

Garden of Shadows Study Guide

Garden of Shadows by Virginia C. Andrews

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Plot Summary

Garden of Shadows by V.C. Andrews is the final book published in the Dollanganger series, but a prequel to the first novel, *Flowers in the Attic*. Olivia Winfield is a tall, unhappy spinster when she meets Malcolm Neal Foxworth. Olivia believes Malcolm is her knight in shining armor, come to rescue her from her loveless life. However, instead of giving love, Malcolm opens a world of secrets and obsession. Olivia soon finds herself emotionally abused to such a degree that she participates in cruel acts she never thought herself capable of. *Garden of Shadows* will answer a lot of questions for fans of the Dollanganger series, but it will also reveal a few new truths that will create new questions.

Olivia Winfield lost her mother at a critical age and wishes she still had her to talk to, especially when it comes to the long line of men who avoid Olivia due to her unusual height. Olivia's father has encouraged her to get an education in anticipation of her inability to find a man willing to marry her. Olivia has just about given up on finding love when Malcolm Neal Foxworth walks into her life. Malcolm has come to discuss business with her father, but he is so impressed with Olivia's independence that he asks her to dinner. Olivia is so happy with Malcolm's attentions that she agrees to marry him after only a few dates. It never occurs to Olivia to be concerned that Malcolm has never attempted to so much as share a goodnight kiss.

After the wedding, when Olivia arrives at her new home, Foxworth Hall, she discovers that her husband has little interest in playing the devoted husband. Malcolm wants a woman who can run his home with little input from him, who can represent him suitably in public, and who can provide an heir to his empire. Malcolm has gotten all that, and in return Olivia has gotten a cold, disturbed husband and a lonely existence. The birth of her two sons brings Olivia unending joy, but only irritates her husband, especially when the doctor announces that Olivia will be unable to have any more children. Malcolm wants a daughter now that he has an heir and feels as though Olivia has purposely chosen to prevent him from having all his desires.

Three years into their marriage, Malcolm's father, Garland, comes home with his bride. Malcolm dislikes his father's laid-back attitude and resents his intrusion into both Malcolm's home and business. Malcolm also claims to dislike Garland's extremely young bride, who reminds him of his mother. Olivia believes that Malcolm dislikes Alicia because of the child she is expecting. Olivia, out of a misguided sense of loyalty and jealousy, attempts to place Alicia in a dangerous situation in the attic to cause a miscarriage. Fortunately, Alicia is not harmed and she gives birth a short time later to a healthy boy, Christopher Garland Foxworth.

The two couples live together for three years. Over this time, the glaring differences between the two becomes more obvious. Garland and Alicia are highly affectionate, often disappearing for hours at a time in the afternoon to make love. Olivia and Malcolm are never affectionate with one another. Olivia is fascinated with Garland and Alicia, often finding herself listening to their lovemaking through the thin wall in her room or



following them to the lake to watch their encounters there. One afternoon, Olivia follows Alicia to the lake only to find Malcolm attempting to seduce her.

A short time later, Olivia is drawn to Alicia's room by screams in the night. Olivia discovers that Garland has had a fatal heart attack after fighting with Malcolm. Malcolm had been in Alicia's room, forcing himself on her. Over the next few months, Malcolm goes to Alicia again and again. Alicia tells Olivia that it is rape, but Olivia finds herself wondering if Alicia only wants her to believe her innocent. Alicia also announces she is pregnant. Olivia talks her into having the baby in secret and giving it to her and Malcolm. When Alicia agrees, Olivia goes to Malcolm with all she knows. Olivia promises to hide Alicia and care for her, then to take the child as her own. However, in exchange for this benevolence, Malcolm is to set up a trust fund for both his and Olivia's sons.

Olivia cuts Alicia's hair to keep her as unattractive as possible to Malcolm. Over the months, Olivia is the only person Alicia ever sees. Alicia appears to have some kind of mental breakdown in which she imagines Garland is still alive. When the time of the birth comes, Malcolm attends to Alicia with a midwife, forcing Olivia to wait in her room alone, making noises to convince the servants of her own impending delivery. When the child is born, it is discovered to be a perfect baby girl. Malcolm names her Corinne, for his own mother.

Malcolm spoils Corinne, keeping Olivia as far from her day-to-day care as possible. Corinne grows to be a spoiled, but delightful child. When Corinne is blooming into adolescence, her eldest brother, Mal, is killed in a motorcycle accident. A few short months later, her other brother, Joel, is also killed in an accident. Olivia and Malcolm are beside themselves with grief. John Amos, Olivia's cousin and new butler to Foxworth Hall, helps them find solace in the Bible. When Alicia writes to inform them she is dying, Olivia and Malcolm agree to take on her son Christopher and put him through college. Christopher is a bright, delightful young man who immediately begins an affectionate relationship with them all. John Amos warns Olivia frequently that there is something unnatural about Christopher's relationship with Corinne, but she refuses to listen until the day she finds them making love in the Swan Room.

Olivia and Malcolm are stunned by Christopher and Corinne's relationship, especially since they are the only ones who know the two are half-brother and sister. Malcolm attempts to convince Corinne the inappropriateness of the relationship, but Corinne will not listen. Corinne and Christopher run away, taking a new last name and marrying. Olivia keeps tabs on them through a private detective and is informed each time they have a child. When Corinne writes to let them know of Christopher's death, Olivia makes the decision not to tell Malcolm about the children. In fact, Olivia comes up with a scheme, with John Amos's help, to hide the children until Malcolm's death.



Prologue and Part 1: Chapters 1-2

Prologue and Part 1: Chapters 1-2 Summary

This novel is a prequel to *Flowers in the Attic*, the first novel in the Dollanganger series. This novel tells the story of Olivia Winfield Foxworth, the unnamed grandmother who locks her four grandchildren in a secluded second story bedroom of her home, Foxworth Hall, for more than three years.

The prologue is simply a letter written by Olivia Winfield Foxworth informing her readers that she has written this story to be opened twenty years after her death in order to explain her side of the story told by her grandchildren.

The First Bud of Spring. Olivia has a dollhouse so expensive it is kept under glass to keep her from damaging it. Olivia believes the dollhouse represents a perfect life that she aspires to have one day. However, Olivia is so tall and believes she is so unattractive that she will never find a husband. Olivia's father seems to agree because he has encouraged her to get an education and to work as his bookkeeper. When Olivia meets Malcolm Neal Foxworth, a man who is good-looking, taller than her, and interested in her intelligent mind, she believes her fortunes have changed. They go out to dinner and Malcolm tells Olivia that he admires her education and the fact that she does not act unintelligent and simple minded in order to appear flirtatious. Olivia believes all her fantasies are coming true in Malcolm, especially when he asks her to marry him after only a few short hours together. It never occurs to Olivia to be concerned that Malcolm has never attempted to kiss her or show any type of affection.

My Wedding. Malcolm is anxious to have a quick wedding so that he might return to Virginia and his business. Olivia buries herself in wedding preparations, including having her mother's wedding dress altered in order to wear it on her own special day. When the day arrives, only Olivia's father, aunt, and cousin John Amos attend. After the brief wedding, Olivia and Malcolm go to her father's house for a short reception. John Amos takes Olivia aside and promises to be there for her at any time, suggesting to Olivia that he saw something in Malcolm that she herself had missed. Olivia dismisses this thought, however, and happily sets out to take a train to her new home. On the train, Malcolm is cold, distant, and shows Olivia his frugal side when he refuses to allow her to order a large meal after the stressful day. When they arrive in Virginia, Malcolm introduces Olivia formally to the small staff of Foxworth Hall and has her shown to her bedroom, a room that has clearly been hastily put together for her use. Olivia prepares for bed, hoping Malcolm will come to her in the night.

Prologue and Part 1: Chapters 1-2 Analysis

This novel begins with a letter from Olivia Winfield Foxworth claiming that others have told her story, but have never attempted to understand her motivations in those stories.



Olivia is using this novel to attempt to set the record straight. This informs the reader that this character acknowledges her crimes, but seems to feel that she had proper motivation for what she has done. Readers familiar with these other stories will recall Olivia's few acts of kindness and recognize that she did what she thought was right in God's eyes. However, this does not excuse her darkness in locking four children in a secluded bedroom for more than three years. The reader is deeply curious, however, to learn what happened to this woman to make her believe this was the right thing to do.

Olivia begins her story by describing herself as a tall, awkward spinster who had lost all hope that she would ever have the happy marriage and contented children she has always dreamed of. Therefore, when Malcolm Neal Foxworth walked into her father's house, she fell under his spell immediately, missing the warning signs that his interest in her had little to do with love. The reader sees these signs, the fact that he never kisses her or even willingly holds her hand, and the urgency in which Malcolm pushes the wedding date. Malcolm clearly has married Olivia for reasons other than love. The only question the reader has is how Olivia is going to handle this realization when it finally comes. Olivia is a naive young woman at the beginning of this story, a young woman with the same dreams and hopes as other girls her age. Olivia is likeable in these early chapters, leaving fans of the Dollanganger series conflicted about this character, but not surprised to find she was as much a victim as everyone else.



Part 1: Chapters 3-4

Part 1: Chapters 3-4 Summary

The Ugly Duckling and the Swan. Olivia wakes the morning after her arrival at Foxworth Hall to find Malcolm already gone to the office. Olivia begins taking over the reins of Foxworth Hall by exploring its rooms on her own. Olivia is shocked when she walks into the Swan Room, the room Malcolm told her the night before once belonged to his mother. This room contains an enormous Swan bed and luxurious furnishings that appear contrary to the conservative feel of the rest of the house. Olivia sits on the bed and tries to imagine what Malcolm's mother was like. When Malcolm catches her in this room, Olivia attempts to ask him about his mother. It is immediately clear to Olivia that Malcolm is obsessed with his mother, a woman who abandoned him and his father when he was only five. In his obsession, Malcolm talks about his mother's beauty and sexual allure as he forces himself on Olivia for the first time.

The Ghosts of the Past. Olivia is heartbroken over Malcolm's treatment of her and finds herself stumbling on the realization that her husband has little affection in his heart for her. As a result, Olivia vows to become the perfect wife in order to earn her husband's admiration, if not his love. Malcolm announces he will be throwing a party to celebrate their marriage and to introduce Olivia to his friends and business associates. The party preparations are being handled by Malcolm and the staff, so Olivia has more time to explore her new home. Olivia happens into the attic and discovers a great many treasures in the furniture and clothing stored there. Olivia makes plans to bring some light into the house with the bird cages in the attic, but is stopped when she learns Malcolm's mother decorated the house in the same way and Malcolm does not like it.

Part 1: Chapters 3-4 Analysis

Focusing on setting, Olivia takes the reader on a detailed exploration of Foxworth Hall. One of the most important rooms in the house is the Swan Room. This room is an expensively decorated room that is sexual, more sensual than any other room in the house. This room once belonged to Corinne Foxworth, Malcolm's mother, and it has been kept as she liked it for more than twenty years. The fact that the room still exists in its entirety tells the reader that someone has kept it this way, perhaps hoping for the owner's return. Olivia believes Corinne has died, but Malcolm tells her that she actually left her family in order to be with other men. Malcolm is clearly upset by this, having become obsessed with his mother. This obsession clearly has a sexual edge to it, not only because of his mother's decision to leave for sexual freedom, but clearly because Malcolm is turned on by being in the room. This makes the reader wonder if there was some inappropriateness between Malcolm and his mother, or if this is simply something that has developed in Malcolm's own mind.



Olivia wants to bring happiness into Foxworth Hall, to bring happiness into her own life, but Malcolm stops her at every turn. This creates a situation in which Olivia is stuck between attempting to please her cold husband and finding some happiness in her own life upon the realization that she rushed into a marriage that will never bring to light the fantasies she has held onto for so long.



Part 1: Chapters 5-6

Part 1: Chapters 5-6 Summary

My Wedding Party. Olivia finds herself overdressed for her own wedding party as the guests arrive in the latest fashion, shorter dresses with dropped waists. As Olivia mingles, joining guests in mid-conversation, she soon becomes aware that most of the talk is about her and it is not favorable. At one point, Olivia sees her husband go into his library with a female guest and later becomes aware that they were engaging in heavy flirtation, the same type Malcolm claims to dislike, while she is suffering at the hands of negative gossips. That night, Malcolm comes to Olivia's room and demands that she provide a male heir as he forces himself upon her.

Fathers and Sons. Olivia gives birth to a son, Malcolm Neal Foxworth Jr., nine months after her wedding party. Malcolm is determined to have another child. When Olivia becomes pregnant again when Mal is two, Malcolm is convinced it will be a girl. This second pregnancy is difficult for Olivia and their son, Joel, is born prematurely and sickly. Malcolm is deeply disappointed to have a second son, especially such a weak specimen, and he becomes irrational when told that Olivia cannot have any more children. It is as if Malcolm believes Olivia has done this intentionally. Olivia finds herself alone in raising her children as Malcolm dislikes being around them, even banning them from the family dinner table. When Mal is three, Olivia gets word that her father has died. Malcolm forces Olivia to miss the funeral, but allows her to attend to her father's business. During this time, Olivia meets with John Amos again, her cousin who is now her only family. When Olivia returns to Foxworth Hall, she learns that her father-in-law is coming home from his extended honeymoon in Europe.

Part 1: Chapters 5-6 Analysis

When Malcolm throws Olivia a party, he introduces her to his social circle, but Olivia is not accepted. In fact, Olivia is openly spurned. Malcolm is nowhere to help her. Instead, Malcolm is busy flirting with one of his own guests, leaving Olivia alone to deal with the ostracizing of his friends. Olivia is clearly alone in her new world, a situation that would affect even the healthiest psyche. Later, when Olivia provides an heir to her cold, distant husband, he is uninterested in the child or its health. When Olivia fails to provide a daughter, Malcolm becomes irate. It is clear to the reader that all Malcolm wanted Olivia for was to provide him with heirs and to care for his home. Malcolm has no sense of loyalty to Olivia and no affection for her. Malcolm is a cold, distant husband and father who abuses his family every chance he gets with his distance and his lack of emotional connection.



Part 1: Chapters 7-8

Part 1: Chapters 7-8 Summary

Malcolm's Stepmother. Garland, Malcolm's father, returns from his three year honeymoon to Europe with his very young, very pregnant wife. Malcolm is shocked to see that he is about to have a sibling, but not as shocked as Garland is to learn his only child has married and made him a grandfather twice over. Over dinner, Alicia tells stories about their wedding trip, expressing herself with such honesty and openness that Olivia cannot help but admire her. Alicia is exactly the kind of woman Malcolm claims to dislike, a woman very much like his own mother. However, as the evening continues, it is clear that Malcolm is taken in with Alicia's outgoing personality.

Olivia overhears a conversation between Garland and Alicia when everyone retires to their rooms that night, and finds herself jealous of their easy intimacy. The next morning, Olivia is left alone with Alicia when the men go to work. Olivia listens to Alicia talk about how she and Garland fell in love, shocked at Alicia's young age, fourteen, when Garland first expressed his desires for her. During the rest of the day, Alicia follows Olivia around, asking lots of questions about Foxworth Hall. Olivia feels threatened, afraid Alicia will want to take over the running of the large home. When Alicia shows interest in the attic, Olivia encourages her, all the while hoping Alicia would fall and have a miscarriage. However, Alicia survives the dangers of the attic to give birth to a son a short time later.

Days of Passion. Christopher Garland Foxworth is a perfect baby with his mother's perfect features. Olivia finds herself both jealous and envious of the child and his parents. When Garland and Alicia begin spending a great deal of time indulging their passions, Olivia finds herself eavesdropping on their lovemaking through the thin walls of her bedroom beside theirs. Once, Olivia even finds herself following Garland and Alicia to the lake to watch them make love beside the water. A short time later, Malcolm comes to Olivia and tells her that Garland has changed his will, leaving a bulk of his estate to Alicia, as well as dividing the business equally between Malcolm and Christopher. Malcolm is made the executor. Malcolm should be happy with this, but is not afraid his father will change his mind again.

Alicia announces her intention of moving into the Swan Room. Malcolm is against this, but his objections are met with ridicule and a thinly veiled accusation that he was the reason his mother left in the first place. A few days later, Olivia finds herself in the trophy room next to the Swan Room and she discovers a hole cut in the wall that looks on the Swan Room. Olivia wonders if Malcolm made this hole recently or as a five-year-old boy. About this same time, Malcolm brings in a teacher to instruct his boys. Olivia dislikes this teacher and the classroom in the attic they are forced to use, but Malcolm will not listen to her griping. Then, one afternoon, Olivia follows Alicia to the lake and finds Malcolm there attempting to seduce her.



Part 1: Chapters 7-8 Analysis

Garland and Alicia return to Foxworth Hall for the first time since Olivia's arrival and change the entire dynamic of the house. What was once a dark, unhappy place is suddenly filled with laughter and happiness, thanks to Alicia. Alicia is only nineteen, a newlywed who is clearly deeply in love with her new husband. Alicia is vibrant, exciting, beautiful, and happy, everything that Olivia is not. Olivia feels self-conscious beside Alicia, aware that the servants compare them and Olivia always comes up short. This is a blow to Olivia's already shaking self esteem.

Malcolm claims to detest his mother and all women who remind him of her. However, Malcolm has already shown that women like his mother also excite him and inspire him sexually. Therefore, when Alicia, a woman exactly like his mother, comes into his home, it is not surprising that Malcolm becomes sexually attracted to her, especially when she moves into his mother's room, completing her role as his new mother. This places Olivia in the awkward position of being caught between her husband, who she is aware does not love her, and a woman she is both jealous and envious of. This situation cannot lead to anything good for Olivia.



Part 2: Chapters 9-11

Part 2: Chapters 9-11 Summary

Days Colored Black. Malcolm punishes six-year-old Mal for playing the piano after he told him not to, causing Alicia to look down on Olivia for not protecting her child better. When Christopher turns three, Alicia throws a child-friendly party that Olivia believes will upset Malcolm, but she is surprised to find him treating Alicia with partiality, as though drawn to her like the children for whom the party was thrown. That night, Olivia is drawn to the Swan Room by screams. Olivia finds Garland unconscious on the floor and Malcolm disheveled. After the doctor comes and pronounces Garland dead, Alicia tells Olivia that Garland and Malcolm fought after Malcolm came into her bedroom and began to force himself on her. It was the fight that caused Garland's fatal heart attack. Olivia confronts Malcolm, but he blames the entire episode on Alicia. Olivia becomes the devoted friend to Alicia through the funeral and in the weeks that follow. Alicia is depressed, less like her normal self. Olivia confronts her and tells her she needs to make an attempt at returning to normal for the children. Olivia even suggests that Alicia take her inheritance and begin a new life somewhere else, but Alicia claims she would not even know how.

Malcolm Has his Way. Over time, Alicia again falls into a depression. When Olivia goes to confront her about it, Alicia accuses Malcolm of rape. In fact, Alicia claims that she has screamed during these attacks and Olivia admits to hearing her once. Alicia also says that she is pregnant. When asked if Malcolm knows, Alicia says that Malcolm wants her to have the baby and give it to him. Olivia immediately comes up with a scheme in which Alicia will pretend to leave the house, then return and have the baby in secret. Olivia will hide her in the secluded second floor room and keep everyone away, even Malcolm, while pretending to be pregnant herself. Then, when the baby comes, Olivia will pretend it is her own.

Malcolm's Way, My Way. Olivia feels so empowered by the scheme to hide Alicia away, she continues the scheme by forcing her will on Malcolm. Olivia confronts Malcolm with Alicia's pregnancy, telling him she knows what he has done because she saw him at the lake with her. Olivia then tells Malcolm that she will clean up his mess by caring for Alicia during her pregnancy and then taking on the child as her own. Olivia then tells Malcolm that she will do this only if he promises to create a trust fund for each of her sons in the amount of one million dollars. Olivia also insists that her sons stop receiving their education in the attic schoolroom, but instead begin attending public school. Finally, Olivia insists that Malcolm not spend any more time with Alicia. Malcolm agrees to all of Olivia's terms. When Alicia begins her second trimester, Olivia arranges for her to leave the house, telling the servants that they will all be let go when Alicia leaves.



Part 2: Chapters 9-11 Analysis

Malcolm has become obsessed with Alicia much the way he is with his own mother, attempting to seduce her, watching her through a hole in the wall, and finally forcing himself on her in the night. This obsession has become out of control, causing the death of Malcolm's own father. Olivia, surprisingly, does nothing about what her husband has become. When Alicia admits that Malcolm has been raping her on a regular basis, calling her by his mother's name, neither the reader nor Olivia is surprised. It seems the Olivia does not blame Malcolm for his darkness, perhaps because she understands that it is a mental illness. The setting of the novel might also come into play in this as well, suggesting that because of the time in which the novel is set, it was not the woman's place to handle her husband's aberrant behavior. It was simply the wife's job to live with her husband's behavior.

Alicia becomes pregnant as a direct result of Malcolm's obsession and behaviors. This causes Olivia to have to take charge of the situation. Rather than encouraging Alicia to go to the local law enforcement, Olivia decides to hide her in the house and take her child, raising it as her own, again perhaps touching on the setting of the novel. Olivia is empowered, feeling in control for the first time since she married Malcolm, and this makes her feel good and strong. Olivia has finally found a way to both control what is happening around her and to take some intimacy and control with her husband. It is a change in Olivia that the reader has not anticipated, but it is a change that creates a woman who might someday lock her four grandchildren in the attic.



Part 2: Chapters 12-13

Part 2: Chapters 12-13 Summary

The Prisoner and the Warden. Olivia takes Alicia into the secluded north wing room when she returns late that night. The first thing Olivia does is cut Alicia's hair short so that Malcolm will not be attracted to her. When she is done, Olivia puts the cuttings in Malcolm's trophy room. Olivia is the only one who will have contact with Alicia during her confinement, cooking for her and providing her only source of companionship. At first, Alicia begs to see Christopher and complains about the situation. However, with time Alicia begins to live in a fantasy world where Olivia does not exist and Garland is still alive. Olivia and Christopher, Alicia's son, grow close and Christopher begins to call her Mother. Their relationship becomes so close that Christopher is jealous when Olivia tells him she is expected a new baby. One night, Olivia hears a noise in the north wing and believes that Malcolm is sneaking into Alicia's room. Olivia decides to surprise them together by going through the attic and into the room. However, the light goes out and Olivia becomes lost in the massive attic, causing her to become deeply frightened. When Olivia finally finds her way out, she vows to never enter the attic again.

Christmas Gift. Over their Thanksgiving break from boarding school, Olivia tells her son that she will soon be giving birth to a brother or sister. Christopher takes it hard, afraid that the new baby will replace him in Olivia's affections. When Olivia goes to check on Alicia with pillows strapped to her belly, Alicia forces her to feel the baby's movements, making fun of her pretend pregnancy. When the boys again come home for Christmas, Olivia is helping them decorate the Christmas tree when she hears Alicia calling out. Olivia runs to the room to check on her and finds her in labor. Malcolm insists Olivia go to her room while he and the midwife deal with Alicia. In a few hours, Malcolm brings Olivia their new daughter, whom he has decided to call Corinne, after his own mother. When Olivia later emerges from her room to introduce the boys to their new sister, she discovers that Alicia has taken Christopher and gone. Later, Malcolm replaces the Christmas tree with a much larger one, throwing an expensive, luxurious party like nothing he has ever done before to introduce baby Corinne to society. Olivia hears the guests discuss how the baby looks nothing like her, and for once Olivia stands up for herself, putting these rude people in their place.

Part 2: Chapters 12-13 Analysis

Olivia never really tells the reader that she dislikes Alicia or that she did not believe her story of rape at the hands of Malcolm. However, this becomes very clear as Olivia takes delight in locking Alicia away in a secluded second story bedroom, becoming her personal warden. Not only does Olivia hide Alicia from the world and drive her very near insane, but she becomes a mother to Alicia's perfect child. Olivia feels powerful as she keeps Alicia hidden and controls her husband's desire through her insistence that he not spend time with Alicia while she is in their home. All of this foreshadows the events of



the first book of this series, *Flowers in the Attic*, and Olivia's role in keeping four children imprisoned in this same room.

When Corinne is born, something changes in Malcolm. Rather than being the disinterested father he has been with Olivia's two boys, Malcolm becomes indulgent, easily spending more money on his daughter than he ever would have dreamed of spending on a party for his two boys. This leaves the reader with the impression that Malcolm cares more about this child because it is female, and perhaps because the mother is someone who reminds him so much of the only woman he has ever loved, his own mother.



Part 2: Chapters 14-15

Part 2: Chapters 14-15 Summary

Corinne. Malcolm immediately takes over the care of the new baby, hiring a nurse and instructing her that Olivia is to have no say over the baby's care. Malcolm also hires a special nanny when Corinne is only three, in order to teach Corinne the proper manners of a young woman. Corinne is given special attention, allowed to eat at the dinner table as a toddler instead of waiting until she is six, like Mal and Joel. It is clear to everyone that Corinne is the apple of her father's eye, including Mal and Joel who find themselves continuously criticized by their cold, distant father. This situation causes a great deal of tension between Olivia and Malcolm, but it does nothing to lessen the deep adoration they both feel for their daughter.

When Mal and Joel reach the age of eighteen and come into their trust funds, Olivia sits them down and warns them that their father will want to take over control of their money. Olivia warns them not to allow this or they will never have access to the money again. About this same time, Malcolm sits Corinne down and makes her promise she will never leave him. However, when Corinne asks to move into the Swan Room, Malcolm refuses, afraid the history of that room will corrupt his perfect little girl. Just to goad Malcolm, Olivia begins allowing Corinne to visit that room.

The Blackest Day. Olivia is outside one day when Corinne comes to her and announces that she has become a woman, she has gotten her first menses. They talk for a little while and Corinne tells Olivia how excited she is about falling in love and sharing herself with a man one day. As they make their way to the front of the house, Mal pulls up on a motorcycle. Malcolm has told Mal repeatedly he is not to buy a motorcycle, but Mal has done it with his own money. Corinne wants a ride and Olivia allows it, as long as it is only to the end of the driveway. Malcolm comes outside as the children drive away. Malcolm begins arguing with Olivia over the motorcycle when Corinne suddenly returns in tears. Mal has lost control of the bike and driven over a cliff. John Amos comes for the funeral and when it is over, Olivia asks him to stay on as the butler. John Amos, who is something of a preacher, helps Olivia turn to God for answers in the loss of her son. Joel, who is also heartbroken over the death of his brother, goes on tour with an orchestra.

Part 2: Chapters 14-15 Analysis

As Corinne grows, a rift grows between Malcolm and the rest of his family. Malcolm is so doting on Corinne that it underscores the apathy he has felt for his own sons since their birth. Olivia constantly fights Malcolm on this, but it is clear to the reader that Olivia enjoys having her sons to herself. The only thing Olivia clearly dislikes is that Malcolm has taken over the care of Corinne and shut Olivia out of her life, despite the fact that



Olivia adores this beautiful little girl whose birth has become so entwined in Olivia's mind with power that she accepts her as her own.

Corinne is spoiled by an indulgent father who imagines he finally has someone like his mother, but who will never leave him. This is a dangerous situation because as a spoiled little girl, Corinne will grow into a spoiled woman who will believe that she can have anything she wants. Malcolm has created a monster that could come back and bite him.

Olivia has created her world around her boys. When Mal dies and Joel goes away on tour with an orchestra, Olivia has nothing left but a spoiled daughter who is closer to her father than her mother and a husband who never did love her. Olivia turns to her cousin, John Amos, and religion in order to fill the holes left by her sons. This begins to create the woman that readers of *Flowers in the Attic* are familiar with.



Part 3: Chapters 16-17

Part 3: Chapters 16-17 Summary

Shadows and Light. Olivia spends the winter alone, studying with John Amos and waiting for letters from her beloved children. When spring comes, it brings the sad news that Joel has died in an avalanche while hiking with a group from the orchestra. Olivia is beyond herself with grief at this news. When the report comes from the police, Olivia plans a memorial service for her youngest son. Malcolm refuses to go, refusing to believe his son is dead without a body to bury. Olivia takes this as a further sign of Malcolm's indifference to his children, but John Amos sees it as crippling grief. John Amos begins visiting Malcolm in his study, helping him turn his grief toward the Bible. Through religion, Olivia and Malcolm finally settle into a cordial, almost happy, relationship. That same summer, Olivia and Malcolm receive a letter from Alicia after fifteen years of silence. Alicia is dying of cancer and she wants Malcolm to take Christopher in, to give him the education his name deserves. Olivia sees this as a second chance and convinces Malcolm to do as Alicia requests.

Christopher Garland Foxworth. Christopher has become an intelligent, gentle young man, bringing new light into Foxworth Hall. Olivia is instantly taken with him and Malcolm too shows interested in the young man. It is Corinne, however, who is really brought out of her shell of grief by Christopher's attentions. The only person in the household who is not taken in by Christopher is John Amos. John Amos warns Olivia that the relationship between Corinne and Christopher is not proper and should be closely monitored. Olivia ignores this advice, simply happy to have Christopher back in her nest. At Christmas, Malcolm again throws a big party in Corinne's honor, giving the neighbors another chance to gossip on Corinne's differences from Olivia. This time Olivia ignores the vicious gossip.

During Christopher's years at Yale, Corinne attends a high school near him and Olivia learns that they spend a great deal of time together while at school. When they are home, Olivia notices how much time they spend together and how affectionate they are to one another. Again John Amos warns her this is not normal, but Olivia again ignores his concerns. The day Christopher receives his acceptance letter to Harvard Medical School, Olivia rushes upstairs to give it to him. However, Olivia cannot find him in his own room or Corinne's. As Olivia wanders the halls, looking for Christopher, she hears noises coming from the Swan Room. Olivia enters to find Christopher and Corinne in the middle of making love.

Part 3: Chapters 16-17 Analysis

Olivia has lost both her sons to accidents within a year of one another. This is devastating to her because she has created her happiness around these boys. Malcolm too is shattered by this loss, suggesting that he cared a great deal more for his sons



than he ever allowed anyone to know. This leaves Corinne as their only surviving child, making her that much more precious to them.

Christopher, Malcolm's half brother and Corinne's half brother, returns to Foxworth Hall upon the death of his mother, Alicia. Christopher replaces some of the emptiness left by the deaths of Mal and Joel. However, his relationship with Corinne immediately sets off warning bells for highly religious John Amos, Olivia's cousin who has come to live at Foxworth Hall as the butler. Olivia ignores his warnings because she is desperate to find happiness after so much tragedy. Olivia wants to be a good person, she wants to see only the good in people. However, this proves to be a warning she should have heeded, as she learns when she finds Corinne and Christopher, brother and sister, making love in the dreaded Swan Room.



Part 3: Chapters 18-20

Part 3: Chapters 18-20 Summary

The Wages of Sin. Olivia rushes to the library and tells Malcolm what she has caught Christopher and Corinne doing. Christopher and Corinne come into the room and begin arguing their right to be in love. Malcolm warns them that their actions are sinful, that they are committing incest and any children they might have would be seeds of the devil. Corinne refuses to listen, insisting that people have married closer relatives in history and nothing bad came of it. Malcolm demands that Christopher and Corinne leave his home unless they are willing to end their relationship. The young couple walks out of the house, without taking any belongings at all. Immediately upon their departure, Malcolm collapses. Malcolm has suffered a small stroke and a heart attack. Olivia takes charge of Malcolm's business affairs, once again finding power in Malcolm's weakness. In the months after Christopher and Corinne's departure, Olivia hires a private detective to trace them. Olivia learns they have taken the name Dollanganger and that Corinne is expecting her first child.

The End of the Line. Olivia is informed each time Corinne and Christopher have a child, as well as the perfection of these children. Olivia elects not to tell Malcolm about them, aware that he would fall in love with these children in time and forgive Corinne her actions. Olivia has become stronger in her religious beliefs and knows that these children go against everything God has taught her. When Corinne's letter comes, informing her of Christopher's death, Olivia decides to allow her to come home. However, she again makes the decision not to tell Malcolm about the children. With John Amos's counsel, Olivia comes up with the plan to hide the children in the same room in which Corinne herself was born.

Eyes that See. The night Corinne returns with the children, Olivia is taken by the children's beauty and must steel her heart against falling in love with them. Olivia takes the children to their prison and informs them of the rules, making it clear the boys are not to share a bed with the girls or at any time be in a position to see their nakedness. Olivia knows these children are evil and will commit evil, but she wants to prevent as much of it as possible. Then Olivia locks the door behind them and prepares to give Corinne back to Malcolm.

Part 3: Chapters 18-20 Analysis

It is interesting to note that when Olivia catches Christopher and Corinne in bed, neither she nor Malcolm bothers to tell them the truth about their relationship. Perhaps things might have been different had the couple known they shared the same mother, not just a father/grandfather. At least with this knowledge, they might have made a more informed decision about having children. However, no one wants to admit to their sins,

except for the young couple who do not have the information needed to fully understand their sins.

Corinne has always gotten everything she wanted, so it is not a surprise when she walks away with Christopher and later returns when Christopher dies. Olivia loves her daughter so much that she is willing to do just about anything for her. This includes hiding her children in an attempt to erase Corinne's biggest sin in life, the marriage between her and her half-brother. To do this, however, Olivia must steel herself against falling in love with these children, something she finds surprisingly difficult. However, the reader will recall the sense of power Olivia felt when she held Alicia captive in this same room. Perhaps a part of her wants to hide these children because it will give her power over Corinne, a child she has never been able to control, has never had power over.



Characters

Olivia Winfield Foxworth

Olivia Winfield is the ugly duckling daughter of a rich businessman in Connecticut. Olivia is not so much as ugly as lacking a sense of self-esteem because of her unusual height. Olivia's father seems to recognize the difficulty Olivia has in finding a husband and encourages her to get an education in order to help her support herself should she never marry. This also allows Olivia to take part in her father's business and keep her occupied. When Malcolm Neal Foxworth comes to Connecticut to discuss business with her father, Olivia is taken with his unusual beauty and that fact that he is actually taller than her, something unique in most men. When Malcolm proposes after only a few dates, Olivia feels lucky to have found someone interested in her. However, Olivia is too naive to understand that Malcolm wants a wife to fulfill a role, not because he is in love.

Olivia moves to Foxworth Hall and is immediately thrust into the role of mistress of the house. Olivia discovers that her husband is unusually obsessed with his mother, a woman who ran away when he was only a child, leaving him feeling abandoned. It is because of this experience that Malcolm has chosen to marry a woman who had few suitors and who was not overly feminine, because Olivia is as different from his mother as a woman can be. Unfortunately, Olivia also realizes about this same time that her husband does not love her. Not only this, but none of her neighbors like her either. Olivia finds herself very much alone in her marriage and her new home. Olivia is determined to make it work to her advantage, however, and she sets out to become the best wife and mother for Malcolm she can be.

Olivia is emotionally and physically abused in her marriage. Olivia's husband becomes obsessed with another woman just a few years into their marriage and places Olivia in a position where she must become warden of sorts to her husband's lover until she gives birth to a child conceived in this affair. This causes Olivia some emotional damage that will come into play later in her life. Olivia also loses her two sons, both in accidents, causing her to turn to religion. The combination of the emotional strain of these events and the intensity of the religion she is taught causes her to treat four children with a moral disregard that she might not have employed under other circumstances.

Malcolm Neal Foxworth

Malcolm Neal Foxworth is the son of a wealthy business man and owner of Foxworth Hall. Malcolm was close to his mother as a young child and was heartbroken when his mother left the family. Compounding this hurt, Malcolm was told by his father that his mother leaving was his fault for being an inquisitive and demanding child. As a result, Malcolm has a deep hatred for women who are highly feminine, for women who attracted men easily and feign ignorance as a way of making a man feel powerful. At the



same time, Malcolm is darkly drawn to these same types of women, causing in him an emotional struggle that he finds difficult to understand or control.

Malcolm is a highly intelligent man who has taken his father's empire and turned it into something bigger and better than it was. Malcolm knows that a man of his stature requires a wife who can handle the day-to-day care of a large home and who can represent his personal image in a proper manner at parties and business dinners. For this reason, Malcolm sought out Olivia, the daughter of a business acquaintance. Olivia is educated and does not act in the shallow manner in which most women do. Malcolm asks Olivia to marry him without so much as a kiss goodnight. Malcolm never claims to love Olivia, nor does he ever imply that their marriage will be anything more than a business deal. In fact, Malcolm does not share a bedroom with Olivia and only sleeps with her when he wants to make her pregnant with his child.

Malcolm's father returns from an extended trip in Europe with his new wife a few years into his marriage to Olivia. The moment his father arrives with his bride, Malcolm finds himself attracted to his new stepmother, who is more than ten years his junior and practically a clone of his mother. In time Malcolm informs his stepmother of his feelings and even attempts to rape her in her room one night, causing a fight with his father that ends in his father's death. After this, Malcolm goes to his stepmother often, eventually causing her to become pregnant with his child. Malcolm is thrilled with this pregnancy. When the child is born a girl, Malcolm names her after his mother and dotes on her, turning her into the spoiled, flighty kind of woman he both despises and admires.

Alicia Foxworth

Alicia Foxworth is Garland Foxworth's second wife. Alicia is only nineteen when Malcolm and Olivia meet her, and has already been married for three years and is pregnant with her first child. From the moment they meet, Malcolm is fascinated with Alicia, hanging on her every word in a way he never did with his wife, Olivia. Alicia, however, is deeply in love with her husband despite their age difference. For the first few years living in Foxworth Hall, Alicia is able to ignore Malcolm's attentions. However, the longer they all live in the same house together, the more determined Malcolm becomes, causing Alicia a great deal of difficulty. Alicia threatens to tell her husband about Malcolm's attentions, but this doesn't deter him. One night, Malcolm comes to Alicia's room and attempts to rape her. Garland comes in and stops his son, but the resulting fight causes a fatal heart attack.

Alicia falls apart after the death of her husband and often spends days on end in her bed. One day Olivia comes to tell her she must move on and learns that part of Alicia's depression is caused by Malcolm's nightly visits during which he forces himself on her. Alicia has also discovered she is pregnant with Malcolm's child. Olivia quickly convinces Alicia that she should have the baby in secret and give it to Olivia and Malcolm to raise as their own. Alicia agrees, but her innocent psyche does not handle the seclusion of living in a single room for six months well. Alicia has a mental break during this time, convincing herself that Garland is not dead and she is not imprisoned in Foxworth Hall.



Eventually the baby is born and is given to Olivia and Malcolm as promised. Alicia takes several million dollars and disappears with her son, not contacting Malcolm and Olivia again until she learns she has cancer and is dying. At this point, Alicia hands her other child over to Foxworth Hall, allowing Malcolm and Olivia to care for him after her death.

Garland Christopher Foxworth

Garland Foxworth is Malcolm's father. Garland is a laid back, easy going kind of guy. This attitude causes Malcolm to look down on his father and to believe that his father has no real feel for business even though it was Garland who first grew the business. When Garland comes back from his semi-retirement in Europe, there is a great deal of tension between him and Malcolm that only increases when Malcolm meets his new stepmother, a woman so much like his mother that he falls instantly in love with her. Garland does not see this connection and doesn't realize the dark obsession his son has with his mother until it is too late.

Garland and Alicia are deeply in love, a fact that causes both Malcolm and Olivia to become fascinated by them. For Malcolm it is an off-shoot of his obsession with his mother, but with Olivia it is a fascination of watching the type of love she so desperately wanted for herself. Olivia often finds herself watching or listening to Garland and Alicia in moments of intimacy and wishing she had something like that for herself. Perhaps it is for this reason that Olivia is not angered or hurt by the knowledge of Malcolm's affair with Alicia and why she so willingly keeps Alicia captive during her pregnancy with Corinne.

Christopher Garland Foxworth

Christopher Foxworth is Garland and Alicia's son. Christopher is a perfect, golden child from birth. At first Olivia is deeply jealous of Christopher, who appears to be so much more perfect than her own two boys, but she soon finds herself falling in love with the small child. While Alicia is locked in the secluded second floor bedroom, Olivia cares for Christopher and comes to think of him as her own child. Olivia is heartbroken when Alicia takes Christopher away without giving her the chance to say goodbye.

As the years pass, Olivia falls in love with her daughter and grows closer to her own two sons. When both her sons are killed in separate accidents, Olivia is devastated. Therefore, when Alicia writes and asks Olivia and Malcolm to take in Christopher due to her impending death from cancer, Olivia jumps at the opportunity. Even Malcolm seems pleased with Christopher's arrival in the home, embracing him as a father would a son. However, neither Olivia nor Malcolm see the growing affection between Christopher and Corinne until it is too late. They never chose to tell Christopher and Corinne, however, that they are brother and sister.



Corinne Foxworth, Daughter

Corinne Foxworth is the child of rape. Corinne was conceived when her father, obsessed with his own biological mother, rapes his stepmother, Alicia. When Alicia learns of the pregnancy, she turns to Olivia, Malcolm's wife. Olivia comes up with the scheme of hiding Alicia in a secluded second story room of Foxworth Hall until the birth of the baby. During this time, Olivia wears pillows under her dresses, faking a pregnancy of her own so that when the baby is born the world will believe her to be the mother.

Corinne is named after her father's mother. From the moment of her birth, Malcolm treats her differently than he has treated his two sons. Malcolm brings in the best care and the best educators for his daughter, allowing her to have everything she wants without question. Corinne grows up spoiled, believing she can always get what she wants with a simple smile. This leads Corinne into a false sense of power, keeping her from getting an education that might help her provide her own income and to believe that she can have what she wants, even if it is unethical or illegal. Therefore, when Corinne falls in love with her half-uncle, she never thinks twice about the morality of their relationship. Corinne leaves her family home in shame to be with Christopher, never aware that he is actually her half-brother.

Malcolm 'Mal' Foxworth

Mal Foxworth is Olivia and Malcolm's oldest child. Mal is a strong, intelligent young man who shows promise as a musician from a very early age. Malcolm does not believe that men should be musicians, however, and he often belittles his son's talent. Malcolm wanted a son to take over the company and this is the only reason, therefore he rarely spends any time with Mal. What little time Malcolm does spend with Mal, he spends criticizing him for his every action. When Mal turns eighteen he comes into a trust fund his mother forced his father to set up for him. Even though Mal is attending college and working in his father's company, he has kept control of his trust fund and spends it freely as he pleases. Mal does not listen to his father's insistence in taking over the trust fund to invest it or his advice on what Mal should use the money on. Mal decides to buy a motorcycle, despite his father's direct order not to. The first day Mal has the bike he drives off the edge of a cliff and dies.

Joel Foxworth

Joel Foxworth is Olivia and Malcolm's youngest son. Olivia's pregnancy with Joel is a trouble one and he is born early. Joel is sickly from the moment of his birth and Malcolm often criticizes him for being effeminate. As Joel gets older, he too shows promise with music. Olivia secretly encourages this talent, despite Malcolm's insistence that none of his sons will grow up to be musicians. When Mal dies, Olivia encourages Joel to go on tour with a music group he is a part of. Less than a year later, Olivia and Malcolm learn that Joel died in an avalanche while climbing a mountain. Joel's body was never found.



John Amos

John Amos is Olivia's cousin. John is the only family beside her father and her aunt to attend Olivia's wedding to Malcolm. John gives Olivia advice at her wedding that leads her to believe he recognized something in Malcolm that day that it took her months to see. When Olivia's father dies, John is the only family she has left. Upon Joel's death, Olivia invites John Amos to take a position as butler in Foxworth Hall. Upon his employment, John Amos begins teaching Olivia scripture and helping her find faith in God. John Amos also helps Malcolm find solace in religion. When Corinne and Christopher become lovers, it is John Amos who first recognizes the signs and who warns Olivia. Olivia refuses to see what John Amos sees until it is too late and later regrets her blindness. Therefore, when Olivia learns that Christopher has died and Corinne wants to come home, she turns to John Amos for advice. It is John Amos that helps Olivia come to the decision that the children are seeds of the devil and should be hidden away from the world.

Corinne Foxworth, Mother

Garland Foxworth's first wife, Corinne, was a young, beautiful woman who enjoyed flirting and made men feel like the center of her world with her charm. Malcolm was one of these men, even though he was only five when his mother left the family. Malcolm hates his mother for leaving him, feeling as though she abandoned him in order to be with other men who could give her more than he could. Due to this, Malcolm becomes obsessed with women who remind him of his mother, including his stepmother Alicia. Malcolm's obsession is sexual, leaving the reader wondering if perhaps Corinne was inappropriate with Malcolm before she left the family. The writer never really goes into this idea, but due to Malcolm's sexual attraction to anyone who reminds him of his mother, the reader cannot help but believe Corinne might be the root of the incest that seems to plague this family.



Objects/Places

Dollhouse

Olivia has a doll house that was custom made and is very expensive. Olivia's father had the doll house placed under glass to keep it from damage. Olivia often fantasizes about having a life like the perfect dolls in this house.

Letter from Alicia

Alicia writes a letter to Malcolm fifteen years after she left Foxworth Hall in order to inform him of her impending death and to ask that he take care of Christopher.

Motorcycle

Mal buys a motorcycle with his trust fund money despite his father's insistence that he not buy one. Mal is killed when he goes too fast around a corner and slides off the side of a cliff.

Christmas Tree

Upon Corinne's birth, Malcolm throws a huge Christmas party to introduce her to society, and decorates with a tree that is more than twenty feet high.

Secluded Second Floor Bedroom

Olivia locks Alicia in a secluded second floor bedroom that has access to the attic through a wardrobe. Alicia remains in this room for more than six months while awaiting the birth of her child.

Attic

Alicia is fascinated with the attic. Olivia sends her up there late in her pregnancy to explore, hoping she will fall and lose the baby. Later, Olivia tries to sneak through the attic to catch Malcolm visiting Alicia in the secluded second story room during her second pregnancy, but becomes lost in the dark. Olivia is so frightened she will never again set foot in the attic.



Swan Room

There is a bedroom in Foxworth Hall that has a swan bed in it. This room was originally Malcolm's mother's and later became Alicia's. Malcolm is obsessed with this room. When Malcolm finds Olivia in this room, he talks about his mother and then rapes her. Later, Olivia will catch Christopher and Corinne making love in this room.

Trophy Room

There is a room beside the Swan Room where Garland and Malcolm keep for displaying their trophies from hunts and to share cigars. Olivia finds a hole in the wall of this room that looks into the Swan Room.

Foxworth Hall

Malcolm's family home is called Foxworth Hall. It is a large mansion that includes two wings that have multiple rooms in each. Malcolm makes Olivia the mistress of this home upon their marriage.

Lake

There is a lake on the edge of Foxworth Hall's property. Alicia and Garland often go here to make love. Olivia once follows them to watch. Later, Olivia watches Malcolm attempt to seduce Alicia here.

New London, Connecticut

Olivia was born and raised in New London, Connecticut and this is where Malcolm comes to court her before their wedding.

Charlottesville, Virginia

Charlottesville, an hour away, is the nearest city to where Foxworth Hall is located.



Themes

Love and Marriage

Olivia is a young, insecure woman when she meets Malcolm Neal Foxworth. Olivia is taller than most girls and she feels that she is not as beautiful. Olivia has had trouble finding men who can get past her exceptional height and fall in love with her. This causes Olivia to believe that she will never be married. Despite this, Olivia reads lots of romance novels and wants to find a man who can love her the way a husband is supposed to love a wife. Therefore, when Olivia meets Malcolm Neal Foxworth, a wealthy, tall, handsome man, she cannot help but fall instantly in love. Malcolm is the first man she has met who is taller than her and who seems to admire the fact that she has an education and opinions of her own. When Malcolm asks her to dinner, Olivia is so happy she does not notice the lack of affection he shows her and the indifference with which he treats her.

Malcolm asks Olivia to marry him without ever kissing her or even holding her hand. Olivia believes Malcolm is shy, that he does not want to show her affection in public. Olivia is wrong. It soon becomes clear that Malcolm did not marry Olivia for love, but rather because she filled a need. Malcolm needs someone to take care of his home, to escort him to business parties and dinners, and to provide an heir to his business. Olivia fits this mold. However, there is no love or affection between them. Olivia is soon heartbroken, finding herself alone in a marriage that was supposed to make all her dreams come true.

When Garland and Alicia come home from Europe, Olivia sees between them all the love and affection she had hoped to get from her husband. Soon Olivia finds herself eavesdropping on their love making and following them to the lake where she knows they plan to be intimate. Olivia both admires and detests Garland and Alicia's easy affection with one another. In time, Olivia becomes aware of her own husband's obsession with Alicia and this only fuels her hatred for the other woman. Eventually Olivia begins to change, becoming the kind of woman who can lock another woman in a room until her child is born and then claim it as her own. For this reason, marriage and love are a theme of the novel.

Incest

Incest is both illustrated and suggested in this novel. At first, the subject of incest is implied when Olivia wanders into the Swan Room and learns that it was once the bedroom of Malcolm's mother. Malcolm tells Olivia that his mother was a sensuous woman who wanted other men more than she wanted to stay at Foxworth Hall to raise her only child. Malcolm becomes so enraged as he speaks about his mother that he forces himself on Olivia, raping her in his mother's bed. This implies to the reader that



Malcolm has confused sexual attraction with his memories of his mother, perhaps because his mother was sexually irresponsible with her young son.

When Malcolm's father comes to Foxworth Hall with his new bride, a duplicate of Malcolm's mother, he becomes obsessed with her. Malcolm tries over and over again to seduce Alicia, finally forcing himself on her after she moves into the Swan Room. After his father's death, Alicia is unprotected and Malcolm takes advantage of this situation, forcing himself on her so often that she finally becomes pregnant with his child. Alicia is ashamed of this situation, insisting to Olivia that it was rape, that she was an unwilling participant. However, Olivia never fully believes her and comes to the conclusion that Alicia was as excited by this incestuous affair as Malcolm.

The product of Malcolm and Alicia's affair is their daughter, Corinne. However, Corinne is raised to believe that Olivia is her mother. Corinne is very close to her father and at times the reader stumbles on hints that Malcolm had the same feelings for Corinne as he has had for his mother and Alicia. Later, when Christopher, Alicia's son with Garland, comes to Foxworth Hall, Corinne has no way of knowing that rather than being her half-uncle he is really her half-brother. Corinne falls in love with Christopher and convinces herself it is okay because their relationship is not that close. Others have married cousins or uncles and nothing bad has come of it. However, Malcolm and Olivia try to convince her that her relationship with Christopher is incestuous without telling her the truth of their relationship. Corinne ignores their advice and runs away, without regret.

Religion

Olivia has married for what she thought was love and later discovers she has entered into a marriage of convenience that is more of a job than a partnership. Olivia turns to the Bible to help her deal with the loneliness and depression that this realization brings her. Olivia becomes the mother of two children and later takes her husband's love child as her own. This helps Olivia, but when her two sons are killed, she finds herself once again turning to religion. Olivia's cousin, John Amos, comes to Foxworth Hall and helps her find consolation in the Bible.

John Amos is a highly religious man. In fact, John Amos was the leader of a church without a congregation before Olivia gave him a job at Foxworth Hall. After the death of their sons, Malcolm too turns to religion through John Amos. John Amos becomes the voice of God in Foxworth Hall, helping Malcolm and Olivia, while also making judgments over Corinne and Christopher. When Olivia learns that Christopher has died and left Corinne with four children, she turns to John Amos for advice. It is John Amos who convinces Olivia it would be best to lock the children in the attic and hide them from the world because they are an abomination to God.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of this novel is first person. The novel's prologue suggests that the story contained in the plot of this novel was written by Olivia Winfield Foxworth, the narrator, in order to refute stories told about her by her child and grandchildren. Olivia is known to fans of the author as the grandmother who kept four children locked in a secluded second-story room in order to punish them for being born to an incestuous relationship. Olivia seeks in this novel to tell her story, explaining the darkness of her marriage and the events that led to the mindset that would allow her to torture her own grandchildren in this fashion.

The point of view of this novel works well because it accomplishes the goal the writer sets out in the prologue. The narrator tells the reader that she wants the reader to see certain events from her point of view in order to understand more completely her actions in regard to the children of her daughter, Corinne. The point of view would normally allow a great deal of intimacy between the reader and the narrator, but this narrator is unique in the fact that she keeps her emotions well guarded and even in the first person narration of a story she hopes will exonerate her from claims that she is a heartless heretic, she manages to keep the reader at arm's length. This helps to characterize her as a character in the plot, however, and therefore makes the point of view appropriate to purpose and development of this novel.

Setting

The novel is set mainly in the home of the Foxworth family, known as Foxworth Hall, spanning thirty years, from the 1920s to the 1950s. This house is quite large and luxurious, a home that speaks of great wealth. However, the home is never filled with the love and happiness that the main character hopes for when she first comes to her new home. In fact, this house hides a great many secrets and the grief of loss. This setting creates an illusion for the reader and characters in the novel not aware of the secrets taking place inside. The illusion is destroyed as the reader continues to discover each of these secrets that eventually lead to the locking of four children in a secluded second story room.

The setting of this novel is important because the author begins the novel by telling the reader she hopes to explain the motivations of a character who appears in another novel in this same Dollanganger series. That novel takes place in a single room in Foxworth Hall. The main character of this novel is Olivia Winfield Foxworth, the unnamed grandmother from this other novel. Olivia narrates this new novel in an attempt to explain her life story in such a way that it will excuse her actions in the earlier novel. The setting of this novel is also important because it adds to the illusion that



money changes lives, but proves that even those with money have secrets and problems, sometimes more so than other people.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is English. The dialogue of this novel is stiff, reflecting to some extent the time period in which the novel is set. Within the exposition, the language is less formal, but still contains some formality that again reflects the time period in which the novel is set as well as the higher education of the main characters of the novel. There are few foreign phrases in the novel and most of the language is simple enough that most readers will be able to comprehend with little trouble.

The language of the novel works within this novel because it reflects the intelligence and social position of the main characters, especially the character who is narrating the novel. The language is stiff, making the comprehension of the plot somewhat difficult at times, but this again reflects the setting and the characters of the novel. Finally, the novel is written in a consistent language that allows the reader to follow the plot's development with little struggle after they have become accustomed to the stiffness of the dialogue.

Structure

The novel is divided into three parts and twenty chapters. Each chapter bears a title that reflects an action or character that will appear within the novel. The chapters are fairly short, each less than thirty pages each. The novel is told in both dialogue and exposition, telling the story as well as showing it. The novel is told in a linear fashion, taking the story from the first time Olivia Winfield Foxworth met her husband, Malcolm Neal Foxworth, to the day Corinne Dollanganger brings her four children to Foxworth Hall to hide them away while she sweet talks her way back into her father's will.

The novel has only one main plot. The novel's plot follows Olivia Winfield Foxworth's life from the day she meets her future husband, marries him and becomes mistress of Foxworth Hall. Olivia discovers that her husband does not love her, but married her to fulfill a job vacancy. Olivia adjusts to the realization that she will never know true love and focuses on her two children. When her husband has an affair and this affair produces a daughter, Olivia takes advantage of the situation to make life better for her own two children as well as taking over the care of this child as though she were her own. Finally, the novel comes to a point where Olivia has lost her own two sons, so she takes into her home the son of her husband's mistress. This leads to disaster that will have Olivia turning to religion, a religion that will motivate her to hide away four children whom she believes to be demon seed due to their parents' incestuous relationship.



Quotes

"Had others not decided to tell my story for their own gain, the secrets of the Foxworth's would have been buried in my grave with me. Cruelty comes in many forms—ignorance is one of them." Prologue, p. 1

"The real world, my own world, seemed always to be gray, without rainbows."
Part 1: Chapter 1, The First Bud of Spring, p. 6

"Like any woman stupidly believing in love, I never realized that the blue sky I saw was not the warm, soft, nurturing sky of spring, but the cold, chilling, lonely sky of winter."
Part 1: Chapter 1, The First Bud of Spring, p. 27

"Did I finally look beautiful, even if just for today? Did my eyes sparkle with new life? I hoped this was true." Part 1: Chapter 2, My Wedding, p. 33

"Something bright touched my eyes and I awoke. In my half dream I thought it was the light of love shining from Malcolm's eyes, but when I opened my eyes I realized it was merely the bright sun." Part 1: Chapter 3, The Ugly Duckling and the Swan, p. 50

"My true education about my husband had begun." Part 1: Chapter 4, The Ghosts of the Past, p. 65

"My first reaction was to feel happy about it; it looked like my reception was off to a wonderful start, but as I began to circulate amongst the guest, my exuberant feelings fizzled, for I felt a chill in the air between me and these gay, lighthearted, and surprisingly whimsical people." Part 1: Chapter 5, My Wedding Party, p. 80

"No wonder when he spoke about having a son it sounded like a command." Part 1: Chapter 5, My Wedding Party, p. 86

"'My God,' Malcolm said, 'she's pregnant!' I knew what his concerns were—another heir." Part 2: Chapter 7, Malcolm's Stepmother, p. 104

"Their footsteps sounded like thunder, the thunder that comes to warn us of an impending storm." Part 2: Chapter 7, Malcolm's Stepmother, p. 129

"It wouldn't be long before the opportunity came and the demons would bring with them

more misery than I had ever imagined could live in the cold, empty rooms of Foxworth Hall." Part 2: Chapter 8, Days of Passion, p. 149

"For it was a smile I had seen before, it was the smile of Christopher for Corinne, the smile I had been too blind to see. But now my eyes were opened." Part 3: Chapter 20, Eyes that See, p. 376



Topics for Discussion

Who is Olivia Winfield Foxworth? Why does Olivia feel it is important to tell this story? What other story does Olivia believe the public has been told about her? How is this story supposed to make those accusations seem less cruel? Is Olivia the cruel person others have accused her to be? What about this story can explain Olivia's motivations better than someone else might have suggested?

Why does Malcolm Neal Foxworth come to the Winfield home? Why does Malcolm take Olivia to dinner? What is different about Olivia that appeals to Malcolm? Why does Malcolm ask Olivia to marry him? Why does Olivia believe he has asked? Is Olivia naive in her assumptions about Malcolm's motivations? How? What clues in Malcolm's behaviors should have warned Olivia that his intentions were not as honest as she believed?

Who is Corinne Foxworth? How does her shadow overcast Olivia's new marriage? Why does Olivia go into the Swan Room even when her husband tells her not to? What does he do when he finds her in there? How does this illustrate his obsession with his mother? How does this action foreshadow trouble in this room later in the novel?

Who is Garland Foxworth? Where has he been the first three years of Malcolm and Olivia's marriage? Why did Malcolm not tell him about his marriage? Why does Garland come home now? What does Olivia think of him? How does Garland's presence change the relationship between Olivia and Malcolm? Is this a good change? Explain.

Who is Alicia? Why is Malcolm shocked the first time he sees her upon her return to Foxworth Hall? How does Malcolm's behavior change around Alicia? Why does Olivia believe that Malcolm would want Alicia to have a miscarriage? Is Olivia correct in this assumption? What does Olivia see Malcolm do with Alicia by the lake? Why should this have warned Olivia that something bad would happen between these two? Why does Olivia not take steps to avoid this situation?

Describe Malcolm's relationship with his two sons. Does Malcolm love his sons? How does Malcolm feel about his sons' future? What does he want them to do with their lives? Why does Malcolm ridicule their desire to become musicians? Why does Malcolm not want his sons to manage their own trust funds? Why does Malcolm discourage Mal from getting a motorcycle? Who does Malcolm blame for Mal's death? Why? How does Malcolm react to Joel's death? What changes in Malcolm's behavior after these tragedies? What does this say about Malcolm's feelings for his children?

Why does Christopher come to live at Foxworth Hall? How is he related to Malcolm's daughter, Corinne? How does Corinne feel about Christopher from the moment she sees him? Why does John Amos continuously warn Olivia about Christopher and



Corinne's relationship? Why does Olivia refuse to see what John Amos sees? Who finds Christopher and Corinne in the Swan Room? What is the result of this event? Why?

Why does Olivia keep tabs on Christopher and Corinne over the years? Why does Olivia refuse to tell Malcolm about Christopher and Corinne's four children? What is Olivia afraid will happen if Malcolm learns of the children? Is this a bad thing? What does Olivia believe the children are? Why does Olivia come up with a scheme to hide the children in the same room where Corinne was born? What result does Olivia believe will come of this action? How does that change the perspective the reader has of this situation?