

## Cluny Brown (1946) Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947)

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#### OVERVIEW

*Auteur:* Ernst Lubitsch was a German-American film director, producer, writer, and actor. He is famous for urbane comedies of manners. With the growth of his prestige, his films came to be known as having *the Lubitsch touch*. Lubitsch was born in 1892 in Berlin, as the son of Simon Lubitsch, a tailor, and Anna (née) Lindenstaedt. His family was Ashkenazi Jewish. He did not enter his father's tailoring business, and by 1911, he was a member of Max Reinhardt's *Deutsches Theater*. Lubitsch was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director three times for *The Patriot* (1928), *The Love Parade* (1929), and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). In 1946, he received an Honorary Academy Award for his contributions to the art of motion pictures. His best-known works are *Trouble in Paradise* (1932), *Design for Living* (1933), *Ninotchka* (1939), *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940), *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). Lubitsch died of a heart attack on November 30, 1947, in Hollywood at the age of 55.

*Film:* *Cluny Brown* is a 1946 American romantic comedy film directed and produced by Ernst Lubitsch. It stars Charles Boyer, Jennifer Jones, and Peter Lawford. The film follows a screenplay written by Samuel Hoffenstein and Elizabeth Reinhardt based on the 1944 novel *Cluny Brown* by Margery Sharp. The cinematography is by Joseph LaShelle. The music score is by Cyril J. Mockridge. *Cluny Brown* is a satire on the smugness of British high society, that is, people's excessive pride in themselves or their achievements. It is also the last film Lubitsch completed before he passed away in 1947. In a *Vanity* review, it is written: '*Cluny Brown* is in the best Lubitsch tradition of subtle, punchy comedy, and his two stars make the most of it. It is a satire on British manners, with bite and relish.' The film was adapted to radio and presented on *Star Playhouse* on November 15, 1953. The radio show starred Celeste Holm in the title role.

*Historical background:* *Cluny Brown* is based on Margery Sharp's 1944 novel with the same title. It is a humorous coming-of-age-novel, that is, a literary genre that focuses on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist from childhood to adulthood, in which character change is important. Clara Margery Melita Sharp (1905 – 1991) was an English writer of 25 novels for adults, 14 children's novels, four plays, two mysteries, and numerous short stories. During World War II she worked for three years as an Army Education Lecturer; during this time she wrote the novel *Cluny Brown* and worked on *Britannia Mews*, which described the bombing of London. The story of Sharp's novel follows the escapades of a plumber's niece, Cluny Brown, who is twenty years old in England in 1938. Cluny has high spirits and a constant desire for expansion of experience that leads the more staid and unadventurous members of her community to question whether she knows her place. This young woman is soon sent off to a charming country residence to be a parlormaid. The simultaneous arrivals of the young son and heir of the house, a mysterious Polish professor, and a beautiful socialite make richer the tale of Cluny following her *dreams* and finding her *personal freedom* in the turbulent 1930s.

#### SYNOPSIS

In 1938, Cluny Brown goes to Mr. Ames's house to fix a plumbing issue. There she meets Professor Belinski with whom she gets well along. At Mr. Ames's cocktail party, Betty Cream and the two young men pursuing her, Andrew and John, stumble upon Mr. Belinski sleeping in a separate room. The young men recognize him as a Czechoslovakian professor and anti-Fascist who has taken refuge in London. Andrew offers Mr. Belinski a place to stay at his family's country house.

Cluny's uncle who is displeased with her unladylike behavior sends Cluny to work as the parlormaid for Andrew's family, the Carmels. In this country house, Cluny, to her surprise, sees Mr. Belinski at the dinner table. Later, Mr. Belinski talks to Cluny and they make a deal to remain friends with each other.

One day, Cluny is invited by the town's chemist Mr. Wilson to meet his mother. Cluny is impressed by Mr. Wilson's life. Later, Betty Cream comes as a guest to Carmel's house. Cluny goes to Mr. Wilson's mother's birthday party, where she expects Mr. Wilson to announce his engagement to her. When a problem occurs regarding the plumbing during the birthday, Cluny jumps at the chance to fix the issue. Mrs. Wilson disapproves of Cluny doing plumbing and retires immediately. Mr. Wilson is frustrated and has doubts about his relationship with Cluny.

The following morning, Cluny finds out that Mr. Belinski is leaving and catches up with him at the train station. She talks to him about how Mr. Wilson disapproved of her plumbing. Mr. Belinski tells her to get on the train with him. On the train, he professes his love to her. He and Cluny build a family. Mr. Belinski becomes a best-selling author and his murder novels are displayed in the window of the Fifth Avenue Bookshop.

## CHARACTERS

- Cluny Brown*: A free-spirited girl, a plumber's niece, an amateur plumber, and later a parlormaid  
*Adam Belinski*: A Czechoslovakian professor and anti-Fascist who has taken refuge in London  
*Andrew Carmel*: Son of the Carmel family, a young man enthusiastic about politics, pursues Betty Cream  
*Betty Cream*: A popular socialite, a self-absorbed person, pursued by Andrew and John  
*Hilary Ames*: A man whose sink is out of order  
*Jonathan Wilson*: A chemist of the Friar Carmel, a sensible yet smug man  
*Sir Henry Carmel*: Father of Andrew, a man not much interested in international politics  
*Lady Alice Carmel*: Mother of Andrew, fond of gardens, hospitable  
*Mrs. Maile*: The housekeeper of the Carmel family, an earnest and dutiful person  
*Mr. Syrette*: The butler of the Carmels, with a strict conception of how service must be done  
*Mrs. Wilson*: Mother of Mr. Wilson, a woman who needs to clear her throat frequently  
*Arn Porritt*: Cluny's uncle, a plumber, reminds Cluny frequently of her *place*  
*John Frewen*: Andrew's friend, pursues Betty Cream  
*Colonel Charles Duff Graham*: An old man with a dog, whom Cluny meets on the train

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### Cluny Brown

She is the protagonist of the film. We watch the series of events that happen in relation to her and her environment and witness how Cluny Brown comes to find *her place* in life. She is a free-spirited, enthusiastic, lively, joyful, and skillful character who amazes people around her with her nonconforming plumbing skills.

*Free-spirited*: Cluny Brown is a free-spirited girl, which means, she is an independent character and not constrained by convention. She is someone who does not fit into the pre-established gender and class roles. Her nonconformity is intricately connected to her favorite hobby which is plumbing. Plumbing is usually a job that is almost always taken up and pursued by men. However, Cluny surprises everyone with her plumbing skills. Yet, her unladylike behavior is a lot of the times not appreciated by those around her, even her family members such as her Uncle Arn who decides to send her to a country house to be a parlormaid, a job that is more fitting and suitable for a young girl at that time. Thus, we can conclude that Cluny's free-spirited nature is not always understood by those in her environment. However, there is one character who understands and welcomes her unconventional spirit. That character is Adam Belinski with whom at the very end of the film she builds a family.

**Enthusiastic:** Cluny is a lively, energetic, and chirpy girl. Her enthusiasm about life and her favorite hobby plumbing is seen in her facial expressions, body language, and in her interactions with other people. Her life-affirming character is reflected in several scenes of the film: when she becomes drunk at Mr. Ames' house, when she has her Wednesday off from three to seven, when she listens to the music Mr. Wilson plays on the harmonium, when she cheerfully lopes along to the Carmel's house after a day at Mr. Wilson's house, and when she rushes off to catch up with Mr. Belinski to say her thanks to him for the stockings he gifted to her. In all these scenes, we view her enthusiasm and vivacity.

**Skillful:** When it comes to plumbing, Cluny is more than an amateur who is a plumber's niece. Plumbing is her favorite hobby and passion. Moreover, she is very skilled at it as she shows us when she fixes the plumbing issues at both Mr. Ames' and Mr. Wilson's houses. She forgets everything when she gets the opportunity to do plumbing and can be said to be in a *flow state* (which is a mental state in which a person performing some activity is fully immersed in a feeling of *energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment* in the process of the activity). Despite her passion for plumbing, her skill is not acknowledged or appreciated by many. Mr. Wilson, for instance, thinks she has disgraced herself when she jumped at the opportunity to do plumbing during his mother Mrs. Wilson's birthday celebration where all the guests that were present likewise disapproved of her unladylike and strange behavior. However, Mr. Belinski accepts Cluny Brown as who she is and even says to her in the scene where they are on a train and leaving Friar Carmel that if he were rich he'd build her the most beautiful mansion, with the most exquisite and complicated plumbing: 'And right in the middle of the most elegant housewarming party, I would hand you a hammer and say, Ladies and gentlemen, Madame Cluny Belinski is about to put the pipes in their place.' Thus, it can be said that even though most of society does not approve of unconventional, nonconformist people and odd behavior, there do indeed exist individuals who do.

### **Adam Belinski**

Professor Belinski or Mr. Belinski is the second main character of the film. He is a Czechoslovakian professor and anti-Fascist who has taken refuge in London. We first meet him in Mr. Ames' house where he comes to search for Professor Leigh who happens to be in Scotland. Soon later, he meets Cluny Brown and is impressed by her unconventional and enthusiastic personality. They become good friends as they both stay at the country house of the Carmel family. At the end of the film, Mr. Belinski professes his love for Cluny and he decides to support both of them by writing best-selling novels.

**Knowledgeable:** Mr. Belinski is a knowledgeable person who is sought after by the Nazis. He is an author and professor from Prague. Andrew and John respect him a lot because of his knowledge, wisdom, and courage as can be seen when Andrew says to him: 'I have great respect for you as a writer, as a philosopher, as a man of principle.' We witness his great knowledge when for instance Mr. Belinski quotes from Shakespeare at the dinner table of the Carmel family. He quotes from *Richard II* and *The Merchant of Venice* which reflects his learnedness and his memory skills.

**Intelligent:** Besides being a man of knowledge, Mr. Belinski is also a man of intelligence which can be observed in his interactions with other people. When Mr. Belinski comes to Mr. Ames' house, for instance, he praises his friend Professor Leigh and talks about how he'd insist that he take a nap if he were present. This causes Mr. Ames to offer Mr. Belinski to take a nap in his house. Thus, we can say that he uses his intelligence to make people behave and respond in ways that he prefers. One similar scene is when Mr. Belinski convinces Mr. Syrette and Sir- and Lady Carmel by quoting a Shakespearean speech on mercy that Cluny should not be dismissed. Normally, Cluny would be dismissed because of her inappropriate behavior of telling her master what to eat. However, Mr. Belinski intelligently makes people see things from different angles and in a way manipulates them to achieve the outcomes he prefers, for instance, to make Cluny stay at the Carmels as parlormaid so he can also be near her.

**Caring:** Other than being knowledgeable and intelligent, Mr. Belinski is also a caring individual. Most of all, he cares about Cluny Brown. When he finds out that Mr. Wilson has invited Cluny to his house to spend the afternoon, he questions Mr. Wilson as to his seriousness and intentions regarding Cluny. He makes clear that at the Carmels they do not consider Cluny merely as a maid but that *they* are interested in her welfare and friends where the plural subject form *they* refers apparently to Mr. Belinski himself. At

the very end of the film, Mr. Belinski decides to become a best-selling author to financially support both Cluny and himself. This shows us once again that he cares a lot about Cluny's well-being and happiness.

### **Andrew Carmel**

Andrew is the son of the Carmel family, he is a young man enthusiastic about the political state of the world and nervous about what will happen to Britain. He pursues the popular socialite Betty Cream. Andrew is the one who brings Adam Belinski to the country house of the Carmel family. At the end of the film, we learn that Andrew and Betty are going to be married and that Andrew is planning to join the RAF (Royal Air Force).

*Nervous:* Andrew is highly strung, easily agitated, and nervous. There are a lot of things that excite him and make him nervous: One of these matters is politics as Europe is on the verge of war at the time of the film. Another matter is the fact that Betty Cream does not seem to be responsive to his pursuits and it seems uncertain whether they'll have a future together. All these factors add to Andrew's anxieties.

*Political enthusiast:* Politics is one of the areas that is of great interest to Andrew. When we see him for the first time at Mr. Ames' cocktail party, Andrew says: 'Parties and people laughing, with Europe on the brink' as if he cannot believe how people can get on with their lives so easily and indifferently when Europe is about to be a tumultuous place very soon. Because of his interest in political matters, Andrew is the first one to recognize who Adam Belinski is. He is of the opinion Britain must create its own Belinskis, that is, learned and principled people who rise against ideologies like Nazism and Fascism.

*Passionate:* Andrew is a passionate individual which can be said to be tied to the nervous quality of his character. He is passionate about politics and highly concerned about the future of his country, and the world. He also shows great respect for Professor Belinski and sees him as his own responsibility to take care of. He is also prone to impulsive behavior. For instance, when he sees Mr. Belinski come out of the room of Betty Cream, he decides to knock him down because he is jealous and becomes suspicious of Mr. Belinski's true motives and intentions—even though he still respects him as a principled scholar—as he believes what the professor did was highly inappropriate.

### **Betty Cream**

Betty Cream is a popular socialite, that is, a person who is from a wealthy and (possibly) aristocratic background, is well known in high society, and fond of social activities and entertainment. She is pursued by two young men: Andrew Carmel and John Frewen. She is held in high regard by many people. We first hear the name of Betty Cream mentioned as Mr. Ames worries about what will he say to such people as *the honorable Betty Cream* if his sink cannot be fixed and there is flooding in his apartment. Later at the cocktail party, we see an old woman approaching Betty Cream and talking to her in a nervously excited manner about how there is only one Betty Cream and so on. One of her pursuers John also gossips about her and comments how: '*Everyone makes such an absurd fuss over her.*' All these examples underline that Betty is a highly recognized and respected individual in fashionable society.

*Self-absorbed:* Betty is a self-absorbed individual, that is, she is preoccupied with her own feelings, interests, or situation. She does not seem to care much about the feelings of the two young men pursuing her and leaves them in a state of uncertainty regarding whether she'll marry one of them. Even Mr. Belinski comes into her room one night to talk to her about why she is so *vicious* to Andrew and why she does not realize that she could make other people happy too. From these scenes, we can infer that Betty is more interested in her own world and herself than the well-being of those around her. Or at least, she is less interested in others than in herself.

*Indifferent:* Betty Cream has an indifferent and/or apathetic attitude toward many events happening around her environment. For instance at the cocktail party of Mr. Ames, Andrew and John worriedly talk about the political affairs of the time and how Europe is heading for a war. However, Betty says she is tired of hearing the same names of Hitler and Mussolini over and over again. It can be said nevertheless that she has a more pragmatic and practical approach regarding politics as she tells Andrew to do

something about it rather than talking about the political matters aimlessly and fruitlessly. Another scene where we witness her indifference is when she comes as a guest to the Carmel family's manor and runs into Andrew and Mr. Belinski while riding. Andrew is shocked at how she has the nerve to come to his house after the big row they had the other day, however, Betty seems oblivious and does not even seem to remember they had a row and approaches Andrew in an almost mocking fashion. Her indifference and apathy make her look cooler, standoffish, and even haughty.

### **Jonathan Wilson**

Mr. Wilson is a chemist and has a chemistry shop at the Friar Carmel. He lives with his 65-year-old mother who does not speak but frequently clears her throat to express her disapproval of things. He is a sensible man who fits perfectly into his role in society. He is a serious and devoid of passion. Despite that, he has an array of skills which impress Cluny. He has intentions to become engaged to Cluny, however, he comes to have doubts about her as she inappropriately showcases her plumbing skills in front of all the guests during her mother Mrs. Wilson's birthday celebration.

*Serious-minded:* Mr. Wilson is a serious-minded person who is sincere, solemn, or thoughtful in character or manner, that is, he is not a man of frivolity. We can observe this characteristic of his in his attitude, facial expressions, and behavior. He praises Cluny that she looks *intelligent*. However, when she comes into his shop another day with a garden on her head, he doesn't notice it at first and later comments that his mother might find the extra flowers frivolous. We also find out that he has planned his whole life. He wants to spend the rest of his life in Friar Carmel working as a chemist and later marrying and perhaps being blessed by little Wilsons.

*Smug:* His conceit comes to the forefront when Cluny fixes his plumbing issues at his mother's birthday celebration. He cannot believe how Cluny Brown can perform such an act in front of his guests. He considers Cluny jumping at the opportunity to plumb an impulsive, foolish, imprudent, inappropriate, and unsuitable behavior. This shows us that he conforms to the gender roles set by society and thinks men cannot marry girls who do plumbing. We can say that his smugness is connected to his being narrow- and close-minded.

*Skillful:* Despite being a serious, prudent, and smug person, Mr. Wilson nevertheless possesses an array of skills in music and firefighting. We find out that he is a good player of harmonium and his playing skills impress Cluny. He is also the chief of the Friar Carmel volunteer fire department which astonishes her. Also, his knowledge of chemistry makes him very attractive to Cluny Brown.

### **Sir Henry Carmel**

Sir Henry Carmel is the father of Andrew and the husband of Lady Carmel. He plays a minor role in the film where we witness his ignorance about the political events of the time.

*Ignorant:* Despite being a wealthy man and possibly coming from an aristocratic background, Sir Henry Carmel is ignorant when it comes to politics. When Andrew remarks that Professor Belinski is in danger and fighting for a new and better world, Sir Carmel is utterly surprised and asks: 'What for?' Moreover, when Mr. Belinski and he talk at the breakfast table, Sir Carmel refers to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* as *My Camp* as if he'd written an outdoor or sports book which ironically brings to light the political ignorance of higher classes of British society.

### **Lady Alice Carmel**

Lady Alice Carmel is the mother of Andrew and the wife of Sir Carmel. She is a hospitable, sensible, and well-mannered woman who always approaches events with a sense of calmness and repose.

*Well-mannered:* Lady Carmel is well-mannered, polite and courteous. Her calm and well-mannered behavior can be witnessed in her interactions with people. For instance, when Cluny drops the platter when she sees Mr. Belinski at the dinner table of the Carmels, Lady Carmel does not react as harshly as

does her husband. She calmly listens to what Mr. Belinski has to say about the event. Another scene where she prevents conflicts is when Mr. Belinski enters Betty Cream's room, she screams and everybody gathers in front of her room. Lady Carmel tells Mrs. Maile and Mr. Syrette to leave and wants her son to directly go to his bed without fighting with Mr. Belinski. This behavior of hers shows her being well-mannered and polite, and how she aims to create a peaceful, calm atmosphere in her house.

### **Mrs. Maile**

Mrs. Maile is the housekeeper of the Carmel family. She takes her work very seriously and aims to instruct Cluny Brown in the same fashion. She teaches her how to behave, what to do, and what not to do. As Mr. Syrette remarks about her, she is earnest and dedicated to her profession.

*Earnest:* Earnest means being characterized by or proceeding from an intense and serious state of mind. Mrs. Maile is a serious-minded person who is a devout housekeeper. We can see her earnestness when Mrs. Maile recalls her childhood: 'One is born to things or one isn't. I remember when I was a little girl, I used to say to my Dolly: *Did you ring, your Ladyship? Shall I bring your tea, my lady?*' This shows us that she was born with the intuitions and skills of a housekeeper.

### **Mr. Syrette**

Mr. Syrette is the butler of the house. He also valets Mr. Belinski. He is serious and dedicated to his work.

*Dutiful:* Mr. Syrette is a responsible and dutiful person. He tries to do his work excellently. Therefore, he finds Cluny's dropping the platter outrageous and unacceptable. As Mr. Belinski mentions he is 'a guardian of English customs and traditions'. He is someone who has internalized certain given social roles. It is the reason why he finds Mr. Belinski's directly talking to him as an equal shocking.

### **Arn Porritt**

Arn Porritt or Uncle Arn is Cluny Brown's uncle. He is a plumber and we find out from Cluny that he votes labor (which is also exemplified when Uncle Arn throws away the pound note given to him by Mr. Ames and says: 'You can't buy me off with your filthy pound note' which shows us that he doesn't have respect for higher classes just because they are *born* as higher classes as a matter of *pure chance*). He always tells Cluny that she doesn't know *her place* and she has to learn *her place* which is related to the fact that Cluny has nonconforming or unconventional sets of behaviors and has to learn about and behave according to her proper gender and class role in society.

*Pragmatic:* Uncle Arn is a practical, and pragmatic man. As he is concerned about Cluny's unladylike behavior and wants her to learn her proper place in life, he sends her to Carmel's manor in the countryside. This shows us that he is someone who takes direct action to achieve whatever goals or preferences he has regarding things, in our case, regarding Cluny's future.

### **Hilary Ames**

Mr. Ames is a character we see in earlier the scenes of the film when he is throwing a cocktail party. He is very worried about his sink being out of order and says he cannot just call up people like the *honorable Betty Cream* and tell them that his sink is not working. He is thus concerned about how he will be perceived by people in high society.

*Perfectionist:* Mr. Ames can be seen as a nervous and perfectionist character. First of all, he is very nervous because his sink is not working, and worried that his cocktail party will be ruined. Even after his sink is fixed by Cluny Brown, Mr. Ames is agitated and worried because Cluny has become drunk due to the alcohol given to her by Mr. Belinski. She talks nonsense and behaves strangely. His nervousness and agitation thus stem from the fact that he wants to create the best impression he can on his guests which underlines and emphasizes his perfectionist mindset.

## THEMES

### SOCIETY

**Gender** 'Gender includes the social, psychological, cultural, and behavioral aspects of being a man, woman, or other gender identity'. Gender and gender roles play an underlying role in *Cluny Brown* as Cluny is a girl who does not conform to prescribed and pre-established gender roles. Her hobby and passion is plumbing which is mostly perceived as a man's profession. However, as someone who has learnt a lot from her plumber Uncle Arn, Cluny jumps at the chance to perform her plumbing skills. Yet, she is met with a lot of opposition and disapproval from serious-minded and sensible people of British society. In particular, when she fixes the plumbing issue of Mr. Wilson during Mrs. Wilton's birthday celebration, Mr. Wilson and all the guests become shocked as to how a girl like Cluny can behave so inappropriately. Mrs. Wilson immediately retires to her room while clearing her throat which shows her frustration at and disapproval of Cluny. Mr. Wilson is not even willing to talk to Cluny unless and until she makes herself presentable, that is, she pulls down her sleeves. Cluny even comes to believe that she has disgraced herself and says to Mr. Belinski at the train station scene: 'If everything turns out all right, I might still be Mrs. Jonathan Wilson. That is, if I don't behave *foolishly* again. And I won't. I'm certainly going to watch myself. *One can't be foolish and have a place in life, can one?*' This quote reflects that even someone as free-spirited as Cluny can be transformed into a conforming and non-questioning person if met with sufficient opposition from the environment. Mr. Belinski fortunately comes to Cluny's rescue and makes her understand that she *can* be accepted with her quirks and nonconforming behavior. So, *Cluny Brown* makes us question the assumed gender roles in society. Thus, the film makes us more open-minded toward and accepting of people deviating from the standardly ascribed gender roles.

**Identity** 'Identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance, and/or expressions that characterize a person or a group'. Cluny is a young girl who is in search of her identity. She is in her early twenties and untrained, that is, does not have professional training or education other than having gained a lot of plumbing skills from her Uncle Arn. Yet, her Uncle Arn always comments on how she doesn't know *her place* and has to learn *her place* which reflects his concerns about her unladylike behavior and free spirit. Indeed, Cluny is a character longing for freedom as she searches for her place in the world. When she drinks too many cocktails and becomes drunk at Mr. Ames' house, she imagines herself as being shapeshifted into a cat and traveling to Baghdad, Cairo, and various places. She says: 'I feel so wonderful. So *free*.' Thus, even though she does not have a strict plan about what to do with her life, she wishes to remain true to her lively, enthusiastic, free spirit. In the process of the events in the film, she tries the occupation of being a parlormaid which she more or less fails at. Yet, she finds someone, Mr. Belinski, who welcomes her free spirit and eventually marries him. Thus, she is with someone who accepts her as she is. The rest of the story is unknown, but since she is with Mr. Belinski who is always there to encourage her, we can assume that she will be supported no matter what area she pursues and wishes to improve herself in. Thus, her freedom is no longer obstructed and she is truly free. Her identity is still to be shaped in the future.

**Class** 'A social class is a grouping of people into a set of hierarchical social categories, the most common being the upper, middle, and lower classes. Membership in a social class can be dependent on education, wealth, occupation, income, and belonging to a subculture or social network'. In *Cluny Brown*, Cluny and her Uncle Arn belong to the lower classes whereas the Carmel family represents the higher classes of British society. On the other hand, Mr. Wilton and his family can be said to belong to the middle class. We see in the film that there are certain roles associated with and sets of behaviors expected from every social stratum. For instance, when Cluny Brown first comes to the Carmel manor, she is perceived as a friend of Colonel Duff Graham. Therefore, Sir- and Lady Carmel behave toward her as if they stand on an equal plane. However, as soon as they realize that Cluny came as a parlormaid, Lady Carmel rings the bell to call the butler which means as a parlormaid, it is inappropriate for Cluny to have tea together with her Ladyship as if they are equals. There are thus certain hierarchies that cannot be overstepped. Another scene where Cluny's behavior is deemed outrageous and preposterous is when Cluny directly speaks to Sir Carmel while she is serving the meal and advises him what to eat and not. This behavior is seen as crossing the invisible yet significant social boundaries, therefore highly unsuitable and even disgraceful. *Cluny Brown* is yet a free-spirited girl who does not necessarily like to conform to those

norms and breaks them again and again. We do not get offered a solution as to what should be done regarding social classes as we do in the cases of gender roles, however, at least, we get an accurate description of the rigid social stratification that is present in England in the year of 1938.

## POLITICS

**Political background in the prewar year of 1938** 'A conflict is a struggle and a clash of interest, opinion, or even principles.' An underlying theme in *Cluny Brown* has to do with the political background of England and the world in the prewar year of 1938. The Nazis are on the rise and the names of Hitler and Mussolini are frequently heard in social circles. The ideologies of those are called Fascism. On the contrary, Adam Belinski represents those fighting for a better world, an anti-Fascist who seeks refuge in London from totalitarian regimes. Thus, the political situation at the time builds the background of *Cluny Brown* and we get to learn about people's perspectives regarding the Fascist leaders such as Hitler. While young people like Andrew and John are deeply concerned about the state of Europe, most people seem unconcerned, apathetic, and indifferent as present in the case of Betty Cream who is tired of hearing the names Hitler and Mussolini over and over. Then there are cases like Sir Carmel who is rather ignorant of what is going on and refers to Hitler's book as *My Camp* (a wordplay on *Mein Kampf/My Struggle*) and thinks Hitler writes outdoor sports books. Therefore, the film is a reflection of the ignorance of the higher classes of British society.

## RELATIONSHIP

**Friendship** Cluny Brown first becomes friends with Mr. Belinski. They get along well from the first moment they see each other, namely when Cluny comes to Mr. Ames's house to fix his sink problem. Mr. Belinski seems impressed by her plumbing skills and talks to her about her place in life and even advises her: 'Nobody can tell you where your place is. Where is my place? Where is anybody's place? I'll tell you where it is. *Wherever you're happy, that's your place [...] And happiness is a matter of purely personal adjustment to your environment.* In Hyde Park, for instance, some people like to feed nuts to the squirrels. But if it makes you happy to feed squirrels to the nuts, who am I to say nuts to the squirrels?' This advice is to stay with Cluny as she repeats the phrase 'nuts to the squirrels' when she sees Mr. Belinski at the dinner table with the Carmel family. Their friendship grows stronger as Mr. Belinski and Cluny Brown both stay in the same place, one as a guest, the other as parlormaid. They even make a pact that they are to kick each other if they ever seem romantic to one another. Cluny shares her thoughts and feelings with Mr. Belinski, including those regarding Mr. Wilson, Mr. Belinski's competitor for Cluny's affection. When they meet at the train station approaching the end of the film, Mr. Belinski tells her to get on the train with him where he finally professes his love for her and their friendship turns into a love relation.

**Caring/Love** Mr. Belinski cares for Cluny Brown from the first moment he sees her. We can observe his caring attitude in the advice he gives to her while they are at Mr. Ames' house. Furthermore, he shares with Cluny his observations regarding Mr. Wilson and the kind of life she can have with her. When Mr. Belinski talks to Mr. Wilson, he makes it clear that they do not consider Cluny merely as a maid but that they're interested in her welfare and friends. All these scenes reflect how much Mr. Belinski cares for Cluny. Thus, from the beginning of the film, he's interested in her romantically, however, he does not necessarily make romantic advances toward her. Only at the train station, as Cluny desperately talks about how Mr. Wilson thinks she disgraced herself, does Mr. Belinski tell her to get on the train with him and express his love for her and how he will support both of them by writing best-selling novels. Thus, their love is not a love based on mere attraction, but a kind of love that is built on strong friendship and caring for each other.

## PSYCHOLOGY

**Sadness** Several scenes in the film depict sadness. One of these is when Cluny Brown is sent by her Uncle Arn to the Carmel manor and she is preparing her luggage. She looks deeply upset about the fact that she will leave her uncle and feels frightened by her uncertain future, yet her uncle is determined that this is an opportunity for Cluny to find *her place* in life. Before she leaves, she says to her uncle: 'Girls leave home because they're thrown out'. This statement expresses Cluny's sadness about being sent to



a faraway house. Another scene where Cluny is sad is when she fixes the plumbing issue at Mrs. Wilson's birthday celebration. Her unladylike behavior is disapproved of by all the guests and Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. Mr. Wilson does not even wish to speak to her until she makes herself presentable (referring to her raised sleeves). Cluny has had the best intentions while fixing Mr. Wilson's plumbing issue and even says to him that this is her birthday present for Mrs. Wilson. However, her good intentions are not understood or appreciated by her environment which creates a certain type of sadness in Cluny.

**Anger** Anger is an emotion that we see in several characters. Firstly, Cluny's Uncle Arn becomes angry when he comes to Mr. Ames' apartment only to see Cluny in a drunken state. He thinks she's being taken advantage of and is angry at the two men, Mr. Belinski and Mr. Ames. When Mr. Ames tries to give him money for Cluny's work, he angrily rejects the money saying: 'You can't buy me off with your filthy pound note'. A second scene depicting anger is when Sir Carmel is advised by Cluny as to what to eat and not. After Cluny runs to leave the room, Sir Carmel voices his shock and anger saying: 'Outrageous, preposterous, strikes me speechless.' A third scene where we witness Anger is when Andrew sees Mr. Belinski stepping out of Betty Cream's room after she screams multiple times. He questions him directly as to what he has been doing and even intends to go after Mr. Belinski to face him but is stopped by Lady Carmel from doing so. Nevertheless, the next day he tries to fight with Mr. Belinski (yet the viewers do not get to see what happens in their fight).

**Jealousy** Mr. Belinski becomes jealous of Mr. Wilson after finding out that he has invited Cluny for tea with his mother. He shows his jealousy and tries to disturb the peace of Mr. Wilson when he rings the doorbell multiple times and then runs away from the chemist's shop. His interruptions do not result in any big change other than making Mr. Wilton frustrated. However, it is because Mr. Belinski's jealousy is very subtle, and not of a great degree as he with high probability believes that Cluny is capable of making and will make the best choice for herself in the end.

**Otherness** Cluny is the *other* in the film. She does not have feelings of alienation from the society around her, possibly because of her vivacious and positive nature. Nevertheless, she stands out from the crowds because she is someone who does not readily conform to standardized gender and class roles. Her passion is plumbing which is generally categorized as a manly profession. Her showcasing of her plumbing skills astonishes and at times, shocks those around her, including Mr. Ames, Mr. Belinski, Mr. Wilson, Sir Carmel, and so on. She is thus different and *other* as she defies the conventions and norms of society. Moreover, she is also not afraid to overstep established hierarchical social structures as when she addresses Sir Carmel at the dinner table, advising him what to eat and what not to eat. Her free spirit stops her from seeing what is obviously socially inappropriate to others. Thus, we can say that by not conforming to long-established gender and class roles, she rises above them and becomes *the other*.

## QUEST

**Explore** The film is ultimately about the exploration of the world by Cluny Brown. There are various paths along which she explores her environment and the world. Firstly, she loves plumbing and explores the world through this passion of hers. Secondly, she goes to Carmel's manor as a parlormaid and explores another occupation and way of being. Thirdly, she becomes friends with Mr. Belinski who appreciates her skills and her way of being in the world. He soon becomes someone to whom she can confide. Fourthly, she gets to know Mr. Wilson and his mother Mrs. Wilson, and discovers their way of living. Thus, there are multiple paths upon which she treads and through which she experiences the world around her.

## CHANGE

**Transience** Despite not being a major theme of the film, the theme of transience is nevertheless brought up in a certain scene of Cluny Brown. This scene is when Mrs. Wilson has her birthday celebration and Mr. Wilson makes a speech related to her birthday. He starts his speech with the phrase *tempora mutantur* (which is a Latin adage referring to the changes brought about by the passage of time) and says that sixty-five years ago his mother wasn't even here. This makes us viewers, even if for a short period, question the flow of time in our lives and the big scheme of things, in particular when considering

that a possibly lively and happy child has in time turned into a 65-year-old Mrs. Wilson who does not even care to speak and only expresses her disapproval of things when she clears her throat as she so frequently does.

## APPEARANCE

**Dreams** Cluny Brown dreams of Mr. Belinski. In her dream, Mr. Belinski is in a fez and rides a black Arabian stallion. Then he swoops Cluny up off the desert and sits her right in front of him. He burns up the sands. After listening to her dream, Mr. Belinski asks whether he took her to his tent, but Cluny says she remembered their pact just in time and kicked herself. This dream may be representing Cluny Brown's unconscious when examined from a psychoanalytic perspective. Cluny Brown may have romantic feelings for Mr. Belinski deep in her unconscious. What the black Arabian horse represents is of course up to debate, however, we can infer that Cluny wishes to have an adventurous lifestyle where she will always be on the run and discover new places with her beloved.

**Self-delusion** Cluny Brown deludes herself when she thinks she might have a good and happy life with Mr. Wilson, the chemist. Their characters and personalities are incompatible with one another which she does not seem to notice, possibly because she so earnestly searches for a place which she can call 'hers'. Even after it becomes apparent that the sensible and serious-minded Mr. Wilson does not approve of her plumbing and considers it foolish, she still believes she might one day become Mrs. Jonathan Wilson: 'That is, if I don't behave foolishly again. And I won't. I'm certainly going to watch myself. *One can't be foolish and have a place in life, can one?*' The answer to this question is that Cluny is not foolish in the first place. Secondly, one *can* be foolish and have a place in life despite perhaps being highly disapproved of and judged by the society one finds himself or herself in. However, Mr. Belinski does not answer Cluny's question at this point and just tells her to get on the train with him. On the train, he tells her that if he were rich, he'd build her the most beautiful mansion, with the most *exquisite and complicated plumbing*: 'And right in the middle of the most elegant housewarming party, I would hand you a hammer and say, Ladies and gentlemen, Madame Cluny Belinski is about to *put the pipes in their place*.' This shows us that Mr. Belinski does not believe what Cluny does is foolish at all. Secondly, Cluny does have a place in life and even *puts things (pipes) in their places*. Mr. Belinski's appreciation of her nonconforming skills makes Cluny realize that there can be people in the world who accept her with all her quirks and strange behaviors. We can conclude that her self-delusion that she could be happy with Mr. Wilton comes to an end at the end of the film.

## SCENES

### MR. AMES'S party

#### Mr. Ames will have a cocktail party

The film begins with a view of the Thames River and the Big Ben. *There was nothing particularly important going on in London on a quiet Sunday afternoon in June 1938. The most exciting event of the day was Mr. Hilary Ames' cocktail party—and even that was exciting only to Mr. Ames.*



**Mr. Ames's sink is out of order** We see Mr. Ames talking on the telephone about an issue with his sink that it won't drain. And he's got fifty people popping over for cocktails. He says he's called dozens of plumbers but none of them are available to come. He adds that one chap half-promised to be over more than an hour ago. He says he can't call up such people as 'the honorable Betty Cream' and tell her his sink's out of order. At that moment, the doorbell rings and Mr. Ames thinks the plumber has finally arrived.



**Mr. Belinski is mistaken for the plumber** Mr. Ames guides the man directly to his kitchen to show him the sink. However, to Mr. Ames' surprise, the man says the sink looks interesting: 'Is there anything more arresting than a sink out of order? An everyday, ordinary, commonplace pantry sink. And yet, an analog of human frustration.' The man soon tells Mr. Ames that he needs a plumber to fix the sink, yet he is not a plumber. It turns out he has come to see Professor Leigh who, according to Mr. Ames, happens to be in Scotland. Mr. Ames is so concerned about his sink that he doesn't show much interest in the man. The man says that Mr. Ames is too selfish as he is only interested in Betty Cream and that he doesn't ask the man anything about himself. At this point, Mr. Ames asks the man if there is anything he can do for him. Then the man introduces himself as Adam Belinski and says that he is tired. He further adds that if Mr. Leigh were there, he'd have insisted on him taking a nap. Mr. Ames seems surprised by Mr. Belinski's talk. He suggests that he take a nap. Once again, the doorbell rings.



**The plumber's niece arrives** A girl introduces herself as Uncle Arn's niece. She says her uncle won't come but that Mr. Ames sounded so stopped up when he talked on the phone that she thought she'd have a fling at the thing herself. Mr. Ames is doubtful whether she can do the job as she does not look like a plumber, but the girl insists that she's been around pipes and sewers for a long time. She also believes that there is no need to take the long road when it comes to pipes as in many cases, 'one good bang might turn the trick in a jiffy'. Mr. Ames does not want her to do the plumbing as she might smash the pipe to smithereens. However, Mr. Belinski persuades him and Mr. Ames lets the girl try.



**Cluny Brown gets to work** The girl takes out her gadgets, deals with the pipe forcefully and bangs loudly. While she does so, she starts talking about how she had a tea at the Ritz: 'You'd never have thought I was out of place'. Mr. Belinski is surprised as to why she thinks she'd be out of place. We soon find out it is her uncle telling her to learn her place: 'He's always telling me, *Cluny Brown, you don't know your place. Think of your place. Cluny Brown, you ought to learn your place.*' Mr. Belinski says to Cluny Brown: 'Nobody can tell you where your place is. Where is my place? Where is anybody's place? I'll tell you where it is. Wherever you're happy, that's your place [...]. And happiness is a matter of purely personal adjustment to your environment. In Hyde Park, for instance, some people like to feed nuts to the squirrels. But if it makes you happy to feed squirrels to the nuts, who am I to say nuts to the squirrels?' At that moment, the sink starts to drain. Cluny Brown has successfully finished the job.



### **Cluny Brown becomes drunk**

Cluny Brown holds a cocktail in her hand. She says: 'My first sink and my first cocktail.' She is apparently drunk and says there's a Persian cat feeling coming over her. She talks about wanting to travel the world and suddenly shapeshifting into a cat and seeing she's in Baghdad. Mr. Ames implores them as their guests are about to arrive any time soon. At that moment, the doorbell rings again.



### **Uncle Arn comes to take Cluny Brown**

Cluny's uncle arrives at Mr. Ames's apartment. He gets angry when he sees her niece on the couch in a drunken state. He is in particular angry about the fact that her niece has been given a strong drink. Mr. Belinski tries to introduce the host Mr. Ames but Mr. Porritt says he has no wish to meet the individual. He says Cluny Brown is being taken advantage of and she never knows her place. He has decided that she will go into service, that is, become a domestic servant. Mr. Ames wishes to pay them for Cluny's work, however, Mr. Porritt says: 'You can't buy me off with your filthy pound note' and throws away the pound note to the ground. They leave the apartment. Mr. Belinski is surprised that a British subject is calling a symbol of the empire 'filthy'. He takes the pound note from the ground and puts it into his pocket.



### Cocktail party

There is piano music at Mr. Ames's cocktail party. We see Betty Cream and the two young men pursuing her: Andrew Carmel and John Frewen. They all look depressed and talk about the recent political events of the time. Andrew says: 'Parties and people laughing, with Europe on the brink', John adds: 'Yes. Hitler and Vienna and Prague, and people go around having fun.' Betty, on the other hand, seems to be tired of hearing the same political talk over and over again. Andrew insists that she must understand they're on the verge of a war. Betty seems not to be impressed by this news, and has a more practical approach to the matter: 'Well, then stop talking and do something about it.' When Andrew says he has written a letter to the Times, Betty says that there's then nothing to worry about. Then she leaves the two men.



### Andrew and John gossip about Betty

As Betty goes inside, she is approached by Mr. Ames who asks her whether she's having a good time. Then another woman talks to her in a nervously excited way about how *there's only one Betty Cream*. Meanwhile, the two young men Andrew and John gossip about her. John says that: 'Everyone makes such an absurd fuss over her. She's simply unbearable [...] She's cold, conceited, and callous.' Yet it turns out John asked her to marry him two days ago and was rejected. They talk about how she hasn't any talent, yet Andrew remarks that she has beauty which can be helpful. John finally says that: '[he] shall ask her once or twice more, then [he] shall wash [his] hands of her', meaning he will not pursue her anymore.



**Betty Cream finds Mr. Belinski—a Czechoslovakian, anti-fascist professor—sleeping in a separate room** Betty Cream goes into a room and sees a man snoring in a bed. She quickly goes to tell Andrew and John about whom she found. They come to look at the man. John says the man is squiffed. Andrew realizes that the man is Adam Belinski. John and Andrew look at Mr. Belinski in astonishment. Betty asks whether he is a gangster. Andrew says he's a writer, a professor in Prague, 'one of Hitler's worst enemies'. John adds: 'That's why the Nazis are after him.' Andrew says he looks so much nobler than in his pictures and John adds that he looks serene, the two young men seem to be utterly impressed by Mr. Belinski's presence. Betty notes the obvious fact that he snores. Soon, Mr. Belinski wakes up. The three introduce themselves to the professor and ask him whether he's in trouble. Mr. Belinski admits he's a man without a home. The young men think they must do something about it as the professor is their responsibility. Betty suggests that they go out of the house. Mr. Belinski suggests the Ritz as a place to go.



**Betty Cream, Andrew Carmel, and John Frewen give the professor a ride to his house** We see a car arriving at a house. Mr. Belinski gives his thanks for a delightful evening and says goodbye to Betty Cream, Andrew Carmel, and John Frewen. Andrew and John are worried about the professor's safety and security and ask him about what kind of people live in this house. They further add that Mr. Belinski should accept more money than the 20 pounds they gave to him. However, Mr. Belinski assures them he doesn't need any more money. The two young men finally say goodbye and depart.



### **Cluny Brown prepares her luggage to leave her Uncle Arn's house**

We see Cluny Brown in sad spirits, preparing her luggage. She asks her uncle about who's going to mend his socks, who's going to answer the telephone, and who he's going to talk to when he's got something on his mind. Cluny Brown is very sad that she has to leave. However, her uncle thinks it is for the best and a great opportunity for an untrained girl like her to be accepted as a parlormaid in a nice house in the country. Cluny Brown worries about whether they might starve her or knock her about. Uncle Arn assures her they won't and tells her that she can send him a line if it becomes necessary. Then he gives her a photograph of his. Cluny is so happy to receive this item as it will remind her of home. He tells her to keep her mind on her work. Cluny Brown finally tells her uncle that: 'Girls leave home because they're thrown out' which expresses Cluny's sadness about being sent to a far-away house.



### **Cluny Brown gets off the train accompanied by an old man and a dog**

A train arrives at the station. Cluny is accompanied by an old man and a dog that seems to be fond of Cluny as she has taken care of the dog during the journey. The old man says: 'I've never seen Roddy behave so well on a journey, thanks to you.' The dog does not want to leave Cluny. The old man adds that they might see each other again sometime and asks her where she's going. After hearing that Cluny is headed to Friar Carmel Manor, the old man says that they're his neighbors. Then he offers her a lift and introduces himself as Colonel Duff Graham.





**Andrew tells his parents about his special guest: Professor Adam Belinsky**

Andrew nervously comes near his mother and father. He informs them his special guest is coming alone tomorrow night. He tells them he's in danger and that: 'He's fighting for a new and better world.' The father, Sir Henry Carmel, is surprised: 'What for?' Andrew tries to explain to his father that he's a Czech fighting the Nazis and adds that England won't be safe until they produce their own Belinskis. His mother, Lady Alice Carmel, assures her son that Britain has never failed and wants him to calmly have his tea. Andrew tries to tell her that this is a matter of life and death but his mother seems more interested in making sure that their guest has a pleasant weekend with them. Andrew says he must immediately go to London. Lady Carmel asks whether it is about Betty Cream which Andrew denies.



**Cluny Brown arrives at the Carmels' house** As soon as Andrew leaves with his car, another car stops by the Carmels' manor. Out of the car come Cluny and Colonel Duff Graham. In the house, Colonel Duff Graham greets Sir- and Lady Carmel in a friendly manner. He says he just got time for a ride before dinner and won't be staying for tea although he says to Cluny that he'd like to see her at some point. Then he joyfully leaves the room. Cluny is left alone with Sir- and Lady Carmel.



**Sir- and Lady Carmel mistake Cluny Brown for someone else** Lady Carmel asks Cluny Brown to sit down and have tea. Sir Carmel offers her crumpets. Cluny is so surprised by their hospitality. She says she's never seen such beautiful flowers in her life referring to the garden Lady Carmel works in. She also adds that she's going to do everything to please them, asks them further whether there's anything wrong with their plumbing, and that she could fix a leaking pipe. Sir Carmel is surprised to hear these today's girls go in for plumbing. Later on, she tells them that she's been sent to work as a parlormaid. At that moment, Sir- and Lady Carmel realize that Cluny is the new maid and Lady Carmel calls for the butler to take Cluny. Cluny feels uncomfortable, worried about whether she's done anything wrong. The butler Syrette comes in and Lady Carmel introduces Cluny to him. Next, Sir- and Lady Carmel leave the room.



**Syrette takes Cluny to the housekeeper Mrs. Maile** Syrette introduces Cluny to the housekeeper Mrs. Maile and Weller. When Mrs. Maile asks her where she's been, Syrette tells her that she's been having tea with Sir Henry and her Ladyship which amazes Mrs. Maile. Then Mrs. Maile teaches Cluny the basics such as that she will say *ma'am* to Mrs. Maile, and *sir* to Mr. Syrette and if by chance she finds herself in the same room with Sir Henry and her Ladyship: '[She] will not be in the room. [She] will see and not see. [She] will hear and not hear.' After this instruction, Cluny remarks that she understands everything perfectly: 'For instance, if I feel like...What was it the gentleman said? Oh, yes. If I feel like *feeding squirrels to the nuts*, this *isn't* the place for it.' Mr. Syrette and Mrs. Maile turn silent, not understanding what Cluny is talking about.



### **Mr. Belinski meets Sir- and Lady Carmel**

Mr. Syrette announces the arrival of Professor Belinski. Lady Carmel says to Mr. Belinski that he is most welcome there, for as long as he cares to stay. Mr. Belinski is grateful for their hospitality. However, he is worried because he has no proper dinner jacket, only a lounge suit. Sir Carmel remarks that he once wore a lounge suit at dinner in Naples when he had gone slumming (which means to visit impoverished areas or squalid locales, especially out of curiosity or for amusement). Lady Carmel says to Mr. Belinsky that Andrew will lend him a dinner jacket.



### **At dinnertime, Cluny Brown is shocked to see Mr. Belinski**

At the dinner table, Mr. Belinski quotes from Shakespeare: 'This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle. This other Eden, Demi-paradise. This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land. This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.' Lady Carmel praises Mr. Belinski's English skills. Sir Carmel talks about how as a teenager he went traveling around the world and he never spoke a word of any language other than English. However, it turns out that Sir Carmel is not so fond of traveling after all: 'If a man has a home, he should stick to it.' On the other hand, Lady Carmel is a 'natural cosmopolitan': 'If one never gets out of one's own country, one becomes quite pot-bound.' Meanwhile, Cluny Brown comes to serve dinner. While she is serving, she whispers to Sir Carmel to take a particular piece of mutton who is shocked that he's being advised by a maid. Then Cluny Brown recognizes Mr. Belinski sitting at the table and drops the platter she's been holding, shouting: '*Nuts to the squirrels!*' Then she runs out of the room.



### **Mr. Belinski prevents Cluny Brown from being fired**

Mr. Syrette intervenes and says Cluny Brown will be dismissed immediately. Sir Carmel is speechless and thinks what Cluny did is outrageous and preposterous: 'Hang it all, it's just not done', meaning her behavior was unacceptable, inappropriate, or incorrect in this particular social situation. Mr. Belinski says it is thanks to Cluny that Sir Carmel took the right piece of the meal. Lady Carmel adds that it's so difficult to get domestics to come to the country nowadays. Sir Carmel, on the other hand, is much more stubborn: 'Well, she needn't have dropped the platter and insulted my friend.' Then they talk about what she said about nuts and squirrels. Mr. Syrette interrupts and says: 'If I may say so, my lady, the sooner the young woman is dismissed, the better.' Mr. Belinski, however, tries to protect Cluny Brown: 'I [...] know that as a guardian of English customs and traditions, this young woman has offended your sensibilities.' Then he goes on to quote from Shakespeare again: 'The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven.' Then they raise their glasses to Shakespeare. This settles the issue and guarantees that Cluny Brown will continue her work as a parlormaid.



**The end of the evening** Lady Carmel says to Mr. Belinski that Mr. Syrette will valet him. Mr. Belinski remarks he has two suits: the one he's wearing and Andrew's dinner jacket: 'They're both at Syrette's disposal.' Lady Carmel tells him that there's a nightingale under his window. They say goodbye to each other.



### **Cluny Brown and Mr. Belinski promise to go on being friends**

Cluny Brown bursts into tears while she is writing a letter to her uncle. At that point, we see Mr. Belinski by the window looking into the room. He knocks on the window and Cluny opens it for him to come in. Mr. Belinski asks her to explain how she ended up in this house of all places. Cluny says that it is all her uncle Arn. But she is so upset because she doesn't want to be a maid all her life: 'I'll go on and on dropping platters, putting hot water bottles into cold beds, and having Wednesday afternoon off in the village, where the cinema opens only at night.' Mr. Belinski shares the same sentiment as Cluny as he remarks that he is a city man who loves the city, lights, and smoke in his lungs. Cluny says: 'It's so good to talk to someone who's *out of place* too.' She suddenly hugs him. Then she apologizes and says to him that he isn't her type. Mr. Belinski states he understands perfectly and they must go on being friends although he also comments that as time passes they might not look so bad to each other. They promise to kick each other if they ever seem romantic to one another.



### **Mrs. Maile is taken aback by Mr. Belinski's inappropriate behavior**

Mr. Belinski stands by the door and is about to leave. Cluny says that it is lucky they met in the flat and that she wishes she could do plumbing again. This last part of their conversation is overheard by Mr. Syrette and Mrs. Maile. Later, Mr. Syrette tells Mrs. Maile that Mr. Belinski rose at dinner and addressed him directly as an equal. Mr. Maile seems shocked to hear about this. Then they say goodbye to each other.



### **Cluny Brown and Mr. Belinski run into each other in the village**

Cluny is beautifully dressed as she runs into Mr. Belinski who asks her about what the occasion is. It is Wednesday, her day off when she is free from three to seven. It turns out that Cluny met Mr. Wilson, the village's chemist, to buy pear tree liniment for Mrs. Maile's rheumatism and is now invited by him to tea and to meet his mother. Cluny looks very happy about the event: 'It's so exciting to meet a man who's surrounded by hundreds of bottles, and every one of them life or death.' On the other hand, Mr. Belinski looks slightly disappointed but he wishes well to Cluny and she heads for the chemist's shop.



### **Cluny Brown meets Mr. Wilson at his chemistry shop**

Cluny Brown comes to the chemist's shop where Mr. Wilson is attending to a customer. After the customers leave, they greet each other. Cluny asks Mr. Wilson whether he has noticed any difference in her appearance. Mr. Wilson says he had remarked that she looked intelligent the last time he saw her. When Cluny makes it clear that she is referring to the garden on her head, Mr. Wilson says that he doesn't object to it although his mother might find it frivolous. Then Cluny takes off her hat.



**Mr. Wilson is a very sensible man with a wide array of skills**

Cluny Brown and Mr. Wilton step into the parlor where Cluny is impressed by the elegance of the room. Mr. Wilson shows her a picture of a sheep which makes her sad considering the sheep has so little life to live until the slaughter but Mr. Wilson objects to Cluny's empathy and remarks that he'd be proud to serve the empire if he were a sheep. Then he shows her the map of the valley and reveals his intention to stay in the same place all his life. Cluny asks what he'd do if the house burned down but it appears that Mr. Wilson has taken every precaution to prevent such a thing and it turns out he is also chief of the Friars Carmel volunteer fire department which astonishes Cluny.



**It is teatime**

Mr. Wilson goes to call his mother. He knocks on the door of his mother's room from where we hear the sounds of throat-clearing. Later, we see the three of them drinking their teas.



**Cluny is impressed by Mr. Wilson's playing the harmonium** Mr. Wilson says he shall play something on the harmonium which once again surprises Cluny: 'You play the harmonium too? Is there anything you don't do, Mr. Wilson?' As Mr. Wilson plays the harmonium, Cluny is deeply impressed by the beauty of the music. Meanwhile, Mrs. Wilson snores. After the music finishes, the doorbell rings. As Mr. Wilson purposefully makes the client wait, he remarks that he's glad she's so responsive to music. Cluny says about his playing: 'When you were playing, it did something to me. I saw you in your fireman's hat, climbing up a steep ladder and saving a child. It was all so beautiful and brave.' Next, Mr. Wilson goes inside to attend to the client but there is no one. As he gets angry and goes back to the parlor, we see Mr. Belinski waiting near a wall. He once again opens the door to ring the doorbell and goes away.



**Cluny Brown and Mr. Wilson run into Mr. Belinski on the road** We see Cluny Brown and Mr. Wilson walking together. He tells her that his mother's taken a great liking to her. Cluny is surprised as Mr. Wilson's mother didn't even speak a word. Mr. Wilson says that his mother doesn't waste words on flattery: 'If she speaks, it's to correct faults.' Next, Cluny recognizes Mr. Belinski. After a formal greeting, Mr. Wilson asks whether he is a relative of Mrs. Maile or Mr. Syrette. Soon, he is surprised to learn that Mr. Belinski is a guest of Sir Henry and Lady Carmel. Mr. Belinski says he understands him perfectly as a guest is not ordinarily aware of the existence of a maid and that must be what troubled Mr. Wilson. Mr. Belinski goes on to say with an expression that abruptly takes on a serious tone, that at Friars Carmel, they do not consider Cluny merely as a maid but that they're interested in her welfare and friends. At that point, the town's clock strikes seven. Cluny leaves loping along.





### **Mr. Belinski questions Mr. Wilson about his intentions regarding Cluny**

After that, Mr. Belinski asks Mr. Wilson about his intentions regarding Cluny. Mr. Wilson says that he is not the sort of man 'who would invite a young lady for tea merely to while away an afternoon' which relieves Mr. Belinski's worries. He also asks Mr. Wilson whether he drinks and is pleased to find out that he doesn't.



### **Mr. Belinski explains his thoughts about Mr. Wilson**

We see Mr. Belinski talking to himself, rehearsing what he shall say to Cluny. He says that he's not saying: 'Let's break our pact' but he's also not suggesting that they keep it. As he is talking, there's a knock on the door and it is Cluny. She asks Mr. Belinski what he thinks of Mr. Wilson. Mr. Belinski talks in metaphors: 'Out there is an ocean. On the ocean is a boat, braving the storm and battling the billows. That's not Mr. Wilson. But in a quiet harbor, there is a freighter. Its engine is turned off, no smoke comes out of its funnel. Nothing could ever budge it, neither wind nor wave. That's Mr. Wilson.' Cluny is glad that he liked Mr. Wilson. She talks about how peaceful, cozy, and homey it was in Mr. Wilson's house with him playing the harmonium: 'I got all choked up. For the first time, I really felt what it must be like to have a place.' She adds how she even liked his mother's snoring because she is an orphan. Mr. Belinski says: 'But you're happy now. That's all that matters.' Next, Cluny gives him his hot water bottle remarking that he probably won't need it on this warm night. Yet, Mr. Belinski states that he's feeling *chilly*. Mr. Belinski's feeling chilly reflects his loneliness and sadness about Cluny being with Mr. Wilson.



**Andrew is concerned about Mr. Belinski and feels strongly about the global political situation**

We see the chemist's shop's doorbell ringing, once again there's no customer which angers Mr. Wilson. He goes out to see if there's anyone. Andrew happens to be driving. We see Mr. Belinski making the sheep pass across the road. Andrew is surprised to see him. When Mr. Belinski asks him about Betty Cream, he says he doesn't want to hear her name again. According to him, all women are 'impossible, harebrained, self-centered, insensitive, idiotic...' He further goes on to tell the professor that he is sorry for having neglected him shamefully and asks whether he's seen anything suspicious or looking like a Nazi. Mr. Belinski jokingly says a cow gave him a nasty look. Andrew says that Mr. Belinski may not value his life but he does. Mr. Belinski tries to explain that he's not in special danger as everybody in the world is in danger (because of the Nazis). But he adds that he may be in a bad situation if he ever publishes his book in England or America. After that, he says there's a lull and they can relax. However, Andrew is not sympathetic to the suggestion. He wants to join the RAF (Royal Air Force).



**Betty Cream is a guest at the Carmels' house** Betty Cream comes riding and says good morning to Andrew who is shocked to see her. He goes to ask her why she came. It turns out Lady Carmel invited her. Andrew replies with how he was to know she'd have the nerve to come to his house after their row. However, Betty says she doesn't remember they had a row.



**Mr. Belinski asks a favor from Betty Cream** Mr. Belinski comes to Betty Cream's room. It turns out he came to talk to Betty about Cluny Brown who happens to be Betty's personal maid. Betty first doesn't seem to know about her but then she remarks: 'As I remember, this Cluny is a sweet little thing. A bit talkative.' Mr. Belinski asks her whether Cluny talked about him. Betty says she's sure she did but 'she talked about everything'. Next, Mr. Belinski explains that Cluny Brown wants the evening off to attend a birthday celebration. As she is also Betty's personal maid, she must also allow her to go to the birthday celebration. Betty says Cluny can have the whole night off.



**Cluny Brown's dream** Mr. Belinski goes to tell Cluny that she can have the night off which makes her happy. She tells him things have been happening. It turns out Mr. Wilson spoke to her mother about Cluny and she didn't say no to their relationship. He also asked his aunt and Mr. Latham, his solicitor; and that he might also ask Cluny very soon. Then she hesitates to speak but upon Mr. Belinski's insistence, she speaks about a dream she had the other night about Mr. Belinski. He was in a fez and rode a black Arabian stallion. Then he swooped Cluny up off the desert and sat her right in front of him. He was burning up the sands. Mr. Belinski asks whether he took her to his tent, but Cluny says she remembered their pact just in time and kicked herself. Then she asks whether he'd wish she'd gone to his tent. Mr. Belinski replies that she did the right as he has no tent, not in the desert or anywhere.



### **Mrs. Wilson's birthday celebration**

The guests are gathered around the birthday table at Mr. Wilson's house. Mrs. Wilson keeps on clearing her throat. Then she blows out the one candle on her cake. Mr. Wilson proceeds to make a speech. He starts his speech with the phrase *tempora mutantur* (which is a Latin adage that refers to the changes brought about by the passage of time) and says that sixty-five years ago his mother wasn't even here. Then he gives thanks to all who came. He says he's guilty of an omission concerning a *young lady* but remarks that sometimes an omission is an admission which he's sure the guests will agree with.



### **Cluny fixes the pipes which everyone except a child finds utterly inappropriate**

At that moment, we see loud and disruptive sounds coming from the toilet. A boy comes out and says: 'I just turned on the tap. It's the plumbing.' As the sounds keep on disturbing the guests, Cluny rises and says that she can fix it. Mr. Wilson is shocked to hear Cluny say that, but she goes on to tell the guests that she's a plumber's niece: 'Just give me a hammer and a wrench and I'll show you.' The boy says he will get those things for Cluny. As she starts banging the pipes accompanied by the little boy, Mr. Wilson closes the door. He proceeds to cut the cake. Then we see the sound of water being drained. Cluny comes out the door happily: 'That's my birthday gift to your mother, Mr. Wilson.' However, Mrs. Wilson loudly clears her throat, showing her disapproval of Cluny's behavior. Then she retires to her room. Soon afterward, the guests excuse themselves saying it is getting late. The boy thanks Cluny for letting him watch.



### **Mr. Wilson is disappointed with Cluny Brown**

After everybody is gone, Cluny asks Mr. Wilson whether she did something wrong. Mr. Wilson replies: 'I wish I hadn't seen what I saw.' When Cluny remarks she was only trying to help, Mr. Wilson says he'd rather not discuss anything till she makes herself presentable referring to her raised sleeves.



**Mr. Belinski enters Betty Cream's room** At night, Mr. Belinski enters Betty Cream's room and sits on a sofa while Betty is surprisedly looking at him. He asks her what one does with a woman like her. She tells him she will scream if he does not get out of the room. He asks her why she is so vicious to Andrew. However, Betty thinks that Mr. Belinski came to see her to make romantic advances toward her as she cannot help but notice his carefully combed hair and his smelling like a perfume salesman. Mr. Belinski thinks this would be an interesting problem for a psychoanalyst to solve as he could have sworn he came there for no other reason than to speak for Andrew. Then Mr. Belinski asks her why she is so nasty to Andrew: 'Can't you ever think of anybody but yourself? Doesn't it occur to you that you could make someone else happy?' At that point, Betty has had enough and she screams several times. Andrew, Mrs. Maile, Mr. Syrette, and Lady Carmel gather in front of the room. Mr. Belinski comes out of the room and says he mistook the door for the bathroom.



**Lady Carmel talks to Betty Cream**

Lady Carmel soon sends everyone away and asks Betty whether she can come in. Lady Carmel says to Betty that she ought to get married. She asks her whether she's going to marry Andrew. When Betty says yes, Lady Carmel then states she should tell him so because he's getting quite nervous. Betty obediently says that she will tell him tomorrow. Then they say goodnight to each other.



### **Mr. Belinski and Sir Carmel talk about Hitler**

Sir Carmel is having his breakfast and invites Mr. Belinski to the table. Sir Carmel talks to him about how Andrew thinks war will be declared and he wants to join the RAF. Then they talk about Hitler. Sir Carmel remarks that Hitler has written a sort of outdoor book called *My Camp* (referring to the autobiographical manifesto *Mein Kampf/My Struggle*). Mr. Belinski states that there will inevitably be a war. Sir Carmel responds that then he's glad Andrew is joining up as Carmels never shirk their duties.



### **Betty Cream and Andrew will be married and Mr. Belinski is leaving the manor**

Lady Carmel, Betty Cream, and Andrew come near Sir Carmel and Mr. Belinski. Betty Cream announces that she and Andrew are going to be married. Mr. Belinski congratulates them. After this, he tells Lady Carmel that he'll be leaving for London. Sir Carmel is visibly upset that Mr. Belinski is leaving. At that moment, Andrew says he'd like to have a word with Mr. Belinski, and the two leave.



**Mr. Belinski and Andrew's fight** After they go into a separate room, Andrew says to the professor that he knows Mr. Belinski wasn't looking for the bathroom door last night. Mr. Belinski tries to tell Andrew he went into Betty Cream's room last night to talk about him but Andrew doesn't believe that. He says to Mr. Belinski: 'I have great respect for you as a writer, as a philosopher, as a man of principle. [...]But I'm going to knock you down.' Mr. Belinski tries to delay their fight by asking Andrew about how much he owes him and telling him that he was once the lightweight champion of all of Czechoslovakia. They get ready to fight but the scene ends and we don't see if they've fought or not.



**Andrew lends more money to the professor** We see Andrew taking out money from a drawer. Then Betty Cream comes in and asks him what the matter is, however, Andrew tries to hide what he has in his hands. Finally, he confesses that he'll lend fifty pounds to the professor. Betty tells him to give hundred pounds, two hundred, or three hundred. She is thankful that Mr. Belinski stepped into her room last night: 'If I hadn't screamed last night, we wouldn't be engaged today.'





**Mrs. Maile talks about her work** The maid Weller talks to Mr. Syrette and Mrs. Maile that Cluny Brown is ill. Mr. Syrette then talks about how Cluny Brown is not born with the instincts and talents of a second maid. Mrs. Maile agrees with him: 'One is born to things or one isn't. I remember when I was a little girl, I used to say to my Dolly: *Did you ring, your Ladyship? Shall I bring your tea, my lady?*' Mr. Syrette praises Mrs. Maile for the earnestness with which she does her job.



**Mr. Belinski's presents** Mr. Belinski appears. He gives presents to both Mrs. Maile and Mr. Syrette and says goodbye to them. After finding out Cluny Brown is indisposed, he asks Mrs. Maile to give her his parting present. Then Mr. Belinski says goodbye to the members of the Carmel family and leaves.



**Cluny Brown tries to catch up with Mr. Belinski** After Mr. Belinski has left, Cluny Brown appears. She hastily shows the members of the Carmel family the black stockings Mr. Belinski has bought her as a present, rushes out, and runs after him. She catches up with him at the train station.



**At the train station** At the train station, Cluny finds the whereabouts of Mr. Belinski, goes near him, and gives thanks to him for his present. Mr. Belinski asks her about Mr. Wilson. Cluny talks about how she disgraced herself the other night. Cluny says: 'Men just don't marry plumbers.' She adds Mr. Wilson said that with his standing in the community, he cannot afford a wife who is subject to impulses. Yet, it turns out Mr. Wilson is going to ask his mother to give Cluny another chance: 'If everything turns out all right, I might still be Mrs. Jonathan Wilson. That is, if I don't behave foolishly again. And I won't. I'm certainly going to watch myself. *One can't be foolish and have a place in life, can one?*' As the train is about to leave, Mr. Belinski tells Cluny to get in and so the two get on the train.



**Mr. Belinski professes his love to Cluny Brown** On the train, Mr. Belinski says to Cluny that if he were rich, he'd build her the most beautiful mansion, with the most exquisite and complicated plumbing: 'And right in the middle of the most elegant housewarming party, I would hand you a hammer and say, *Ladies and gentlemen, Madame Cluny Belinski is about to put the pipes in their place.*' He tells her to take off her cap and apron and that she'll never have to save three meals a day. He further tells her that he was going to write a book about morality versus expediency, but now he is going to write a best-seller: A murder mystery. This book will make enough money for both of them. Cluny asks what if there should be three of them. Then Mr. Belinski remarks that he'll write a sequel or a serial. Cluny says: 'I don't think I'll have much time for plumbing.' Then they embrace and kiss each other.



**Fifth Avenue Book Shop** We see the Fifth Avenue Book Shop. In the window of it, copies of Adam Belinski's best-selling novel are displayed which is called: *The Nightingale Murder*. We see Mr. Belinski and Cluny Brown passing through the streets of Fifth Avenue, dressed very elegantly. They look at the window of the shop and people gather around them, congratulating them on the novel. Soon, Cluny Brown faints and Mr. Belinski takes her away. In the next scene, we see a new best-selling book called: *The Nightingale Strikes Again*, suggesting to us the viewers that Cluny had a child and there are three of them now.



