***Borrowers***

***Chapter 5***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

Have your parents ever put you to bed, but you totally didn't feel like sleeping?

That's what happens to Arrietty in this chapter. Instead of going to sleep, she overhears snippets of her parents' conversation, until her mother comes in and asks what she knows about Upstairs.

Homily tells Arrietty that Uncle Hendreary needed to emigrate because he was "seen" on April 23, 1892 by a maid.

Ready for a journey back in time? Here's how it all went down:

Hendreary was crawling along the drawing-room mantel, looking for a liver pill for his wife, Lupy. A new maid dusted right over him, and he sneezed.

Not too long of a story, huh? That's because Arrietty, Homily, and even Pod keep interrupting—telling Arrietty a lot more about her past than she bargained for.

Let the story continue:

It seems that Arrietty's family used to be rich. They had a whole suite of walnut furniture from the dollhouse, and a musical box that played three tunes, including [**"Clementine"**](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07kOBbqYyio) (you know the one: "Oh, my darlin'…"). And they used to have parties that even the Overmantels were jealous of.

Who are these Overmantels? We bet you can figure it out.

If Arrietty's last name is Clock, so named because her family lives under a clock, where do you think the Overmantels lived? Perhaps over the mantle in the morning room?

Now, the problem with these Overmantels is that they were very lazy. They lived only on breakfast food, as that was the only meal served in the morning room. Breakfast all day? Doesn't sound so bad to Shmoop.

The women were conceited because they kept looking at themselves in the mirror above the mantel, and the men used to always be drunk, after drinking up what was left in the whiskey bottles.

In the end, the Overmantels had to leave because the Master—that's Great-Aunt Sophy to you—took to her bed, and didn't need the morning room anymore.

Another family, called the [**Harpsichords**](http://www.claviantica.com/restorations_files/GT_norm_files/GT_norm_view.jpg), were a little stuck-up, too, though not as bad as the Overmantels.

Arrietty's own Aunt Lupy was a Rain-Pipe before she married Uncle Hendreary, a Harpsichord, and according to Homily, became rather snooty afterwards.

Harpsichords lived only on afternoon tea, as that was the only food served in their room (again, tea and cakes and muffins, jams, and jellies sound pretty awesome to eat all day). But sometimes they had to live for days on mere crumbs and water out of flower vases.

So in the end, the Harpsichords had to leave, too.

Suddenly, Arrietty's parents realize they haven't told her about what happened to Eggletina yet. No more beating about the bush. Let's hear the full story.

***Important Quotations:***

***Quotation 1:***

"We were rich then," said Homily. "Oh, we did have some lovely things! You were only a tot, Arrietty, and wouldn't remember. We had a whole suite of walnut furniture out of the doll's house and a set of wine glasses in green glass, and a musical snuffbox, and the cousins would come and we'd have parties. Do you remember, Pod?" (5.28)

***Explanation:***

So the Clocks used to live large. What happened to all that fancy furniture, and the parties? Why are they living in humbler surroundings, now?

***Quotation 2:***

So you can't be too hard on them; their only comfort, poor things, was to show off a bit and wear evening dress and talk like ladies and gentlemen. Did you ever hear your Aunt Lupy talk?

[…]

"Oh, you should have heard her say "Parquet"—that's the stuff the drawing room floor is made of—"Parquet… Parr-r-kay" she'd say. Oh, it was lovely. Come to think of it, your Aunt Lupy was the most stuck-up of them all. (5.52, 54)

***Explanation:***

Homily is totally putting down Aunt Lupy. But she also kind of seems to be worshipping her. Uh oh. We smell jealousy. And it does not smell good.