

## The Bertolini

"THE SIGNORA HAD no business to do it," said Miss Bartlett, "no business at all. She promised us south rooms with a view close together, instead of which here are north rooms, looking into a courtyard, and a long way apart. Oh, Lucy!"

"And a Cockney, besides!" said Lucy, who had been further saddened by the Signora's unexpected accent. "It might be London." She looked at the two rows of English people who were sitting at the table; at the row of white bottles of water and red bottles of wine that ran between the English people; at the portraits of the late Queen and the late Poet Laureate that hung behind the English people, heavily framed; at the notice of the English church (Rev. Cuthbert Eager, M. A. Oxon.), that was the only other decoration of the wall. "Charlotte, don't you feel, too, that we might be in London? I can hardly believe that all kinds of other things are just outside. I suppose it is one's being so tired."

"This meat has surely been used for soup," said Miss Bartlett, laying down her fork.

"I want so to see the Arno. The rooms the Signora promised us in her letter would have looked over the Arno. The Signora had no business to do it at all. Oh, it is a shame!"

"Any nook does for me," Miss Bartlett continued; "but it does seem hard that you shouldn't have a view."

Lucy felt that she had been selfish. "Charlotte, you mustn't spoil me: of course, you must look over the Arno, too. I meant that. The first vacant room in the front —"

"You must have it," said Miss Bartlett, part of whose travelling expenses were paid by Lucy's mother — a piece of generosity to which she made many a tactful allusion.

Questions about the opening to *A Room with A View*

1. What makes this opening passage different from the other ones we considered? This was the only one written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Can you tell? How? What feels modern about this passage?
2. Do you want to read more? How does Forster pull us into the situation? What distinguishes his technique for catching our interest from the techniques used in some of the earlier passages?
3. What's wrong with the situation Lucy and Miss Bartlett find themselves in? Why are they dissatisfied? Do they have the same desires? Or are their desires different? Does the passage offer any clues?