



1. Julian Fellowes has said that his inspiration for writing *Past Imperfect* was the “odd sensation of being part of something that everyone had forgotten about,” meaning the debutante seasons of 1960s London. Is there a time in your past that was important to you at the time but seems to have been forgotten? Do you tend to look at the past as perfect or imperfect?
2. What do you think of Serena, whom the narrator describes early on as “a creature of myth, a lovely naiad eluding her swain”?
3. The narrator notes that “the primal job of an aristocrat is to stay on top. Bourbon or Bonaparte, king or president, the real aristocrat understands who is in power and who should be bowed to, next.” Who do you think are the “real aristocrats” in *Past Imperfect*?
4. How do the characters’ perceptions of their society differ from the reality, and how does this disparity play into their fateful holiday and their lives thereafter?
5. Lucy’s final moments with the narrator are quite telling, “Give him my best love. And say that I wish him nothing but good things. Nothing but good, good things.” She stepped back from the vehicle and I nodded. Her simple encomium spoke more for Damian’s treatment of her than I would have credited him with.” Discuss each of the women—Lucy, Dagmar, and the rest—who might have been the mother of Damian’s child, and how each changes the narrator’s view of Damian.
6. Discuss the character of Damian Baxter. The narrator asks at the start, “Why did he want to bother with the fading glories of the blue bloods, those sad walking history books?” Now, having finished the story, how would you answer this question?
7. At the end, the narrator’s father says: “You’ve been made to go back into your own past and to compare it with your present. You’ve been forced to remember what you wanted from life at nineteen, forty years ago, before you knew what life was. Indeed you must face what you all wanted from life, all those silly, over-made-up girls and the vain self-important young men you ran around with then. Now, thanks to Damian, you must bear witness to what happened to them. To what happened to you.” Do you trust that the narrator has borne honest witness to his past?

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