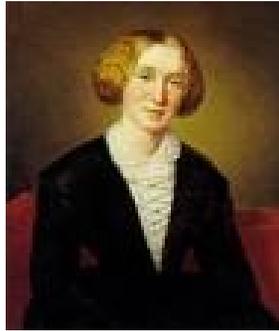


# DANIEL DERONDA

by George Eliot



## THE AUTHOR

Mary Anne Evans (1819-1880) was born in Warwickshire, England, the youngest daughter of an estate agent (after whom Caleb Garth in her classic *Middlemarch* seems to have been modeled). She was raised as an Evangelical Protestant, but in her early twenties she turned away from the faith of her parents and rejected organized religion, becoming a freethinker. She even translated David Friedrich Strauss' radical *Life of Jesus* and Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* into English, and thus had an impact on the growth of theological liberalism in England.

After spending several years writing for a radical political journal, she began living with married writer George Henry Lewes, creating a scandal in English society. She continued to live with him until his death in 1878. It was with Lewes' encouragement that she began to write works of fiction under the pseudonym of George Eliot. Her first full-length novel, *Adam Bede*, published in 1859, was widely acclaimed, as were its successors, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) and *Silas Marner* (1861). After trying her hand at historical and political novels, she returned to the environment she knew best with her classic *Middlemarch*, published in serial form in 1871-2. In 1880, she married John Walter Cross, who was twenty years her junior. She died two months later.

George Eliot is best remembered as a writer who possessed peerless insight into human character. She understood and communicated with great skill the motives and intents of the heart, and demonstrated herself to be a shrewd observer of the English class system and its fine distinctions. Her use of the English language demonstrated her to be a fine stylist, and her wide-ranging knowledge of history, literature, art, and science placed her in a realm rarely visited by women in Victorian England. In fact, her writings were often criticized by her contemporaries because women were expected to confine themselves to the sphere of vapid romance.

*Daniel Deronda* (1876) was her last novel. In addition to her usual sharp characterization, it addresses head-on the problem of anti-Semitism in Europe; note that this was twenty years prior to the advent of the Zionist movement (1896), which was stimulated by Theodor Herzl's reaction to the notorious Dreyfus case in France. Eliot was intensely interested in Judaism and the plight of the Jews, and had personal contact with pianist Anton Rubenstein, the model for Klesmer, and

Talmudic scholar Emanuel Deutsch, upon whom the character of Mordecai was based. One of the unusual quirks in the novel is the parallel plotting it contains. The stories centering on Daniel and his quest for his identity, on the one hand, and Gwendolen and her unhappy marriage on the other, seem virtually independent of one another, though they do connect in a few places, and are very different stylistically. Because of the enormous attention given to Judaism in the novel, many criticized it as overbearing and preachy, though Jewish critics heaped high praise on the novel and argued that Eliot understood the Jews better than any writer in the prior history of the English language.

## **MAJOR CHARACTERS**

- Daniel Deronda - The protagonist, he is a young man who believes himself to be the illegitimate son of his guardian, but later discovers he is the son of a Jewish couple, and that his guardian had accepted the responsibility for raising him because he had been in love with Daniel's mother. Daniel ultimately discovers his Jewish identity, falls in love with Mirah, a Jewish girl he rescues from a suicide attempt, marries her, and moves with her to Palestine.
- Sir Hugo Mallinger - Daniel's guardian, he had once loved the Jewish opera singer who gave birth to Daniel. Daniel grows up believing that Sir Hugo is his uncle, or perhaps even his father. He marries late and gives birth to four daughters, so that his entailed estate is to be turned over to Grandcourt at his death.
- Louisa Mallinger - Sir Hugo's wife, a kind and simple woman.
- Hans Meyrick - Daniel's best friend at Cambridge, Daniel takes Mirah to his mother's home after rescuing her from the river. Hans falls in love with Mirah, but she has eyes only for Daniel.
- Mrs. Meyrick - Hans' mother who, along with her daughters Kate, Mab, and Amy, gladly welcome Mirah into their home.
- Mirah Lapidoth - A Jewish girl who sought a career as a singer, but failed. She returned to England seeking her mother and brother, but could not find them, so tried to commit suicide. She was rescued by Daniel and cared for by the Meyricks. Ultimately, she and Daniel marry.
- Lapidoth - Mirah and Mordecai's father, he takes her away from her family in order to make money from her musical talent, then tries to sell her to a nobleman in marriage. Later he returns to London and tries to get money from her to support his gambling habit.
- Ezra Cohen - At first thought to be Mirah's brother, he runs a pawnshop; Daniel meets him when walking in the Jewish quarter half-heartedly searching for Mirah's family.
- Mrs. Cohen - Ezra's mother.

- Mordecai - An intense Jewish man dying of consumption, he boards in Ezra's home, and turns out to be Mirah's surviving brother Ezra Mordecai Cohen. His love for his Jewish heritage infects Daniel and drives his eventual decision to emigrate to Palestine.
- Princess Leonora Halm-Eberstein - Daniel's real mother; she was a professional singer who entrusted him to Sir Hugo so she could pursue her career.
- Gwendolen Harleth - A pretty but spoiled young lady, she marries Grandcourt for his money and lives to regret it because of his brutality. She falls in love with Daniel, but is unable to break his attachment to Mirah.
- Fanny Davilow - Gwendolen's mother, she made an unfortunate second marriage that left her penniless.
- Alice, Bertha, Fanny, Isabel - Gwendolen's younger sisters.
- Nancy Gascoigne - Fanny's sister, she has seven children.
- Henry Gascoigne - Fanny's brother-in-law, he is an Anglican pastor who has very little interest in religious matters, being much more concerned with associating with the right people. He supports Fanny and her children after the death of her second husband.
- Anna Gascoigne - Gwendolen's cousin, she is small and plain, and is dominated by the more brilliant Gwendolen.
- Rex Gascoigne - Anna's older brother, he falls in love with Gwendolen, though she has no interest in him.
- Mr. Middleton - Rev. Gascoigne's curate, he also falls in love with Gwendolen; she cares for him even less than she does for Rex.
- Catherine Arrowpoint - The daughter of the wealthiest family in the county, she is plain but musically gifted. She attracts the attention of Klesmer, who tutors and eventually marries her.
- Julius Klesmer - A Jewish musician (modeled on pianist Anton Rubinstein) who is brutally honest with Gwendolen about her lack of talent and later encourages Mirah in her singing; he eventually marries Catherine Arrowpoint.
- Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt - He is Sir Hugo's nephew and heir to his estate. He marries Gwendolen because he wants to take on the challenge of breaking her spirit, and treats her cruelly. He drowns after falling off a sailboat.

- Thomas Cranmer Lush - The companion of Grandcourt for fifteen years, he abets his devilish schemes, though he does try to prevent his marriage to Gwendolen, feels sorry for Lydia, and works behind the scenes to help Sir Hugo get control of Diplow.
- Lydia Glasher - A woman who left her husband to be with Grandcourt, bore him four children, and then was deserted by him, though he continues to support her. Gwendolen promises her that she will not marry Grandcourt, but goes back on her promise and does so anyway.

## **PLOT SUMMARY**

### **BOOK I - THE SPOILED CHILD**

The story begins with the protagonist, Daniel Deronda, in a casino in southern Germany. He is observing the gamblers in the casino, and is particularly drawn to a beautiful young lady, Gwendolen Harleth, who carelessly squanders a large sum of money at the roulette table. That night, she receives a letter from her mother announcing that their entire fortune, small though it was, has been lost in a financial collapse. She must return home immediately. Gwendolen, being a very selfish girl, resents having her vacation interrupted, briefly regrets having lost so much money at roulette and considers gambling with the little she has left to try to make up her losses, but finally sells an Etruscan necklace for enough money to get back home. Daniel sees her sell the necklace, and anonymously buys it from the jeweler and returns it to her. Gwendolen, guessing who is responsible even though the two have never met, instead of being grateful, resents this assault on her pride. She leaves for home early the next morning.

The author then flashes back to a year previous, when Gwendolen and her family first moved to their present home at Offendene. Her stepfather has died, and she, her mother, and her stepsisters are dependent on her uncle and aunt for their support. Gwendolen is determined to be noticed and admired, and dominates her mother and sisters. Shortly after their arrival, she begs her uncle, Rev. Gascoigne, for a horse so she can show herself to best advantage before the neighbors, and he reluctantly accedes to her wish, being captivated by her beauty, despite the objections of his wife. Soon they are invited to a party at Quetcham Hall, the home of the Arrowpoints, and Gwendolen is noticed and admired by all (except her hostess, who is rather critical or the proud and spoiled newcomer). She shows off her singing, and is very disappointed when Herr Klesmer, a noted musician, minimizes both her performance and her talent.

Gwendolen, realizing that she cannot be admired for her musical talent in the presence of one so knowledgeable as Klesmer and one so genuinely talented as Catherine Arrowpoint, turns to drama as a source of amusement. She plans and organizes tableaux and games of charades in which she involves her sisters and cousins. When Anna Gascoigne's older brother Rex comes home, he enthusiastically joins in the fun and soon falls in love with Gwendolen. She is still determined to gain the admiration of Klesmer in some way, so when they plan an evening of drama, despite her clergyman uncle's disapproval, all the neighbors are invited. The evening goes well until the climax, when, in the middle of Gwendolen's big scene, a cabinet door flies open and she screams in terror. She is humiliated to have been so easily frightened, but the incident draws positive comments from Klesmer and in no way decreases the ardor of Rex's affections.

Rex is determined to propose to Gwendolen despite Anna's warnings to the contrary. One morning he takes her to the local hunt, and, before he can raise the subject with her, she rashly insists on riding with the hunters - something a woman rarely did. Rex, on a horse unfit for the task, reluctantly follows, but his horse stumbles and he dislocates his shoulder. The local blacksmith pops the shoulder back into place and Rex goes home to recuperate, but Gwendolen rides with the leaders and is eventually given the fox's tail by the hunter who earned it. Rev. Gascoigne tells Rex that he is sending him to Southampton for the remainder of the Christmas vacation, but Rex insists on seeing Gwendolen one more time. He expresses his love to her, but she repulses his affections and he leaves the house in confusion. He then falls into despair, decides that he can no longer remain in England, and certainly cannot continue his studies at Oxford. He proposes to his father that he emigrate to Canada and take Anna with him to keep house. Gascoigne realizes that he is making a long-term decision on the basis of a temporary emotional response and suggests that he should instead take a semester off from college to clear his mind. Rex reluctantly agrees.

That summer, Mallinger Grandcourt comes into the area and takes up residence at Sir Hugo Mallinger's estate. He is Sir Hugo's nephew and heir, and thus in line for a great fortune and a noble title. The women in the neighborhood immediately begin speculating about his marital prospects; most agree that he will marry Catherine Arrowpoint, the richest girl in the vicinity. Mrs. Davilow also thinks about Gwendolen's chances, but determines to say nothing lest she makes her willful daughter decide against Grandcourt before meeting him. She is thus amazed when, before going to the Archery Meeting, Gwendolen affirms her intention of winning Grandcourt for herself. At the Archery Club, Gwendolen excels, winning the gold star, and finally is introduced to Grandcourt.

## BOOK II - MEETING STREAMS

Gwendolen's initial conversation with Grandcourt is nondescript, and she spends the entire time wondering what kind of impression she is making on him. Later the two dance, but the only thing she notices is that he is not in the least overwhelmed by her as all the other men seem to be. She also meets his friend Lush and immediately feels uncomfortable around him. Two days later, Grandcourt is at breakfast with Lush. We discover that Lush has been Grandcourt's companion for fifteen years, and has remained in his service despite being treated with contempt because of the luxury he is able to enjoy without doing any significant work. As their conversation continues, we find that Grandcourt treats everyone and everything with contempt, from his dogs to his servants to his neighbors. Lush assumes that Grandcourt intends to marry Catherine Arrowpoint for her fortune, but Grandcourt informs him that he has determined to marry Gwendolen instead.

Over the next two weeks, Grandcourt sees Gwendolen almost every day, but hesitates to make her an offer of marriage. When he finally drops hints in that direction, Gwendolen brushes him off and changes the subject, though she has almost decided to accept him in the end. She is convinced that, not only can Grandcourt provide her with the luxuries and leisure she desires from life, but that she will also be able to dominate him, and thus be at liberty to do whatever she pleases. When the direction in which things are moving becomes obvious, Gascoigne summons Gwendolen to his study and encourages her to accept Grandcourt's offer, both for her own sake and for the sake of her family. Meanwhile, Lush has contacted a woman in her mid-thirties with four children, and she has come to the neighborhood in response to his summons. In some way, he intends to prevent the impending marriage.

The next day was the day of the traveling archery contest, and both Grandcourt and Gwendolen expected that, before the day was over, they would be engaged. When the bows are being passed out after the picnic lunch, Lush slips a note to Gwendolen. The letter says that, if she waits by the Whispering Stones, she will learn something of great importance regarding her relationship to Grandcourt. Gwendolen's curiosity gets the better of her and she lags behind the group. A woman and two children emerge from behind one of the stones. She woman introduces herself as Lydia Glasher, and tells Gwendolen that, nine years earlier, she had left her husband to live with Grandcourt and had borne him four children. He had then deserted her. Meanwhile her husband had died, so that her son was Grandcourt's heir. She still wanted to marry him so her children could get a name and an inheritance, and warned Gwendolen against accepting his advances. Gwendolen, shocked in the extreme, goes back to her mother and tells she will never marry Grandcourt. Furthermore, she insists she will travel immediately to Dover and accompany their friends the Langens on their trip abroad.

This brings us back to the events of the opening chapter. Gwendolen gambles, encounters Daniel Deronda, and is called back home when an economic collapse costs her family their slim fortune through a speculation gone bad. Grandcourt, who knows nothing of why she left England so quickly, nonetheless admires her spirit, if for no other reason than that he wants to take on the challenge of breaking it. He follows her to Germany in a leisurely fashion, and gets there some days after she has returned home. While there, he encounters Sir Hugo Mallinger, Daniel's guardian. Sir Hugo, who owns Diplow, the estate on which Grandcourt has been living, dislikes Grandcourt because he has three daughters but no sons, and thus finds the estate entailed to his nephew. He has hatched a scheme to pay Grandcourt to cancel the entailment, so he can leave the estate to his wife and daughters. Grandcourt is pleased when Lush tells him about the scheme, if only because he can have the pleasure of denying the old man what he desires. When Daniel hears about the potential marriage between Grandcourt and Gwendolen, he says that he hopes it never happens; Sir Hugo wonders if he is interested in Gwendolen himself, but he denies any interest, insisting that Gwendolen is dangerous and Grandcourt is heartless.

The author now gives the reader another flashback, filling in details of Daniel's upbringing. Daniel has grown up in the home of Sir Hugo, always having been told that he lost his parents at a young age and that Sir Hugo was his uncle. At the age of thirteen, he begins to realize that, in past history, when popes and cardinal spoke of their nephews, they were really talking about illegitimate children; he begins to wonder if Sir Hugo might not after all be his father. He soon finds that many in their circle share his suspicion, though he never has the courage to speak to his guardian about the subject. His sense of not quite belonging gives him a sensitivity to weaknesses in others, and his desire to reach out to those in need keeps him from becoming a first-rate scholar at Eton and Cambridge. In particular, the time he spends helping his best friend, Hans Meyrick, win a scholarship costs him his own. His longing for knowledge takes him beyond the realm of books, and he finally quits Cambridge in order to travel and learn something of different people and places.

Having returned to England after his travels and no longer involved in formal education, Daniel is somewhat at loose ends. He does some reading in the law with no definite purpose, and spends much of his time indulging his love of boating. One evening, while boating on the Thames, he sees a girl of about eighteen on the bank. When he returns, he sees her again; this time she is soaking her cloak in the water in obvious preparation for committing suicide. He rows immediately to the bank and takes her into the boat. He finds that she is a Jewish girl named

Mirah Lapidoth who has returned to England to search for her mother and brother, but without success. He offers to take her to friends who will care for her, and proceeds to transport her to the Meyrick home, where Hans' good-hearted mother and three sisters welcome her gladly. After some initial reluctance, Mirah gratefully accepts their hospitality.

### BOOK III - MAIDENS CHOOSING

Daniel is unsure at this point what should be done about Mirah. He doesn't want to make her dependent upon him, but has no idea how she might gain a measure of independence. He wants to help her find her mother - her desire touches a chord in his own breast, but doesn't know how to go about the search. He abhors the secrecy in which his own past has been shrouded, so has no desire to keep Mirah's identity a secret in a way that would generate gossip, but he doesn't know what the truth of the matter is. The next morning, Mirah tells her story to Mrs. Meyrick. She grew up in London under the name of Cohen, but when she was six years old, her father took her away to New York, leaving her mother and brother behind, and changed his name to Lapidoth. He worked in the theater with some measure of success, and when she was nine, got her involved as well, singing and playing small roles. She hated the theater and knew she was not very good on the stage, but she continued in order to please her father. When she was thirteen, they moved to Europe, traveling around to cities such as Hamburg and Vienna. Their fortunes declined as the father gambled more and more often. One day when Mirah was eighteen he introduced her to a Count, who showered her with unwanted attentions. Later, her father was imprisoned for debt, but the Count paid his debt, then proposed to Mirah. She ran from the room, feeling the contempt in his eyes. When they arrived in Prague, Mirah realized that her father intended to leave her with the Count, so she ran away, selling everything she had in order to gain passage back to London. Weak and famished, she searched the city for her mother and brother, but the streets she remembered no longer existed, so she despaired of ever finding happiness and determined to take her own life. It was under those circumstances that Daniel found and rescued her. The Meyricks are happy to have her live with them and she is content to stay. At this point Daniel is called away to Europe with Sir Hugo and his wife, and leaves enough money to care for Mirah for the next two months. It is during these travels that he encounters Gwendolen in the casino in Germany, as recounted in the first chapter.

When Gwendolen arrives home from Germany, she has no understanding of the seriousness of her family's financial situation. When she finds that the servants have been let go, the horses sold, and that they will have to give up their house, move to a cottage, and work for their living, she becomes angry - even more so when her mother has the temerity to suggest that she should use her education to take a job as a governess or teacher. She simply cannot imagine herself being anything less than the object of universal admiration. She quickly pens a letter to Klesmer at Quetcham. The letter arrives just as he is preparing to depart - under duress, for the family has discovered that he and Catherine have fallen in love, and they heartily disapprove of the match. The Arrowpoints have threatened to disinherit Catherine if she goes through with the marriage, but neither she nor Klesmer cares anything for the estate, and insist that they will marry in spite of her parents' objections.

When Klesmer responds to Gwendolen's missive, she asks him for advice about becoming a professional singer or actress. She assumes that her little performances in the drawing room equip her for universal admiration and immediate success, and such a career certainly is superior

to that of a governess. Klesmer, however, is an honest man. He speaks to her of the years of labor and training required for a career in the arts and tells her that she should have begun such training years earlier. Besides, success is never guaranteed, and he estimates that she could never hope to achieve more than mediocrity with her talent. Gwendolen is stricken - even more so when Klesmer offers the services of himself and his bride-to-be as patrons for her studies should she choose to undertake them. When Mrs. Davilow returns from church, Gwendolen informs her that she has decided to become a governess after all, but when Gascoigne describes life as governess for Bishop Momfort's girls, she is more depressed than ever.

Meanwhile, in Germany, Grandcourt is considering whether or not to pursue Gwendolen back to England, while Sir Hugo is pumping Lush about Grandcourt's financial situation in the hopes that some arrangements might be made that would allow him to purchase the right to retain Diplow for his heirs. Grandcourt orders Lush to return to England and prepare for his arrival while he spends a few days in Paris. When Lush arrives at Diplow, he hears about the financial disaster that has overtaken Gwendolen's family and the Gascoignes. He is still determined to do what he can to prevent a union between his master and Gwendolen. When Grandcourt gets back, Lush tells him, not only about the penniless condition in which Gwendolen now finds herself, but also about the reason why she had distanced herself from Grandcourt earlier - her knowledge of Grandcourt's previous relationship with Lydia Glasher. Grandcourt cares for none of this, and determines to court Gwendolen again in order to spite both her and Lush. As Gwendolen is resigning herself to life as a governess, she receives a letter from Grandcourt asking if he may pay a visit. There can be no doubt of its purpose, but her miserable condition makes Gwendolen waver. She finally agrees to let him come, fully intending to have the pleasure of rejecting his proposal, but in the back of her mind is thinking about how much help she could be to her mother if she had a rich husband. When Grandcourt appears, she is overwhelmed by the thought of having everything just as she would wish it and delivering herself and her mother from poverty, rationalizes away her concerns about Lydia Glasher, and accepts his offer of marriage. Her only request is that he dismiss the odious Mr. Lush - a request to which Grandcourt readily agrees.

#### BOOK IV - GWENDOLEN GETS HER CHOICE

The wedding is set for three weeks hence, and in the interim Grandcourt is courteous and generous. He dismisses Lush, though the latter is certain that he will be recalled as soon as his master realizes the extent to which he is dependent on his services. In their own minds, however, Gwendolen and Grandcourt are imagining how they will easily dominate the partner they are about to acquire. Sir Hugo, meanwhile, hears details from Lush about Grandcourt's financial pressures, and deposes Daniel to advance his proposal to purchase from Grandcourt the rights to the Diplow estate. When all meet at Diplow, Gwendolen, who hates the thought that anyone might not admire her and fears that Daniel disapproves of her because of her gambling in Germany, attempts to draw him out in conversation in order to gain his admiration. He is reserved, as usual, which only makes her think of him more.

The next day, Grandcourt goes to Gadsmere to visit Lydia Glasher. He does not tell Gwendolen where he is going, though she suspects the truth. His intention is to tell Lydia about his coming marriage and to demand from her the diamonds he had given her at the beginning of their relationship. She, then five years into a miserable marriage, had left her husband and young son to elope with Grandcourt. He had ultimately tired of her, though he had continued to support

her and their four children, though after the death of her husband she had hoped that he would relent and marry her after all, thus legitimizing the children. He, of course, had no such intention. When he brusquely tells her the purpose of his visit, she sees the end of all her hopes. The only meager revenge she can hope to take is her insistence that she will not give him the diamonds, but instead send them to Gwendolen on the night of their marriage. He tries to apply pressure to get her to conform to his will, but she is adamant. The two soon get married, with much fanfare and public spectacle, but with no real signs of affection. On their wedding night, Gwendolen receives a package containing the diamonds, along with a note from Lydia cursing her for breaking her promise and consigning her to a life of misery as a result of her foolish and wicked choice. Gwendolen burns the letter, then screams and throws the diamonds on the floor.

Daniel, meanwhile, has been taking an increased interest in the Jewish religion, both because of his innate sympathy for the underdog and his interest in Mirah. While he was in Germany, he had taken the time to visit a Jewish synagogue, and had been strangely moved by the service, though he had not understood a word of the Hebrew. Mirah is doing very well at the Meyrick residence; she and the members of the family love one another, she is teaching the girls, and they are looking for opportunities to get her more students so she can earn some money. Daniel feels great affection for Mirah, though he knows that her attachment to her Jewishness would be a barrier to any serious relationship. He is also concerned that, when Hans returns home, he might fall in love with Mirah and complicate things enormously. He begins searching among the Jewish quarters of London to see if he can find Mirah's lost family, though he really hopes he cannot find them. One day in Holborn his eye falls upon an attractive ornament in a pawn shop; he considers buying it for Sir Hugo's wife. After a brief conversation with the proprietor, he notices the name above the shop: Ezra Cohen - the name of Mirah's brother. He returns a few weeks later and has a conversation with a dark-featured man in a used-book store; the man appears weak and emaciated - he is obviously ill - but he is very intense, and asks Daniel if he is Jewish. When he returns to the pawn shop, he asks if they would lend him money on a diamond as an excuse for returning later and extending their conversation. The members of the family are very kind to him and invite him to their Sabbath dinner. He enjoys the time with Ezra and his family, which includes his mother and a strange man named Mordecai - the same man he had earlier seen in the bookstore. In the course of the conversation, Daniel asks Ezra's mother if she has a daughter, and is greeted with an embarrassed silence.

## BOOK V - MORDECAI

Some months after the wedding, Sir Hugo invites Mr. and Mrs. Grandcourt to his home for a visit. The two rarely speak to each other, and Gwendolen alternates between her usual outward vivacity and a quiet demeanor that masks the inner pain she is experiencing. The pain comes not only from her persistent belief that Daniel looks down on her, but also from the utter failure of her attempts to gain mastery in her marriage. In fact, quite the opposite has been the case; from the very beginning, Grandcourt has dominated her, taking pleasure in his mastery and caring nothing for her misery; he coldly forced her to wear the diamonds after she had burst into tears upon reading the letter from Lydia. Her admiration for Daniel and his evident superiority thus increases. Later, a man at the gathering who loves to hear and spread the latest gossip tells Daniel about Grandcourt's prior relationship and the arrangements at Gadsmere. Daniel now comes to pity rather than despise Gwendolen, since he sees in her signs of repentance and

suffering for the evil she has done. He then decides to seek out opportunities to talk to Gwendolen rather than avoiding her. That night, Gwendolen wears the turquoise necklace Daniel had repurchased for her to the dance. They talk, and he exhorts her to learn from her mistakes and live a life of benefit to others even though she has closed herself in to the misery of a bad marriage. Later, Grandcourt is furious with his wife, not for talking to Daniel, but for wearing the necklace. He also warns her not to do anything to embarrass him. Daniel also tells the gathered nobility about Mirah and encourages them to come hear her sing and to hire her to teach their daughters.

When Daniel returns to his own home in London, he finds Hans Meyrick in residence, as he had expected. Hans has turned the flat into an artist's workshop for his painting, but Daniel is astonished to find that many of the paintings - an entire series based on the story of Berenice, a brave Jewish woman of the first century - had obviously used Mirah as a model. Hans confesses that he is madly in love with Mirah. Daniel assures him that he is wasting his time, since she will never marry outside her own race, but Hans glibly says that he will convert if necessary, and intends to pursue the relationship. Daniel is confused about his own reaction - is he protecting his friend from certain disappointment, or is he jealous that someone else should care for Mirah? Later Daniel tells Mirah about spreading the word to get her an audience and some teaching jobs, and she is thankful and not at all fearful of the coming opportunity.

The author now takes some time to tell us about Mordecai, the consumptive Jew after whom this section of the novel is named. He is a visionary, immersed in the mysticism of the Kabbala, who believes that he has a prophetic destiny: not to do great things himself, but to pass on his great ideas to one who is in good health, intelligent, a man of means, and well-featured enough to be heard by the masses. He has spent his life looking for such a one without success; Ezra Cohen certainly does not qualify, and even the hours he spends with little Jacob, teaching him Hebrew poems he cannot understand, will bear little fruit for his purposes. When he first meets Daniel in the bookstore, his interest is piqued - until he finds that Daniel is not Jewish. But when he sees Daniel again at the Sabbath meal, he regains hope - perhaps this is the man for whom he has been waiting and into whom he can pour his wealth of knowledge and ideas, someone whom he can inspire to put those ideas into practice on the world stage.

A few days later, Klesmer pays a call on Mirah at the Meyrick home. He listens to her sing and compliments her as a true musician. He does warn her that her voice is only suitable for singing in drawing rooms, but encourages her to pursue such performances, since they will surely lead to opportunities to give lessons. He then invites her to sing before a gathering in his home the following Wednesday. When Hans arrives, the conversation revolves around whether or not Mirah should get a new dress for the occasions. She insists that her plain black dress is good enough, but Hans decides that she needs a new silk one.

Daniel again seeks out Mordecai and mysteriously finds him waiting for him at Blackfriars Bridge. They go to the bookstore to speak, and Mordecai tells Daniel of his immersion in the works of the Kabbalah, of his conviction that he carries within him the soul of Judaism, and of the necessity of passing that soul on to another before he dies. He is convinced that Daniel is the one to whom his soul must be passed. Daniel's denial of any Jewish heritage no longer discourages him, and he surprises Daniel by telling him that he has no certain knowledge of his heritage. Daniel admits that this is true, but tells him that he is convinced that his father is an Englishman; furthermore, he has no intention of engaging in a precipitate search for his roots, though he has a deep desire to know them. When Daniel asks Mordecai why Mrs. Cohen refuses to answer

questions about her daughter, Mordecai disappoints him by refusing to answer, but the two agree to meet again in the near future.

## BOOK VI - REVELATIONS

Daniel broods for days about his conversation with Mordecai, wondering how he should respond, uncertain whether he is simply a fanatic or if there may be some truth in what he says, particularly with regard to Daniel himself, his past, and his future. They meet again two days later, when Daniel, after playing with the Cohen children, accompanies Mordecai to a meeting of the Philosophers' Club of which Mordecai is a part. The topic that night is the doctrine of progress, and the discussion ranges widely with little coherence until Mordecai introduces the idea of progress in the Jewish race. Even his fellow Jews assert that this can only happen through assimilation, but Mordecai insists that Judaism can only progress, and lead the world to greater heights at the same time, if they once again form a nation in Palestine. Daniel is fascinated with the power of the sick man's rhetoric. After the others leave, Mordecai again expresses his certainty that Daniel will continue his work after he dies, even to the extent of assuring Daniel that their spirits will be joined together to fulfill the mission found in his visions. As Mordecai continues to give voice to his meandering thoughts, he speaks of his childhood - of the deaths of his siblings, all except the youngest child, a girl, who is lost to the family after being spirited away by their father, and reveals that his own given name is Ezra, that his sister's name was Mirah, and that his mother died of grief after Mirah was taken, Daniel realizes that it is Mordecai, and not the Cohens, who is Mirah's sole surviving family. He then begins to ponder how they might be brought together in a way that avoided too much shock to either, but nevertheless would allow the sister to nurse her brother in his dying days.

Gwendolen, meanwhile, has been thinking more and more of Daniel and trying to follow his advice to improve her mind despite her circumstances. She resolves to read challenging books, but cannot maintain her attention on them, especially when her husband so often demands that she fulfill the office of wife and hostess at Diplow. She does her best to give an outward show of happiness, and everyone is convinced that she is getting along famously in her new standing as a great lady. Grandcourt, however, begins to show his displeasure at the visits of her family, thus causing her to distance herself from them; she is ambivalent about this, longing to see them while at the same time not wanting them to know of her misery. One day while Grandcourt is away visiting Lydia Glasher, Gwendolen goes to see her family, but cannot bring herself to reveal the truth to her mother. Later Gwendolen and Grandcourt attend a party at the Mallingers and hear Mirah sing. Despite the often-condescending comments, Mirah does very well. Klesmer actually suggests that Gwendolen take singing lessons from Mirah. Gwendolen looks for an opportunity to speak to Daniel, but finds that Lush always seems to be hovering in the vicinity. When they do converse, their dialogue is awkward, and after the party Grandcourt informs Gwendolen that Lush is again to be admitted to their house, and that she is to treat him with civility.

Daniel now turns to the problem of how and when to reveal what he has learned about the relationship between Mordecai and Mirah. He tells everything to Mrs. Meyrick, who advises him to tell Mordecai first and secure his agreement to a proposed move to a flat near where the Meyricks live. Daniel arranges another visit to the Cohens, gently breaks the good news to Mordecai, and easily convinces him that the move to the new flat would be best for everyone concerned. On hearing what Daniel has done (even though Daniel hides from him the part about

saving Mirah from suicide), he again insists that Daniel must be Jewish, and is more convinced than ever that the two are soul-mates. Together they tell the Cohens, who are distraught at the thought of losing Mordecai, who is especially beloved by the children. Daniel suggests that Mirah might visit the Cohens to reassure them, but Mordecai (whose real name is Ezra Mordecai Cohen) advises against it because the Cohens have lost a daughter and sister who will never be restored to them. When Mrs. Meyrick tells her children, they, too, are distraught at the thought of losing Mirah - especially Hans, who stamps out of the house angrily. Daniel asks Mrs. Meyrick to break the news to Mirah while he waits at the flat with Mordecai. When Mrs. Meyrick and Mirah arrive at the flat, Mirah and Mordecai have a tender reunion full of mutual joy and love.

While Grandcourt is in London, he alters his will, and arranges to inform Gwendolen of its contents in the most humiliating way possible. He sends Lush to speak to her about it, and he tells her that her husband has left his entire estate to Henleigh Glasher, his illegitimate son, unless Gwendolen should produce a male heir. While she views this as just, she increasingly feels the burden of her imprisonment to her husband's implacable malice. She considers leaving him, but realizes that she could give no possible justification for such a move that would satisfy either her family or the broader society. In her desperation, she decides to ask Daniel for advice, but when she feigns illness in order to see him alone, Grandcourt simply leaves and then quickly returns in order to find them together; his attitude is not one of sexual jealousy, but one that will not tolerate any aspect of his wife's being that he does not control. He then calmly announces to Gwendolen that he intends to go yachting in the Mediterranean, and that she will accompany him. Daniel, meanwhile, has been summoned by Sir Hugo, who presents him with a letter from his mother. The long silence is finally broken - Daniel now knows for certain that he is not Sir Hugo's son, and determines to travel to find the mother he has never known - a journey that will take him to Italy.

## BOOK VII - THE MOTHER AND THE SON

The brief letter Daniel receives from his mother introduces her as the Princess Leonora Halm-Eberstein. She tells him that her health is not good, and that he should immediately travel to Genoa and wait for her arrival. He does so, giving to no one the reason for his trip. When he gets to Genoa, she is nowhere to be found. He becomes bored and lost in his own thoughts. Part of him hopes that Mordecai is right about his heritage, but he knows it is foolish even to speculate on the subject. He also worries about Gwendolen and her sad lot in life. Finally, after more than two weeks, his mother arrives and asks him to come and visit her. She then tells him her story. Her father - Daniel's grandfather - was a strictly observant Jew and a tyrant, insisting that his daughter follow the path of the subservient Jewish woman. Leonora, drawn to the entertainment field by her aunt and already aware of her own natural talent, rebelled. She submitted to her father only to the extent that he married his choice of a husband - her cousin Ephraim - but did so only because she knew she could control him. Her father died three weeks after the wedding, and she immediately took up a career as a professional opera singer and actress. Then Daniel was born, and she saw him as nothing but a hindrance to her career. After Ephraim died, she had many suitors, among them Sir Hugo Mallinger. Desiring to spare her son the disadvantages of a Jewish identity, she asked Sir Hugo to take him and raise him as an English gentleman, never revealing to him his true identity; she also made him the trustee of Ephraim's fortune, which was eventually to come to Daniel. Sir Hugo gladly agreed, and she had never seen or contacted her son since.

After her talent faded, she remarried - the Russian prince who gave her his title and to whom she bore five children. Even now she would not have contacted her son had it not been for two circumstances. The first was her terminal illness, of which she had recently become aware; the second was the discovery of Daniel's identity by an old family friend, Joseph Kalonymos, who had seen him in the synagogue in Frankfurt. She had earlier entrusted to him a wooden chest given to her by Daniel's grandfather. That chest is now in the vault of a bank in Mainz, and she sends Daniel to retrieve it.

Before Daniel can go to Mainz, he receives a letter from Hans Meyrick. Hans speaks of his failure to market his serious art, but notes that he is getting frequent opportunities to paint portraits. He has been painting Mordecai, all the while learning from him and being impressed with the breadth of his understanding. He writes effusively of his love for Mirah, but Daniel strangely is less troubled by this than he had been before; knowing his own heritage has calmed his mind on this score. Jacob Cohen often comes to keep Mordecai company, and of course Mirah as well. Hans has met Rex and Anna Gascoigne and speaks of their friendliness. Daniel senses from the letter, however, that Mirah is troubled about something, and indeed she is. One day while walking about London she had seen her father in the distance. She feared his reentry into her life, and especially what such an event would do to Mordecai. She goes to Mrs. Meyrick and confesses her fears, and the latter comforts her. She also fears that Daniel might become attracted to Gwendolen, though Mirah herself has no thought of any relationship with Daniel beyond what already exists.

Three days later, Daniel is again summoned by his mother, this time for a final visit. Daniel wants to establish a relationship with his mother for whatever time remains to her, but she says such a thing is impossible - not only because she is incapable of love, but also because her present husband and children know nothing of his existence. She also discerns that Daniel is in love with a Jewish girl. She presses him for details, but he admits that he has said nothing to her of his feelings and knows nothing of hers.

Grandcourt and Gwendolen are now sailing in the Mediterranean. She has nothing of which to complain, but detests being restricted to her husband's hated company. He, of course, likes nothing better than subjecting her to his complete domination. She thinks continually of Daniel, holding him up as a paragon, a standard up to which she must try to live, and wondering how he must despise her for the choices she has made. One day the yacht is damaged in a storm and they are forced to put in at Genoa for repairs. Almost immediately, they see Daniel. While Gwendolen hopes for an opportunity to spend some time with him alone, Grandcourt is determined that this will not occur. He suggests they rent a small boat and sail some more, but when Gwendolen begs off due to a minor illness, he insists on staying with her. She sees that her scheme is being thwarted, and agrees to sail with her husband. During the trip, her thoughts turn to murder as the only way to end her misery, but she knows that Daniel would never approve, and argues that she is not so weak as to pursue so desperate a course. When Grandcourt turns the boat to return to the dock, the sail strikes him and he falls into the water. Gwendolen, wishing him dead, hesitates briefly when he calls for the rope, and by the time she recovers, he has drowned. She jumps into the water is rescued by nearby boatmen. Daniel, who is on his way back from the synagogue, sees commotion at the dock and goes to see what is happening. There he finds a badly shaken Gwendolen and takes her back to the hotel. After she sleeps, she asks to see him. She confesses her evil thoughts - she had dreamt of murder, even to the extent of secreting a sharp blade under her pillow, for some time. She bemoans the depth of her won wickedness, but Daniel

assures her that she could have done nothing to prevent her husband's death even had she thrown the rope. He then sends letters to Sir Hugo and Rex Gascoigne, hoping that they will bring Gwendolen's mother to Genoa to care for and comfort her. He knows that the journey to Mainz still awaits him.

## BOOK VIII - FRUIT AND SEED

When word of Grandcourt's death reaches the Gascoignes, Mr. Gascoigne determines to accompany Mrs. Davilow to Genoa to be with Gwendolen. Rex's mind is filled with other thoughts, however; he wonders if Gwendolen might reconsider his proposal now that she is free from her previous entanglement, but considers it unlikely. Sir Hugo also travels to Genoa to see Daniel, and Daniel reassures him of his continual gratitude even though the nature of his lifelong deception has been revealed. Daniel then goes to Mainz to find Joseph Kalonymos, hears from him more about his grandfather Daniel Charisi, and receives the chest that Kalonymos had kept safely for his friend's grandson and heir. Under questioning by Kalonymos, Daniel admits that he will now live openly as a Jew, though he may not espouse the Jewish religion, and intends to do whatever he can to help his people.

When news of Grandcourt's death reaches the Meyricks, Hans is convinced that Daniel will now marry Gwendolen; he has sensed an attraction between the two in the conversations he has observed. Mirah, of course, is distraught by the suggestion, though she has never entertained any hope of a deeper relationship with Daniel herself and hides her feelings very well. For Hans, this is wishful thinking, since he loves Mirah and would love to see Daniel's attentions occupied elsewhere. Hans tends to read much into little indications of Mirah's courtesy toward him, but when they visit Mordecai, who has just received a letter from Daniel, he is obviously possessed with a level of excitement that goes beyond what they are yet able to understand. Mirah is also troubled at having seen her father. One day he approaches her as she walks home after a concert and asks her for money, trying to sweet-talk her into blaming herself for having deserted him. She wants to take her to Mordecai, but he insists that he would make a better impression on his son if he had a new suit of clothes. She gives him her wallet, but he still refuses to come in. When she tells Mordecai what has happened, he cautions her to steel herself against giving the old man any more money.

When Daniel returns to England after his trip, he goes immediately to visit Mordecai and finds Mirah there. He joyfully tells them about his discovery, and excitedly offers to share the contents of his grandfather's chest with Mordecai so the two can study the documents together. Between Daniel and Mirah is a sense of uneasiness - each loves the other, but fears to speak of what they feel. Daniel fears that Mirah can never look on him as a lover because she venerates him as her savior from death, while Mirah fears that Gwendolen's attraction to Daniel would make her affection unwanted. Gwendolen, meanwhile, is being comforted by her mother, her uncle, and Sir Hugo, all of whom are upset at the shabby treatment she had been given in Grandcourt's will, though Gwendolen herself wonders whether she should accept anything from the wretch at all. She decides to consult Daniel on the subject. This pleases Sir Hugo very much, since he has made up his mind that the obvious attraction she has for Daniel really ought to be reciprocated. When Gwendolen and Daniel do meet, he advises her to accept the money from Grandcourt's estate and use it to support herself, her mother, and her sisters in the home in which they had lived before she met Grandcourt. She longs to be closer to Daniel and he fears that his own sympathies for those in need will draw him in, but he knows that his real affections lie elsewhere.

Mirah's father continues to hang around hoping to get more money from her, having gambled away the money in her purse. When he appears at her door again, Mordecai orders her to bring him in. The son tells the father that he and Mirah will provide food and shelter, but will give him no money. He accepts the offer, but spends his time looking around the house for money he can steal to feed his gambling habit. Meanwhile, Daniel and Hans Meyrick have a serious conversation. Hans realizes that Mirah loves Daniel, not him, and he takes some opium to try to dull the pain. He then tells Daniel about his conviction concerning Mirah's affections, and Daniel determines to tell her of his love as soon as possible. When Daniel is at the house one day, he takes off his valuable ring. Lapidoth steals it and flees, intending to sell it for enough money to return to Europe. When the theft is discovered, Mirah is shamed and embarrassed, but Daniel comforts her in a way for which he had been seeking courage for many weeks - he proposes marriage, and she joyfully accepts.

When Sir Hugo and Lady Mallinger move back to Diplow, Daniel seeks an opportunity to see Gwendolen and tell him about his impending marriage to Mirah. After three visits, he finally gets the courage to break the news to her. She at first feels abandoned, but later braces herself and determines to benefit from Daniel's goodness to her and become a better person. Hans gets over his grief at the loss of Mirah, and the possibility remains that Rex Gascoigne could yet win Gwendolen. Daniel and Mirah marry in a Jewish ceremony, and they prepare to set off for the East, where Daniel intends to work to establish a political entity for his people in fulfillment of the vision imparted to him by Mordecai. The sickly scholar intends to go with them, but dies in the arms of his sister and his protege before they are able to leave the country.

### **NOTABLE QUOTATIONS**

“Her beautiful lips curled into a more and more decided smile, till at last she took off her hat, leaned forward and kissed the cold glass which had looked so warm.” (ch.2, p.12)

“A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of the earth.” (ch.3, p.15)

“So exceptional a person as herself could hardly remain in ordinary circumstances or in a social position less than advantageous.” (ch.3, p.16)

“Marriage is the only happy state for a woman, as I trust you will prove.” (Fanny Davilow, ch.3, p.22)

“The only point of resemblance among them all was a strong determination to have what was pleasant, with a total fearlessness in making themselves disagreeable or dangerous when they did not get it.” (ch.4, p.33)

“I shall never love anybody. I can't love people. I hate them.” (Gwendolen, ch.7, p.71)

“Reformation, where a man can afford to do without it, can hardly be other than genuine.” (ch.9, p.81)

“You do read such books - they give you such ideas of everything!” (Mrs. Davilow, ch.9, p.83)

“Oh, I am not sure that I want to be taken care of: if I chose to risk breaking my neck, I should like to be at liberty to do it.” (Gwendolen, ch.13, p.116)

“He found the inward bent towards comprehension and thoroughness diverging more and more from the track marked out by the standards of examination: he felt a heightening discontent with the wearing futility and enfeebling strain of a demand for excessive retention and dexterity without any insight into the principles which form the vital connections of knowledge.” (ch.16, p.160)

“The moment of finding a fellow-creature is often as full of mingled doubt and exultation as the moment of finding an idea.” (ch.17, p.174)

“The inmost fold of her questioning now, was whether she need take a husband at all - whether she could not achieve substantiality for herself and know gratified ambition without bondage.” (ch.23, p.225)

“Gwendolen had about as accurate a conception of marriage - that is to say, of the mutual influences, demands, duties of man and woman in the state of matrimony - as she had of magnetic currents and the law of storms.” (ch.27, p.266)

“He had no taste for a woman who was all tenderness to him, full of petitioning solicitude and willing obedience. He meant to be master of a woman who would have liked to master him, and who perhaps would have been capable of mastering another man.” (ch.28, p.286)

“That she was doing something wrong - that a punishment might be hanging over her - that the woman to whom she had given a promise and broken it, was thinking of her in bitterness and misery with a just reproach - that Deronda with his way of looking into things very likely despised her for marrying Grandcourt, as he had despised her for gambling - above all, that the cord which united her with this lover and which she had hitherto held by the hand, was now being flung over her neck, - all this yeasty mingling of dimly understood facts with vague but deep impressions, and with images half real, half fantastic, had been disturbing her during the weeks of her engagement.” (ch.31, p.318)

“You took him with your eyes open. The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse.” (Lydia, ch.31, p.322)

“He was unique to her among men, because he had impressed her as being not her admirer but her superior: in some mysterious way he was becoming a part of her conscience, as one woman whose nature is an object of reverential belief may become a new conscience to a man.” (ch. 35, p.375)

“But the coercion is often stronger on the one who takes the reverence. Those who trust us educate us. And perhaps in that ideal consecration of Gwendolen’s, some education was being prepared for Deronda.” (ch.35, p.390)

“One who has committed irremediable errors may be scourged by that consciousness into a higher course than is common. There are many examples. Feeling what it is to have spoiled one life may well make us long to save other lives from being spoiled.” (Daniel, ch.36, p.408)

“Deronda uttered each sentence more urgently; he felt as if he were seizing a faint chance of rescuing her from some indefinite danger.” (ch.36, p.410)

“He was conscious of that peculiar irritation which will sometimes befall the man whom others are inclined to trust as a mentor - the irritation of perceiving that he is supposed to be entirely off the same plane of desire and temptation as those who confess to him. Our guides, we pretend, must be sinless: as if those were not often the best teachers who only yesterday got corrected for their mistakes.” (ch.37, p.420)

“How could the rose help it when several bees in succession took its sweet odour as a sign of personal attachment?” (ch.39, p.445)

“It might be that he had neared and parted as one can imagine two ships doing, each freighted with an exile who would have recognized the other if the two could have looked out face to face.” (Daniel, ch.40, p.446)

“You will be my life: it will be planted afresh; it will grow. You shall take the inheritance; it has been gathering for ages.” (Mordecai, ch.40, p.453)

“For an enthusiastic spirit to meet continually the fixed indifference of men familiar with the object of his enthusiasm is the acceptance of a slow martyrdom, beside which the fate of a missionary tomahawked without any considerate rejection of his doctrines seems hardly worthy of comparison.” (ch.42, p.478)

“I say that the effect of our separateness will not be completed and have its highest transformation unless our race takes on again the character of a nationality.” (Mordecai, ch.42, p.484)

“The sons of Judah have to choose that God may again choose them. The Messianic time is the time when Israel shall will the planting of the national ensign.” (Mordecai, ch.42, p.488)

“When my long-wandering soul is liberated from this weary body, it will join yours, and its work will be perfected.” (Mordecai, ch.43, p.489)

“You are not a woman. You may try - but you can never imagine what it is to have a man’s force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl.” (Leonora, ch.51, p.573)

“I desire a grandson who shall have a true Jewish heart. Every Jew should rear his family as if he hoped that a Deliverer might spring from it.” (Daniel’s grandfather, ch.53, p.601)

“But her remorse was the precious sign of a recoverable nature; it was the culmination of that self-disapproval which had been the awakening of a new life within her; it marked her off from the criminals whose only regret is failure in securing their evil wish.” (ch.56, p.633)

“Think of it as a preparation. You can, you will, be among the best of women, such as make others glad that they were born.” (Daniel, ch.65, p.699)

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. In a letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose work she admired very much, George Eliot wrote, “The usual attitudes of Christians toward Jews is - I hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid when viewed in the light of their professed principles.” How is this frustration with Christian anti-Semitism reflected in *Daniel Deronda*? Does this writer, who was shunned for years by decent people because of her rejection of the faith in which she was raised and her open adultery, show a more Christian sense of morality than those Christians she abhors? Why or why not? Use details from the novel to support your argument.
2. Compare and contrast George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* and Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Give special attention to the power of the story to overcome prejudice. Which novel is more effective as a critique of the prejudice that filled the society addressed by each author? Support your conclusion with details from both stories.
3. Critic Edmund White said of George Eliot, “She was against the heartless imposition of moral judgments against living (or fictional) human beings.” To what extent does *Daniel Deronda* demonstrate a lack of moral judgments on the part of the author? Is she willing to moralize about some things and not others? Is she more willing to make moral judgments about broad social issues than she is about individual choices? Support your answer with details from the novel.
4. The opening epigraph of George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* begins with the words, “Let thy chief terror be of thine own soul.” What do you think she means by these words? How do they enunciate a major theme of the novel? Be sure to cite specific details from the novel to support your conclusions.
5. George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* consists of two separate narratives, one centered on Gwendolen Harleth and the other on the title character. These narratives rarely intersect. Why do you think the author chose to construct the story in this way? Could the two narratives stand on their own as separate novels, or do they in some way need one another in order to achieve wholeness?

6. George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* consists of two separate narratives, one centered on Gwendolen Harleth and the other on the title character. Which of the two stories do you think is better? Why? Justify your conclusion on more than subjective grounds, evaluating elements like narrative structure, characterization, and social significance.
7. Choose one of the main characters in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* - either the title character or Gwendolen Harleth - and discuss the growth and development of the character throughout the novel. Which character changes in more believable ways? How do the changes you observe contribute to the major themes of the novel?
8. Though George Eliot was very much influenced by the visual arts, she considered fiction superior to them because it was capable of portraying "the truth of change." Do you agree or disagree? Discuss how George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* fulfills this quality of fiction. Consider not only changes that take place in individual characters, but also changes in families and in the broader society. Be specific.
9. Who is the most credible character in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*? Support your conclusion with details from the story, and be sure to indicate why your candidate is more credible than other possible choices.
10. In George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, when Daniel finally meets his mother, she speaks to him of "the slavery of being a girl." The author clearly sympathized with this attitude. Choose one of the leading female figures in the novel and discuss the extent to which she was limited by this sense of "slavery." Be sure to cite details and use quotations.
11. Imagine what happens in the years after the conclusion of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*. Do you believe that Gwendolen will become a better person because she has known Daniel? Why or why not? Support your conclusion with details from the story that give you insight into her character and how it has changed.
12. George Eliot, after going through Calvinist and Methodist phases, turned to religious skepticism, though she long attended Anglican worship to please her father. How are the religious convictions (or lack thereof) of the author reflected in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*? Cite specific details and include quotations from the book to support your argument.
13. Some critics have argued that the title character of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* is simply too good to be true - a paragon who lacks credibility because he has no real flaws. Do you agree with this assessment? Do you find the admirable nature of Daniel's character a positive or negative element in the novel? Support your arguments with specifics from the story.

14. What is the essence of love as pictured in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*? If you were to isolate the leading characteristic of the loving person using the novel, what would it be? Support your answer with specifics from the story.
15. Victorian novels typically ended with the good being rewarded and the wicked being punished (e.g., almost anything by Charles Dickens). Does George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* fit this mold? To what extent does she present the happy ending expected by Victorian readers? What characters fit the expectations of the audience, and which do not? Be sure to explain and support your choices.
16. Choose two characters from George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* that you consider to be foils for one another. Explain how the contrasts between them bring out the salient qualities of each, and how these contrasts contribute to the themes of the novel.
17. Some critics have described George Eliot as "the great fountainhead of the modern psychological novel." Do you agree or disagree with this assessment? Do you see her greatness in her treatment of the inner lives of her characters, or would you argue that her strength lies elsewhere? Use George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* to answer the question, being sure to include details from the novel in your arguments.
18. Compare and contrast George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* and Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* as psychological novels. Which book better deserves the appellation? Why do you think so? Support your choice by citing specific elements and passages from both novels.
19. Discuss the relationship between physical appearance and character in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*. To what extent does the author tell us about the personalities of her characters by describing their appearance? In what cases does this correspondence not exist, or even serve the purposes of irony? Choose three characters from the novel and analyze the relationships that exist between the physical descriptions of them found in the story and the character traits that are later revealed.