# A Room With a View by E.M. Forster

## Synopsis

When Lucy Honeychurch, visiting Italy, mentions the lack of a view from her room, George Emerson and his father offer to swap, but Lucy's suspicions that the Emersons are the wrong sort of people seem confirmed when George impulsively kisses her during a picnic in the Tuscan countryside. Soon, however, thoughts of that kiss have Lucy questioning her engagement to boorish, if utterly acceptable, Cecil Vyse.

All in all, the situation presents quite a muddle for a young woman who wishes to be absolutely truthful—even when she's lying to herself about the most important aspects of life and love.

## Discussion questions

1. How are Lucy's character and mood captured in the descriptions of her piano playing throughout the novel? Why does she refuse to play Beethoven in Mrs. Vyse's well-appointed flat? What compels her to sing, after breaking her engagement with Cecil, the song that ends with the line "Easy live and quiet die"?
2. George is a clerk, the son of a journalist and grandson of a laborer. Lucy is the daughter of a lawyer and her social status is "more splendid than her antecedents entitled her to." What role does social class play in the novel? Why did Forster choose Cecil to deliver the statement: "The classes ought to mix...There ought to be intermarriage—all sorts of things. I believe in democracy."?
3. Mr. Beebe is portrayed early in the novel as an observant, thoughtful counselor with a good sense of humor and an unusually open mind for a clergyman. Soon after meeting Lucy he predicts that "one day music and life shall mingle" for her. Why does he fail, in the end, to support her decision to leave Cecil for George?
4. Charlotte Bartlett is absurdly prudish, forbidding her cousin even to sleep in the bed where George Emerson had slept. If George's surmise at the novel's end is correct, what motivates her to help bring the lovers together by facilitating Lucy's fateful meeting with Mr. Emerson? Is she, as George jokes, made of the "same stuff as parsons are made of"?
5. There are many kinds of deceit in the book: betrayal by friends, secrets between lovers, and most importantly Lucy's self-deceit. Four of the last five chapters show Lucy lying to nearly everyone else in the book. Which kinds of lies are most harmful to the "personal relations" that Forster cherished?
6. Forster often expresses the physical component of spiritual passion indirectly, as in his description of Lucy's piano playing: "Like every true performer she was intoxicated by the mere feel of the notes: they were fingers caressing her own; and by touch, not by sound alone, did she come to her desire." What balance between the physical and emotional expressions of love does Mr. Emerson suggest in his statement, "I know by experience that the poets are right: love is eternal.... I only wish poets would say this too: love is of the body; not the body, but of the body"?

*Discussion questions from https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-reading-guides/fiction/10545-room-with-a-view-forster-1?showall=1*