

The Favored Child Study Guide

The Favored Child by Philippa Gregory

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Plot Summary

Julia Lacey and Richard McAdams are raised as cousins by Julia's mother, Celia. Richard's father, John, is away attempting to make enough money to sustain their household and to rebuild Wideacre, the family estate. As the plot unfolds, Julia and Richard will learn that they are brother and sister, born of Beatrice Lacey McAdams and her brother, Harry. As they grow up together under the care of Celia, Julia and Richard know nothing of the family secrets other than the fact that it was Beatrice's greed that prompted the villagers to burn her house and kill her, and that the night of violence caused the death of Harry Lacey, squire of Wideacre. They live in the dower's house with Celia, knowing only that she is Julia's mother and Richard's "mother-aunt," and that they are cousins. With that knowledge, they plan to marry. Though Celia tells them it's not possible, they believe her objection is made because both children will need to marry well in order to bring money onto the estate.

All during their childhood, Richard goes into the village for lessons with the village priest though there's not enough money for Julia to also have lessons. Instead, she begins spending her time with the children of the village, grudgingly earning their respect with her tough nature, her willingness to join them for games and obvious love for Wideacre. That love grows, and it's Julia who has the gift for knowing how to farm and to care for the animals of the estate. Richard cares nothing for the land and is fearful of animals. In fact, the animals are the first to recognize that something isn't right about him.

John returns home with plenty of money to do the necessary repairs and to buy what's needed to make the estate a farming community again. He hatches a scheme in which the people will share in the wealth. The first season begins with the people looking forward to prosperity.

From the time of her childhood, Julia is plagued by dreams. One night, she dreams that lightning sticks the church spire, dropping part of the building onto the nearby houses and causing a fire that quickly spreads throughout the village, killing several. She warns the villagers, and the lightning does strike. It's immediately assumed by the villagers that Julia has "The Sight," but her mother and John - fearing that she's "odd" because her parents were siblings - sends her to a psychiatrist in Bath. While there, she meets a man she plans to marry, but Richard interferes and drives him away. Meanwhile, Richard rapes Julia, and she quickly discovers that she's pregnant. They slip away and marry, only then telling John and Celia and discovering that they are actually siblings.

Julia has a strange connection with her biological mother, Beatrice. She often dreams of Wideacre before it was burned, though that happened when Julia was only two-years-old. In those dreams, she sometimes sees herself in a mirror, but it's the reflection of Beatrice. The older people of the village also recognize her as looking like Beatrice and predict that either she or Richard will be "The Favored Child" who has The Sight, as Beatrice did. As it happens, it's Julia. She often "dreams true," meaning she has dreams that predict what will happen.



After Julia and Richard reveal their marriage, John and Celia head to London to have it annulled. Richard is unwilling. He and Julia jointly inherit Wideacre, and he wants no competition in the form of a husband for Julia. Richard follows John and Celia and murders them, along with their driver. He then forces Julia to live with him in anticipation of the birth of their child. Julia does remain, though she leaves the house the moment the child is born with the intention of drowning it in the river, ending the Lacy legacy forever. Instead, she follows an apparition across the river and discovers a band of gypsies, waiting in their wagons. She wordlessly hands the baby to a woman who is already nursing an infant, and the gypsies leave. When Julia returns home, her friend and mentor, Ralph Megson, has a knife to Richard's throat. Julia instructs Ralph to "kill him."

As Julia lies dying from her exposure to the elements after the birth of her child, she writes James Fontescue. He's the man she was engaged to marry. She asks him to find her daughter, returning her to the estate now that Richard is gone.



Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

Julia has a recurring dream in which she is walking through the driving rain while holding an infant to her chest. She remembers details, that the warmth of the child under her cloak is the only warm place on her body. The child is her own daughter, and she's headed to the river Fenny to drown the baby. The river is swollen out of its banks, and she doesn't know how she's to reach the river.

The book begins with Julia admitting that she's now old and reminiscing about her childhood. She was born in 1773 to Celia Havering of Havering Hall and Harry Lacey, the squire of Wideacre. She tells of her Aunt Beatrice, her father's sister. Beatrice was killed by the people of Wideacre, and the Wideacre mansion burned. Julia repeatedly dreams of the night Beatrice was killed and her father died when Julia was only two-years-old. Julia went to live with her mother and her cousin Richard in the small dower house. They are supported by whatever charity Celia's mother and stepfather dole out and the stipends sent home by Richard's father, John. Julia calls Richard her "dearest friend," though Richard is actually a bully. Julia says that she invariably follows Richard into his escapades, and that she accepts the results of those. However, while Julia loves Richard with all her heart, Richard uses Julia whenever it suits him. He is able to charm anyone, including the cook, Mrs. Gough. Julia and Richard play often in the burned out ruins of Wideacre estate and know nothing of their history except that angry villagers killed Beatrice and burned the house, that Harry died on the that same night, and that Celia and John took the children to a safe place.

Julia recalls that, when she was a child, slavers came to the Acre. They took six children as they were of poor families who could scarcely feed them. Dr. Pearce, the village parson, appealed to Celia who could do nothing to help.

Julia and Richard childishly promise that they'll someday marry. Celia says that it can't be, but does not explain why. Julia continually puts Richard's wants above her own. Her grandmother Havering tells Julia that a wife must always bow to her husband, and Julia works at being the perfect mate while the two are still children. When Julia's grandfather gives Richard a horse, Julia is anxious for a horse of her own but obediently waits while Richard begins taking riding lessons. The horse, Scheherade, is anxious when Richard is near, and Richard hates to ride but continues to try. Julia is offered a turn, but turns it down. She says later that Richard noticed her refusal and gave her a kiss, then says that he will teach her to ride. Julia says that she wanted Richard's love more than she wanted anything - even a horse. Richard continues riding lessons from Julia's grandfather, but it's evident to everyone except Richard that the horse hates Richard and that Richard hates riding. Once, Julia entices Scheherade to the door of the stable and mounts her. When Richard finds Julia there, he's furious and strikes her with his riding crop. She promises never to ride again.



Richard has an excellent singing voice until his voice begins to change. He's always bemoaned the fact that there's no money for singing lessons, and Julia herself has said that Richard should have lessons. Julia only plays the piano in order to make music with Richard. Then Richard's voice begins to change, and he suddenly has only an ordinary tenor singing voice. Once his voice completes the change, he vows never to sing again.

Julia is invited to spend some time with her Grandmamma and consents, thinking that it will make a good change from life at the dower house with her mother and Richard. Julia says that she learned much during that stay - including that it's possible to look back on a "bleak past" without reproach. Grandmamma says that the secret of happiness is to be "content with what you have." It's Grandmamma who tell Julia that the husband is always right and that it's the wife's duty to bow to that authority.

When Dench is taking Julia home, they come upon Scheherade in the commons. Richard is nowhere to be seen. The saddle is askew, making them believe that Richard must have been thrown. Dench puts Julia on the horse and sends her to find others who'll help search for Richard. Though she's had no riding lessons, Julia immediately knows how to ride. Julia is thrilled with the ride, though she's still worried about Richard. She encounters Mrs. Green who says that she won't send her men to help the search until Julia convinces her that Richard is only a child in need. She then encounters the blacksmith and tells him that she's sorry that she doesn't need his services, but that she needs his help instead. She arrives home safely, and Richard is soon brought home, as well. He's angry when he discovers that Julia rode his horse. She says that it was Dench who made her ride, and Richard's anger seems to immediately subside.

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

Julia believes that the "dream" is to come true and that there will come a day when she's drawn to the river to drown her own child. She can't imagine why it will happen, but knows that it will. That day does come, though she won't succeed in killing the child. Julia will eventually learn that she is Richard's sister, not his cousin, and that Celia is not really her mother. It's important for the reader to remember this, but for the sake of accurately presenting the story, Celia will be referred to as Julia's mother, and Richard will be referred to as her cousin.

Julia's childhood was idyllic in many ways. She has the entire estate as a playground and has a connection to the land from the time of her childhood. The only downsides seem to be that Richard is often cruel to her and that they have no money for anything other than necessities. It's her companionship with Richard that is to be her greatest downfall. Julia truly loves Richard and believes that he feels the same. Richard seems incapable of love and doesn't care for Julia unless he wants something from her. He can't stand the thought that Julia might have someone's attention. He will sometimes accuse her of trying to take her mother's love though she says that she always felt her mother had enough love for both of them.



It's Julia's Grandmamma who tells her that a woman's place is to bow to her husband's wish and command. Julia takes that to heart. Though she already gives in to Richard's every whim, she'll work even harder at being the perfect, loving mate to him. It will eventually be her downfall, because she simply can't imagine denying Richard anything or of going against him even when she knows in her heart that he's wrong.

Julia has encountered the people of Acre before. They all attend church in the village, but seem to have no other interaction. When Julia stops in the village to ask for help with the search for Richard, she's immediately met with opposition. Yet Julia's own love of her people and her land show through, as well as her concern for Richard. She tells Mrs. Green that he's just a child and earns her grudging respect. When she meets the blacksmith, her first comment is that she's sorry that she has no business for him. Julia realizes that people in the village are in dire straights and in need of money. It's that notice that likely wins her a similar respect from the smithy.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

As Richard is convalescing, Julia begins spending more time in the stables with Scheherade until the day Richard sees her there. After that, she tells Jem, their stable boy, that she won't take the horse out as Richard is watching. Jem tells her that the horse needs exercise, and Julia is tempted. However, she does not want Richard angry with her. Richard then asks Celia why Dench wasn't reprimanded for putting Julia on a horse. He points out that Julia might have been thrown and seriously injured. Celia doesn't see it for Richard's anger that Julia rode his horse, but thanks him for being the man of the house and pointing out things that would have escaped her attention. She then talks to her mother who is Dench's employer. Julia's Grandmamma fires Dench immediately. That night, Julia asks Richard if she could ask her mother for permission to walk Scheherade. Richard doesn't give his approval, but asks if Julia would like to learn to ride. She takes that for his approval and is elated. Later that night, Richard claims to have seen someone out in the stables and plants the idea that it was Dench visiting Jem. The next morning, Julia finds Scheherade with her legs slashed. Ned Smith arrives and recommends killing the horse. Celia agrees, and the horse is killed with a hammer then taken away. Julia asks what they'll do with the horse, and her mother suggests that the people of the village might be desperate enough to eat it. There's an immediate search for Dench, who'll be hanged if he's caught.

Richard goes into the village daily for his lessons with Dr. Pearce, and Julia knows that he's having trouble with the village children. One day, Julia goes into town with Richard. While he's in the parsonage, she goes into the streets where she encounters the village children and immediately realizes that they are severely malnourished. They tease her but she wants desperately to have the village be as it was before the times of hunger. Julia then faces the children and comes to know Clary Dench, niece of the groomsmen accused of harming the horse, and Matthew Merry, a young boy who stutters and is thought to be "simple" because of it. Julia and Clary briefly fight, then give in to the need to stop the bickering. As they return to the parson's house, they dare Julia to climb the wall and throw over some apples. The children explain that they'll be in trouble for stealing apples but Julia will not. Julia climbs the wall and is just about to drop into the parson's yard when she discovers that he's outside. She drops instead back into the mass of children, and they all giggle until they cry. When Julia goes to the front door, she's unsure what the parson will do but he prefers to ignore the indiscretion than to deal with it. The escapade earns her their friendship. Julia and Clary become close, spending many days together. While they are swimming one day, Julia suddenly foresees Clary's death in the river and makes her friend promise that she'll never go swimming alone.

On her sixteenth birthday, Julia dreams of being in the Wideacre estate mansion before it was burned. Then she realizes that she's actually Beatrice and that they are coming for her. When she's awake, she thinks that Beatrice would never have allowed the



estate to go into ruin, but would have borrowed money to keep the people working. Julia's mother helps her put her hair up that day for the first time and knows that her mother sees a strong resemblance to Beatrice. Julia goes out onto the land that day and, when she arrives, she's told there's a visitor. Her Uncle John has returned. Uncle John's first impression of Julia is that resemblance to Beatrice. Celia objects, saying that there's no resemblance. John says that he's made a fortune mining opals and has enough to restore the estate. He gives Celia a pink pearl necklace and earrings. John and Celia offer Richard and Julia some details of the night Beatrice was killed, though Julia realizes that they still aren't telling everything. Julia admits that on that night, she dreamed only of balls and gowns - "like any young girl who has just become a young lady."

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

Julia seems unsure that Dench - who spent his life caring for horses - could have damaged Scheherade, but she accepts Richard's word for it. Years later, Richard will tell her that he was responsible. He takes great satisfaction from the fact that Julia cried over the loss of the animal.

When Julia first spends time with the village children, she learns that they are truly hungry. They listen with longing to what she'll have for supper, anxiously quizzing her about details - whether she'll have real tea, for example. It's only then that she understands the extent of the problems in the village. She's known that her own family is poor but had no idea the extent of the difficulties in the village. As she walks home with Richard, she tells him of her encounter. He says that she's done well, and that he never minded the children though that's an absolute lie. He also points out that Julia will now be able to go into the village with him often, his way of having her protection. His praise is sufficient for Julia.

John's return is important to the village. He has plenty of money to restart the estate's farming operation. That fact alone will put food back into the mouths of many of the families that have been literally starving to death.

Julia's dreams are as much a part of her as her love of Wideacre. She can no more stop dreaming than she can stop breathing. She has two specific types of dreams. She dreams of what happened in the past - especially of the night of Beatrice's death - and of what might happen in the future. The foretelling dreams are called "dreaming true," and it will be one of those that prompts John and Celia to send Julia away from Wideacre.



Chapters 5 and 6

Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

Uncle John is disappointed with Richard's knowledge and demands that he study harder. He goes to London for several days and returns with the knowledge that he's hired Ralph Megson as an overseer for the estate. John believes that Ralph Megson left the estate as a child. When Julia goes into the village, she discovers that Ralph is well-known there and that he has brought food to the people. Ralph had no legs but maneuvered well on peg legs. When Ralph sees Julia, he immediately recognizes that she's Beatrice's child. Ralph and Richard clash immediately, Richard demanding respect and Ralph seeing Richard as a child. Richard then calls for Ralph to be fired, but Julia stands up for him, and John refuses. When John and Julia go to the village in search of Julia's glove, they encounter the groom, Dench, but Julia introduces him with a different name. When Richard finds out, he's furious but Julia explains that she only wanted not to spoil the village celebration for Ralph's return. As Julia and John are preparing to leave the village, Ralph tells Julia that he was with the group that burned Wideacre. Julia realizes that she's dreamed of Ralph before she met him. That night, she dreams that she is Beatrice and that she and Ralph are lovers.

The next day, Julia takes a walk to Wideacre, to the burned out ruins of the old house. She feels drawn and goes willingly, though without conscious thought or decision. Once there, she has a vivid daydream, that Ralph undresses her and that she gratefully accepts his lovemaking, returning her own love in return. When they've done, she imagines that they sit together watching the rain. She's aware that she's seeing the house as it was before the fire, but doesn't analyze the situation. Suddenly, she turns and sees only piles of dust and leaves. She's returned to the present and to herself, though she realizes that she and her Aunt Beatrice are as one.

Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

When Julia meets Dench in the village, he expects that he is about to be taken into custody and executed for his alleged part in the death of the horse. Julia makes a snap decision and introduces him as Dan Tayler. Richard simply can't let it go and continues to push Julia about the man. She finally tells him that it was Dench and that she simply hadn't wanted to interfere with the village party at Ralph's return. Julia's mother seems to understand, and Julia herself seems to remain unconvinced about Dench's guilt. Richard says that Julia only wanted to be friends with the people and that's why she didn't turn Dench in. Richard hits Julia on the head in his anger. There's a sudden change in Julia after her daydream of making love with Ralph. When Richard is still angry with her that morning, she's disappointed. Yet when her mother asks whether Richard is still angry, she shrugs it off, saying that he'll soon get over it.



As Richard and Ralph clash on their very first meeting, Julia can't help but immediately stand up for Richard. They leave the village together though Julia admits that she knows how ridiculous the two seem. Julia and Clary have become close friends. They are constantly teasing each other, and Clary often makes light comments about Julia being part of the gentry. That closeness is important to Julia, and she'll later desperately miss Clary's friendship.

Julia's increasing connection to the land and to Beatrice is worrisome to her in some ways but admits that she can't change it. It will become an intricate part of herself. Though Julia's by now heard the rumors in the village - that either she or Richard will be the favored child - she continues to insist that it's Richard but knows that she has received the gifts.



Chapters 7 and 8

Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

Uncle John plans to have the people of the estate share in the profits of the season rather than to work for hourly wage. The idea is to have the people have a vested interest in the results of the harvest, making them more willing to work hard at making the estate profitable. The plan is John's answer to rebellions around the world, including those that resulted in beheadings in France. John says that Julia and Richard, as the next managers of the estate, must buy into the plan for it to work. When Richard presents it to Ralph, he's skeptical. He says that it depends on the people's trust of the owners, and that the trust doesn't exist. Richard hurriedly says that John will agree to simply pay wages if Ralph suggests it.

Uncle John catches Julia gardening. He asks how she knows what flowers should be planted in a particular spot, and Julia says that she just knows. Julia walks to the river that afternoon and encounters Ralph attempting to poach a trout. They talk for awhile, and Ralph pledges that he'll support the plan to have the villagers work for a share, rather than for an hourly wage. He then asks Julia why she doesn't have a horse, and she says that her Uncle John has not found a suitable mount for her.

Julia and Celia talk about Julia's resemblance to Beatrice, and Celia says that Julia is much different. Julia also talks about her growing affinity with the land. Celia then says that she hasn't always avoided the village and that there was a time she was very much involved with the lives of those who lived there. Julia believes her life would be perfect if only she could stop dreaming of Wideacre.

Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

When Julia and Richard speak to Ralph about the plan to have the villagers share in the estate, Ralph immediately points out the flaws in the plan. While Julia had thought it was nothing but a positive point for the villagers, she'd not thought of it from their point of view. When Ralph points them out, Julia is ashamed that she didn't think of those things herself. Richard's reaction is much different. He hopefully tells Ralph that he's certain John would approve of hourly wages if Ralph supported that idea over the profit-sharing scheme. Ralph asks Julia what she thinks. She defers to Richard, though it's only because she's agreed to do so before they arrived at Ralph's cottage.

Julia watches the village girl who's been hired to keep house for Ralph with something like envy. She wonders how Ralph could possibly have that great "lout" in his house. It seems that she feels proprietary toward him as they've made love in her dreams.

Julia's knowledge of the land is brought to John's attention when he catches her gardening. She laughingly says that her mother tries not to know that her daughter is working in the dower house flower garden and that Julia avoids working there at any

time that she might be observed. Yet she simply knows what plants want to be in a particular spot. That knowledge will soon benefit the entire estate, and Julia takes over much of the oversight of the farming venture.



Chapters 9 and 10

Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

Uncle John is a physician and his attention, combined with adequate food, soon slows the death rate dramatically in the village. A woman brings her ailing child to John who promises that the child isn't going to die. The woman says she's buried, "four, no five" children. Julia is struck by the fact that she doesn't immediately remember how many of her children have died. Meanwhile, Celia is holding school for the village children. While John wants her to teach reading and arithmetic, she is first teaching personal hygiene and cooking - skills that they need to survive.

Julia agrees to oversee the planting of an apple orchard. She wakes the next morning to a drizzling rain but knows that it's not too wet to plant. She carefully measures the field and plans the planting, but when they've finished, there's one apple tree left. That brings laughter from all those who've watched her plan so carefully. She tells them to plant the tree on the common ground so that the village children can have the apples.

A few days later, Ralph appears at the cottage with a horse for Julia. The grey horse is named Peggy but Julia changes it to Sea Mist. As they ride together, Ralph asks about Richard. Julia says that his temper is seldom a problem. Ralph says that it doesn't sound like a temper at all, but like the ravings of a spoiled child. Richard is predictably upset that Julia has a new horse but he hides it from Celia and John. The next day, Julia agrees to meet Richard at the sheep barn. When she arrives, the sheep are mobbing him. Julia rushes through their midst, scattering them away from Richard. Julia turns the conversation immediately to other matters - the stone Richard is planning for construction of the new house. She never mentions it again, though she'll later think that the sheep recognized the madness in Richard that others didn't see until it was too late to stop him.

Ralph, Richard, Julia and John meet later to discuss the planting and crops. Part of their plan is to always hold sufficient food back for the people of Wideacre, and to sell at least some locally at a fair price. The rest will be sold in larger markets, and it's there they hope to make the larger profits rather than on the backs of the locals.

Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

As Julia heads out to oversee the planting of the apple orchard - her first task as overseer - she's nervous. She finds that Jem has overslept and has hooked the gig to the horse in his sleeping clothes. She tells him that he should have been dressed, then says that's her first reprimand of an employee and asks how she did. Jem laughingly tells her that she'll be fine if she doesn't get "too full of herself." That's typical of Julia's concern for others and her realization that she has power over the people of the village, but wants to be fair.



Julia and Ralph are becoming increasingly close. Ralph tells her that she is Beatrice's heir and that her life would be empty without the land of Wideacre. Julia is struggling to meet the demands of her mother and asks Ralph what she should do. He tells her to simply grow up and figure out her life for herself.

When Julia sees Richard with the sheep, she says that the sheep mobbing a person is not in their nature and that it's in fact, impossible. Yet she's seen it with her own eyes, and it will be much later that she realizes that the animals had recognized Richard's madness. It explains Richard's problems with riding, as well. Julia and Richard don't talk of the incident as they leave the stock barn, as it's Julia's habit never to talk of anything that might upset Richard or put him in a bad light. Richard says only that he hates sheep and that he won't ever work with them again. It's generally accepted that Richard simply cannot be bothered with the animals of the estate, and he turns his attention fully to the building of the mansion.



Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

Julia's connection with Beatrice is growing stronger, and she recognizes the times Beatrice "comes to me." If she's standing by a gate or in a particular field, she'll suddenly know that she has been there before, as Beatrice. The old people who see her in that position will say, "Welcome child, welcome," and seem to know that they're speaking to Beatrice. The Christmas season is near and there are celebrations, including a dance with Gypsy music at the dower house. The night after the dance, Julia dreams that the village church is struck by lightning, that the spire falls on three houses next door, killing some and starting a fire that sweeps through the village. Julia dreams it over and over. When she wakes, she rushes to the village, certain that the event is going to happen. She goes to Ralph, and he tells her that if she believes in herself, to make the people believe in her. She does, and the village people move everything out of the three houses and tear down the next two, creating a fire break. When the lightning happens, Julia faints and wakes later in the parsonage.

At home in her own bed, Julia immediately dreams that she's walking toward the river holding the child that she must drown. John and Celia are concerned that she's showing the "oddness" of Beatrice and make plans to ship her off to Bath to see a doctor who specializes in women's nervous disorders. Richard gives Julia the news along with the information that they plan to have her married off. As Julia is leaving for Bath, Richard tells her that he plans to make the land his entirely while she's gone. He says that she will be immediately disinherited if she is placed in an insane asylum. Julia meets briefly with Ralph and Clary before she leaves, and both know that she's afraid. Both tell her to stand up to Celia and John but Julia simply goes along with the plans to leave for Bath.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

When Julia has the dream of the village fire, she wakes torn about what to do. As is typical for Julia, she tells someone and hopes it will be resolved for her. Julia has been taught that a lady is to be quiet and unobtrusive, and she wants to fulfill her mother's and grandmother's instructions. When she tells Ralph of her dream, he asks if she believes it will happen. Julia is certain, and Ralph tells her that she must convince the villagers. She does and saves the lives and homes of several. Her mother is not relieved that her daughter's gift is valuable. Both Celia and John are terrified that Julia is "odd" like Beatrice. The villagers, meanwhile, accept Julia even though the reign of Beatrice didn't turn out well.

Julia is terrified at the idea of being declared insane, but more so at the thought of losing the land. There's little doubt that Richard's words will weigh heavily on her mind. Richard's parting shot is that Julia will be gone for months and that he'll make Wideacre



his while she's absent. It's likely that Julia suddenly sees that Richard has no kindness nor love for her - a dream she's held to for many years.

Julia talks with both Ralph and Clary before she leaves for Bath. Her friendship with Clary comes to the surface again. She says that she at least won't be forced to watch Julia "lording" it over everyone in the village. It's Clary's attempt to make Julia smile and weak as it is, Julia appreciates it. It's a joke between them as Julia and Clary both know that Julia is more like one of the villagers and more in tune with their needs than she is a member of the gentry.



Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

Julia and Celia travel to Bath where they rent an apartment from Mrs. Gibson. Julia immediately realizes that she's a country girl and meets Dr. Phillips who has a ridiculous speech impediment. Julia believes that having her dreams and The Sight is right, and that there's no need for a doctor, but she doesn't push that fact. Julia meets a young woman, Marianne Fortescue, who is also seeing Dr. Phillips. The two immediately become friends, and Julia is drawn into Marianne's society. She is popular from the first, earning invitations to balls, parties and teas. Julia also meets Marianne's brother, James, who says that Dr. Phillips is a "quack."

James Fortescue is the most eligible bachelor in Bath, and his family has approved of Julia. In return, Julia's mother has approved of the Fortescue fortune, and the parents seem to be considering a betrothal. James and Julia are well aware of the situation and are joking about it during their time together. Their teasing includes James saying that he supposes Julia could elope with her butler, and Julia saying that she supposes she'll have to accept James' invitations to dance as she's a dutiful daughter.

Julia does her best to keep her dreams and thoughts secret from Dr. Phillips, but admits that he's skilled at his job and can pull things from her that she doesn't mean to tell. It's James who finally draws Julia's true thoughts out. She tells him that the Laceys are believed to have a magic of sorts and that there's a long tradition at Wideacre that suggests that the Laceys can make the land produce. James doesn't make fun of her statements, but accepts them as fact. James tells her that rather than trying to exorcise her dreams and her gift, she should cherish them. She wants to thank him but the moment passes. Julia doesn't forget James' words and hold on to them in the following weeks.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

Julia was told by both Ralph and Clary that she should stand up for herself and embrace her heritage, but it's James who finally gets her attention with that same advice. There's no real reason that James' words carry more weight than that of Ralph, though it seems reasonable that Julia might have ignored Clary's advice by thinking that the girl simply didn't understand Julia's role on Wideacre.

It takes Julia no time at all to figure out that she's a country girl thrown into the Bath society. Still, the years of Celia's teachings have paid off, and she doesn't embarrass herself. The times spent with Dr. Phillips are a negative point for Julia. She says that she feels that she's giving herself away and betraying Wideacre as she tells the details of her dreams. Julia admits that Dr. Phillips is skilled at making her give up information that she had intended to keep to herself, but doubts the overall good it's doing her. Julia

also hates the hot water springs, saying that she longs for the crisp, cool water of Wideacre streams.



Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

Celia takes ill and leaves a party early, allowing James to escort Julia home. Outside, they meet a linkboy - a child with a torch who will light their way for a small fee. Julia immediately says that she plans to take the boy home, and he answers, "to Wideacre?" The child is Jimmy Dart, one of the six who were taken from the Acre by the slavers. Julia did not recognize him as an Acre child but it was her sight that prompted her declaration. Jimmy tells of the fate of the others - that two died, the mill closed and the remaining four are now living on the streets in Bath. Julia pledges to take them all home and gives him a bit of money to help feed the children until she can arrange transportation. James isn't appalled at his first-hand glimpse of her gift, but tells Julia only that the children are fortunate that she has such a gift. The next day, Julia and James go to the hovel where the children live. Julia has taken money to give them, but is robbed along the way. So, James gives them some money and instructs them that they aren't to buy liquor - which the children say helps them stay warm. A child called Rosie Dench tells Julia that she can't leave until she finishes her work on a pair of gloves. She explains that a shopkeeper sells her the material, she does the embroidery work, and the shopkeeper gives her a small amount for the work. Julia and James arrange for the children to move to a better inn, and then Julia goes to the shopkeeper to explain that Rosie will be leaving town without finishing her current project. Julia returns the material, and the shopkeeper says that the child owes her money. With customers in the shop, Julia angrily tells them that the shopkeeper is having dirty, diseased children do that work and makes a scene until the shopkeeper is anxious to wipe off the debt. When Julia and James return to the carriage, Julia is angry that James didn't help her but James explains that he wanted to see what Julia was made of. Convinced that she's not a cowardly child, he asks her to marry him, and she says yes.

Julia finds that her mother's illness is worse and calls for a doctor. James and Julia discuss where they'll live, and James agrees to build a house at Wideacre. James and Julia spend much time together though Julia sits for hours with her mother. James agrees to pour whatever money is necessary into Wideacre to make it a proper estate and even offers to buy out Richard.

With Richard's encouragement, both Marianne and Julia end their relationship with Dr. Phillips. John arrives to take the ailing Celia home, and Julia arranges for the children to travel at the same time. She then discovers that an older girl, named Julie, isn't going. Julie says that she's become a prostitute and that she won't fit in at home. She then tells Julia that men like James have paid for her services, and Julia discovers that James has also been with prostitutes.



Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

Julia has truly been raised as a country child and knows little of the ways nor the evils of the big city. She's appalled at the living conditions of the poor of Bath and is anxious to do whatever is necessary to get the Acre children home. When she discovers that Julie has been selling her body, she's even more appalled. Julie says that she first did it to buy food for the entire band of children and that she now simply knows nothing else. It's Julie who points out to Julia that James is well over twenty-years-old and that there's no way he hasn't lain with women - likely prostitutes, such as herself. James tries to explain himself to Julia but doesn't deny the charge. He says only that it's society's way of looking at things that tends to make men think that it's natural to seek sexual relief. He says that he realizes that things are different for women and begs Julia to understand.

Julia has put James on a pedestal and doesn't know what to do now that she realizes that he's only human. He's given her strength and courage to face her future, and she wants him to continue being her hero. She can't stand the thought that he's not perfect and is tempted to end their relationship. Though she'll take some time, she'll eventually realize that she loves him despite his shortcomings and that she wants to marry him.



Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

Julia and John clash when she tells him that she's ended her sessions with Dr. Phillips. John says that he and Celia agreed that Julia was not to return to Wideacre unless Dr. Phillips cured her of her "delusions." Faced with the immediate decision, Celia says that "Julia is my daughter, raised by me," and that she won't force her to stay.

As they are leaving, James appears, begging Julia's forgiveness. James tells Julia that she should call for him if she needs him at all, and she's suddenly certain that she will call for him and that he won't be able to respond. Later, Julia says that she has the land, and James has the money to further their plans for Wideacre. It should be a perfect match - except that she fears it will never come to pass.

When they arrive at the dower house, they discover that John has completely redecorated, making the house appealing and comfortable. Julia expects to be taken over by Beatrice again, but it doesn't happen. She puts it down to being at peace with herself. Julia admits that her loved ones wanted her changed in Bath, and that she was - but the changes are not what had been expected.

When Julia meets Richard, he's angry about her betrothal. He says that she is his and that she shouldn't have planned to marry someone else. Julia is largely unrepentant, saying that Richard will understand when he meets someone to truly love.

Julia and Ralph talk at length about the situation on Wideacre and around the countryside. Ralph predicts that Julia will someday give the land of Wideacre to the people of the village, and she says they won't know how to care for the land. Julia learns that there's to be a holiday - Maying, it's called. The young people will slip out to the downs before daybreak and will bring the spring back to the village. They expect to make Julia their May Queen, and Julia agrees. Julia is helping start the farming season by sowing corn when Richard arrives. She rushes to him for a full-fledged, ardent kiss. Richard tells Julia that he is waiting for her and that she is his, and though she knows it's wrong, she does nothing. Over the coming days, Richard sees Julia's new-found confidence and is more determined than ever.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

Julia has John's assurance that she can go back to Wideacre, but doesn't stop with that. She tells him that she has a gift and that he must accept it. John agrees, until there's a better explanation. It's a sign of Julia's emerging independence and confidence that she's not simply grateful that she's going home.

Julia is so much in tune with the land that she simply loses herself whenever she's there. She sometimes hears Beatrice calling to her, though not since her return from



Bath. She says that she hears the heartbeat of the land and that it soothes and mesmerizes her. When Richard arrives during the first of the planting days - Julia's birthday, just for luck - Julia is in that very state. She rushes to Richard of her own accord, though she's not at all conscious of doing so. It's the land that so often guides and directs Julia, and she's incapable of severing that connection.

Richard's seeming acceptance of Julia's engagement is short-lived, and he's determined to have her for his own. It's typical of Richard that he never wanted her during the years of her self-sacrificing love for him, but now that she's engaged to someone else, he's playing the jilted lover.



Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

Julia and Richard plan to go riding on a Sunday afternoon. Celia and John are struck by her resemblance to Beatrice, though Celia puts it down to the fact that Beatrice had a riding habit of the exact same color. John teases Julia to smooth over the moment, and she leaves the house bound for the village. Richard says that he loves Julia and asks if she loves him. She says that she loves him only as a cousin. Richard plays the part of the jilted lover, saying that Julia has broken his heart. Julia is sad that she hurt him but stands her ground on her betrothal. Richard then pretends to accept her decision once again, saying that he's jealous but is willing to have her be happy.

The two happen upon Ralph with his goshawk. Ralph allows Richard to hold the bird but the hawk begins flapping in an effort to get away from Richard. Richard jerks on the leash, breaking both the bird's legs, and Ralph has to kill the animal. Ralph asks Richard, "what ails you?" Then Ralph says that animals don't like Richard. He turns to Julia, says that she has The Sight, and asks what she sees in Richard. She sees "awful danger and fear and horror," but says only that she sees nothing and leaves. Ralph knows otherwise, and it's some time before things are back to normal between Ralph and Julia. James is gone away to Oxford for a time but returns home in a seeming good humor.

Richard accompanies Julia to the Maying, and it's there that Julia learns that Clary and her betrothed, Matthew Merry, have argued. Julia is suddenly more concerned for Clary's life but Clary leaves the festivities.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

As soon as they are out for their ride, Richard accuses Julia of working only to become the Acre favorite. Though Julia denies it and truly has the best interests of the estate at heart, she herself was jealous when she was away, and Richard was working daily on the estate.

Julia's newfound confidence isn't yet complete, and she suddenly becomes concerned that it might not be ladylike to attend the Maying with the young people of the village. She asks Richard and Ralph. Richard says he'll accompany her, and Ralph says that she should ask her mother. When Julia arrives, she discovers her best friend, Clary, has had an argument with Matthew. The two have been in love since they were children. Matthew once walked all night with one of Clary's young siblings who was ill. On this day, Clary tells Julia that Matthew has written some poems and that someone has bought them for printing. What made Clary angry is that they've used the fact that Matthew was once considered "simple" as a selling point. While Matthew's only fault is that he stutters, he's willing to allow that in order to make the money from the sale of the



poetry. Clary is angry that he would allow his desire for money to override his pride. It's likely that Matthew recalls the days of hunger in the village and knows that he and Clary will soon marry, making him responsible for a family. Clary plans to take two of her siblings into her home, lessening the strain on her own parents but increasing the responsibility for herself and Matthew. Julia isn't able to reassure Clary, but is worried about her friend's safety. They part with Clary's promise to meet Julia later that day.



Chapters 21 and 22

Chapters 21 and 22 Summary

Julia receives a letter from James on the day of the Maying, telling her that he'll have sufficient money to build a great house. Julia rides to Wideacre Hall, where work is progressing on the house James is overseeing. Julia is in a dream state when she realizes that Richard is kissing her and is on top of her. The rape is brutal and fast with Richard suddenly running away and leaving Julia bleeding and with a broken wrist. She struggles to her feet and encounters Jem who says that Sea Mist returned home with her saddle askew, prompting a search for Julia. When she arrives at the house, Richard meets her, helping her from her horse and silently squeezing her when Celia asks what happened. Julia allows them to believe that she was thrown and doesn't tell about the rape.

That night, Ralph informs Julia that Clary is missing. Julia insists that something has happened to her friend. Ralph agrees to take a search party out the next day, reminding Julia that it's a holiday and that they were all to be off work. Julia already knows that Clary is dead before they find her the next day, cradled in Matthew's arms. Matthew is incoherent, finally saying that Clary's death was his own fault and signing a confession. He's put in prison and hangs himself.

Meanwhile, Julia is faced with the problem of telling James that she isn't a virgin. She can't decide what to say without implicating Richard or beginning a string of lies. Julia sends word for James to meet her at Midhurst, a nearby town, but James never shows up. When Julia leaves the inn, Richard is waiting outside. Julia will later learn that he intercepted James and sent him away.

Chapters 21 and 22 Analysis

Ralph says to Julia that she must return to the land, and that the people of the Acre know that she can name the killer using her Sight. Julia doesn't deny the ability, but says she dreams of the killer and doesn't dare look at his face, earning Ralph's disdain for her lack of courage. He then tells Julia to merely tell him the name and that he'll do the rest, "Then you'll be the squire in very truth." That statement indicates that Ralph knows that Richard is the killer and that his arrest would put Julia at the helm of Wideacre.

Julia is battling for control. She knows that as a young lady of the gentry, she should bow to the men in the family. As heir to Wideacre, she wants to do what's best for the village, the land and the people. That war continues to rage within Julia so that even when she sees Richard's faults, she can't do anything about them.

The family attends Clary's funeral, and Julia sees that Richard is smiling as they're in the church. She says that his thoughts must have been elsewhere, but it's evident that



Richard is thinking of his role in Clary's death and where his plans are headed. Meanwhile, Matthew Merry is buried at the corner of the church as he's a suicide and can't be buried within the cemetery's sacred grounds. It's only then that Julia learns that the plot of ground, called Beatrice's corner, is home to two other graves that are a testament of Beatrice's reign over Wideacre.



Chapters 23 and 24

Chapters 23 and 24 Summary

Julia continues to hope for word from James until Richard says that he sent James all the letters James had written Julia. It's then that Richard admits that he intercepted James the day he was to have met Julia and sent him away with the information that Julia and Richard are now engaged. Richard tells Julia that without her virginity, she has no hope of finding a husband.

The Wideacre growing season is off to an excellent start, and Julia says the only sad points were Ralph and herself. When someone suggests that it's Julia who made the crop grow, she dismisses it, though she confides in her mother that she likes the idea of the Laceys making the land fertile. Julia herself is under the weather, eating little and feeling constantly ill. When Celia asks what's wrong, Julia tells her that she's not going to marry James. She says that she discovered that he'd been unchaste, and that he'd had sex with Julie, the Acre child who remained in Bath. Julia says that she's not certain James would have stopped those habits once they were married.

Julia realizes that she's pregnant and, when her mother suggests a holiday, she asks to visit Richard at Oxford. Once there, she tells him and sees that he's immediately proud of himself. He quickly hides it, asking what she plans to do about it. Julia stands up to Richard, saying that she won't tolerate his teasing, that he's to say whether he'll help her or not because without his help she plans to move to the Acre and raise the child alone. Richard assures her that he's always loved her and will marry her as soon as possible. Richard is granted a brief leave from school, and he and Julia slip away to be married by a drunk captain who agrees to falsify the records. Richard returns to school, and Julia continues her charade at Wideacre.

Chapters 23 and 24 Analysis

As is typical of abusers, Richard continues to tell Julia that the rape is her fault, that she invited it, and that no one will believe her if she says otherwise. Julia tells Richard that she would never have betrayed him, and it seems likely that he would believe that based on her past. However, Richard is always angry at anything Julia has or accomplishes and seems not to trust her devotion to him, probably because he has no loyalty for her.

Richard seems intent on making Julia suffer when she tells him she's expecting his child. Despite his own joy, he won't show that to the woman he continually professes to love. It's another sign of Julia's own confidence in herself that she tells him to say yes or no and to stop toying with her. Richard then agrees as if he'd only been kindly teasing. The wedding is horrible, the ship filthy, and the captain who performed the ceremony drunk and lewd. As they head home, Richard tells Julia that he's written to James,



informing him of their marriage. Julia knows that Richard would have been less than kind with the announcement and is angry because of it. When Richard points out that their lives have turned out exactly as they planned as children, Julia is silent. She does tell him that she won't stop working the land, even though she realizes that he is squire.

Julia has considered what the pregnancy means to her - that she won't be marrying James nor allowed another opportunity at happiness in marriage. More than that, she's concerned about the impact on her mother and grandmother.



Chapters 25 and 26

Chapters 25 and 26 Summary

As Julia gets past her morning sickness, she encounters Ralph in the village one day. He asks what's wrong with her and asks if she's "with child." She says no but Ralph says that if she were, there'd be no need to rush off into marriage, that there are ways to get rid of a baby. He says an old Gypsy woman knows how to accomplish that and says that if a young friend of his wanted, he'd ride up that day. Julia thanks him but says there's no need. That night, Julia dreams of a Gypsy woman walking away with a cart. In the dream, Julia yells something but can't tell what it is that she says.

It's time for the harvest, and Julia goes to the field on the day of the reaping. One of the children begs for a ribbon off Julia's riding habit, and it's used to make the corn doll - part of the end-of-season festivities. Each day, the harvest continues until the fields are complete with the exception of one small section. Richard arrives as the harvesting is complete. Julia, John, Richard and Celia are on hand for the final moments - a game challenging the abilities of those with sickles. Julia is panicked, knowing that there's going to be a revelation that she won't like. Julia urges her family to leave, but they want to stay for the final results. When Jimmy Dart's sickle catches the straw doll adorned with Julia's ribbon, he takes the doll to Julia. She immediately turns red with shame. She looks down at the doll and discovers that the belly of the doll is swollen as if pregnant. John and Celia immediately see the doll, and John orders Julia and Richard to go directly home. Julia doesn't blame the doll maker, saying that it's magic that had simply "welled up."

At home, John feels Julia's abdomen and confirms that she's pregnant. Richard admits that he's the father. It's then that John tells them that Beatrice was not only Richard's mother, but was also Julia's birth mother. He says that both children were the result of an incestuous relationship between Beatrice and Harry, that Beatrice had given the older child - Julia - to Celia to raise and that Harry was away at the time and had never known. When Beatrice was pregnant a second time, John had married her and claimed that child - Richard - as his own. John says the only solution is to annul the marriage, sell Wideacre and separate Richard and Julia. Julia agrees, and John and Celia leave immediately on the way to have the marriage annulled.

Chapters 25 and 26 Analysis

Julia's life, as she deals with her early stages of pregnancy, is horrible. She is ill but unable to tell anyone about her condition. She also feels very alone and misses Clary, who knows more about childbirth from seeing her mother go through it many times. It's not until Julia has a talk with Ralph in the village that she realizes that she could have had some help with her situation. When Ralph tells her that there are ways to deal with an unwanted pregnancy, Julia says there's no need - not because she's not expecting a



child but because she's already married to Richard. It seems that Julia must be hoping against hope that she won't have to kill the child. Otherwise, she could simply end the pregnancy even though she's already married to Richard.

It's interesting to note that Julia is so appalled by the revelation that she and Richard are siblings that she's perfectly willing to sell Wideacre. Her deep love for the land is simply not enough to make up for the amoral deed that she's unknowingly participated in.

Julia is devastated by all the things she's learned but it seems she's most hurt by the fact that the woman she's always known as mama isn't really her mother. Julia wants to talk to Celia before she and John leave the house but they don't say anything to each other. Celia seems to be in shock, and Julia will later remember that they parted without saying anything, and with no love spoken between them.



Chapters 27 and 28

Chapters 27 and 28 Summary

John and Celia are killed on the road, Celia's pink pearls and their cash taken. Richard tells Julia's grandmother that they were married and demands that Julia return to the dower house with him.

Richard takes over immediately following the funerals. He begins selling wheat at the commercial markets, ignoring the deal that had been made with the villagers to retain enough for the people of the Acre. Ralph hides some wheat. Richard demands of Julia the location, but she doesn't know. Richard cares only for the baby and Julia uses that, making demands of him so that she won't be concerned, and the baby will grow healthy.

Julia tries to argue with Richard, saying that they can't live together now that they know they are siblings. Richard won't give in. Julia's Grandmamma takes over ensuring that Julia isn't shunned because of the quick marriage. Because of the death of her mother, Julia is saved from some of the society obligations but Grandmamma says that it's necessary for Julia to meet her neighbors with her head up.

Richard has Ralph arrested, claiming that he'd been involved in bread riots of years before. Julia misses her mother greatly and can't confide her fears and the truth with anyone. She sends for Jimmy Dart, asking him to take a letter to James. When Jimmy doesn't return, she discovers that he was arrested for being a vagrant. Rosie Dench and others are evicted by James, and Julia is unable to do anything about it. Several days later, Julia receives a letter. She finds that it's her own letter to James, though it's been torn to bits and put in another envelope. Richard had intercepted her attempt and tells Julia that she must learn her place.

Julia is quiet and remains inside, doing little. One night, when they are expecting company, Richard commands that Julia dress up. He then presents her with her mother's pink pearls that had been stolen during her murder. It's then that she realizes that Richard killed Celia, John and Jem, the groomsmen. Richard later tries to take Julia sexually but "doesn't know how to begin" when Julia doesn't resist. Instead, he begins confessing things, such as the fact that he was the one who cut Scheherazade, his horse. Julia picks it up, saying that she saw the animals who didn't like him. She says that she knows he was simply scared of the sheep, the horse and the other animals.

Chapters 27 and 28 Analysis

It's that teaching of Julia's Grandmamma and her mother, Celia, that pushes Julia into believing she has to obey Richard. She has always wanted to please those women and has trusted their judgment. It seems that Julia can't reconcile the fact that she shouldn't be Richard's wife because of their relationship with the requirement for women of the day to obey their husbands without question.



Richard continues to take great pride in hurting Julia, both physically and emotionally. Julia is finally learning to stand up for herself and is actually pushing back against Richard's domineering ways. In some cases, Julia seems to be learning from Richard, pushing whatever buttons it takes to make him angry or apprehensive. As children, Julia would never have mentioned that Richard was afraid of animals, but now she points it out. She remains generally quiet and reserved, but seems no longer afraid of Richard. Instead, she's resigned to her fate. It seems that Julia has simply accepted her situation. She often says that she invited Richard's rape and that she brought on the pregnancy and the marriage. What doesn't ring true is that she discovers Richard is a murderer and still doesn't go to anyone for help, including the authorities. However, given that Julia's own Grandmamma tells her that she must return to Richard's house after Celia's death, it's evident that Julia believes she won't find anyone willing to help.



Chapters 29, 30 and 31

Chapters 29, 30 and 31 Summary

A village woman, Mrs. Tyacke, tells Julia that things have gone wrong in the village. Julia points out that other places manage and that she doesn't understand why there's always a problem in Wideacre. Julia learns that Ralph has escaped the prison, and it frightens Richard that Ralph might be returning to Wideacre to exact his revenge. Julia says that there's no way, and that Ralph would be leaving the country. Richard insists that Julia offer a reward in the village for Ralph's capture. She does so, stopping briefly to talk with Matthew Merry's grandmother. Mrs. Merry says that the entire village believes Julia deserves better than Richard, and Julia says that she hates him. Mrs. Merry tells Julia that she doesn't need to worry, that Ralph is on his way home. Julia later finds that George, Richard's groomsman, tells her every move to Richard. Julia admits that she's afraid of dying in childbirth.

Richard goes so far as to have soldiers come to Wideacre in an effort to catch Ralph. Julia and Richard argue, and Julia goads him into attacking her. She thinks only that she's promised there'll be no other ruler in Wideacre and that her death and that of her child will keep her promise. Richard then tells Julia that he killed Clary and gives the details of his murder of Celia and John, and is about to kill Julia when she goes into labor. Alone in her room, she delivers a baby girl. She calls her Sarah. Julia then sneaks down the stairs, past Richard's study and into the night. She plans to drown the child, just as she's dreamed but she sees an apparition and follows it across the river to the other side where a Gypsy woman is waiting. Julia hands Sarah over. The woman takes her without a word as the wagons pull out of their camp. Julia cries out that the baby's name is Sarah.

Julia returns home to find that Richard is in the study and that Ralph has a knife at his throat. Julia closes the door so that no one can see in the room and says for Ralph to "kill him." The book ends with Julia's letter to James. She writes that she's dying of a fever and asks James for a final favor. She says that she wants him to retrieve Sarah and to return her to Wideacre. She also says that she named James as Sarah's guardian until she is of age.

Chapters 29, 30 and 31 Analysis

It's interesting to note that Julia is still loved in the village even after all that's happened and after Richard's treachery. The village people seem to realize that Julia's love of the land overrides all her other emotions. Julia has pledged that there won't be another squire to rule over Wideacre, but seems to change her mind once the child is born.

Julia feels an immediate connection with her daughter, Sarah. Though she's spoken openly about her vow not to have another squire over Wideacre, she doesn't want to



give up the child. She's dreamed often of heading toward the river with the child with the intention of drowning the baby "like an inbred puppy." Yet when the time comes, she's obviously torn between her love of the baby and her love of Wideacre. She finds a way out of the situation by handing the child off to the Gypsy woman. Once Ralph is back at Wideacre, Julia suddenly realizes that she again had an option other than to give the child away. It's then that she calls on James, knowing instinctively that James will do as she asks.



Characters

Julia Lacey

Julia Lacey grew up believing she was the daughter of Harry Lacey, squire of Wideacre, and his wife Celia, and that Richard was her cousin. She greatly resembles Harry's sister, Beatrice. As is later revealed, Julia is actually the daughter of Harry and Beatrice. The man she knows as "cousin" Richard is actually her own brother, also the child of Harry and Beatrice. Julia has inherited Beatrice's love of the land and her dedication for Wideacre. She also has "The Sight," the ability to see and dream things that will come true. As soon as Celia recognizes that gift, she fears that Julia will go down the same path of destruction as Beatrice. It's Celia's brother-in-law, Beatrice's husband, "Uncle John," who arranges for Julia to see a doctor specializing in women's nervous disorders. While there, Julia is reluctant to give up her dreams. She feels that telling her dreams makes them less real and fears that she'll completely lose touch with Wideacre. She meets a young man, falls in love and agrees to marry him while in Bath. Richard, who hopes to have Wideacre all for himself, rapes Julia and breaks up her engagement.

When Julia finds that she is pregnant, she is suddenly less afraid of Richard and his temper tantrums. She stands up for herself more and resolves that she'll kill the child before she allows any more Laceys to be born who might wrongly rule over Wideacre. As a child, Julia is willing to do whatever is necessary to keep Richard's affection. She gives up things that she wants for herself in order to make Richard happy. Despite her efforts, Richard is jealous of everything Julia receives or accomplishes. When she makes friends with the children of the village, Richard says that Julia is only trying to take the Wideacre subjects' loyalty from him. Julia will learn many lessons, but most of them come to her the hard way - by making costly mistakes. She learns after she's married to Richard, that there were ways to eliminate her pregnancy but doesn't have the heart to kill the baby by the time she is given that information. She also feels that she is completely alone in her situation - pregnant out of wedlock - but later discovers that Ralph Megson would certainly have come to her aid.

Richard McAdams

Richard grows up in the household of the woman he calls "mother-aunt" with the girl he believes is his cousin, Julia. His father, John, is away in India, trying to save enough money to restore the estate Wideacre. Richard and Julia are to be joint heirs to that estate. When Julia goes away to Bath and becomes engaged, Richard is angry as he now will inherit only half the estate. Richard doesn't seem to want Julia for herself but wants her share of Wideacre. He catches her alone one day and rapes her. Then, he intercepts Julia's betrothed and sends him away. When Julia discovers that she's pregnant, she and Richard sneak away and are married, only then discovering that they are brother and sister. When the man who had claimed Richard as his one son and the



woman who had raised both Julia and Richard leave for London to have the marriage annulled, Richard catches up to them and murders them.

Richard's madness is recognized first by animals. He is terrified of the horse he's given as a child and eventually cuts the animal's tendons in order to avoid riding. Once, he's feeding sheep when the entire flock mobs him. Julia would later look upon those incidents as warning signs she doesn't recognize until it's too late. As a child, Richard is charming when it suits him. Other times, he is controlling, and Julia spends most of her life trying to please him. As an adult, Richard's controlling nature is more severe, often resulting in violence. When one of Julia's friends sees Richard raping Julia, Richard chases her down, strangles her and throws her body in the river. Richard will eventually die at the hands of the same man who killed his mother, Beatrice. Ralph Megson asks Julia what he should do with Richard, and Julia says to kill him.

Celia Lacey

The woman who raised Julia as her own and served also as a surrogate mother to Richard. She was a wealthy young woman. Her own mother and stepfather live nearby, providing at least some comforts. Celia is every bit the gentle lady and feels that she has failed in trying to keep Julia an "indoor girl." Celia is most at home in Bath, among the people of society, though she never complains of the hardships her simple country life have brought. She was married to Harry Lacey, and Julia is actually the daughter of Harry and his sister, Beatrice. Celia will later say that Harry didn't know Julia was Beatrice's child, that he was away during the time of her pregnancy and birth. When someone says that Julia resembles Beatrice, Celia insists that she raised Julia as her own - a clue to the reader that Julia is not her own child. Celia is in love with her brother-in-law John, though they remain circumspect in public. Celia seems at a complete loss when she and John tell Julia and Richard of the secret of their heritage, and that the two are also brother and sister.

Ralph Megson

Ralph is first introduced to Julia and Richard when Uncle John hires him to be the new overseer of Wideacre. He tells John that he lived in the village, but moved away as a small child. There's an immediate connection between Ralph and Julia, and she realizes that she's dreamed of him. Ralph and Julia become very close, though she says that she can't always define their relationship. In reality, he's the person who killed Beatrice, burned down the Wideacre estate and became known as the Culler. He is immediately welcomed into the village as a returning hero, because he had sent money home over the years away, when he worked as a smuggler. Richard uses his past as a smuggler to have him arrested. When Ralph escapes prison, Richard is afraid though Julia is certain he won't be returning to Wideacre. He does return, and it's Ralph who kills Richard on Julia's command.



Uncle John McAdams

Uncle John is the man who claimed to be Richard's father throughout the years. Uncle John leaves Wideacre after the villagers burn the house, kill Beatrice and cause the death of her brother Harry, in an attempt to raise enough money to put the estate back to rights. He succeeds, and it's John's money that provides the basis for farming supplies to put the estate back on a money-making level. It's also Uncle John who tells Richard and Julia that they are actually brother and sister, and that he is not Richard's father but that both children were born of an incestuous relationship.

Clary Dench

Clary is the niece of the groomsman and Julia's best friend. It's Clary who spends long summer days on Wideacre with Julia and who tells Julia of the many legends and rumors - including the fact that either Julia or Richard will be the favored child who has "The Sight," inherited from Beatrice. Julia foresees Clary's death but is unable to tell when Clary dies, just as Julia predicts, at the hand of Richard.

Dench, the Groom

Dench is the groom for Julia's grandfather. It's Dench who is driving Julia home when they discover Richard's horse, Sally, with her saddle askew and Richard nowhere to be seen. Dench has Julia ride Sally to the village to ask for help searching for Richard. Richard is furious and carefully plants the idea with Julia's mother that Dench could have caused Julia's death. Dench is fired from his position and is later accused of having slashed Sally's tendons, prompting the village smithy to put her down. Julia later encounters Dench but lies to her uncle, providing a false name for the man to protect him.

James Fortescue

James is Marianne's brother and the man Julia is engaged to marry. When Julia first meets him, he amazes her when her sister refers to Dr. Phillips and James says, "Quack," repeatedly. James is with Julia when she meets Jimmy Dart, a boy who grew up in Wideacre but was enslaved as a child. Though she doesn't know Jimmy, she suddenly knows that she'll take him home with her. James easily accepts that she has "The Sight" and that he's just seen an example of it. James believes it to be a gift and encourages Julia to stop her sessions with Dr. Phillips if she doesn't think they're working, which she does. He watches Julia as she encounters a shop owner who insists that one of the Wideacre children owes her money, only to have Julia stand up to her in front of customers. Immediately after that encounter, James asks Julia to marry him, and she accepts. James is later encountered by Richard who sends him away, returns letters he'd written to Julia and informs her that she is to marry Richard.



Marianne Fortescue

Marianne is the young woman Julia sees leaving Dr. Phillips' office. Julia will later learn that Marianne has an eating disorder. Marianne and Julia eventually go to see Dr. Phillips together, both declaring that they aren't benefiting from his treatment and ending their sessions. It's Marianne who is handed the task of overseeing Julia and James as they are courting while Julia's mother is ill. She teasingly tells them that if they're going to hold hands while she watches, she might as well not be there.

Jimmy Dart

Jimmy is one of the surviving children taken from Acre and forced to work in a mill until it closed. Jimmy approaches Julia on the street in Bath, offering to light her way home. She impulsively says that she'll take him home and then discovers he's from Acre. Jimmy, along with Rosie Dench, Nat Brewer and a girl named Julie are taken under Julia's care and sent home. Julie does not return to Acre, though the other three do.

Dr. Phillips

Dr. Phillips is a friend of Uncle John and the doctor who is going to cure Julia of her dreams. Julia hates him on sight and can barely keep from laughing at him when she discovers he can't pronounce the letter, "r." Rules and reason becomes "wules and weason." As Julia begins her sessions with Dr. Phillips, that speech impediment seems threatening.

Dr. Pearce

Dr. Pearce is the village parson who teaches Richard. Dr. Pearce comes outside the day the lightening hit the church spire when Julia is urging the people to leave the houses that are to be hit and to tear down the next two in order to have a fire break. Dr. Pearce seems to want to intervene but Ralph Megson heads him off.

Mrs. Green

Mrs. Green is the woman in the village who first says that she won't help search for Richard, but after Julia's pleas for help, gives Julia some precious medicine - laudanum - for Richard's pain.



Objects/Places

Wideacre

Wideacre is the estate of Julia's home. Julia claims to feel the heartbeat of Wideacre. As John and Julia prepare to begin work on the estate, they offer the villagers a portion of the profits rather than hourly wages. The villagers agree, but then Richard backs out on the deal.

Acre

The Acre is the village of the Wideacre estate.

India

India is where Uncle John spent the years away from Wideacre making his fortune to restore the property.

Chichester

Chichester is a town near Wideacre. Julia and her mother sometimes go to Chichester to church, and Uncle John goes there to consult with the Wideacre attorneys.

12 Gay Street

12 Gay Street is the house where Julia and her mother rent rooms during their stay in Bath .

Royal Crescent

Royal Crescent is the neighborhood where Dr. Phillips has his home and office.

Bath

Bath is the resort city built around hot springs, and Julia's mother thinks the hot water is medicinal. She insists that they each drink three glasses daily. Julia is repulsed by the naturally hot water and says it makes her long for Wideacre.



Sussex

Wideacre is located in Sussex

Linkboy

A Linkboy is a child who carries a torch to light the way for the rich at night on the city streets, usually for a penny.

The Fenny

The Fenny is the river that flows through Wideacre. Julia often dreams of drowning her baby in the Fenny, and it's from that river that Clary Dench's body is pulled.



Themes

Love

Julia's love for her family and her land are an overriding theme found throughout the book. As a child, Julia knows every inch of the estate and can feel the heartbeat of the land and the seasons. She knows when each flower will begin to bloom and where to plant flowers in her own flower garden. She instinctively knows when it's time to plant and where, even though she's had no formal training on those subjects. It's simply that Julia is connected to the land - simple to say but difficult for some to accept and understand. Julia isn't the first to love the land in this way. Her biological mother, Beatrice, also had that love for Wideacre, and the estate flourished under her care. Though it's not thoroughly explained in this book, Beatrice's greed overcame her love of the land and led to the destruction of Wideacre Hall and her own murder. As Julia begins to mature, and the estate is again worked as a farming enterprise, Julia begins to understand that she's gifted in that respect.

During her brief foray into Bath, Julia is happy with her opportunity to make new friends but anxious to be home to her beloved Wideacre. It's not only Julia who recognizes that love of the land in herself - others recognize it in her. Even when things have turned bad for Wideacre under Richard's rule, the people of the village seem to know that Julia loves the land and has their interests at heart. Julia's love of her land is rivaled only by her love of family. She seeks to make her mother and Richard proud of her as a child, giving up the things she wants for herself to do so. She constantly says that it's Richard who is destined to inherit Wideacre and that he's the one who'll eventually show the signs of being the "favored child," though Julia is already showing those signs. Even Julia's love for her newborn daughter isn't quite as strong as her love for the land. Julia hands the child over to a Gypsy woman in order that Wideacre be free of the Lacey rule.

Supernatural Power

There are those who consider that Beatrice was a witch and that Julia, as the child who is heir to Beatrice's "gift's," will also be a witch. In this case, the "witch" is not the evil crone who is prone to casting evil spells, but is a benevolent being who oversees the land. Julia may deny that she has those gifts at various times, but in her heart, she knows that it's true. It seems that she's seeking to please her mother when she tells a village man that she had nothing to do with the successful harvest that's near. Later, she confesses to her mother that she likes the idea, though she continues to say that it's not true.

Julia's power is in various forms. She not only has an affinity with the land that makes her a natural farmer with knowledge that makes the farming successful, she also has "The Sight." This is the ability to foresee the future or the truth of a matter. There are several examples of this throughout the story. Julia foresees Clary's death many years



before it comes to pass. She childishly believes that Clary's death can be prevented if she simply stays away from the river when she's alone. Julia doesn't realize that she's foreseen her friend's murder and that there's nothing Clary can do to prevent it. The Sight is different but just as accurate when Julia meets Jimmy Dart in Bath. Without knowing why, she tells him that she's taking him home and then discovers that he's an Acre child, taken when he was young. Another of Julia's gifts is her ability to "dream true." In some cases, she dreams of the past and knows what Beatrice saw and felt those many years ago. In other cases, she foretells the future. In the case of the village church being struck by lightning, Julia takes action in order to save lives. In other cases - that she'll be attempting to drown her own child in the river, for example - she seems unable to take any steps to change the events. Though Julia's powers are at the heart of the story, it seems likely that Ralph Megson also has some ability to see into the hearts of others, and he seems to know that Julia has dreamed of him.

Power Over Others

The fact that one person can have power over others is a central theme of this story but also of the societal bounds of the day. There were historically riots over the cost of bread and unfairness to the workers as the poor looked for ways to change their stations in life. Though Julia and her mother don't seek to make their lives on the backs of their laborers, there is no doubt that the Lacey's have done so in the past. Even with Julia's inherent kindness, she still has that power and at least sometimes realizes it. As a young child, she suddenly sees the children of the Acre as the very poor. She'd considered herself poor until she saw that those children had little to eat and that starvation was common.

Julia later realizes that she'll be taking over some of the duties of master of the estate, and she's nervous as she heads out for her first task - overseeing the planting of an apple orchard. When Jem the groom hooks up the buggy still dressed in his pajamas, Julia scolds him. Then she says that's the first time she's done so and asks if she did okay. Jem laughingly says that she's done okay. Clary also talks of Julia's position as gentry. It's a joke between them but both are aware that it's actually true. It's Richard who wields the power and is glad to have and use that power. Richard forces others to bend to his will and takes whatever he wants. Julia is more inclined to seek the happiness of others first, though both have equal power over the people of Wideacre.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in first person from Julia Lacey's point of view. This is likely the only way the novel would have worked. Knowing the thoughts and dreams of Julia is vital to the story, because Julia's dreams are a basic sub-plot of the story. Without that first-hand knowledge, the reader would have lost an important element of the story. It's also vital that the reader not know the thoughts of other characters. For example, Julia's mother, Celia, knows the horrible truth about Julia's heritage as well as Richard's. Often, someone would mention that Julia was very like Beatrice, and Celia would say that Julia might resemble Beatrice but that she was raised as Celia's child. While the wording is a clue into what will be revealed about Julia's heritage, it's not absolutely evident that Julia is not Celia's biological child.

Setting

The novel is set in Sussex, England, in the latter part of the 1770s. The estate is called Wideacre, and the village is called the Acre. There's a river nearby called the Fenny and nearby towns called Midhurst and Chichester. Wideacre is a farming estate consisting of fields, "downs" and lands for animals. Julia has a connection with the land and is anxious to stay near it. When she has a series of dreams, she's sent to Bath to recuperate, be introduced to society and to see a doctor who specializes in women's nervous disorders. Bath is a sprawling city. There's a series of hot springs in the city, and many people feel those have healing powers. Julia is repulsed by the hot water and longs for the cool, crisp water of Wideacre. The city also has slums where the very poor live. It's there that Julia discovers four children of Wideacre living in squalor, until she sends them home to the Acre.

Language and Meaning

The book is written in easy-to-follow language though there are some lapses into the English dialect of the day. As a rule, the people of the village speak much less formally than those of the city of Bath and the gentry. There are some terms that may not be immediately familiar, though their meaning is typically easily discerned. For example, Julia has The Sight. It's simply the ability to tell the future, and Julia does foretell of a terrible fire in the village and of Clary's death, as well as her attempts to drown her own child.

Dreams are sometimes open for interpretation, though the majority of the story is well-explained. For the most part, details are not left for the reader to interpret but are explained either during the dream or by Julia as she considers them later.



The reference to the "favored child" is a village story. Though Julia insists that Richard is that favored child, it's actually Julia who demonstrates her love of the land and her ability to foretell the future. The village story goes that one of the children - either Julia or Richard - will have Beatrice's ability of "The Sight" and her almost supernatural power to make things grow. The Sight refers to the ability to "dream true" in order to foresee the future. Julia has those dreams, both in waking and asleep.

Structure

The book is divided into thirty-one fairly even chapters. There is also a prologue that's titled, "The Dream." The dreams occur throughout the story, though they are typically well-defined so that there's no doubt that it's a dream rather than reality. The story flows exceptionally well though there are occasionally long passages of description of the land. Those descriptions usually give insight into Julia's mood and her dreams of the land. Those descriptions do not occur often and are not overly tedious.

It's important to remember that the book is the second of a series of three. The first book apparently tells the story of Harry and Beatrice on Wideacre. The sequel to the Favored Child will apparently tell the story of Sarah, the child of Julia and Richard. The book stands alone and is easily understood and accepted without knowledge of the prior book of this series. It's not immediately evident whether the truth of Julia and Richard's heritage is outlined in the first book. If so, the reader would have a clear advantage when reading the Favored Child, and perhaps the revelation at the end of the book would be less dramatic.



Quotes

"I was born Julia Lacey in 1773, the daughter of the squire of Wideacre and his wife Celia Havering of Havering Hall. I was their only child; there was no male heir. I was raised with my cousin, Richard, the son of Beatrice, my father's sister. Those two - my papa and his sister - made my cousin and me joint heirs to Wideacre. They changed the entail on the estate so that we two could jointly inherit. We always knew that we were to run Wideacre together."

Chapter 1, Page 2

"I knew, even then, that there is a balance of needs on a land like ours. The masters take so much, the men take so much and they both keep the poor. The land has its rights too: even fields must rest. My Aunt Beatrice was once the greatest farmer for miles around, but someone, and no one would quite tell me how, it all went bad. When my Aunt Beatrice died and my papa died in the same night, the night of the fire, the Laceys were already ruined."

Chapter 1, Page 9

"I was too loving and obedient to my mama to overrule her, or even to challenge what she said. And I was too much Richard's faithful betrothed to think an independent thought. It seemed I had been set in a mold before I had time to make a choice. I was a docile, ordinary young lady and I must take my little enjoyments indoors and with proper decorum."

- Julia, Chapter 4, Page 98

"I trusted my judgment with Mr. Megson. I did not think Richard had been insulted. I thought he was behaving like a fool. I thought he had acted like a fool. And I did not see that his precious honor was concerned in the least."

Chapter 5, Page 130

"And yet I have been stuck in Dr. Pearce's stu have been free to roam all around and make friends with people and make them think you are the natural heir. You would never even have told me if it had not slipped out like this! You are a cheat, Julia. You are an encroacher. This is my land, and I am Beatrice's son. I shall be the heir."

- Richard, Chapter 7, Page 148

"I did not know where to go. I did not know what I wanted. The brief exchange with Richard had left me feeling that the struggle to be a proper wife, to be a properly behaved lady, might cost me more than I was able to pay."

Chapter 6, Page 157



"I stared and I blinked. I put my hands to the floor in bewilderment and terror. I had a feeling like falling, as if the very ground beneath my feet had opened up and I was tumbling downward into a madness where I could dream the dream in real life, where Beatrice could enter my head at any moment, where I could no longer tell the difference between the dream and reality."

Chapter 6, Page 163

"I could not have said what he was to me. Sometimes he was like a father, sometimes he was like a lover, sometimes he was like a teacher. All the time he was a friend. And as the days went past, and the November days got shorter and colder and more and more miserable for outdoors work, we became less like pupil and teacher and more like partners."

- Julia speaking of Ralph, Chapter 11, Page 242

"The wind was icy, blowing down from the stars, but I had a throbbing headache so heavy over my eyes that I could hardly see the garden. I seemed to be well on the way to losing everything I had ever wanted: Richard, Wideacre, and my girlhood. All stolen from me by the lost dead witch of Wideacre. And nothing given to me in their place but a handful of superstitions and a wildness which I could not control."

- Julia, Chapter 12, Page 275

"'I have bad dreams too,' he said. 'Especially when I have eaten toasted cheese for supper.' Marianne and I both laughed, then Mama was at my side and it was time for me to go. But I knew I liked James Fortescue, and I smiled all the way home at the thought of telling Dr. Phillips that I dreamed because I ate toasted cheese late at night."

Chapter 13, Page 294

"As we walked along, I with my skirts bunched in one hand to try to hold the hem clear of the muck, James with one hand firmly under my elbow, we could hear from each house, from each blocked doorway and unglazed uncontained window, the crying of little babies and the moaning of old and ill men and women, and the ceaseless quarrels of those with breath and energy to be moved to anger rather than silent despair."

Chapter 15, Page 315

"'Lord love you for a fool, Julia Lacey,' he said easily. 'So full of your own importance that you think you are responsible for the Norman Conquest and for the abuse of the lords of the land ever since. Nay, I'm not angry, Miss Vanity. And if I was, it would not be with you.'"

- Ralph, Chapter 18, Page 373



"The seeds stuck, moist and pale, to my hands and I threw them in a great flinging sweep out to the very boundaries of Wideacre so that the whole greed world should grow at my bidding and there should never be hunger on my land again."

Chapter 18, Page 381

"I missed James more than I could have believed possible. I walked alone under trees full of birds singing love songs, under a sky criss-crossed with nest-building flights, watched the red deer nuzzling together in the twilit evenings; at night I could not sleep, for I fancied even the owls were calling to each other of their passion and their desire under an enlarging moon."

Chapter 20, Page 408

"And every now and then I would look at Richards and feel my eyes fill with useless, inexplicable tears. I felt that it was my fault. My fault that it happened. My fault that I had not told at once, the minute I was home, that through my cowardice, Richard and Mama, Uncle John and I would all be living a lie. I had not told when I should have told. And now I could say nothing. I could not even stop Richard smiling at me in that familiar, conspiratorial way."

- Julia after the rape, Chapter 21, Page 435

"The circular nagging worry went around and around in my head until I leaned back against my shutter and closed my eyes against the glare of the moon and the drumming of my fear that I would lose James, that I did not know how to hold him. I did not know the words which would make him forgive me. He was the only man I had ever loved, would ever love. And I did not know where to begin to keep his love."

Chapter 22, Page 449

"Clary Dench was not forgotten in Acre. Nothing is every forgotten in Acre. But with the land grewins so green and strong, the sun so hot and the clean wind blowing across the top of the downs, bringing with it day after day of warm weather, no one could keep a surly face and no one blamed me for failing to seek my friend among the shades with my Sight."

Chapter 23, Page 469

"The straw dolly had a face made of a head of wheat, and my pale gray bow had been tied around her body of stalks to signify it was meant to be me. Her little arms were tied stalks, sticking out sideways, and her legs were two seed heads. Her belly was huge, unmistakably swollen, made of seed heads tied tightly together. She was pregnant, she was bursting with the fertility of Wideacre."

Chapter 26, Page 515

"Richard spent that night in my room. And whether he was there as a brother in mourning, as a husband, or even as a jailer, I never really knew." Chapter 26, Page 526

Topics for Discussion

Describe Julia's love for Richard. Compare that with Richard's feelings for Julia.

Who was Ralph Megson? How did he and Julia become connected? What was the final act Ralph took for Julia?

Describe at least two of Julia's dreams. Does Julia always dream that she is herself? What are the significance of her dreams? What does it mean to "dream true?" Does Julia ever "dream true?"

What are Julia's feelings for the land of Wideacre? Who else has those feelings? Is her obsession with the land healthy? How does Julia know how to make things grow?

How does Richard feel about animals? How do animals respond to him? Describe some of those encounters.

Why does Julia not go to school? What does she do while Richard is being taught? Would Julia have preferred to be learning? Would Richard have preferred to be free of his studies?

When Julia is in Bath, Richard is working Wideacre. Is Julia jealous? Does Richard have the best interests of the land and the people at heart? What are his plans for Wideacre?

Describe how Julia and Richard discover that they are actually siblings. What is amoral about their own lineage? Why does Julia think that killing her own child is the only course open to her?

How do others discover Julia is pregnant? Does Julia have any warning that it's about to happen? How does she know?