

The Dream Lover Study Guide

The Dream Lover by Elizabeth Berg

(c)2016 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Dream Lover Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Pages 3 through 21.....	5
Pages 22 through 52.....	10
Pages 53 through 77.....	15
Pages 78-102.....	20
Pages 103 through 142.....	25
Pages 143 through 176.....	31
Pages 177 through 194.....	36
Pages 195 through 232.....	39
Pages 233 through 272.....	44
Pages 273 through 319.....	49
Pages 319 through 373.....	54
Characters.....	59
Symbols and Symbolism.....	63
Settings.....	65
Themes and Motifs.....	66
Styles.....	71
Quotes.....	73

Plot Summary

The following version of this book was used to create this guide: Berg, Elizabeth. *The Dream Lover*. Penguin Random House, 2015.

Aurore Dudevant, also known as George Sand, tells her story from beginning to end in this historical fiction novel written by Elizabeth Berg. The author clearly notes above her copyright information, that the book is purely fiction despite using names of actual people, including Dudevant who wrote as George Sand. The first person point of view journal entries skip back and forth between various states of Aurore's life from beginning to very end, literally. She even describes her birth and her funeral. The journal entries are most often dated only by month and year, indicating that the author is recalling the information instead of writing it as it occurs. Additional proof of this is that she could not have written the journal entries as they happened when she was a very young child.

Aurore is distraught over her loveless marriage and the French laws that make it difficult to change her circumstances. She actively seeks love and success as a writer. Success comes first, but with several lessons about love learned throughout the book, she learns the truest love of all is that she has for her grandchildren. She also learns that the most important thing about life is to be yourself.

Aurore has many experiences in the story. First, she recalls the feelings of doubt she had about her choice to leave her family home to pursue a writing career in Paris. The reader learns that she is also hoping to further a romantic relationship with a young man named Jules who lives in Paris, making her reason for leaving the children behind seem less noble and more selfish.

After she and Jules eventually break up, there are many other lovers in her life. She became infatuated with an actress named Marie Dorval. Dorval also was a real-life actress and friend of Aurore, although real-life rumors of a lesbian relationship between the two were never confirmed. In this story, their lesbian encounters are limited, but their friendship remains up to Marie's death. In the story, Aurore still longed for continuing their intimate relationship. Eventually she moved on, and dated composer Chopin.

The story depicts a world in which women have very little control over their own lives. Women are so devalued that they even lose control of their own inheritances. Fearing that Casimir had only proposed to marry for money, Aurore's mother arranged a pre-nuptial agreement for Aurore and her husband. Although she could not control her inheritance, the agreement made sure that Aurore received annual funds from it. Her husband had affairs, but if Aurore had left him, he would have maintained control of her money according to the laws of the era. If he had discovered, however, that she was having an affair, he would have been able to divorce her and keep all her inheritance.

The story also reflects society's lack of religion in the era. When Aurore wanted to become a nun, her grandmother withdrew her from the Catholic school and insisted she get married. Otherwise, Aurore would have given up her worldly possessions and the



family estate would have been lost forever. Religion was not valued during the era which was also known for its focus on science and development of technology and the people in Aurore's community were mostly superstitious.

The book demonstrates a class system that splits its ranking between wealth and morals. When Aurore was a teen, she and a medical student named Stephane considered marrying. They knew their families would never agree. His family was not as wealthy as hers; and since her mother had been a prostitute, his family considered her not morally fit to marry. Aurore tried to stick to her morals when she met Aurelien shortly after her son Maurice was born. Despite her desire and love for him, she remained true to her marriage with Casimir. Later, she saw Stephane for medical help but ended up having sex with him and getting pregnant with her daughter, Zoe.

The story shows that history repeats itself, even though situations may differ. For example, Aurore held a grudge against her mother for leaving her with her grandmother to go live in Paris, yet Aurore did the same thing with the same result. Her own daughter held a grudge against her for moving to Paris to seek work instead of concentrating on motherhood, the societal norm. Unlike her own mother, Aurore did return to the family's country home to care for her children every other quarter. When she did, though, she continued writing, which took time away from the children. She endeavored to work around the situation by writing at night and being available for the children during the daytime hours. Her son was old enough to understand his mother's move, but her daughter was very young and perceived the move as abandonment.

In addition to dealing with concerns for her children, Aurore also had to worry about society's view of her. She really did not care what other people thought of her, but she recognized that their opinion had a big impact on her life. For instance, her brother's opinion was that women belonged at home and did not deserve to have careers. He badgered her about giving up on writing and returning home. He told her that her own children were forgetting about her to try to guilt her into returning for good. On the other hand, society impacted her life through the purchase of her novels. Writing was her source of income, so when the public bought books, she made money to support her family.

The public was also drawn to Aurore for her fondness of masculine dressing. She was a novelty to some, an abomination to others. What started as a way to get in to see plays cheaper became a tool of empowerment for Aurore. When she looked like a man, she was able to have a voice in politics when talking with other men. She was able to discuss philosophy and other topics that, at the time, were not suited for women. Getting to actively participate in the world of both men and women gave her writing a unique voice that made it popular with readers.

Because this book is written as a series of journal entries and because its characters are people who actually existed, it is important for the reader to keep in mind that the story is fiction. This gets more difficult as the plot progresses. To further complicate matters, the author incorporates the names of Aurore's real-life books into the story.



Pages 3 through 21

Summary

This section begins with a prologue and is followed by three journal entries, all written in first person point of view and in past tense as the narrator reflects on her life. The brief prologue, dated April 1873, shows that the narrator enjoyed being a hostess. Her son and three novelists -- Gustave Flaubert and Alexandre Dumas (French) and Ivan Turgenev (Russian) visited to play charades and have a party. They had a puppet show and read stories as well. The narrator closes the prologue by saying that people need music, literature art and love in their lives every day.

The journal entry dated January 1831 takes place at Nohant, the narrator's family estate. The narrator was sad about leaving her children behind, but happy to leave her loveless marriage to pursue a career as a writer in Paris. With a son, Maurice, aged 7 and a daughter, Solange, 2, the narrator and her husband, Casmir, agreed to share custody of the children. She did not say she was divorcing the husband, just that they would live separately and share care for the children. Casmir agreed to give her a monthly allowance from her own inheritance, which also included the home at Nohant. French law stipulated that the husband be in control of the money and the property. She knew she had to find work in Paris to support her and the children. As her carriage drove away, the narrator was reminded of violin music her father played on the day she was born.

A new, undated journal entry reveals the love story of the narrator's parents. Her father was Maurice Dupin, descended from Polish royalty and known throughout France for his bravery and love of military. He met the narrator's mother, Sophie, while he was stationed with the French army in Milan, Italy. She was a former prostitute who was living with a general. Sophie and Maurice fell in love and he stole her away from the general. Even so, he was still promoted in the ranks. Maurice told his mother about Sophie in letters and she worried that he would marry someone of a lower social status. Sophie's father was a poor man who sold songbirds and she already had a young daughter. Ironically, the narrator pointed out, Maurice's mother was illegitimate and born to a prostitute.

After being released from the army, Maurice returned to his mother at Nohant. Maurice's father had died when he was only nine years old, so his mother was very protective of her only son; and he was likewise protective of his mother. He knew his mother would not like Sophie, so he planned to introduce the two women later rather than sooner. Maurice moved Sophie into a hotel three miles from Nohant. When he started spending a lot of time away from Nohant, his mother confronted him about his absences. He admitted that he was seeing Sophie. His mother begged him to send her away.

Deschartres, Maurice's tutor, heard the mother and son arguing about Sophie and decided to confront Sophie about the matter. He went to her hotel and told her that her



presence was causing trouble with Maurice and his mother. He pointed out that they clearly were not meant for each other and offered to have her driven back to Paris. She threw Deschartres out of her room. Deschartres went to the mayor and the police to try to have Sophie evicted from the hotel. He finally convinced officers to go to her hotel, but they pitied her when they found out that truth -- that she left a comfortable life with an army general to follow her heart.

Maurice was angry at Deschartres for his intervention. He went away with Sophie for a few weeks, then returned to Nohant, seemingly to try to forget about her. But when his army leave was over, Sophie was with him again, following him from camp to camp. A week before the narrator was born, Maurice was granted time to take Sophie to Paris where they were married and so the narrator could be born as a Parisian. They did not tell Maurice's mother for two years.

A journal entry dated July 1804 continues the love story of the narrator's parents and her birth. On the night of her birth, her parents hosted an engagement party for Sophie's sister, Lucie. While Sophie hosted, Maurice entertained guests with violin music. Sophie excused herself from the party and quickly gave birth without a sound with Lucie attending. After a safe delivery, Lucie got Maurice to tell him the news. The narrator's name is revealed for the first time; her parents named her Aurore after her father's mother. He knew she would not bless the marriage or birth of their daughter right away, but hoped the namesake might encourage the blessing in time. He sent his mother a letter to tell her about the birth of Aurore. His mother heard rumors of his marriage and checked them out with the city office in which they were married.

Maurice fathered a son out of wedlock before he met Sophie. His name was Hippolyte and he was given to a peasant woman to raise near Nohant. Maurice's mother gave money to the woman to raise him, but she did not want him to be an heir to their estate or to carry the family name. Maurice had one of the Nohant servants introduce two-year-old Aurore to his mother as though she were her own granddaughter. When Maurice's mother realized it was her own granddaughter, she was happy to see her and Maurice, but still refused to see Sophie or Caroline, and still refused to recognize their wedding. She did, however, send Sophie a ruby ring through Aurore.

Analysis

In the prologue, the reader is lead to believe that the narrator achieves her dream and does become a celebrated author because she is entertaining other novelists at her home. They are interacting with her child and playing games. Her choice to close the prologue with the statement that people need music, literature, art, and love in their lives every day foreshadows the base of the entire story -- pursuit of the fine arts and passion. In the first paragraph of the prologue, the reader is told that the famous authors and Aurore's son, Maurice (named after her father) are plucking rose petals off bouquets and eating them. Rose breeding and hybridization became popular in the 1800s, indicating that Aurore's love of beautiful things also carried over into her garden.



The men were symbolically consuming the beauty, demonstrating a gender theme that remains throughout the book.

Carrying through on the gender theme, Aurore explains the inequality of child custody and financial matters in her first journal entry (dated January 1831). This inequality carries over into her personality as well. For instance, as she is waiting for the carriage to take her away, her husband coldly tells her to write to let him know she safely arrived. She says she feels for a moment like she has lost her balance. In this case, she did. Her husband symbolizes balance. With her leaving, she loses him. Despite leaving him, he still controls her life directly by controlling her finances. He gives her a small amount of money each month, which will not let her get very far or to allow her to live in a nice area...and it is her inheritance that he is doling out to her. While there is no mention of divorce in this chapter, the reader gathers that a permanent separation is in the works, because Casimir and Aurore have developed a shared custody plan for their two children.

The reader also gathers in this section that the love between Casimir and Aurore has gone cold. A verbal exchange between the two indicates a figurative and literal example of Casimir's coldness. As she leaves, he stands on the porch with his arms crossed. She remarks that he must be cold and should go inside. He replies that he is not cold, but she remarks that "clearly he was" (5).

This journal entry also uses weather conditions to reflect the mood and tone of Aurore's departure. Thick clouds loom low, but an occasional streak of yellow sun pierces them. The clouds symbolize the dread of leaving and the gloom of her current relationship, while the occasional streak of sun symbolizes the hope of light, or better days, in her future. These weather conditions also remind that situations are temporary -- cloudy days turn to sunny ones, then back again. The reader knows that Aurore is going to Paris to pursue her passion, a passion big enough to pull her away from her young children and her family's wealth and estate. She says that the passion is writing, but given her remark in the prologue about how people should have love in their life every day, the reader gets the idea that Aurore may want more than just a successful writing career from her move to Paris.

In the section that details her parents' love story, the general with whom Sophie lives is not upset at all when Maurice takes the beautiful woman from him. In fact, the general promotes Maurice along the ranks. Maurice falls in love with Sophie for her beauty, passion and zest for life; perhaps those qualities are troublesome for the general. This section also introduces another recurring theme -- social class inequality. Maurice's mother holds to a code that just does not allow her to accept her son's interest in a former prostitute, especially one born to a poor man who sold songbirds. She can forgive illegitimacy, but not poverty. However, in this era, women cannot achieve wealth in any way other than marriage or inheritance. Even if wealth is gained through inheritance, the man takes control of the woman's wealth upon their marriage. This climate makes success for women difficult to achieve.



Maurice and his mother are very protective of each other. The language he uses to express fondness for his mother borders on the romantic side, indicating another reason his mother does not like Sophie. Instead of disapproving of her social class, perhaps his mother is jealous of this other woman who has entered Maurice's life. This Oedipal relationship explains why Maurice has a hard time breaking his mother's heart with news of another woman and why she has a hard time accepting Maurice's new love.

Deschartres is a trusted, loyal employee who becomes like a member of the Dupin family. He feels it necessary to intervene in the battle going on between Maurice and his mother over Sophie. The problem is that, as intelligent as he is, the man lacks emotional intelligence and sees emotions as a burden. When reasoning with Sophie does not work, Deschartres uses the Dupin family's influence to get the police to respond to his complaint. They see that Sophie is in love with Maurice and do not kick her out of town as Deschartres demands. Naturally, this intervention only draws Sophie and Maurice closer than ever, even with his mother's guilt and manipulation.

In the journal entry dated July 1804, the narrator tells the story of her birth. In it, she describes her own birth, as she imagined it happened, indicating her creativity. She even "recalls" turning her head to the sound of music during her Aunt Lucie's engagement party during which she was born. Aurore closes the story of her birth by making a comment about writers. She refers to writers using a gender-specific pronoun, "he." (18) This is the first indication that in Aurore's mind, a successful writer must be a man.

She goes on to relate the story of when she first meets her grandmother at age two. Her grandmother welcomes her into the family, but still refuses to see Sophie. This section continues the themes of gender and social class hypocrisy when the narrator explains that Maurice fathered an illegitimate son with a villager. The village woman has no choice in the child's upbringing; he is taken by Maurice's family and given to a peasant to raise near Nohant. Maurice's mother pays the peasant to raise her illegitimate grandson, but refuses to allow him to use the family name or to be an heir.

While Maurice's mother remains firm in her stance against Sophie, she does send her a ruby ring through two-year-old Aurore. Ironically, the ruby symbolizes passion and courage, two of Sophie's characteristics that Maurice's mother seems to detest most. When Aurore is given the ring to give to her mother, she feels like she is put in the middle of the conflict, just like her father is. Ending the section with the comment about being caught in the middle foreshadows other instances in which Aurore finds herself caught in the middle.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the importance of weather conditions in the journal entry dated January 1831.



Discussion Question 2

Discuss the irony of Aurore's grandmother's feelings about Sophie.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the importance of music, art, and literature to Maurice and Sophie. Does Aurore adopt the same feelings? Support your response with evidence from the book.

Vocabulary

raucousness, melancholy, gaiety, courtesan, beleaguered, inordinately, transferred, lilting, aristocrat, conciliatory, tone, crooning, estate, reverie, clarity



Pages 22 through 52

Summary

In the journal entry dated January 1831, Aurore was in Paris, recalling the day she met Jules, a man accompanying her friends Charles and Alphonse. Jules was originally from a town near Nohant, but had just completed law school in Paris. He was 19, seven years younger than she. He was a handsome, soft-spoken romantic and she eventually fell in love with him. In the meantime, while Casimir served in the military, Aurore invited Jules to visit her in the summer house that was separate from the main house at Nohant. She did not feel guilty for making love with Jules because she believed that love purified it. She said the only thing wrong with making love was being with someone you did not in fact love (24). She explained that Napoleon had abolished divorce, so she tried for a long time to make things work with Casimir. When Jules left the country to go back to Paris, he begged Aurore to go with him.

Upon her arrival in Paris, Aurore moved into her half-brother's (Hippolyte) apartment but revealed in the journal that she would soon move into Jules' apartment with him without her husband's knowledge. She closed the journal entry by explaining she was heading out to buy a pair of men's boots for herself. Her boots made her slip on the icy streets in town.

Aurore recalls more about the turmoil between her grandmother and parents in the next journal entry, dated January 1805. She points out the differences between her mother and grandmother. Her grandmother followed all of the unwritten laws, but her mother made her own rules. The grandmother thought she was superior because she was an aristocrat, but the mother thought she was superior because she treated all people as equals. In this entry, Aurore also explained that she and her half-sister Caroline lived with their Aunt Lucie for a period of time so their mother could join Maurice at an army camp.

In the next journal entry, dated May 1808, Aurore tells about her life at age three. She lived in Paris with her mother; Caroline was in boarding school; and Aurore's father was off at war. While Sophie worked in the kitchen, Aurore played and told her stories. When her mother took a break to hold her and listen to her stories, Aurore learned that words and story telling brought about attention and expressions of love from her busy mother. Her love of story-telling began then.

Maurice was transferred from Prussia to Spain and Sophie decided they would join him because she was afraid he would meet someone else since he was so handsome and charming. So, when she was eight months pregnant, Sophie and Aurore set out on an impromptu trip to Spain. They left so quickly that Aurore was not allowed to go get her doll. Their carriage was packed with people and they saw much wartime destruction along the way. Once in Spain, their living quarters with Maurice were not clean, but the



family made the most of their otherwise fancy surroundings. There were opulent items of decor, but because of wartime fighting, everything appeared dirty.

Shortly after arriving in Spain, Sophie gave birth to Aurore's brother, Louis. When she first saw him, Aurore could tell something was wrong with his eyes -- his eyes were pale blue and the pupils were clear. In July, their father escorted them back home before being sent to Naples with the war.

The trip home was rough, especially since Louis was only two weeks old. The heat was horrible and they only had lemons, raw onions and sunflower seeds to eat on the journey. The war destruction was worse, and their carriage rolled over bodies. They lost their carriage to the army, who used it to transport wounded soldiers. Aurore's family was moved to a wagon full of luggage and ill soldiers. They arrived back at Nohant on July 21.

The next journal entry skips to Aurore's adult life and is dated January 1831. After reading her story, a publisher told her to stick with making babies instead of books. She told him that if he thought his advice was so great, he should follow it himself. Even though she was upset with the rejection, Aurore held onto hope because her life in Paris was happy. She decided to pursue other publishers instead of giving up her dream.

In an entry dated July 1808, the story returns to Nohant. Deschartes examined the children upon their arrival at Nohant and said both had scabies and that the baby was blind and quite unhealthy in other regards as well. Aurore was introduced to her half-brother, Hippolyte, in this section and the two played together in the yard. They decided to play cat and dog. Hippolyte said that girls were cats and boys were dogs. Aurore announced that she was a girl but wanted to be a dog, so that is what she would be. She said she would find a squirrel to be a cat. Aurore also revealed that each night, after being tucked into her own bed, she got up and crawled into bed with her parents. She liked to hear them talk about her and the others at Nohant as they lay in bed at night. She also heard their concerns about Louis.

The story jumps to February 1831 where Aurore is an adult living in Paris. She read a letter from Hippolyte, who said her biggest accomplishment was giving birth to her son, Maurice. He reminded her that Maurice loved her with all his heart and that her absence could change that. She revealed that this very thought almost kept her from pursuing her dream, but she believed that a "life not lived in truth is a life forfeited" (45). Letters she received from the children's tutors and from Casimir showed that the children were thriving in her absence. Aurore lamented on the double standard that existed between women and men -- men could travel for business without the guilt prescribed for women who were mothers. Aurore got an interview with a satirical newspaper.

The story returns to Nohant, September 1808. Louis had not recovered from his illness. Sophie ate often and well, hoping that better nutrition on her part would help her nurse Louis back to good health. He died on September 8, 1808. While Sophie wept and Maurice grieved, Deschartes took the boy's body and buried it in the backyard. Sophie was upset that she did not get to prepare her son for burial and, in the late hours,



convinced Maurice to exhume his grave so she could do so. Sophie cleaned and oiled then bound the baby according to burial customs and they kept him in his bed for that night. When Maurice went to dig up the grave, he first uncovered the wrong grave site. He accidentally stepped on the corner of the coffin and it rose up and hit him, knocking him into the grave. He said he felt like it was an omen. Sophie emphatically said it was not an omen. Louis was reburied by the pear tree in the children's garden, but her parents told no one of the relocation. Even Aurore was told about it only many years later.

Analysis

Foreshadowing from the first section that leaves the reader to believe Aurore may be seeking a passion other than a writing career comes to fruition in this section. Aurore tells of her affair with Jules, a man seven years younger than she, and how he begs her to go with him to Paris.

Aurore's boots allude to a gender discrepancy, carrying along the theme of gender inequality. Her boots do not hold up to walking on Paris' icy streets; they begin to fall apart. She opts for a pair of men's boots, which are more solidly made and even have an iron heel to help keep balance. The shoes symbolize a societal belief in Aurore's era: women were delicate and weak, but men were sturdy and strong. Her resolve to buy a pair of men's boots for herself reflects her disdain for the double standard and her desire to be strong and stable.

In the section dated January 1805, Aurore points out how her mother and grandmother are very different. The grandmother follows an unwritten social code that reinforces her wealthy stature. The mother has no social code to follow; she was raised in poverty. Despite this contrast, they do share similarities. For instance, both think they are superior. The grandmother thinks she is superior for upholding the standard social code. The mother thinks she is superior because she accepts all people for who they are. Even though they both have a very different approach to society, both believe they are right for holding to their beliefs.

In the section dated May 1808, Aurore explains how her mother suddenly decides to hop on a carriage and head to Spain so the family can be with Maurice when he is stationed in Spain. Her choice is based on the fact that her husband is handsome and charming; she knows he could have any woman he wants. Ironically, she is the one who did the exact thing shortly after they first met. When he went on leave after being a prisoner of war and was at Nohant, she moved in with a different general. When he returned, she left with Maurice again.

In another sense of irony, the mother is proving the female gender stereotype of someone delicate and unstable as true. Aurore presents her mother in such a way that the reader sees that her mother values her independence. In actuality, however, Sophie is very dependent. She depends on Maurice for love, acceptance, and financial support of the family. Aurore also shows that her mother is not good with managing money,



again supporting the negative female stereotype. Sophie values the fine arts above eating, often spending too much money on theater tickets and leaving very little for food. The decision to leave Paris for Spain to be with Maurice demonstrates a great deal of selfishness and bad judgment along with her insecurities. Sophie does not stop to consider the trip's affect on her very young child or on her unborn child. The trip home is just as bad and exposes the baby to many illnesses and unsanitary conditions as well as malnutrition.

In the next section, dated January 1831, Aurore relates the story of her first publication rejection. A remark made by the publisher re-emphasizes the gender inequalities of the time period. He tells her to stop trying to make books and just keep making babies. The comment comes to her at a time when she is struggling with the fact that she left her children to pursue her passion. She convinces herself that pursuing her writing dream is good for her and the children and will allow them to live the lifestyle to which they are accustomed once she is established. She downplays to herself the role that Jules had in her decision to move in Paris.

When the story returns to July 1808, three-year-old Aurore experiences what is likely her first remembrance of gender inequality. Her half-brother, Hippolyte, assigns her the role of a cat when they decide to play dog and cat. He says girls are always cats. Cats are often indifferent to humans, but patient. Symbolically, then, Hippolyte assigns the attribute of indifference and patience to females. Ironically, cats are also fiercely independent, indicating that there may be more to a human female than those common stereotypes. By comparison, dogs symbolize loyalty and companionship. In trying to assign Aurore to the role of cat, Hippolyte also sets himself up as the stronger character, creating another example of gender inequality. In the same section, Aurore recalls crawling into bed with her mother and father every night. This co-sleeping pattern gives her great comfort and insight into her parents' relationship.

The February 1831 section provides another guilt trip for Aurore. Her brother tells her that her son will soon stop loving her if she continues to pursue her dream in Paris. Reports from her husband and the children's tutors say they do not miss her at all. The fear of losing her children does not deter her from pursuing her dream, however. She grapples with the idea that women must be in the home with the children while men have free reign of the world and can travel away from home guilt-free.

In the section where Louis dies, dated September 1808, Aurore's father falls into a grave and tells his wife it is an omen. She insists that it is not, but it actually is a hint for the reader, foreshadowing his death.

Discussion Question 1

What is the cause of strife between Aurore's grandmother and her mother?



Discussion Question 2

Discuss examples of gender inequality portrayed in this section (Pages 22 through 52).

Discussion Question 3

How does Deschartes' lack of emotions affect Sophie in this section (Pages 22 through 52)? How does Sophie resolve it?

Vocabulary

chaotic, republic, intimate, abolished, vendors, exponentially, bohemian, bourgeois, unbeknownst, stamina, seductive, conteuse, immodesty, entourage, astride, embrace, dejected, pleasantries, observation



Pages 53 through 77

Summary

In the section dated February 1831, Aurore tells of her first meeting with a publisher of a daily newspaper called *Le Figaro*. The newspaper lampooned King Louis-Philippe and reported gossip. He told Aurore that her book manuscript needed much work, but offered her a writing job for his newspaper to help develop her talent. Her initial job was to review plays and she was responsible for buying her own tickets. Women were made to sit in box seats, which cost more than the cheaper areas where men were allowed to sit. The publisher suggested she dress like a man so she could buy the less expensive tickets. Her mother had done the same thing when dating her father because they did not have money for the expensive box seats. Sophie said disguising herself was fun, so Aurore decided to do it too. With long coats in style, it was not difficult for Aurore to hide her identity and she enjoyed the simple dressing style. Her voice was low and neutral, so she had no problem completing the disguise. Still disguised, he even joined men afterwards to socialize in bars.

Her job quickly grew from covering plays to writing about politics and she wrote both news and satire; she also wrote brief fillers and short fiction for the paper. One day, the office was raided for its anti-government comments and Aurore thought she would go to jail over a parody article she had written. She convinced herself that she would go to jail, then write an expose about the experience. She was disappointed when the government dropped the case. Her friends, which she noted were all male, cheered her up again.

In this same section, Aurore discussed the difference between her life at Nohant with Casimir and her life in Paris with Jules. In Nohant, she organized parties and begged friends to write to her to avoid her boredom with Casimir; but in Paris, she rushed home after work every day for satisfying sex with Jules. Having written a successful novel together under one pen name, Jules encourages Aurore to write her next idea alone. She embraced the idea because, from their first collaboration, Aurore saw that Jules talked about work more than he actually worked.

The entry dated September 1808 returns to Aurore's childhood again, shortly after Louis' death. Grief was taking its toll on her parents' relationship. Maurice suggested that Sophie's jealousy cost them their baby because the trip to and from Spain was too rough. Sophie resented the remark, mostly because she already felt that guilt herself. One night, Maurice decided to go out and Sophie was mad that he was leaving her. The weather was bad and she worried about him riding a horse into town. When she said that he could not control the horse, Maurice got mad and left and never said when he would return home. Sophie cried furiously until her mother-in-law reminded her that crying and not sleeping damaged a woman's skin. Sophie was 35 and worried about aging. She decided to go to bed early and apologize in the morning. Maurice's mother and Deschartres stayed up late to play cards; she was worried too. Deschartres



reminded her that he was a safe rider and had Weber, his valet, with him. Shortly after midnight, Weber returned and said that Maurice had a riding accident and was carried to a nearby inn at LaChatre. Deschartres set out in the carriage but Maurice's mother decided to go to the inn, too. She walked three miles to get there. She fell upon Maurice's dead body and would not separate from him. She held him in the carriage all the way home and never cried. Aurore explained that some grief brings unstoppable tears, while some grief is bigger than tears.

Sophie discovered Maurice's death the next morning at the breakfast table. Deschartres abruptly told her he had died, both laughing and crying while doing so. Aurore tried to calm her mother, but was ignored in the grief. Aurore said she wished she were a boy, because then she could have been just like her father and, at that moment, she knew that her mother could only be comforted by her father. Aurore finally reconciled her own grief by understanding that her parents' love never had to come to an end. His early death meant that they would never fall out of love.

The entry dated April 1831 discusses Aurore's return to Nohant from Paris to visit her children. She revealed her custody arrangement details: she would spend three months in Paris, then return to Nohant for three months to care for the children. Upon her return, the children loved spending time with her, but after a while the novelty ended and the children returned to their normal lives. Aurore liked the attention she got from them, but when it stopped, she had to fill time on her own. She was bored again. She spent time writing, but wrote with less passion in Nohant than in Paris. Aurore wrote to her mother for advice. Should she be in Paris missing her children but loving life otherwise, or in Nohant with her children, miserable in life. Her mother told her she was being selfish and that she was abandoning her children. Aurore pointed out to the reader that she learned how to abandon her children "at the hands of a master" (87).

The story moves back to Aurore's childhood in the next entry, dated October 1808. Aurore, who was four, asked her mother when her father and Louis would return. Sophie struggled with an answer, but finally told her it would be a very long time and that she should be a good girl and do things that would please her father because he was still watching over them even though they could not see him. Aurore also revealed her grandmother's disdain for Sophie's father, the bird salesman. She told Aurore that it was an unacceptable job and Aurore wanted to kick her. Aurore said she kept branches on her desk and allowed birds to come and go at will when she sat by the window. She said they even perched on her pen while she was writing occasionally.

Still in the October 1808 section, Aurore recalls that the death of Maurice brought her mother and grandmother together, almost as friends. They took delight in beating Deschartres in card games and Aurore's grandmother began to admire Sophie for her sewing skills and ability to play harpsichord by ear. She noted that her mother was never aware of her own intelligence because of her insecurities about social class. She envied upper class women who had great educations, but was unaware of her own intellect, talent, and abilities. Aurore said her mother was the most passionate woman she had ever known, and it was "soul-ripping" when Sophie abandoned, or sold, her.



In the entry dated July 1831, Aurore was back in Paris and living with Jules in their new apartment. It had two exits so Jules could make a quick getaway if Casimir ever showed up. She revealed that it was her mother who stepped in before their marriage to make sure Aurore kept her inheritance for herself, even it did have to be controlled by her husband. Since he had control, she did not want to anger him or get cut off from her money. She asked Casimir to secure a loan for her to cover the furnishings and home supplies she needed, but he did not. Her brother also did not. She even threatened to kill herself, but they did not. To cover her furnishings, she got a loan from a politician that she had help get elected and an advance from her editor. Then she wrote to Casimir and told him she had made the arrangements but expected him to pay them from her inheritance. He wrote a brief note back saying he would do that. While reading the note, Aurore pondered what went wrong in their relationship, but realizing it was pointless to look back, she tore up his letter and threw it away.

In the entry dated September 1831, Aurore returned to Nohant for another three months with her children. Casimir would not even speak to her. She felt lonely without her Paris friends. She received a note from Jules that said he was visiting a friend just a mile and a half away. He sneaked into her room and his friend waited in a ditch to make sure no one caught him entering or exiting Aurore's bedroom window. She said that only years later did she realize how risky the act was because one of her children could have entered her room.

Analysis

While she never states that she is the only woman working at *Le Figaro*, it is clear that Aurore has made strides in her career despite her gender. Starting out as a play reviewer, her wit and sarcasm are recognized and she is given lampoon assignments. Lampoon uses satire to critique or make public commentary about a person or situation. In a world where women's voices are stifled by societal norm, this is a big break - not just for Aurore's career but in her role as a woman. The fact that her publisher suggests she dress like a man to get a cheaper theater ticket re-emphasizes the theme of gender inequality and likewise points to the social class inequality of her era. By making it more expensive for women to attend plays, women of all classes cannot attend; only wealthy women can afford the box seats. Aurore enjoys the disguise so much that she continues it after the plays when she socializes with men she meets at the theater, continuing on a notion that she explains to the reader in this section -- that she at times wishes she was a boy. With all the benefits for males in the era, it makes sense that she wants the freedom given to men just for their gender.

She explains that she really wished she was a man when her father died so she could comfort her mother. The four-year-old misplaces the importance of gender because she witnesses the devastating grief brought by the deaths of both her brother and her father. When Louis died, her father comforted her mother. As a result, the young Aurore believes the only one who can comfort her mother is another male. However, it is obviously inconsolable grief Sophie feels for the loss of her husband and not related to Aurore's gender at all. Nevertheless, the deaths reinforce Aurore's desire to be male.



Living in Paris as an adult, Aurore notes that all of her friends are male. Perhaps her desire to break away from society's double-standard draws her to men. Maybe she enjoys attention from men, even when it is just at the friendship level, since she lost her father at such a young age. There is also a chance that, with her career in writing, there are simply not many other female contemporaries with whom she can become friends.

If the reader has not yet determined that Aurore bores easily, this section proves it beyond doubt. She gets away with her male disguise at the theater, and pushes the limit by hanging out with groups of men afterward. She gets so excited about the possibility of going to jail that she is let down when it does not happen. She is bored at Nohant with her children and she welcomes a risky late-night visit from Jules without concern for her children. In the entry dated July 1831, Aurore discusses the importance of having two doors in her apartment. This symbolically represents the life she is living in many ways. She doubles as mother and career-woman, wife and mistress, country dweller and city dweller, and even man and woman.

The foreshadowing from a previous section comes true when Aurore's father dies. Previously, he fell into an open grave and felt like it was an omen. His death comes just two months after that incident. His death shows another side to her grandmother that Aurore did not know existed. While the woman rarely did anything for herself, she walked three miles in the dark to get to her son. Aurore notes that her mother and grandmother are more friendly toward each other after her father's death. In addition to loving the same man, both women now share the bond of losing a son. This gives them a mutual respect for each other that did not previously exist.

Aurore's desire for excitement and drama takes a dark twist in the section dated July 1831. She needs to furnish the apartment she has acquired for Jules and herself. When her husband and brother do not respond to her request for a loan, she threatens to kill herself. This unhealthy type of manipulation falls on deaf ears and it surprises her to learn that they do not care whether she lives or dies. With this realization, she stops pleading for a loan and makes her own arrangements, then tells Casimir to pay off her loan using her money. He obliges. It seems as though Casimir does not want to make her life in Paris easy or comfortable, but when he is told how to use her inheritance, he does as requested. This is possibly because, as her husband, he will be responsible for any debt she accrues anyway.

The section dated October 1808 ends abruptly with the idea that Sophie sells Aurore. This unexplained idea is obvious foreshadowing that will be explained later in the book. Mention within the entry dated April 1831, Aurore hints at what this foreshadowing will be; she writes to her mother expecting to get support for continuing her life in Paris when she is struggling with guilt over leaving her son and daughter at Nohant. She expects her bohemian mother to encourage her to live the life of which she dreamed and to pursue her passion. Instead, her mother tells her she is being selfish and abandoning her children. When she does not get the response she wants from her mother, Aurore says that she learned how to abandon her child from the best, implying that her mother abandoned her at some point.



At the end of the September 1831 entry, Aurore notes that she never considered her risky behavior with Jules could have affected her children until years later, indicating that she reflects on her choices often throughout the course of her life. Perhaps her mother did the same, which led her to the response she gave Aurore regarding her selfishness.

Discussion Question 1

Compare and contrast Deschartres' reaction to baby Louis' death and the death of Maurice (Aurore's father). Why does he first laugh when he tells Sophie of her husband's death?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the importance of the two doors in Aurore's Paris apartment and what do they symbolize to her beyond that?

Discussion Question 3

Does Aurore respect Jules as a writer? Why or why not? Use examples from the text to confirm your response.

Vocabulary

self-mockery, vigorously, pleasantries, proprietor, obscured, coquettish, tittering, luxuriating, digression, satire, bucolic, seditious, defiantly, mussed, implored, braggadocio



Pages 78-102

Summary

In an entry dated July 1810, Aurore saw her mother packing a suitcase. She was moving to Paris to live with Caroline and she would only get to visit Aurore. Aurore's grandmother still would not allow Caroline to come to Nohant. Caroline was 11 and Aurore was six. Aurore's great-uncle, Beaumont, helped Sophie weigh the pros and cons of taking Aurore to Paris with her. Since Napoleon was defeated, Sophie no longer received a military pension for her husband. Beaumont argued that she could not afford to live alone with both girls without that pension. Sophie said money did not buy happiness. Beaumont convinced her that it would be wrong to take Aurore away from the place and the lifestyle in which she had been reared. Aurore's grandmother offered to give Sophie the amount of Maurice's pension if she would leave Aurore there at Nohant. In addition, Sophie would be paid a bonus of 1,000 francs annually. In exchange, Sophie had to give up all rights to Aurore, but could see her any time she wanted. Aurore felt like she had been sold to her grandmother. She begged her mother not to do it. Finally, her mother told her that she would move to Paris and save money to bring her to live there later. Together, the mother and two daughters would start a hat shop. Aurore was excited. That night, she wrote her mother a letter and asked her to put in writing their plans. The next morning, Aurore awoke to find that her mother had already gone and did not leave a letter for her. Aurore became bitter because of it.

In January 1832's entry, she returned to Paris with a novel completed by her at Nohant. It was called *Indiana*, named for a fictitious woman who was sold into marriage to a man who ignored her. She found a lover, who eventually did the same. The woman drowned herself after a love affair ended. Aurore said that the story was fiction, but it contained feelings that she had not been able to express previously. She said parts of *Indiana* was based on her own life and feelings, but parts were straight fiction as well. While at Nohant, she wrote an average of 20 pages each night to complete the novel. She revealed that between 1832 and 1835, she published ten novels and more than 80 throughout her life. When she completed *Indiana*, she called her children to her study and hugged them. They were all happy -- she made herself and her children happy.

In the entry dated April 1832, Aurore picked a pen name with which to publish her book. Her mother-in-law did not want her to use her married name and her mother did not want her to use her maiden name. Both women feared the book would bring shame to their families. With Jules, she had collaborated under the name J. Sand. The publisher suggested that she keep the last name since it already had recognition and just change the first initial. She chose G for George.

When the novel arrived at her door, she shared a copy with her friend, Latouche. He glanced through and criticized the work. Another friend read sections and said he thought it might be dangerous for his imagination. The public loved the book and gave Aurore instant success in sales. All the male literary critics gave it raving reviews. They



all noted the female hero in the book, but said that sections of the book showed a strong, masculine mind at work. Women were motivated by the book and understood that it was about an oppressed woman because they also understood the oppression.

With her book's success, people began approaching Aurore more and even dropped by the apartment. Some asked for money; some just wanted to meet the author. The success allowed her to move her children to Paris, but Casmir instead sent Maurice (their son) to a military school. As the husband, it was his legal right to make that decision without input from the mother. Solange, age three, moved in with her and Jules.

Jules helped raise Solange and her literary and journalist friends loved to play games with the child. Aurore noted that her son would be like her, a strong woman; Solange would be more like an unsuccessful man because she was not sensitive or kind and patient. Solange asked her mother when Casmir would come live with them. The girl bored and needed a lot of attention, which kept Aurore from writing as much as she needed. A neighbor invited her to play with her children in the afternoons and told Aurore that Solange was mean to the other children.

As Aurore's writing life began falling apart, so did her relationship with Jules. She asked friends if they knew what was wrong and they explained that her success had stripped him of his masculinity. She confronted Jules about it and he confirmed it. Aurore said she would rent Jules his own office space where he could write. He said he would pay her back with his first novel. She doubted that he was good enough to make it as a writer, but she loved him. He called her by her professional name, George, and said he needed to get away. He said that when she left for Nohant, he would visit his parents. After Jules fell asleep, Aurore wondered why Casmir was not threatened by her success but Jules was.

In the entry dated Winter 1813, Aurore reflects again on moments from her childhood. Aurore and her grandmother lived at their Paris apartment in the winter. Her mother could take her on outings and visit her often with this arrangement. Aurore recalled the differences between her grandmother's Paris apartment and that of her mother's. Even though her grandmother's home was bigger, Aurore preferred being in her mother's home with her and Caroline. Her grandmother still refused to acknowledge Caroline and turned the girl away when she dropped by to visit Aurore one afternoon. Aurore revealed that shortly after her mother moved away from Nohant, she had begun collecting items to sell so she could run away to join her. After her grandmother turned Caroline away, Aurore decided to start collecting again. After being back at the Nohant country estate for about a week, Aurore's grandmother became very sick. Aurore considered the situation and decided to stay at Nohant with the adult who cared for her most, her grandmother.

In the entry dated August 1832, Solange left Paris to return to Nohant. Maurice and Casmir visited the military academy the boy would attend in the fall. Solange quickly adapted to life in the country, but Aurore took longer to adjust. She found the country an inspiring place again. She spent time teaching Solange about birds and about her great-



grandfather's bird charming ability. Aurore did not like dealing with the details required by the servants though.

When Casmir and Maurice returned to Nohant, she worked out a schedule with her husband that suited them both. She wrote through the night and went to sleep when he awakened. While she was at Nohant, she rented a room for Jules in Paris. When she returned, they would move back into their large apartment. He wrote to her and told her how much he missed her. She surprised him by going to Paris under the guise of details for an assignment for *Le Figaro*. The next day, Aurore went out to let Jules have time to write. She arrived back sooner than planned and caught him with another woman, his laundry maid. He called her by name and said it meant nothing. She told him her name was George. She resolved to find a place to live alone because she could afford it on her own. Even though she had freedom, she felt lonely.

In an entry dated November 1832, Aurore took over a friend's apartment rental because he preferred to stay in his country home. The apartment did not have the same grand views that the apartment she shared with Jules had, but there were gardens and the Louvre was just across the river. She did not hold a grudge against Jules, but he was never more than a friend again. Her true love became her lifestyle and her career.

Analysis

Now the reader understands what Aurore meant in a previous section when she said that her mother "sold" her. The section dated July 1810 explains the situation in detail. Sophie needed money to leave Nohant, and she needed to leave Nohant to see her other daughter, Caroline. Caroline was still forbidden by Aurore's grandmother to come to Nohant even for a visit. As bitter as the idea of being "sold" made Aurore feel, she ironically does the same thing with her own children. She cannot leave her husband because he controls all her money. He uses the children as leverage, making an arrangement that he will give her a certain amount of money during her stay in Paris. The difference is that he insists she returns every three months to live with the children at Nohant. So, in a way, both Sophie and Aurore sold their children for money to live on in Paris. In contrast to her own mother, however, Aurore does want both of her children in Paris with her and she knows it will not be easy when they are. When she is finally able to have Solange join her in Paris, she sees that the girl is willful and mean-spirited. She even predicts that Solange will grow up to be like an unsuccessful man because she acts like a jerk. Does this feeling represent how she feels about Jules? She alludes to his lack of accomplishment a few times and even says she doubts his writing ability because he does not focus on it. All the reader sees is Aurore continually securing housing for him. Perhaps he was the basis for her thoughts about Solange.

In another instance of irony, Aurore writes her best-selling novel at Nohant. She finds herself more productive there and writes an average of 20 pages per night at the country estate. She explains that her first novel, *Indiana*, was about a wife who takes on a lover because her husband ignores her. This is reflective of her own life with Casmir. Whatever has come to pass between the husband and wife, she feels she is in a



loveless marriage. When Jules comes along, with his romantic notions, she is swept off her feet by him. Part of the story of Indiana is also about how the lover eventually begins to ignore the woman, too. This is foreshadowing that comes full circle in this assigned section. When she finds him in bed with another woman, her heart is broken and she turns all her passion to writing. Catching him with another woman is a double insult to Aurore because she is actually paying for the rented room in which Jules lives. The fact that she emasculated him should have warned her that their relationship was falling apart, and serves as foreshadowing for the reader that their relationship will not be forever. He cheats on Aurore with a laundry maid, someone below his own station in life. Aurore does not seem upset at this, because social status has not mattered much to her; but the fact that she mentions the other woman's work indicates that Jules has found someone with whom he can feel more successful.

On the verge of a successful writing career, Aurore is challenged with selecting a pen name. No one in her family wants her to use her married or maiden name for fear her books might cast unfavorable light onto their families. She selects the name George because the word means farmer in Greek. She looks at it as a way to pay homage to her upbringing in the country at Nohant. The book is published under the name G. Sand. Her closest friends do not give the novel much consideration, but the general public and literary critics alike love it. Perhaps since the book has recognizable elements of her real life in it, they do not want to read it for fear of reading something that sounds like themselves. Sometimes it is difficult to separate fact from fiction, and they might read the book with preconceived notions about which is which. Ironically, the critics find both male and female qualities in the book. The book questions the accepted social status of women in more ways than one: (1) Aurore is a female writer who uses a male pen name; (2) It inspires women to look at themselves for what they are - slaves to the male-run system; and (3) male critics point out the strong, masculine sections of the book, indicating the idea that women could not have strong thoughts or desires.

In the end of this assigned section, the entry dated November 1832, Aurore moves forward and does not let her bad experience with Jules deter her future writing career. In her lifetime of wanting freedom and success, she now has both and is still lonely. She turns all her passion to something that will not disappoint her -- her career.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the significance of Jules calling Aurore "George" when they discuss his insecurities about her success. What does it mean when she reminds him to call her George after she finds him cheating on her?

Discussion Question 2

Explain the considerations Sophie makes when choosing to leave Aurore with her grandmother. Compare those to the considerations Aurore makes when leaving her children at Nohant.



Discussion Question 3

Compare and contrast Aurore to the main character in her book, Indiana.

Vocabulary

pastiche, milliner, forbearance, indentation, enslavement, domestic, astonishing, androgynous, galvanized, discerning, perverse, emasculated, expedition, anemones, periwinkle, resolve, aspire



Pages 103 through 142

Summary

The journal entry dated October 1817 introduces a new character at Nohant -- Julie, a maid to Aurore's grandmother. Julie hated Aurore. Until her mother moved away, Aurore talked with the staff at will; but after she left, Aurore's grandmother forbid her to mingle with the hired help. When Aurore turned 13, her own servant, Rose, started treating her cruelly. Rose beat Aurore for minor things, like forgetting her handkerchief, getting dirt on a dress, or smacking when eating. She never hit Aurore in front of her grandmother or mother. Aurore did not tell on Rose, but instead adopted the behavior as normal and even realized she was strangely comforted by it because it was familiar.

Aurore, at 13, felt abandoned and alone. Her father and brother died, her mother moved, and her grandmother was ill. She thought about God, but said she had little faith. She recalled going to Mass with her mother and her mom's childlike faith. Her grandmother, however, taught her that Jesus was a historical figure and a nice guy, nothing more. Most of the community believed the same and only adapted Christian occasions when they permitted a party. They were largely superstitious and believed in mythology. Trying to sort through theologies, Aurore said God came to her in a dream and was named Corambe. He was warm and compassionate, good like Jesus and beautiful and graceful like an angel. Although he was male, he often dressed in women's clothing. In the woods, Aurore created an altar to worship Corambe. She went there to pray, and although she said no words she did experience a peaceful feeling.

One day after getting caught in the rain, Aurore sat on her porch and cried instead of going inside. She spoke aloud to herself all the things she wanted to say to her grandmother, thinking she was alone. Julie, however, heard it all. Julie was angry at Aurore's outburst and told her she was lucky her grandmother did not hear it. Aurore told her she knew she was going to tell her what she heard. She was surprised when Julie came to her room and told her that her grandmother did not want to see her ever again. Since she hated her so bad, her grandmother was sending Aurore to Paris to live with her mother. Aurore told Julie she did not hate her grandmother but thanked her for the opportunity to return home with her mother. Julie said she would leave in three days.

The three-day wait gave Aurore time to think about how lucky she was to live at Nohant. She also realized that she had seen her mom as a victim; but the truth was that Sophie chose to leave Aurore behind at Nohant. On the third day, Aurore was told to go see her grandmother. For 30 minutes, her grandmother told her about how she was raised, how she brought up her son (Aurore's father), and told her the truth about Sophie. She told her that Sophie had gone back to her old profession in Paris and that if she moved back there with her, she would forfeit her right to her inheritance. She also told Aurore that she doubted Maurice was her real father, because he was miles away when Sophie would have gotten pregnant. Aurore spent the night crying in her room, realizing that she was not certain of anything at all.



In a journal entry dated January 1833, Aurore had another novel released. It was about an aristocratic woman who fell in love with an actor. Actors were considered lower class. The man had many feminine qualities. The woman disguised herself as a man so she could watch her crush without being detected. Eventually, they became lovers. When the relationship ended, it was because the aristocratic woman realized she was not worthy of him.

Aurore became interested in an actress named Marie who was rumored to have had many lovers, some of them women. Aurore hoped that her growing reputation would give her the opportunity to meet Marie some day. She sent her a letter expressing her desire to meet her, and Marie stopped by her apartment unannounced when she and Jules were having coffee. With one glance, Aurore said she knew that Marie understood her. She said that any spark she still had for Jules left that day. Aurore reflected on why all of her friends were male. She found women too hysterical and petty. Marie invited Jules and Aurore to have dinner with her on Sunday and Aurore accepted for them both. Secretly, though, she wanted the dinner to be only with her and Marie. She said Marie had everything she had ever wanted.

Aurore and Jules joined Marie, her husband, and her lover for dinner. Marie wore a very feminine silk dress with flowers tucked in her hair. Aurore wore men's clothing with a frilly shirt. She learned that Marie was born out of wedlock in 1789 and put on stage as soon as she could talk. She married at 15 and quickly had three daughters. When her husband died, she married a director. At the end of the dinner party, Marie told Aurore that she was very excited to get to know her and that she was everything men should be. Aurore found out a little later that Marie's lover gossiped about her masculinity. She hoped the rumors would not change Marie's feelings about her so she sent Marie a love note. Marie did not answer the note and Aurore worried about revealing her intimate feelings to her.

The journal entry dated November 1817, reflected on Aurore's teen years at Nohant again. After her grandmother told her the truth about Sophie, Aurore was not sure who she was or how she felt. She was comforted only by her dog, Phanor. Through the pain, Aurore always found hope. She forgave both her grandmother and her mother. Her grandmother called her in for a talk one day because she was not interested in school work, social graces, or beauty. Her grandmother said she was tired of constantly trying to help and correct the girl and was sending her to an English convent in Paris starting in January. She said she hoped they would persuade her to use her gifts and talents in appropriate ways. Aurore was excited that she would see her mother again. Her grandmother pointed out that she would then be separated from them both.

The next journal entry was dated January 1818. Aurore arrived at the convent and her mother came to visit. She was shocked to learn that her mother was not taking her to live with her and Caroline. Her mother told her to do as her grandmother said so she could get her inheritance. Aurore knew then that she would never get the emotional support she needed from her mother. Luckily, Aurore liked the solitude of the convent. The crucifixes reminded her of a story that was tragic and inspirational. Aurore learned English at the convent and got to learn more about religion.



The religion aspect was difficult for Aurore since she had no Christian background. Her lack of knowledge made her seem irreverent and rebellious, so she joined a group called the Devils. There were two other groups in the school: the Sages tried to be good and the Beasts remained independent. Aurore chose the Devils, in part, because she admired their leader, Mary, who was nicknamed "Boy" because she was strong and loud. Aurore's nickname was "Madcap."

It was a cold winter, but in April 1819, she got her own 10 foot-by-6 foot room. She could look out and see Paris from it. Having the private room gave Aurore time for solitude and she became very religious. She explained her life-changing religious moment when praying in the chapel and discussed the joy of her first Communion. She even planned to join the convent. Madame Alicia, a nun, encouraged her to take time before making such a serious commitment. When her grandmother heard of her plan to become a nun, she withdrew her from the school and told her she must find a husband so she could inherit Nohant. She was not yet 16 and her grandmother was trying to find a suitable husband for her.

In a journal entry dated February 1833, Aurore was in Marie's dressing room after a performance. Marie asked her to tell a story about why she wore men's clothing. Aurore explained how she dressed as a man first to get into the theater cheaper for her job as a theater critic. She talked about the feeling she got from socializing with men afterward; it was like she was promoted in society, respected and included for a change. She said the feeling was a deep one that she felt between her legs, a feeling of power and confidence. That feeling of power made her lose the desire to wear flowers and bows. She said the feeling made her feel independent and like things were fair for a change. Marie told her she was a gentleman and Aurore took it as a compliment. After Marie had changed, the two women laid down by each other so Aurore could continue a story about a wolf.

An entry dated March 1820 returns to Aurore's youth, when her grandmother tried to find her a husband. Aurore tried to get her mother to go back to Nohant with her so she could advise her in the selection of a husband. Sophie told her no, but to contact her when she found someone; then she might be able to help.

Analysis

Aurore's rebellious teen years are more turbulent than most because she lives with an ill grandmother who does not want to put up with the girl's willfulness. Until she becomes a teenager, her maid, Rose, beats or slaps Aurore for minor infractions, like bad manners. The beatings are so commonplace that Aurore accepts them as normal behavior, creating a lifestyle of co-dependency at a young age. When Aurore is big enough to retaliate, Rose stops, indicating a pattern of inequality for children who are helpless and defenseless. She sees that, as a child, she deals with gender inequality; now as a teen, she realizes age inequality. It could be argued that the age inequality is a byproduct of her rebellious teenage angst. Regardless, she experiences this and perceives it as discrimination, so it is real to her. Added to her desire to make her own decisions and to



seek happiness in her own way, Aurore grapples with the fact that she is living with her grandmother instead of her mother. She blames her grandmother for this situation, viewing it more as extortion by her grandmother than abandonment by her mother. That all changes when Julie, her grandmother's maid, tells the ill old woman what she overhears Aurore say when she believed she was alone.

The truth changes Aurore's perspective. In hearing Aurore's truth, her grandmother levels with her and tells her side of the story. Aurore discovers that her grandmother really did not bribe her mother to let her stay and that she has been somewhat of a burden to her grandmother for these several years. Aurore also hears the truth about her mother's past work as a prostitute and is told that she has resorted to that profession again.

In this section, "truth" becomes a prevailing theme. Grandmama learns the truth about how Aurore feels. Aurore learns the truth about how her grandmother feels and the truth about her mother. She goes seeking truth when she desperately searches for something in which to have faith. The oxymoron of knowing the truth leads Aurore to a period of confusion. Now that she knows all the facts, she realizes that everything she believed is false. She longs to find something stable that she can hold onto and believe in. She finds goodness inside her, and faith, when she develops a relationship with her own figure of faith, Corambe. Without knowing how or what to pray, Aurore just sits silently at a self-constructed altar and finds peace. This desire for religion is foreshadowing for events to come later in this selected assigned section of reading. In her desperate search for religion, the reader learns that Sophie was Catholic, but the Nohant region was predominantly pagan, Aurore has no where to turn for religious guidance. By the 1800s, Christianity had spread to the most largely populated regions in the world, however it was also the Age of Enlightenment. There is a chance that the Nohant people were less "pagan" and more "enlightened," meaning they would have question the possibility of a deity in an age where discovery is developed through the accepted scientific method.

The journal entry dated January 1833, foreshadows a new relationship for Aurore and continues hinting at the theme of gender inequality because it explains the plot of a new book and the facts upon which it is loosely based. The reader assumes, from the description, that Aurore will fall in love with a male actor, but it is an actress who gains her affection. According to rumors, the actress, Marie, is known to enjoy a number of lovers both male and female. She is married but has a boyfriend when Aurore meets her. Aurore grows jealous of Marie's male lover and worries that rumors he is spreading about her masculinity will discourage Marie from becoming her lover. She sends her a love note, but does not get a reply.

Aurore is accustomed to rejection. As a writer, she has her share of it. She has been rejected by her mother and her grandmother. She was rejected by Jules when he cheated on her. But, putting her feelings, so different from what her society considered the norm, on paper and giving them to her crush was challenging to her. She does not want to be rejected by Marie.



But, as the journal entry dated November 1817 notes, Aurore always finds hope. In this particular chapter, she finds comfort and hope in her dog. She also finds hope in the news that her grandmother is shipping her off to an English convent in Paris. Once there, her mother dashes her hopes of going to live with her and Caroline. Even in the midst of more rejection, Aurore finds hope after studying the Bible. Her faith is so overwhelming that Aurore decides to join the convent as a nun, but one of the nuns convinces her to wait to see if the feeling lasts. Hearing of Aurore's intention, her grandmother pulls her out of school and insists she find a husband. There are several reasons that her grandmother may not have been happy about her intent to join the convent: (1) It is not done among the social elite in their region, (2) Religion is seen as weak in the largely pagan area, (3) Nuns give up their worldly possessions, meaning Nohant someday would no longer be part of the Dupin family.

In the last section, dated February 1833, the reader gets a recap about Aurore's choice of masculine dressing. Marie is intrigued by her choice and asks to hear the story about it. Aurore explains the fact that, at first, it was to get cheap theater tickets for her job as a play critic. Then, she explains the feeling of power she got from socializing as a man after the plays. She describes this feeling as a type of transfiguration that occurs between her legs, indicating the development of a symbolic penis. This feeling of power is a stark contrast to the feeling of helplessness Aurore has when her grandmother pulls her out of the convent school. Aurore feels bitter about the situation and the fact that her grandmother is going to force her to find a husband. This causes Aurore to detest societal expectations even more.

Discussion Question 1

Does Aurore fight her grandmother's decision to remove her from the convent school? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 2

Compare and contrast Aurore's infatuations with Jules and with Marie. Does her obsession show personal growth or change? Why or why not?

Discussion Question 3

We have heard the phrase that "the truth will set you free." Does it have this effect on Aurore and her grandmother in this section (pages 103 through 142)? Explain why or why not, using examples from the text as evidence.



Vocabulary

unraveled, hankie, submerging, castanets, countenances, remorseful, ominous, flatness, accusations, leaden, vital, obfuscating, heavenward, detested, prostrated, humiliation, conversion



Pages 143 through 176

Summary

In a journal entry dated May 1820, Aurore explains that her grandmother's health declined after withdrawing her from the convent school and returning to Nohant. Deschartres became Grandmama's primary caregiver and even moved into the house to be closer if suddenly needed. A newfound respect between Aurore and Deschartres developed as they saw how much the other cared for the elderly woman. While there, Aurore read a lot of poetry and philosophy and she began to drift away from the religious convictions she found at the convent. She also rode her horse every morning very early. She dressed in men's clothing for her rides and many rumors were started about her. There were wacky rumors, such as she was a ghost or that she rode into church, right up to the altar, before riding out. She took interest in making the medical rounds with Deschartres, who was helping her study science.

Also in this section, Aurore talks about Stephane, a medical student who came from a moral family, but not a rich one. He was Aurore's friend and agreed to tutor her so she could be more active in helping Deschartres as the town's surgeon. Stephane went to Aurore's room regularly to tutor her, but they became intimate. They knew they could never be married -- her grandmother would not allow it since his family was poor, and his father would not allow it since Aurore's mother had been a prostitute.

In an entry dated February 1833, Aurore makes a new friend, Sainte-Beuve. His girlfriend once set Aurore up on a blind date, but the man expressed no interest in Aurore. He said she seemed passionless. At the time, she was actually writing a novel about someone who was devoid of passion. Marie, angry with her boring lover, seemed to make a pass at Aurore. Marie questioned Aurore about her beliefs and whether she wished she were a man. Aurore explained that she wished to be a woman with a man's privileges. Then, Marie asked if Aurore loved women like a man. Marie asks her to walk out of the restaurant with her, arm-in-arm then to stay out all night eating and drinking champagne to get back at her lover.

The section dated September 1821 takes place at Nohant. Aurore was 17. As her grandmother's health improved a little, the woman decided it was time to make plans for Aurore's continued care in the event of her death. She asked Aurore's permission to entrust her custody to her cousin. Grandmama died on Christmas day.

In the entry dated March 1833, Aurore read Marie a passage from her new book, Lelia, about a woman that had no passion or love in her life. Marie pointed out that the character was Aurore herself, but Aurore changed the subject. A week later, Aurore went to see Marie's latest play, then hung out with her in her dressing room afterward. Marie did not undress behind the screen as she had done previously, Marie asked for details of Aurore's meeting with Merimee, a playwright and novelist who asked to meet her. Aurore explained that he wanted to have sex with her, but she only laughed. Hearing



this, Marie encouraged her to do so, because it was a chance to find passion. At Marie's urging, Aurore set up a dinner and planned an intimate evening. For their dinner, she wore a yellow silk robe with red slippers and smoked a pipe. She wanted to be different from Merimee's other women. After dinner, Aurore was very forward in starting their intimate time. She disrobed herself suddenly, which made the man blush. As he kissed her, she had to hold back laughter. He asked if she could "help" and she had no idea what he meant. Merimee dressed quickly and left. Aurore cried because she had been untrue to herself. She sent him a note asking for another chance, but he did not respond. Two days later, she told Marie the whole story. Marie told her lover and a neighbor that happened to be a friend of Merimee. By the time the story was retold a number of times, the rumor became that Merimee could not perform sexually. Marie begged Aurore to forgive her for telling her secret. Aurore forgave her. Marie left for a tour without mentioning it to Aurore. Desperate to contact Marie, Aurore got her address from Marie's lover. She sent a love letter to Marie and told her she would join her at once if she would just reply to the letter. Marie never did.

The journal entry dated January 1822 takes place at Nohant. Sophie went to Nohant for Grandmama's funeral with her sister Lucie and her husband. The reading of Grandmama's will showed Aurore's monthly allowance cut by one-third. Sophie was mad and even madder that Aurore was going to stay with her father's side of the family. Aurore worked out a compromise -- she agreed to be in her mother's custody if allowed to live at the Paris convent again. Her mother agreed, but once Aurore left Nohant, her mother made her instead move in with Aunt Lucie until they could move into Grandmama's Paris apartment. Deschartres seemed lost once she left Nohant. Aunt Lucie gave Aurore some advice in dealing with Sophie. She said that instead of being calm and sensible, she should yell back when Sophie got excited. Aurore understood her reasoning, but did not want to behave that way.

In the journal entry dated March 1833, Aurore was in Paris and very ill. Marie stopped in to check on her, saying nothing about her sudden leaving or the love letter. Marie said she would take care of Aurore. Finally, Aurore asked where Marie had been. After a long pause, Marie answered, "Here I am." When Aurore was well a few days later, she went to see Marie's play and went to surprise her in her dressing room. Marie arrived with a young man, but sent him on his way after she saw Aurore waiting for her. Aurore massaged Marie's neck and Marie kissed her knuckles in return. Marie said she wanted to dance barefoot in the streets with Aurore and Aurore thought she had the opportunity to share her feelings with Marie. Just then, however, Marie's husband showed up. Aurore left and had intimate thoughts about Marie all the way home.

The journal entry dated March 1822 takes place in Paris, where Aurore and her mother moved into Grandmama's apartment. Aurore's guardian stopped visiting, but sent his brother, Auguste, instead. When asked why, Auguste said it was because Sophie was rude and that they had not lived up to their end of the agreement for Aurore to live at the convent. She told him that it was not her choice since she was still only 17 and not of age. She defended her mother's prostitution because she was not a man and her income-earning options were limited because she was a woman. Auguste said his family wanted her to marry a wealthy man, but she could marry a commoner if desired.



Aurore said she would rather live in the convent than marry. He laughed and said he knew all women dreamed about getting married. She said men should let women speak for themselves. He said men were the superior sex.

Analysis

In the May 1820 journal entry, the reader sees that Aurore moves away from her religious convictions after spending a great deal of time reading poetry and philosophy. Symbolically, this reflects a conflict between knowledge and faith. Her readings expand her knowledge of people and the way they think and act, which offers contradiction to the teachings of her faith. While she leaves behind the fervor for her faith, it still remains important to her, as demonstrated at her grandmother's death. Even though her grandmother was not religious, Aurore buried a crucifix with her that she received at the convent.

The convent is mentioned several times in this assigned section. It is the place Aurore wants to go when she tries to compromise between her two families. She sees it as a safe haven, a symbolic heaven, in which she finds comfort and peace, which is exactly what she needs when her mother insists she will fight for her custody. In reality, Sophie does not have the money to fight for Aurore's custody, and readers are left to wonder if she would even want to do so if her own allowance from Grandmama had not been cut by one-third. In Sophie's family of three -- herself, Caroline, and Aurore -- that one-third cut is more symbolic rather than economically stifling: one-third of Sophie's family was lost with Grandmama's death. Aurore was figuratively cut from Sophie's family because she agreed to stay in custody of her father's family. The convent arises again in this assigned section when Aurore says she would rather live in the convent than marry and have her life stifled by a man.

This section reveals a great deal about Aurore's sexuality as well. At age 16 or 17, she is very attracted to Stephane and is very direct with him about her desires. He stops short of having sex with her because of their family differences. Her family is ranked high in society and she is fine with the idea of premarital sex. He, however, is poor but his family is very moral; to him, premarital sex is wrong. Ironically, both are not good enough for each other. He is not wealthy enough to be with her by the community's standards. She is not good enough to be with him because of her family's moral standards. They are both experimenting with their family boundaries and both have some degree of pushing the limits, as evidenced by them just spending time together. Today's readers should be reminded that medical school was not always the training for doctors and surgeons. In many communities, people who gained experience of caring for ill people or those in need of emergency care, used that experience to care of their family and neighbors. That is why Aurore refers to Deschartres as the community's "de facto surgeon" (148). He was, "in effect" the community doctor and surgeon. Stephane was studying to become one.

Excerpts featuring young Aurore in this reading section show great maturity on her part. Not only does she care for her grandmother during her illness, but she concerns herself



with Grandmama's eternity. She buries a crucifix with her out of respect for her grandmother and her hopes for a good eternity for her. She grows to value Deschartres and even accepts him as a mentor. She also sees her mother for what she is and levels with her about her disappointment of being left behind when Sophie moved to Paris with Caroline.

Sexuality is addressed again in the journal entry dated February 1833. Aurore's blind date tells his friend she seems like she would be passionless in bed. Ironically, she is writing a novel at the time about a woman who lacks - but desires - passion in her life. Marie believes Aurore is writing about herself and encourages her to seek satisfaction from Merimee, a famous writer who is known for his ability to please women. Aurore is so harsh in her approach to him that he blushes. Her lack of passion makes him not want to have sex with her. Aurore cries because this makes her realize she is lying to herself; it is Marie she wants.

Twice in this assigned section, Marie makes flirtatious remarks that tease Aurore. Neither time is over-the-top innuendo or a direct offer of intimacy. Both times, Marie simply says she wants to frolic with Aurore down the street or under the stars or get drunk on champagne with her. It is possible that Marie, known for being flirtatious with men, is just flirtatious in general. Perhaps it is just her nature to say crazy, romantic things without any intent on following up. Either way, Aurore sees what she wants to see -- a romantic relationship with Marie. She is devastated when Marie leaves with no mention of her tour and when she does not reply to her letter. When Marie returns suddenly to care for Aurore when she is sick, the reader wonders if there was possibly some miscommunication between them. But when asked point blank about where he has been, Marie only says that she is here now.

A conversation with Marie actually gives the reader a good glimpse into Aurore's thoughts. Her desire to be a woman with man's privileges leaves a lot to the imagination. Her first response is the admiration she shared for her father and that she liked the outdoor adventures boys played instead of the things girls were expected to do (133). She could also mean, as she reveals as the section dated March 1833, that she desires to physically love a woman the way a man does. Her love letter to Marie sent when she left unannounced for a tour does not express physical desires, only emotional ones (163).

Aurore, at age 17, expresses her disdain for the gender disparity when talking with her cousin Auguste. He makes negative comments about Sophie's profession and Aurore reminds him that women's income-opportunities are very limited. She also says men should let women speak for themselves and that women want more than just marriage. He says that men are superior but women have their own charming contributions to make to the world (178). Since most of the world operates under this notion, perhaps Aurore just feels less "charming" because of her drive to learn and achieve, qualities which make her more masculine according to the era's standard.



Discussion Question 1

Discuss the social class disparity from this assigned section (pages 143 through 176). Use examples from the text as evidence.

Discussion Question 2

In her attempt to be intimate with Merimee, Aurore crosses her arms and asks, "Well?" (159). What does her body language say about her desire in this instance?

Discussion Question 3

From the description Marie provides on page 156, does Aurore resemble the character in Lelia? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

semblance, rustle, ghoul, physiology, malice, sullen, metronome, alabaster, vile, vicious, coquette, brazenness, sardonic, confection



Pages 177 through 194

Summary

In the journal entry dated June 1833, Aurore went back to Nohant to care for her children, however Casimir took them to see his family for a few weeks. While he was gone, Aurore put the staff to work and had them get the home and grounds back into nice order. For their hard work, Aurore rewarded them with a two-week vacation. Just before the servants left for their vacation, Aurore received a note. She wanted it to be from Marie, but it was instead from Marie's lover, Vigny. He asked Aurore to stop contacting Marie and told her Marie wanted nothing more to do with her. He also called her a Sappho. Aurore was confused, but remembering that she had once disappeared without a word previously, maybe the note was true. Marie sent a letter the next day, telling her she did not authorize the letter Vigny sent. She also said she might visit Nohant. Aurore wrote back and told her not to come; she was there seeking solitude and was without servants.

Marie showed up anyway four days later. They shared their concerns and woes about men and Marie offered to treat Aurore like a lady, the way a man should. She held her chair out for her as they ate dinner alone. Afterward, they retired to the bedroom and were intimate. They shared more intimacy during Marie's visit. Before she left the next day, Marie told Aurore that their love could not be for good, but they would always have last night. She said that all their talk against men made her hungry for one. She planned to forgive Vigny and make him take her to an expensive dinner.

After Marie left, Aurore considered her publication options. Leilia hit too close to home, proposing that both prostitutes and wives were enslaved to men and the conflict of religion vs. intellect. She thought about working on a novel called Pauline. It was about two women who were friends which was loosely based on her friendship with Marie. Even though she tried to work on one of the novels, she could only think of a sad man named Monsieur Demai. He had the strange behavior of walking into homes unannounced. He was looking for affection. Aurore's grandmother said he must never be told that it did not exist, and she often diverted him to other areas of the estate to search for affection. She said this gave him continued hope. When she was older, Aurore realized that he was not mad as the townspeople had said; he was just desperate for love. She knew the feeling and did not give up on hope for a relationship with Marie.

That night, Aurore could not sleep. She decided to go back to Paris until the children returned to Nohant. She made arrangements for Saint-Beuve to make dinner reservations for them and she took pages of both Lelia and Pauline for him to read. The journal entry ends with an excerpt from Pauline. In it, a woman whose female lover left her behind set a caged songbird free. It did not want to be free. The woman told the bird it did not deserve to be free and she cried as she watched the bird fly back into its cage.



In the journal entry dated June 1833, Aurore told her friend Sainte-Bueve everything about her night with Marie at Nohant. He confided that he had had sex with young men. He tried to convince her to turn her passion and heartbreak from Marie to her writing. She would not hear of seeking medical help for depression so Sainte-Bueve recommended she have sex with a younger man. She was 29; he was 23. She said she was not ready, so she promised to finish Lelia instead. She shares an excerpt from the book in which one sister admires another for looking like a man. When she went to buy a bouquet of flowers for her house in Paris, she saw prostitute soliciting passengers of carriages that were stuck in the mud. When rejected, the prostitutes just laughed. She wished she could laugh off Marie's rejection.

Analysis

Aurore still cares about Nohant and shows her management skills by organizing the staff and needed chores while Casimir and the children are away. The reader learns that she has not criticized Casimir for his lack of attendance to the estate in favor of being more civil about the matter. The note Aurore receives from Vigny proves he is jealous of her relationship, or possible one, with Marie. All the notions of equality that Aurore fills Marie's head with cause problems between Marie and Vigny. Of course, Aurore hopes their conversations will seep in and that Marie will see that she and Aurore should be together. Vigny calls Aurore a "Sappho" in his note. Sappho was a Greek poet who was born in approximately 600 BCE. She ran a school for girls on the island of Lesbos. While very little is actually documented about her life, parodies that portrayed her as a very sexual, forward woman who preferred women to men stuck with society. The term "lesbian" is developed based on this portrayal of her and the fact that she lived on the island of Lesbos.

While Aurore generally portrays a masculine role, in this section she ironically portrays a vulnerable more feminine character. She dresses like a man and acts like a man until Marie reverses the roles and treats her like a lady. This role reversal could have been as much for Marie's experimentation than Aurore's. Marie has always been curious about Aurore's choices and maybe she just wanted to act out the role for a change. For Marie, their lovemaking is just another play, a portrayal of a person that she is not. She is acting. Aurore is actually Marie's conquest, a complaint they make often about men who have sex with women as just another conquest. This leaves Aurore broken hearted, a characteristic often applied to women in love stories. At this point, Aurore finally understands the desperation exhibited by Monsieur Demai as he searched to no avail for satisfying affection.

Aurore draws from these experiences as she writes Pauline and Lelia. The caged songbird in the Pauline excerpt is metaphorically Marie. Aurore sets Marie free from male control just like the woman in the book releases a caged bird. Like the bird, Marie does not want freedom and flies back to her entrapment. In Aurore's mind, Marie does not deserve freedom after choosing to go back to Vigny. In her own way, though, Marie is in control. She controls her husband by having a lover. She controls her lover by punishing him with her absence and making him buy her expensive make-up gifts. In



Lelia, Aurore develops the main character, a woman who will not relinquish her independence for a man. She is attracted to her sister because she looks like a man.

The prostitutes Aurore sees in Paris after the rain has left the roads muddy symbolize freedom for her. She has previously stated that women like her mother turn to prostitution because they do not have the same income-earning options available as men. She sees them as free because they are able to laugh off their rejection instead of dwelling on it. This introduces a conflicting notion: are women already equal to men in different ways? These prostitutes move on as soon as men reject them. They do not pine for anyone and simply move to the next business transaction. This also must change the way Aurore feels about her own mother since she is a prostitute

Discussion Question 1

Examine excerpts from Pauline and Lelia. How are the main characters similar to Aurore?

Discussion Question 2

By the end of this journal entry, Aurore believes prostitutes have admirable qualities. List what those qualities and explain how they apply to Aurore.

Discussion Question 3

What is ironic about the character's names in Pauline in the author's description?

Vocabulary

implored, refrain, rarity, intolerable, firmament, meringues, reverberation, diatribe, fulfillment, conflated, beseeching



Pages 195 through 232

Summary

The journal entry dated April 1822 takes place at the du Plessis country home. Aurore and Sophie met James and Angele du Plessis at a dinner party and were invited to visit the couple at their country home. Sophie did not like the country so she left after one day. She was supposed to pick Aurore up in a week, but the du Plessis family asked her if she would like to stay. Aurore stayed for five months. During her visit, she met Casimir. They both loved to play with the du Plessis children and seemed very similar in their thinking. It was not love at first sight, but they grew fond of each other during her stay. He asked her to marry him without asking her mother's permission first, a reversal of the way proposals were done. He said he believed she should have the right to decide and if she said yes, then he would talk with her mother. Aurore liked that she had the choice and she said yes. Sophie hoped that Aurore would find a more handsome husband and at one point she accused Casimir of being a working-class waiter. When he calmly assured her that while there was nothing wrong with being a waiter, he had never been one, Sophie exploded with rage. She said that Mr. du Plessis arranged marriages for a fee and that his wife had no morals. Aurore agreed not to proceed with a wedding until her mother figured out something. The solution Sophie developed was a prenuptial agreement of sorts. By contract, Aurore would remain the heir to her inheritance; but as common and in accordance with law, her husband would control the estate. She was also guaranteed to have an annual personal allowance of 3,000 francs. Casimir signed it and Aurore thought she would finally find happiness.

In the June 1833 journal entry, Aurore met a new lover named Alfred de Musset. He was a poet who was enamored with Aurore. Their friends did not approve of the relationship, except Marie who wanted Aurore to find passion. Aurore received a love note from him and invited him to visit. He admitted that he could not work because he was constantly thinking about her, then he burst into tears. She consoled him, but he was embarrassed and ran out. She thought about how he was a struggling poet and how his father and brother died the previous year, leaving the family with little income. Suspecting he might be looking for a woman with money, she decided not to let the relationship develop. Another love note was delivered to her the next day. She held it dear, but did not encourage the man with a reply. She admitted to herself that she still wanted Marie. A third note from Alfred said he was foolish to show her more than one side to himself and stated that he loved her like a child. She responded to that note with one of her own asking him to come see her. He did.

Aurore found Alfred to be a passionate lover and was happy that his beliefs aligned with hers as well. She arranged for a short vacation with him.

Aurore was back in Nohant during the journal entry dated September 1822. She tells of the first time she and Casimir had sex. She laughed and told Casimir that sex was comical, which offended him. He told her that sex with her was like lying on a board and



said she should have told him of her frigidness. He slept in another room, but the next morning it was like nothing had happened. She said that they were never compatible lovers. One time when he hurt her during the process, she cried out. He simply put his hand over her mouth and continued. She got pregnant with Maurice and her interests changed from philosophy and literature to domestic things like sewing. She pondered that the reason females were the superior sex was because nurturing and compromise were innate for them. She pointed out that she never believed women should choose work over family or that women should be away from their home and children. She reminded that she only worked because she had to and that she knew the importance of what a mother could do for her children as well as the importance of things mothers failed to do.

During the winter months of her pregnancy, Deschartres put her on bed rest. It was a cold winter and many birds were dying. Deschartres brought a dying bird to her bedside so they could talk about it. She warmed it by holding it over her heart and covering it with her blanket. Soon, the bird was moving again. After a brief flight around the room it was ready to go outside. She helped many birds that winter and Casimir enjoyed the bird rehab, too. Despite their sex problems, they still were happy. A friend from the convent wrote to Aurore to ask for advice about her own marriage. Aurore wrote back and told her that one of the two needed to compromise and to see the problem through the other person's eyes. She said that since men have financial power and lack natural compromise, it falls on the woman to bend.

In June, Casimir and Aurore prepared to leave for Paris to have the baby. Deschartres' contract also came to an end. Although they offered him the chance to stay, he did not. He said he would be too critical of Casimir's choices when he assumed responsibilities of the estate. Aurore said that Casimir's way of dealing with her depression was to get far away from her. She said she would eventually discover that some depression conditions are natural for creative people, including strange behaviors that are not easily understood by people who are not artists.

Aurore and Alfred were on vacation in the journal entry dated July 1833. Alfred wanted to show Aurore a canyon that offered strong echoes. He sat her on one side of the canyon, then set out to go to the other side after insuring she was not scared to wait there alone. A few minutes later, she heard him cry out in fear. She ran to see what happened and found him curled on the ground, shaking. He said he saw a ghost that had his own face on it. The next day, despite her reservations, they went out exploring again. She ended the journal entry saying that she would later discover that he had a particular kind of mental disorder that would cause them much pain in the future.

The journal entry dated June 30, 1823 discussed Maurice's birth. Deschartres even visited, checked out the baby and admired him for a long time. This baby Maurice reminded him of Aurore's father, Maurice. In August, Aurore, Maurice and Casimir went to the du Plessis country home for relief from the heat. They returned to Nohant in October. Aurore lamented about the company of Hipolyte and his wife, both lived at Nohant. Evening talk was about gossip, dirty jokes and drunkenness. Aurore hated that her grandmother's home had become so undignified. When things began to get ugly,



she excused herself to a little room where she hung a hammock and kept her collection of books, rocks and butterflies. She also began writing in that room. She soon found that writing gave her peace of mind. She wrote about her sexual problems with Casimir to a friend, but burned the letter instead of sending it for fear that sharing her thoughts would make them more real and constant. She decided to work harder at her marriage.

A journal entry dated Spring 1824 showed the decline of Casimir and Aurore's relationship. He began taking away all the things she enjoyed -- her piano, the trees and trails at Nohant, and even the old animals were put to death (including her beloved old dog). She likened Casimir's decisions to do all this to a dog marking his territory. She said she no longer wanted to live there and he admitted that he hated living there. While their reasons were different, Aurore found comfort in the fact that they did share the desire to leave Nohant. They moved to the du Plessis country home and paid for their four-month stay so they would not be a financial burden to the family. One day while she was playing with the children and the other adults were drinking coffee on the terrace, she accidentally got a little sand in Casimir's coffee. He told her if she did it again, he would slap her. She said he would not and coyly dropped a few grains into his cup. He slapped her in front of everyone. She turned and walked away. He did not follow. She cried about the way things turned out. She missed the way Nohant looked when she was a child. She had been naive in thinking marriage would make her happy, and she was not happy that a man had control of her life. That night in bed, she refused Casimir's advances and told him she'd rather be at Nohant, alone in her room. He told her to go back and fell asleep. She stayed awaking thinking about things. She could not divorce him for having a mistress in Paris because the law only allowed men to divorce women for adultery. It did not seem fair.

In the journal entry dated August 1833, Aurore and Alfred were back in Paris. A long poem of his was published and Alfred's fame grew. When the children went back to Nohant, Alfred moved in with Aurore.

In December 1833, Aurore wrote about her plans to vacation with Alfred in Italy for the winter. He needed an inspiring place from which to write, so they thought Italy might help. She sent Solange back to Nohant and Maurice was in school and would stay with Sophie on his days off. Alfred's mother, however, was not happy about his plans to vacation in Italy. It was far away and she worried about his mental health. Aurore visited her and assured her that she cared for her son, was aware of his mental problems, and would take care of him. Happy to hear it, Alfred's mother gave her blessing for the trip. Everything seemed to be falling into place -- Solange would be safely at Nohant, Maurice was safely in school, Alfred's mother approved of the trip and Alfred could enjoy the trip knowing that. She finished this journal entry with the foreboding statement, "There was no other time in my life where expectation was such an ill fit against reality" (232).



Analysis

The reader learns how Aurore met Casimir, but has doubts about whether the meeting was accidental or not when Sophie reveals that Mr. du Plessis takes money to help arrange marriages. Of course, she also says that Casimir is a waiter and he calmly explains that he has never been a waiter. Regardless, the introduction of the idea that their meeting might have been arranged indicates that their marriage may be based on falsehoods. One of the things Aurore loves about Casimir is that he asks her to marry him before asking her mother. She likes having the power of making that decision for herself and it is very different from the societal norm. However, if their meeting was arranged, it could be that Casimir does this for show rather than out of sincerity. The proposal is not the only thing different about his marriage. Sophie, still convinced that Casimir is after Aurore's inheritance, develops a prenuptial agreement that allows him to have control over the inheritance but leaves it in the possession of Aurore. She is also guaranteed an allowance for herself. When Casimir signs it, Aurore believes he is demonstrating his love and respect for her and believes that she will finally find happiness with him.

The idea of marital happiness ends shortly after their marriage, as the journal entry dated September 1822 reveals. Their first attempt at sex is offensive to both. She laughs and says sex is comical. He is angered and tells her she is like a board. This journal entry reveals that sex does not improve for them. It also demonstrates Casimir's lack of respect for Aurore when he continues having sex with her knowing it hurts her. Despite their sexual problems, she gets pregnant with Maurice and shifts her focus to domestic things like cooking and sewing. She discovers her own nurturing skills while caring for the cold birds during the winter. Ironically, she shares this quality with her mother's father, the grandfather she never met. Her instinctual care revives the birds and saves their lives. This experience leads her to believe that women are superior to men for their instinctual ability to nurture and compromise.

Ironically, Aurore sees Deschartres as a more caring and loving person that she did when she was younger. Nothing about the man has changed, but it is Aurore's maturity that allows her to see this side of Deschartres when he holds Maurice. She may also see him as a caring and emotional being now after being married and in a loveless relationship. Now that she has a relationship that is devoid of love, she can see it more clearly in Deschartres. Even though he is retired, he spends much time with baby Maurice. He comes to serve as a father figure to Aurore because he cares for her baby just as he once cared for her father.

Casimir's lack of concern for Aurore during sex is not the only example of his lack of respect for her. In the Spring 1824 journal entry, he begins eliminating all the things that bring her joy -- her piano, the trees and trails at Nohant and even kills her dog. He takes his frustrations out on her by doing these things because he is sexually frustrated by her.



Aurore proves she has passion within her when she falls in love with Alfred. She learns he deals with a mental illness and foreshadows that it will greatly affect their relationship. In addition to the physical aspect of their relationship, Aurore also feels responsible for nurturing the young man. Her visit to his mother prior to their Italian vacation is more along the lines of two mothers arranging a play date than a grown woman embarking on a journey with her lover. He is weak at times and cries easily. In a way, Aurore is mothering him.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the various compromises made by Aurore in this section (pages 195 through 232).

Discussion Question 2

How and why has Aurore's opinion of Deschartres changed by this section (pages 195 through 232)?

Discussion Question 3

What is the significance of Casimir removing all the things from the estate that Aurore loves?

Vocabulary

instinctively, caretaker, smugness, vicissitudes, remonstrations, ministrations, maternity, procures, ineffable



Pages 233 through 272

Summary

In the Spring 1825 journal entry, Aurore and Casimir moved to an apartment near her friends and family. Despite the change of location, Aurore fell into a deep depression and sought advice from her confessor at the convent. At his suggestion, she retreated to the convent for a short stay. One of her favorite nuns, Madame Alicia, reminded her that she had bouts of unhappiness at the convent too and told her that "the turtle carries its house with him wherever he goes" (233). She told Aurore she needed to commit to a place to be. Aurore realized that it was her son she loved most, so she chose to commit to her family. Deschartres died on a business trip after losing all his fortune. Aurore reflected on Deschartres' life. Aurore missed him very much and, in his death, she lost a connection to her father.

In a journal entry dated June 1825, Aurore became very sick with a deep cough and even began coughing up blood. She told Casimir she thought she might have tuberculosis (consumption), and he said she was just being dramatic. Casimir and Aurore decided they would take a family vacation to a therapeutic hot springs during the summer and join Aurore's friends there. Casimir hoped the change in scenery would help Aurore. It did, but not in a way either Casimir or Aurore expected.

Before leaving for their trip, Aurore wrote a journal entry saying goodbye to Nohant. She was afraid she was consumptive and would die on the trip. The recovery, or "cure" that Aurore took was being doused with water then wrapped in a blanket for hours (238). Casimir hunted daily, but Aurore befriended a woman named Zoe. They rode horseback together and enjoyed much time outdoors. Zoe introduced Aurore to her friend, Aurelien, and they were mutually attracted. He was a rich, handsome aristocrat, easy to talk to about philosophy and religion. He was everything Casimir was not. Aurelien was engaged, but discovered his fiance was uninteresting and cold. He made a move on Aurore, but she told him she was married and had morals. He kissed her neck and she scolded him. He apologized and asked her to forgive him and to continue to reject him if he did it again. They decided to be friends and enjoy each other's company. He took her on a boat ride and carved the first three letters of their names in a wooden plank. She scoffed and his feelings were hurt. She explained that the only reason she did not respond positively to his gesture was because he had told her to always reject him.

Casimir and Aurore joined Aurelien, his fiance and her family on a short excursion. While Aurore and Casimir were having dinner one night, Aurelien approached their table. Casimir invited him to join them. When Casimir excused himself for a moment, Aurelien told Aurore that she had his heart and soul. Casimir returned to the table. As Aurelien was leaving, Aurore invited him to visit a local landmark that was known to be "quite stimulating to the senses." Casimir was angered that he did not first give permission for the invitation and that the stimulation remark had sexual undertones. Aurelien did join them on the excursion. In a dark cave, he hugged her and kissed the back of her neck.



Before leaving that day, he told Aurore that he lived to please her. That night, Casimir made sexual advances that Aurore did not think she should reject. She imagined it was Aurelien instead of Casimir. Afterward, she felt guilty for betraying her husband in spirit. She said the first betrayal was the hardest but it made subsequent ones easier. She said betrayal is not effortless, though, and said it was an endless search to find a way to stop searching (247).

Aurore and Alfred were in Italy in the December 1833 journal entry. She had dysentery in Genoa, but he was very disappointed to miss the ballet. She told him to go alone, hoping he would stay. He did go alone, and came home so late that she expected he had met someone afterward. The next morning, she was well enough to travel so they went to Pisa. When they reached Venice, she felt better for several days until a migraine hit.

Alfred threw a tantrum about her illness and said he did not love her. He said he could not stand to be with a woman who had such gastric problems as she did when she had dysentery. She told him they took the trip so he could get inspired, yet he had created nothing in more than a month. He also gambled money that Aurore had to cover. He stormed out and was gone several days. When Alfred returned, he was sick with fever. She took care of him because she promised his mother she would.

A doctor named Pagello came to treat Alfred. He stayed because Alfred's illness (typhoid) was so bad. When the doctor learned who Aurore was, he was happy to be in her presence. He kissed her and she did not object. When Alfred was well again, she rejected his physical attempts because she was with Pagello now. She sent Alfred back to Paris. She stayed hoping to see Spring in Venice. In June, she published a new novel and a novella. At the end of July, she went back to Paris. She found no comfort there, so she went to Nohant.

In the journal entry dated September 1825, Casimir, Aurore, and Maurice returned to the home of Casimir's parents after their spa vacation. Aurore loved her father-in-law, but did not care much for her mother-in-law. Aurore tried hunting with Casimir, but found it boring. She wrote to Zoe and Aurelien. When she found out he was in Bordeaux, she convinced Casimir that they should move to Bordeaux for a while because he could visit all his family there.

Upon their arrival in Bordeaux, Aurelien went to visit when Casimir was gone. Aurore rushed to his arms and burst into tears. He held her while she sobbed. Casimir saw this and threw Aurelien out of the room. She flung herself to the floor moaning, "What have I done," and Casimir took this as a sincere apology. She was actually referring to losing Aurelien. Regardless, Casimir treated her with tenderness for the first time in a very long time. Aurelien sent her a letter saying that he wanted to continue their friendship without sacrificing their morals.

The next day, Zoe, Aurelien, Casimir, and Aurore went on a ride together. When the women went to the restroom, Aurore told Zoe all that had happened. Zoe gave Aurore another note. In it, Aurelien said their relationship was the centerpiece of his life, but he



would let her go if she wanted. Aurore told Zoe that she wanted to give herself to him. Zoe made the arrangements. But when Aurelien found out Casimir trusted them, he refused to go through with their deceit. They did, however, agree to continue writing as platonic friends. Aurore agreed that Casimir could read all letters sent to and from Aurelien. Zoe reminded her that she did not say he could read her journal. She sent journal pages to Zoe, who shared them with Aurelien. Casimir found the new journal pages and left angrily for Nohant. Aurore overheard her father-in-law telling Maurice a story about a time he stood up to a wolf. She decided to stand up to Casimir. She sent him a letter of demands and received back a loving letter that offered hope. They agreed to revitalize their marriage. She said she should have known better.

In the journal entry dated Fall 1826, Aurore was mad that Casimir lost 30,000 francs of her money on a bad investment. When his father died, his mother gave him nothing, leaving Casimir totally dependent on Aurore's fortune. Aurore told him she was taking over the management of Nohant. He did not argue, but left the house. Aurore revealed that he had had an affair with a maid in the past and that he was probably going to see her. In a year's time, Aurore's health got bad so she went to Paris for treatment from Stephane who was now a doctor. Jules, Stephane's brother, accompanied her on the trip.

Jules and Aurore arrived in Paris on December 27, 1827 for her treatment. Stephane asked what was wrong and Aurore began to cry. He held her and kissed her and all her illness seemed to go away. On the way home the next day, Aurore knew right away she was pregnant. Solange was Stephane's child. Aurelien visited at the time of her birth and asked if it was Stephane's baby. She did not answer. He asked if she loved Stephane, but she told him he was the one she loved. She decided that she and Casimir must have separate bedrooms.

In a journal entry dated January 1831, Aurore found a letter on Casimir's desk addressed to her with instructions not to open it until his death. It was a letter of confessions about how much he hated her and that he stayed with her for her money. She weighed her options. She knew if she left and took the children, he would fight her. So, she said she was leaving him and the children in order to force him into some sort of compromise.

Analysis

Aurore's search for happiness ironically leads her to many dark bouts of depression. In the Spring 1825 journal entry she returns to the first place she felt love and satisfaction -- the convent. In her first stint at the convent school as a teenager, Aurore felt a universal love from the Father, symbolizing that she missed the love of her earthly father who died when she was very young. Reflecting on that happiness, Madame Alicia reminds her that she had not always been happy in the convent, either. She uses a metaphor to explain a concept -- "the turtle carries its house with him wherever he goes" (233). This metaphor means that one cannot run or get away from his/her own feelings and emotions. Madame Alicia pointed out that Aurore bounces from one place to



another looking for love. She said that Aurore lacked commitment. Commitment is the thing Aurore liked most about the convent previously when she asked to join. There is structure and a loving community all in one place. However, having seen how easily Aurore bores with routine, it makes the reader wonder if she could have fulfilled a commitment to the convent at all. Knowing that returning to the convent would mean giving up her son makes her realize how much she loves him. She decides to commit to her family.

Committing to her son seems easy enough, but committing to her husband remains a struggle. Aurelien is the first to challenge her commitment, but she remains strong despite his good looks, intellect, and charm. When she finally decides to give in, he declines as a matter of honor since Casimir says he trusts them. Aurore and Aurelien have quite a lot in common. They physically resemble one another with their dark curly hair. They both discover that their loved ones are dullards. Even their names are similar, plus they love to discuss politics and philosophy. The differences, though, are great. He luckily discovers his fiance's faults before marrying her. He also complains that his fiance is cold, which is ironically how Casimir describes Aurore. Both are certain their relationship would be one of great passion, but there is no evidence of that other than a few romantic utterings or writings.

Aurore's commitment is challenged throughout these assigned pages of reading. In addition to Aurelien, Stephane tempts her. She gives in to him, however. It could be that she views him as her "first" love, because when they were younger, they spoke of marriage but knew their families would not allow it. Her lack of commitment to Casimir finds her pregnant with Stephane's daughter. She is able to honor her commitment to Alfred's mother, though, even after she is angered by Alfred. He shows how immature he is when he complains about the stench of her dysentery and about how her migraine is keeping him from having fun. She could have kicked him out and left him poor and broke in Venice, but she makes sure he is nursed back to health then sends him back to Paris. She does this to honor her commitment to Alfred's mother. As a mother herself, she wants her children taken care of and she understands his mother's concern for his health. In truth, Aurore tolerates Alfred like a child and she is his mother-figure. Alfred is also using Aurore's money, just like Casimir confesses to do.

This assigned section also incorporates a lot of loss. Deschartres dies and Aurore realizes how close he was to her family and to her. He was the only remaining connection to her father's youth and he loved baby Maurice as much as he had loved her father. She loses Alfred and Casimir, and may lose Aurelien since she had Stephane's baby.

Aurore also loses part of herself. She says that the first betrayal makes the others easy. Where she remained physically true to her marriage with Casimir, she spiritually lost part of herself and her value system when she pretended she was having sex with Aurelien instead of Casimir. It seems that other transgressions do become easier for her after this one.



The more Aurore searches for happiness, the more convinced she is that she will never find it. Instead of actually seeking medical help from Stephane, she has sex with him and regrets it afterward. Throughout it all, she falls back on her writing as a release of stress and frustration and as a confidant where she records her happy times.

Aurore's character grows more complex as she discusses how her desire to be happy and not to be lonely conflict with the happiness and fulfillment writing brings her when she is alone. She would rather not make small talk or go to high society parties where she might make more friends.

Through it all, Aurore solidifies herself as a dream lover. She dreams of happiness and even despite her serious depression, she finds hope. When she and Casimir agree to work on their marriage in the section dated September 1825, she ends the journal entry with the words "I should have known better." This foreshadowing lets the reader know that her intent does not come to fruition.

Ironically, Aurore is living a life very close to that of her mother. There was rumor that Aurore was not Maurice's daughter, just like the rumors about Solange not being Casimir's daughter (she is not). Aurore's relationship with her mother is strained at this point because Sophie accuses her of putting on airs like Grandmama used to do.

Discussion Question 1

Explain Aurore's feelings of loss when Deshartres dies.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss how Aurore faces the rejection of Casimir and Alfred in these assigned pages. In what ways are the rejections similar and different?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the irony of Aurore's comments as she cries "What have I done?" (258).

Vocabulary

retreat, dissuade, stark, shredding, consumptive, ceaseless, imperious, visceral, heretical, chat, chastised, spontaneous, toilette, proprietary, resonated, sumptuousness



Pages 273 through 319

Summary

In the journal entry dated September 1834, Aurore contemplated drowning herself. She stepped closer to the river that ran across Nohant. Suddenly, she heard the sound of a hundred birds in the tree that she had been lying under while thinking about suicide. Instead of going through with it, she found new resolve and went back into the house. She planned to take Maurice back to military school in October and to enroll Solange in school then, too. She received a letter from Alfred asking for another chance. She wrote that they must never meet again. Shortly after, she sent another letter asking him to meet her.

The journal entry dated October 1834 discusses the rekindling of Aurore's and Alfred's relationship. When he heard that she had sex with his doctor in Venice, he was mad. She reminded him that he had told her he hated her and they were not together. He told her the same thing again and stormed out of her apartment. She waited in Paris to see if he would change his mind. While there, she agreed to sit for a painting that had been commissioned for the *Revue* publication. Delacroix was the handsome artist hired to paint her portrait. She invited him to Nohant to paint and offered to set up a studio for him there. Aurore talked with Marie about Alfred and Marie said that all men are the same and she should stop expecting one to be different. Aurore wrote to Alfred again, but the letter was not answered.

In the journal entry dated December 1834, Aurore received a letter from Alfred with a lock of his hair. She mailed him back a leaf that was once alive, but now dead and still beautiful. Alfred began dating a young, petite blonde woman who was rich and beautiful. Delacroix was painting at Nohant when she received word of Alfred's new love. She took Alfred's lock of hair and went to her room. She cut off all her curls, giving herself a very bad boyish haircut. Delacroix noticed at dinner and asked to paint her. It was a portrait of hopelessness. Yet a short time later, she and Alfred were back together and returned to Paris. By March 1835, they had split up for good. She went back to Nohant.

In the journal entry dated Late March 1835, Aurore was back at Nohant. She revealed in it that Casimir held a gun on her in front of their guests one night for comforting Maurice after he had spoken harshly to the boy. For years, Casimir had been drinking, having affairs, hunting, and misusing the Nohant estate funds. Aurore decided that instead of staying with a husband for the sake of her children, she would try to teach them, by example, to live by their own consciences.

In the journal dated April 17, 1835, Aurore met a lawyer in Bourges to discuss a formal, legal separation. Napoleon outlawed divorce, but a legal separation with specific terms outline was possible as long as the person did not remarry. She had no interest in remarriage. The lawyer was Michel de Borges. He encouraged her to use her writing to inspire a revolution of equality. He told her to stop looking for love in an individual and in



herself and to turn to the public. He was a brilliant lawyer and got Aurore's fortune back for her. Casimir only got a small portion and he had to move to his parents' hunting lodge. She had an affair with Michel for less than a year. She decided she would devote herself to things that mattered most and things on which she could depend.

Aurore returned to Nohant, in full possession of it after her legal separation, in May 1836. It was a festival day, so she released the staff to enjoy the festivities. She got a letter from Maurice saying other boys made fun of him because she is not a prude and she is a writer. She decided to withdraw her son from the school.

In the journal entry dated October 1836, Aurore took her children, her maid, and some friends to visit Franz Liszt and his mistress, Arabella, when they had a baby daughter. Maurice was 13 and Solange was 8. He was soulful, she was willful. One day Aurore realized Solange needed to be credited for her strength and ambition. Aurore moved into the Paris hotel where Liszt and Arabella lived. It was full of writers, artists, and musicians. She met Chopin there and they became interested in each other.

In the section dated January 1837, Arabella visited Aurore at Nohant while he was on tour. She told Aurore that Solange was difficult to tolerate because she was rebellious. Aurore said a woman needs to be rebellious in a man's world. Arabella told her that Solange had a natural ability to manipulate others. Aurore knew it was true. She discovered that Solange had burned pages of her manuscript and knew it was because she wanted her attention. Liszt returned in May. One night after dinner, Liszt and Aurore worked together at separate ends of the dining table. After they finished working, they talked. She said he sought to know God and she sought to know love. He told her that she gave too much of herself and people used her. They laughed that he once wanted to be a priest and she a nun.

In the journal entry for August 1837, Sophie died. Her last words were "Please tidy my hair," then she died after smiling and glancing in a mirror.

In the journal entry dated June 1838, Aurore expressed her confusion over her relationship with Chopin. He kissed her, but did not seem to want their relationship to go farther. She wrote to his friend to ask what to do. The response was to try harder. They became lovers.

In the entry dated November 1838, Aurore decided to take the children somewhere warmer so Maurice's rheumatism would not affect him so much with Nohant's cold winter approaching. Chopin met them in Spain. This was his first time to meet the children and they loved him. Solange wanted to take piano lessons from him. The first place they rented was not nice, but eventually Aurore found them an abandoned monastery in which to stay. Chopin became very ill and coughed up a lot of blood. They left for Paris, but he could not make the whole trip. They stopped in Marseilles and he got better.



In the journal entry dated May 1839, Chopin was healthy again and he joined Aurore and her family at Nohant. He had his own apartment and library at Nohant. Aurore loved her life with Chopin and her children.

The journal entry dated September 1839 tells about Chopin going back to his students, so they all moved back to Paris. Solange went back to school. Maurice, 16, became an apprentice for Delacroix. In this section, Aurore explains that Chopin liked the aristocratic lifestyle and spent his concert earnings on a new outfit and two bottles of cologne. He depended on a busy lifestyle to create while she liked having solitude to create.

Analysis

Aurore's journal entries are getting shorter, indicating the end of her story is drawing near. However near it is, the entries indicate that she is moving forward without returning to review the past as much. In these assigned pages, she did not return to the past for a journal entry at all.

Desperation is the main theme in the first four journal entries in this assigned reading section. Aurore is in such despair that she contemplated suicide. The thought of drowning herself in the river that runs through Nohant. The river filling her lungs the river would have both figuratively and literally become part of her. But, as she had saved hundreds of birds during that cold winter when she was pregnant with Maurice, they come to her rescue and save her from following through on her plan by chirping and singing in a huge flock. The noise startles her and makes her stop. She had helped nature, now nature helps her in return. The experience also brings her in touch with her heritage, as her grandfather was a bird tamer and seller by that very river.

The theme of desperation continues as Aurore turns away from Alfred, then asks to reconcile. Together again for a short time, Alfred is angered when he learns that she and the doctor had an affair while he was sick. She reminds him that he told her how much he hated her then left. They break up again. Again, Aurore asks for him back.

When she receives a lock of his hair, Aurore believes they are reconciled, but a friend tells her Alfred is having an affair. Out of desperation, she cuts her hair into a really bad boyish haircut and mails it all to him. Of course, this act of desperation does nothing to help her. In addition to being irrational, though, Aurore's self-given hair cut represents more than her frustration with Alfred. Giving herself a boyish hair cut, she expresses her frustration with the gender inequality between men and women on all levels of the era's social norms. Men are all but expected to cheat on their wives during the era, but the wives are supposed to remain loyal and forgiving. Men are, by law, managers of money and property, yet it is Aurore who funds Alfred's travel and apartments. She did the same for Jules, too, her first lover when she moved to Paris. Even Liszt points out that she gives more than she gets in all her relationships, emotionally and financially.



The climax of this novel comes when Aurore files for legal separation from Casmir. At this point, she becomes a man as much as society will allow. She has an excellent lawyer who negotiates well for her. In addition, he encourages her to stop looking for love in other people and within herself. He encourages her to look out to the public for love. He points out that her divorce will be a liberating example for other women in her situation. While she is inspired by his words, she still turns to him for physical love.

As Aurore is enjoying a successful career, she is more than ever fulfilling society's expectations of a man. She earns money by her writing career. She manages her own property. She makes her own decisions. This gains her additional notoriety because it fits the masculine female characters she writes into all of her novels.

Like any parent, Aurore worries about her children. Maurice has rheumatism and Solange is willful and uncaring. Aurore thinks Maurice is most like her because he is a creative soul. Solange, however, has the same willfulness that Aurore has; she just does not see it because they are so very much alike.

Both children have a hard time dealing with their mother's fame. Maurice gets teased at school over the bold, direct topics and characters about which his mother writes. Solange is jealous of the amount of time her mother spends writing. Aurore sees what it is like to be a single parent -- to be the working father-figure associated with the era and to be a mom, all at the same time. She also sees the effects it has on her children.

The journal entry for August 1837, about Sophie's death, is very short. While Aurore once lamented over not being with her mother and half-sister, Caroline, the death of her mother is barely a mention. Aurore finds her shallow and her last words reflect it. Even so, Aurore finds time at her mother's grave to recall all the good memories, although she does not bother to share those in detail with the reader.

Aurore's conflict over social class status becomes evident again when she begins dating Chopin. While the two care a great deal for each other, she jokes about his fondness for fine things and trends. She prefers simple things like good conversation and old books. He likes the busy city, but she is growing to love Nohant and has always preferred to work in silence.

Discussion Question 1

What does Liszt mean when he tells Aurore that she gives disproportionately?

Discussion Question 2

How do each of Aurore's children interact with her.? Discuss their relationship with her.



Discussion Question 3

Discuss the structure of the journal entries in this assigned reading section (pages 273 through 319). What do they tell the reader about Aurore?

Vocabulary

relished, politicized, daresay, netted, principles, decapitating, hostile, vocation, unkempt, acuity, entranced, prelude, imitative, apothecary, monk, exorbitant, mallow



Pages 319 through 373

Summary

The July 1844 entry summarizes a milestone year. Aurore turned 40 and Maurice turned 21. As he became the master of Nohant, he developed animosity toward Chopin. The first thing he did was fire Chopin's servant. He asked Aurore not to take a winter vacation with Chopin so they could complete the paperwork making him officially in charge of Nohant. Her relationship with Solange grew worse when she took in a cousin whose mother was pushing her into prostitution. Aurore hoped Solange would look to the cousin as a big sister, but she did not. Solange, aged 15, was flirty and voluptuous and convinced Chopin to side with her. In May 1846, Solange agreed to marry her first suitor. Aurore told her that she married Casimir without love and trouble followed. She asked if Solange loved Ferdinand. She said yes and Aurore offered to take her shopping for her wedding needs. As she wondered what she did wrong to make Solange hate her so much, she heard Solange's child voice cry out for her to watch her. Aurore cried, realizing she did not give her daughter enough attention when she was young.

In the journal entry dated February 1847, while Solange and Aurore are shopping, Aurore asks her daughter to visit a sculptor with her so he can make a bust of Solange. This was just one way Aurore tried to shift focus to Solange. She even gained weight and generally let herself go. She stopped talking of work, too. Shortly after the visit to the sculptor, Solange called off her engagement. The sculptor, Clesinger, showed up at Nohant and demanded permission to marry her. That night, Solange kissed her mother before bed. Casimir would not object, but Chopin would since the sculptor was not of aristocracy, but was a commoner. Chopin skilled Solange's wedding but sent her a nice note expressing his regrets. After the wedding, Chopin threw a tantrum in Aurore's Paris apartment about what a loser the sculptor was. Aurore told Chopin the decision was not his, it was Solange's, then she blasted him with remarks about his aristocratic nature. After her rant, she apologized. Chopin apologized back.

Aurore and Maurice discuss the cousin, Augustine, whom they moved into Nohant to get her away from her prostitute mother. Aurore was hoping Maurice would fall in love with her. One of Maurice's friends loved Augustine, though, and Aurore offered a dowry. Solange was mad and jealous, so she sent the friend an anonymous note saying that Augustine really loved Maurice, so he called off their engagement. Solange and her husband spent her dowry too quick on many fine things, then expected Aurore to take care of them forever.

In the journal entry dated July 1847, Solange and Clesinger showed up at Nohant. Aurore was hoping they would visit to be reminded that simple pleasures offer lasting memories without a need to spend so much. Clesinger was drunk and tried to stab Maurice with a sculptor's tool. Finally, he was subdued and escorted from the house. Solange left too. When Aurore refused to send her carriage to take them back to Paris,



Solange wrote to Chopin for help and he obliged. Aurore wrote to Chopin and told him that she did not want to hear her daughter's name again. He answered back in a note to criticize her and mentioned that Solange was "on the threshold of her life as a woman," insinuating she was pregnant (331). Aurore wrote to him to tell him goodbye and that he can take care of Solange if he wants to do so.

In the journal entry dated March 4, 1848, Aurore ran into Chopin when they visited a mutual friend. On his way out, he told Aurore that she was a grandmother. A man with him rushed back upstairs to tell her that Solange and the baby girl were in good health. When asked why Chopin did not tell her, the man said it was because he could not walk up the stairs again. She rushed downstairs to ask Chopin more about Solange. Solange's baby died a few days later.

Aurore went to Paris to be politically active, according to the May 1848 journal entry. She became known as "the mind and the pen of the new regime" (334). Many men in Nohant were angry about her liberal political views. She wrote another novel about nature and the beauty of rustic life and was, once again, perceived well by the public.

Chopin's death was revealed in the October 1849 journal entry. Aurore did not go to his funeral because she did not know about it. She heard that he died in Solange's arms. She recalled his love for theater that he shared with her and her children. In 1851, Aurore turned Solange's old bedroom and another room into a home theater. Solange gave birth to another daughter, Jeanne, who died young of scarlet fever. Maurice married a woman named Lina and they had three children. Her grandchildren brought Aurore much delight. She thought this was the best thing in the world.

In the journal entry dated February 1866, Aurore attended a dinner in Paris to meet Gustave Flaubert. They became great friends and she was a mentor to him. She said she no longer yearns for fame, just enough money to secure a trust for her grandchildren. He came to visit Nohant once, and as a joke, he dressed like a woman and danced. Everyone thought it was comical.

In the journal entry dated April 1873, Aurore was thinking about Marie, who died 24 years earlier at the age of 51. She recalled a play she wrote for Marie to star in; unfortunately, the audience saw her as too old for the part and booed her off stage. From time to time, Aurore sent money for her to help care for her grandson, Georges. Her grandson died a year before Marie. Aurore dealt with the grief of losing Marie by imagining she had been there at her deathbed. At the end of this journal entry, Aurore had a pain in her side, but decides to wait for it to pass before moving forward.

In the June 8, 1876 journal entry, Aurore said she felt like she was dying. She tried not thinking about her pain by recalling her best memories. She could not speak but she could hear Solange crying at her bedside. She tried to whisper "Laissez verdure" (keep the greenery) to Solange because she had just thought about how green was God's promise to humanity. She leaned back and felt peace, a widening. Solange closed her eyelids and Aurore explained that her soul had left.



In the June 10, 1876 entry, Aurore tells what she saw at her own funeral -- peasant women crying and saying the rosary, Flaubert crying so hard he could barely breathe, Victor Hugo wrote her eulogy and it was read by Paul Meurice. It said that her influence would never be lost and that George Sand was an idea. She was released from flesh and now in death, could live. She heard a nightingale sing and turned to see it, then was gone toward heaven. She concluded by saying that in the end, none of her adventures, personas, or experiences mattered. It only mattered that she was herself.

Analysis

As the author tries to wind down the story, Aurore also winds down her life. Where journal entries in the beginning of the book were long and frequent, they are not more spread out over longer periods of time. For instance, 32 years spans from the beginning of this assigned reading section to the end of the story and the entries get shorter.

In addition to fewer and shorter entries, the journal writing becomes more reflective as Aurore matures. She focuses less on what she wants to accomplish and more on the things she has overlooked in the past decades while concentrating on her career. She proclaims herself officially old in the July 1844 entry. In this section, she tries to have an open, honest conversation with Solange about the importance of love in marriage, but the girl will hear nothing of it. When she falls in love with an artist instead, Aurore is secretly happy. Chopin is angry that Solange is going to marry the artist, Clesinger, because he is rumored to be a drunk and bad with money. Aurore says she met the man and is very impressed with him when he came in and demanded approval for her daughter's hand in marriage. Ironically, this style of demanding, they later discovered, had less to do with his romantic, desperate love for Solange and more to do with Clesinger just being obnoxious. Solange and Clesinger are both bad with money and go through her dowry in a short time. They expect Aurore to pay their way and become really mad when they learn she offers a dowry for her cousin, Augustine. Initially, she tries to get Maurice to marry the girl, but he is not interested. He asks his mother why Solange gets to pick her spouse but he does not. She realizes she has created a double-standard just the opposite of the one she has so heartily opposed. She gives him space and time to find his own spouse.

Solange really tries to hurt her mother because she feels like she was neglected as a child. Her mother was always writing and never took time for her. Then, Aurore left the children when she first moved away to pursue her writing career. Aurore is trying to have a career and family in an era when women are not expected to "have it all." The process of building her career was not easy and it came with a cost. In this case, the cost is her relationship with Solange. Chopin becomes a father-figure to Solange and knows more about her adult life than Aurore does. Telling him that she was pregnant without telling Aurore was just another vengeful tactic Solange used to punish her mother for being absent during her upbringing. Ironically, Aurore had the very same complaint about her own mother, Sophie.



Both of Solange's daughters die at young ages. Maurice's children, however, bring Aurore much joy. She realizes this is the best love in the world. Instead of working for fame or fortune, she only wants to work to make enough money to leave behind some for her grandchildren.

It is ironic in the journal entry dated February 1866, that Flaubert dresses like a woman and dances for everyone. It is comical and everyone laughs openly when he dresses like a woman. No one laughed openly when Aurore began dressing like a man although she was the topic of many rumors for doing so, indicating another example of gender bias.

The June 8 and June 10 journal entries describe Aurore's death and her funeral from her own point of view. When she talks of diverting attention away from her pain by recalling good, happy thoughts, she is really experiencing the phenomenon often referred to as having her life flash before her eyes. She tells her full life story, including her death. In his eulogy, Victor Hugo refers to her as George Sand instead of Aurore. This demonstrates that he knew her in a professional way and knew her as a friend since her closest friends called her George.

Once again, birds are an integral part of the story. As a nightingale sings, it draws her attention and flies away with it toward heaven. The nightingale is often symbolized in literature as a connection between life and death. Where Aurore had once saved birds from the cold and they had saved her life, it is a bird that escorts her soul to heaven. Since she is telling this story, it means that at least the last journal entry is written from heaven.

The moral to her story is that nothing about her life mattered except that she was herself. Everything she did taught her a little more about who she was. Writing helped her understand her feelings about all aspects of life. By the end of her life, she knows who she is... she simply is herself. The fact that she spent time developing a successful writing career and that she was so dedicated to it only matters at the end in the lives she touched and those who touched her life.

The author resolves the Solange conflict at the end of the book for the reader. Although the reader does not know what has transpired, it is obvious that Solange has some regrets.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss Solange's relationship with Chopin. Why does he know more about her life than Aurore does?

Discussion Question 2

Compare and contrast Solange's husband, Clesinger, to her father, Casmir.



Discussion Question 3

Discuss the double-standard relating to marriage that Maurice points out. Is the double-standard intentional? Why or why not?

Vocabulary

sacrament, gait, pauper, cacophony, grotesque, cobbler, transcendence, mazurka, polonaise, ravishing, vitriol, ire, vestibule, assignations



Characters

Aurore

Aurore Dudevant is a woman who craves both excitement and equality in her life. Her dream is to become a writer, and her first job requires her to dress as a man to get cheap theater seats so she can write play reviews for a newspaper. She adopts the styles of men in her dressing because she feels more powerful when doing so. When dressed as a man, she also has a voice in politics and philosophy. Despite the Victorian odds stacked against women, Aurore becomes a writing success and uses the pen name George Sand. Many of her friends begin to call her George because they believe the male name suits her better. Aurore is actually a real-life author and Victorian era feminist who really wrote under the George Sand pseudonym.

In order to become a successful writer, Aurore leaves her two children with her husband and sets out for Paris to develop her career. She returns to her family estate every other quarter to care for her children. While she figuratively bursts societal norms for females by becoming a successful writer, she literally bursts norms, too. She has many lovers, which was not generally accepted behavior for women of the Victorian era; neither was the masculine style of dressing she adopted once reaching Paris.

Throughout the book, Aurore makes some of the same mistakes her own mother made, including leaving her daughter behind for someone else to rear and putting her children's needs aside to pursue her own dreams.

George Sand

George Sand is the pen name, or pseudonym, used by Aurore Dupin Dudevant for novels she wrote in the 1800s. When her lover is distraught over her success and his lack of success, he refers to her as George, her professional name. When Aurore catches him cheating on her, he pleads with her and calls her Aurore. She reminds him that her name is George, indicating that their relationship is professional only or perhaps implying that she is the successful one in the relationship since men were the primary career seekers during the Victorian era.

Maurice (father)

Maurice Dupin is Aurore's father. He is born into a wealthy family, but falls in love with a prostitute. Maurice fights with his mother often about the love of his life. He marries her secretly then takes his daughter to see his mother for the first time when the girl is about two years old. At first, he asks one of the staff servants to present her as her own granddaughter. When Maurice's mother notices the familiarity of the little girl's eyes, however, she knows right away she is Maurice's child. He and his mother make amends.



Maurice is in the French army as an adult and a respected local citizen and soldier. He is very handsome and his wife, Sophie, fears he will meet another woman while traveling with the military. She packs up the family and moves to be with him during the war. Maurice dies at a young age because of a horse riding accident he had when he left the home angry with Sophie one night.

Maurice's father died when he was very young, so he has always lived his life trying to please his mother as her only son and as the man of the house. His mother did not want to let go of him, especially when she learned that Sophie had once been a prostitute. Maurice worked very hard to have the two women of his life get along, but they never did until his untimely death.

Sophie

Sophie Dupin is Aurore's mother. She was formerly a prostitute and most often lived with a military general during the war. She followed the camp and was taken care of by whichever general she was with. She actually left a general to be with Maurice. She is French and is very passionate about equality among social classes. After her husband dies, she leaves Aurore at the country estate with her mother-in-law and receives a sum of money for doing so. Sophie tells Aurore she will come back for her, but she never does, even though she does visit some.

Sophie has three children. Caroline is the oldest and was born in a previous relationship. Aurore and Louis are her children with Maurice. Sophie has a temper and is jealous. She becomes so consumed with jealousy that she, eight months pregnant, moves Aurore into a Spanish war zone to make sure Maurice does not have an affair. This trip takes its toll on the baby and he dies shortly after they arrive back at Nohant. Louis was born blind, but Sophie swears she saw the Spanish doctor push his thumbs into the baby's eyes out of hatred for the French.

Louis

Louis Dupin is Aurore's baby brother. When she is eight or nine months pregnant, Sophie decides to move the family to be with Maurice while he is at war. The living conditions are not the best and baby Louis is born with some problems. He is underweight and blind. He dies at Nohant while still an infant. Immediately upon his death, Deschartres takes the baby's body, puts it in a casket and buries it on the estate grounds. Sophie, desperate with grief, convinces Maurice to exhume the baby so she can properly prepare him for burial. They allow Louis to lie in his crib through the night, then Sophie prepares him for burial. Maurice buries the baby under the pear tree in the children's garden at Nohant. No one knows of the switch in burial plots until Sophie tells Aurore many years later.



Grandmama

Grandmama is Aurore Dupin, Maurice's mother and Aurore's grandmother. Aurore is named after her. Grandmama sticks to social class values of the region and does not like that her son married a prostitute. She is also unhappy that Sophie's father was a bird salesman. She often laughed at his vocation and made snide remarks to Aurore about what a lowly career he had. Grandmama takes custody of Aurore when her mother moves back to Paris after Maurice's death.

Grandmama is to credit for Aurore's education. She taught her granddaughter music, literature, and etiquette.

While Grandmama eventually accepts Aurore and her mother, she never accepts Sophie's oldest daughter, Caroline. Caroline was born from another marriage so Grandmama will not even let her come to Nohant to visit her mother or half-sister.

When Grandmama hears that teenage Aurore is unhappy at Nohant, she unleashes the truth to her. Grandmama tells her that Sophie had been a prostitute and had returned to that work since moving back to Paris. She also tells Aurore that she suspects she is not really Maurice's child, and as it turns out, Grandmama never wanted the responsibility for caring for her after all. These things hurt Aurore, but she respects Grandmama for leveling with her.

Grandmama then sends Aurore to the convent where Aurore finds God and wants to dedicate her life to her religion. Fearing that her granddaughter will live the life of a pauper, she withdraws Aurore from the school immediately and begins searching for a husband for her.

Deschartres

Deschartres is the highly intellectual - yet very unemotional - tutor employed by Grandmama for Maurice. After Maurice was grown, she kept Deschartres on the staff to help with other aspects of running the estate. While he did not like Aurore at first, they become good friends when they took care of Grandmama together.

Deschartres, while an employee, feels vested in the Dupin family because he has worked for them for so long. When Maurice was growing up without a father, Deschartres looked upon him as his own son. He also took care of the family estate, which is a task a family member would have held. When he sees Maurice and his mother fighting over Sophie, Deschartres feels justified in stepping in to mediate. He tries to get Sophie to move back to Paris and even tries to have her arrested, but is unsuccessful.



Jules

Jules is Aurore's lover when she first moves out of Nohant and to Paris. He and Aurore co-write a book together, but he accomplishes very little on his own. Jules is seven years younger than Aurore.

Caroline

Caroline is Aurore's half-sister, born to her mother before she met Maurice. Caroline stops by to play with Aurore at Grandmama's Paris apartment one day but is turned away. Seeing how her grandmother treats her half-sister makes Aurore angry and bitter toward the old lady.

Marie

Marie is an actress that is married and has a lover. She is the object of Aurore's affection and when the actress visits Nohant, they have a same-sex intimate experience. Aurore always thinks of Marie as her one true love. They did not continue their physical relationship after Nohant, but Aurore wanted to do so. Marie, however, wanted to get back to her lover since she had made him suffer without her during her time visiting Aurore at Nohant.



Symbols and Symbolism

Birds

Birds represent freedom in several instances in this book. Auore's grandfather was poor, but he was free, as a bird tamer and seller along the river banks.

When Aurore is pregnant with Maurice in the winter, she is bedridden. The birds bring freedom into her bedroom. They are cold so she warms them and helps them recover. They give her happiness and help her to feel free from her bedrest constraints when they recover and fly around the room before going back outside.

Birds are important because they keep Aurore from committing suicide by the river. The sudden flapping and chirping of a flock of birds snaps Aurore back into reality and she realizes suicide is not the answer. In this way, the birds give her freedom to live.

In the end, a bird escorts Aurore's soul to heaven, leaving her free from emotional and physical pain and freeing her from worry.

Turtle

Madame Alicia reminds Aurore that a turtle travels with its house - a metaphor for how our internal problems move with us. A turtle is also symbolically slow and steady. Madame Alicia is telling Aurore that if she would stop trying to live a fast life, happiness would fall into place.

Men's clothing

Men's clothing symbolizes comfort and equality for Aurore. When she slips on a men's coat, she feels strong and powerful as well as comfortable. The form of the coat is forgiving and helps hide her identity from others literally and possibly from herself figuratively. Not only does wearing men's clothing facilitate getting her work done, she gets a taste of what life is like for a man. While dressed like a man, she is not subjected to society's standards for women.

Nohant

The country estate of Nohant symbolizes solitude for Aurore. When she and Casimir are first married, the solitude of Nohant is unpleasant. After their separation, though, it gives Aurore the very solitude she needs in order to write more.



Paris

The city of Paris, a bustling metropolitan area, represents life and excitement. Sometimes, Aurore is inspired by the activity of the city; other times she wants to be inspired by nature. Many of her lovers choose Paris over Nohant, such as Chopin and Alfred. They feel stagnant in the country.

Letters

Letters are the only form of long distance communication for people of this era. Aurore writes many love letters to express her admiration for people of both sexes. She receives letters from her friends and loved ones as well. She reads a letter from Casimir expressing that he hates her. Letters symbolize the things people cannot say to each other in person, either due to distances apart or circumstances.

Books

Books symbolize a sense of accomplishment in this story. People feel a sense of accomplishment after reading a book, but Aurore feels that sense after she finishes writing a book.

Women's clothing

Women's clothing is meant during this era to be more alluring and less practical or comfortable. The small waistlines and low cuts of the styles accentuate the shape of a woman. It is comical when Flaubert dresses like a woman and dances.

Money

Money symbolizes social class because finances are related directly to social class. In the setting of this story, Men are given control of their family's finances, even if they are poor directors, like Solange's husband.

River

The river that runs through the Nohant property symbolizes life. Aurore's grandfather feels alive when he is at the river with his birds. Aurore almost takes her life in the river, but nearby birds divert her attention to something else.



Settings

Nohant

Nohant is the Dupin family estate in the French countryside. After the death of her father and her grandmother, Aurore becomes the heir to Nohant. After she marries, her husband takes control of the property in keeping with French law. Nohant is built on beautiful grounds with rolling hills of green grass, fruit trees and a river. At first, Aurore is inspired to write in Paris, but eventually she comes to find a great deal of inspiration at Nohant.

Paris

Aurore has different apartments at various times in Paris. When she discovers that Casimir hates her and has only stayed with her for her money, she chooses to start a fresh life in the city of Paris. After being in a dead marriage for so long at Nohant, Paris offers the opportunity for exciting city life.

Venice

Aurore and Alfred are in Venice when they break up. He is angry that she is too ill to see the city and tells her he hates her. She remains true to her promise to his mother to look out for him, but sends him home to Paris as soon as he is well enough to travel. Although they went there for him to find inspiration to write, she is the one who stays through spring because she is so inspired.

Dames Augustines Anglaises Convent

This English-run boarding school for girls is located in a Paris convent. Aurore is sent to live and study there as a teenager when her grandmother becomes sick of her rebellious nature. While at the convent, Aurore believes she receives God's calling to be a nun, but Madame Alicia tells her to wait to see if her feeling lasts. Later she returns to the convent to contemplate life when she and Casimir are having marital problems.

Office of Le Figaro

Aurore gets her first job offer in the office of Le Figaro in Paris. Le Figaro is a newspaper owned by Henri Latouche. It features news and politics, satire and more. Aurore is originally hired to write movie reviews. Latouche suggests she dress like a man to buy a cheaper theater ticket.



Themes and Motifs

Women are capable

Aurore shows that women are capable of achieving as much as men. Even though this is not a popular social sentiment during the Victorian era in which Aurore lives, the books she writes with strong females fitting the typical male hero archetype are selling in record numbers. Whether the readers buy them because they like the idea of strong female characters or because they simply view the stories as farce, her stories introduce the concept of gender equality.

Aurore's success as a writer comes largely from her ability to fit into a man's world. She dresses manly in order to circumvent the expensive tickets women must buy for theater box seats, but finds that she rather enjoys male conversation. She successfully fits in and hangs out with a group of men after the play. She holds her own when conversing about politics and philosophy among the group of men, another example of how Aurore proves that women are capable of achieving as much as men.

In the journal entry dated April 1832, Aurore faces discord with Jules because he is jealous of her success. He even goes as far as to blame her career success for his lack of success. He says that her fans and publishing friends dropping by constantly distract him and keep him from producing his own successful novel. Then, her incessant scratching of her pen across paper as she writes also distracts him (93). Surprisingly, Aurore falls for these excuses and offers to rent office space in which Jules can work in peace and quiet. As strong as she is, she is still held captive by the idea that she must do everything within her power to please him since he is a man.

Ironically, Aurore often sees herself as the strong male role in her relationships, especially with Jules. She says he is like her mother, moody and bitter when upset, but a lot of fun when passionate about something. She put herself in the role of man by forgiving him for his silliness (94). In her relationship with Albert, Aurore once again finds herself footing the bill for their vacation, a task actually expected of men during that era.

In the journal entry dated Fall 1826, Aurore takes over the grounds and her finances after Casimir risks and loses \$30,000 francs. At this point, Casimir is completely reliant on her fortune and he squanders it. While there are many things she wants to say, she only tells him, "We are finished with you running this place. Starting now, I will take over" (266). While it may not sound like much based on today's marital arguments, it was a big deal for a woman to take charge in such a manner in the early-to-mid 1800s.

Aurore's love life also proves that women are capable of achieving as much as men. During her era, women are not much more than conquests to many men. She takes on a number of different lovers, despite being married, which was a benefit primarily reserved for men under French law.



Work is not as important as family

Aurore learns through her mistakes that work is not as important as family. Before setting out to live in Paris to pursue her dream of becoming a writer, Aurore takes into careful consideration what she will be missing in the lives of her children who are staying at Nohant. What she fails to consider is what they will be missing. She does not seem to see that work is not as important as her family until it is too late. Her daughter, Solange, is only two when Sophie moves to Paris for three months. Solange feels abandoned by her mother and subsequently grows to act spoiled, resentful, and disrespectful of her mother.

Ideally, Aurore wants to become a successful writer and get an apartment with two doors so the children can move in with her and Jules in Paris. Knowing that having Jules as a live-in-boyfriend will negate her financial agreement that provides her a small allowance from her inheritance, Aurore wants a second door for Jules' quick escape in case of a surprise visit from her husband, Casimir. Of course, the flawed thinking behind this notion is that she assumes one of the children will not tell their father that Jules lives at the address as well.

As much thought as Aurore has put into this particular housing situation, she never really considers the affects of her absence on her children. She fears they will forget her, but that is related to her own ego and self-interest instead of her children's emotional well-being.

Finally, Aurore recalls all the times she ignored her daughter's pleas for playtime in order to finish a novel or write a journal entry. She is immediately reminded of the times she, as a little girl, desperately tried to get her own mother's attention while her mom cleaned the kitchen. She learns this lesson with great regret when she realizes the fullness of Solange's lack of respect for her. She also feels regret because she realizes she did to Solange exactly what her mother did to her -- she left her children behind to pursue her own interests; never mind that Sophie's interest was to return to prostitution while Aurore's was a professional endeavor. In both cases, the children were left with trusted family members to provide for their care (and in both cases, the children were left at Nohant), but a mother's love and attention cannot be replaced.

The theme of family importance is reinforced at the end of Aurore's life when she has an out-of-body experience and sees Solange crying over her as she lays dying in bed. When she takes her last breath, Solange is the one who leans over to her and closes her eyes, symbolically putting to rest her life-long grudge against Aurore and creating new regrets for Solange of not reconciling sooner. This act by Solange also allows Aurore the ability to rest in peace literally, since it is a burial preparation, and figuratively, since Aurore sees the remorse in her daughter's eyes and she can be buried knowing that deep down inside, Solange loved her all along.



History repeats itself

History repeats itself in more than one way throughout the novel. First of all, Aurore leaves her daughter to be raised by someone else at Nohant just as she was left there by her own mother, too. Ironically, Aurore saw her mother Sophie as a dream lover, someone who ran off at whim to make her own dreams come true. After Maurice died, Sophie missed the exciting life in Paris. With her oldest daughter, Caroline, in boarding school, Sophie was actually able to return to her work as a prostitute. Aurore thinks the situation that causes her to leave her children at Nohant is different because she is striving to build a better life for her and her children.

As much as Aurore believes her mother was a dream lover, she herself is a chaser of dreams. The difference is that Sophie did not have a plan of action other than connecting with a rich man who could provide her needs. Aurore chases her dream with a plan and realizes she may end up back at Nohant without a career if she does not work hard enough. To her, the worse thing she can do is not teach her children that love and respect are both also an important part of marriage for both the man and woman involved. She fails to think about the negative effects of a failed mother and daughter relationship that can arise from her decision to leave. This is probably due to two facts:

(1) Unlike her own situation, Solange and Maurice are staying at Nohant with a parent. When Sophie left her at the country estate, she was in the care of her grandmother

(2) Aurore does return to Nohant to participate in their care. She returns every other quarter to live in the country home and to be a mother to them.

History also repeats itself in a number of failed love affairs for Aurore. Shortly after marrying Casimir, she falls in love with Aurelien, but thanks to his ardor, they do not dishonor her marriage by having sex. She is convinced that she really loves Aurelien, but she cannot have him because of his morals and honor. She then begins a series of affairs that start with Stephane, the doctor in Paris, who fathers Solange. She still holds romantic feelings for Marie even though Marie clearly saw their romance as an experimental fling. After dating Chopin for a number of years and having him take Solange's side in several arguments, Aurore finally gives up on the idea of falling in love and finally begins to see the love around her in her grandchildren. She was not around enough to care for her own children the way they needed or wanted, so she takes the opportunity of being with her grandchildren to make retribution for her past decisions. In the end, she writes to make money to leave to her grandchildren, not for her own personal wealth or fame, much like her own grandmother did as she got older.

In the end, it only matters that you are yourself

After all of her adventures, attempts to find love, and her financial success and fame, Aurore says that all that matters after her death is that she was herself. Knowing "herself" becomes increasingly difficult for Aurore during her lifetime. She believes she knows exactly who she is until her grandmother tells her the truth about her mother and



other information. Her grandmother questions whether Aurore is actually Maurice's child since her mother was a prostitute. She also discovers that her grandmother did not negotiate to keep her; instead, she took her in because her mother wanted to leave Nohant. This new knowledge contradicts everything Aurore has ever believed. From that point on, she spends a lifetime looking to find herself.

Aurore feels like a strong person, but realizes as a minor she is under the control of her parents or grandmother. Upon her marriage, which was all but demanded by society, she was in the control of her husband. Between childhood and marriage, she really has no time to discover who she really is. There are a couple of times she thinks she knows. At the Catholic school, she is drawn to the sisterhood and feels the presence of God for the first time. She wants to immediately commit herself to being a nun, but one of the nuns encourages her to wait to make sure the feeling lasts. In the meantime, Grandmama withdraws her from the school and insists she finds a husband. In another example, Aurore is highly attracted to Stephane, the student from Paris who later becomes a doctor. Unfortunately, he is not rich enough for her family and she is not moral enough for his. Knowing their families will not approve, they simply avoid the relationship. Apparently they are attracted to each other because after her marriage to Casimir, Stephane fathers Solange with Aurore.

Her move to Paris opens new opportunities for Aurore to find herself. Landing her first writing job at the newspaper is a step toward finding herself and it gives her an opportunity to explore another dimension of herself. Not only is she earning income in what is predominantly a man's career, she also dresses like a man. At first, her male attire began as an expression of sensibility. Her women's boots are not holding up to Paris' cold, icy winter. She buys a pair of men's boots that offer more traction. On top of that, she begins dressing as a man to get cheaper theater tickets. Being accepted as a man gives her a feeling of power that she loves, so she incorporates men's attire into her regular wardrobe. Soon, her friends in Paris begin calling her George, her chosen pen name.

She finds mutual love as both Aurore and as George, but none of those loves are as rewarding as her love for her grandchildren. Instead of fame, she only wants to leave behind money for her grandchildren in the end and is satisfied that she was never anything but herself.

Never give up on your dream

Aurore is a dream lover, consistent with the book's title, and she never gives up on her dreams. She has dreamed of living in Paris since she was a child, left behind at her grandmother's estate in the French countryside by her own mother. As it turns out, Aurore's mother was also a dream lover. She dreamed of a perfect family life with Maurice, Aurore's father, and their children. When he died in a horse riding accident, her dream died with him. After some time Aurore's mother did not give up her dream -- she started all over again. Returning to Paris with the dream of finding a new husband who would respect and worship her as Maurice did, Aurore's mother never found that kind of

relationship again. Seeking love and appreciation from men, she returned to a life of prostitution.

Aurore's dream of becoming a writer comes true with some sacrifice and hard work. Because of her success as a writer, she loses relationships with Jules and her children, especially Solange. Her writing success puts additional expectations on Aurore, by herself, her publisher, and her adoring readers. Choosing not to let them down interferes with her children and her romantic relationships. Jules even goes as far as to blame Aurore's accomplishment of reaching her dream for the reason he cannot reach his own dreams. He says he is distracted by her frenzied writing (93).

Aurore's mother shared a dream with her on the eve of the day she departed for Paris. When Aurore begged to go to Paris with her, her mother told her to give her some time to start a business. The way she talked about the hat-making business she wanted to start made it sound real enough that Aurore believed it. Perhaps her mother really did want to start a legitimate business. Money was tight, though, so the business venture never occurred.

Aurore does not give up on her dream to travel. She and Albert take off for a romantic Venice vacation that also takes them all over Italy. When Albert has a feverish spell and breaks up with her, Aurore quickly moves on to the next man and decides to stay in Italy longer after shipping Albert back home.

Much like her mother, Aurore's biggest dream is to find love. She falls into society's customs and marries Casimir at a young age. She thought he was progressive when he asked for her hand in marriage before asking her mother for permission. As it turns out, it was just a ploy that he knew would endear him to her. He admits later that he only married her for her money. She chases a number of lovers and eventually concludes that her most fulfilling dream is being a grandmother who can leave behind a little wealth for her grandchildren. After her death, she looks back on her life and is happy that she always went after her dreams because they made her who she was.

Styles

Point of View

This story is told in a journal format from the first person point of view. The narrator is always Aurore Dudevant who is also known by her pen name, George Sand. The first person point of view, along with the fact that she and all the other characters actually existed, make this story very believable to the reader. The first person point of view makes the journal format seem like a real diary, but the reader should remember that the story is fictionalized by the author.

The first person point of view is told in past tense all the way back to the narrator's birth and before, but it shifts to present tense starting with the June 8, 1876 journal entry. She dates the journal entries by month and year so the reader has a time frame in which to follow because the entries are not placed chronologically. Instead, they are scattered to provide flashbacks that explain details and foreshadowing to keep the story moving.

The author's use of this journal format and past tense entries add to the reader's experience by making the book read more like a memoir even though it is fiction. Keeping the point of view in first person instead of interspersing third person or omniscient points of view also allows the reader to follow the main character's line of thought and follow the growth of that character and the climax of the story alongside the character.

Language and Meaning

Occasional French phrases are sprinkled through the book, but are understandable within the context for those who do not speak French. For instance, as a young child, Aurore constantly makes up stories to tell her mother. She enjoys the attention from her mother, who listens to these stories as she works. Her mother calls the stories "romans interminables" which translates from French to be "novels that are endless" (29). The author drops occasional French phrases into the book to keep the setting relevant. This story could happen anywhere even today, but its significance lies in the fact that women were not allowed opportunities to achieve financial success through anything other than marriage or inheritance during the mid-to-late 1800s.

Some language in this book also foreshadows Aurore's fascination with masculinity and the gender differences that oppressed women of her era. It begins with Aurore recalling that her mother had dressed like a man and enjoyed it. She also expresses that she wished to be a boy on the day she learned of her father's death. She thought that only a man could comfort her mother, a nagging thought that would carry over into her own adulthood. In her discussions with Marie, the language reflects ideas of female superiority when they discuss the folly or foibles of their lovers.



The language and meanings are straightforward. The journal entry dated July 1833 describes a sexual encounter with Marie in vivid detail, the most graphic description of intimacy in the book. That designation shows that the passion she felt with Marie was much greater than the other lovers Aurore describes in the book.

Structure

Aurore tells her life story through a series of journal entries that are written as reflections after the events occurred. The reader does not know when they are written, and given the ending where she describes her own funeral, perhaps she wrote them from the afterlife. Some are specifically dated but others simply are dated with a month and a year. The journal entries switch back and forth through about the first two-thirds of the book, jumping from Aurore's adulthood back to her childhood. There is no pattern to the switching, showing the reader the author's intent of Aurore's stream of consciousness thinking. Readers can use the dated entries to keep a mental chronology of events. All of the entries through the top half of page 348 are told in past tense. Starting with the journal dated June 8, 1876, the journal entries are short and told in present tense. It is clear in these entries that Aurore is sick. The author's choice for present tense in the last few journal entries allow the reader to be with Aurore while she dies and to get closure for the story.

The last one-third of the book does not jump back and forth between young Aurore and adult Aurore. It physically shows the reader that they have finally caught up on all the background information and that this section is all new. As the book nears the end, the journal entries get shorter, indicating that she is either doing something other than writing journal entries or that she does not feel up to writing them.



Quotes

I do not believe the loss of a child is something one ever overcomes. One puts on the faces one needs, but inside one bleeds and bleeds.

-- Aurore (Journal Entry September 1808 paragraph 7)

Importance: Aurore reflects on the death of her baby brother, Louis. Louis' death drives a wedge of grief between her parents that is never reconciled since he dies an untimely death in an accident.

To me, it meant that my mother was trading me for money.

-- Aurore (Journal Entry July 1810 paragraph 1)

Importance: Aurore explains how she ends up staying with her grandmother at Nohant. Grandmama will not allow her half-sister, Caroline, to visit. In order to see her, Sophie moves to Paris. She gets a stipend to make up for her husband's lost pension, and Grandmama pays her an extra salary to leave Aurore at Nohant. Her mother says she cannot afford to take care of two children on her own when Aurore begs to go with her to Paris.

You who claim such sensitivity and perceptive abilities, how can you not recognize the way all of this has been a blow to my ability to work?

-- Jules (Journal Entry April 1832 paragraph 3)

Importance: Jules tells Aurore how he feels about her success. He is a writer, too, so her notoriety is emasculating him.

I would like your approval.

-- Grandmama (Journal Entry September 1821 paragraph 1)

Importance: Grandmama tells Aurore that she wants to make plans for her guardian in case she dies. Instead of simply appointing a guardian, Grandmama knows that Aurore will receive the idea of staying with the Dudevant family better if given a choice.

There is no shame in being a waiter.

-- Casimir (Journal Entry April 1822 paragraph 7)

Importance: When Sophie accuses Casimir of being a waiter, he responds that he has not had time to be a waiter, but that it is not a bad profession. He shares Aurore's ideas of fairness in terms of social class.

That much truth I had to allow.

-- Aurore (Journal Entry December 27, 1827 paragraph 7)

Importance: Aurore confesses in her journal that Stephane is Solange's father. Her pregnancy has upset Aurelien, whom she wanted to be her lover but his virtues



prevented them from dating. She decides she and Casimir will begin sleeping in separate beds as a surrogate form of honesty.

They said all sorts of things because you are a woman who writes, because you are not prude like most of the other boys' mothers.

-- Maurice (son) (Journal Entry May 1836 paragraph 4)

Importance: Maurice is getting teased because of his mother's work. It breaks her heart, so she removes him from that school the next day.

Must history always repeat itself, not only in the larger ways of politics but upon the personal playing field and of the self?

-- Aurore (Aurore paragraph 5)

Importance: Aurore realizes that Maurice is experiencing the same things she did as a child when other children made fun of her mother and her past as a prostitute. This quote is also a recurring theme in the novel.

I could only serve one master; and it was not my publisher I chose, but myself."

-- Aurore (Journal Entry November 1838 paragraph 3)

Importance: Aurore begins publishing the stories she wants to tell, not the wildly romantic books she became famous for writing. In this moment, she decides to be true to herself and to pursue her own happiness and family enrichment over work.

Love begins as a rhapsody and ends as a dirge.

-- Aurore (Journal Entry July 1847 paragraph 4)

Importance: Aurore has this thought when she runs into Chopin after their breakup. Their love began as a rhapsody, an enthusiastic feeling. After they fight about Solange, their love dies and becomes more like a dirge, a funeral song, than a rhapsody.

What else better was there? What else better had there ever been?

-- Aurore (Journal Entry October 1849 paragraph 3)

Importance: Aurore reflects on her life and finds that her grandchildren are both predictable and surprising; they bring her so much joy. With her heart so full of love finally, she questions what could possibly be better and her love makes her forget all that happened previously. She is finally happy and feels loved.

In the end, there is but one answer to every question, whether it is spit at me or made at gentlest inquiry: I was I.

-- Aurore (June 10, 1876 paragraph 3)

Importance: This is the final sentence in the book. Aurore has just described her funeral and her ascent to heaven. She reflects that the most important part of life is to be yourself.