



## The Concert Party

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“The Concert Party” begins with the first-person narrator named Burnet, a Canadian academic, identifying with a colleague named Harry Lapwing while they are both graduate students in France. Lapwing and his wife, Edie, and Burnet and his wife, Lily, become a social unit, attending dinners and parties together. The concert party of the story's title is given by a man named Watt Chadwick, a novelist who is trying to figure out a way to socially elevate his nineteen-year-old, part-time gardener, David Ogdoad, a pianist, to the position of being his lover.

The situation at the party becomes complicated when David is attracted to Lily, and another Canadian named Fergus Bray, a playwright, is attracted to Lapwing's wife, Edie. During the party, Bray invites Edie to leave Lapwing and come to live with him in Madrid. When Lapwing humiliates Edie at the party, she decides to go. In a parallel action, Lily goes off to London with David.

Burnet knows that he romanticized the experience in France. If he had said that Lily had left for Detroit and Edie for Moose Jaw, leaving him and Lapwing stranded in a motel, they would have seemed foolish. However, the words “Madrid” and “London” and the fact that the event involved a musician, a playwright, and a novelist tinges the story with fiction and gives it an alien glow, making him and Lapwing appear as actors in a Technicolor film. However, he recognizes that the story is really that of men's humiliation, “bleached and toneless.”

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