

STRANGE, BUT TRUE

During a luncheon at Oxford with his cousin George, an animated and usually jovial member of the university, the narrator is first struck by George's unusual silence and dejected mood. After the meal, as they stroll through the Park, George reveals to his cousin, whom he addresses fondly as "Sam, old boy," that he is miserably in love, prompting a conversation about the perplexing and paradoxical nature of his feelings. George describes being in love as both a torturous condition akin to "Hades" and yet not entirely undesirable. His attempt to elucidate the maddening oscillations of a lover's emotions – immense happiness followed by despair over trivialities – illustrates his naive and passionate entanglement. The narrator's lack of personal experience in romantic love leads to George's frustrated attempts to explain the inexplicable.

As they sit in the park, observing passersby in the hopes of spotting George's beloved, the conversation delves deeper into the irrationality and all-consuming aspect of love. George's recounting of his recent time spent with the girl at a dance reveals his obsessive yearning, feeling as though he had not seen her for months despite their recent encounter. This point highlights love's distortion of time and perception.

George's refusal to name the girl, combined with a charged moment when she passes by in a carriage, showcases the intense personal significance and privacy of his feelings. Following this encounter, George's critiques of his father's practical advice against youthful passion frame a classic portrayal of the generational divide in views on love and practicality.

Finally, an introduction to Lady Mickleham, a friend of the narrator, provides a glimmer of hope for George. She offers to facilitate a meeting between George and his love interest, symbolizing the wider social networks and machinations often involved in romantic liaisons. This encounter highlights both the solidarity and manipulation present within social circles regarding matters of the heart. Through witty dialogue and

the vibrant characterization of George's youthful romanticism versus the narrator's detached cynicism, the chapter paints a vivid tableau of the complexities and absurdities inherent in young love.

