

--and Ladies of the Club Study Guide

--and Ladies of the Club by Helen Hooven Santmyer

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Plot Summary

Anne Alexander and Sally Cochran are newly graduated from the Waynesboro Female College when they are told that some women, including some of their former teachers, are planning to organize the Waynesboro Women's Club. Anne's initial reaction is to turn down the invitation to join, but Sally agrees and Anne follows suit. The two girls are among the youngest of the first twelve members. The club's purpose is to provide mental stimulus for the members while providing social activities. Sally and Anne are soon caught up in the events typical for young women of their age. Both marry, Sally to a young businessman named Ludwig Rausch and Anne to a young doctor named John Gordon. Ludwig begins a rope factory and John goes into practice with Anne's father. Both women have children, Anne giving birth to a son they name Johnny and later to a daughter named Belinda and called Binny for short. Binny, as a teenager, contracts rheumatic fever and dies of complications from the disease. Johnny goes to medical school and returns to Waynesboro to go into practice with his father, Anne's father having died by that time. John and Ludwig both die in the coming years.

The club continues to be an important role in the lives of all the members, including Anne and Sally. Among those is a pair of elderly sisters named Caroline and Lavinia Gardiner who don't really want to belong to the club but join in the hopes of furthering the career of their nephew, Doug. There are also sisters Thomasina and Eliza who join with their mother and remain members after the death of their mother and until their own deaths.

Johnny has spent time with Sally's daughter Elsa, who is deeply in love with Johnny, but Johnny marries Julia Deming, the daughter of another club member. Johnny and Julia have a son, Alexander Tucker, but Julia swears she won't have another. She and Johnny soon have separate bedrooms and when Julia discovers that Johnny has had an affair, she files for divorce. She moves with Tucker and her mother to California, allowing Tucker to return to Waynesboro a couple of the following summers. Tucker becomes certain that he'll go into medicine, though his mother objects. Johnny dies of heart problems and several years pass before Tucker does return. He eventually marries Sally's granddaughter, Jennifer and they have three children. Anne and Sally continue to be a part of the club and continue to be friends until Sally's death, followed soon by Anne's, the final two of the founders of the club.



Pages 1 - 104

Pages 1 - 104 Summary

The graduation ceremony for the Waynesboro Female College of 1868 includes a speech by General Deming. The college lawn has been turned over to the event so that more people from the town can attend to hear Deming's speeches. The ceremony is lengthy and ends with a valedictory speech by Anne Alexander, who talks about the futures that lie in store of the graduates. Following the event, the families break off into groups, many gathering to celebrate the successful completion of their daughters' educations. Anne and fellow graduate Sally Cochran are ordered to the office of Mrs. Lowrey, who tells the girls that there are plans to start a literary club that will be called the Waynesboro Women's Club. Along with Mrs. Lowrey, and apparently in on the plan, are Agatha Pinney, Louisa Tucker and Susan Crenshaw.

In the first chapter titled "1868," summer passes quickly toward the fall and the first planned meeting of the club. Amanda Reid returns home from Oberlin College, having completed her degree and preparing to teach in Waynesboro to repay her debt. She has a reunion visit with Thomasina Ballard, a young woman who suffers greatly from hay fever and asthma. Sally and Anne visit sisters Caroline and Lavinia Gardiner with an invitation to join the club. Both Caroline and Lavinia want to decline but decide to accept so that their friendships might further the future career of their nephew, Douglas.

In the second chapter titled "1868," the first meeting of the club is held October 7, 1868, at the home of Mrs. Rebecca Lowrey. Mrs. Lowrey's daughter, Kitty, opposes her mother's involvement, saying that Mrs. Lowrey has enough to do with running the school without taking on more tasks. At the first meeting, the women vote to have Mrs. Mary Grimes Ballard, mother of Thomasina and Eliza, take the role of president, with Louisa Tucker as vice president, Amanda Reid as "recording secretary" and Sally Cochran as "corresponding secretary and treasurer."

While the women are holding their meeting, John Gordon arrives, and when Anne returns home, John tells her that he's going into practice with her father. He then proposes and Anne agrees. In the third chapter titled "1868," Anne and John are away on their month-long honeymoon and Sally is courted by Ludwig Rausch, who is hoping to buy and operate a rope factory in Waynesboro. There's a party and Sally and Ludwig announce their engagement, as do Louisa Tucker and General Deming - neither coming as much of a surprise. In the chapter titled "1860," the January meeting of 1969 is held at Anne's home, and she works feverishly cleaning the family home which was given to her as a wedding present from her father who now lives above his physician's practice.

Thomasina recites a poem to the bride, Anne, and Amanda isn't impressed. She knows her reaction hurt Thomasina's feelings and takes the poem to the local paper, the Waynesboro Torchlight, where the editor agrees to publish it in the poet's corner. Samuel Travers, organist at the Methodist Church, reads the poem and later asks



Thomasina if he can set it to music. She agrees, and their courtship is soon in full bloom. Thomasina's sister Eliza and her mother Mary make it clear that Samuel, who teaches music for a living, is beneath their notice, but her father intervenes when Thomasina and Samuel marry, turning over a part of the house to the newlyweds. Anne gives birth to a son and there's soon the arrival of a Ellen Tyler, Mrs. Lowrey's daughter, who has left her husband and moved with her children to Waynesboro.

Pages 1 - 104 Analysis

It's important that the reader understand the background for the story. The United States is trying to recover from the Civil War. There is unrest on social issues, including the rights of blacks and women. Those in favor of these rights are often adamant and those opposed are equally so. There are also many who are recovering from wounds - physical as well as emotional - of serving in the war. The turmoil of the country is to be heightened by the fact of economic instability. When there's a party at Christmastime for the ladies of the club, the conversation at one point turns heated as several of the men voice their opinions. Douglas Gardiner is outspoken and says that he doesn't believe blacks should have the right to vote. When John is dragged into the conversation, he says that he didn't fight to give blacks freedom but can't express his reasons for being in the military. Ludwig Rausch, a German, says John and many more like him fought for the same reason young men have joined the military all over the world - to do what they could to keep their home countries from being torn completely apart.

It's apparent almost from the first moment of their invitations into the club that Anne and Sally are chosen - at least partly - because of their places in Waynesboro society. Mrs. Lowrey gives them a list of several people she wants to also invite into the club and cites the girls' connections with these women, assigning them the task of issuing the invitations. An interesting aspect of the emerging personalities of Anne and Sally are seen in this scene. Anne seems on the verge of refusing, apparently not ready to put herself back in a position of being assigned reading after having just completing college. Sally, however, readily agrees, and Anne supports Sally's decision without question. The girls have obviously been friends for a long time and are comfortable with each other as good friends often are.

Anne and John have a conversation in which John confides that he doesn't believe he can ever be a doctor because of his military stint in which he was often little more than the butcher sawing off wounded limbs to prevent gangrene. Anne tells him that she believes in him, and it's initially unclear as to how much of a role this plays in John's decision to return to Waynesboro and go into practice with Anne's father, Dr. Alexander. Anne knows something of the life of a doctor, including that his time is never his own, and her father takes time to warn her that she can never allow herself to become angry because John is so often away or is called away at inconvenient times. Anne later learns that Dr. Alexander is carefully choosing the patients he passes on to John, being careful that John doesn't take the terminal patients and so doesn't have to deal with the losses or the reputation of having let someone die. An interesting point is that when Sally is about to marry, she looks at her friend Anne with some fear for Anne's



relationship with John, whereas Sally believes fully in her own choice. Sally doesn't elaborate as to the cause of this worry.

The marriages of each of the young ladies gives rise to speculation by someone else. In the case of Thomasina, Anne learns from John that it's being said that Samuel had inquired about the wealthiest young lady in town soon after his arrival. In the case of Louisa Tucker, it's said that she's much more domineering than her new husband.

John's sister Kate is introduced briefly during this early segment of the story. It seems likely that Kate is a lesbian, and most people around town believe her to be somewhat strange and masculine, though the concept of a lesbian is not mentioned in connection with her. One day Kate stops by the home of John and Anne and asks that John come to her farm later to prescribe something for the cough of the young girl who lives with her, apparently as an employee. John says that Kate continually finds some young, homely girl, cleans her up and helps her gain some self-confidence, only to be crushed when the young girl then finds a boyfriend and marries. Anne asks what Kate might be seeking from the girls and John says, "undying devotion."



Pages 106-225

Pages 106-225 Summary

In the chapter titled "1870," Amanda is annoyed that Thomasina is so "besotted" by her new husband, Samuel, and Amanda starts spending a great deal of time with the newly-arrived Ellen Tyler. Kate catches the young girl living with her in the arms of a young man and goes berserk. John is called and gives her a sedative but is called back later when Kate is found hanging in the shed. She leaves a note saying she'd never been happy and leaves the farm to John and Anne's son, Johnny.

In the chapter titled "1872," there's a new German attorney in town named Herman Lichtenstein, who is an obese widower with a young son. Anne's father's health is failing and Susan Crenshaw's cancer has confined her to the house. Susan's illness and imminent death creates an opening in the club and the name of Rhoda McKinney, wife of a new minister in town, is bound to be presented as a candidate for membership.

Sally gives birth to another child, this one a son she agrees to name Ernest. Susan dies the same week Ernest is born and Anne continues to spend a great deal of time with her father, who is falling weaker and more ill each day. One day he talks to Anne about her love for John and says that a love as deep and abiding as this is demanding in and of itself, and asks that Anne keep this in mind if she's ever hurt by anything John does. He reminds her that John was emotionally devastated by the war and says that he needs time to heal, even these years later. Anne's father dies in early December.

In the chapter titled "1873-1874," amid accusations of graft and mismanagement, General George Deming, U.S Representative for Waynesboro and the surrounding district, returns to Waynesboro with his wife Louisa Tucker Deming and their daughter, Julia. She visits Mrs. Lowrey, who says that Kitty is at Oberlin and that attendance at the Waynesboro Female College has "fallen off" because so many of the brightest young ladies are attending other colleges, including Oberlin. Mrs. Lowrey also confides that Amanda, having repaid the financial debt she owed for her education at Oberlin, is going to work for the public school where Mr. Fletcher is now superintendent. They end their visit with Mrs. Lowrey inviting Louisa to return as an active member of the club. She accepts, which prompts a resolution to raise the number of members from twelve to fifteen.

There's a meeting at Rhoda McKinney's house, and Anne discovers that Rhoda cares for her mother-in-law who is senile and spends her days waiting for the return of her dead son. The discovery softens the feelings of Anne and Sally. Several of the ladies plan a temperance movement, though Judge Ballard doubts the legality of their methods. Judge Ballard learns of a complaint filed by Mr. Hoffmann, who says the crusaders are blocking his business, and he sends Douglas Gardiner with word to Mary. She alerts the others, but none disbands. They are arrested but quickly released. The political aspect of life cools somewhat over the coming years of the 1870s.



In the chapter titled "1875," Anne has another baby, this one a daughter they name Belinda, who is called "Binny." The club begins raising money for a library. They are given space in the building that houses the Torchlight, and Anne goes there one evening to work at arranging the donated and purchased books. It's cold and John leaves her his cape. When she puts her hands in the pocket to warm up, she finds a note, signed by "Z.F." which Anne knows to be "that Flood girl." The note reads, "Of course you can cum tonight if you give the ole man time to drink hisself stooped and git to bed first." At the bottom is written, "Don't fergit the stockins." Anne immediately realizes that John is having an affair and decides that she won't confront him about it or let him know that she's aware.

Pages 106-225 Analysis

The political climate heats up and the competition between parties prompts a demonstration that goes - by mistake - past the home of Judge Ballard. The judge knows that there's nothing personal involved in politics, but the women of the family, Thomasina, Eliza and Mary, are angry, especially when they see that Ludwig is among those in the parade. In truth, Ludwig had stepped out of the demonstration briefly and the parade leaders had mistakenly turned the wrong way, a mistake that Ludwig couldn't rectify in time to control the damage.

John had been the doctor when Anne's brother, Rob, was wounded during the Civil War. Rob had died and John seems to blame himself for not being able to save his friend. Anne tells John that her father had known Rob wouldn't survive his wounds and that he'd not been angry at John, but had been glad that Rob had the bit of comfort that could be provided by a familiar face in such horrible circumstances. It's this talk from Anne that seems to convince John to return to Waynesboro and to join her father's practice. Now, as he is on his deathbed, Anne's father reminds her that with Rob gone, John is the only son he has. Anne puts her father's warnings down to the morbid thoughts of a dying man combined with the drugs being used to help with the pain, but this seems to be a foreshadowing of hard times ahead for John and Anne.

An interesting thing happens after the women crusade for temperance in Waynesboro. The crusaders are arrested and their cause shut down, but this prompts the wives of the Germans who own and operate the beer parlors to take a careful look at their places in society. These women realize that their children will always be shunned because of their fathers' occupations and it's their perseverance that prompts the closing of all the German establishments over the coming decade.

The setting is again important as 1873 brings more financial problems to the country. Judge Ballard, who had sought to leave his family comfortable upon his death, finds himself on the brink of ruin after a potentially-lucrative investment goes bankrupt. It's Eliza who steps in to help her father by handling the paperwork for his corporate law office. It's noted that Eliza is making something of a sacrifice, here but it also seems that this would be something she wants to do - making a place for herself in a man's world and going, at least to some degree, against traditional roles for women.



Anne's discovery that John is having an affair makes her immediately aware of the conversation she'd had with her father in which Dr. Alexander says that Anne must be prepared to always forgive John of his misdeeds. Anne believes this is the kind of misdeed her father was warning her about. Her first instinct is to confront John with her anger at his betrayal. She then plays out the scene that will ensue and comes to realize that she doesn't want him to know that she's aware. When John arrives, it seems her anger will show and she says, "How could you." When John seems to think that she's referring to the fact that he's late and she's cold, he apologizes and Anne leaves it at that. It seems that Anne simply wants to avoid the scene with John and desperately wants to hold her marriage together, regardless of the personal cost. As she's thinking about confronting him, she replays a scene that occurred right after Kate committed suicide in which she asked John for a promise - that he would never kill himself. John tells her that she needn't worry on that point but does promise. He then asks himself if making that promise should ease his conscience on "other" matters - a point of foreshadowing to the fact that he's cheating on Anne. The reader must keep in mind the time period to fully understand the motivations behind the actions of both Anne and John.



Pages 226 through 311

Pages 226 through 311 Summary

In the chapter titled "1875-1876," the female college is floundering and Kitty Lowrey learns that there's a religious college interested in establishing a campus in Waynesboro. Without her father's knowledge, she manages to get word to those in charge that the college buildings could be bought and her father agrees to sell, calling the offer a godsend and accepting a principal's position in another town. Kitty plans to marry her long-time boyfriend, Sheldon Edwards. Mr. Lowry tells Kitty's sister Ellen that she can move with them, find a job or return to her husband. Meanwhile, Ludwig and Sally plan to move in with Sally's parents because her mother is in poor health, and to rent their house to the newlywed Kitty and Sheldon. Dr. Blair moves into the now-empty Lowrey house. He is a widower with an eighteen-year-old daughter named Christina. John is called to Dr. Blair's home to help him deal with a bout of asthma and Christina is elected to the club. Mrs. Laura Maxwell is also taken in as a club member. Sally is again pregnant, while Ludwig becomes more political. Kitty, having finally married Sheldon, is also pregnant, though it seems she might be planning to use some doctor other than John. One night John tells Anne that she's seemed distracted and that he and the children need her "undivided attention."

In the chapter titled "1877," George Deming and his wife, Louisa, are living in Waynesboro with their daughter, Julia. George tends to spoil her and notes that Louisa has to keep them both in line. Ludwig's desire to expand his mill has been put on hold because of the country's economic condition, but he now sees that the time is right to make some changes.

Amanda tells her mother that she should stop working so hard and suggests that Amanda's teaching salary would keep them both housed and fed. Her mother says that she won't be dependent on Amanda before it's absolutely necessary. Amanda suspects that at least part of her mother's desire to work is sparked by a need to be righteous, and that attitude grates on Amanda. Mrs. Reid also tells Amanda that she has to begin saving for her own old age.

Anne is on her way to the country to pick up eggs when she encounters Mrs. Reid, who is on her way to visit Mrs. McCune, who is pregnant and very ill. Anne immediately realizes that Mrs. McCune is near death. Mrs. McCune wants to call for John, but her husband refuses because he as a preacher has a doctor in his congregation who will see Mrs. McCune for free. That doctor is called in, but almost immediately calls on John for a second opinion. The two doctors agree on a treatment and Mrs. McCune is turned over to John's care, but he says it was too late to save her and she dies in April. Kitty has a miscarriage and John warns them to wait awhile before trying again. Kitty is mortified, saying that she can't believe that she would have trouble carrying a child when other women she knows, including Anne and Sally, have managed it.



Pages 226 through 311 Analysis

Sally holds to grudges and prejudices much longer than Anne and Anne puts that down to her own maturity, which she believes has outgrown Sally's. In fact, the attitudes of the two women are quickly changing. When Anne points out that there had been a time when she and Sally hadn't really liked Mrs. McKinney, Sally says that she still doesn't like the McKinney's "fanatical" ideas, referring to the fact that they'd taken a black child into their home as a servant and that Mrs. McKinney had been granted guardianship through the courts for the child. Anne, however, admires Mrs. McKinney for her dedication to her mother-in-law and to the unfortunate child.

There's an interesting scene between Anne and John following a party hosted by Sally near Christmas. The club has held annual parties, many of them prompted and planned by Sally. After this particular party, Anne and John seem to be in high spirits, having greatly enjoyed the play Sally arranged. John tells Anne that she has recently seemed distracted and that he and the children want her "undivided attention." It's odd because it's usually John who is spending so much time away that Anne is lonely for him. It seems possible that Anne, finally realizing the extent of John's affairs, is ready to give him the freedom to do as he chooses and that he senses this change in her. The play at Sally's is an interesting sidebar to the main themes of the story in that some of the residents - and the members of the club - refuse to participate because they believe a play to be wrong, regardless of the topic.

The issue with Mrs. McCune brings up an interesting practice among the doctors of this story. Dr. Alexander had originally tried to protect John somewhat by keeping the cases that were certain to end in death, not only to protect John from dealing with the deaths but also to protect his reputation. Now John says that the doctor originally called in to see Mrs. McCune will do the same, and for the same reason, though he puts it off as believing that Mrs. McCune will be "more comfortable" with a younger doctor. John is very angry over Mrs. McCune and tells Anne that Mr. McCune is nothing more than a murderer because Mrs. McCune had suffered greatly with lung problems through her previous pregnancies and Mr. Gordon had ignored the warnings that she should not have more children. Mrs. McCune is pregnant with her sixth at the time of her death. With Mary McCune's death, the club has two memberships "in memoriam" - Mary and Susan Crenshaw. Membership at this point is Eliza Ballard, Mary Ballard, Esther Beattie, Christina Blair, Louisa Deming, Katherine Edwards, Carline Gardiner, Lavinia Gardiner, Anne Gordon, Rhoda McKinney, Laura Maxwell, Agatha Pinney, Sally Rausch, Amanda Reid and Thomasine Travers.



Pages 312 through 519

Pages 312 through 519 Summary

In the chapter titled "1878," Ludwig gets started expanding his mill and hires a man named Captain Bodien as the new overseer. Though he does worry that having someone between himself and the workers will hurt his relationship with them, Ludwig knows that in order to make the mill prosper, he has to make time to travel. One day Ludwig and Captain Bodien are at the mill when there's an accident involving a young black man named Zack. When Ludwig sees the extent of the man's injury - his leg broken by a heavy coil of rope - he sends someone for John. John puts the man to sleep and transports him home, but Zack continues to plead with John not to remove the leg. John gives in, though he fears for Zack's life. After a short time, gangrene sets in and Zack dies. A woman called "Mrs. Professor Beattie", who is really Esther Beattie, is chosen to fill the vacancy in the club created by Mrs. McCune's death. Christina Blair and Henry Voorhees, who had played roles in one of Sally's Christmas events, begin seeing a great deal of each other and eventually announce their marriage.

Mr. McCune invites Amanda to a lecture and her mother points out that he is obviously looking for a new mother for his five children. This makes Amanda angry, and she is more so when she later realizes that Mr. McCune had already gotten her mother's approval. Amanda outright refuses, saying she plans to never marry, and Mr. McCune is soon married to his first wife's cousin. Four of the children accept the change but a daughter, Arianna, is angry and spends a great deal of time with Thomasina at the Ballard home.

In the first chapter titled "1879," John visits Kitty, who had suffered a second miscarriage the previous year. Barbara Bodien, wife of the captain in charge of Ludwig's rope factory, is working at the store where Sheldon works. Douglas Gardiner has become the prosecutor and works out of the office Eliza Ballard manages for her father. Several of the mothers decide that Miss Agatha Pinney is no longer capable of teaching the young children because of her health. In the second chapter titled "1879," several club members collect a fund to help support Miss Pinney when all her pupils are moved to public school. Miss Pinney dies a short time later, apparently a suicide.

In the chapter titled "1880," Eliza is working for her father in his law office, their effort to keep overhead down for the family business. Arianna is seen with a young boy named Ben Mercer, who is talking about running away from home. Eliza finds the opportunity to look through some of the important papers in the office and looks for proof of Ben's parentage. She is involved in this when Doug Gardiner returns to the office and chastises her for snooping. At the club meeting that day, Eliza makes certain the Gardiner sisters know that Doug is involved with Captain Bodien's daughter. Anne arrives home to find John waiting with a letter from the wife of his cousin. The woman's name is Jessamine and she announces that she has a son. At home, Doug tells his aunts that he intends to marry Barbara Bodien because she is the daughter of the man



who runs Ludwig's mill and is, according to the aunts, below his station. Meanwhile, the political people are discussing Doug's name as a candidate for representative.

In the chapter titled "1880-1881," Sally and her family are headed to Burlington with Sally staying briefly with her parents before joining Ludwig for the political convention. Both Barbara Gardiner and Kitty Edwards are pregnant. Kitty is ordered to bed in the hope that she can carry the child to term. Barbara has a daughter and Douglas is angry that the aunts show no concern for either mother or child. Barbara's family is Catholic, but she decides that she won't raise her daughter in the church. She and Doug leave the girl with her mother, who rushes out and has the child christened and baptized Lavinia Anne.

In the chapter titled "1884-1885," Amanda takes on a roommate, Elizabeth Talmadge. Amanda is approached by the Ballard sisters, who request that she change Arianna's failing grade to passing, but Amanda refuses. Amanda had been briefly courted by the Reverend McCune and Eliza accuses Amanda of taking out her hurt that he didn't marry her on Arianna. Kitty is again pregnant and Barbara is expecting her third, having given birth to two girls over the first four years of her marriage. As Lavinia announces the pregnancy, she says that she and Caroline are relieved that Doug and his family have gone to Washington for awhile. Eliza is in the law office one day alone when she hears her father fall. She rushes to him, calls for help and has someone send for John, but Mr. Ballard dies. She goes home to break the news to Thomasina and their mother. Sam Travers takes over and tends the details and the women, much to John's surprise. The question then arises as to what should become of the law practice. Doug and a young man named Tim are now partners with Mr. Ballard. There's also the question of what to do about Eliza, who has been working almost for free. Ludwig offers her a job for twenty-five dollars a month, more than she'd made as a clerk for her father.

Pages 312 through 519 Analysis

The young women who are now young mothers are sometimes rather competitive though it isn't often seen in an overt fashion. One time that it does come out, Louisa Deming says that her daughter, Julia, only attends school a half day in order to be with children her own age, but that she's so bright she works on school work at home with her mother in the afternoons.

Miss Pinney has sciatica and that has become a generally known fact around town, as has the fact that she's taking a great deal of laudanum, which is an opium derivative. When the ladies take up the collection for Miss Pinney, they put her on a monthly allowance so that she has only enough to live on, and there's not enough for her to buy the laudanum to feed her habit. She goes to one druggist, who refuses to give her credit on the basis that he's no longer extending credit to anyone when in fact he's only refusing to give her credit, though it's not clear whether he's afraid he won't be repaid or is trying to make sure he doesn't add to her drug problem. The ladies who began the fund to help provide for her also seemed to have sought a way to make her drug use more difficult in an effort to help her control it. Anne refused to become involved past the



point of giving money for the fund and later tells John that trying to break her of the habit was cruel, citing her father's dependence on the drug near the end of his life. When Miss Pinney dies, John and Douglas Gardiner discover that she was in the closet with the door closed and locked from the inside. She had a candle with her and had apparently tried to burn the house. John seems to believe it's because of her inability to obtain the drug.

The club roll going into 1880 includes Eliza Ballard, Mary Ballard, Esther Beattie, Louisa Deming, Katherine Edwards, Gwen Evans, Caroline Gardiner, Lavinia Gardiner, Anne Gordon, Rhoda McKinney, Laura Maxwell, Sally Rausch, Amanda Reid, Thomasine Travers and Christina Voorhees. Those who have passed away are Susan Crenshaw, Mary McCune and Agatha Pinney.

Anne encouraged John to go on a trip with Ludwig and it's during this trip that he apparently connects with family, a cousin named Robert and his wife, Jessamine. Anne mistakenly believed that if she sent John on this trip he would be free to indulge in an affair that she wouldn't have to know about. She feels certain that John and Jessamine had an affair. John tells Anne that Jessamine had talked to him about her husband, who was impotent. After news of Jessamine's son arrives, John says that her husband "apparently recovered." When they receive news that Jessamine has a new baby, Anne realizes that the timing is wrong for it to have been John's child during that trip, but will later realize that the boy is actually older than Jessamine says and will believe that it is John's child.

Caroline and Lavinia are hateful and rude to Barbara, clearly resenting her presence. Doug threatens to leave them to fend for themselves but Barbara doesn't want that and convinces him to remain in the house with them. Doug really wants to force the aunts to accept Barbara who realizes that's impossible and tries her best to win them over with her manners and docile nature. Years will pass with Barbara restraining the children to make the lives of the aunts as tolerable as possible while providing the best life she can for her children. It will be noted that upon the deaths of the aunts, the children suddenly realize the difference that their presence made in their lives and are amazed by the freedoms that are given after that. It's noted that the aunts hate their lives, remain cooped up in their apartments within the house, seldom bathe and smell horribly. They go to such extremes to spite Barbara and Doug that they make themselves miserable and miss out on the lives of the children. Barbara, meanwhile, catches the attention of all the children. When Johnny picks the cherries at his mother's house, he asks for a gallon to give as a present. He gives them to Barbara and she thanks him. Johnny seems to be looking for a way to make up for how Barbara is treated. Captain Bodien's son, Stewart, becomes a wheel boy at Ludwig's plant.

The death of Mr. Ballard creates some serious questions for the family. Thomasina is near helpless on the financial front and it seems inconceivable that she would be able to take over as bread winner for the family. Her husband Samuel, teaches music but this also seems to bring in little in the way of money. Their mother believes that Eliza's decision to work for her father was acceptable but hates the idea of Eliza working for someone else, especially when she realizes that Eliza will be exposed to the rough



environment of the rope factory. Both her mother and sister know they will accept whatever Eliza chooses to do. The attitudes of the various characters regarding the role of women evolves over the course of the book but the reader should remember that most of these women are considered the most educated of the town at the time. Ludwig knows Eliza's tendency to gossip and tells her that he'd like to keep the job offer confidential until she makes a decision whether to accept. He considers this will be a test of Eliza's trustworthiness.



Pages 521 through 681

Pages 521 through 681 Summary

In the chapter titled "1885-1886," Mrs. Ballard resigns as president of the club and Sally is elected in her place. As Anne and Sally are talking about the situation prior to Sally's selection, Sally says that she has come to depend on the club as something apart from the domestic situation of raising four kids and tending her husband. Anne fusses at her young daughter, Belinda and nicknamed Binny, for her appearance. Sally thinks Anne is hard on Binny, but Anne says that she is trying to keep Binny in line so that John doesn't have to fuss at her, as he often does. Binny becomes very ill and John realizes that she has rheumatic fever. Anne feels guilty that she'd known Binny had a sore throat and had put it down to Binny's effort to get out of studying for her catechism. Dr. Warren is called in to care for Binny and the first weeks are horrible as she screams with pain and hates to be touched. John doesn't mention that he fears that Binny's heart will be damaged, but Anne knows that it's a possibility and doesn't ask for fear of the answer. There isn't initially any damage but the recovery time is long and tedious.

Sally is formally elected president of the club and Eliza begins her job with Ludwig. Sally announces to Anne that she's expecting another child, though she is now thirty-eight years old. Amanda tells her roommate, Elizabeth, that there's going to be a vacancy in the club and suggests that she join. Amanda realizes that Tim Merrill is spending a great deal of time with Elizabeth and expects that they'll marry.

In the chapter titled "1886," Arianna McCune runs away from home. It's not initially known where she went or even that she's gone until her siblings share the information at school and Amanda asks Thomasina if she knows where Arianna might have gone. Arianna's younger sister, Ruhmamah, is worried about Arianna, but their father is simply furious and swears that Arianna won't be allowed to return home. John learns that Arianna left town by train and asks a man who works on the train to help find her. He does and discovers that she's married Tim Mercer.

Julia Deming invites Binny along on a picnic now that Binny is apparently recovered from the rheumatic fever. Later, Anne allows her son Johnny to have a taffy pull at their home. While Anne is overseeing the event, she learns that Kitty, who is near the time to give birth, is in trouble. John is there and Anne calls on Sally to supervise the party, leaving immediately for Kitty's house. Kitty has a young son, but it's obvious that she isn't going to survive this birth. The child, another son, does live, but Kitty dies.

In the chapter titled "1886-1887," Gwen Evans, wife of the Baptist minister, is concerned about her nephew Gilbert, who is taking dancing lessons. Gilbert says it's only so that he can dance with the young ladies at upcoming events. Gwen seems worried because she fears that Gilbert is being "drawn into a world that can never be" his, but doesn't forbid the dancing. John receives a letter from Jessamine Stevens, saying that her son is ill and that she needs to move. She wants to come to Waynesboro. Anne says that



John must invite her immediately. Barbara Gardiner gives birth to her fourth daughter. Jessamine arrives and Anne sees a resemblance that makes her believe the boy, Rodney, is John's son. Jessamine wants to be part of the club simply because of the social aspect and Anne encourages her to become friends with Christine Voochrees. Reverend McCune resigns about the time Jessamine joins the Reformed Presbyterian Church where Christine attends. Reverend McCune's family leaves with the exception of Ruhamah, who remains to finish school and work at the library, a project of the club that now pays Ruhamah as a part time employee. Johnny is nearing graduation and Binny falls ill again, apparently a relapse brought on by an early-morning trip to pick flowers for Julia Deming. John knows that a second bout with the rheumatic fever is likely to result in heart damage. Commencement exercises come and go with Anne barely realizing that Johnny has graduated high school for worry about Binny.

In the chapter titled "1887-1888," one of Sally's son, young Ludwig, is becoming known as a bully. Stewart Bodien returns to Waynesboro after graduating Sheffield and takes a place in the mill. He soon presents Ludwig with an invention for tarring rope and the two men partner to make the invention a working reality.

Eliza and Thomasina are not on speaking terms, but when Mrs. Ballard is obviously near death, the girls are persuaded to spend time together and with their mother. Mrs. Ballard tells Eliza that she wishes to resign from the club and the girls fear it's a sign she's giving up. Sally's father dies and Elizabeth Talmadge marries Tim Merrill. Binny's illness grows worse and she's obviously fearful she's going to die. After some new examinations, John confirms that there's heart damage and that Binny is going to die. Binny dies at thirteen in the middle of the night with Anne at her side. Johnny takes off from college to be home for the funeral. Mrs. Ballard dies and the club holds a meeting "In Memoriam."

In the chapter titled "1892," Julia Deming hasn't yet answered Johnny's proposal, citing the fact that he's still a year away from graduating medical school and has plans to join his father's practice - a plan that doesn't excite Julia because she calls Waynesboro "pokey." Elsa, daughter of Sally and Ludwig, has always loved Johnny and now decides to go to Germany to study music as an antidote to her unrequited love. Elsa and Gilbert later connect and the pair decide to marry, a situation that makes Gilbert's aunt Gwen angry because she believes Gilbert is marrying above his social and financial standing. Sheldon remains alone after the death of Kitty and seems to worry that he won't feel the same love for his younger son, the child born when Kitty died. Arianna returns, very ill with end-stage tuberculosis, and is taken to stay with Eliza. John warns Eliza and Thomasina to take care that they don't contract the disease while caring for her. John and Anne discuss the fact that Julia is going to marry Johnny, though this wouldn't have been their choice for him, and that they'll have to live with his decision or risk alienating him.



Pages 521 through 681 Analysis

The personalities of the various club members are evolving as time elapses, many of them proving perfect examples of the coming of age theme though their natures remain typical of their younger years. Mrs. Ballard comes to terms with her husband's death in a very positive manner, telling her daughters that she refuses to stand on ceremony with regard to a set time of mourning and a period of wearing only black. She says that a person who does this is proving nothing except a knowledge of social dictates. Mrs. Ballard stands up for herself to her daughters, something she's seldom had the courage to do in her younger years. It's important that the reader remember that the coming of age theme applies to those who mature into a positive personality as well as those who focus more on their negative points as they mature. Amanda is an example of this as she continues to feel superior to the other members of the club and admits that she wouldn't trade places with any of them. As time passes, she comes to relish her time alone, likely because she feels all her friends are beneath her intellectually.

Amanda's immediate reaction to Arianna's leaving home is concern for her safety but also a sense of guilt. She fears that having given Arianna a failing grade may have played a role in the girl's decision to run away. Thomasina's feelings are hurt that Arianna didn't come to her. Christina Voorhees fears that her own lifestyle has played a role in Arianna's action. Christina had once played a role in a play put on by the members of the club but later comes to believe that acting is sinful and refuses to take part in any activity of this type. Christina's hard-line approach to her religion alienates her from her friends by her own choice. While it's admirable to stand by what's right, Christina seems bent on making certain others realize that she's doing what she believes to be right.

Anne truly believes in life after death and the teachings of her church, though she doesn't feel the need to tout her religion to others. John has never come to have that kind of faith but seems to envy Anne's belief. When Kitty dies, Anne and Kitty's husband Sheldon talk about Kitty's eternal life and John, while outwardly scornful, seems jealous of the fact that Anne and Sheldon share this while he can't share it with his wife.

Anne's decision to invite Jessamine to Waynesboro is interesting and seems to be an effort to punish herself. Anne believes that Jessamine and John have been lovers and that Jessamine's son is John's. With that knowledge, it seems impossible that Anne would insist John invite Jessamine to Waynesboro, but that's exactly what she does. Anne realizes that Jessamine has lied about the boy's age so that it seems his birth doesn't fit into John's visit to her home. Anne is convinced that John doesn't believe the boy is his son and she notes that she'll spend a great deal of time trying to convince herself that it's not true. Soon after Jessamine's arrival, she buys a house and Eliza points out that John spends a great deal of time there.

John and Johnny talk at length about what it means to be a doctor. John is brutal with the impact that an incorrect guess has on both doctor and patient. He also points out that there's so much that isn't known about illnesses and that it's frustrating to be in that

position. John says that he has personally "guessed wrong" or steered a patient to an incorrect treatment. Johnny seems set on becoming a doctor just the same.



Pages 683 through 987

Pages 683 through 987 Summary

In the chapter titled "1892-1893," the engagements of Julia and Johnny and of Gilbert and Elsa are announced. Julia remains reticent of any sexual advances by Johnny. As the club reconvenes in the fall, Julia is absent because of pregnancy. Julia, Elsa and Charlotte Bonner, who has recently graduated with a bachelor's degree, have been added to the club's membership. Arianna dies and Ben, who had been in town only to see her, leaves quietly. Julia gives birth to a son, Alexander Tucker Gordon, and tells Johnny she'll never have another child.

In the chapter titled "1894-1895," Lavinia Gardiner breaks a rib and develops pneumonia but survives. Both the Gardiner sisters are showing overt signs of senility, refusing to bathe regularly and living in squalor in their part of the house. They never go out except for club meetings and have little social contact. Julia's father falls ill and then dies, and she blames Johnny and Dr. Warren. Sophie Klein is expected home from college with a philosophy doctorate and her name is proposed for club membership. Stewart Bodien and Ludwig begin a company called Rausch and Bodien Coated Paper, Inc. Elsa has given birth to her second child, Jennifer. Sophie marries a young attorney, Randy Lichtenstein.

In the chapter titled "1895-1896," Julia withdraws from most of her friends. There is financial worries and talk of a soup kitchen. The women work to make the library public rather than a subscription library and the school board agrees to help establish the Waynesboro Public Library. Sophie has a son, Fredrick. There's an outbreak of diphtheria and Sally's son Paul contracts the disease.

In the chapter titled "1898," the country again prospers. There's a party celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the club that summer at the country home of Ludwig and Sally. Christina's son Blair shows his temper by striking out at his sister, Janey, in a moment of rage, though their parents are watching. Blair goes away to college but is soon sent home for fighting. Lavinia and Caroline Gardiner have died and Barbara and Doug remodel the aunt's living quarters to make room for their daughters. The country becomes embroiled in war. The Gardiner's daughter Lavinia and Rodney Stevens become close. There are only six of the original twelve members of the club remaining, Thomasina, Eliza, Anne, Sally, Amanda and Mrs. Deming. Ruth Campbell becomes a member.

In the chapter titled "1900-1902," there are plans to build a local hospital with the Gordons and several other area doctors' families putting in the initial payments to make the hospital a reality. Rodney leaves town to attend medical school and plans to specialize in surgery, returning to Waynesboro to practice. Sally's son Ludwig Junior leaves town to marry a millionaire's daughter and has become the black sheep of the family. Jane Voorhees and Barbara's daughter Lavinia are invited to join the club.



Johnny is called to attend Thomasina, who dies during the night. John goes on a call that should have been for Johnny and is stranded in a snowstorm. He dies later of the after-effects of exposure. Tucker brings home a puppy that Julia won't allow him to keep and the dog, Major, stays at Anne's home. Blair joins the military and his parents refuse to allow his name spoken at home. Jessamine marries Sheldon Edwards.

In the chapter titled "1904-1905," Johnny has an affair with a girl from the area. He met the girl while tending a patient and notes that there's nothing permanent in the situation for either of them. Sally's son Paul has a relationship with a girl named Ellen O'Neill, who turns up pregnant, and the two marry. Sally is angry and says she'll never allow Paul back into her home. Ellen's sister is the woman accused of having an affair with Johnny and Sally and Anne have trouble coming to terms, both believing that the son of the other had been to blame for both situations. Julia learns of Johnny's affair, tells him she wants a divorce and plans to move to California with Tucker. Paul's daughter Kathleen is born. Grace Warren and Margaret Harrington are taken into the club.

In the chapter titled "1908," Janey Voorhees announces that she's leaving to be married and resigns from the club. Mrs. McKinney resigns to move to California with Julia. Eliza becomes ill and the women note that she's gaining an inordinate amount of weight, though she refuses to consult a doctor. Tucker comes to Waynesboro for a visit from his new home in California and says that his grandmother has a "beau." Tucker begins going on rounds with his father whenever possible and announces that he wants to become a doctor. Eliza is sick at work and Ludwig insists that she see Johnny. Eliza is moved to the new hospital. She survives the surgery to remove a tumor but dies of cardiac failure two days later. Eliza talks with the woman she considers her only friend, Amanda, prior to her surgery. She asks Amanda if she's set for money and Amanda assures her that she's comfortable. Eliza seems to feel some obligation to Amanda, but once assured that her friend is not in need, Eliza leaves her share of the large house she shares with Thomasina's husband to Ruhamah, Arianna's sister. Ruhamah has had a difficult life, living on her own with little income since her parents moved away. Ruhamah had remained in Waynesboro on the hope that Arianna would someday return and fearing that Arianna would not know how to find the family if she also left town. Ruhamah, after the shock of learning that she's inherited Eliza's share in the house, rents it out, furnished, to the Pattons. The Patton's oldest daughter is Naomi, who is not Deborah Patton's biological child and clearly resents her stepmother, though she warms up to the woman and presents her a Christmas gift she made herself. The house rented by the Pattons remains something of a duplex, having been split by Thomasina's father so that both Thomasina and Eliza would have a place to call home. Thomasina's husband remains in the other half of the house and in fact, he's called on by the Pattons to stay with their children when Naomi is in the hospital seriously ill.

Pages 683 through 987 Analysis

Julia is an overtly social person and refuses to submit to social dictates, though she often makes a spectacle of herself in doing so. She is also selfish and self-centered, refusing to take the feelings of others into consideration. For example, she is angry and



petulant the entire time she's pregnant and tells Johnny that she'll never have another child. Ignoring his need for sex, they have separate bedrooms for the remainder of their marriage. However, when Tucker is born, Julia makes a point of nursing him whenever the need arises, regardless of where she is. She bares her breast and feeds the child in front of her father-in-law, though it obviously makes him uncomfortable. It seems she doesn't really care for Tucker except as far as she can make him further her quest to be the center of attention. This is a trend that will continue throughout his life.

Johnny and his father continue to divide the cases between them, sometimes based on the preferences of their patients and sometimes based on practicality. For example, diphtheria - a childhood disease - is usually handled by John so that Johnny doesn't risk taking the disease home to Tucker, his own son. Julia finds out that Johnny is handling a case of diphtheria and grows angry. She is not cut out to be the wife of a doctor and this seems to be at least part of their problem.

Christina and her family agree to attend a summer party celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the club, combined with a community gathering. When Christina discovers that there was liquor, she and her family leave immediately. Christina's oldest child, a boy named Blair, was with some of the other boys his age and someone offered him a beer, which he accepted though he didn't like the taste and drank only a swallow. Christina refuses to allow Blair any leeway on this and her anger drives him away from Waynesboro. Christina has homeschooled her children, citing her distrust of the public school system, and has effectively cut the children off from other children in the neighborhood. Christina believes every failing of her children is because of some weakness of failure on her part. She is overly fearful that people will believe her less than perfect and tries so hard to be outwardly perfect that she's become the epitome of a "holier-than-thou" personality.

Julia tells Johnny she wants a divorce soon after she learns of his affair but admits that she's wanted a divorce for some time. She says that she wouldn't have asked for a divorce because she feared the public stigma of being divorced, but that having a husband who has cheated on her is just as bad and means that she might as well have a divorce. It seems that Julia hasn't been happy about their relationship for some time and that she'd actually been searching for a way to get out of the marriage. Johnny admits that Julia hadn't wanted to be married to him and says that he's relieved that she isn't leaving him for another man, that he can live with the fact that she doesn't want to be married at all more than he could have stood the fact that she simply didn't want him.



Pages 989 through 1100

Pages 989 through 1100 Summary

In the chapter titled "1909," Julia announces that she's marrying the man Tucker had thought was courting his grandmother. He's older and Julia says that he won't demand any of the marital bed "business" Johnny had demanded. Tucker is sent to Harvey Military School though Johnny objects, but Tucker sends letters indicating his love for his father despite the demands of his mother. Julia sends word that her mother died. Johnny, who is now living with Anne, is called out to attend a case of polio which is followed quickly by another case that indicates an epidemic. Tim Merrill's son is among those who contract the disease as is Naomi Patton. By the time Johnny is called to the Patton home, Naomi can't lift her limbs at all. Naomi dies that night in the hospital with her father and stepmother at her side. Johnny has an episode that makes him realize his heart is no longer strong, damaged by poor habits and too little rest. One night Anne learns that Johnny was seen staggering into the house and she rushes home with friends to find Johnny dead on the living room floor. Much later she finds a letter he'd written her, envisioning his death prior to her own. He asks that she keep in touch with Tucker.

In the chapter titled "1913," there's a flood in the area and the families worry about loved ones cut off in other parts of the region. Ludwig is frantic with rebuilding and recovery, so much so that Elsa fears for his health. Ludwig eventually goes to see Johnny who orders that he rest, and he admits to Sally that he isn't well. There's a huge Christmas party planned for the family which is still somewhat divided. Soon after the holidays, Ludwig grows ill and is finally moved from the bedroom he's shared with Sally to a room set up strictly for nursing him. Sally is resting when he dies. The company is clearly not in good shape and the business matters fall to Paul who is charged with rebuilding the company after the devastating flood and its aftermath.

In the chapter titled "1914-1916," Americans become embroiled in World War I. Johnny is soon serving in an ambulance corps and Elsa's daughter, Jennifer, announces to her family that she's training as a nurse to work in the war effort in Europe.

In the chapter titled "1916-1924," Caroline Gardiner, daughter of Doug and Barbara, has married Lowrey Edwards, son of Kitty, and has given birth to four healthy children. There's word that young Ludwig is reported missing in action which most people believe means he's safely out of the fighting. There's word that Blair Voorhees is in the military and has encountered Jennifer, though Blair's parents refuse to hear any news about their son. Ludwig returns on a hospital ship, obviously not seriously hurt by his encounter. The following Christmas Jennifer returns home and the club celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. Tucker shows up at Anne's house soon after and announces that he and Jennifer are to be married. Anne, though she and Sally have always been fast friends, knows that Sally thinks the Gordon men are "unstable" and unreliable marriage



partners and predicts that Sally will object to the marriage, a fact that Tucker is prepared for.

Sally is slowing down a great deal. She no longer drives though she has a small electric vehicle and soon comes to give up even that as being too dangerous. Tucker and Jennifer marry and soon have a daughter they name Sally Anne. Henry and Christine Voorhees leave for Florida. Sally resigns as president of the club and Elsa is named in her place. Jennifer is elected to the club and gives birth in 1922 to John Alexander and in 1924 to Belinda. Melissa Patton, sister of Naomi, is elected to the club.

Pages 989 through 1100 Analysis

Anne has faced the loss of her daughter as a teenager and her husband, followed by the loss of her only remaining son. She naturally questions the reason she is left behind to face these deaths and is alternately angry and morose, as would be expected from the situation. Anne's faith is a recurring theme in this story and comes to her aid as she faces the loss of her family members, one by one. However, it would be impossible for her to face this without fear and she comes to a point where she decides that she's going to cut herself off from all but superficial friendships so that she never again has to face the horror of loss she feels when she loses her children. Johnny's pleas make her resolve to end this detachment but she continues to insulate herself for years to come. When Tucker returns to Waynesboro much later to begin his own medical practice, she's rather cool with him and is forced to face up to her fears and to the fact that she wants to love him and to be loved by him, the last remaining person of her immediate family.

Tucker, as an adult who has served in the military, realizes that the problems between his mother and father were at least partly based on his mother's aversion to sex. He recalls an incident from his childhood in which his mother is objecting strenuously, though he hadn't understood at the time. Now, Tucker realizes that his father's infidelity, which his mother had touted openly as her reason for leaving him, was at least partly caused by his mother's refusal to engage in sex.



Pages 1101 through 1174

Pages 1101 through 1174 Summary

Captain Bodien had retired from Rausch Cordage Company, which had undergone changes under the management of the younger generation of Rausches. The young Ludwig, now about thirty, falls in love with Melissa Patton, who is now assisting Ruhamah in the library. Bodien dies with Tucker as the physician and Tucker makes the statement that the event was "the death of an old soldier." Soon after, Bodien's great-granddaughter, Theresa Stevens, asks Tucker about her grandfather's death. He is initially reluctant to talk about it with the young girl but learns that she is writing a book about Captain Bodien and relents. She asks that he not tell anyone about her project, fearing that it won't come to pass or won't be accepted for publication if she does finish it.

Sally is becoming more crippled with arthritis, though she personally puts it down to being "fat and lazy." Tucker tells Anne that Sally is actually in great pain and that she skips her medicine on the days the club is to meet at their home so that she can attend and remain lucid and attentive. Melissa and Ludwig marry, though she continues to work for a year to help put her brother through school. The couple then has a son they name David and a daughter named Deborah.

In the chapter titled "1929," Amanda is more than eighty and is showing her age. The families are feeling the effects of an economic downturn, especially those with several children. Elsa arranges for the older members of the club to have transportation to the events. When Amanda misses a meeting, the members are naturally concerned and eventually gain entrance into the house to discover that she's died. Members of the Rausch family are facing hardships as the stock market becomes increasingly erratic. Sally refuses to bail out her son who has fallen in too deeply, predicting that he would only lose whatever she give him along with what he's already lost. Theresa Evans' book, "Old Soldier," is published. Theresa's family comes to realize that her time spent writing is not merely time wasted and her mother, Lavinia, promises to make it easier for her by not interrupting so often.

In the chapter titled "1930-1932," Anne admits that she is losing her ability to recall names but says she isn't as bad as Sally, who can't seem to remember anything. Elsa and her family are now caring for Sally, living in the same house, and are there when Sally falls and breaks her arm and rib. Tucker and Rodney worry about pneumonia because of the broken rib. As Sally is fighting a losing battle, she tells Elsa that she wants to see Anne in order to ask her forgiveness. Elsa is confused but Sally says that she'd been the one to hint to Anne of Johnny's affair those many years ago and wants to be certain Anne has forgiven her. Anne does come and the two remember the many years of friendship that has bound them together. As Anne leaves, she says that Sally called on her because of their years of friendship as Sally is facing her own death. Sally dies soon after and Elsa, who had often been at odds with her mother, is left to carry on



without her, only now realizing how much she had cared for her. Elsa is also left alone in the large house with only her husband and describes to some degree the same loneliness Sally must have felt.

Twenty years has passed since Johnny's death and Tucker and his family live in the country, though they try to visit Anne regularly. One day Anne requests that her servant, a woman named Louline, help her carry some items down from the attic. When Tucker fusses at her for overexerting herself, she says that she's trying to set things to rights so that he and Jennifer won't be left with that task. Anne suffers what is apparently a light heart attack, but Tucker is obviously worried and tells Jennifer so. Theresa moves in with Anne, hoping to have a place where she can accomplish more writing and be nearby in case Anne needs her. One day Louline and Theresa are picking cherries while Anne watches from a chair in the yard. She makes a sound that attracts the attention of the two women, who rush to her side. Theresa immediately goes to call the hospital. Over the coming weeks, Tucker's daughter Sally Anne often stops by Anne's house for a visit after school. One day Sally Anne finds photos of Belinda and asks about her. Anne says that Belinda had been about the age of Sally Anne when she'd died. Tucker and Jennifer eventually find other things for Sally Anne to do, fearing she might be alone with Anne when Anne's time comes. In fact, it's Louline who is with her, and the servant describes an "easy" death for Anne. During the tribute ceremony, it's pointed out that Anne is the last of the charter members and that her death marks the end of an era for the club.

Pages 1101 through 1174 Analysis

There's an interesting scene as Sally calls for Anne while Sally is lying on her death bed. It seems reasonable that Sally realizes that she's near death and won't likely recover and she says that she wants to be certain that Anne forgives her for having been the one who hinted that Johnny was having an affair. While it's true that Sally had been that person, Anne doesn't seem to have harbored a grudge. Even more importantly, Sally hadn't trusted Anne's husband, John, and seems to have suspected that John also wouldn't remain faithful. The two women were among the organizers of the club and are now the final remaining charter members, as well as having been friends since their school days. It seems that Sally really wanted Anne nearby because she is the one person who could - and would - remember all those years. This common thread bound the two women and with Sally's death, Anne realizes that she will be alone when her time comes to face death. This is bound to be a blow to Anne, who has suffered the loss of so many near and dear to her heart.

There seems to be little doubt that the club had grown into something that Anne and Sally hadn't envisioned when they were initially approached about joining. It's Sally who says that she had never expected that the club would become so important. It seems that many of the women depended on the events of the club as a way of escaping the tradition domestic aspects of their lives, but also as a way to exchange ideas and ideals. There is naturally a social aspect and the women develop friendship and sometimes become near-enemies, but there are essays shared at every meeting and the women

take their assignments very seriously, working to make their talks informative to the other members and obviously hoping for praise rather than disdain.



Characters

Anne Alexander Gordon

Valedictorian of the Waynesboro's Female College's class of 1868, Anne soon marries Dr. John Gordon and gives birth to a son. Anne seems somewhat reluctant to marry initially, but becomes convinced that it's the right thing and plans to make the best of their marriage. Having been the daughter of a doctor, Anne realizes the demands on John's time and makes the two compatible. Anne soon gives birth to a daughter named Belinda, called Binny. Anne nurses Binny through rheumatic fever and a relapse and is by her daughter's side when she dies. Anne also outlives both her husband John and son Johnny and is the last of the twelve charter members of the club to die. Anne is a staunch believer in the afterlife, though she doesn't believe that her religion has to be an overbearing part of her life. She never tries to push John into believing. Anne is a strong character as seen in her knowledge that John has several affairs. Even when confronted with proof of his affair, she doesn't argue with him about it or ever threaten to leave him. In fact, she goes to great lengths to hide the evidence so that he won't ever have to worry that she knows. When John's illegitimate child and the child's mother want to come to Waynesboro, Anne prompts him to accept her and does her best to make the woman welcome, though she admits that she spends a great deal of her life trying to convince herself that it isn't true.

Sally Cochran Rausch

Close friends with Anne, Sally and Anne are initially invited to join the club by Mrs. Lowrey on the day of their commencement exercises. She is referred to as "Sarah" on the club's rolls. Sally eventually marries a man named Ludwig Rausch, who has a dream of starting a rope factory in Waynesboro. Sally is a strong character, though she is somewhat headstrong and unwilling to compromise in many instances. A strong example of this is seen when her son gets a girl pregnant out of wedlock. Sally believes there should be some alternative other than marriage, but her son insists on marrying the girl and Sally says she'll never welcome them into her home, though it means she won't have contact with her grandchild. She eventually relents, though it's circumstances that force her to do so. Sally, in her old age, is plagued by arthritis that Anne learns is debilitating and painful. Sally never lets on to this fact to those who aren't close to her treatment, and in fact, makes many of her friends believe that she's simply gotten fat and lazy rather than letting them know of her disease and its progression. As she is near death, Sally calls for Anne, fearing that her friend might hold a grudge for a situation many years earlier. Sally is the last of the charter member of the club to die with the exception of Anne.



Amanda Reid

A young woman who has graduated from Oberlin and returns to work at Waynesboro as a teacher in 1868, she is included in the founding members of the club. Amanda's mother has worked to help Amanda make it through school and now feels that Amanda owes her a debt, more of gratitude than of money. Amanda develops the attitude in later years that she is superior to the other club members and dies alone.

Caroline Gardiner

Aunt of Douglas Gardiner and sister of Lavina Gardiner, Caroline is somewhat reclusive and only agrees to join the club because she feels the need to foster friendships that will help Douglas with his future career plans. She and her sister hate Douglas's wife, Barbara and are miserable near the ends of their lives, having harbored hatred and animosity for so long.

Lavinia Gardiner

Aunt of Douglas Gardiner and sister of Caroline Gardiner, Lavinia is somewhat reclusive and only agrees to join the club because she feels the need to foster friendships that will help Douglas with his future career plans. She and her sister hate Douglas's wife Barbara and are miserable near the ends of their lives, having harbored hatred and animosity for so long.

Douglas Gardiner

Nephew of Caroline and Lavinia, Douglas is a socially shy young man and seems more so because of his self-consciousness about his club foot. Douglas is, however, outspoken on matters of importance to him. For example, he speaks out plainly regarding his opposition to allowing blacks the right to vote. Doug makes a good career for himself in later life in law and politics, marries Barbara Bodien and fathers several daughters.

John Gordon

Husband of Anne, John is a doctor who is filled with insecurities about himself in his role as a doctor. John was in the military during the Civil War and his doubts seem to stem from the role in that capacity, where he says that he spent a great deal of time cutting off limbs to avoid gangrene and allowing so many to die. John has several affairs and likely fathers an illegitimate child, Rodney Stevens, but remains married to Anne until his death after suffering severe exposure during a house call.



Ellen Lowrey Tyler

Sister of Kitty and daughter of Rebecca Lowrey, Ellen leaves her husband and moves to Waynesboro with her children. She is quickly accepted as a member of the club, though some of the younger members don't fully approve. Ellen is a forceful personality and pushes to have things done her way. She teaches algebra, though there seems to be some question early on as to her qualifications.

Louisa Tucker Deming

One of the founders of the club, Louisa marries General George Deming, and her status is changed to honorary member when the Demings live in Washington, where George is a representative. Louisa and George have one daughter, Julia, who marries Johnny Gordon.

Agatha Pinney

Described as a "thin, ingratiating little spinster," Agatha teaches primary school and is among the initial founders of the club. Agatha is eventually hooked on opium prescribed as pain medication because of sciatica and becomes a problem to the club because the members believe she is no longer able to teach their children, as had been her occupation for many years. Relegated to a pension and unable to get enough medicine to soothe her habit, she tries to commit suicide by burning down her house but only kills herself without starting the fire as she'd intended.

Susan Crenshaw

A teacher at the college, Susan teaches Latin and Greek and is among the founders of the club. Anne says that Miss Crenshaw seems not to live life but seems to be "filling in time" while she waits for inevitable death.

Ludwig Rausch

A former military man, as are most of the men of his age in this time, Ludwig has dreams of starting a rope factory in Waynesboro. He marries Sally and they have several children. Ludwig is ambitious and comes to employ a great many people of the area. When times are hard, he has his workers making any kind of rope that will keep them employed, even when the company is barely breaking even. He works doubly hard after a devastating flood and dies at home soon after.



Eliza Ballard

Daughter of Mary Grimes Ballard and sister of Thomasina Ballard Travers, Eliza is a social snob and derides her sister's choice of a husband. Her father is a lawyer and Eliza becomes his clerk when the family falls on hard times in order to save money. Eliza remains working for her father until his death and then becomes a secretary for Ludwig Rausch until her own death of a tumor.

Thomas Ballard

Father of Thomasina and Eliza and husband of Mary, Thomas is a Supreme Court Judge. He seems to truly care for Thomasina's happiness and intervenes with Eliza and Mary when they are making Thomasina's life unhappy because of her choice for a husband. Thomas loses a great deal of money in the economic crash following the Civil War and later makes the grim announcement that he'll have to revive his law practice in order to make enough money to support the family. He dies in his law office and leaves the family home divided with half to each of his daughters.

Sheldon Edwards

Husband of Kitty Lowrey, Sheldon worries that he will not love his two sons equally because Kitty dies during the birth of their second child. Sheldon remains single while the boys are growing up, but he eventually marries Jessamine Stevens.

Johnny Gordon

Son of Anne and Dr. John Gordon, Johnny is determined to be a doctor from a young age and goes along with his father on rounds as soon as John will allow it. Though Elsa Rausch is in love with him, Johnny chooses to marry Julia Deming and the two later divorce. Johnny's son is Tucker, who also becomes a doctor.

Elsa Rausch Evans

Daughter of Sally and Ludwig, Elsa is obviously in love with Johnny Gordon, though he doesn't marry her. Elsa marries Gilbert Evans and the two have several children. Elsa spends a great deal of time working for the club as her mother's health wanes and stays with her mother until the end of Sally's life.

Thomasina Ballard Travers

Sister of Eliza and daughter of Mary Grimes Ballard, Thomasina is a shy young girl who is somewhat reclusive because of acute hay fever and asthma. She meets Samuel Travers after her poem, "To a Bride," is published in a local newspaper and Samuel



asks for permission to set it to music. Thomasina and Eliza hate each other but come together when some situation calls for it.

Jessamine Stevens Edwards

The widow of John's cousin, Jessamine wants to take her son Rodney away from Louisiana because of his bouts with malaria and moves to Waynesboro. Anne believes that Jessamine and John had an affair and that Jessamine's son is actually John's. Jessamine eventually marries Sheldon Edwards.

Samuel Travers

The young man who plays and teaches organ and piano, he courts and marries the shy young Thomasina Ballard. Sam is generally thought something of a useless man and he is described as "dapper." However, when Thomasina's father dies, Sam takes control, tending details and caring for the three women in the house who are facing the shock of loss.

Kate Gordon

John's sister and likely a lesbian, Kate inherited money from her father and bought out John's share of the family farm. She remains at the farm, living alone and doing the work of a man quite successfully though is viewed as an oddity by those who know her. She commits suicide after a particularly vocal argument with a young girl.

Ben Mercer

The young boy who runs away from home and joins the circus. Ben was left by his own mother and raised by his grandparents. He marries Arianna McCune.

Arianna McCune

The daughter of the Reverend McCune, Arianna is angry when her father remarries and begins spending a great deal of time with the Ballard family. She eventually runs away from home and marries a young man named Ben Mercer. Arianna returns to Waynesboro later but is very ill with tuberculosis and eventually dies.

Julia Deming Gordon

Julia marries Johnny Gordon, becoming Anne's daughter-in-law. Julia seems to have lesbian tendencies. She seems attracted to Johnny's younger sister, Binny, prior to Binny's death. Julia initially refuses to allow Johnny to kiss her and later hates the



sexual side of their relationship. She has one child, a son, and refuses to share a bedroom with Johnny after that. She divorces Johnny and remarries, but chooses an older man who apparently has no sexual capacity remaining.

Naomi Patton

The stepdaughter of Deborah Patton, Naomi resents Deborah's role in her life, though she warms up to her over the Christmas season the family spends in Waynesboro. Naomi contracts childhood polio and is among the children who die of the disease.

Sally Anne Gordon

Daughter of Tucker and Jennifer, Sally Anne is very close to her great-grandmother, Anne, and spends a lot of time with her.

Alexander Tucker Gordon

Son of Johnny Gordon and Julia Deming Gordon, Tucker initially believes everything his mother says about Johnny's affair being the reason for the divorce but later comes to realize that both had been at fault. Tucker lives with his mother in California but eventually returns to Waynesboro to practice medicine.



Objects/Places

Waynesboro Women's Club

An organization founded in 1868 and initially dedicated to topics of enlightenment with all controversial subjects barred.

Waynesboro

Where the story is set.

The Waynesboro Female College

The school where most of the young ladies of the club attended and where several others teach.

Mrs. Lowrey's House

Where the first meeting of the club is held.

Burlington

Where Sally's parents live when Sally leaves the children with her in order to attend the political convention with Ludwig.

Rausch and Bodien Coated Paper, Inc.

The business started by Ludwig and Steward Bodien.

The Waynesboro Public Library

The library founded originally as a subscription library and turned to a public facility in 1895 or 1896.

Washington, D.C.

Where the majority of the political events occur and where several of the families live during political seasons.



Rausch Cordage

The company started by Ludwig Rausch.

The Waynesboro Hospital

An establishment started by the Gordons and several other doctors in the area.



Themes

The Need to Believe

Anne is a prime example of the need to believe in religious ideals, including life after death. John notes that Anne's belief provides comfort for her in times of trouble and seems to wish that he had that comfort for himself, but never begins to believe in life after death. Anne talks with Kitty's husband Sheldon soon after Kitty's death and it's evident that Sheldon also holds to this belief. It's then that John realizes that this has created some distance between John and Anne that could never be breached. It's interesting that neither John nor Anne's children show any great tendency toward religious beliefs. This belief is obviously vital to Anne's peace of mind as her daughter, her husband and then her son die. Another example is seen in Christina Voochorees. Christina, however, doesn't find a calm comfort from her beliefs. Instead, she has allowed her need to believe to change her personality so that she is no longer a happy person and makes her family and friends aware of her misery. The biggest difference between Christina's beliefs and those of Anne seems to be the way they view their roles. While Anne trusts in God's goodness and mercy, Christina believes that any misdeed on her part will result in God's wrath.

The Importance of Marriage

Anne loves John fully and decides from the beginning of their marriage that she will keep her marriage secure without making demands of John. Her father, also a doctor, warns her that it won't always be easy and that she must be willing to forgive John, regardless of his shortcomings. Anne makes John promise that he'll never commit suicide as his sister did but swears that she'll never ask for another promise, and she doesn't. Anne knows that John is frequently unfaithful to her and puts it down at least partly to the demands of his job. She never confronts him about it even when she has proof of an affair. When one of John's conquests asks to come to Waynesboro, Anne allows it and notes that she'll spend a great deal of her time trying to convince herself that the woman's child isn't John's son. She never does but remains faithful to John, and they continue their lives as husband and wife until John's death. Early in her own marriage, Sally fears for Anne's, though she herself has some minor difficulties with her husband, Ludwig, over the years until his death. The majority of the characters believe in the sanctity of marriage though there are some who don't, such as Julia Deming, who marries and then divorces Johnny Gordon.

Friendship

While the Waynesboro Women's Club is touted mainly as a club to further the educational aspects of the lives of those who join, though there's no doubt that it's also a close-knit social circle that becomes increasingly important to the lives of those who



join. Initially, Anne doesn't expect to be overly involved, but years later she and Sally admit that the club has come to be important in their lives, providing a circle of friends and events outside their immediate families. The club provides a necessary link of friendship for many of the members, including those who look down on the club and its members. The club does let down some of its members, including Agatha Pinney, who commits suicide as a result of despair. This is the exception, the club members in this case not realizing what has happened in Agatha's life. When Eliza, years later, is ill, the club members try to figure out a way to help and are very concerned. The club members hold a memorial service each time a member dies.



Style

Point of View

The story is written in third person with an omniscient perspective. There are initially twelve women involved in the club and the perspective changes to several of them at various times, meaning an omniscient perspective is the only option available to the author. The changes of perspective means the reader has to track which character is the subject, but this is fairly easy to accomplish because the story refers to the various characters by name. The perspective means that the reader learns facts and information about various characters throughout the course of the story. While the story is most often seen from Anne's perspective, it often drops to Sally's and divides the rest among other characters. The perspective drops sometimes to minor characters, and this may sometimes be a problem for the reader who can have trouble tracking the characters. It's very possible that the casual reader will sometimes lose track of kinships and relationships. For example, Anne's grandson and Sally's granddaughter marry, but because the granddaughter is Sally's daughter's child, the last names aren't the same and some readers may miss the relationship without careful reading and tracking of characters.

Setting

The story is set in Waynesboro, Indiana, over the course of several decades beginning in the late 1800s. The place - Waynesboro - is real, and many of the historical events touted as part of the story are also real. This lends credence to the story. In addition, the lives of the characters are very believable and could have been real, though there is no evidence that they are. The young author who appears at the end of the book, Theresa, is working on a book that may very well have been this book, *The Ladies of the Club*. The specific settings include the homes of the various characters where the club meetings are held and where action takes place. There are also scenes in the room that becomes the Waynesboro Public Library, the Rausch Cordage Company and the law offices of Eliza Ballard's father. Many of the settings are described in great detail, though there are many details left to the imagination of the reader.

Language and Meaning

The story is written in a fairly straight-forward style. The majority of the words used will be familiar to any reader with a reasonable vocabulary base. Most of the story line is also straight-forward as well, and most readers will find the storyline difficult to follow, only in keeping track of the various characters. The tone is generally hopeful as the various characters deal with life's situations. These include the deaths of loved ones, and though there are periods of hopelessness, the overall tone of hope remains. This is seen clearly in the case of Anne, who holds to a belief in the afterlife. The hopeful tone

remains largely because there are always characters to carry on this tone even when some are dealing with times of hopelessness or despair. The story takes place over a period of several decades, but the book goes through little evolution with regard to the use of words and phrases specific to the time period. There are some minor exceptions, such as a "taffy pull" held by Anne for Johnny's friend.

Structure

The book is divided into chapters that are named the year or years of the events contained in that chapter. The reader must realize that not every year is accounted for, that some chapters contain multiple years, and that there are some years that stretch over multiple chapters, meaning some chapters have the same "titles." The chapters vary in length, though most are in the range of about thirty pages. The book is lengthy, with the paperback version at about 1,170 pages. The book flows in chronological order as is evident by the dates used as titles. However, there are some pieces of information presented out of order. These are typically presented as historical pieces, or memories, of the various characters. The chapters each begin with a list of the current club members and those who have died, noted as "in memoriam." This provides a clue as to the contents of the chapter by listing any changed last names which would occur by marriage as well as any members who die over the course of that chapter.



Quotes

"They are two spinsters, in their forties, rather badly off, living very quietly. With those handicaps they have managed to impose themselves on the town as beings apart, aristocrats, uninvolved in the hurly-burly of life; they are spoken of with bated breath, and approached by other ladies only in the most ceremonious fashion, carrying out the ritual of the afternoon call, and not approached in any way by other people." 1868, p. 42

"Mrs. Lowrey made a joke about an epidemic of weddings in the Club, and wondered if this would be the last, and Eliza said, short and sharp, 'Where there's an infection in the air, Thomasina's sure to catch it, whether it's measles or love.'" 1869, p. 95

"'Eliza,' her father rebuked her, 'men cannot take politics so vindictively and continue to live comfortably in the same town. Women must learn to be more tolerant.'" 1872, p. 147

"'Life wasn't meant to be enjoyed!' Mrs. Reid was tight-lipped." 1877, p. 291

"Her lot was no worse than the common lot, no worse than - She let herself look around the group: that of the Missus Gardiner, who she was sure made themselves miserable and would have done so in any circumstances. " 1884-1885, p. 495

"Amanda had no very high opinion of most of her fellow Club members; she remembered now with some sadness, as for any lost illusion, how eager she had been for its organization, so that there might be some mental stimulus in the town where she must live. But whatever its shortcomings, the Club was all there was, its members the best-educated, the most intelligent: she must make the most of it." 1884-1885, p. 496

"I do not believe in the sequestering of one's self for a specified number of months and then appearing in public veiled in black; I do not see what it proves except that one is acquainted with the dictates of society. It seems to me almost a denial of one's belief that a loved one has exchanged the trials of this life for the peace of another happier one." 1885-1886, p. 523

"She had resumed attendance at church because she found Mr. McKinney's sermons less upsetting than his pastoral visits, which he always concluded by praying for her." 1895-1896, p. 770

"I have been rather forcefully reminded that enjoyment is not the purpose of life." 1898, p. 838

"I wouldn't mind taking you with me on my country calls, some of them: there are old men, and women too, with broken bones, or anyway housebound, who enjoys nothing more than a new face. I could explain that you were learning." 1908, p. 950



"That is it,' and he disengaged the hand that was still in Deborah's, and pulled the sheet up on Naomi's arm and shoulder, over her face. Her father murmured, 'Into Thy hands, Oh, Lord, I commit my child - ' and struggled to his feet." 1909, p. 1012

"The Secretary believes that all members concur with her in feeling that today's Memorial Program marked a very sad occasion for us. Mrs. Gordon was the last of that small band of courageous women who defied convention and organized the Waynesboro Woman's Club. An era has ended." 1930-1932, p. 1176



Topics for Discussion

Describe the beginning of the Waynesboro Women's Club. List at least six of the twelve original members and describe how each becomes involved.

Anne and Sally are close friends from the beginning of the story. How do they come to be involved in the Women's Club? What do they initially believe about the club and their role in it? How does that change over the years?

There are two sets of sisters in the club, Eliza and Thomasina Ballard and Caroline and Lavinia Gardiner. Compare the relationship between the Ballard sisters to that of the Gardiner sisters.

Describe Agatha Pinney. Describe Amanda Reid. Both Agatha and Amanda are educators. Compare the lives and deaths of the two women.

Sally expresses concern about Anne's marriage. Does it turn out that this is founded? Compare Sally's marriage and life to that of Anne. How do the lives of the two women connect again in later life?

Who is John Gordon? Johnny Gordon? Tucker Gordon? What do the three men have in common? Compare the personalities and lives of the three men.

Who is Belinda Gordon? Who is Naomi Patton? How do each die?

Who is Julia Deming? Describe her life and marriage.