

CHAPTER II - FIRST LESSONS IN THE ART OF INSTRUCTION

As Agnes Grey embarks on her journey as a governess at Wellwood, her apprehensions about her new role are palpable amidst the cold, dreary September weather. Despite her initial optimism, the reality of standing alone for the first time in her life at the threshold of the Bloomfield household is daunting. The expectations and self-doubt she harbors are evident, given her sheltered upbringing.

Upon meeting Mrs. Bloomfield, Agnes is greeted with a polite yet distant welcome, which does nothing to ease her anxieties. Mrs. Bloomfield, described as a tall, stately woman with an imposing presence, briefly introduces Agnes to her new environment, leaving her to settle in and prepare for her duties. Agnes's self-consciousness is heightened by the physical toll of the journey, mirroring her inner turmoil as she braces herself to meet her charges.

Agnes's initial encounter with the Bloomfield children during luncheon is a mix of observation and adaptation. She notes Tom's assertiveness and Mary Ann's need for attention, with little mention of the younger siblings at this stage. The interaction is marked by Agnes's attempts to navigate her new role, balancing discipline with an effort to establish a rapport, particularly challenging given Tom's dominant personality and the hints of his cruel tendencies toward animals.

The exploration of the garden and Tom's domineering approach to both his sister and Agnes provide further insight into the dynamics she will face. His boastful display of his schoolroom and garden, along with his disturbing admission of cruelty to animals, underscores the challenges Agnes faces in molding her pupil's character. Her gentle reproach and attempts to instill empathy highlight her values and the uphill battle she

anticipates in fulfilling her role as a moral guide.

Agnes's resolve to influence Tom's behavior, despite his parents' apparent indifference to his cruelty, sets the stage for her tenure at Wellwood. Her introduction to the children and her observations of their interactions shed light on the complexities of her position—not just as an educator but as a moral compass—in a household that seems to undervalue these traits in its youngest members.

