

The Feast of All Saints Study Guide

The Feast of All Saints by Anne Rice

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Plot Summary

"The Feast of All Saints" by Anne Rice is a tale of the New Orleans community of free men of color living within the laws of the white men that surround them. Each of the characters in this tale encounter moments where they must accept that they have not the same rights as the white men and yet, they must uphold the privileges that they have created for themselves within this area. Much of the tale revolves around a custom in the area called plaisage, where a young woman of color would enter into an arrangement with a white gentleman. He would provide for her as well as protect her and her children. "The Feast of All Saints" is a fascinating novel that demonstrates the racist atmosphere that permeates America's environs.

Marcel Ste. Marie is a child born to a mulatto woman and a rich plantation owner. Marcel is a boy of privilege and a free man, but he is not accepted into either world in which he is born. He was not given his father's name nor will he ever be able to vote, visit his father at his home, or marry beneath his status. Marcel is often envious of the freed slaves as they create with their hands, like Jean Jacques, but he is unable to dirty his own hands due to his station. Marcel often longs to travel to Paris, where he has been told that the color of one's skin does not keep a man from being the man that he chooses. The appeal of Paris is the freedom that he truly seeks. However, he is thrown into a world between worlds while he awaits his eighteenth birthday in order to accomplish his dream.

Christophe is a famous writer that has traveled to Paris and has returned to New Orleans to teach the young men of color from his home. He feels that he needs to better the place in which he was raised, yet he often finds that the freedom that he was afforded in Paris no longer exists for him, and he has trouble in trying to fight the system from within when many of the victims of this system have come to quietly accept their way of life.

Throughout this tale, there is also the sister of Marcel, Marie Ste. Marie, who was born with such pale skin that she is often mistaken for white. She is supposedly what all the women in the area hope that their children to look like but she is often shunned for beauty. Even her mother is jealous of her. Yet, Marie hates the arrangements that these women make, trying to be what they are not and trying to create children like her who have no secure place in the world. She wishes to marry a colored man and is thought lowly for this choice. Eventually, Marie is raped due to the jealousy of others, making her ruined for any white man. However, since a white man raped her, she has no right to accuse him, and it is her father's brother-in-law who must defend her honor as it is illegal for a colored man to duel a white man. Even in doing so, he must duel based on her worth and not her honor. However, he is also conflicted on this decision as he was raised with the notion of slaves and has fallen in love with a young colored woman who has given birth to his son as well. He must face the responsibilities of his actions in bringing another innocent yet misplaced soul into creation.



Section 1-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 1- Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4

Section 1-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 1-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4 Summary

"The Feast of All Saints" by Anne Rice is a tale of the New Orleans community of free men of color living within the laws of the white men that surround them. Each of the characters in this tale encounter moments where they must accept that they have not the same rights as the white men and yet, they must uphold the privileges that they have created for themselves within this area. Much of the tale revolves around a custom in the area called plaisage, where a young woman of color would enter into an arrangement with a white gentleman. The man would provide for her as well as protect her and her children. "The Feast of All Saints" is a fascinating novel that demonstrates the racist atmosphere that permeates America's environs.

Marcel Ste. Marie learns that Christophe Mercier, a famous writer and his hero, is returning to New Orleans from Paris to open a school for young, colored gentlemen. He decides to seek Juliet, Christophe's mother, to verify this account. This action, combined with his tarnished reputation, leads to Marcel's expulsion from school. Richard Lermont, his friend, follows him from the classroom to demand his return, feeling guilty for telling Marcel of Christophe's return, but Marcel is adamant about speaking to Juliet.

Later, Richard takes Marcel's notice of expulsion to Marcel's home, and Cecile, Marcel's mother, is furious and screams for her daughter to get out when she enters the room. Richard laments the way Cecile treats her daughter. Marcel confronts Juliet about her son's return to New Orleans, and she asks him to read her unopened letters which she held onto because she cannot read and did not want to ask a stranger to read them to her. Marcel is excited when he finds the letter confirming Christophe's intended return, but Juliet seems sickened by the report because her son is returning for the school rather than out of love for her. Juliet is intrigued by Marcel's attempts to reassure her of her son's love and seduces the young man. Initially terrified, Marcel becomes overjoyed to be in the woman's arms and falls asleep in her bed.

Section 1-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 1-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4 Analysis

Marcel's excitement about his hero coming back to the area and opening a school for colored gentlemen is an extension of his dream of going to Paris. Marcel sees his promised trip as a way to become a man, but what he does not know is what it is he wants to do with the education he has been promised. As Marcel has already shown



interest in so many things, he has unintentionally ruined his reputation among many in the area. Richard is fraught with guilt over having shown Marcel the article that sends him on his newest escapade, but when he sees his best friend trailing the mad Juliet, he tries to stop him from completely destroying what is left of his reputation. Unsuccessful in this endeavor, Richard goes against his character and has a drink at the pub. This detour shows the first signs of the racial tension of the times in which these characters live. Richard's encounter with the drunken man, who complains to him about the blacks and slaves having higher wages, demonstrates what these two young men face each day. This is again demonstrated when Marcel meets Juliet and it is made known that she is unable to read the letters that her son has sent her from around the world. Also, there is another subtle insinuation that is shown in this section where black women are considered even less important than black men.



Section 2-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 5

Section 2-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 5 Summary

Marcel awakens to the enjoyable feel of Juliet's embrace, but then he notices Christophe sitting near the bed. During Juliet's warm reunion with her son, Marcel tries to go unnoticed and he is distraught to meet his idol in such a way when Juliet insists upon introducing them. Marcel mourns the loss of the dream of Christophe and compares it to the loss of his friend, Jean Jacques, a year earlier. After Tante Josette praised Jean Jacques, Marcel admires and watches his friend amorously. Cecile is angered by Marcel's friendship because she believes her son is born in better circumstances than Jean Jacques. Jean Jacques teaches the privileged boy about the sufferings of his own people's history as slaves and promises that Marcel can have his diaries when he dies. As Marcel spends more time with Jean Jacques, she is displeased by his questions about the revolution. When Jean Jacques dies, Marcel tries in vain to find the books left to him, but Richard's father had delivered them to Marcel's home and Cecile burns them. When he returns home and learns what his mother has done, Marcel stops speaking to his mother and becomes interested in the things that people create. He sees himself as a make-believe man and hates his childhood. Additionally, he is no longer permitted to spend time with Anna Bella, his friend, because she comes of age to be courted and her guardian will only allow white men to court her. When his aunt tells him that his mother's mother was a slave, Marcel tries to see Lisette in a new light.

Section 2-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 5 Analysis

Marcel's immediate sense of grief is apparent when he awakens to Christophe finding him in Juliet's bed. It is compared to the real death of friend, Jean Jacques, who was also a hero to Marcel, much like Christophe. Oddly, when Marcel believes Christophe will be seeking a duel to defend his mother's honor, he is not nearly as upset at the idea of dying as he is over the thought of Christophe disliking him. The narration takes us back one year in time to when Marcel took an interest in Jean Jacques due to a comment his aunt had made and he pursues that interest. Jean Jacques represents passion, a quality that Marcel has never had or seen in his life. Marcel comes to see Jean Jacques as a father figure who takes an interest in him and teaches him. Jean Jacques tells him of the history of his people from Saint Dominique and promises Marcel his journals when he dies. Those books represented a past and a place to Marcel where he belonged. When his mother destroyed the books, in a way she not only destroyed what little Marcel had of his friend but also shattered his perceived place



in the world. Since Rudolphe knows what happened to the books, he looks at Cecile Ste. Marie in a different light, foretelling later events that will occur in the book. After Jean Jacques died, Marcel turned to the only other person who made him feel loved, Anna Bella. Marcel rejects his mother's comfort and seeks the company of Anna Bella, a young woman whom he was always friends with and is someone he deeply trusts. When Marcel finds out his mother was the daughter of a slave, he begins to see why his mother is always pushing him away from physical work and wants more for him. This also prompts him to take more of an interest in Lisette and to be more considerate of her. This too foreshadows the development of a relationship that comes out later in the story.



Section 3-Volume 1, Part 2, Section 5-Volume 1, Part 3, Section 2

Section 3-Volume 1, Part 2, Section 5-Volume 1, Part 3, Section 2 Summary

At a slave auction, Marcel is perceived as though he were on display, forcing him to acknowledge that he is not white though he has never thought of himself as black. Later, at the opera with Richard, he sees Philippe, his father, in the white section, but he allows himself to be overcome with the music when the opera begins. Marcel decides to teach himself to read like Jean Jacques, but he quickly realizes he is unable to progress without a teacher. Hence he begins to focus on his pending trip to Paris, which he sees as a promise to be Philippe's only educated child. He longs to leave early but must wait until he is eighteen.

Marcel visits Jean Jacques' grave for the first time due to his distress at the loss of his hero. Christophe follows Marcel but is not angry as Marcel expected, and he accepts Marcel into school after warning him to never mention his encounter with Juliet. When Marcel returns home, Cecile is furious and has sent Marie, her daughter, to the notary where Marie is upset by the notary's overtures and further embarrassed for crying in front of Richard. Marie begins to grow upset by the way her mother treats her as well as her overly Caucasian appearance. She is jealous that Marcel associates with Lisette in a way that he cannot with Marie. She is also disheartened by her feelings for Richard because he is rich and can never marry her. Richard sees Marie as a beautiful young woman, but when he mentions this to Rudolphe, his father, Rudolphe warns Richard to avoid Marie because girls like that turn out like their mothers.

Section 3-Volume 1, Part 2, Section 5-Volume 1, Part 3, Section 2 Analysis

When Marcel goes to the slave auction, he is disgusted with the well-dressed people there, looking at him as though he were for sale. To him, he is from a fine family and probably better educated than they are, but yet they look down on him. Marcel is still too young at this point and too sheltered to understand why they would be looking at him. Even more astounding is the auction block, which Marcel compares to a tabletop made by Jean Jacques. Marcel knows however that it is the feet of slaves who have polished this top to such a shine and he realizes that he is a part of this trade of human flesh. He has a maid, Lisette, who may have been standing there once. He also comes to realize that as he is neither white nor black, he is the product of a financial arrangement; his mother once stood for sale here similar to the slaves that are being purchased. So when Marcel sees his father at the opera, he has a moment where he hates the man he has always loved because he sees him as a master for the first time.



Meanwhile, Marie is coming to her own epiphanies. She sees how other mothers and daughter act towards each other and compares it to the way her mother treats her. Deep down, she knows her mother does not like her. This saddens Marie, but oddly, not as one might think. In a way, she compares her mother to Anna Bella and her African features and feels pity for her mother. Although it is not said, it is implied by the way Marie pities Anna Bella, and although Marie believes Anna Bella to be a better person, she holds a great deal of love for her mother. Yet, even with the pity she feels, Marie has also come to the conclusion that her mother was a purchased woman and she knows this is not the life she wants for herself. Her love for Richard is revealed, but at this time, it seems hopeless for Marie. What Marie does not expect is that Richard feels just as greatly for her but his father has reasons for being wary of the girl. Marie is the daughter of an upstanding woman, but Cecile is also a snob against her own people. He believes Marie must have picked up this trait as someone with it raised her. It is Rudolphe's dislike for Cecile that causes him to warn his son to avoid Marie.



Section 4- Volume 1, Part 3, Section 3- Volume 1, Part 4, Section 1

Section 4- Volume 1, Part 3, Section 3-Volume 1, Part 4, Section 1 Summary

When Marcel wakes up late, Lisette warns him that his mother is angry about his expulsion. Cecile orders him to his room to await Philippe who she has sent for, but Marcel explains that he was out all night gaining acceptance to a new school. Meanwhile, Richard thinks about Marie and the death of his younger sister years earlier. At the home of Dolly Rose where he performs a child's wake, Richard meets Christophe and is surprised by the appearance of Philippe who requests that he take Vincent, the deceased child's father, to the Anna Bella's boarding house for the night. Anna Bella greets Vincent and Richard, shows Vincent to his room and asks Richard to tell Marcel she wishes to speak to him as she has not seen Marcel in months because Madame Elsie has driven him away and makes her receive white gentleman all night. Richard is upset by how Anna Bella is treated and by Madame Elsie's obvious belief that Marcel is not good enough for Anna Bella. When a week passes, Marcel worries that Christophe has changed his mind, so he searches for his idol and hears that Rudolphe has spoken to and was impressed by Christophe. Work begins at the Mercier house, and Christophe visits the Ste. Marie cottage. Marcel is astonished by the renovations to the classroom, but he notices a white Englishman who had clearly traveled with Christophe. Christophe tells the man, Michael, to return to Paris, but Michael insists on staying in New Orleans until Christophe returns to Europe with him.

Section 4- Volume 1, Part 3, Section 3-Volume 1, Part 4, Section 1 Analysis

Marcel's joy is once again drained by his mother's actions. As with the journals of Jean Jacques, she has taken actions regarding Marcel, behind his back and without all the information. She had taken so many measures for his education, yet often in her actions, she treats him as though he knows nothing. Her impulsive actions may have caused Marcel a much more difficult time with his father than was needed as Marcel has addressed the issue of his education on his own with Christophe Mercier. Yet, without venom, Marcel forgives her actions, indicating that he is the one who feels as though they are dealing with a child, not the other way around. This again demonstrates the thinking of the age, that women are emotional and uneducated, and it also demonstrates Marcel's pity for his mother, as if he is saying that she does not know any better.

Richard is drowned in reflections of his day, which marks him as a quiet and thinking man. His participation in the wake and funeral of Dolly Rose's daughter brings out in him



the true sadness he felt for his sister and, in turn, shows a likely connection he feels toward Marie as she is a quiet and innocent character. The way Richard handled the wake was a personal moment for the man to see into her character and view the thoughts that take place, the compassion that exists within him. This is easily read in the placement of the flowers, the delicate disposition, and the grace with which he dealt with a distraught Dolly Rose. This meeting also marks the first time in which Richard meets Christophe, who is an idol to him as well as to Marcel. The difference lies in the situations under which the meetings take place, and the reactions of both boys to this figure in their lives are dramatically different. Where Marcel becomes inarticulate, Richard's reserve causes him to be speechless. Whereas Marcel is excited, Richard is filled with awe. It shows, in a way, why these two young men are such good friends in that it depicts their differences and therefore how they compliment each other.



Section 5-Volume 1, Part 4, Section 1-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4

Section 5-Volume 1, Part 4, Section 1-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4 Summary

Juliet is angry when she finds Michael in her home, but Christophe refuses to explain so he and Marcel continue the renovations. When Christophe leaves on an errand, he asks Marcel to return in an hour, but Marcel returns to find Juliet alone and suspicious that Christophe has gone to visit Michael. When Christophe was sent to Paris, an Englishman took him from his guardian, and Juliet suspects Michael and believes something is going on between the two men. She is furious when Marcel declines her attempt at seducing him because she wants Marcel to make Michael leave New Orleans. When Christophe returns, he assumes Marcel and Juliet have been together sexually and warns Marcel that it will undermine the entire school if he allows Juliet to seduce him again. Bubbles, a young boy, returns Christophe's key which he accidentally left at Dolly's.

Madame Elsie has a stroke which leaves her left side paralyzed. Anna Bella convinces her to go to Marcel's aunts' dress shop where she sneaks away to meet with Marcel. As she leaves, she hears Madame Elsie speak derogatorily of her looks, and after being harassed on the way, she reaches the Ste. Marie cottage in tears, interrupting a moment between Richard and Marie. Richard leaves, and Marie takes Anna Bella inside, relieved at her arrival because she cannot believe she allowed Richard to kiss her. As Anna Bella describes her troubles at the boarding house, Marie realizes that it is a life she is in danger of but cannot live with. When Richard helps Dolly home, he finds Christophe on the couch and hears them discuss whether she has gone to the doctor. When he mentions it to his mother in concern, she tells him Dolly has lost a baby and is fighting with her mother because she is being courted by a black man. On the first day of school, Marcel is proud of the achievement, but he worries about Michael disturbing Christophe and causing him to argue with Juliet, though Christophe spends his time with Dolly. After class, Richard speaks to Marcel about Anna Bella, suggesting Marcel visit her because he is like a brother, but Marcel has stronger feelings for her which is why he cannot visit her. Then, Richard explains his feelings for Marie and asks permission to call on her which Marcel grants. Marcel goes to see Anna Bella but leaves when he sees her speaking to a gentleman.

Section 5-Volume 1, Part 4, Section 1-Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4 Analysis

Juliet's anger at Michael is understandable, considering Michael takes Christophe while in Paris. Since Juliet had sent Christophe because her father had made her and



Christophe had disappeared, it may be that her current hatred for Michael is due to her feelings that he has come to take away her second chance with her son. Additionally, there is the suspicion she has regarding a romantic relationship that has been rumored as existing between the two men. This was also mentioned in the beginning of the story by Antoine, Richard's cousin, as a reason Richard should not be allowed to attend Christophe's school, and later, it comes up in Marcel's mind when he sees the two men arguing as though they might have been lovers. Because of this, Juliet accuses Christophe of keeping Marcel from her bed, not for protection of the school, but for his own jealousy. Christophe's reaction may be more pure than that. Had he been the lover of Michael, then he may be keeping Juliet from seducing Marcel in order to protect Marcel from the type of attachment he himself felt for Michael, and in doing so, keeping Marcel from the suffering he endured from leaving Michael in Paris.

Meanwhile, Anna Bella has not fallen out of love with Marcel, and she is desperate for him to claim her in order to keep her from being sold to Vincent as Madame Elsie has been trying to. She sees Marcel as her savior as well as her soul mate which is identical to the feeling Marie is experiencing with Richard, but whereas Richard openly reciprocates Marie's feelings, Marcel fights and hides his. Both these women are fighting for the same life and love that they disdain in their guardians as they fight the nature of their appearances. Whereas Marie is considered the perfection due to her white skin tones, Anna Bella appears more African. Marie must do her best in order to fight off the attraction of gentlemen who see her as the prize, while Anna Bella must fight to keep the same type of gentlemen from taking her as a slave. All the while, both are hated by those closest to them due to their appearances, which hold them in their prospective positions in being kept from the men they love.



Section 6-Volume 1, Part 4, Section 4-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 1

Section 6-Volume 1, Part 4, Section 4-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 1 Summary

Lisette wakes Marcel because Christophe wants to see him. Since Michael had previously forbid Marcel to spend time with Christophe, Marcel misses Christophe and runs to him immediately, finding him in his chaotic room. When Christophe states that Michael will be returning to Paris shortly, Marcel expresses his fear that Michael will convince Christophe to return to Paris also, but Christophe explains to Marcel that, in Paris, his guardian took the money sent for his car but denied sending him to school or providing him with proper food or clothing. When Michael arrived, he cared for Christophe, so Christophe willingly left with him. He admits that he did not write his mother for three years as punishment for sending him to that place. He believes he would be nothing without Michael. Suddenly, a man arrives asking Christophe to get Michael out of the hotel because he has contracted yellow fever and cannot stay. Christophe carries Michael into his room, and Marcel searches for a nurse to attend to Michael when Juliet refuses to help. When he has found no one by dawn, Rudolphe suggests he ask Anna Bella to assist him. Anna Bella returns to the Mercier house with Anna Bella and sets to work caring for the dying man while Marcel returns home to rest. Lisette wakes Marcel again to inform him that Madam Elsie is demanding that Anna Bella return to the boarding house, but when he goes to fetch her, he learns that Michael has died. Anna Bella, horrified by the death, seeks comfort from Marcel. When she kisses him, he pushes her away, stating that this is the reason he cannot visit her.

Meanwhile, Marcel's aunts prepare for Marie's birthday party where she is to be presented. Cecile resents it when Lisette begins waiting on Marie. Rudolphe forbids Richard to attend the party, but Suzette, his mother, ignores the order. At the party, Dolly arrives, and when Marcel asks if she has seen Christophe since Michael's death, she admits that he has been at her home the entire time and she has arranged to have him discovered by her white lover. Marcel and Rudolphe retrieve Christophe just as Dolly's other suitor enters. Once they get him home and in bed, Rudolphe lectures Christophe before leaving him to Marcel's care. Vincent greets Christophe in the morning and informs him that he has addressed Captain Hamilton on his behalf. Due to these events, Dolly breaks up with the Captain and takes in two young country girls to entertain.

Section 6-Volume 1, Part 4, Section 4-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 1 Analysis

Christophe reveals the situation in which he was living in Paris and why he had taken off with Michael. This revelation opens up the very close relationship these men had



shared to the reader. It explains Christophe's need to be open and tender with Michael, to appreciate him even while he feels trapped by him. Michael had brought out the best in Christophe, but at the same time, he does not fully understand Christophe's need to improve the lives of people like himself. Michael may very well have a tender heart for colored gentlemen, but having never been one, he is unable to understand that leaving them uneducated does them no justice. When Michael is brought to the house with yellow fever, once again, Marcel shows his deep love and devotion to Christophe by hunting all night for a nurse to tend to the man whom he despises. Anna Bella's arrival also shows her devotion to Marcel as she goes against the rules of Madame Elsie to tend to Michael. Even when she was ordered back to the boarding house, she had sat with the body, bathing it and praying over him. And when Marcel arrives, she tells him of the awful death she witnessed. This is a very telling scene for Anna Bella's character as she weeps for a man she did not know and stays with him throughout the entire ordeal, even when she had an easy way out of it. It shows Anna Bella's true nature and pureness of heart in what she does and the choices she makes later in the tale. Later, when one may think she is making excuses or taking the easy road, one must remember this moment and realize Anna Bella is a gentle woman who puts her heart into the endeavors she has decided upon.

Dolly Rose has another moment where she shows the treacherous side to her nature, and the reader is bound to dislike her as much as many of the characters do. Yet, Christophe is always making excuses for her behavior, even in this situation where she leaves him to be discovered by Captain Hamilton, alone and naked in her bed. Since this is not the first time Christophe has excused Dolly's whims and not the first time he has run to her aid, stayed with her for comfort, and the reader knows they were childhood friends, one might draw the conclusion that Dolly once felt a great deal of love for Christophe before he left her and went to Paris. Her behavior is reminiscent of a woman scorned, in which one can see the relationship between Anna Bella and Marcel foreshadowed should he leave for Paris as he desperately wants to. Another point regarding Dolly's character is that of Rudolphe's perspective. He obviously likes young Christophe as he rushes to Dolly's home in order to save him from being discovered by Captain Hamilton, but he has issue with the fact that, for the first time in his life, he had to take the back stairs like a servant and hide instead of standing up for himself as he is accustomed. Rudolphe does not resent Christophe for this predicament, but Dolly, even when he lectures Christophe regarding the matter. After the event, Dolly broke ties with Captain Hamilton and opened her home to two young girls from the country in order to entertain gentlemen. This action illustrates Dolly's need to take her destiny into her own hands and be in control of her life. It also may indicate that her stunt with Christophe and Captain Hamilton was to prod Christophe into fighting for her in order to know if he holds any feelings for her.



Section 7-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 1- Volume 1, Part 5, Section 4

Section 7-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 1-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 4 Summary

When winter arrives, Marcel dreads Philippe's arrival. Christophe still grieves for Michael and is often drunk in the streets; however, he manages to meet with the fathers and even purchases a book to thank Anna Bella for her help. Marcel's aunts argue with Cecile about presenting Marie properly at the upcoming opera, but Cecile finds it foolish until Marcel shows interest in attending. Marie is happier about her situation since her brother will accompany her. Christophe takes Bubbles in the week before the opera because of how badly Dolly had beaten him, but when he allows Bubbles to sit in the classroom with his students, many of the boys leave until the classroom is empty by midweek. Marcel convinces Christophe that the class will not return until Bubbles is removed, and the class is regained by Saturday. Soon afterward, Bubbles writes Christophe that he has returned to Dolly Rose. Dolly offers Christophe the title to Bubbles in exchange for him taking her to the opera, but Christophe declines. Instead, she sells Bubbles to Christophe for a dollar because her real interest is in making Christophe a slave owner. When Marcel attempts to dismiss Dolly, Christophe defends her, stating that he disappointed her a long time ago.

As Marcel prepares for the opera, a beautiful woman enters, and Marcel realizes that it is Marie. On the way to the opera box, everyone stares at Marie while she pays attention only to the Lermontant box. Many gentlemen visit Marie, but Anna Bella distracts Marcel. At intermission, he visits her box to kiss her hand but leaves before Madame Elsie can drive him away. He then sits with Christophe and Juliet to watch the opera based on Christophe's novel, but as he watches, he notices a white man looking at Marie. After the opera, Marcel's aunts host a party at their flat, and even Christophe attends, but Marcel slips away and roams the streets for hours until he reaches the Mercier house from whence a gentleman emerges. Enraged, Marcel breaks in to find an amused Juliet who successfully seduces Marcel, and they make love twice before Christophe arrives and attacks Marcel. When Juliet accuses Christophe of keeping Marcel for himself, Christophe hits her. Marcel leaves and arrives home, wet with blood, to face a drunken Philippe and a frightened Cecile. Philippe presents Marcel with a book from Rome and money for a seat at the opera, amusing Marcel since the man had either not received his expulsion letter or no longer remembers. Marcel sleeps for only a few hours before being awakened because Anna Bella is waiting for him.



Section 7-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 1-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 4 Analysis

The discussion between the aunts and Cecile regarding Marie attending the opera brings more of Cecile's disposition regarding her children into light. She clearly favors Marcel and her treatment of Marie has grown worse. Cecile calls the opera foolishness when her aunts invite Marie, but when Marcel states his interest in going, she tells him that he should go as much as he pleases. It is then that Colette accuses Cecile of being jealous of her own daughter. This is an important scene to remember later in the tale, both in regards to the aunts as well as Cecile. Where the reader may very well agree that Cecile is jealous of her daughter, the aunts have their own agenda regarding Marie. Christophe's suffering over Michael is not the only of his trouble. He has brought the young slave boy, Bubbles, into the classroom with the fine colored gentlemen attending his school, and within days, all the attending boys have been drawn out of the classes. Christophe may be taking this action for many reasons, one being Michael's perspective that slaves are wrong and leaving them uneducated is wrong, though he covers this with the reasoning that Bubbles is his slave and he can educate him if he wishes. However, the parents of the young men obviously do not agree. Though many argue that having a slave in the same classes as their children is below them, there is also the fact that these parents are paying fees to send their children for a higher education than other boys, so they resent a young man with no money being allowed to attend for free.

Marcel discovers his sister's beauty for the first time when they attend the opera, but he also notices her affection for Richard who is keeping his admiration to a minimum. However, Marcel is also distracted by Anna Bella, showing the reader his affection even though he hides it from her. His aggravation and confusion grow as he sees the finely dressed gentleman leaving Juliet's. He finally goes to her, but the reader has to ask if he is using her as a substitute for Anna Bella because it seem that whenever he is overcome with his passions for Anna Bella, he winds up in Juliet's bed, which in turn allows the reader to question his love for Anna Bella, just as she does. When Christophe discovers the two, he becomes enraged, but it is unclear if it is that Marcel is not following his instruction or if he wants to keep his mother to himself. Juliet openly accuses him of her suspicion that he wishes to keep Marcel to himself, but Christophe has yet to show any inclination toward Marcel in this manner. Since the first time he met Marcel, Christophe has enjoyed the young man's company and finds him wiser than his years, but he has not held a grudge regarding his mother's romantic interactions with him nor solicited anything of that manner toward himself. Also, Marcel's dread of Monsieur Philippe arriving home and confronting him about being expelled has had Marcel on edge through this part of the tale, so when Philippe does arrive and seems to not even remember the matter, Marcel finds it amusing; however, this is more foretelling in that Monsieur Philippe may not really care.



Section 8-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 5- Volume 2, Part 1, Section 3

Section 8-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 5-Volume 2, Part 1, Section 3 Summary

Anna Bella complains that Marcel has not visited her, and he explains that he wants to kiss her again but cannot risk Paris or ask her to wait and this is why he cannot visit her. Furthermore, he is not of age and cannot provide for her. When Anna Bella tells Marcel that Vincent Dazincourt has asked for her and she must answer him today, Marcel advises her to answer as she wishes but promises to go to his father if Vincent forces her. Marcel explains that, if he stayed in New Orleans for her, they would be poor and he would become bitter; he cannot do this to her. Philippe is unhappy to see Anna Bella leave. He presents Marie with a portable secretaire that has been in his family for generations as Cecile watches from the corner. Outside, Philippe confronts Marcel about seeing Anna Bella leave his room and dictates that he must not be seen with her again. When a carriage comes to the cottage from the boarding house, Marcel realizes that his father is aware of Vincent's attentions to Anna Bella. Trying not to think about Anna Bella being with Vincent, Marcel visits Christophe's home and is asked to keep Juliet company while Christophe runs some errands. Marcel allows himself to be seduced by Juliet yet again.

Philippe owned a struggling plantation when he was twenty years old, and when he came to New Orleans to visit a distant cousin, Magloire Dazincourt, he married Aglae, Magloire's oldest daughter, was entrusted with the plantation of Bontemps, the care of Vincent, Magloire's youngest child, and the overseeing of building a cottage for Cecile who Magloire was courting. Aglae and Cecile were both pregnant when Magloire died, and since Aglae was always disrespectful to Philippe, he sought comfort from Cecile after she lost her baby. When Marcel was born, Cecile's aunts demanded that the boy be given a European education. Vincent adores his sister, Aglae, and believes that, as a Christian, it is his duty to civilize the heathens through slavery. Seeing Vincent's beliefs as an interest in the plantation, Philippe shifts more responsibility to him. He also coaxes Vincent towards Anna Bella after the death of Vincent's daughter. Vincent vows to end his relationship with Anna Bella when he marries, but Anna Bella has decided to give her heart to Vincent though she has always disagreed with that life. She recalls her love for Marcel and his love for her. Now, Vincent requests an answer to his question of courtship, and Anna Bella agrees.



Section 8-Volume 1, Part 5, Section 5-Volume 2, Part 1, Section 3 Analysis

Anna Bella's arrival to Marcel's cottage is his last chance with this woman he loves. However, he is so distracted by the other events taking place that he is too blind to see it. When she openly tells him that there is another man seeking her company, he does confess his feelings for her but again locks them away from reach. Much like Anna Bella in this way, he shuts off the ability to feel what he wants to because it interferes. Anna Bella follows this in that when she tells Marcel she cares nothing for Vincent, this is both true and misleading. It is not that she cannot feel for this man but rather that she has not allowed herself to because of her desire for Marcel.

Philippe's reaction to seeing Anna Bella leave Marcel's room is also very telling of his true nature in character. The reader realizes Philippe has not only known of Vincent's interest in Anna Bella, but Philippe has been quietly prompting the two together, and he has done this while supposedly knowing his son's feeling for the girl. Either that, or Philippe once again has not paid any attention to the wants of his children and does not care to. When the narration reverts to when Philippe was a young man and he came into his marriage and plantation, the reader sees the characters as they lived and were raised in Bontemps, rather than New Orleans. The reader is introduced to a kind man named Magliore, who was the original man courting Cecile, and can see the progression of Philippe taking over control of this man's livelihood as he passes away. This reveals that Philippe basically inherited Cecile and therefore was considered another piece of property to this man. The reader is told of Philippe's perspective on his wife and how she treats him disdainfully in his eyes as compared to how he believes a wife should treat her husband. This past narration gives insight into Philippe's mind and how he selfishly believes things should be when it regards him.



Section 9-Volume 2, Part 1, Section 4-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 1

Section 9-Volume 2, Part 1, Section 4-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 1 Summary

Richard is ecstatic to learn that Marie loves him. When a photographer arrives in town, Marcel, fascinated by the process, convinces Richard to have his picture taken for Marie. Afterwards, Richard returns home to find his father being arrested for striking a white man that was harassing Richard's sister. Richard defends Giselle against his father's accusations that she was leading the white man on, but Suzette later explains that her father was only angry about being helpless to defend his daughter. Rudolphe wins the case because the man was on his property, but the white gentleman is genuinely offended to lose to a black man. Marcel talks about Paris and how he had hoped for Richard to go with him until his friend fell for Marie, but Richard never wanted to go to Paris; Marie is his Paris. Anna Bella prepares the small house Vincent purchased her for Christmas. Though she has lived there only a week, Marie and many others have already visited her, and Marie brings her a secretaire. When Vincent visits, he is gentle in making love to Anna Bella, but he recognizes his sister's secretaire that had gone missing some time previously.

Within a month, Madame Elsie dies, and Anna Bella learns she is pregnant. When Vincent notices that she is tense on his next visit, she tells him about the baby and is relieved that he is indifferent rather than angry. This also causes her to realize that she loves him. Additionally, Vincent promises to personally grant Marcel permission to visit Anna Bella so she will not be lonely during the upcoming harvest. Unfortunately, Vincent encounters Philippe who is in New Orleans to visit Zazu, and realizing how much he loathes Philippe, he decides against allowing Marcel near Anna Bella. Though he realizes that he loves Anna Bella, he also realizes that if she bears a son, the boy will be like Marcel. Vincent returns to Bontemps to find Aglae with opened ledgers and a note showing the amounts that Philippe has mortgaged on their property. On voting day in New Orleans, Rudolphe is angry that he cannot vote because he is black, despite being a man of property and standing in his community. When he visits the sculptor who has finished the monument for Dolly and Vincent's daughter, he is overcome by its beauty but saddened that the sculptor is moving to Paris to study art since all of the talented young men leave.

Section 9-Volume 2, Part 1, Section 4-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 1 Analysis

Richard's trip to the Daguerreotypist is one where one first sees a true passion that lives within Marcel. Since he often shows interest in many forms of artistic creation, the



reader may overlook this; however, this is also the second time this art form has come to light in the tale and may prove to be foretelling. The argument between Rudolphe and the white gentleman who accosted Giselle, however, is another example of the time and world in which these characters live. Much like the slave auction, which Marcel attended in section three, it is made clear what the colored man's rights were in this time. Even though he was protecting his daughter, on his own property, Rudolphe is arrested for insulting a white man publicly. Furthermore, when Rudolphe wins the case, the white man is not only appalled but also deeply hurt that he lost his case to a colored man, showing how low this man thought of colored people. The rights, or lack thereof, and the frustration of the colored people is again demonstrated when voting day has arrived, and Rudolphe is angry that he is unable to vote in regards to the very issues which he endures on a daily basis. Interestingly, Vincent's disgust with Philippe is such that he cannot bring himself to request Anna Bella's dearest friend to be permitted to visit with her, even knowing how lonely his absence has left her. As Vincent was raised by Philippe, this is very telling of Philippe's character from a perspective of one of the white characters, while shortly thereafter, when he discovers his sister and mortgages in which Philippe has placed on the property and their belonging, it lends a financial perspective. All this shows the money in which Philippe has been spending to be an illusion of a vain man.



Section 10-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 1-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 3

Section 10-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 1-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 3 Summary

Rudolphe visits Dolly's home for colored women to be courted by white gentlemen and is surprised that she accepts the sculpture without anger. It is clear that Dolly is thriving in her new lifestyle, and Rudolphe is reminded of the girl she used to be when she visited his daughter. He delivers wrenches to Christophe from Dolly, and they discuss political issues before Rudolphe goes home. There, he confronts Richard about his admiration for Marie, and though he is awestruck by the strength of his son's convictions, he fears that Marie's are not as strong. Richard confesses that he will never be the man his father wants him to be, but as Marie sees in him what Rudolphe never will, he asks permission to marry her. Rudolphe agrees once Richard comes of age. When Lisette runs away from the Ste. Marie cottage again, Philippe orders Marcel to find her since she and Philippe have been arguing about her mother, Zazu, dying. For the first time, Marcel sees Philippe's anger when Cecile had hit Lisette and threatened to sell her during an argument.

Due to Zazu's failing health, Philippe stays at the cottage, and Cecile enjoys having him around. Philippe and Marcel discuss his white family, Vincent taking over the family plantation and Marcel's education. When Marcel hears his parents making love, he realizes that his lover is as beautiful as his father's, and he feels an unknown comfort in the Mercier house. Marcel, Christophe and Juliet have a familial love though they never speak of it. Marcel is so content that he does not speak of Paris, but he often wonders about Christophe's private life. Marcel and Christophe finally discuss Marcel's affair with Juliet, and Marcel cannot find the evil in it though others will see it as immoral. The next morning, Marcel searches for Lisette, and when he reaches Anna Bella's gate, Zurlina suggests he check at Lola Dede's, a voodooienne woman. Not finding Lisette, Marcel returns home to say goodbye to Zazu. Zazu asks Philippe to watch over Lisette because she is his girl too, and Philippe promises to do so. Directly after Zazu dies, Lisette shows up just long enough to confirm her mother's death before running off again. Philippe explains to Marcel that Lisette's behavior is due to her desire for freedom, but if she wants it enough, she will obey Marcel from now on. When Lisette visits Marcel's room on the morning of the funeral, he tells her that her behavior will not lead to freedom, and she angrily tells him that Philippe has broken his promise to free her once she was an adult. Furthermore, Lisette warns Marcel against believing anything Philippe says as she is also Philippe's child. When Marcel confides in Anna Bella about all of this, she says that he must convince Philippe to free Lisette for the peace of his home. They catch up on their lives, Anna Bella telling Marcel all about Vincent's kindness and dedication to the plantation.



Section 10-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 1-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 3 Analysis

Lending to the character of Vincent is the beautiful monument he had commissioned for his and Dolly's daughter. This gesture to a departed child and a woman who despises him shows him to be a man of honor. However, Anna Bella's revealing Vincent has been seeing lawyers and studying maps of the plantation also contradict this. The reader has heard comments by Philippe prior stating he has turned over more and more responsibility to Vincent, as he did in section eight, but is this an indication Vincent means to take over Philippe's plantation? While Rudolphe remembers Dolly as she had once been, the reader is given another view of this complex woman. Through Rudolphe's memories the reader sees a young, kind woman who visited his daughter, and this reminds one of how many times, earlier in this tale, she was accepted and cared for by the people of this community. It is not until the loss of her daughter and her following episodes with Christophe that she is seen as a villainous character. Since these actions were taken against Christophe and he often forgives her, it is important to consider this remembered personality.

Lisette continues to become more self-destructive and also sabotages the interests of the Ste. Marie family. As her mother has become terribly ill, she has begun arguing with Cecile, but now she begins arguing with Philippe. Philippe, however, forgives her easily enough before, but is now taking her actions more seriously, and for the first time, Marcel has seen anger in his father, indicating the arguments that the reader is not privy to. When she arrives home with her mother on her deathbed, her mother tells Philippe to watch over her, as she is his girl too. The reader has heard him call Lisette his girl before, but this is a poignant request, insinuating Lisette may be Philippe's daughter as well, which in turn shows the reader again what kind of man he is. If Lisette is his daughter, then why is she a slave to his other children? It is revealed afterward that she is in fact his daughter and he had promised her freedom, but he has failed to keep his promise, instead keeping her a slave to his higher bred children. At this revelation, Marcel feels a bond to the young girl and seeks to assist in this matter by attempting to persuade his father to free her from the manipulations of his mother.



Section 11-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 4- Volume 2, Part 2, Section 7

Section 11-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 4- Volume 2, Part 2, Section 7 Summary

Marie wakes at her aunt's flat where her mother has suggested she stay. She enjoys dreaming of Richard, though she considers it a sin, and suspects that her dreams are tied to the fact that Richard knows of her passion but protects her virtue. Going by the cottage, she receives an invitation for coffee at the Lermontant house by Suzette's request but is upset to learn that her mother had discarded Madame Suzette's previous letter. Marie hurries to arrive on time, but her aunts, insisting that it is already too late to go, write an apology to Madame Suzette and tell Marie to instruct the maid to deliver it. Instead, Marie dresses and rushes to the Lermontant house where she is warmly received by Suzette. When Marie returns home, she hears that Lisette has been arrested after a drunken fight with Cecile in which Cecile ripped Lisette's earring out, causing such an infection that the earlobe had to be removed. A month later, Philippe hides terrible tremors behind him drinking. Though he considers freeing Lisette, he argues that she must be thirty years old before he will free her and decides to discuss it with the notary. When Cecile and Marcel tell Philippe that the notary has called for him, he goes to the notary's office where Vincent and Aglae confront him about his debts. At the hotel, he sends word to Cecile that he is going home and will not return until the harvest.

The following week, when Marcel visits Richard, Richard tells him that he wishes to marry Marie, but her aunts have sent word that his visits are unwelcome and that they have spoken to Philippe about their decision. Outraged, Marcel says he has already spoken to his father about the marriage and will do so again upon his return. Before Richard can provide Marcel with a proposal, Rudolphe arrives and tells them that all three must appear at the notary immediately on Philippe's behalf. At the notary's, Marcel learns that Philippe will accept Richard's proposal if Marcel forgoes Paris, takes an apprenticeship at Rudolphe's funeral home, and convinces Cecile that it was his decision. Marcel spends the next two days in a drunken haze at Madame Lelaud's, thinking about how his father is a liar and that Rudolphe and Christophe pity him. Enraged, Marcel walks to Bontemps. Felix, the driver, tries to dissuade Marcel from having Philippe tell the truth, but as Felix tries to get Marcel to the servants' quarters, Philippe sees Marcel, and when Marcel calls his father a liar, Philippe whips him with a riding crop and kicks him in the face before sending him back to New Orleans.



Section 11-Volume 2, Part 2, Section 4- Volume 2, Part 2, Section 7 Analysis

Marie has been sent to live at her aunts' flat almost full time, and they take great joy in dressing her and showing her about, but when an invitation to coffee arrives, they are all disturbed. It is apparent this is a special invitation, one that shows Marie is about to be proposed to, yet her mother has thrown the invitation away and the aunts seem disturbed by this, yet they also seem pleased. They insist on declining the invitation and send a proper decline to Madame Suzette, but what is more revealing is how these women insist she not make this decision so young, how she receive other gentlemen, and insinuate she should be seeking a wealthy white gentleman. In this, they show that perhaps Cecile is not the only one who is jealous of her fair skin, and perhaps the aunts are trying to live vicariously through Marie's good fortune of passing as white, or they could be merely seeing a large fee that she could bring.

Meanwhile, Marie attends behind everyone's back. Madame Suzette amazes her. In her, Marie sees a good, generous, gentlewoman. In this woman, Marie sees hope that when she is married to Richard, she will have a mother figure she is proud of and loved by. Lisette has again gotten into trouble by participating in a brawl at a cabaret, after another fight with Cecile. It has come to light that Cecile knows Lisette is Philippe's daughter and resents her being in her home, while Philippe continues to argue with the girl that it is his right to keep her as a slave until the age of thirty. Yet, there is no parental loyalty or love for this girl, which is most likely the reason she is misbehaving so much. Even Philippe's decision to free her is based more on the inconvenience she is causing rather than keeping his promise. Philippe is further shown to be a man of a cruel nature when he uses Marie's marriage as a way to break his promise to Marcel, just as Lisette had warned him. Not only that, but he does so in such a manor as to send a messenger and place a condition that Marcel is to lie to his mother. When Marcel travels to Bontemps and confronts his father, his father shows him no love or compassion. Instead, he beats the boy with a riding crop like a slave, showing that, to him, children are only property.



Section 12-Volume 2, Part 3, Section 1-Volume 2, Part 3, Section 5

Section 12-Volume 2, Part 3, Section 1-Volume 2, Part 3, Section 5 Summary

When Marcel awakes, he is in Marie's room, and she is tending his wounds while Cecile, Louisa, Christophe and Rudolphe decide to send him to Josette's in the country as soon as he can travel. Meanwhile, Marcel finds comfort from Juliet at Christophe's home so that Philippe will not find him if he returns to the Ste. Marie cottage. Contrary to Marcel's fears, Christophe is not angry and explains that Philippe's anger was due to his embarrassment and fear of Marcel being seen by his white family. He tells Marcel to look forward to his life because he is honorable even though his father is a fool. Unable to hug Christophe because the rumors are true, Marcel offers himself to him, but Christophe refuses and leaves. When he returns, he explains his relationship with Michael and refuses to put Marcel in the same situation. Anna Bella has been crying since giving birth, and Zurlina, her maid, tells her about Lisette ruining herself by visiting Lola Dede who is no more than a harlot selling colored women to white gentlemen. Vincent does not visit since a week after their son was born because he wanted a girl, and Anna Bella rejects his desire to send the child out to nurse. She also notices that visitors are only concerned with whether her son can pass as white.

Two weeks after Marcel's escapade, Vincent visits to demand that Anna Bella teach their son to never go to Bontemps, and Anna Bella asks him to leave. The next morning, she grants Zurlina's freedom. Marcel travels to San Souci. Philippe agrees to Marie's marriage, and Marcel is ashamed by Rudolphe's extreme kindness. Before Marcel departs, Christophe gives him a copy of a newly printed journal. As Marcel boards the ship, he is excited about his new adventure and his prospects for a life. Though Josette tries to make him feel at home, Marcel knows that he is a burden. Josette tells him about the reasons and details of taking Cecile in as a child and assures him that he is not a burden because he is family. Josette begins to educate Marcel on Haiti and Saint-Dominique and gives him private books that reveal the perspectives of slaves as Jean-Jacques had intended to do. Meanwhile, Philippe signs the papers Aglae gave him, and tells her he is leaving. She actually begs him to stay, but he leaves her standing in the yard and takes off for New Orleans. He runs to Cecile's arms and seems happy for Marcel that he is in the country. He begins drinking a great deal, as well as gambling. He also has taken ill, causing Cecile to delay Marie's wedding. Christophe reports all this to Marcel via letters.



Section 12-Volume 2, Part 3, Section 1-Volume 2, Part 3, Section 5 Analysis

Marcel's predicament has brought out a side to Rudolphe we have suspected, which is that he truly cares for Marcel as though he were family, but they are more than that. Rudolphe has been the character who has had an internal struggle with the lack of rights and treatment of the colored gentlemen, so Marcel's predicament reflects the very same prejudice, only this time it is from father to son and for this, Rudolphe cannot help but feel both pity and pride for the boy. An example that his actions have shaken the white men in this tale is the reaction not only of his father, but that of Vincent, when he warns Anna Bella to make sure his son never pulls such a stunt.

The thinking of the times again is shown in Philippe's action towards Marcel and then in the arrangements of Marcel's stateroom on the ship to his aunt Josette's home. When there are so many examples, cresting with the ones of his own father, the reader can see the very real world that Marcel had so desperately dreamed of escaping in Paris. Marcel's encounter with Christophe in which he seeks a hug as a physical expression of love and then his changing this thinking into that of a more profound physical exchange. Christophe is very perceptive in his analysis of Marcel's need for a father figure, his need for a sense of security, and a conveyed feeling of love. Christophe is willing to give these things to Marcel, but he is unwilling to place Marcel in the same situation he was in as a boy with Michael, in a way fulfilling his gift of being a father figure. Lisette's behavior has gotten to the point where people are talking of how she is ruining herself by visiting Lola Dede. This path she seems to be taking is leading to a revelation, which so far has only to be hinted at, be it voodoo or this new accusation that she is selling colored girls to white men, or something else, which is unclear as of yet, but the fact that her behavior is coming up in every few sections indicates this is a mounting issue.



Section 13-Volume 2, Part 3, Section 5-Volume 3, Part 1, Section 4

Section 13-Volume 2, Part 3, Section 5-Volume 3, Part 1, Section 4 Summary

Marcel learns about the Haitian revolution and is enthralled by how the white men exploited and distrusted his people. He is most amazed that his people were the ones with the power to change the outcome. When Josette explains how his people live in the shadows of those events, Marcel begins to feel for the slaves, and he spends his time teaching the younger children in this intriguing place. After New Years, Josette tells Marcel about a young woman, Marguerite, whose father sends a marriage proposal to Marcel, but he gently declines because he can no longer stay in the country, protected and pretending; he must return to New Orleans. Josette has no idea what a black man can do with his life, but their descendants must hope to pass for white, destroying their very existence as a people. Philippe dies, and Cecile requests that Marcel not return until she sends for him. At Philippe's wake, Aglae is unable to enter or speak to anyone who attempts to console her. Vincent attempts to ease her mind by sharing his impression of Cecile and telling her that Philippe had stolen Aglae's treasures to give to his other family, but Aglae wonders if Cecile is to blame for the failure of her marriage.

In New Orleans, Cecile insists on being left alone with Marie, and once alone, she confesses that she has been jealous of her daughter's light skin since her birth. She tells her daughter about her past, her fears for Marcel because of his looks and her belief that Marie could have anything she wants but is throwing it away to marry Richard. For example, Marie could send Marcel to Paris if she would make an alliance with a wealthy, white gentleman. Disgusted, Marie calls her mother a whore and runs to Christophe, begging him to send for Marcel. Richard's mother presents his with options of other brides because of Cecile's scheming, but unable to bare the idea of losing Marie, he calls for Marie at her aunts' flat. Colette demands that Marie give Richard up and insists she attend the balls to send Marcel to Paris and provide for Cecile. Disgusted and afraid, Marie confides in Lisette about Cecile's plans, and saying that Cecile sees them both as property for sale, Lisette takes Marie to Lola Dede's for a charm to prevent white men from noticing her.

Section 13-Volume 2, Part 3, Section 5-Volume 3, Part 1, Section 4 Analysis

This section reveals a great deal of the character of the women in these children's lives. As the reader has already have come to realize, they have a need for a father figure to love and guide them, but Marcel is the only one of the two who had his mother's love. The measure of Cecile's manipulation, selfishness and greed is openly shown when she



requests time alone with Marie after Philippe's death. She finally admits to Marie that she is jealous of her and has been since the day she was born, but she then plays on Marie's love for her brother by asking her what she would do if she were the one who had been born with the African looks. She uses this to incite pity from Marie and then proceeds with this in explaining how it was for her with people talking behind her back, comparing herself to Anna Bella, whom she knows Marie feels sorry for. Once she has worn her daughter down with this guilt, she tries to dazzle her with all the things that Philippe and Magloire had provided for her with her dark appearance, imagine what they would do for a girl with such white skin. "They would fall on their knees," she tells her. Then she comes to the point that Marie could save the entire family. She places the entire future of the family on her daughter's shoulders instead of taking care of them as a mother. The aunts, who keep Richard away from her and demand that she stop being so selfish, even though it is the selfishness of these women who are driving this plan, only back up this thinking. They also are making sure Marcel stays in the country so that he cannot interfere on his sister's behalf as he is now the head of the family and he has already approved of Richard as a match for Marie. The actions of these women drive Marie to desperate measures, and she seeks out help from Lisette. So when Lisette suggests taking her to Lola Dede to obtain a charm in order to keep the white men from noticing her, the reader is forewarned of the evil intent this



Section 14-Volume 3, Part 1, Section 5-Volume 3, Part 2, Section 3

Section 14-Volume 3, Part 1, Section 5-Volume 3, Part 2, Section 3 Summary

At Lola Dede's residence, Marie is afraid and wants to leave, but Lisette convinces her to have tea for the sake of politeness. The tea makes Marie dizzy, and she vaguely realizes that she is being undressed. Marie is raped by five white gentlemen who do not even remove their clothes, but one does not participate, and he stays to help her escape when she awakes. When she manages to get back to her cottage, Cecile has already heard what happened and beats her, screaming "Ruined!" Marie manages to dress and escape to Dolly's house where she remains. When Marcel arrives home, he visits Christophe to apologize for his delay, and Christophe explains that Richard's parents have locked him in the attic. He also tells Marcel about Marie's rape, that she is safe at Dolly's and that Vincent has already killed two of her attackers. Marcel goes to Vincent, wanting to defend his sister's honor, but Vincent tells him the final young man will not duel a black man. After Marcel shatters the Lermontants' window, Felix takes him to an abandoned cottage where Anna Bella waits to tend to his injured hands. Anna Bella sends well wishes and prayers to Vincent through Felix. Marcel does not move for a very long time, but she stays with him, thinking of and lamenting for Marie and Richard. She waits until Christophe arrives to help open the back kitchen door so that she can properly feed Marcel. Inside the kitchen, they find Lisette's body hanging from a beam. Dolly tries to convince Marie to eat, and Marie, thinking of how much Dolly is misunderstood, confides that she belongs here because those men raped her because they could see how she felt about Richard. After the last duel, Vincent visits Anna Bella and confesses that, like Philippe with the Ste. Marie children, he was wrong to enter into their arrangement and produce a child. He regrets and apologizes for his actions. Understanding, Anna Bella says she will raise the child in New Orleans, not Paris.

Section 14-Volume 3, Part 1, Section 5-Volume 3, Part 2, Section 3 Analysis

Marie's brutal rape at the hands of the white men who purchased her from Lola Dede comes to the reader in pieces as drugged memories of Marie surface, but it is her guilt that weighs the most on Marie, the guilt of the desires she had carried for Richard. Cecile beating Marie reveals just how vicious this woman is. She screams the word "Ruined" at Marie over and over, but is it Marie who is ruined or is it Cecile's great plans to sell her own daughter, which is ruined? Because of her mother's cruelty, Marie seeks shelter at the house of Dolly Rose, and the reader comes to see the very sweet, gentle and kind woman that was hinted at in the memories of Rudolphe Lermontant. Dolly's care of Marie is genuine and loving, in a motherly way, much like Christophe has been



with Marcel. This brings up the true meaning of family. Like the conversation Josette had with Marcel where she revealed that she took Cecile as family because she wanted her, and how she takes care of the children of the extended family members, these children have gone out and obtained their own families to fulfill the needs they have within.

Anna Bella, Marcel, and Christophe inadvertently discovers the hiding place of Lisette, but guilt has caused her to take her own life over her actions, when in truth she needed a family as badly as the Ste. Marie children. Later, Anna Bella seems to have learned from the pain of her loved ones and shows this when Vincent suggests their son be sent to Paris, and she declines. She decides to love her child and teach him to love himself for who he is instead of allowing him to chase after the same dream she watched Marcel chase after his entire life. In turn, Vincent, unlike Philippe, knows what he has done, feels guilt for it and will live up to the responsibilities of his actions in regards to his son, though he will not be a part of his son's life at Anna Bella's request.



Section 15-Volume 3, Part 2, Section 4-Volume 3, Part 2, Section 7

Section 15-Volume 3, Part 2, Section 4-Volume 3, Part 2, Section 7 Summary

When Richard goes to Dolly's to see Marie, she says she would rather stay there. She will not go to another home where they look at her with grief in their eyes because she did not do this to herself. At home, Richard holds a loaded gun to his temple and threatens to kill himself if his father does not find a way for him to marry Marie and bring her home tonight. Rudolphe suggests they go to Paris for a year until the rumors have abated, and when Richard brings her home an hour later, Rudolphe realizes that he already thinks of her as family. Christophe is supposed to go to Dolly's to confirm the wedding, but he does not go for days, causing her to grieve. Christophe cannot stop thinking about Marcel's lonely smile as he left the church, so he goes to Madame Lelaud's to play billiards and drink instead. Marcel sees Richard and Marie off to Paris and wishes them well. He returns home to find Anna Bella waiting, and knowing that he still loves her, he decides to ask her to marry him; however, before he can complete the proposal, she refuses, saying he needs to find his own way and perhaps create something. Marcel buys a Daguerreotype box and signs up for an apprenticeship with the salon owner.

Section 15-Volume 3, Part 2, Section 4-Volume 3, Part 2, Section 7 Analysis

Marie's words to Richard sum up the entire tale and each individual's story as well when she says " They did this to me! I did not do it to myself. I am the same in my heart." She had not changed, only the opinion in which she is viewed by the society. A raped girl shunned by society as a harlot or a walking corpse, the daughter of a selfish mother who was always jealous of her and would sell her off herself, a colored girl who was born of a union based on money and comfort rather than love, the sister of a girl so hell bent on revenge she delivered her to be raped, the daughter of a father who used her marriage as a way to crush her brother's dreams- none of this had she done to herself. No more than Christophe had asked for a mother who was raised in war in the mountains, or a grandfather who sent him off to a hell in Paris, a man who loved him so much he smothered him, or a talent that has every young man in New Orleans looking to him to make it better. No more than Rudolphe had his two oldest son's abandon him for the white families that made in Paris, or a daughter pretty enough to be harassed by any white man who takes his fancy to, a child who died young, or a son who shows more conviction than himself. No more than Cecile wanted to be taken from her mother because a woman saw her as beautiful and decided to keep her and later parade her around for an old white man to bed and then die on her. No more than Anna Bella



wanted her parents to die, to be sent to a woman looking to sell her and use her money, to have a white man pursue her when she loved another, or to be a single mother of a child who would not know his father. No more than Marcel wanted to be favored over his sister, have money and dreams given to him in order to have them taken away, to befriend a man of remarkable character and lose him, or to love a girl he was forbidden to talk to. No more than Dolly who had the beauty to enthrall men except the one she truly wanted, the mother of a child who died young, the lover of a man who left her with a child and no money, the daughter of a woman always looking for another white man for her instead of allowing her to have the colored man she loved. None of them asked for these things, none of them did this to themselves, but these are the things they received, all because of the color of their skin.



Characters

Marcel Ste. Marie

Marcel St. Marie is the child of Cecile Ste. Marie and Philippe Ferronaire. He is of mixed blood and considered a free gentleman of color. He has inherited lighter skin, blue eyes, and blonde hair from his father, but he has not been given his father's name. However, he is given the finest of clothes and education that a man could have, including a promise that he is to travel at the age of eighteen to visit Paris where the color of his skin will not prevent him from anything.

Marcel is often considered a daydreamer and he is interested in the thoughts and creations of others. It is not until a young writer, Christophe Mercier, returns home to start a school for the gens de couleur that Marcel takes any real interest in learning. Once he begins to attend class at Christophe's school, as well as become subjected to the events that surround Christophe's life, Marcel begins to understand that he has a limited place in the world and limited privileges. There are many instances in the beginning of the tale where Marcel allows others to take care of his affairs because he believes that is a privilege of his station. However, when he visits his father's home and his father treats him as though he is no more than a slave to be beaten for misbehaving, Marcel comes to terms with the fact that his life has been one of fantasy and the imagination of a child. It is then that he becomes a man, willing to address his own matters and those of his loved ones.

Richard Lermontant

Richard Lermontant is the best friend of Marcel Ste. Marie. He is the son of Suzette and Rudolphe Lermontant, the undertaker. He is also a privileged free man of color who is sent to the same classes as Marcel. Richard, however, is much quieter and more serious than Marcel. He takes his duties to heart. He is also protected by his parents. His father has timed the distance to the school on his watch and only allows Richard an additional five minutes on rainy days. Beyond this, Richard is a man wise beyond his years and is prone to taking a wiser course of actions, which may explain his relationship with the younger and more spontaneous Marcel.

Richard becomes attached to Marcel's sister, Marie Ste. Marie, and once Marie comes of age to be courted, he pursues her. However, Marie is a fair woman in color and is pursued by many young callers by her mother and aunts' doing. Eventually, Richard is given permission to marry Marie, provided that Marcel give up his dreams of Paris. Richard determines to find another way, rather than place his friend in such a situation. Since Richard and Marie are not married right away, her mother seeks other options for her future. Unfortunately, Marie is raped. After Marie's rape, Richard insists that he marry her, against the wishes of his father and the harsh words of the others, when in fact this is one of the noblest moments in the tale.



Marie Ste. Marie

Marie is the younger sister of Marcel Ste. Marie and her skin is of such a light color that she could pass for a white woman. It is this trait that has made her so desirable among the young gentlemen of color, while it is this trait that makes her so loathed by her own mother. Marie is always put second to the needs of her brother. If it were not for her two aunts, Colette and Louisa, Marie would have not been presented as available to court even when she had become of age.

This actually does not bother Marie as much as it would the other young women, and in actuality, the only reason Marie has any interest in the custom at all is that she is fond of Richard Lermontant. She knows that her mother would not approve of her marrying a man of color when she could have herself set up with a rich white man who would be willing to pay for her and her family based on the lightness of her skin. Eventually, Marie comes to see her mother's schemes and seeks any means in which to keep the white gentlemen at bay so that she can ensure her union with Richard. In a moment of poor judgment, she turns to her maid, Lisette, who takes her to a voodoo priestess to make a charm for Marie so that the young white men will not take any notice of her. Unfortunately, Lisette has a different plan and has Marie's virginity sold and the young girl raped. In her misery, Marie seeks solace in the house of Dolly Rose, but she is eventually rescued by Richard.

Christophe Mercier

Christophe Mercier is the son of Juliet Mercier, who has traveled to Paris for ten years and has now returned to become a teacher for the young gentlemen of color in New Orleans. He returns to find his mother mad and his home in shambles, and his mother in bed with a young boy of only fourteen, Marcel Ste. Marie. Oddly, Christophe befriends the young man and it is with Marcel's help that Christophe begins the school.

A white man named Michael Larson follows Christophe from Paris. Michael has taken him from the hotel where Christophe had been sent ten years ago. The man takes care of Christophe, travels with him and provides him with the education that he is now imparting to the younger men in the area. Christophe is considered famous for his writing in Paris where he writes a novel and the young men of New Orleans worship him as he is known as a man of color, not passing for a white man. There are also many mysteries surrounding Christophe. There are rumors that the white gentleman, Michael, was more than a friend to Christophe, rumors that become worse once Michael dies. Through all of the trials that Christophe encounters, it is the delicate balance of privilege and degradation of his color that he fights the most to reconcile in his actions throughout the tale. Amongst these involve his relationship with Dolly Rose, a known woman of color who is courted only by white men and the education of a young slave named Bubbles. Along with this, and the madness of his mother's actions, Christophe must walk a fine line in order to keep his school a thriving place of education.



Anna Bella Monroe

Anna Bella Monroe is Marcel Ste. Marie's oldest and dearest friend. She is forced to relinquish her time with him as she has come of age to be courted, while Marcel is only a boy of fourteen. Although she loves Marcel dearly and would like nothing more than to become his wife, her appearance too closely resembles that of her African ancestors for his family's taste. In fact, Anna Bella hardly has any friends as many of the young girls comment too much on her looks and her darker skin. Anna Bella tries to wait for Marcel to admit that he wants to be with her. In fact, he often admits it to her but then declines her company. Anna Bella's parents are dead, so she is in the keep of Madame Elsie who oversees the boarding house. Madame Elsie drives Marcel away from Anna Bella any chance that she can and in the meantime, keeps Anna Bella waiting upon the young white men at the boarding house in order to have Anna Bella chosen to be their mistress. Eventually, a young man named Vincent Dazincourt requests that Anna Bella agree to become his and she agrees. After their child is born, Anna Bella realizes her mistake and she and Vincent part ways. Anna Bella finds herself free to be with Marcel, as she always wanted.

Juliet Mercier

Juliet Mercier is the mother of Christophe Mercier who has a reputation of being a mad woman. Many years earlier, Juliet's father, a mean old Haitian, moved into Juliet's home and sent her son, Christophe, to Paris for an education. However, her son goes missing from the guardian family in Paris and Juliet, having feared the worst, lets herself and the house go to ruins while she tends to her dying father. The young Marcel approaches her when he hears that her son Christophe may be returning in order to confirm the rumor. Juliet lures the boy inside to read to her as she has received letters from her son but is unable to read them. After her liaison with Marcel, she tries to tempt the boy back into her bed and at other times, portrays the perfect mother. At other times, she seems quite out of her mind. Either way, it is clear that she is a woman who carries her emotions on her sleeve and a grudge that will follow her to the grave.

Cecile Ste. Marie

Cecile Ste. Marie is the daughter of a rich plantation owner and a slave woman from Haiti who was taken from her dead father's body during the uprising of the slaves. Josette, who raised her as her own, brought her to New Orleans. Later, Cecile entered into an arrangement with a white gentleman to care for her and provide her with a livelihood. His name is Magloir Dazincourt. He is sixty years of age and passes away. His son-in-law, Philippe, takes over looking after Cecil. She bears him two children, Marcel and Marie, although she clearly favors Marcel and does everything she can for the welfare of the boy. Often, Cecile becomes cold with her daughter as she is jealous of the light skin that her daughter is born with.



Dolly Rose

Dolly Rose is a beautiful young mulatto woman whose charm and cutting wit have had many men fight duels over her. She often enters into the arrangements of being taken care of by white gentlemen, but they are frequently ended due to her wild behavior or temperament. She enters into one such arrangement with Vincent Dazincourt and gives birth to his daughter who dies at the age of four due to lockjaw. This loss drives Dolly into a wild grief and she attends parties directly after, staining her reputation within the community, but she is only trying to come up with a way to distract herself. She also is a childhood friend in Christophe, and she carries a fond and loving memory of him. She is angry about this within herself as Christophe is a man of color and so she is often cruel to him.

Jean Jacques

Jean Jacques is a carpenter whose dignity and art in wood catches the attention of Marcel Ste. Marie. Marcel is drawn to Jean Jacques after his aunt has commented that the man has taught himself everything he knows, including how to read and write. Marcel spends a great deal of time with the man and begins to learn a bit of history about his family and ancestors from Haiti. Jean Jacques has all this written within his journals and promises to give them to Marcel when he dies, but Cecile destroys the journals before Marcel can ever read them. It is the loss of Jean Jacques that throws Marcel into such a depression that many people in the community treat him with tender thoughts as though he is defective. However, he just longs for his only close friend.

Philippe Ferronaire

Philippe Ferronaire is the youngest son of a plantation owner and is spoiled in his youth. He eventually marries a young woman named Aglae, who is the eldest daughter of a distant cousin and in doing so, he inherits a large plantation called Bontemps. He tries very hard to follow the instructions left to him on how to run the plantation but feels as though he fails at every turn and this drives him to cruelty. In addition to this, Aglae seems to disrespect him frequently so he finds himself more comfortable and at home in the cottage of Cecile Ste. Marie. He is the father of her two children, Marcel and Marie. In all things, he appears to be a generous man to these children and to Cecile, but he actually steals the presents he provides them from his wife and her home. He also fathers another child, Lisette, with a slave woman from his parents' plantation, whom he gives to Cecile as a slave. He promises this child her freedom when she becomes of age and breaks the promise which leads to her mistreatment of Marie. He also has promised to send Marcel to Paris, which dominates the young man's mind. Later, he not only breaks the promise, but when the young Marcel appears on Bontemps to confront him, he treats him as a slave instead of his son.



Michael Larson-Roberts

Michael Larson-Roberts is a white gentleman who was visiting a hotel in France where he came upon a young Christophe. Christophe is malnourished and ill-treated so he takes the young boy away. They travel together all over Greece, Egypt, Rome, and Paris. He feeds and educates Christophe and becomes like a father, brother, and lover to the young man. Eventually, Michael's ties to Christophe become too much for the young man, and when Christophe leaves him, he follows Christophe to New Orleans. Many people think the worst of Michael, especially Christophe's mother who believes he has stolen the boy. When Michael falls ill to yellow fever, Christophe is beside himself and goes into a depression that finds him in the arms of the vindictive Dolly Rose, leading to a string of misjudgments on Christophe's part.

Vincent Dazincourt

Vincent Dazincourt is the son of Magloir Dazincourt and the brother of Aglae, Philippe's wife. He is a young man when he enters into an arrangement with Dolly Rose and fathers a daughter with her. He leaves for France for an education and on his return, he is told that his daughter has died. He attends the wake, only to be the center of Dolly's rage and another reason for her to be a cruel woman in the concerns of men. Later on, Anna Bella Monroe, with her calming beauty, enamors Vincent, and he makes arrangements to set her up in a house for him to call upon her at any time. Vincent truly loves her for her innocence and sweet nature, but once she becomes pregnant, he realizes that he is making the same mistake he has made before. He realizes the world that he is condemning his child to live in and despises himself for it.

Lisette

Lisette is the young slave daughter of Philippe and Zazu, who is promised by her father that she would be freed when she became of age, but she is not. She is raised serving the Ste. Marie family and watching the other children of Philippe as they received presents, money, and privileges from their father. Lisette becomes bitter in her jealousy of Marie Ste. Marie for her beauty and freedom, and because of this jealousy, she takes Marie to a voodoo priestess who has the young girl raped by several white men. Lisette regrets her actions so greatly that she is unable to live with them.

Rudolphe Lermontant

Rudolphe Lermontant is a respected member of the community and the undertaker of this area. He is a broad and loud man at home, who carries a quiet respect any time he is outside of his house. He often lends a hand where it is needed throughout the tale and holds a compassion for the troubled people within it. Rudolphe is the voice of respectable reason covering quiet rage. Although there are many times when his color bothers him, the only moment where Rudolphe loses his grasp on his control occurs



when a young white man follows his daughter home to his steps and publicly abuses her. He is sent to trial for the incident and wins the case which many in the community see as a victory. Rudolphe sees this as another example of the fact that he does not have the rights in order to protect his own child. He knows the things that he has had to endure in order to live amongst the whites, following their laws and the Creole ways in order to have his position. It disgusts him. Later, however, he works around these things in order to see his son happily married to Marie Ste. Marie, despite her ruined status.

Bubbles

Bubbles is young slave that is in the ownership of Dolly Rose. He is a talented boy when it came to tuning pianos, but Dolly Rose keeps him in rags and beats him. He becomes the subject of a great problem for Christophe who hates the institution of slavery and takes the boy in when Dolly Rose treats the boy too badly. He places the boy in the back of the classroom with the other children, but within a week, the other children are pulled from their classes. Eventually, Christophe submits and pulls the young man out of the class, but the boy returns to Dolly as he feels guilt over Christophe's situation. Later, Dolly sells Bubbles back to Christophe for the sum of one dollar so as to be cruel enough to make Christophe a slave owner.



Objects/Places

Bontemps

Bontemps is a large cane plantation, which belonged to Magloire Dazincourt and was left to Philippe Ferrinaire due to the wedding of Magloire's eldest daughter. It is a sprawling place in the country where the family has lived for generations. It is here that Philippe, Aglae, their children and Vincent all live. It contains a two-story home with large oaks, a cabin town where the slaves live, a swampland with timbre, and a refinery where the cane is cooked. It is also here that Marcel took a journey to see his father face to face in order to ask him why he would lie to him and in doing so, sets a fear in both Philippe and Vincent that their secret lives in New Orleans could haunt them. During this unwelcome arrival, Philippe beats Marcel and whips him with his riding crop. This is also the property, which Aglae and Vincent fight with Philippe for ownership. Due to the mortgages, which places the entire estate in debt, Philippe struggles to meet payments. After his death, his body is brought for burial here. It is believed by some that the fight over the property causes Philippe's decline in health and eventually his death. To many characters, Bontemps is their life and death.

Ste. Marie Cottage

Ste. Marie cottage in New Orleans is built for Cecile Ste. Marie at the request of Magloire Dazincourt and it was finished on the day he died. The construction of the building is under the supervision of Philippe and this is where he and Cecile have come to spend their time, while courting and later as lovers. The home of the Ste. Marie family and their two slaves, Zazu and Lisette, the home is small and finely furnished. Philippe comes to see this as his refuge. Once Marcel is old enough, he moves into the rooms about the garage to be out of his father's way when he visits. Later, Marie is removed from the cottage in order to stay out her mother's way once Philippe has left Bontemps for good. This is where Philippe Ferrinaire dies also, as well as his lover Zazu and where his daughter Lisette has hung herself after Marie's rape. Her body is found after Marcel has gone mad and has been there for some days. Once his childhood home and later a battle ground for anyone who dared cross Cecile's temper, the cottage is abandoned after Marie and Cecile's fight. It becomes Marcel's home as he begins to peruse his new life and seek out a new livelihood.

Secrtaire

The secrtaire is a table secretary that belongs to Aglae and has gone missing out of Bontemps. She has searched all the slaves cabins, but is unable to locate it amongst other items that has disappeared. It appears in the Ste. Marie cottage when Philippe brings it to Marie as a present, telling her that it is in the family for generations. Later on, the secrtaire reappears in the new home of Anna Bella Monroe as a present from



Marie. Marie tells her again that the piece is several generations old. Anna Bella loves it and the first thing she does with it is to write Marie as thank you note with it because to Anna Bella it signifies a friendship she has long wanted. Anna Bella's lover, Vincent Dazincourt who is Aglae's brother, discovers it. He knows this is his sister's yet he cannot take it from Anna Bella, so he questions her as to how she came by it. Anna Bella tells him it was a gift from Marie Ste. Marie and he knows that it was stolen from his sister by Philippe. Later on, Vincent uses this knowledge to check around the Ste, Marie cottage when he comes to deal with Philippe's body and when he believes Aglae blames herself. He finally tells her what has become of her belongings such as the secretaire.

Mercier House

The Mercier house is a three-story dilapidated old mansion in which Juliet Mercier lives. There is a brick fence that surrounds the property, which has been overgrown and contains a window, which the boys of the neighborhood slip letters for Christophe. The house has once been a beautiful home before Juliet's father arrived and sent Christophe away. It was then that Juliet had taken to letting the walls be overgrown, the walk to be covered by vines, the chickens to live inside with her, and the windows boarded over. Once her son, Christophe, arrives back from abroad, he begins fixing up the property in order to set up a school of the young colored gentlemen to attend. Many of the trunks that had lined the hallways were emptied and found to have pieces of art from all over the world. It is this house where Marcel where Marcel follows Juliet to ask if Christophe is really coming home. She seduces him at this residence. Later, this house becomes a sanctuary for Marcel away from the problems that the world has thrown at him. In this home Marcel learns what he needs for the exam in Paris. He also learns about his lover and how to please her, discovers Christophe's secret, and understands the peace that a loving family can provide.

Lermontant House

The Lermontant house is the home of Marcel's best friend, Richard Lermontant. It is a beautiful home, decorated in fine lace curtains and has a large fan window over the front door. This home is where Rudolphe is arrested when he tries to defend his daughter from a white man who harasses her. This also becomes Richard's prison when he hears of Marie's rape and later on, becomes their home when they return from Paris.

The Boarding House

The boarding house is where Anna Bella Monroe is raised by Madame Elsie, after her parents are killed. As Anna Bella reaches suitable age, Madame Elsie makes sure that Anna Bella is up to allow the young white gentlemen in at the late hours. In this way, she encouraged Anna Bella's interactions with potential suitors. The boarding house is



also where Philippe sends Vincent after the wake of his daughter, knowing that Anna Bella will be the one to admit him and that he can take comfort in her presence.

Anna Bella's House

Vincent Dazincourt builds this house for Anna Bella as a part of their romantic arrangement. Anna Bella decorates this home to please Vincent and it is where Vincent discovers the secretaire that Philippe has given Marie. Later on, this is also where Anna Bella gives birth to her son, Martin, and chooses to raise him.

Lola Dede's House

Lola Dede's house is a dilapidated home where she entertains white gentlemen and sells them the privilege of deflowering young colored women. This is where Lisette often disappears to in order to practice voodoo. It also where Lisette had taken Marie in order to obtain a charm and instead Marie is unfortunately raped by white gentlemen.

Cabinet Shop

The cabinet shop is owned by Jean Jacques. Marcel visits him everyday here and watches in wonder as the man creates beautiful furniture from the wood in the shop. This is also where Marcel meets a man that he respects and admires and where he learns of the wars in Haiti and the history of his people.

Dolly Rose's Flat

Dolly Rose lives in a flat with her daughter, Lisa. When her daughter dies, the flat is revealed to be barren of furnishings, which reflects the poor state in which they lived. For the wake of the girl, the Lermotant family furnished the flat with pieces from their own in order to hide Dolly's poverty from the visiting mourners. This is where the fights between Dolly and Vincent occur. Dolly also arranges a fight between Christophe and Captain Hamilton.

Dolly Rose's House

Later in the story, Dolly Rose takes over a large home where she houses young colored girls to entertain white gentlemen, while she actually takes residence over the garage. It is here that Marie Ste. Marie goes for security when she and her mother fight after her rape. It is in this home where Marie feels safe and discovers what a mother's love feels like. It is also where Marie feels that she belongs during this difficult time in her life.



Slave Block

The slave block is where the slaves in New Orleans are presented and purchased. Marcel has visited it once. He discovers that the block is beautifully polished as though Jean Jacques has spent days polishing it with his oils and rags, but then Marcel realizes that it is the feet of the slaves that have polished the block so. This leaves such an impression on Marcel that he tells Anna Bella all about it and later begins to look at Lisette and Zazu in a different light.

Nuits de Charlotte

Nuits de Charlotte is a book written by Christophe Mercier, which has made him famous in both Paris and in New Orleans. This book is changed into an opera which Christophe signs over the rights in order to obtain additional funds for him to build his school. It is also written in the style of a journal and published in New Orleans.

New Orleans

New Orleans is the main setting of the novel.



Themes

Prejudice

This story deals with the topic of prejudice in the times of the 1800's. There are many areas where this is boldly described such as Rudolphe's anger because he is unable to vote or even in the language in which derogatory statements are used as easily as a greeting. However, amidst the obvious racisms shown, such as the existence of slavery, there is also a subtle layer of prejudice as well, as shown in the treatment of both Anna Bella Monroe and Marie Ste. Marie. In the case of Anna Bella, the colored people of the area treat her poorly and insult her due to her more African physical features. Yet, it is Anna Bella who has won the heart of Vincent, the most honorable of the white gentlemen characters. This attraction is based on her African features, which Vincent finds comforting, as well as her kind heart and profound intelligence. In truth, Anna Bella is the most educated of all the female characters in the tale, but because she is female, this is not a desired quality in a woman of that day and age. Marie has the same problem, which arises in the opposite degree as, due to her fair complexion, she is considered a prize in the eyes of the colored people around her, yet she is considered by these same people as vain and arrogant. For this reason, they shun her as much as they do Anna Bella, yet if they had gotten to know her, they would have found a very gentle and kind soul. In fact, it is revealed that even her own mother had such jealousy of her that she grew to hate her because people would think that her mother was her colored nurse. Ironically, Marie's fair tone is exactly what these women like Cecile, who have entered into these arrangements of *plaisage*, have been striving to achieve.

There is also the prejudice of education, as in the case of Jean Jacques. Marcel is fascinated by the craftsmanship of Jean Jacques. He feels it beneath him to pick up a tool and assist the man because his breeding and education put him above this man who is well over twice his own age. One may be inclined to forgive Marcel for this as he is a young man and was raised this way, but as Cecile is the one who raised him, can one forgive her for raising him as such? Cecile, who was the daughter of a slave, has a slave in her own home, whom she knows to be the daughter of her lover, yet instead of taking to the girl, she despises her and threatens her. She even goes so far as to make the girl wait on her own children as though they were not siblings. Cecile finds this behavior acceptable as she considers herself a lady, and this child merely as slave, even though she shares the same blood as her own children. Philippe, too, has this ignorance when he considers his daughter Lisette. After all, he is the one who brought her to the Ste. Marie house to be the maid of his other two children and his mistress, yet he quarrels with her over the cost it will take to free her and does not take into consideration her feelings because, to him, she is no more than a favored slave. He made a mental comment that it was too bad regarding her looks, but that leaves open the question: if she had fairer skin or more Caucasian looks, would she have been more than a slave or would she have only possessed a higher value as a slave? As a whole, this society may have been oppressed by the white people of the times yet they too held



the same prejudices among their own kin and among other members of their community.

Parents

Almost each and every character in this tale has lacked the parental figures they desire or deserve. The two main characters show this admirably as they avoid their mother's wrath and cater to their father's fantasies of who they are, while he lies about himself. Marcel is in need of a father figure, which he finds in Jean Jacques. He loses him quickly however, leaving the hole in his heart for such a figure that is more open and raw than some of the other characters. Christophe recognizes this in Marcel and takes up the reins in guiding this young man, but as Marcel has a father who is constantly entering Marcel's home, promising the world and then recanting on his promises, this only makes the job more difficult on Christophe. Of course, Marcel is not the only one Philippe has broken his promise to. He has promised to set his daughter Lisette free when she was grown, but at the age of twenty-three, he uses the laws in order to keep from freeing her based on the monetary fees that would be involved in such a transaction. It is this constant neglect of this girl that leads her to seek revenge on him and Cecile by taking Marie to the house of Lola Dede. Lisette knows what was to be done to Marie in this house, but her anger and pain are so deep at this point that there is no way to save her from the bitterness in her heart, created by her father and his broken promises. Then again, Philippe is not the only parent in these children's lives either. Cecile has known of her daughter's proposed marriage to Richard, and she knows how her daughter is very much in love with her fiancé. When Philippe dies, she keeps Marcel in the country and sees to it that Marie is paraded all over the quadrone balls in order to entice a wealthy white gentleman so that her own needs would be seen to as well as those of her son. In this, Cecile sees her daughter as no more than a treasured slave in her own way and a pretty girl to be sold to the highest bidder. It is not completely surprising when Marie is raped and her mother beats her for her indiscretion that she finds the hands that comfort her and care for her as belonging to a warm and wonderful woman, Dolly Rose.

Even Anna Bella, who was raised at the boarding house after the death of her parents, has always thought of the love between her mother and father as perfect. So in turn, she rejects the idea of plisage and seeks her love with Marcel. When her love is not reciprocated, she easily comments on all the things she admired about her father when she talks of Vincent and her love for him. As a man who reminds her of her beloved father, she allows herself to love this man's similarities. Christophe has the most amusing, if not strange, parental relationship with his mother in the sense that the reader can at times see them as a married couple or as him raising her or even as siblings at times. Yet, whatever the actions are at times, there seems to be no real sense of guidance by Juliet to Christophe, although her love and devotion are far more real and apparent than that of the other parents in the tale. Their relationship is in constant flux as one moment they are fighting to the point where he storms out of the house and in the next, she is waiting on him as though she is his servant, not his mother. Of all the parental interactions, Juliet is the most difficult to follow because,



unlike Cecile, she is not a greedy and self-centered woman nor is she a vain liar like Philippe. She is also not an absent parent who is unable to help or guide her son. Since she is not defined like the other characters, the reader is forced to accept her character as the way she is presented, which coincides with the point of the tale which is what you get is what you get.

Love Affairs

True love is a wonderful dream, but in this tale, it is only a dream. The reader can find many of the characters fighting, denying, avoiding, lying to, or simply refusing to be in love with their true loves in this story. Since this is not a love story and is instead the story of people coming to understand themselves and the world around them, this is acceptable. However, this does not mean that the reader does not hope for a little joy for some of these characters. From the very beginning, it is obvious that Anna Bella and Marcel should be together, yet he persists in avoiding her and his feelings for her. Instead, every time he has a moment of weakness where he may go to her, he ends up in Juliet's bed. This is not to say that he is not enamored by Juliet but it is apparent that his heart belongs to Anna Bella.

The reader may be fooled by the way Marie and Richard find ways to be alone and express their love for one another, but just when it seems that these two may be the ones to demonstrate the happiness that one hopes to see living in this world, the young couple is pulled apart by the schemes of Cecile, Colette, and Louisa. As these women persist in keeping the two apart in order to pursue a more wealthy benefactor for Marie, they succeed in driving the young girl to such desperation that she winds up raped and in doing so, makes her no longer acceptable to Richard's family as a worthy wife. The couple are finally united, but after such trials that it is no longer possible to view them as young and in love but more as mature and compatible. The young love affair is thus ruined.

The reader is still left at odds over the relationship of Dolly Rose and that of Christophe. Are they young friends in love like Marcel and Anna Bella? This is the perception that may be taken but never confirmed. However, it is clear that Dolly Rose carries a longing for Christophe to be with her as when they speak during the wake of her daughter. However, she becomes vicious when he fails to do so, leaving him for Captain Hamilton to find alone in her bed. There are many hints that these two share a past and perhaps due to the similarities of Marcel and Christophe, they are seen following the same road in their love lives as well as their academic ones. Since it is never really confirmed, the reader cannot predict what may have happened or what either wishes to be. This emerges as the most romantic story in the book as the reader must make assumptions from what they see, choose to see, and what they imagine they see.



Style

Point of View

The novel has a third-person perspective, which is limited in view. This is proven by the fact that the narrator reports upon the actions and events that occur, as well as the dialogue that is exchanged. However, this is complicated slightly by the fact that there are times when the narrator comments on what a specific character is thinking about. Overall, the point of view is reliable which can be seen by the fact that nothing the narrator says is disproved, although the narrator does not judge characters, instead leaving the reader to come to their own conclusions about the characters and their actions. This is important because this tale deals heavily with the theme of racism, making it necessary for the reader to view the results caused by specific actions. This enables one to decide how they feel about these topics which are addressed throughout the novel when dealing with the repercussions.

The novel is written using a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue. This is effective as it allows the reader to see the interactions between characters, as well as the individual characters' thoughts and actions. This provides a more accurate portrayal of the circumstances in which these characters exist which allows the reader to make more accurate judgments. The viewpoint of the novel alternates between all of the characters, though the focus seems to be primarily on the Ste. Marie family.

Setting

"The Feast of All Saints" is set in the real world in New Orleans in the 1840s. The setting is realistic as the author portrays a possible scenario that may have existed, at least as far as the principles and ideas, in free black communities while slavery was still predominant in the south. The characters consist of white upper-class gentlemen, mulatto women and children, and black families. This novel greatly examines the differences in social classes that exist between these slightly physically different groups of people.

Bontemps is a large cane plantation owned by Philippe and this is where he beats Marcel for visiting as it risks embarrassing Philippe in front of his white family. The Ste. Marie cottage is where Cecile, Marcel, and Marie live. Marcel finds comfort and a new family at the Mercier house as he befriends Juliet and Christophe. The Lermontant house is the home of Marcel's best friend, Richard Lermontant. This also becomes Richard's prison when he hears of Marie's rape, and later on will be their home when they return from Paris. The boarding house is where Anna Bella Monroe was raised by Madame Elsie, after her parents were killed.

Vincent Dazincourt builds a house for Anna Bella, as a part of their romantic arrangement, and this is where she gives birth to their son. Lola Dede's house is



dilapidated where she entertains white gentlemen and sells them the privilege of deflowering young colored women. This is where Lisette takes Marie in order to obtain a charm, but where she was instead raped by white gentlemen.

Jean Jacques has a cabinet shop where Marcel visits him everyday and watched in wonder as the man create beautiful furniture from the wood in the shop. Dolly Rose takes over a large home where she houses young colored girls to entertain white gentlemen. The slave block is where the slaves in New Orleans are presented and purchased. Marcel visited it once and found the block itself beautifully polished as though Jean Jacques had spent days polishing it with his oils and rags, but then Marcel realizes that it is the feet of the slaves that have polished the block so. This left such an impression on Marcel that he told Anna Bella all about it and later began to look at Lisette and Zazu in a different light.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel tends to be stiff and formal. The sentences are constructed in a manner that was common in writing of the era. This language does not, however, hinder understanding. Instead, it allows the readers to immerse themselves in the setting of the novel by familiarizing them with the culture and terms that were commonly used. As the characters see themselves as ladies and gentlemen, they speak in language that conforms to the expectations for the social classes to which they have pretensions.

The language of the novel tends to characterize the different characters and their respective social classes. The novel is told through a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue, so the reader has the opportunity to become acquainted with the individual characters through their spoken language, rather than just the language of the narrator. The language used also distinguishes classes and education by the diction portrayed by certain characters, differentiating between whites, slaves, and mulattos. Throughout the novel, the language is effective at distinguishing characters and setting the tone without hindering the reader's comprehension of the narrative.

Structure

This novel consists of six hundred and twenty-six pages which are divided into three volumes. The first volume contains five parts with five sections in part one, six in part two, five in part three, seven in part four, and six in part five. Volume two contains six sections in the first part, seven in the second, and five in the third. The final volume consists of two parts which each contain seven sections. The chapters are not titled except by their volume, part, and section of the novel. The chapters are short but detailed, and varying amounts of time pass in each chapter, ranging from days to months.

"The Feast of All Saints" by Anne Rice is a tale of the New Orleans community of free men of color living within the laws of the white men that surround them. Each of the



characters in this tale encounter moments where they must accept that they have not the same rights as the white men, and yet, they must uphold the privileges that they have created for themselves within this area. Much of the tale revolves around a custom in the area called plisage, where a young woman of color would enter into an arrangement with a white gentleman who would provide for and protect her and her children. "The Feast of All Saints" is a interesting novel that demonstrates the racist atmosphere that permeated America's environs, even for free blacks.

The novel's pace varies. Although the action tends to be quick-paced, the incessant flashbacks slow the pace significantly. "The Feast of All Saints" is easy to read and highly entertaining.



Quotes

"I am a criminal, give up on me" (Volume 1, Part 1, Section 2, pg. 29.)

"What do you think Paris is, some paradise where you grow angel's wings? Where your skin turns to milk?" (Volume 1, Part 1, Section 2, pg. 32.)

"What had removed this man from the commonplace and given him of spinning straw into gold?" (Volume 1, Part 1, Section 4, pg. 64.)

"...I don't know that anyone would have taught me if I hadn't shown the will to learn. It was more than will, to tell the truth, it was a passion, a passion..." (Volume 1, Part 2, Section 3, pg. 79.)

"...But if ever there was something that is obviously supposed to remain spiritual it's the content of a book..." (Volume 1, Part 2, Section 6, pg. 112.)

"I've consulted them already but they are not workmen, they are slaves" (Volume 1, Part 4, Section 1, pg. 173.)

"God triumphs on the ruins of our plans" (Volume 1, Part 4, Section 1, pg. 175.)

"They think I have no mind" (Volume 1, Part 4, Section 1, pg. 185.)

"..the face is not pretty, but you know, well, the figure is something else..." (Volume 1, Part 4, Section 2, pg. 193.)

"It's a dangerous thing to really love someone," "it's a dangerous thing to be young and malleable and let that someone give you a consummate vision of the world" (Volume 1, Part 4, Section 3, pg. 210.)

"He needs me to need him again. And there's a monstrous injustice in all this, a monstrous injustice which no one comprehends here except me" (Volume 1, Part 4, Section 4, pg. 228.)

"...the world does not understand people who are pure of heart, it's made for people who cannot trust each other, and are not trustworthy themselves" (Volume 1, Part 4, Section 6, pg. 251.)

"Nothing matters really except the ties of blood. All the rest is vanity, all the rest is lies" (Volume 2, Part 1, Section 2, pg. 329.)

"Any death is hard, Vincent," "And one of the worst is the death of an innocent child" (Volume 2, Part 1, Section 2, pg. 332.)

"Richard, you know this is the time of temptation, this is the time when young men forget all about the vows they made in childhood, not just the vows they made to each other,



but the vows they made to themselves. The world has a way of closing in on us now, inundating us with the practical, and the enticing, and even the small" (Volume 2, Part 1, Section 4, pg. 358.)

"Life is for the living, ma chere," "What the dead think of is in God's time and wisdom is just fiction in our mind" (Volume 2, Part 2, Section 1, pg. 392.)



Topics for Discussion

Do you think Philippe intended to break his promises, or do you think that these actions were forced by circumstance?

What do you think was the linking connection that created the love between Cecile and Philippe?

Do you think there were reasons for Aglae's behavior toward Philippe and if so, what do you think that are?

Do you think Cecile feelings toward life, love, and money was an inherent trait or a learned one from her aunts and how so?

Why do you think it is so important to have a reputation in this community?

Which of the female characters do you think is the most devious and why?

Compare yourself to the character you relate to the most and explain why.

Which character do you feel you wanted to know more about and why?

With Anna Bella being so different from Cecile, and Vincent so different than Philippe, why do you think Vincent reacted to Marcel's trip to Bontemps the way he did?

Compare and contrast Anna Bella Monroe and Marie Ste. Marie.

Compare and contrast Dolly Rose and Marie Ste. Marie.

Why do you think Christophe is so reasonable regarding the affair between Juliet and Marcel?

What do you think was the largest betrayal in this plot and why?

What do you think was the best lesson Christophe taught to Marcel and why?

Why do you think Aglae was so upset in regards to finding out that Philippe's affair with Cecile had lasted eighteen years?