

## Chapter 1 (pp. 1-16)

### Short Answer

1. Who is telling this story? What do you learn about the narrator's clothing and appearance?
2. Who taught the narrator to fight with a sword?
3. What is Patrick's reply when the narrator asks, "Kill me? But why?" Does the narrator understand Patrick's meaning?
4. What startles Thomas about the street fight with Patrick and Jack?
5. When the narrator finally states her name and sees her image in a shop window, are you surprised she is a girl? Why or why not?
6. What is Lucy's ambition?
7. Who is her father and what does he do? What happened to Lucy's mother?
8. Does Lucy seem to fool the members of the acting company into believing she is *Luke Culpeper*? Why do you think so? Why not?

### Topics for Discussion or Writing

1. Is there an occupation that interests you, even though you have always considered that line of work as being suitable only for the opposite sex? Think of certain jobs that have changed over time to allow people of both genders to perform them.
2. In 1589, London was a dangerous city for an unarmed person. Within a few years, though, men stopped wearing swords on the streets. Compare Lucy and Will's London of 1589 with the American West of the 1800s? How were the settings alike? How might they have been different?

**Chapter 2** (pp. 17-42)**Short Answer**

1. In Lucy's audition for a role with the acting company, who does she pretend to be? Her audition speech was originally given in 1588. Under what circumstances?
2. Why does Lucy *not* get a job?
3. How does Thomas react to Arthur's news that Sally is missing?
4. Why does Robert Taverner become interested in Arthur's story?
5. Why does Gilbert Dereham ask the actor named Will the question about twins?
6. In her conversations with the actors, what does Lucy reveal about her education? What is revealed about theirs? Who had university degrees? Who did not?
7. Will and Lucy enter into a wager. What are the terms of the wager?
8. *Will*: "But a sword can be made with words, can it not?"  
*Lucy*: "Ah, if one speaks to the *letter* and not to the spirit, you are right."  
What is the name for this kind of *word play*? Explain the word play quoted here.
9. How does the scoring go in the wager? How does Lucy achieve her win?
10. Why is the day special to Will?
11. What does Lucy learn about Thomas's relationship with Sally?
12. What does Will tell Lucy about his father?

**Topic for Discussion or Writing**

Lucy and Will do not exactly hit it off with one another, but are combative from the outset. Have you ever met someone who instantly brought out your argumentative or confrontational nature? Describe the encounter and the individual. If this has not happened to you, have you observed it among others? Describe what happened.

**Chapter 3** (pp. 43-59)

1. Who plays the title role in *The Mighty Myconides*?
2. In addition to applause, how does the audience show its approval of the performance?
3. What message does Ellen, Thomas's former girlfriend, give to Lucy? What is unusual about the way Ellen wrote the message?
4. Will claims to know where Sally's employer, Lord Charles Wotton, lives. Why has he learned this information?
5. When Will remarks that jokes about a person's name "can turn a boy into a man," Lucy is alarmed enough to change the subject. Why?
6. Lucy persuades Will to talk about his playwriting. What is the name of the play he is writing? Why does Lucy refer to it as a "plagiarism of Plautus"?
7. What is Will's plan for getting inside Lord Wotton's home? Does it work? How does Lucy pull it off?
8. Alice, a servant girl, leads a very different life from Lady Lucinda Culpeper. In the 1580s, though, each girl is alike, in being "trapped in her class." Explain the meaning of this phrase.
9. Alice is angry about Sally's great beauty. How does beauty (or the lack of it) also trap a person in a certain class?
10. When the servant named Basset enters the kitchen, Lucy realizes something startling about Will. What is that? How does Lucy explain Will's sudden absence? Where do you think Will has gone?
11. The next person who enters is Alice's young suitor whom Lucy recognizes. Where had she seen him before?

**Topic for Discussion or Writing**

In Shakespeare's day, artists needed wealthy patrons, such as members of the nobility, to provide financial support. Is this still true today? Is it (or *was* it) an ethical practice? Is it fair to other professions? Why or why not?

**Chapter 4** (pp. 60-76)**Short Answer**

1. Lucy says the word “Rosemary” to the young man in Alice’s kitchen. Why does she say this? Does he understand her meaning?
2. Who suddenly appears as if out of nowhere?
3. What is a shoemaker’s *last*?
4. What kind of surprise awaited Lucy and Will outside Lord Wotton’s home? What items does Will take from the man? Who is the man?
5. What is Will’s idea about Sally’s occupation? Why does Lucy dislike the idea?
6. What does Lucy notice in a boathouse underneath the wharf where they stand?
7. Where had Will gone when he left the kitchen? What did he take from that room? At first, how does Lucy react? What is her reaction later, as he leafs through the book?
8. Describe the old London Bridge that Lucy and Will walked across.
9. What crime was Thomas Culpeper, Lucy’s great-uncle, involved in? What was his fate? Lucy uses the Latin phrase, *memento mori*. What does it mean?
10. Lucy’s story of her great-uncle makes Will sad. What is his remark to Lucy?
11. As they reach Southwark to search for Sally, Will realizes that the two hours of time he owed to Lucy is over. How does she react?

**Topics for Discussion or Writing**

1. Do some research on the subject of King Henry VIII and his six wives. Why did his personal history affect England’s religious history? What was the effect?
2. The story of Thomas Culpeper and his adulterous affair with King Henry’s fifth wife, Katherine Howard, is true. The author, whose maiden name is the Americanized

*Culpepper*, read about Thomas Culpeper in a footnote and did more research. Do you have a relative, past or present, with a colorful story? It doesn't have to involve kings or unfaithful wives or heads impaled on the London Bridge, but you may be surprised what your relatives tell you once you start asking questions. Write an interesting family story in your own words.

**Chapter 5** (pp. 77-102)

1. Will's two hours are up, but he decides to go with Lucy to the cemetery. Why?
2. The *Single Woman's Graveyard* actually existed in this cemetery. What was it?
3. When Lucy and Will find Sally's body, what does Lucy take from Sally's belt?
4. What are Will's four reasons for believing Sally did not commit suicide, but that she was murdered?
5. Do you suspect any of the characters in the story of Sally's murder? Why?
6. Will tells Lucy, "I never object to being corrected." Is this true of his behavior so far?
7. What do they discover in Sally's purse? Do you understand the note? Do Will and Lucy?
8. What do you think Will means when he tells Lucy, "Now I can recommend you to John Bright. I have seen you act."
9. Lucy's father appears at her door. How does she react to her father? Do you think her knowledge of his work as a spymaster affects her attitude toward him? Why or why not? How does she manipulate her father to get some information about Lord Charles Wotton?
10. Where does Lucy go to overhear her father's conversation with Thomas? What does she learn about Thomas and Sally? What does she learn about Thomas's involvement with the acting troupe? What is her reaction to her cousin's deception?
11. What does she learn about the word *rosemary*?
12. Lucy leaves home in order to exact revenge against Thomas. What happens

instead?

13. Do Patrick and Jack divulge why they were trying to kill Thomas?
14. Before Lucy falls asleep that night, she decodes part of the mysterious note from Sally's handbag. What does she figure out? What especially troubles her as she recalls the time she spent with Will?

### **Topics for Discussion or Writing**

1. Is it possible to enjoy a true friendship that is based on deception? Do you have a personal experience or know someone with this kind of experience? What happened?
2. If the note in Sally's handbag refers to a plot against the Queen, should Lucy alert her father? Why or why not?



**Part II****Chapter 6** (pp. 103-133)**Short Answer**

1. Where and when does this chapter open?
2. Why does Lucy follow Will without calling out to him?
3. How had Lucy known where Will lived? What was the *pun* on Will's address?
4. How had Will learned of the address on Speight Street?
5. Near the Tower of London, Lucy and Will see a man who is tied to a hurdle.  
What will likely happen to him? What could have been his crime?
6. What is the subject of the book, *Leicester's Commonwealth*? Why is Lucy frightened when Will mentions it?
7. While Lucy writes names on place cards for Alice, what happens to Will?
8. When Lucy sneaks around Lord Wotton's house to look through the window of his library, who does she see on the front step? Why might this person be in disguise?
9. Whose are the last two names Lucy writes on the place cards? Why—according to Lucy—are these two names on Lord Wotton's guest list?

**Topics for Discussion or Writing**

1. At the end of the chapter, Lucy gets the chance of a lifetime. She will take Arthur's place onstage that afternoon. If you have ever been in a situation like Lucy's—eager to prove yourself at something you always wanted to do, but scared you were not ready—describe the circumstances and the outcome. Describe your emotions and rate your level of success. Was it a good or a bad

- experience?
2. Arthur's mother drags him away from the theater, refusing to let him associate with actors. Have you ever been forbidden to associate with a certain person or a group of people? How did you react? Do you regret being made to stay away from that person or group? Why or why not?

**Chapter 7 (pp. 134-153)****Short Answer**

1. As Lucy performs in the afternoon play, she recognizes two people in the audience. Who are they?
2. Lucy tells Gilbert Dereham about Sally's death. What is his reaction?
3. Describe the relationship between London theater owners and actors and the members of the London Council.
4. How does Will describe the play he is writing—in two words? Why do his words startle Lucy?
5. What warning does Will give Lucy about searching for Sally's murderer?
6. Describe Henry Rendle, the young Lord Winter. Why does Lucy visit him?
7. What does the encounter with the butterfly reveal about Henry?
8. During their duel, Stephen Brooke, Lord Pettigrew, reveals that he has heard Lucy is androgynous, both male and female at the same time. Who told him that?
9. How does Lucy manage to win the duel?
10. How does Lucy persuade Henry Rendle to leave her house?

**Topics for Discussion or Writing**

1. What are Lucy's motives for wanting to continue working on the mystery of Sally's death and the meaning of the coded message in Sally's handbag? Discuss whether she is being foolish or brave.
2. Will defends his reason for stopping his work on the meaning of the coded message because he does not want to die and leave his children fatherless. Discuss whether he is being cowardly or wise.

**Chapter 8 (pp. 154-175)****Short Answer**

1. Lucy promised Henry Winter she would give the message about a plot against Queen Elizabeth to her father the moment she saw him. Why does she *not* give the message to her father?
2. When she enters Lord Wotton's home, what does she hope to find?
3. What does Lucy learn regarding *Peter Street*, the name on the card from Sally's handbag? How does this tie in with an attempt on the Queen's life?
4. At Lord Wotton's home, Lucy sees several people she knows. Name at least five. Which one is in disguise and why?
5. When Lucy sees and hears the servant Patrick, she realizes he is a twin to the man whom she wounded in a sword fight the evening before? How is the relationship of Patrick and his brother relevant to the play Shakespeare is writing at this time?
6. Gilbert Dereham says, "Today is St. Mark's Eve," and Lucy is shocked. What is the meaning of Gilbert's words?
7. Lucy overhears a servant remark that "one of them fellows" was in the library. Why does this startle and worry Lucy?
8. When Lucy encounters Will, who does she claim to be?
9. Will had told Lucy he would not involve himself in the plot against the Queen? Why had he changed his mind?

**Topics for Discussion or Writing**

1. Is Lucy justified in keeping the message from her father? Why or why not?
2. Lucy says, "As so often happens in life, my costume gave me the cue." Have you

ever behaved in ways unlike your usual self because of the way you were dressed? Describe such a situation and analyze why your clothing or appearance affected your behavior. What were the consequences of your unaccustomed behavior?

**Chapter 9 (pp. 176-198)****Short Answer**

1. During the sword fight between Basset and Will, who enters the library? Why had he come?
2. According to Will, Basset had hidden the incriminating pamphlet, *Lord Leicester's Commonwealth*, in the ottoman. Why?
3. Will accuses Basset of killing Sally. What was Basset's motive? Why had Basset sent Patrick and Jack to kill Thomas?
4. Henry Rendle and Lord Edward Culpeper enter the library and watch the sword fight, but they are anxious to foil the plot against the Queen. How does Thomas calm their fears?
5. Basset reveals the reason behind his hatred of Queen Elizabeth. What is it?
6. Lucy tells Will why she suspects Gilbert Dereham is the mastermind behind the plot against the Queen. Name at least three reasons for her suspicion.
7. Lucy tells Gilbert Dereham, "You're just like me." What does she mean? How does Lucy overpower Gilbert?
8. What leads the reader to believe Will and Luke Culpeper might see other again?

**Topics for Discussion or Writing**

1. Will had claimed that "temperament is more important than motive," in determining who might be a murderer. Discuss why you do or do not believe this to be true.
2. In your opinion, does Will realize who Luke really is? Give your reasons for believing that Will *knows* Luke is Lucy, or your reasons for *not* believing that.