



## Aaron's Rod

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### Characters Discussed

Aaron Sisson, a well-educated young man who decides not to teach but instead to return to the coal mine as a secretary to a miners' union. He leaves behind the oppressive responsibility of his wife and three daughters to become an orchestra flutist in London and then leaves London for Italy, following Lilly. He finds Lilly in Florence, seeking him out to discuss a new *modus vivendi*.

Lottie Sisson, his beautiful wife, with whom he has a contest of wills. She half desires and half resists his attempts to return home.

Millicent Sisson, the oldest of their three daughters, who inherits the struggle of wills from her parents. At Christmas, she tries the patience of her father by testing the strength of a family tree decoration; it breaks.

Jim Bricknell, a war veteran, the son of the local mine owner. He takes up Aaron as an interesting acquaintance who represents the real working class in his superficial commitment to cultural revolution. Bricknell repeatedly proclaims his need to be loved.

Josephine Ford, his fiancée, an artist. She has a short affair with Sisson in London.

Rawdon Lilly, an English gentleman whose cottage Bricknell visits on the strength of his own invitation. When Lilly criticizes Bricknell too severely, Bricknell knocks him breathless. Later, Aaron arrives drunk and feverish at Lilly's Covent Garden flat, to be nursed back to health. He also breaks with Lilly. Lilly knows that he is expected to save his friends by telling them some unique truth. At the end of the novel, in a long discussion, he tells Sisson that modern men and women must either love or rule.

Francis Dekker, a traveling Australian painter whose privileged means and manner contrast with Aaron's background as they ride the train to Florence together.

Angus Guest, a traveling Welsh painter who forms part of the English-speaking artistic set in Florence.

James Argyle, a traveling English writer, another visiting member of the Anglo community in Florence.

Manfredi, the Marchese del Torre, a colonel in the Italian army. He befriends Sisson as a fellow musician despite his awareness of the relationship that Sisson is forming with his wife.

Nan, the Marchesa del Torre, his wife. She draws Sisson into an affair by displaying her smoldering passion, which transforms into a childlike dependency after they become lovers.

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