

The Cure for Dreaming Study Guide

The Cure for Dreaming by Cat Winters

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Plot Summary

The Cure for Dreaming is set during the suffrage movement of the 1900's. The story follows the course of Olivia, a young teenager who is celebrating her 17th birthday. She's with her two best friends, Frannie and Kate. Earlier in the day, all of the girls had participated in a pro suffrage march at the courthouse. Olivia was terrified that her father was going to find out, since he doesn't approve of the suffrage movement and just wants Olivia to be a good, submissive girl.

The girls are celebrating Olivia's birthday by going to visit a famous hypnotist, Henri. Henri chooses Olivia from the crowd when he finds out that she's celebrating her birthday. He's easily able to put her under his spell. She doesn't remember the incident, but everyone assures her afterwards that she was in a complete trance. Henri was able to stand on her, play drums right next to her head, and even poke her with needles and she didn't react.

When Olivia is leaving she's approached by the judge's son, Percy. Olivia had a crush on Percy because she considered him to be well above her station. He offered to take her home, something she was happy to accept. Percy meets Olivia's father and formally asks her out on a date, something that her father agrees to. Olivia is happy because her father seems to have no idea about the suffrage rally she attended. Before she goes to bed, he confronts her about it, and warns her against ever going to a demonstration. He mentions that he's afraid Olivia will end up like her mother, whom Olivia later reveals left the family because she felt suffocated at home.

Olivia's father continues to grow concerned about her behavior. He arranges for Henri to meet with Olivia again. He forces Henri to hypnotize her, making it so she's able to see the world for how it truly is. He also makes it so whenever Olivia is unhappy she can't complain, all she can do is say that all is well. Olivia starts to see the world in a twisted way. Many of the men she encounters are vile monsters, including her father.

Things continue to worsen for Olivia. When she's out with Percy, she's unable to try and resist him when he tries to force himself onto her. She's able to escape from him, but she's still in trouble because she's still under the hypnotism. She hunts down Henri, who she starts to call by the normal name of Henry. He explains that he had to put her under because his sister is dying from a tumor. He needed the money from her father to operate on her, but he only gets it once her father knows she's completely under his spell.

Olivia and Henry decide to team up when they discover that Olivia's father wants to display her to the anti-suffrage movement. He wants them to see how effective hypnotism is in silencing women. He takes the hypnotism even further, making Olivia sick whenever she hears certain pro suffrage phrases. Each step he takes just pushes Olivia further away from him, and encourages her to become more active in the suffrage movement.



Olivia and Henry are able to trick the anti-suffrage movement. They put all the women there under hypnotism so they cannot speak. The women are upset and try to plead for their voices to be returned. Henry points out the hypocrisy, making them realize opposing suffrage is just like taking away a woman's voice. The suffrage group helps Henry and Olivia raise the money they need to help his sister, and Olivia is able to escape to New York to live with her mother and pursue her dreams of becoming a journalist.



Chapters 1-3

Summary

Chapter 1

The chapter opens with the main character, Olivia, attending a carnival show with her two friends, Frannie and Kate. The date is October 31st, 1900. Olivia and her friends attended a demonstration at the courthouse earlier in the day, advocating for women's rights. Olivia was worrying about how her father "Mad Mead" was going to react.

The main headliners of the carnival are the Reverie's, a hypnotist, Henri, and his sister, Genevieve. Henri chooses Olivia to be his first volunteer, because it's her birthday. He hypnotizes her, which puts her at ease. He convinces her to go completely rigid, a command that she obeys. He snaps her out of the trance after a few moments, and Olivia finds herself feeling sad that she's being escorted away from Henri.

Chapter 2

The girls are leaving the performance. Frannie and Kate help fill Olivia in on what happened when she was hypnotized. Henri had stood on her chest and rung cymbals near her eyes to show that she was in a complete trance. He even poked her with needles, but Olivia had no memory of any of that happening.

Before they leave, Percy, the son of a prestigious judge, asks Olivia if he can take her home. Olivia is surprised, but eagerly accepts. On the ride there, she worries that he isn't interested in any of the things that she's saying. She can't help thinking about the hypnotist from the carnival.

When they arrive at her house, they talk about her father. He has a reputation around town as being strange because of his profession. He's a dentist, but everyone finds some of his practices strange, especially since it seems like he's always happy whenever he's operating on someone's mouth. Olivia admits it's hard living with the strange reputation of her father, that's why she's usually so quiet in class. She asks Percy why he is interested in her, and he says that she was beautiful when she was on stage at the carnival, something that he had never noticed before. She's worried that he's only interested in her because she seems obedient, but he insists that isn't the case.

Percy goes inside to meet her father. He makes a good impression and formally requests to go out with Olivia later in the week. Her father says he has to think about it. When Percy leaves, her father scolds her for being at the demonstration earlier. She says she wants the right to vote when she's old enough, which angers her father. He says he thought she was more sensible, and says if she wants to go out this weekend she better think long and hard about why what she did today was wrong.



Chapter 3

The next morning, Olivia's father calls her down to the kitchen to tell her that her picture has made the paper. She's worried it is about the protest, but he reveals that she is in the paper because of the hypnotism performance. He tells her that he's been interested in hypnotism to help his patients deal with pain. When she assures him how effective it is, he also reveals that he's interested in it for Olivia because he wants to get rid of her rebellious thoughts. Olivia is hurt, and her father goes on to talk about how he wants her to be a good wife, and the only reason he's having her go to school now is he's worried about what would happen to her if she was working alone. Olivia insists that he's doing this only because he's upset that he wasn't able to control Olivia's mother.

At school, Olivia notices that Percy is paying more attention to her. He even gets in trouble from their English teacher, who also notices that Percy isn't paying attention. The two briefly speak after class, and Olivia gives Percy her copy of *Dracula*, since they had discussed it the night before. Frannie shows up and asks about what happened with Percy. Olivia notes she seems unhappy with Percy. Frannie says he seems snobbish, and she heard he has a reputation for jumping from woman to woman. The chapter ends with Olivia receiving a note from her father, saying to go straight to his office and not to return home.

Analysis

Chapter 1

The very first thing that this chapter does is introduce the reader to the setting. The time period is vital for the reader because it lets them know that the book takes place when women were still fighting for the right to vote, which is one of the main themes, as well as conflict, of the book. It's made clear right away where Olivia stands on the matter, but also what her father's position is. Given how afraid she is about him finding out, it's clear that he doesn't support women having equal rights. Again, this is one of the major conflicts throughout the book, and it's Olivia's father's opposition which moves the plot forward.

Henry is introduced, along with his gift for hypnotism. This is another driving point in the book, since it's Henry's hypnotism that causes Olivia to see the world in a different light. The theme of *Speaking One's Truth* is also touched upon lightly in this chapter as the reader sees Olivia beginning to discover her own truths, and those truths being unacceptable to her father. Additionally, it is interesting to note that one of the things that Henry does to Olivia while she's hypnotized, is that he stands on her chest. This, metaphorically speaking, indicates one of the themes of Women's Rights, and how men felt as if women were beneath them. Though this isn't necessarily what Henry believes, the theme of Oppression and Subjugation are hinted at through this seemingly innocent act.

Chapter 2



The character of Percy is introduced. Percy tries to be vague about what his views are on suffrage, but the reader is given the impression that he's against it, if for no other reason than he's very old fashioned and sticks to traditions. This demonstrates the theme of Traditions. In this case, and in Olivia's father's instance as well, it is shown that not all traditions should be cherished or supported. Olivia feels like Percy isn't interested in anything that she's saying, and she wonders if he's only interested in her because of her appearance and how submissive she seemed during the hypnotism.

Olivia's father is introduced for the first time as well, already acting like an antagonist. He believes that women aren't equal to men and don't deserve the right to vote, thus continuing the theme of Women's Rights and the lack thereof. He tries to immediately control Olivia, using the possibility of going out with Percy as a way of manipulating her into behaving the way that he wants. It is clear that he treats her as inferior to himself. This theme of Oppression and Subjugation is just beginning to show itself in these early chapters, but it is already establishing a sinister cycle. Olivia's father is constantly trying to control her during the book, soon resorting to hypnosis.

Chapter 3

Olivia's father continues his conversation from the last chapter, telling Olivia exactly how he wants her to live her life. He's interested in hiring Henry because he wants to have complete control over Olivia, going so far as to take away what he considers to be her rebellious nature. Olivia snaps at him, saying that he's only doing this because of her mother, which is the first time that she has been mentioned in the book. The reader later learns more about Olivia's mother. Just like with Olivia, her father tried to control her. This hints at events to come, as well as demonstrating the theme of Oppression and Subjugation.

Frannie gets defensive of Olivia when she finds out that she and Percy are going to be going out. She hints that there's a darker side to Percy, but denies actually knowing based on any personal experience.

Olivia gives Percy her copy of Dracula. The two will mention it a few times later, and Olivia starts to make more references to the book after Henry hypnotizes her again in the later chapters. This symbolically is a story about a man draining the life force from women, something that many of the men in Olivia's life attempt to do.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the significance of the novel, Dracula in Chapter 3.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the theme of Oppression and Subjugation in these chapters.



Discussion Question 3

What is Olivia's father like?

Vocabulary

posterior, supine, thrashing, temperance, unearthed, upholstered, contraption, beguiling, alluring, grimace, simmered, coaxed, infatuation, languid, petrified



Chapters 4-6

Summary

Chapter 4

Olivia arrives at the office, wondering if she should try and run away, pretending she had not received the message at school. That plan is ruined when her father arrives and tells her to wait. Henri soon shows up, telling Olivia that he's here to hypnotize her. Olivia is furious and argues with her father. She can't believe that he would try and strip away parts of her personality. She tries to leave, but Henri stops her. He starts to put her under, bringing her into her father's operating room. Her father tells Henri to get rid of her rebellious side. He wants her to see men and women for how they're supposed to be in the world, and instead of arguing she should just say 'all is well'.

Henri continues to hypnotize Olivia, giving her the instructions from her father. When she comes out of her trance, both Henri and her father look completely different. Henri seems beautiful to her, almost angelic. Her father looks the complete opposite, resembling some sort of ghostly fiend with fangs for teeth. She tries to express her horror, but all she can do is repeat that "all is well".

Chapter 5

Olivia gets out of the office and bolts down the street. She stops in front of a building where she sees women trapped in cages. They seem oblivious to their caged state, and they're just sitting there reading from pamphlets. Henri catches up to Olivia, this time appearing like the first time they met. He stops her and tries to convince her that everything is okay. All Olivia can do is repeat that all is well. Her vision returns to normal, and she sees that the caged women are actually part of a group that opposes suffrage. Olivia angrily kicks Henri and runs to Frannie's house. She's grateful to see that Frannie's family look normal.

Olivia tells Frannie about everything that happened. Frannie thinks that Olivia saw her father like a vampire because she had read *Dracula* too many times. She says she'll go and check to make sure that he's alright. Frannie asks about what Henri looked like, and she admits that he looked like someone she could utterly trust.

Chapter 6

Olivia has dinner with Frannie's family, as she is still trying to calm down. Frannie eventually takes her home, first making sure that her father is perfectly normal and not some monster. He looks normal to Olivia, but she still has a problem looking at him. He asks if the hypnotism worked, and Olivia tells him that she now can see everyone's position in the world, and that everything is well. This seems to satisfy him. Olivia starts to head to her room, but she stops when she sees an article written in the paper by Percy's father.



The article discusses how women shouldn't be allowed to vote. It talks about how women are irrational and not nearly as educated as men. They're only fit for basic domestic duties, and they're in no way emotionally mature or intelligent enough to vote or hold office. Olivia is furious and she writes a strongly worded counter letter, pointing out how women are smart enough to handle running things in the household, such as taking care of finances and raising their children, no matter what their gender is.

She argues that women are smarter and less prideful and prone to fighting, unlike men. She counters each of the points in the article, but worries about sending it because she doesn't want her father to find out and have her committed. She decides to sign the letter 'a responsible woman'.

Analysis

Chapter 4

This chapter touches on most of the themes of the book. It covers Speaking One's Truth, as well as Speaking Out, Traditions, and Women's Equality. Henry's father keeps trying to change Olivia into the person that he wants her to be, but every time he tries to strip away parts of her personality she just becomes more defiant. He doesn't just show this with Olivia, but also with Henry. Henry, whose name is often interchanged with the spelling Henri, is clearly uncomfortable using his talents on someone that isn't willing, but Olivia's father forces him to do it.

Henry being unwilling to change Olivia is another key point in the book. Olivia doesn't realize it at first, but Henry was doing everything he could to create loopholes for Olivia. He didn't make her mindlessly obedient like her father wanted. His hypnotism was designed to open up Olivia's eyes because he wanted her to be aware of how wrong everything was around her. This shows that Henry really is on Olivia's side despite working with her father and helps to explain how they end up working together later on in the book. This is even foreshadowed by Olivia seeing Henry as a bright light, while her father looks like a monster.

Chapter 5

Olivia's new gift comes into play right away. She sees the women in the anti-suffrage building as being trapped in cages, indicating that their freedom has been stripped away by the men in their lives. Olivia is horrified, but she's unable to voice her terror since all she can do is say 'all is well'. This phrase, in and of itself is ironic as things are most certainly NOT well. Henry manages to catch up to Olivia, but she doesn't want to see him. Even though he doesn't look like a monster, she can't trust him. She's still upset because she thinks that he was willingly working with her father and doesn't yet understand why he's hypnotizing people in the first place, or that he was trying to subvert her father's wishes.

Olivia's and Frannie's friendship is explored in more detail in this chapter. Frannie is ultimately a minor character in the book, but it's important that the readers see how



strong their friendship is in these early chapters since it helps to explain Frannie's actions later on. She might not be a main character, but she does influence the plot towards the end of the book.

Chapter 6

Olivia is calmed enough to return home. She's still angry with her father, but there isn't anything that she can do about it. She convinces her father that the hypnotism went exactly as expected, implying that she no longer has any rebellious tendencies and believes the old traditions.

Olivia struggles when she sees what is written in the paper. Olivia angrily lashes out by writing her own letter in response to the things that Percy's father was saying in the paper. She wants to be able to speak for herself, demonstrating the theme of Speaking One's Truth.

Her letter covers another one of the central themes, Women's Equality. Her rebellion also goes to show how much her father's plan backfired. Based on what Olivia said at the beginning of the book, if she hadn't been pressed by her father she likely wouldn't have been too afraid to ever do something as bold as writing a counter argument.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the views of both Henri and her father after Olivia wakes from the hypnotism, and what it might indicate.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the theme of Women's Equality in these chapters.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the images of the women in the cages and what it indicates.

Vocabulary

silhouette, conniption, clarity, gaunt, bulbous, adamant, malicious, antiseptic, lacerated, cadaverous, referendum, irate, unbridled, rambunctious, insinuate, incendiary



Chapters 7-9

Summary

Chapter 7

That evening, Olivia has a nightmare about her father operating on her. Her father is yanking out all of her teeth. Each time he takes a tooth, he talks about removing one of Olivia's dreams, such as being allowed to vote and ever being considered a responsible woman. At the end of the dream, Henri shows Olivia an image of her with all her teeth removed, saying that's what will happen if she stays with her father, he'll take everything away from her.

Chapter 8

Olivia goes to deliver her letter, posing as someone who just found an envelope addressed to one of the editors. Before she drops off the letter, she spots one of her neighbors helping her children get ready for school. The woman appears like a ghost to her, an empty shell of a person. After dropping off the letter, Olivia decides she isn't going to school, something she has never done before. She goes to an auditorium, which reminds her of her mother. Her mother left when Olivia was 4, saying she couldn't return home because she felt like she was being suffocated.

Olivia watches an organist perform, noting that she isn't nearly as good as Genevieve was at the carnival. Henri arrives and tries to help the performer, but she's unhappy being helped by someone so much younger. Olivia tries to sneak out, but Henri catches her. He asks what she saw that was so horrifying and why she ran. Olivia reluctantly explains what she saw, and how her father was a monster. Henri insists that he cares about helping people with his gift, but he needs money because his sister has a horrible tumor, and the treatment to remove it costs a small fortune. This seems true to Olivia when she sees how sickly Genevieve looks, and how exhausted Henri is.

Henri tells her that his real name is Henry Rhodes, but he uses the stage name, Henri, to get attention. He says that he isn't able to help fix Olivia, at least not now. Olivia says she doesn't trust him and he looks like a fraud to her, but Henri seems to know that she doesn't really mean what she's saying.

Chapter 9

The world still seems strange to Olivia as she's walking home. She tells her housekeeper, Gerda, that she has a headache and had to leave school early. Gerda is worried, asking if she should cancel Olivia's date with Percy later in the evening. Olivia had completely forgotten about Percy, but insists she should be good enough to go out later, she just needs to rest now. She gets to her room and sees a letter from her mother. She writes about how she is performing in New York.



She misses Olivia and knows she must be mad at her for abandoning her at a young age. The letter comes with a one way ticket to New York and some money. Every year, Olivia has been getting money from her mother, most of which she saves. She realizes she has over \$100 saved up, and she imagines using that money to go to college and get an education.

Analysis

Chapter 7

This short chapter goes into more detail about how Olivia is terrified by the thought of having her voice taken away. In her mind, there's nothing worse than not being able to speak her thoughts, which indicates the theme of Speaking One's Truth. She feels like her father is forcefully trying to take away all of the freedom that she has, trying to make it so she's physically incapable of speaking out against him and all of the other injustices facing the suffragists.

Chapter 8

Olivia begins to experience more of the world because of her visions. When she comes across her neighbor she sees her as a smoky wisp. She ultimately ends up fading away before Olivia. This is exactly the type of fate that Olivia is trying to avoid. In her eyes, the woman is a ghost because she's already given up on the world and her own dreams. She has no voice, and no will to fight. This just gives Olivia more motivation to fight for her rights, encouraging her to get to the paper to have her letter published, and thus demonstrating the theme of Women's Equality.

Olivia gets the chance to confront Henry. She's angry at him for everything that he's done to her, but Henry argues that he had no choice. He tells her about how sick his sister is, and how desperate he is to get the money to help her. Genevieve doesn't have much time left, and Henry was able to get the last of the money he needed by hypnotizing Olivia. He wants to reverse the hypnosis, but he isn't getting the full payment until Olivia's father has seen that the treatment is truly effective.

Olivia believes Henry after she sees his sister. Henry further tries to gain her trust by giving her his real name. Olivia is still bitter about what happened, even though she's beginning to understand what motivates Henry.

Chapter 9

Her mother gives Olivia a ticket to New York, which foreshadows a possible way out for Olivia. She also has money to survive on her own thanks to saving all of the gifts that she's gotten over the years from her mother and others. The letter that Olivia gets also gives her more motivation to leave. Reading about the life of freedom that her mother has lets her know that there are places in the world that have already gotten rid of the old traditions that Olivia opposes.



Discussion Question 1

Why did Olivia's mother leave when Olivia was so young?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the theme of Women's Rights in Chapter 7.

Discussion Question 3

Why has the author chosen to use the dream to represent the theme of Speaking One's Truth?

Vocabulary

ominous, luminous, visage, truant, demur, crone, giddy



Chapters 10-12

Summary

Chapter 10

Frannie once again warns Olivia about Percy and his wandering hands. When she turns to leave, Olivia swears that she sees a hand print on Frannie's skirt, even though Frannie insists that Percy has never done anything to her. Olivia gets ready for the party, worrying about what Percy is going to look like to her. Thankfully, Percy appears to be perfectly normal when he arrives. On the way to the party, Percy brings up his previous girlfriend. She was a free spirit that was dating two other men at the same time as Percy. He was hurt, but he's confident that Olivia is the perfect sweet and innocent girl that he needs in his life to heal his broken heart. Olivia feels overwhelmed by that because she isn't sure that Percy is really seeing her for who she actually is.

Chapter 11

Percy and Olivia arrive at the birthday party for Sadie, another upper class girl that Percy knows. When they arrive in the dining room, Olivia is horrified to see everyone once again looking like monsters. She tries to leave, but Percy stops her and things return to normal. Sadie reveals that she hired Henri as entertainment for the evening. Everyone wants to see him hypnotize Olivia again, with Sadie and some of the other guests even insulting her and calling her simple. Henri becomes angry and leaves, taking Olivia with him.

Percy comes out, offended that Henry took Olivia away. Henry argues that Percy should have done something. Percy waves his comments off, deciding he doesn't want to be there in the first place. He invites Olivia and Henry with him to go out into the city and have dinner.

Chapter 12

Percy brings them to a fancy restaurant. Olivia sees another woman that is fading away into nothingness. She also sees a group of four that she recognizes from the suffrage rally she attended at the start of the book. She sees them as bright and beautiful before her vision returns to normal. Percy mocks them for their views. He mentions how his sister was pro suffrage, and when his father found out he kicked her out of the family and forbade anyone from talking to her. Henry is surprised by this, and admits to being a pro suffrage man, something that Percy doesn't believe in.

Percy goes to get a drink, giving Olivia a chance to talk with Henry. She asks him to reverse the hypnotism, but he says he can't, not yet. He hasn't gotten all of the payment because her father wanted to be sure the cure would take. Once he gets paid, he'll have enough to treat his sister. He tells Olivia that he believes what he did isn't bad. He just made it so she can see the world for what it is, not accept it like her father initially



wanted. He warns her about people like Percy. She's confused because she thinks Percy is better than her and she's just plain and boring. Henry says that isn't the case at all.

When Percy returns, Henry excuses himself. Olivia takes the opportunity to ask Percy what his views on suffrage are, and if he believes women are inferior to men.

Percy doesn't answer her, but he orders her food and takes control of the conversation, making Olivia realize that he does think of her as inferior.

Analysis

Chapter 10

Thanks to her new vision, Olivia is able to see the truth about Frannie's earlier words. Frannie didn't want to admit it to Olivia, but Olivia now knows that Frannie was speaking from personal experience. Despite this new knowledge, Percy appears normal to Olivia when she first arrives at the party. Olivia finds this reassuring, since she thinks it means that Percy can be trusted. The reader later learns that Olivia was only seeing Percy like this because she was still in denial to his true nature. She wanted to believe that Percy was good because she genuinely considered him to be a better person than her. Things change once she has a chance to talk with Henry, and see more of the way that Percy behaves.

The theme of Appearances is offered in this chapter as she arrives at the party and she sees nearly everyone as monsters. Even the women appear as hideous, and as the evening progresses it becomes obvious that though they are all dressed and draped in luxury and opulence, they are ugly beasts on the inside.

Chapter 11

More of Henry's character is revealed when he refuses to hypnotize Olivia for the amusement of Sadie and the rest of her friends. He recognizes that they're bad people and just want Olivia there for their own amusement. Unlike with Olivia's father, Henry isn't so reliant on the money that he's making from performing for Sadie.

Percy leaves along with Henry and Olivia, but it's clear that he doesn't actually care about Olivia's feelings, and he does it just to save face. As Henry points out, Percy didn't even try to defend her. The only reason that Percy was willing to leave with Olivia is because he didn't even want to be there in the first place. Henry also sets up the discussion that Olivia tries to have with Percy after Henry leaves, about women's rights, and it becomes evident (and the theme of Women's Rights appears again) that Percy believes the same way that his father does: women are inferior and childlike.

Chapter 12



Olivia once again gets to see the world from her unique perspective thanks to Henry's hypnotism. She sees another woman fade away, but when she sees the suffragists they appear as bright and enlightened in her eyes. Percy starts to reveal his true nature when he mocks the women for being pro suffrage. He goes on to explain about his sister, and express his belief that there's no such thing as a pro suffrage man. This all helps Olivia realize exactly the kind of person that Percy is.

Percy continues to disrespect Olivia by refusing to talk about anything that she's interested in. Whenever she tries to bring up a subject, he just brushes it aside. Olivia realizes that Percy doesn't actually care about anything that she has to say. At the end of the chapter, she knows that Percy considers her to be inferior to him.

Henry goes into more detail about why he was forced to hypnotize Olivia, and he makes it clear that he isn't happy with what he had to do. He wants to reverse the hypnotism before he leaves. Henry also helps Olivia realize what kind of person Percy is when he argues against her being boring and uninteresting. This also explains why Olivia wasn't seeing Percy like a monster, because she has been deluding herself and hiding the truth.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Appearances.

Discussion Question 2

What becomes clear about Olivia's invitation to the party?

Discussion Question 3

What does it suggest that it is Henry that defends Olivia at the party, and not Percy?

Vocabulary

scraggly, abominations, swooning, enunciated, eccentric



Chapters 13-15

Summary

Chapter 13

Olivia finds that Henry managed to sneak a note and a ticket to his next show into her bag before leaving. The note reads that he wants Olivia to come so she can meet Genevieve. On the return trip home, Percy tries to force himself on Olivia. Olivia manages to fight back and run to her home. She sees Percy as a monster, just like the other attendees at the party. Percy catches up to her, but Olivia's father is there so Percy can't do anything. He makes up a story about Olivia falling out of the buggy to explain away her soiled clothing. Olivia doesn't say anything and goes upstairs, vowing not to ever go out with Percy again.

Chapter 14

The next morning Olivia's father talks about her taking on more responsibilities around the house, like a good woman should do. Olivia sees in the paper that her letter has been published. She asks her father about it, and he believes it was written by a man playing a trick, since he doesn't believe a woman could ever write something so eloquent. This pleases Olivia. Olivia goes out to see Frannie. Everyone is buying up suffrage books at the store because of the letter. Olivia tells Frannie that she's the one who wrote it, and then tells her everything that happened with Percy.

Frannie admits that Percy had touched her last year. She had hoped that he had matured since then. She's worried about Olivia being invited to meet Genevieve, pointing out that Olivia can't really trust Henry. This upset Olivia, who feels like Frannie thinks she's being an idiot.

Chapter 15

Olivia goes to a restaurant where she runs into someone from the party, named John. John taunts her about being hypnotized again. When he hears that she's no longer with Percy, he tries to make a move on her. Olivia runs away, horrified by what he has said. She writes down all her thoughts in a letter which she gives to Henry at his show, since otherwise all she would be able to do is say 'all is well'. She writes about how frustrated she is with not being able to speak her mind, and how when Percy attacked her, she couldn't even scream at Percy to stop when he tried to force himself on her.

Henry has a hard time reading the letter. He asks her for more details about what happened, starting to realize the seriousness of his actions. He takes Olivia to meet his sister, Genevieve. In Olivia's eyes, she keeps flickering between healthy and sickly. Henry tells Olivia that her father wants the two of them to attend an anti-suffrage meeting he's hosting. He wants to show off how effective the hypnosis was on making



Olivia a good, submissive woman. Olivia is torn, because she does want Henry to get paid to help his sister.

Henry puts Olivia back under hypnosis. He says that she can speak her mind, but she'll keep seeing everything for what it truly is. He also asks her to try and keep her temper in check while they're attending the meeting, since his hypnosis needs to look effective in order for him to get the rest of the payment.

Analysis

Chapter 13

Things with Percy continue to worsen. Percy's actions against Olivia reiterate the theme of Speaking One's Truth as well as the theme of Oppression/Subjugation. All Olivia can do when Percy is trying to force himself on her is say that everything is well. Her father made it so it was impossible for her to complain about what was actually going on. As a result, Olivia was nearly made into a victim. Fortunately, she was able to escape and get away from Percy, now fully aware of what a monster he truly is.

Chapter 14

Olivia's father continues to belittle Olivia by trying to control her life. He thinks that all she should do is stay at home and focus on becoming a good housekeeper until she gets married to someone who can provide for her. Traditionally, this was the woman's chief role in the household, other than bearing and raising children. Thus, the author is suggesting through the theme of Traditions, that not all traditions are good, and some need to be challenged. Olivia's father shows his general ignorance when he refuses to believe that a woman could have possibly written the letter that was published in the paper.

Frannie's protective nature is shown when she talks to Olivia. She also regrets not telling Olivia the entire experience that she had experienced with Percy. She says that she had hoped it was just a phase that the boy was going through and that he would act more kindly towards Olivia. She is mortified to learn that he had only gotten worse with time. However, she shocks Olivia when she says that Henry is not to be trusted, as in her eyes Henry is just a carnival sideshow freak.

Chapter 15

Henry's guilt is shown once again when he has to read the letter that Olivia wrote. He knows what he did was wrong, and he instantly reverses the hypnotism, trying to make up for this past mistake. This once again covers the theme Speaking One's Truth as well as respecting people for who they are. If Olivia's father had just respected who she was to begin with, she never would have been hypnotized and unable to speak out when Percy attacked her.



Olivia gets the chance to meet Genevieve and once again see just how sick she is. Olivia knows that Genevieve is at a delicate point. She has the chance to get better if she's treated, but she's also visibly fighting to remain healthy and can only go so long without treatment. This makes things more urgent for both Olivia and Henry, and explains why he just can't fully reverse the hypnotism.

Discussion Question 1

What is the dilemma that Henry is in, in regards to reversing the hypnotism for Olivia?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the theme of Speaking One's Truth and why it is so important.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss Frannie's reaction to Olivia's revelation about Percy.

Vocabulary

scrawled, commiserated, anemic, patronizing, referendum, quaver, ethereal, rendition, glamour



Chapters 16-18

Summary

Chapter 16

Henry arrives at Olivia's house for the meeting. Olivia mentions that he has a sick sister to her father, wondering if he knows someone that can help. Olivia's father is suspicious about how she knew that, since he can't imagine that's something Henry would publicly share at a performance. He takes Henry into his parlor and forces him into his chair, gagging him because he doesn't want Henry to hypnotize him. Olivia tries to stop her father, but he just becomes angry and throws her out. Olivia warns their housekeeper, Gerda, that she should leave and get a new job.

Olivia's father lets Henry out. Henry puts Olivia into a trance and says that she won't remember the session or commands. When Olivia wakes up, Gerda has quit. Gerda warns Olivia to try and avoid saying or hearing any words that feel wrong to her. Olivia tries to get more details about what happened when she was put under, but Gerda says she can't talk about it because it would just hurt Olivia.

Chapter 17

Olivia is sitting in her room, refusing to go downstairs. She asks her father about what happened, but he doesn't give her any details. She considers running away with the money she saved up. She wants to go to New York to be with her mother. She wonders if she could make it as a journalist. She knows if she runs, Henry won't get his money and his sister will die. Olivia's father brings her down to meet with the anti-suffrage group. He has one of the members read out a series of phrases, such as suffrage, college, and women's rights. Each word causes Olivia extreme pain and distress, and after a few words she has to rush outside and throw up. The president of the group is so impressed that he asks to see Olivia and Henry at his meeting. He believes they can finally put an end to the suffrage vote.

Chapter 18

Olivia sneaks out of the house. It starts to resemble a prison to her, but Olivia fights through those hallucinations. She rides her bike to the hotel where Henry is staying. She shouts at him and even scratches him for what he did. Henry apologizes, saying that he had no choice. Her father forced him to sign a contract, and wasn't going to let him go or pay him until he did. Olivia offers to use her money to pay for Genevieve's surgery, but Henry knows she must have been saving it for something. He guesses an education, and Olivia reluctantly tells him what it was for.

Henry reverses the hypnotism, but makes it so Olivia will still pretend to gag whenever she hears certain words. He says he needs her to be his partner, just for the next three days. Then he will reverse the hypnotism completely once he has the money to save his



sister. He wants Olivia to come with him and his sister so she can get an education. Olivia is surprised, pointing out she hardly knows Henry. He asks that she at least consider it.

Henry rides with Olivia back home. She talks more about her dreams of getting an education. He talks about how he feels like he's been ruining lives with his act. He thinks he brings bad luck wherever he goes. The two end up kissing, something that was initiated by Olivia. She sneaks back into her room, thinking that perhaps the anti-suffrage movement needs a taste of their own medicine.

Analysis

Chapter 16

Olivia's father continues to try and exert his control over Olivia. When he finds out that she went to see Henry he's able to correctly guess that she must have had the hypnotism reversed. This angers him because he once again sees it as a challenge to his control and authority. As Olivia had previously explained, he's paranoid that she's going to become like her mother and leave. He doesn't realize that the only reason Olivia's mother left in the first place was because he was acting in this exact same fashion around her. He's willing to do anything to try and retain control, but each time his actions just push people further away. Olivia's mother left, Olivia ends up leaving, Gerda ends up quitting, and even Henry ends up defying him in regards to the anti-suffrage movement. None of that would have happened if he simply respected people for who they are and let them follow their dreams.

This chapter is all about Speaking One's Truth, as evidenced by Henry and Olivia's interaction at Henry's. Olivia has had her eyes opened and the truth has made her angry, saddened, and rebellious, which is exactly what her father had feared. What he doesn't realize is that he unwittingly spurred it on.

Chapter 17

Olivia is starting to think about running away. As previously mentioned, all of this happens as a result of her father trying to take control of her life. Olivia's father seems to hate the anti-suffrage movement because he's afraid of the change that they represent, and because they remind him of the wife that he lost. In many respects he resembles a person playing a game that he hates to lose. When his wife left him, it reduced his social status, no doubt made him the talk of the town, and it humiliated him. In many respects, though it may be subconscious, he is taking out his anger on his daughter.

He has no concern for anyone but himself, and doesn't even seem to realize that he's treating his daughter in an inhumane fashion just to try and strike out against a movement he's afraid of. Meanwhile, things are getting more serious for Olivia and Henry, who both oppose the anti-suffrage movement, but are being forced into helping them.



Chapter 18

Olivia finds herself angrily lashing out at Henry once again. She seems to realize that it wasn't his fault, even going so far as to offer him the money that she saved up so he can get treatment for his sister. Henry refuses this offer because he knows that Olivia needs the money if she's going to run away and be on her own. Again, if Olivia's father hadn't been so cruel and tried to control the both of them, this might not have ever happened and Henry could have just taken the money. He is feeling too guilty over his continued involvement to do that. Not only that, but now he wants to actively work against the anti-suffrage movement.

A possible relationship is hinted at between Olivia and Henry. This is something that the reader might have naturally assumed given the way that they acted in previous chapters. There is a connection between the two of them, suggesting that they both are in similar circumstances.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Olivia's father becoming increasingly hostile and desperate?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the theme of Speaking One's Truth.

Discussion Question 3

What does Henry end up doing to help Olivia?

Vocabulary

concocted, privy, tuition, nausea, primal, gilded



Chapters 19-21

Summary

Chapter 19

Olivia's father tells her that since their maid quit, she's going to be in charge of doing everything around the house. This naturally means that she's not going to be able to attend school anymore. He's hopeful that at the anti-suffrage event she'll be able to find someone to be a good husband for her, since she's become such a good submissive woman. Olivia convinces her father to take her to Frannie's house for dinner. Olivia tells Frannie everything that happened and tries to get her help. She wants Frannie to tell Kate about what's happening, hoping she'll be able to get the attention of the suffragists. She also tells Frannie she's planning on leaving for New York, once she knows that Henry has gotten paid and can help his sister.

Chapter 20

Olivia sneaks out to see Henry. Henry is worried because Genevieve is getting worse. He's not sure if she just has the flu, or if it's the cancer progressing to the next stage. He's still clearly guilty about what happened to Olivia, but she just wants his sister to get better. She tells him her plan, to have him hypnotize a group of suffragists and anti-suffragists making them unable to speak at all. She's hoping that the extreme reaction will make the anti-suffragists realize how what they're doing is so wrong, and how hypocritical it is for them to want the women to be silence, when they themselves can't handle being silenced.

Henry tries to get Olivia to resist his hypnotism, but she finds him too relaxing. He's worried that's the reason she kissed him before, but she assures him it isn't. She tells him about her plans to leave for New York, but she wants to be partners until she leaves. The two end up kissing again.

Chapter 21

Olivia misses going to school, but she manages to make something of her day. She writes a letter thanking the editor for publishing her letter in the paper and giving her the motivation she needed to be a journalist. When she arrives, she finds out that the original worker that delivered the letter has been fired. The man working there now informs her that they've been getting letter after letter talking about what they published. He suspects Olivia is the one who wrote it, but she doesn't confirm or deny it. The man gives her the letters, and Olivia spends the rest of the day reading through them, glad to see how many of them are supportive.



Analysis

Chapter 19

Olivia's father refuses to see that Olivia isn't a submissive domestic. He's doing everything that he can to enforce his fantasy of her, unable to accept the reality of the situation. This once again touches on the theme of Women's Equality. If he was able to do that he might realize that not only is Olivia clearly unhappy with the position she was put in, but she's actively trying to fight against the anti-suffrage movement. He can't even entertain that notion, and even unknowingly takes Olivia to Frannie's so she can plan how to overthrow the anti-suffrage movement.

Chapter 20

The stakes are even higher for Olivia and Henry, since Genevieve's condition is getting worse. They both know that they have only a small window in which they can act and have a chance at saving Genevieve. Henry once again expresses his guilt over everything that happened. This, along with the stress of Genevieve, leads to Henry getting sick in the later chapters, almost compromising their plans. Olivia and Henry come up with their scheme to make the anti-suffragist women realize how hypocritical they are being, and how important it is for women to be able to freely express themselves.

Henry reveals that he's always been afraid that people aren't reacting naturally when they're around him. This is another factor that's causing him stress. Olivia makes it clear that she was the one who made the choice to kiss him, and she wasn't being influenced by anyone else.

Chapter 21

This chapter mostly serves to give Olivia more motivation to leave for New York. She's able to see how much of an impact that her words had on everyone. After seeing how strongly people reacted to the letter, she knows that she can be a successful journalist. Olivia knows that if she stays, she'll never have the opportunity to get any type of higher education. This chapter also reinforces the fact that Olivia can't just give up her money to pay for Genevieve's treatment, which is why she and Henry have to go through with their plan and can't just choose to run away.

Discussion Question 1

Describe the relationship between Henry and Olivia.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the theme of Speaking One's Truth.



Discussion Question 3

Why does Olivia want Henry to hypnotize the anti-suffrage people?

Vocabulary

wilted, drab, lapel, obtuse, reticent, obligatory, obliged, intrusive, affiliation, magnitude, fortuitous



Chapters 22-24

Summary

Chapter 22

Frannie arrives after school to go and visit Olivia. Olivia is struggling with her new role as a simple housekeeper, but she knows she'll only have to put up with it for a little while longer. Frannie brings food that she wants to bring to Genevieve. Olivia guesses it is because Frannie still doesn't trust Henry's story. They bring the food to the hotel and find Henry is quite distressed. The doctor has just finished seeing Genevieve, and things don't look good. Genevieve asks to see Olivia and Frannie. Frannie is clearly having a hard time seeing the state that Genevieve is in. Genevieve asks Olivia to make sure that Henry takes care of himself. She thinks he hasn't been getting enough food or sleep since things took a turn for the worse. Henry promises he'll try and take better care of himself. Olivia and Frannie leave, with Frannie clearly believing Henry's story now.

Chapter 23

Olivia spends the day moving all of her valuable possessions into a hotel. She doesn't stop to see Henry and his sister because she had experienced a nightmare the night before where one of them was buried alive. Olivia returns home and waits for her father.

He sees the marks on her neck from Percy's attack earlier in the book. Olivia explains how she couldn't try and get him to stop because of the hypnosis. This causes her father to hesitate, but he ultimately decides to go ahead with the demonstration. Olivia is happy to see that Frannie, and the other women have gathered to show their support. She gets a sense of dread when the building they're going to turns into a dark and twisted castle.

Chapter 24

Olivia sees everyone at the gathering as fiendish monsters. She tries to find Henry in the crowd, but he isn't there. He eventually shows up, looking extremely sick. Olivia's father hurries him forward so they can get on with the demonstration. Henry shows how Olivia gets sick whenever she hears certain phrases, such as suffrage and women's rights. He puts her under once again and secretly removes his previous commands. He then says he wants to give a grander demonstration and hypnotize a group of women.

The anti-suffrage crowd had already moved away, so he uses the wives and daughters of the anti-suffrage movement. He puts them under his spell and makes it so they are unable to speak. The women are instantly unhappy, trying to communicate that they want their voices back. Henry remarks how this must be the first time an anti-suffrage woman asked for their voice, which makes everyone uncomfortable. Henry gets sick before he can reverse the hypnotism, and he passes out at the end of the chapter.



Analysis

Chapter 22

Frannie's protective nature is shown once again. She wants to make sure that Olivia isn't being swindled by Henry or Genevieve. Once she sees the condition that Genevieve is in, she knows that Henry is telling the truth and can be trusted. Not only does Frannie decide to help with their plan, but she even goes above and beyond and helps to raise money to help pay for Genevieve's treatment.

Henry's declining health is brought up in this chapter, foreshadowing his passing out when it comes time to hypnotize the anti-suffrage women. As previously established, this is because of the guilt that Henry is feeling, as well as the stress of taking care of his sister. On top of that, he also has anxiety over the severity of the plan.

Chapter 23

Olivia's father is starting to realize that what he's done is wrong. He sees the damage that was inflicted upon Olivia, and he knows that it was his fault that she wasn't able to call out for help. This is important because it does show that despite everything he has done, Olivia's father does care about her. He isn't trying to keep her from running away just because he thinks women shouldn't have freedom, but because he wants her to be in his life. He just doesn't realize that she could still be in his life while she was getting an education and becoming a journalist. This part with her father reinforces the theme of Traditions, and that they are not always a good thing. If he had just accepted change, he wouldn't have lost Olivia.

Chapter 24

Olivia and Henry put their plan into action. The anti-suffragist women instantly panic when they have their voices taken away from them. This whole plan reinforces two of the themes of the book, Speaking One's Truth, as well as Women's Equality. The anti-suffragist men just react amused when the women lose their voices. This opens up their eyes to how little the women mean to the men, and how important it is for them to be allowed to speak up and fight for their rights.

Tension is raised at the end of the chapter when Henry passes out, since he's the only one that would be able to reverse the hypnotism and give the women their voices back. Thus, the women are truly left without an advocate, and are left in this situation indefinitely. The author seems to be suggesting that left unchecked, inequality robs everyone of something, in particular those who have the most to lose.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Speaking One's Truth in Chapter 24.



Discussion Question 2

Why is Henry so ill?

Discussion Question 3

In Chapter 23, when Olivia's father sees the marks on her neck and does nothing, what does this tell the reader about how he really views Olivia?

Vocabulary

nostalgia, soiree, garish, whimsical, satirical, despotic, remedy



Chapters 25-27

Summary

Chapter 25

Olivia pleads for someone to help Henry. None of the men seem all that eager, not even when Olivia points out if he dies, none of the women affected will be able to speak. This causes the women to leap to action and they manage to get Henry off to a hospital. Olivia runs off to tell Genevieve what happened. When she arrives, she finds Frannie and some of the other suffragists with Genevieve. They explain that they all gathered together to help raise money for her cause, just in case things didn't work out.

Olivia tells them what happened and brings Genevieve to the hospital. The attending nurse doesn't know what happened to Henry. Olivia is upset, and her father tries to get her to leave. She says she's tired of him trying to control her life. He says he knew she was working with Henry, and she admits to everything. She says that all his actions did was to drive her more into the suffrage movement. He's furious and he leaves. When he does, all Olivia sees is a child dressed in adult clothing.

Chapter 26

Olivia and the other women spend the night in the hospital, waiting to hear news about Henry. Olivia apologizes to the women, explaining that she was just trying to do something good, and that they all need to be united together, not fighting one another.

When Olivia awakes in the morning, Genevieve tells her that Henry has had an anxiety attack. He still hadn't been eating or taking care of himself, but now he's starting to recover. He is healthy enough to fix the women that he had hypnotized. Olivia expects the women to be angry at her when they're leaving, but they don't say a thing. As they're departing, Olivia can see that their forms have grown brighter and more enlightened.

Chapter 27

Henry is healthy enough to be discharged from the hospital. He travels with Olivia and Genevieve to the train station. They're going to San Francisco so they can get treatment for Genevieve. Olivia has Henry put her under one last time so he can remove the first command he put in her head, to see the world for what it is. She make Henry promise that he'll take care of himself. She says he's too young to be suffering from so much stress. He promises that he'll do more for himself. Olivia gives Henry the address of her mother's place in New York, telling him to write once Genevieve is better.

Olivia gets on the train, but she still sees the world in a different light. She tries to get off the train, but it's too late. She finds a note from Henry, saying that she's always seen the



world in this way; he just brought it to light. Olivia is a little disturbed by this, but still hopeful for her future.

Analysis

Chapter 25

The men continue to show how little they care about the women in their lives when they ignore Olivia's pleas for help. They don't have any respect for their wives or daughters, or for Henry. They just view him as a tool, with some of them not wanting to help because they don't want a commoner riding in their buggy. This is the same behavior that Sadie and some of the other women had shown throughout the book.

Now, the anti-suffrage women are all rushing to help Henry. At first it might seem like it is just because they needed Henry alive to reverse the hypnotism. As the later chapter shows, Olivia believes that they've become better people, and want to help Henry because it is the right thing to do.

Olivia's father tries to confront her about everything that happened. Olivia is done with his controlling nature. She's already moved everything out, and she has the funds to take care of herself in the city and pursue a higher education. She makes it clear that she isn't coming back, and her father angrily leaves. Olivia sees him for what he truly is, someone that is just throwing a temper tantrum because he can't stand the thought of someone saying no to him. Metaphorically, he is acting like a spoiled child. The author is also suggesting that the way to combat and defeat rampant prejudice is to expose it and confront it, which is just what Olivia does in this chapter.

Chapter 26

Olivia makes an impassioned speech to the women, telling them that they need to stand together and not let anyone control them. This speech mostly serves just to reinforce some of the themes of the book, such as Speaking One's Truth and Women's Equality. Olivia's speech seems to get through to them, as the women walk away bright and enlightened in her eyes.

Though the men didn't want this to happen, their very acts have precipitated the event, ironically. They are shown to be thoroughly self-absorbed and, like Olivia's father, immature and spoiled. Many of them are also depicted as controlling individuals whose greatest fear is losing that control.

Chapter 27

Before she leaves, Olivia talks to Henry about the dangerous way he had been living his life. She knows that he's been taking on too much stress. She's spent the whole book learning about how important it is for people to be able to follow their dreams. Henry has been unable to do this because of his desire to take care of his sister. Now that she's



finally getting treated, Olivia wants to make sure that Henry will focus on himself, and that he won't have to walk around with the weight of the world on his shoulders.

Henry explains to Olivia that she wasn't hypnotized into seeing the world the way it was. In the back of her mind, she always knew how things really were in the world. All his hypnotism did was bring those thoughts to the front of her mind, and that's why she was still having 'visions' even after Henry had reversed the hypnosis.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the women's loss of their voices and their consequent actions to reverse the action.

Discussion Question 2

Throughout the entire novel, how are most of the men depicted?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the theme of Speaking One's Truth and how Olivia personifies this.

Vocabulary

affiliate, beauteous, wonderment, precocious, aberration, callous, detriment, effervescent, fallacy, telltale, veritable



Characters

Olivia Mead

Olivia is the main character of the story. The story opens with Olivia celebrating her birthday. She's stressed because she was at a pro suffragist rally earlier in the day, something that she knows her father will hate. During this part of the book, Olivia is very meek. She has the spark of rebellion in her, but for the most part she keeps all of her thoughts to herself, barely speaking. The more people try and silence Olivia, the more rebellious she gets. After being hypnotized, she begins to lash out against the anti-suffrage movement.

Besides attending the rally, the first real moment of defiance comes when Olivia writes a response letter to something that Percy's father published in the paper. She stood up for women and countered every ignorant point that Percy's father tried to make about women. She started to become more proactive in her own life as well. She was willing to go out with Percy, and she also started to track down Henry to demand that he fix her condition. By the end of the book, she's become completely independent, leaving Portland for New York to live with her mother.

While she has a rebellious side, Olivia is also very sympathetic and caring. When she finds out about Genevieve she instantly wants to help. Olivia also feels a very strong connection to all of her friends, and even though she leaves at the end of the book, she makes it clear that they are welcome to visit.

After being hypnotized, Olivia has the ability to see the world for what it truly is. This typically manifests itself in strange visions, seeing people as angelic beings or twisted monsters. At the end of the book, this hypnotism is removed from her, but Olivia still sees the world in a different light. Henry tells her that this is how she's always perceived things; it's just been in the back of her mind.

Frannie

Frannie is Olivia's best friend. Frannie is shown to be a very practical and intelligent character. Whenever anything strange happens in Olivia's life, Frannie is skeptical and tries to come up for a logical reason for why that might be happening. She's initially distrustful of Henry, but once she finds out his sister is truly sick she's very sympathetic.

Frannie is one of the characters at the end of the book that helps raise the money to help Genevieve. Frannie is constantly there for Olivia throughout the book, even when she has doubts about what is going on in her life.



Percy

Percy is a minor antagonist in the book. Olivia is initially interested in him because she believes that Percy is much better than her. In her eyes, he's a member of the upper class and naturally much more interesting than her. Percy shows an interest in Olivia after seeing her get hypnotized. At first she's delighted about this, but Frannie warns her that Percy has a reputation of being a ladies man. Olivia finds out how true this is.

On top of that, Percy seemed very full of himself and clearly thought that women were inferior to men. Towards the middle of the book, Olivia realizes how toxic of a partner he is and she refuses to go out with him.

Kate and Agnes

Kate and Agnes are sisters that are very into the suffrage movement. Kate is the younger sister and friends with Olivia. Throughout the book these characters are mentioned, usually seen in smaller crowds leading the suffragists. Beyond that, they have a very limited role in the book and have very little interaction with Olivia.

Henri/Henry Reverie

Henry is a skilled hypnotist and performer. At first he goes by the name of Henri, playing up his French heritage because he knows that makes him seem more exotic and mysterious to the crowds. As Olivia gets to see Henry outside of the stage, he reveals his true name, Henry Rhodes. Henry has a strong connection to his sister, Genevieve. His sole motivating factor in the book is his desire to raise enough money so he can get her tumor removed.

As a performer, Henry is shown to be very charismatic and quick witted. Outside of his performance he's a different person. He admits that he's a pro-suffragist man, and he does everything he can to encourage Olivia to realize her own self value. He hates that his talents are being used by such vile men, but he's so desperate to treat his sister that he has to agree. Towards the end of the book, it's revealed that Henry has a hard time taking care of himself. He has an anxiety attack, in no small part because he hadn't been eating enough or getting any sleep.

Henry later reveals to Olivia that he feels like he's cursed, and all he does is bring bad luck onto the people in his life. He clearly feels guilty about everything that he has been doing. Olivia tells him that he's too young to be bearing such a burden, and makes him promise that he'll start taking better care of himself.



Genevieve Reverie

Genevieve is Henry's sister. She's a skilled performer in her own right, but instead of hypnotizing people she's musically inclined. Genevieve is only seen a few times in the book, since she's suffering from a cancerous tumor. When she is in the book she's very kind and sympathetic, urging Olivia to make sure that Henry is taking care of himself.

Olivia's father "Mad Mead"

Olivia's father is the local dentist with a questionable reputation. While he's perfectly competent, many people are uncomfortable with how much he seems to delight in treating his patients, especially with some of his more brutal practices. Olivia's father is a very controlling and cynical man. He gets upset whenever Olivia speaks his mind, and he takes drastic measures to have Olivia hypnotized so she has to be obedient. He claims that he's doing this because he wants to help Olivia. Olivia believes that he's acting in such an intense fashion because he's hurt by the fact that Olivia's mother left him when she was a child. Several times throughout the book he talks about how he's trying to keep Olivia from making the same mistakes that her mother did.

Olivia destroys her relationship with her father at the end of the book. She sees him as a child in adult clothing, seeing his actions as nothing more than a temper tantrum because he wanted to control everything. While Olivia's father is frequently shown as being an ignorant character, she does admit that there were high points in their relationship as well, and he certainly always wasn't such a negative force in her life.

Gerda

Gerda is a minor character that appearances a few times throughout the story. She's Olivia's maid at the start, but she ends up quitting when she sees the way that Olivia's father is treating her. She warns Olivia that her father hired Henry to put her under a crueler hypnosis, but she isn't able to go into any more detail without hurting Olivia.

Sadie

Sadie is one of Percy's friends. He describes her as being a brat. When Olivia meets her, she's very snooty and looks down upon Olivia for not being part of the higher class. She is very opposed to the suffrage movement until being put under hypnosis by Henry at the end of the book. When Olivia sees her again, Sadie seems angelic and enlightened in her eyes.



John Underhill

John is another minor character that appears a few times in the book. Olivia first meets him at Sadie's birthday, where he's being just as rude as her. John later tries to corner Olivia in a restaurant, but she manages to get away from him. His father is the leader of the anti-suffrage movement, and John seems to parrot his ignorant views.

Mr. Underhill and Mrs. Underhill

Mr. Underhill only appears towards the end of the book. He's the leader of the anti-suffrage movement, and he wants to host an event to show off how obedient Olivia has become thanks to the hypnotism. His wife, Mrs. Underhill is very supportive of his views. Just like with Sadie, this changes at the end of the book when she's put under Henry's hypnosis and rendered speechless.



Symbols and Symbolism

Dracula novel

Dracula is Olivia's favorite novel. She's read it multiple times and even saved up enough money so she could purchase a copy of it. Once Olivia starts to experience visions, Dracula becomes a symbol of the corruption in the world, and in particular of the way men seek to suck the life out of women and their dreams. She sees bad people as being twisted creatures that resemble Dracula. The anti-suffragist headquarters looks like Dracula's castle, a dark and twisted place that she wants to avoid at all costs.

Olivia's visions

Olivia's visions represent the way that the world truly is to her. She sees women that are forced into submission as wispy gray forms that seem to disappear whenever a man is around. She sees her father and other antagonists as being twisted monsters. She starts to see pro-suffrage women as being angelic and enlightened. All of this represents how Olivia truly feels about different people and places, and even when the hypnotism is reversed she can still see people like this.

"A responsible woman"

Olivia adapts this title when she's countering the hateful things written in an article saying why women shouldn't be allowed to vote. This title represents everything that Olivia wants to be. Towards the end of the book, she leaves Portland because she wants to go to New York and become a journalist. The article also gave Olivia a chance to vent her frustration and fully embrace the idea of the suffrage movement.

"All is well"

Olivia's father has Henry program this phrase into Olivia. Instead of complaining or voicing her anger, all she can do is say, "All is well," even when she's being assaulted. To Olivia's father, this is a way of controlling Olivia and keeps her from voicing her dissatisfaction with the world.

Nightmare Involving Olivia's Father

During the earlier parts of the story, Olivia has a dream that she's being treated by her father. He's removing each one of her teeth until her mouth is completely empty. This represents Olivia's fear that her father is going to forcefully take away her ability to speak or express herself.



Letters from Olivia's Mother

Olivia keeps all of the letters that her mother sends her. Her mother is usually talking about how sorry she is for leaving Olivia, and all of the grand things that she's doing in New York. To Olivia, this is a lifeline to the outside world, a world where Olivia is free to do and say whatever she wants.

Yellow Ribbon

The yellow ribbon is worn by pro-suffragist women. To them, it's a way of openly defying any anti-suffragists, showing them that they're not going to be silent about their beliefs.

"My Pet"

Percy uses this phrase to describe Olivia. Olivia hates it, because in her mind it's Percy asserting his control over her, implying that she's subhuman and incapable of making her own decisions.

Bike

Olivia's father is upset that she has a bike. In his mind, the bike represents her rebellion. He doesn't believe she should be able to freely get about the city and go wherever she wants. One of the first things he does after hypnotizing her is choosing to escort her to Frannie's instead of letting her go on her own. He also gives strict instructions on when he will be picking her up.

Bicycle Pants

Olivia is very jealous when she sees these pants being sold in stores. Towards the end of the book, Henry gets her a pair. To Olivia, they represent freedom from old traditions. Henry getting them for her represents his own desires to see Olivia free.

Standing On Her Chest

When Henri hypnotizes Olivia, one of the ways in which he demonstrates that she is really under is that he stands on her chest. This is symbolic of how men viewed women during that era.



Mother's Money

Olivia has been receiving money from her mother for many years, which she's kept. In the end, it is her mother's money that allows Olivia to have the money to escape the tyranny of her father.



Settings

Portland, Oregon 1900's

All of the action takes place in Portland during the time of suffrage. Olivia spends a great deal of time moving about Portland. Some of the locations are explored in more detail, but Olivia also goes to the restaurants and different shops located throughout Portland. She also attends a few social functions throughout Portland.

Portland High School

Olivia, Percy, and Frannie all attend Portland High together. Olivia is eventually unable to go to school when her father decides that her place is at home taking care of things and not pursuing a greater education. As such, Olivia only spends a little time at school during the story.

Olivia's Home

Olivia spends a good deal of time in her home. Most of it is spent alone in her room, avoiding her controlling father. She's later hypnotized and put on display at her home when Olivia's father wants to show off how submissive Olivia has become.

Dr. Mead's Dental Office

Olivia only briefly goes to the dental office when her father first arranges for Henry to hypnotize her.

Hotel

Olivia frequents the hotel because that's where Henry and his sister are staying. Olivia herself ends up staying at the hotel when she decides that she's going to leave her home. She moves all of her valuable possessions into her hotel room, so her father can't take them.

Anti-Suffrage Headquarters

Olivia only briefly goes to the anti-suffrage headquarters when she's being put on display by her father. Olivia and Henry come up with a plan to silence all of the anti-suffrage women, making them realize why the suffragists are fighting so hard for their right to speak.

Hospital

At the end of the book Henry is rushed to the hospital after he collapses during a performance. He spends the night recovering while the silenced women impatiently wait for him to get better so their voices can be returned.



Themes and Motifs

Women's Equality

This theme is constantly shown throughout the course of the book. The first time that the theme is shown is when Olivia is dealing with her father. Her father is trying to control her life, telling her who she is able to see and what she is able to do with her life. When Olivia expresses a desire to do something besides become a house wife, he gets angry. She talks about going to school, but he dismisses that as pointless. This leads to him seeking Henry to hypnotize and change Olivia.

The second time this theme is shown is through the character of Percy. When Percy takes Olivia out he treats her like she isn't even a person. He makes decisions for her and doesn't bother to stick up for her when his friends say insulting things about her. He gets offended when she tries to make decisions on her own, and he dismisses any topic that she tries to bring up. He also refers to her as his pet, making it clear that he doesn't consider her to be his equal. Things finally come to a head when he tries to force himself upon her at the end of their date.

The theme comes to a head at the end of the story when Olivia and Henry attend the demonstration at the anti-suffrage rally. Henry takes the voices away from the anti-suffragist women at the party. They panic and try to plead with him for their voices back. Henry points out how unfair it is for them to complain about not having a voice when they're inflicting the same fate onto the suffragist women.

The men just seem amused and entertained and not at all concerned by the fact that the women in their lives are suddenly denied the ability to speak. Some of them even make jokes about how much of an improvement it is.

Traditions

This theme is displayed throughout the course of the book, and goes hand in hand with the previous theme regarding equality. The theme is first showed in the beginning of the book when Olivia is talking to her father about what she has planned for the future. Olivia's father is upset because their mother became independent and left to live her own life. She didn't follow the tradition of just becoming a good submissive house wife, a fate that Olivia's father wants to inflict on Olivia herself.

The theme comes up again when Olivia brings up her education. Olivia is doing well in school, and she has plans to go on to college. She wants to become a journalist, something that her father believes to be impossible because of his dated traditions. He says that the only reason that Olivia is going to school is because she was too young to manage the house, and he thought it was dangerous for her to be left alone to her own devices during the day. He never intended for her to actually get any sort of education.



Another tradition that's shown a bit more subtly during the course of the story is the idea that the upper class is better than the lower class. This part of the theme is shown when Olivia and Percy are attending Sadie's party. Everyone looks down upon Olivia because her dress isn't as fancy as theirs, and she clearly doesn't have as much money as her families. Everyone also tends to look down on Henry because in their eyes he's just a common street performer that exists for their amusement.

Oppression/Subjugation

This theme is once again shown through the abusive relationship that Olivia has with her father. He wants to make her into the perfect submissive housewife. He doesn't like the idea of her being able to freely explore the city, or her pursuing any form of higher education. He tries to control her by getting her hypnotized so she has no desires, which is where the title of the book comes from. By trying to control her, all he manages to do is push her away and drive her further into the suffragist movement.

The theme is also shown through the character of Olivia's mother, or more specifically her absence. Olivia's mother isn't shown in the present, but Olivia and her father talk about her several times in the book. Olivia knows that her mother used to be a performer. In her recent letters, she talks about how happy she is performing with a small play group in New York.

The reason that she left Olivia's father is because he was trying to keep her from being able to perform. She left him when they went to the theater one evening because she realized how suffocated she was at home where she wasn't allowed to pursue her dreams of acting.

The theme is shown more subtly with the character of Henry. Henry is clearly unhappy with the hypnotisms he's forced to do. By the end of the book, he's barely eating and not getting enough sleep. This leads to him passing out and having an anxiety attack after hypnotizing the anti-suffrage women. Henry wants to be doing more with his life, but he's forcing himself to give up on his dreams because he feels as though he's the only one responsible for helping Genevieve.

Olivia recognizes that Henry is denying himself the chance to follow his own dreams. He needs to start taking care of himself and focus on what he wants and needs. Olivia makes him promise this at the train station, where she is about to go off and follow the very same advice that she gives to Henry.

Appearances

This theme is primarily shown through the character of Olivia. Early on in the story Olivia is hypnotized so she's able to see people and things for what they truly are. This first manifests immediately after being hypnotized, where Olivia sees her father as a twisted monster. The reason that he looks so monstrous to her is because he had just



forcefully persuaded Henry into taking away Olivia's freedom. Henry tried to refuse initially, but Olivia's father locked him in his office and gagged him until he agreed.

The theme is shown immediately after when Olivia is running through Portland. She passes by the anti-suffrage headquarters. She sees the women inside as being trapped in cages. They're complacent with their position, and don't even seem to notice that they're being held. Olivia ends up seeing other buildings as twisted. Her room becomes a cage when her father is trying to control her life, and the headquarters of the anti-suffrage movement turn into a dark and twisted castle when Olivia is being brought for the hypnotism demonstration.

Olivia also ends up seeing Percy and the other kids at Sadie's party as being monsters. Sadie and the others are extremely judgmental towards Olivia. They judge her based on the clothing that she's wearing, showing that they are unable to see how good of a person she is.

Olivia doesn't just see monsters. She's also able to see the good and beauty in people as well. Even someone like Sadie has the chance to become beautiful. Olivia experiences this at the end of the book, when Sadie has her voice restored to her. She leaves the hospital looking enlightened. Olivia can also use this gift to spot people who are being victimized. In her eyes, they become gray and misty and just seem to fade away entirely, representing that the men in their lives have completely crushed their spirits.

Speaking One's Truth

This theme is prominently shown when Olivia and Percy are on their date together. At this point in the story, Olivia is still under the initial hypnosis from Henry. Part of that means she isn't able to complain. Instead, the only thing that she is able to do is say, "all is well." This is something that Olivia's father wanted because he was tired of Olivia complaining. By denying Olivia the ability to complain, she isn't able to verbally resist when Percy tries to force himself onto her.

The theme is demonstrated in a lesser fashion earlier in the book, when Percy and Olivia were still on their date. Olivia keeps trying to bring up different subjects, but Percy pushes them aside. Olivia realizes that he's doing this because he doesn't consider Olivia to be his equal. As such, he dominates the conversations, and even goes so far as to order food for Olivia, even when she tries to protest.

The theme is shown again at the end of the book. Henry takes away the voice from all of the anti-suffragist women. They're immediately horrified and hate having the ability to communicate taken away from them.

Henry passes out, and they're forced to stay in that condition for hours, unsure if it will ever even get reversed. Once they are healed, Olivia notices that they all walk away enlightened. They've learned the error of the ways, and it was wrong of them to oppose women being given a voice in elections.

Styles

Point of View

The Cure for Dreaming is told from the first person perspective of Olivia. Olivia spends a good deal of the book alone, so it's important that readers are able to see exactly what she is thinking. Through her thoughts, the reader is able to learn a great deal about the setting and the types of conflicts that women are facing in the 1900's. Olivia being unable to speak her mind is actually a driving plot point, which is why so much of the story is told through her thoughts and the unique way that she sees the world.

Language and Meaning

Because the book is set in the 1900's, the characters use a slightly dated language. It's never anything that the reader wouldn't be able to understand, especially since Olivia always describes whatever it is that she's looking at or talking about. This frequently comes up when Olivia is looking at certain outfits. It also comes up when Olivia is talking about specific authors that everyone would be familiar with during that time period, but modern day readers might not know. After looking at a book, Olivia always gives a brief description of the author, and what impact their work had on the world.

Structure

The Cure for Dreaming is told in a relatively straight forward fashion. There are a few chapters that skip ahead a few days, with Olivia summarizing whatever events happened in that time. The most noticeable time jump is when Olivia's father keeps her from going to school, and she spends the next several times trapped at home. There's also a chapter that focuses entirely on a nightmare that Olivia is happening, where her father takes away her ability to communicate.

Each of the chapters has a unique title that reflects on whatever that chapter is about. For example, the chapter "the cure" is all about Olivia's father trying to fix Olivia's rebellious side by hypnotizing her. The chapter "silence" is all about Henry taking away the voices of the anti-suffragist women.



Quotes

Despite my previous fear that Henri Reverie was the devil, his words melted in my ears like spun sugar. I needed a temporary escape from life. Yet I wasn't brave enough to say so."

-- Olivia (chapter 1)

Importance: This initial passage helps the reader understand exactly what kind of position Olivia is currently in, and it also foreshadows her eventual escape from Portland.

My smile faded. My mind skipped back to a scene from earlier that day. I saw a small group of women with yellow ribbons pinned to their left shoulders. They shouted for equality on the steps of the courthouse. My own voice, along with Frannie's and Kate's, rang through the air in support."

-- Olivia (chapter 1)

Importance: This passage helps to establish the setting of the story. The suffrage movement is a huge part of the book, and this part shows exactly where Olivia stands on the issue.

Well'- Father cleared his throat- 'that sort of behavior is inexcusable for a woman. If my own daughter ever dared to throw a tantrum like that on the courthouse steps, I'd pull her out of school and send her straight to a convent.'"

-- Olivia's Father (chapter 2)

Importance: This passage shows the mindset that Olivia's father has regarding the suffrage movement. It also hints to Olivia that her father knows what kind of mischief she got into earlier in the day, and helps to explain why Olivia was so paranoid about her father discovering the truth.

You are not going to be a teacher or a writer.' 'Why not? Plenty of young women are taking jobs these days.' 'Only desperate and unfeminine ones.'"

-- Olivia's Father (chapter 3)

Importance: This passage once again shows the views that Olivia's father has, as well as his controlling nature towards Olivia. His trying to control her life is what motivates her to eventually run away from home to pursue her dreams.

I squeezed the table's edge until my fingers and my voice both shook. 'You're angry because you couldn't keep my mother inside this home - that's what this is all about. But it's not my fault you drove her away.'"

-- Olivia (chapter 3)

Importance: This is the first time that Olivia explains why her mother is no longer with



her family. It also helps to explain why Olivia's father is acting in such an extreme manner towards her.

When you awaken, you will see the world the way it truly is. The roles of men and women will be clearer than they have ever been before. You will know whom to avoid.
-- Henri (chapter 4)

Importance: Olivia getting hypnotized is a major turning point in the book. Being forcefully hypnotized and made to see the world in a new light is what encourages Olivia to start pursuing her dreams and break away from her father.

Olivia' - he came to me and took hold of my arm - 'my sister has a cancerous tumor the size of a goose egg in her bosom.
-- Henry (chapter 8)

Importance: This passage explains why Henry has been acting the way he has throughout the book. He didn't like the idea of hypnotizing and manipulating Olivia, but he felt like he had no choice because otherwise he wouldn't be able to afford treatment for his sister.

I'd feel a whole lot better knowing a person was falling in love with me because of me and not because of hypnosis or snug purple gowns.
-- Oliva (chapter 10)

Importance: Olivia touches upon one of the themes of the book with this passage, seeing things for how they truly are. She doesn't want to be judged just because of the clothing that she's wearing.

Henry leaned forward again and grabbed my hand. 'He's not better than you, Olivia, and neither is your father. And you're far from plain and dull.'
-- Henry (chapter 12 paragraph 151)

Importance: This passage shows the strong feelings that Henry has towards Olivia. It's also important because it helps her open up her eyes and recognize her own self-worth.

I heard it in his voice, clear as church bells - and I'd probably even heard it and ignored it on Halloween night. Percy thought me inferior."
-- Olivia (chapter 12)

Importance: Olivia is finally starting to see things for how they truly are, one of the major themes of the book.

But unlike Lucy and Mina,' I said to my solid face in the mirror, and I braced my hands around the curved wooden frame, 'you will not be returning to your vampire for a second bite, Olivia Mead. You will not.'
-- Olivia (chapter 13)



Importance: Olivia is starting to stand up to herself, and she isn't going to let any man try and control her life anymore. This is a major turning point for Olivia.

We could show the world that hypnosis is the key to keeping these modern young women in their proper places. No man will lose a sweet loved one ever again.
-- Olivia's Father (chapter 16)

Importance: This passage shows Olivia's father's plan for the suffragist women, something that Olivia is determined to stop when she discovers it.

If he dies, then your wives and daughters are going to be stuck without voices forever.' Some of the men and boys actually laughed at that statement.
-- Olivia (chapter 25)

Importance: Olivia's plan is working when the anti-suffragist men show little regard for the women. This causes the silenced women to realize just how little they mean to these men.

I don't want to hear any more of your theories about women. I want you to go home and live by yourself, because I'm done living with you and cooking for you and worrying about you drinking away your misery. If Henry is gone, then I'm taking Genevieve to San Francisco. If he's able to take her himself, then I'm traveling to New York. My bags are already packed."
-- Olivia (chapter 25)

Importance: Olivia is finally able to voice her disgust to her father now that she's no longer hypnotized. She lets him know that she's going to live her life the way that she wants, and there's nothing that he can do to possibly stop her.