

**TIP FOR READING**—It will be helpful to keep track of these previously-introduced characters who become important in this section of the novel:

- Kashiwagi—Tō no Chūjō's eldest son
- Kumoi no Kari— Tō no Chūjō's daughter, who was the childhood playmate of Yūgiri
- Yūgiri—Genji's son by Aoi, who rises through the ranks
- Suzaku—Retired and eventually Cloistered Emperor, half-brother of Genji
- The Third Princess—Suzaku's favorite daughter
- The Rokujō Haven—Genji's deceased former lover, mother of Akikonomu, whose jealous spirit killed Yūgao (mother of Tamakazura) and Aoi

1. As we have discussed in the previous section, many conflicts arose with the arrival of Tō no Chūjō's lost-and-found daughter Tamakazura in Genji's household. Similarly, in this section, the appearance of a daughter in Genji's household—this time the Retired Emperor Suzaku's Third Princess—entangles the old friends and rivals, Genji and Tō no Chūjō, as well as their sons, in new rivalries.
  - Why, according to Suzaku (see pp. 582-84), are princesses even more problematical to raise than other daughters? What options does he consider for the Third Princess's future?
  - How and why does the presence of the Third Princess in Genji's household destabilize Tō no Chūjō's family, which had just made peace with Genji's family by accepting Yūgiri as Kumoi no Kari's husband?
  - How and why does the arrival of the Third Princess threaten to destabilize Genji's own household, where Murasaki and Hanachirusato live and where the Akashi lady and her daughter, as well as Akikonomu, often visit?
2. In this section, we also see how female comportment is not simply a matter of convention, but can have profound consequences.
  - Both Suzaku, the Third Princess's father, and Genji, her protector, worry that she is irredeemably "childish." How does this childishness manifest itself? According to the norms for female comportment in Heian era Japan, does she bear any responsibility for her violation?
  - Genji repeatedly praises Murasaki's comportment, saying that there is no woman like her. What attitudes and actions make Murasaki the novel's ideal of feminine behavior?
  - Since Murasaki is so adept at handling Genji's household and the delicate problems that arise from Genji's polyamorous relationships, why does she long to become a nun? Why does Genji resist her choice so strenuously?
  - How does the Rokujō Haven, albeit deceased, serve as a foil for Murasaki? (A foil character serves as a contrast to the protagonist. The foil's personality traits, attributes, values, or motivations serve to highlight the traits of the protagonist.)
  - Does Murasaki, the author, tell the story of the near death of Murasaki, the character, as an exemplary tale in which a manifestation of female evil destroys a manifestation of the

female ideal? Or, even for her 11<sup>th</sup> century audience, does Murasaki, the author, suggest a critique of this clear binary?

3. This section of the novel emphasizes the dynamic relationship in Heian court culture between what is veiled/occluded and what is seen/understood.
  - When Tō no Chūjō decides to accept Yūgiri as a son-in-law, why does he convey his acceptance in a drunken exchange of poetry about wisteria blossoms (pp. 563-65)?
  - When a cat, entangled in a curtain's cords, momentarily reveals the Third Princess and her ladies, how do Kashiwagi's and Yūgiri's reaction to this full sight of the women differ? What do their different reactions reveal about the sons of the two friends/rivals, Tō no Chūjō and Genji?
  - Why does the clear sight of what is always behind screens and curtains have such a profound effect on Kashiwagi?
  - How does the offending cat itself become a substitute for Kashiwagi's necessarily hidden passion?
  - Why is the moment of Kashiwagi's rape of the third princess veiled as a dream: "Upon dozing off a moment he dreamed that the cat he had made into such a pet came to him, mewing sweetly, and that he brought it to Her Highness as a gift" (p. 651)?
  - Why is Kashiwagi's deathbed confession to Yūgiri so oblique: "There is a little matter on which I wronged His Grace of Rokujō, and for months I begged his pardon in my heart, until I became so miserable that I despaired of life . . ."? Does Kashiwagi expect Yūgiri eventually to divine his precise sin against Genji?
  - How does this episode of sexual concealment and revelation relate to the secret at the center of Genji's life?
  
4. Shame, almost more than any other emotion, seems to motivate the characters in the court of Heian era Japan. What specific role does shame play in the decisions and actions of the following characters? What do they fear will bring them shame?
  - Yūgiri
  - Suzaku
  - Genji
  - Kashiwagi
  - The Third Princess
  - Murasaki
  - The Rokujō Haven

How does shame interact with the dynamic relationship, which we are probing in question #3, between what is veiled/occluded and what is seen/understood?

5. This section of the novel includes elaborate descriptions of jubilees, birthday celebrations, progresses to shrines, state visits, contests, musical soirees, etc., during which the participants consume copious quantities of alcohol.
  - What role does alcohol play in this elevated court culture? Do any important actions occur while the characters are drunk?
  - At the conclusion of one poetic and detailed description of the music, dancing, and costumes during a pilgrimage, the voice of the narrator adds, "One would have wished to watch them forever" (p. 633). Why does Murasaki, the author, have her narrator call

attention to what appears to be first-hand experience of the glittering court world she describes?