



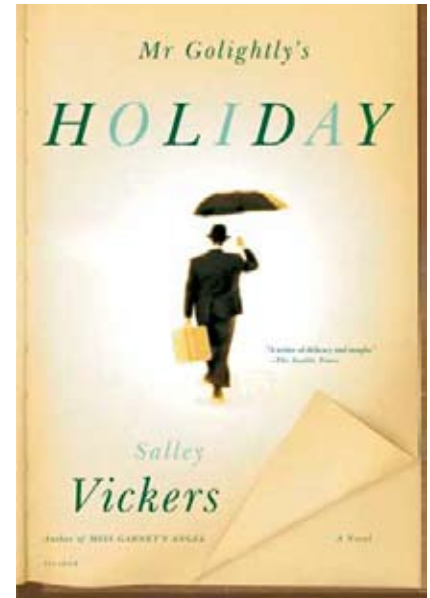
Reading Group Gold

Mr Golightly's Holiday

by Salley Vickers

About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Mr Golightly's Holiday* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this novel. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *Mr Golightly's Holiday*.



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About the Book

Best selling author, Mr. Golightly, has arrived in the historic village of Great Calne in England in order to take a much-needed holiday. His business is very time consuming, leaving him “ignorant of the rapid developments of the modern culture.” He wishes to recreate and update his masterpiece in order to reach a wider audience. Events unfold that take him away from his work and he soon discovers the themes of his masterpiece are alive in the people of Great Calne. *Mr Golightly's Holiday* becomes a journey of self-discovery as he examines his feelings about life, love, suffering, the balance of the universe, and how to deal with the catastrophe of losing his only son. As you learn the true identity of the remarkable protagonist you will find *Mr Golightly's Holiday* to be a clever, thoughtful, and light of touch novel that is sure to generate a lively discussion.

“*[Mr Golightly's Holiday]* invites you to sit back and consider the large issues of remores, redemption, and creation.”—*The Boston Globe*

“Wit a wonderfully wry sense of humor, Vickers makes her god a very fallible character who doesn't quite understand the full complexity of the Creation. It's a clever idea, and she makes it work so well that Mr. Golightly seems almost believable as a slightly clueless deity.”—*The Baltimore Sun*

“Vickers again well mixes the metaphysical and the mundane...A profound and satisfying read: the characters are likable, the whole hangs together.”—*Kirkus Review*



Reading Group Gold

About the Author

A former university lecturer in literature, Salley Vickers is a trained analytical psychologist and lectures widely on the connections between literature, psychology, and religion. She is the author of *Miss Garnet's Angel* and *Instances of the Number 3*. She lives in London and Bath.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of the name "Golightly?" Is Golightly a character light of touch? Explain the serious side to his personality. What is the meaning of the epigraph?
2. Golightly's identity is not revealed until page 250. Discuss the many disguised biblical references that reveal who he is. How were you able to figure out his identity?
3. Golightly has taken a holiday to "rewrite his great work into a soap opera, which he had decided to call *That's How Life Is*." What does this working title say about what he is trying to recreate? Why would his masterpiece need to be rewritten as a soap opera?
4. During his holiday, Golightly meets many interesting characters, all of whom face some type of adversity. How are individual issues confronted by the characters of *Great Calne* a microcosm of today's society? What are the positive and negative attributes of *Great Calne*?
5. As Golightly watches an adult raven try to feed its young he questions the "notion that a creator had influence over the objects of its creation." What does this say about Golightly's presence and influence in *Great Calne*? How does this explain how he sees mankind?
6. Golightly becomes a father figure to the troubled Johnny Spence, a young man who does not have a stable family life and hides around town. How does Golightly's relationship with Johnny help him deal with the "catastrophe" of losing his son? Discuss how Golightly feels about and deals with the "catastrophe." How is he a different person because of it?
7. Ellen Thomas, who was told by a gorse to "tell people ... about love," has an extension built on her house to hide a convicted sex offender who is being hunted by Brian Welford, a prison officer. Consider how Ellen and Brian are different. What are the defining differences in their characteristics and what they represent? How and why do their paths cross at the conclusion of the novel?
8. Golightly's rival antagonizes him with a series of email messages that Golightly himself "asked of the righteous Job." How is the story of Job an influence in the novel? Why would Golightly feel that because "he had not been tested by life" he is "poorer thereby?" Consider the suffering that Ellen has experienced. How is she similar to Job? How is this theme reflected in the lines by Keats on the last page?
9. On the night before Ellen Thomas's funeral, Golightly sends an email to his rival asking to meet. Why



Reading Group Gold

did Golightly have a need to talk to his rival? Why are they seemingly friendly with one another? How does the meeting show the necessary balance between good and evil? What are their thoughts on comedy and tragedy? What do they learn from one another?

10. Golightly learns many things about humanity during his holiday, but before leaving he realizes that “the beam of the universe, though slow, found its own level...but he, nor his rival was the agent.” Do you agree with this explanation of who is in control of the balance of the universe? How does this reflect what Golightly has learned during his holiday?

11. How does Luke’s new work reflect what Golightly tried to achieve with his recreation of his masterpiece? Do you agree with Paula’s need for a happy ending? Would you consider *Mr Golightly’s Holiday* to have a happy ending?