

The Guermantes Way

Marcel Proust, C K Scott Moncrieff

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The Narrator's family has moved to an apartment connected with the Guermantes residence. Françoise befriends a fellow tenant, the tailor Jupien and his niece. The Narrator is fascinated by the Guermantes and their life, and is awed by their social circle while attending another Berma performance. He begins staking out the street where Mme de Guermantes walks every day, to her evident annoyance. He decides to visit her nephew Saint-Loup at his military base, to ask to be introduced to her. After noting the landscape and his state of mind while sleeping, the Narrator meets and attends dinners with Saint-Loup's fellow officers, where they discuss the Dreyfus Affair and the art of military strategy. But the Narrator returns home after receiving a call from his aging grandmother. Mme de Guermantes declines to see him, and he also finds he is still unable to begin writing. Saint-Loup visits on leave, and they have lunch and attend a recital with his actress mistress: Rachel, the Jewish prostitute, toward whom the unsuspecting Saint-Loup is crazed with jealousy. The Narrator then goes to Mme de Villeparisis's salon, which is considered second-rate despite its public reputation. Legrandin attends and displays his social climbing. Bloch stridently interrogates M. de Norpois about the Dreyfus Affair, which has ripped all of society asunder, but Norpois diplomatically avoids answering. The Narrator observes Mme de Guermantes and her aristocratic bearing, as she makes caustic remarks about friends and family, including the mistresses of her husband, who is M. de Charlus's brother. Mme Swann arrives, and the Narrator remembers a visit from Morel, the son of his uncle Adolphe's valet, who revealed that the "lady in pink" was Mme Swann. Charlus asks the Narrator to leave with him, and offers to make him his protégé. At home, the Narrator's grandmother has worsened, and while walking with him she suffers a stroke.



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