. Now, in these quiet moments, as I wait for the world about to awake, I find myself going over in mind again passages from Miss Kenton's letter.

Incidentally, I should before now have explained myself as regards my referring to Miss Kenton. Miss Kenton is properly speaking Mrs. Ben. Now, we are told that Miss Kenton left Darlington hall years ago to get married and she is now Mrs. Ben. Mr. Stevens has recently received a letter from Miss Kenton that she would be receiving him at one of the countryside inns and this was all the more reason for Mr. Stevens to leave Darlington hall and drive down to the place because he was indeed quite fond of Miss Kenton and he would like to meet her again. Miss Kenton is properly speaking Mrs. Ben and has been for 20 years.

So, she has been married for 20 years. However, because I knew her at close quarters only during her maiden years and have not seen her own once since she went to the west country to become Mrs. Ben, you will perhaps excuse my impropriety in referring to her as I knew her and in my mind have continued to call her throughout these years. Of course, her letter has given me an extra cause to continue thinking of her as Miss Kenton since it would seem sadly that her marriage is finally to come to an end. The letter does not make specific the details of the matter as one would hardly expected to do, but Miss Kenton states unambiguously that she has now in fact taken the step of moving out of Mr. Ben's house in Helston and is presently lodging with an acquaintance in the nearby village of Little Compton.

It is of course tragic that her marriage is now ending in failure. So, when we are talking about day one and day two and day three, this is the place day four afternoon Little Compton, Cornwall and this is where the much I anticipated meeting of Mr. Stevens and Miss Kenton. Now, Mrs.

Ben is going to take place after about 20 years and whatever Mr. Stevens may admit to himself, he is actually looking forward to meeting Miss Kenton. At this very moment, no doubt she is pondering with regret decisions made in the far off past that have now left her deep in middle age so alone and desolate and it is easy to see how in such a frame of mind the thought of returning to Darlington hall would be a great comfort to her. Admittedly, she does not at any point in her letter state explicitly her desire to return, but that is the unmistakable message conveyed by the general nuance of many of the passages imbued as they are with a deep nostalgia for her days at Darlington hall. Of course, Miss Kenton cannot hope by returning at this stage ever to retrieve those lost tears and it will be my first duty to impress this upon her when we meet. I will have to point out how different things are now that the days of working with a grand staff at once beck and call will probably never return within our lifetime, but then Miss Kenton is an intelligent woman and she will have already realized these things.

Indeed, all in all, I cannot see why the option of her returning to Darlington hall and



seeing out her working years there should not offer a very genuine consolation to a life that has come to be so dominated by a sense of waste. Now, this is very interesting and also when we refer to Stevens as a very unreliable narrator. Now, see he admits that nowhere does Miss Kenton or Mrs. Benn express any desire to return to the Darlington hall.

He infers from his letter and we do not know why. He reads between the lines that Miss Kenton or Mrs. Benn is extremely eager to come back to Darlington hall. He infers from her letter that her marriage is coming to an end and he also just deduces for some particular reason that she is extremely regretful of her marriage and would like to get her job back. And then of course, he has his still being the head butler of the house, he feels that it would be his sacred duty to educate Miss Kenton that things are not what they used to be once, the glorious days are over. So, while he thinks about the days gone by while he revels in nostalgia and the grand memories of Darlington hall and its grand people and the glorious days which will never come back.

In these memories, we find that it is not just that he regrets the absence of Miss Kenton but he also moves the loss of those days. He is actually, he is in fact the kind of man who longs for those days. He is extremely nostalgic about those days and therefore, it makes him a very unreliable narrative. Is Miss Kenton really looking forward to coming back to Darlington hall? Is her marriage actually breaking? That we will know only once we meet Miss Kenton but as we already know, Stevens is not a very reliable narrator. We will go on to page 58 when the chapter is still the same chapter, day 2 morning Salisbury and as we were discussing at the beginning of this class that although Ishiguro titles the chapters according to various days and various places, the action actually takes place majorly in Darlington hall.

So, while he is reminiscing about Darlington hall and Miss Kenton, while he is in Salisbury, we are suddenly transported to Darlington hall and when the young and rather rebellious Miss Kenton confronts Mr. Stevens who is extremely straight jacketed and very staid in his outlook. So, now this scene or rather this passage is on page 57.

I am reading you lines by Miss Kenton and Mr. Stevens. Mr. Stevens, I have just noticed something outside which puzzles me. What is that Miss Kenton? Was it his lordship's wish that the Chinaman on the upstairs landing should be exchanged with the one outside this door? The Chinaman Miss Kenton? Yes, Mr. Stevens, the Chinaman normally on the landing you will now find outside this door. I fear Miss Kenton that you are a little confused.

I do not believe I am confused at all Mr. Stevens. I make it my business to acquaint

myself with where objects properly belong in a house. The Chinaman I would suppose were polished by someone than replaced incorrectly. If you are skeptical Mr. Stevens, perhaps you will care to step out here and observe for yourself.

Miss Kenton, I am occupied at present, but Mr. Stevens, you do not appear to believe what I am saying. I am thus asking you to step outside this door and see for yourself. Miss Kenton, I am busy just now and will attend to the matter shortly.

It is hardly one of urgency. You accept then Mr. Stevens that I am not in error on this point. I will accept nothing of the sort Miss Kenton until I have had a chance to deal with the matter. However, I am occupied at present.

Look at the confrontation. Look at the bickering between the two principles. He insists that he come down and look at the positioning of this figure in himself. Mr. Stevens is quite convinced that Miss Kenton is correct. Therefore, he is not willing to face that there has been a lapse in the household because remember, he prides himself on his exactness on his being a perfect butler. Now, he knows that Miss Kenton has somehow caught a very trivial, a very minor mistake in the running of the household.

The statue has been placed in a wrong way. He makes a big deal out of it because this is her way of hitting out at Mr. Stevens who demands perfection. In her own little way, she is trying to tell Mr.

Stevens that it is not always possible to be so perfect. You accept then Mr. Stevens that I am not in error on this point. I will accept nothing of the sort. So, he is not the kind of man who would accept his faults until I have had a chance to deal with the matter. However, I am occupied at present.

I turn back to my business, but Miss Kenton remained in the doorway observing me. Eventually, she said, I can see you will be finished very shortly, Mr. Stevens. I will await you outside so that this matter may be finalized when you come out. Miss Kenton, I believe you are according this matter and urgency it hardly merits, but Miss Kenton had departed and sure enough as I continued with my work, an occasional footstep or some other sound would serve to remind me she was still there outside the door.

I will skip a few lines and I will come to the point. Mr. Stevens, that is the incorrect Chinaman. Would you not agree? So, she points it out. Miss Kenton, I am very busy.

I am surprised you have nothing better to do than stand in corridors all day. Mr. Stevens, is that the correct Chinaman or is it not? Miss Kenton, I would ask you to keep

your voice down and I would ask you, Mr. Stevens, to turn around and look at the Chinaman. Miss Kenton, please keep your voice down. What would employees below think to hear us shouting at the top of our voices about what is and what is not the correct Chinaman? The fact is, Mr. Stevens, all the Chinaman in this house have been dirty for some time and now they are in incorrect positions.

Miss Kenton, you are being very ridiculous. Now, if you will be so good as to let me pass, Mr. Stevens, will you kindly look at the Chinaman behind you? If it is so important to you, Miss Kenton, I will allow that the Chinaman behind me may well be incorrectly situated, but I must say I am at some loss as to why you should be so concerned with these most trivial of errors. These errors may be trivial in themselves, Mr. Stevens, but you must yourself realize their larger significance.

Miss Kenton, I do not understand you. Now, if you would kindly allow me to pass, the fact is Mr. Stevens, your father is entrusted with far more than a man of his age can cope with. So, now, we are introduced to another character, Mr. Stevens' father, the old Mr. Stevens or Mr. Stevens, the senior and who was a great butler in his own days, but if you remember at the beginning, we were talking about what defines or what makes a great butler and for our hero Stevens, his father Stevens senior made for a perfect butler, a great butler because he had that elusive quality, a quality which cannot be exactly defined, you know, the so called idea of dignity.

What is dignity and what is dignity in a butler, but both Stevens senior and junior, they pride themselves on possessing this quality and they regard themselves as great butlers. So, now, we find that old Mr. Stevens, the aging butler, he is getting very old, but he is still employed in some capacity by Mr. Stevens junior. So, the son has employed his son, sorry, his father in some capacity and the father still takes great pride in managing the household, in assisting his son.

He also takes great pride in his son's so called success because being successful butler in such a great house is a hallmark of great prestige and they all revel in it, but what we find is, what Miss Kenton is trying to point at is that old Mr. Stevens is getting along in years and he is not capable of carrying out his responsibilities in such a demanding workplace. What she is suggesting is that Mr. Stevens should burden his father less with the household duties.

Miss Kenton, you clearly have little idea of what you are suggesting. So, he is outraged, the very idea that his choice or rather, you know, his position has been questioned because remember, we are talking about hierarchies. It is Lord Darlington's house, but next to Lord Darlington, it is Stevens who rules the place being the head butler and a

housekeeper that is Miss Kenton, her social hierarchy or her position is definitely lower than Mr. Stevens and therefore, she is not supposed to question him.

That is the idea, but she does because she is that kind of a person. Whatever your father was once, Mr. Stevens, his powers are now greatly diminished. This is what these trivial errors as you call them really signify and if you do not heed them, it will not be long before your father commits an error of major proportion. So, he is cautioning him. Although, she is very brusque and very harsh, but she is also a compassionate person and she makes it a point to draw Mr. Stevens' attention to the fact that his father is not what he used to be. So, they should stop living in the past. Miss Kenton, you are merely making yourself look very foolish. I am sorry, Mr. Stevens, but I must go on. I believe there are many duties your father should now be relieved of. He should not for one be asked to go on carrying heavily laden trays. The way his hands trample as he carries them into dinner is nothing short of alarming. It is surely only a matter of time before a tray falls from his hands on to a lady or gentleman's lap and furthermore, Mr. Stevens, and I am very sorry to say this, I have noticed your father's nose.

Have you indeed, Miss Kenton? I regret to say I have Mr. Stevens. The evening before last, I watched your father proceeding very slowly towards the dining room with his tray and I am afraid I observed clearly a large drop on the end of his nose dangling over the soup bowls. I would not have thought such a style of waiting a great stimulant to appetite. She is being very brusque. She is being rude perhaps, but she is also being very truthful. Can truth hurts? Miss Kenton is not willing to accept that his father is way past his prime and Miss Kenton is trying to point out that nothing lasts forever.

One should stop living in nostalgia. The decline of the great Mr. Stevens, the senior is a very good example that nothing lasts forever and one has to stop living in the past. At this point, we will end the class and we will continue tomorrow. Thank you. Thank you.