

If There Be Thorns Study Guide

If There Be Thorns by Virginia C. Andrews

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Plot Summary

Jory begins the story by saying what he knows as fact that his mother has been married three times, that his father is Julian Marquet, that his half-brother Bart's father is Dr. Paul Sheffield, and that his mother's current husband is Chris. Jory's grandmother is known in the ballet world as Madame Marisha and Jory and his family visit her each summer. Jory arrives at home after school to find Emma, the family's cook and friend, in the kitchen. Emma says that she is constantly "anticipating" what Bart might next find to spill or drop and that she's thankful that Bart and Jory spend so much time "on that wall."

It's while the boys are sitting on that wall one day that they see workers arrive to begin restoring the old mansion next door. They are disappointed because they've spent time in the old building but hope for playmates. Instead, they see an old woman dressed completely in black, her face covered by a veil. Bart soon goes over for a visit, saying that the old woman had shouted an invitation over the wall. She asks that he call her grandmother and he comes to agree, though wavers between believing her story that she is truly his grandmother and refusing to believe.

The woman is eventually revealed as Corrine Winslow, and she really is Bart's grandmother. As it turns out, her appearance and the arrival of Jory's grandmother results in the revelation of a family secret: that Cathy and Chris are brother and sister and that Corrine is the mother of both. It's also revealed that Corrine had been married to a man named Bartholomew Winslow and that Bart's mother, Cathy, had seduced Winslow - Bart's biological father. Bart, confronted with all this information, struggles to retain a grip on reality and that grip soon wavers as he is tutored by John Amos Jackson, Corrine's butler. John Amos had been loyal to Corrine's father, fully expecting to inherit the family's fortunes. Now he is bitter and, though married to Corrine, remains little more than a servant. John Amos gives Bart Malcolm's journal and teaches him Malcolm's philosophies about life, the road to success and how to become rich and powerful. Bart picks up on Malcolm's harsh and malicious outlook and the line between the personalities soon dims that that Bart isn't always certain of his own identity.

The story comes to a head when Cathy and Corrine go missing. As Chris and Jory search frantically for the two women, Bart continues to deny any knowledge of their whereabouts and John Amos says that Corrine left voluntarily. The two are actually held in the cellar until an accident with a candle sets the mansion on fire and Bart names their location. Cathy, Chris, Bart and Jory escape though John Amos is burned in the fire. Corrine's clothing catches on fire as she tries to escape and she also dies. In the days following the fire, Jory and Cathy each note that Bart seems to have a tenuous hold on reality. Bart says that he believes the entire situation occurred so that he would know how to save Cathy and Chris.



Part I, Page 1-53

Part I, Page 1-53 Summary

Jory begins the story by saying what he knows as fact that his mother has been married three times, that his father is Julian Marquet, that his half-brother Bart's father is Dr. Paul Sheffield, and that his mother's current husband is Chris. Jory's grandmother is known in the ballet world as Madame Marisha and Jory and his family visit her each summer. Jory arrives at home after school to find Emma, the family's cook and friend, in the kitchen. Emma says that she is constantly "anticipating" what Bart might next find to spill or drop and that she's thankful that Bart and Jory spend so much time "on that wall."

The wall is a boundary between Jory's home and the abandoned mansion next door where Jory and Bart often play though they aren't supposed to go inside. On this particular afternoon, Jory hears his stepfather, Chris, arrive home from work and knows that his mother, Cathy, is dancing in the attic. On this day, Chris confronts Cathy about the fact that there are two small beds made up in the attic and though Jory doesn't understand fully the argument, Cathy denies having set up the beds. Chris says that Foxworth Hall has burned to the ground but Cathy says she heard her grandmother earlier though she then admits that it must have been a dream. Cathy and Chris then dance together and Cathy mentions dancing when she was fourteen, to which Chris replies that he loved her even then, to his shame. This prompts Jory's interest because he believes that the two hadn't known each other when Cathy was fourteen. Cathy then mentions her desire to adopt Cindy, the daughter of one of Cathy's pupils who is likely near death, and Chris says that he and Cathy could already be "compounding the sins of the parents" by living together and that they were likely putting Bart and Jory in danger already, Chris then says that Cathy had set up the beds in the attic to be prepared if their "secret were revealed."

Bart then picks up the story, saying that he and Jory are planting flower seeds in honor of their young aunt and uncle, Cory and Carrie, who are dead. Bart says that Jory is able to do many things Bart is not, and that Bart has broken both his right and left arms falling out of trees. He says that Jory has more possessions because Chris and Cathy give Jory better gifts. One day Jory and Bart are on the wall when they see workers at the old abandoned mansion next door where the two boys like to play. They're both disappointed because the old house has provided them with excitement and adventure.

In "Introductions" Jory says that his family visits South Carolina every summer after a trip to Disneyland for Bart's birthday. In South Carolina, they visit Jory's grandmother and Chris visits his own mother, though Cathy refuses to go with him, saying that she can never forgive the woman though not saying for what.

The day comes when the work is finished next door and the new inhabitants arrive. There's a young chauffeur, an old butler who gets out of the back of the car with an old



woman, veiled and dressed all in black. As Bart and Jory watch from the tree over the wall, Bart squishes a caterpillar, prompting Jory's anger though he immediately calms down, telling Bart that caterpillars turn into beautiful butterflies and that it's wrong to kill them. The next day, Bart and Jory slip over to the house next door and Jory climbs a tree and peers into the window, seeing the old woman there who is picking at her meal. When the branch Jory is sitting on cracks, the old woman turns his way and he sees her face which is scarred horribly.

In *Gone Hunting*, Bart pretends to be a five-star general and knocks on the door of the mansion where the old woman greets him by name and says that she's glad he accepted "her invitation." Bart also refers to the invitation saying that she had called to him over the wall. The woman tells Bart that she "once" had two sons by her first marriage, and that she'd wanted another by her second marriage but that she "couldn't," and that she wants Bart to take the place of that son she never had. She tells him that if he continues to visit she'll grant "his heart's desire," and qualifies that by saying that she'll give him anything "money can buy." She tells him to call her "grandmother."

Another day when Bart is visiting next door, he finds John Amos Jackson - introduced by the old woman as her butler - in the woman's favorite room. Bart orders John Amos out and the man leaves, but tells Bart that if there comes a time he wants to know the truth about the old woman's identity, John Amos is willing to reveal that information. Later he tells Bart that the woman really is his grandmother, and that the woman - later to be identified as Corrine - was once married to Bart's biological father. John Amos gives Bart a journal, bound in red, that he says belonged to Bart's great-grandfather, Malcolm Neal Foxworth. John Amos tells Bart that by reading this journal, he will learn how to control women and to become powerful and rich. Bart notes that he's quickly gone from having no friends to having two: John Amos and his grandmother.

Part I, Page 1-53 Analysis

The story opens with a prologue in which Cathy is in the garden looking at Paul's statues and waiting for Chris. When he arrives, he puts his arm around her and she is thinking that Bart and Jory will soon "give to both of us, either the best or the worst of what is yet to be." She then notes that the story is actually Bart and Jory's and that they will tell it as they know it. This opening is meant to provoke questions and to provide a brief introduction to some of the characters, and it is an effective tool in this situation.

Cathy tells Jory that she's "compelled" to dance in the attic, despite the dust there and the fact that there's a ballet barre downstairs. When Chris finds her there, he's always angry and Jory doesn't understand this, though it's a foreshadowing of the story that will emerge - that Cathy and Chris had been locked in an attic for a long time during their childhoods. A previous book by the same author, "Flowers in the Attic," is a prequel to this story and details the life of Cathy and Chris and their time in the attic. When Chris accuses Cathy of setting up the beds in the attic so that she would be prepared if their secret were revealed, Cathy is adamant that she hadn't planned to hide her children so that she could go "unencumbered" into another marriage. It's not fully revealed in this



novel, but that's exactly what happened to Chris and Cathy along with their younger siblings, twins Carrie and Cory.

After Jory sees the old woman next door for the first time, he rushes home to the comforting arms of his mother, though he admits that he's too old to seek such comfort. He notes that the old woman might have been as beautiful as his mother once, and notes that this could be what his own mother will look like in thirty years. Jory has no idea how close to the truth he is on this point and fails to see the family resemblance.

Bart's jealousy of Jory is seen early on. He says that Jory is able to do many things that he can't accomplish and that Jory gets better gifts and has better possessions. One night Bart slips into bed with Jory and complains that no one likes him. It seems likely that Bart feels these things, though they aren't necessarily true, and Bart's idea of these shortages in his life will become an important part of his life.



Part I, Pages 53 through 94

Part I, Pages 53 through 94 Summary

In *Sugar and Spice*, Chris and Cathy arrive home after having an evening out and Bart overhears an argument over Cathy's plea to adopt the two-year-old daughter of her student. The argument grows heated with Chris saying that Cathy should allow the child to be adopted by someone who "doesn't have as much to lose" if an adoption agency investigates the couple. Cathy counters, saying that Chris has always gotten his own way, and accuses him of saying that Paul Sheffield - Cathy's second husband and the man she's claimed is Bart's father - was healthy enough for sex.

Cathy's tirade continues, with her "berating" both for "what they were doing." Cathy also says that she would never have gone to Bart except that Chris was continually trying to come between Cathy and Paul. Chris says that he'll pack and move out immediately if that will make Cathy happy, which prompts her to run to him, begging his forgiveness and telling him to stay. Jory runs out of the room as his parents' anger seems to change into something sexual, and he wonders about his half-brother's name, questioning the reason his mother hadn't named Bart after Paul Sheffield, the man his mother claimed was Bart's biological father. As Jory is reasoning out what he's overheard, he hears crying from the other side of the wall and an old woman's voice saying, "Christopher," which prompts Jory to wonder if the woman knows them or if she has a Christopher in her own family.

Jory later slips over to the mansion and finds Bart happily sitting in the lap of the old woman. When Bart leaves, Jory knocks on the door, introduces himself and tells the woman to leave Bart alone. The woman says she is only lonely, has no grandchildren of her own, and that Bart seems to enjoy spending time with her.

The next day, Jory discovers that the young student, Nicole, has died and that her daughter, Cindy, is now to live with them as a sister. Bart screams, saying that he doesn't want a sister. As Chris prepares to leave for work, he tells Cathy that Bart's "jealous streak" was part of the reason he hadn't wanted to adopt Cindy. That night, Bart cries out in his sleep for his mother not to leave him. Jory notes that it's up to him to save Bart, but that he doesn't really understand what's happening to his family.

In *My Heart's Desire*, Bart takes over the story. He is demanding a pony as a gift from his grandmother though she says that his parents would surely smell the odor of horse on his clothing. Instead, she buys him a Saint Bernard puppy. Bart is initially angry until his grandmother explains that the dog is only six months old, is already very large and will soon be big enough for Bart to ride on or to pull a small cart. Bart names the dog Apple and orders the puppy to be loyal only to him. Bart, now caught up in the idea, refuses his grandmother's offer to buy him a horse instead. As Bart spends time with Apple, he earns the dog's devotion. One day he asks Corrine about her sons and she says that one went to heaven and one ran away.



As the time nears for Bart and his family to go to Disneyland for their annual vacation, his grandmother promises to care for Apple while he's away. The thought puts Bart in a panic, fearing that Apple's loyalty will have changed over the three weeks apart. He immediately begins working out some way to avoid going on the trip.

In *Shadows*, Jory arrives home with his mother after ballet practice and Cathy sends Jory to find Bart. Jory locates him in the old barn where Apple is being kept. When Bart says that the pup was supposed to have been a pony and that he's making it into a puppy-pony, he seems to be Jory not to laugh. Jory notes that Bart has little enough for friendship and decides not to tell his parents.

In *Changeling Child*, Bart again picks up the story, telling that his own plants refuse to grow while Jory's side of the flower bed is beautiful. Bart pulls up some of Jory's flowers and plants them in his spot, though he has to prop them up against each other. Then Bart is digging and finds some bones with tiny bits of fur and his grandmother accuses him of having killed the stray kitten she'd been feeding. Bart denies the charge, saying he would never kill a kitten, but saying that he had killed a tiger earlier by shooting it in the eye.

Part I, Pages 53 through 94 Analysis

It will later be revealed that Cathy had a difficult labor with Bart and was warned that she should have an abortion for her health's sake but refused. As Cathy and Chris argue one night, Cathy says that it had been Chris's insistence that led her to agree to being sterilized after Bart's birth, and that she otherwise would have tried again for a daughter.

Bart begins to change under John Amos's tutoring. Corrine notes the time Bart spends with John Amos and urges that he not listen to anything the old man says, though Bart notes that John Amos says the same things about Corrine. As time passes, Bart becomes able to quote passages from Malcolm Foxworth's journal. One day Jory confronts Bart about the amount of time he's spending next door and Bart's immediate reaction is one of cowering fear. Then he calls up a strength he believes he is getting from the journal and from Malcolm himself, and orders Jory away.

Bart seems to be calling out for help after he finds the bones of the kitten buried in the yard. He initially says that he'd killed a tiger, though a small one, and then insists that the bones he'd dug up had been there since long before he was born. The details will later be revealed, including that it wasn't likely Bart who killed the animal but John Amos. The purpose of this misleading is obviously to build suspense, and the author succeeds on this point.



Part II

Part II Summary

Part II begins with Tales of Evil in which Jory confronts Bart about the time he's spending at the mansion next door. Jory pulls up half-remembered scenes and begins to understand that Bart is the son of another man, a man who Jory remembers only slightly. Jory then goes to the mansion to confront the old woman. His poodle, Clover, follows until Jory sends the dog home. Corrine soon begins talking to Jory about her life, why she wears only black and why she remains cut off from sunlight. She says that she had four children, fathered by her first husband, a man who was forbidden to her. She says that she thought she'd never find another man as wonderful, but she did and that she allowed her love for this man blind her to the needs of her children, and that she cries herself to sleep every night now because of that mistake. Corrine then asks Jory whether he could forgive his mother if she did something horrible. When he says that he could, she asks if that includes murder. Just as Jory has decided that the woman is crazy and that he must leave, a crate arrives and she urges him to stay to see what's inside. It's an oil painting of a the old woman when she was young and Jory is immediately struck by the resemblance to his own mother. Corrine then tells Jory that her second husband was a younger man named Bartholomew Winslow, that her daughter had seduced him and that Bart was their child. Jory doesn't want to admit that he remembers this woman from his early childhood as a lady in a fur coat.

When Jory arrives home, he realizes that Clover is missing. They begin to search and Bart tells a story of having encountered a wolf, and says that he killed it. Jory feels in his heart that Clover is probably dead. Then he overhears another conversation between his parents which prompts more of the same questions. Jory now knows that his parents have lied to him and fears that the secret they hold is really terrible.

In Lessons, Bart is looking forward to the trip to Disneyland for his tenth birthday. He continues to doubt that Corrine is really his grandmother. One day Bart pretends to be a cowboy and Corrine plays along, pretending to be the local "schoolmarm." Bart, who hates the way things are going at home, is delighted to have this unexpected playmate. Corrine urges Bart to tell his parents that he doesn't want to go for the annual visit to the south, but he refuses. Then Bart overhears his parents arguing about that same topic with Cathy urging Chris to skip the visit to his mother. Cathy again says she fears Bart and Jory will learn their secret and that they won't understand, making Bart more certain that they must be sinning or they wouldn't be worried.

Before time for the annual trip, Bart is crawling in the garden and picks up Apple's feces. He then puts his knee on a rusty nail. He is amazed that he can feel pain and revels in the fact that he's "not a freak" who can't feel pain after all. As he continues to crawl around, he smells something rotting and finds Clover in the hollow base of a tree. He immediately begins to cry, knowing that if someone finds the carcass they'll believe that Bart killed the dog. Bart begins to feel bad, a symptom of an infection from the rusty nail



and the feces, and lies down, thinking as he does that everyone can live more happily with him dead.

In *Wounds of War*, Jory finds Bart and Chris takes him to the hospital where it seems for awhile that his left will have to be amputated. Bart reacts negatively to every antibiotic, putting him in critical condition. Bart cries for Apple and Jory realizes he's talking about the dog. Jory goes to the barn to check on the animal and finds food and water just out of the dog's reach. Jory overhears a conversation between John Amos and Corrine about the dog and interrupts, saying that someone has obviously left the dog to die. The next day, Bart begins recovering.

In *Homecoming*, Bart takes over the story and describes his certainty that his mother isn't at all happy to have him home. Bart denies liking any of the food but is silently angry when Jory eats the piece of chicken Bart had planned to eat secretly later. Bart is ordered to remain inside, his father citing the need to allow the knee more time to heal, but Bart slips out and goes to visit Apple. Bart is angry to find Apple happily playing, feeling that the dog hadn't missed Bart's attention at all. He's also angry that someone else cared for Apple. That night, Bart's knee hurts so that his father gives him a pill and he dreams of his own funeral.

One day Bart seeks out John Amos who compliments Bart when he makes a rude statement about John Amos's teeth, saying that Bart had sounded just like Malcolm. John Amos has Bart swear on a Bible that he will "wreak vengeance" on those who did Malcolm wrong. Bart hesitates but fears refusal and does as he's told. When Bart goes into the house, he does as John Amos says and calls his grandmother "Corrine," which shocks her. She then begs him not to be "gruff" and he melts, running into her arms and crying out his fears and hurts. She reassures him that Chris loves him.

In *The Horns of Dilemma*, Jory grows impatient with Bart's playing as he is sniffing around the yard, digs up a bone and picks it up with his teeth. Jory yells that Bart can't replace Clover. Jory eventually talks to his father about the changes in Bart, telling Chris and Cathy about the woman next door who calls herself Bart's grandmother and buys expensive gifts for Bart. Then Jory says that he found Clover's body.

One day Bart goes to his mother and tells a cryptic tale about being locked in an attic for being bad. The story frightens Cathy though she doesn't explain why, then she asks Bart if he hurt Clover but Bart says only that Clover ran away.

In *The Snake*, Bart finds Cindy briefly unattended in her wading pool and pretends to be a snake, slipping closer to her until he reaches her and wraps his legs around her. Jory interrupts, grabbing Bart. The two fight briefly. Cathy prepares to spank Bart but he says that if she punishes him, he'll wait until she's out of the house and kill Cindy and Emma. Cathy locks Bart in the attic but not before Bart notes the tears and fear in her eyes. The next day, Bart is taken to a psychiatrist who tells Cathy and Chris that Bart's pretending to be Malcolm is just a way for him to cope with the fact that he doesn't like himself.



In *Gathering Darkness*, Jory tells more about the situation at home. He says that Bart breaks a figurine and then threatens Jory in the voice of "the old man." Cathy says that Bart hates everyone, but that she is high on his list. Cathy also says that Bart is paying for the fact that Bart is a child of revenge, but doesn't explain further. Jory suggests that Cathy feels guilt for that fact and that Bart is picking up on that.

Part II Analysis

Bart tells a disjointed story about a mansion, fire, snow and the death of his real father, a lawyer. Though Jory doesn't realize this at the time, Bart is describing the destruction of Foxworth Hall and the death of his biological father, Bartholomew Winslow.

Bart's attitude about Apple is interesting on several levels, mainly in that he wants Apple to depend solely on Bart. Though it seems irrational, Bart seems to believe that Apple's willingness to eat food, drink water and play with a ball that was given to him by someone other than Bart means that Apple is disloyal to Bart. When Bart comes home from the hospital, his first goal is to slip out to see Apple, but all the way to the barn he is expecting to find Apple dead. When that isn't the case, Bart feels betrayed both by Apple and by the person who cared for Apple during Bart's absence. As Bart considers the situation, he says that he's had three friends in his entire life: Apple, John Amos and his grandmother. He says that finding Apple had accepted care from someone else eliminates Apple from that list, though his reasoning for that is distorted and irrational. Bart also says that he believes his grandmother was the person to care for Apple, and that makes her no longer counted among his friends. It seems that Bart fully expected that no one would care for the animal though it's not clear whether he would have been truly sad or if his expectation that Apple would be dead was merely a form of drama for the boy.

As Bart continues to read Malcolm's journal and to be tutored by John Amos on Malcolm's life and philosophies, Bart seems to slip closer to a crack within his own personality. At breakfast one morning after his hospitalization, Bart demands coffee - black, the way Malcolm preferred. Bart says that he knows his efforts to be like Malcolm will end with his being "rich, powerful and loved" as Malcolm was. The interesting thing about this statement is that Malcolm seemed anything but loved. Bart seems to still know the difference between his own personality and that of Malcolm, but it seems Bart is more often "becoming" Malcolm and it seems possible that he will forget how to be himself.

Bart has continued to refer to Corrine as "grandmother" though it seems possible that he hasn't yet come to believe it's true. After he arrives home from the hospital, he tells Corrine that he now believes that Chris loves him because of the care he gave Bart during his stay in the hospital. Corrine says that she is certain Chris loves him and Bart is startled that she knows his father's name.

The small gardens planted by Bart and Jory have come to symbolize to Bart that Jory is superior in almost every aspect of their lives. Bart continues to check on his own seeds,



finding none germinated, and notes that Jory's garden continues to flourish. In Bart's mind, this seems important and he notes that the only thing he excels at is his pretending to be Malcolm. This seems a dangerous situation in that it encourages Bart to continue acting like Malcolm.

An interesting point in the scene in which Bart pretends to be a snake is that Cindy recognizes him as "a snake." The fact that Cindy cries "snake" delights Bart.

Bart says that Bart is a child of revenge. The truth about Bart's father is that he's Corrine's second husband. Corrine had locked Cathy, Chris and their twin siblings in the attic for a long period of time, and when Cathy encountered Bart Winslow, she seduced him.



Part III, Pages 184 through 240

Part III, Pages 184 through 240 Summary

In Malcolm's Revenge, Bart again finds Cindy unsupervised and uses a knife to cut off all her hair, rationalizing that he's making her ugly so that no man will ever want her and that by doing this he is saving all her future children from their fate of being born to her. Bart quotes Malcolm's journal in which he says that he knew a girl named Violet Blue from Sunday school, that she'd had hair the same color as his mother's, that she'd expected Malcolm to say that her hair was pretty but that he'd told her it was ugly, and that she'd responded that it was the same color as his own. Malcolm writes that he shaved his own head, then threw Violet Blue to the ground and that she went home "as bald as I was." Bart notes that he didn't hurt Cindy but that the little girl had started crying after Emma's "shriek" upon finding her.

In The Last Dance, Cathy dances one last ballet that she's choreographed herself, though she's been told her knee likely won't hold up to the strain. The ballet goes well with Bart and Chris watching. Partway through the performance, Cathy's lace comes loose and she trips and falls though Jory sees the accident coming and calls out to her. Her part is finished by a backup dancer and Cathy is taken to the hospital where she undergoes surgery to repair torn ligaments and broken cartilage. Chris tells her that she can never dance professionally again and that she'll have to be in a wheelchair.

In Another Grandmother, Jory continues the story. Chris brings Cathy a typewriter to the hospital, telling her that she should pick up her journal and write her story, regardless of who might be hurt. He then says that she should strike out for Cory, Carrie, Jory and Bart as well. Cathy soon becomes immersed in her writing and Jory admits to being envious. When Cathy comes home, she is in a wheelchair and Bart is immediately angry, saying that Cathy had deliberately fallen so that she wouldn't have to come home to him. Cathy tells Chris that "a few weeks in the attic" might change Bart's attitude. The next day, Jory tells Chris all that he knows about Bart, including the time he spends next door and that he acts strangely when he returns.

Chris immediately goes next door and is admitted by John Amos. The old woman initially refuses to talk but Chris soon notices the rings on her fingers and realizes that the woman is his own mother, though he initially identifies her as "Mrs. Bartholomew Winslow." Corrine begs Chris's forgiveness, saying that if he does so Cathy might eventually forgive as well. Chris says that Cathy will never forgive and urges Corrine to leave. Corrine says that she hasn't tried to harm Bart, that she's trying to take the place of friends that he can't seem to find among his peers, and that it's John Amos who is filling Bart's head with the stories of Malcolm. She then says that she can't fire John Amos because he's blackmailing her. Chris promises that he'll provide Jory with the entire story but asks for time to decide how to present it. Jory reveals that he's found Apple's body, starved to death, and says that it's possible that Bart didn't commit this



deed, though both Jory and Chris seem to believe that he did. The two bury the body of the dog.

In *Honor Thy Mother*, Bart overhears a conversation between Chris and Corrine and begins to wonder if John Amos's stories of Cathy seducing Corrine's husband could be true. Bart overhears Corrine say that she'll go away and leave Chris and Cathy alone if they'll allow her to take Bart. As Chris is preparing to leave, Corrine asks if he and Cathy are living as husband and wife, and he confirms that they sleep in the same bed.

At home later, Bart falls into Cathy's lap, begging her forgiveness. He says that he loves her, that he didn't want her to fall down and hurt herself, that he doesn't want her to die and that he's sorry that he's so bad. Bart admits that he shouldn't be seeking this comfort and that John Amos would be angry at him for doing so. Bart says that he doesn't really care whether she's good or evil, that all he wants is to have Cathy for his own. He says that he'll find a way to make her love him above all others. When he grows silent, Cathy asks what he's thinking and he says that he has no playmates, that he has "bad genes from inbreeding," and that Cathy deserves the "hell" she's created. He then walks away and says that he's glad she has no reaction but sits, obviously stunned.

As Cathy writes, Bart takes the completed pages and reads them, sharing them also with John Amos before returning them. One day Bart overhears Chris say that Cathy is no longer just writing a story but is "reliving" her own past. Chris urges her now to stop though until Bart and Jory are older, was he who first urged her to write the book. Cathy says that she can't. John Amos tells Bart that Cathy's book is the key to knowing about himself.

Part III, Pages 184 through 240 Analysis

Bart seems very aware of the line between himself and Malcolm though it seems that he is becoming less able to control Malcolm. He says that Malcolm is only happy when he, Bart, is angry and mean. There's a scene in which Chris and Cathy argue over Cathy's insistence that she plans to perform one last ballet though she's been told that her knee won't stand up to performing. Bart says that he hates the fact that Chris has come back inside, not because of his argument with Cathy but because it means Bart doesn't have Cathy to himself. This seems at odds with the fact that Bart continues to say that Cathy hates him, that she doesn't want him around, and that he hates her. Bart refers to "the two old men," which could be referring to Malcolm and John Amos, though it's left to the reader to decide.

The complexity of the family connections becomes clearer as Christopher confronts his mother for the first time. Jory learns from the conversation that the woman has done something terrible to her children, including sons Paul and Christopher. This is never explained, though it's mentioned that Paul is Christopher's brother. The identity of Paul is never fully revealed in this book but it's revealed in a previous book that Paul is a



physician who cares for Cathy's younger sister, Carrie, helps Christopher enroll in medical school and eventually marries Cathy.

Additional information is revealed in another conversation between Chris and Corrine. Chris says that Corrine had married Malcolm's younger half-brother though she'd been ordered not to. It's later noted that Malcolm had hidden Corrine away from boys as much as possible in an effort to keep her unmarried, but that he'd taken in his young half-brother at his wife's urging. Chris accuses Corrine of urging her husband to sue Malcolm for half the estate and says that while Corrine had married out of spite with the idea that she'd be rich eventually, her husband had married out of love.



Part III, Pages 241 through 374

Part III, Pages 241 through 374 Summary

In *Ever Since Eve*, Bart says that Jory's grandmother, Madame M., is soon to arrive to help with Cathy's ballet school. Bart continues to read Malcolm's journal and it's here that he learns that Malcolm soon lost interest in his own wife, finding himself instead drawn to his young stepmother, Alicia, who soon gave birth to a son - the boy who would grow up to marry Malcolm's daughter, Corrine. Bart has to go see another psychiatrist and grows very angry at the questions, saying that he's glad Cathy can no longer dance and insisting that the only reason Cathy has enjoyed spending time with Jory is that Jory can dance. At home, he goes into Apple's stall and reads more of Malcolm's journal.

In Madame M., Jory is torn by the fact that his grandmother will soon arrive because there is animosity between his mother and grandmother and his loyalty is to his mother. His grandmother arrives late, says that she's already purchased a car and arranged a place to stay, and tells Jory that she has decided that she must make up for her lack of a close relationship with Jory's father Julian by becoming closer to Jory. The conversation then becomes very strange as Madame M. says that Cathy's husband must be getting very old by now and questioning whether her brother, Chris, ever married. Cathy seems to be trying to end the conversation, which she eventually does.

Jory and Madame M. later argue and Madame M. says that her only purpose in coming was to help out at the ballet school so that she could ensure that Jory would dance in New York. She says that her son Julian had the talent but that because of Cathy he was robbed of the opportunity. Jory is angry. Madame M. asks him to tell her about Paul, saying that Paul must be nearing sixty-two years old by now. Jory hesitates, not understanding fully but sensing that there's a reason for the questions. He says that sixty-two isn't really all that old but doesn't say that Paul had died many years prior. Jory then asks if Madame M. had never met Paul's younger brother. Madame M. says that when Paul's first wife drowned their child, there had been no mention of a brother. She then says that Jory's mother had made several excuses in recent years for the fact that Paul hadn't come with her to visit, and that she'd brought her brother Chris instead. Jory tries to close his mind to the implications and Madame M. says that she's taking Jory home and plans to have a talk with Cathy.

In *The Terrible Truth*, Jory and Madame M. arrive at home and Madame M. confronts Cathy by asking why she hadn't revealed the Paul was dead. Cathy orders Jory from the room but he listens at the door to hear the conversation. Madame M. says that she doesn't care that Cathy is sleeping in the same bed with her brother, Christopher, but that she won't allow Jory to be put in jeopardy because of it. She insists that Cathy give her immediate custody of Jory or that she'll go to the police. Cathy refuses, much to Jory's relief. Jory, now armed with the truth, hides in his room refusing to come out, though he says that he believes he is coming down with a cold. Jory later slips in and



reads Cathy's most recent journal entry. She writes that she hopes she made the right decision by keeping Jory with her and that she fears their world is coming to an end.

In *The Gates of Hell*, Bart picks up the story and sees Chris and Cathy encounter each other in passion with Chris stripping Cathy of her clothing. Bart says that he knows from Cathy's writing that some mothers can be horrible, and that they can go so far as to lock four children up in an attic. He notes that he wouldn't have really believed anything John Amos said about his mother if she hadn't written the book. Bart says that he can't really decide whether he's Malcolm or Bart, reassures himself that he is Bart, but then thinks - as Malcolm would - about the "stupid daughter" who hid four children in the attic thinking that he wouldn't find out.

In *The Rage of the Righteous*, Cathy tries to get Bart excited about the upcoming Christmas season. When Bart deliberately breaks things and continues to lash out, Cathy locks him in the closet but Bart cries out to her, saying that he knows everything, having learned part from reading her book and part from the people next door. That gets Cathy's attention and she immediately gets dressed to go next door. With it being Emma's day off, Cathy takes Cindy with her and orders Bart to remain in the house. He follows and Cathy is admitted to the house. She is immediately struck by a sense of familiarity and Corrine again pretends to be unable to talk, apparently fearing that Cathy would recognize her voice. Cathy soon realizes that the woman is her mother and the two women begin to fight. John Amos comes in then and strikes Cathy. As Corrine bends over her daughter's body, John Amos hits her as well. John Amos then tells Bart to take Cindy home and to order her to keep her mouth shut about Cathy's whereabouts, which Bart says he can do.

In *Where's Momma*, Jory confronts Madame M., telling her that he doesn't want her to say anything else about his mother. He notes that when the two of them hug later, they reached "some sort of compromise." Madame M. then asks Jory to hold a gift she's purchased for Cathy - chocolate candy that she loved when she was younger but that she'd been denied because of the need to stay trim for dancing. Jory later talks with Chris and asks why Chris couldn't have found someone else to love instead of Cathy after they were released from the attic. When Chris explains that he waited for Cathy though she was married twice, Jory accepts the explanation but continues to resent the situation. By now, Jory has also taken Cathy's manuscript and read it and through that has come to see that Chris forced himself on Cathy the first time. At home, Jory falls down in front of the television but is roused when Chris says he can't find Cathy. Faced with the realization that Cathy might truly be gone, Jory realizes that he loves his mother though he also realizes that all-consuming love such as that exhibited by Cathy and Chris could destroy everything that gets in its way. Jory rouses himself, believing that when he finds Bart - who is also missing - he'll find his mother.

In *My Attic Souvenirs*, Bart listens as John Amos orders the household possessions packed up, saying that they are leaving. Bart listens to his grandmother and Cathy where they are locked in a small space in the cellar behind a shelf of wine. Bart feels compassion for the two until Malcolm takes over. Back at home, he's confronted by both Madame M. and Emma but refuse to say where Cathy is. In *The Search*, Jory and Chris



go to the house next door but John Amos tells them that Corrine has gone ahead to Hawaii leaving orders that the house be packed up.

In *Whispering Voices*, Bart continues to say he doesn't know where Cathy is. He notes that he believes he is doing the right thing, but wonders why it hurts so much. In *Detective*, Jory pretends to leave home but returns and follows Bart to the house next door though he loses sight of Bart. In the cellar, Bart hears Corrine telling Cathy that it was John Amos who killed the animals and John Amos who fed Bart so many stories to confuse him. In *Waiting*, Chris continues to try to get Bart to say where Cathy is. In an effort to gain Bart's empathy, Chris asks Bart whether he would be willing to save Cathy if he saw that she was drowning. Bart considers the question for a long time then says that if Cathy were pure, God would save her.

In *Judgment Day*, Bart has slipped Corrine and Cathy a candle so that he can better watch them. In a scuffle, the candle falls over and sets fire to the small cubbyhole where the two women are being held. Bart goes outside where he finds Jory and Chris, and tells them that the two women are in the wine cellar and that they're waiting for the fire that would end their lives as it ended Foxworth Hall. In *Redemption*, Jory fights John Amos as Chris rushes inside in search of Cathy and Corrine. He releases them but Bart has then run back into the house. Jory also goes inside followed by John Amos. As they struggle to get out, everyone escapes except John Amos and Corrine, who is almost out the door when her clothes catch on fire. Chris pulls her out but she has died by the time the fire is out.

Jory and Bart each write one final chapter. Jory notes that Bart now has a Saint Bernard puppy given to him by his parents and a pony, and that Bart continues to be very frail. He says that Bart continues to act the role of a Foxworth, swearing that he'll again rule Foxworth Hall though Jory says he pities those who'll be hurt by Bart's rise to power. Bart notes that as they sit at the kitchen table Chris's eyes look different because he has "let go of his strangle hold on his sister." Bart then says that he watches them at night but that they merely lay in each other's arms in the same bed, and that he has saved them. Cathy concludes the story, saying that she knows when Bart comes into her bedroom to watch her. She notes the way Bart looks at the world now and wonders that she was ever so bent on revenge herself. She and Madame M. have become very close with Madame M. saying that Cathy was going to be rich and famous after all, but as an author rather than a dancer because her book has been accepted for publication. Cathy notes that Bart still carries a red-bound journal, claiming that it's Malcolm's though that journal burned up in the fire. Though this journal has nothing but blank pages, Bart sits and appears to read.

Part III, Pages 241 through 374 Analysis

It's interesting that Bart had been concerned that Apple was still alive when he'd expected that the dog would have died of neglect during Bart's hospital stay, but that he now goes into the stall without considering the reason that the dog is no longer there. It seems that in Bart's mind, he'd given the dog up for dead before he arrived to find out



that Apple was very much alive, but it seems odd that he now doesn't give a thought to the dog's whereabouts.

In Cathy's journal, she writes that it seems she and her family are facing ruin. She then makes a reference to Henrietta Beech. Henrietta is a character from the second of this series in which Cathy, Chris and Carrie are on the run and Carrie is growing more ill. The children fear seeking out medical help but Henrietta finds them and takes them to Dr. Paul Sheffield, her employer. In her journal, Cathy writes that Henrietta saved them once but that she wonders who will save them now.

The relationship between Cathy and Madame M. is strained and Madame M. says that Cathy wasn't the best thing for her son. Cathy apparently has kept the facts of her relationship with Julian secret from most people but in anger tells Madame M. that Julian was anxious to sleep with every woman he encountered and that he abused Cathy freely.

John Amos has convinced Bart that John Amos is part of God's plan to punish the two women - Cathy and Corrine. Bart has, in theory, been convinced to be part of that punishment. However, when both Cathy and Corrine are injured at John Amos's hands, Bart becomes concerned. He says that he can't imagine losing either of them and seems to wonder if God would punish him if he were to try to save them.



Characters

Bartholomew Scott Winslow Sheffield

Bart turns ten the summer the house next door is renovated and occupied. Bart has a strange physical problem in that nerve endings in the body don't go all the way to the skin. This makes him clumsier than he should be and unable to feel pain normally. Bart is the first to meet the woman who claims to be his grandmother and the first to begin working out the truth about his parents, though it seems he does so more while pretending to be Malcolm than as himself.

Bart shows many of the signs of a multiple personality disorder, seeming to be almost unable to control when he acts like the young Bart and when he acts like the decrepit Malcolm. Bart himself seems ruthless but likely isn't nearly as evil as he's portrayed. It is noted, however, that his brother Jory knows that Bart will do whatever it takes to get what he wants and that this tendency will likely grow in later life.

Jory Janus Marquet Sheffield

Jory is fourteen the summer the house next door is renovated and occupied. Jory is a dancer and his paternal grandmother attribute his skill to his mother and his biological father, John Marquet. It's John's mother, Madame Marquet, who comes to visit when Jory's mother, Cathy, is injured. Madame M., as Jory calls her, soon comes to suspect that there's something strange with Cathy's relationship with her brother, Chris. As Madame M. continues to question Jory about the situation, Jory himself begins to put together clues and comes to realize the truth about his mother and stepfather.

Jory initially hates his parents for deceiving him but also hates Madame M. for having brought the situation into the open. However, when his mother's life is in apparent danger, Jory immediately comes to realize that he loves his parents fully and that he can come to forgive them.

Cathy

Mother of Jory and Bart, Cathy is a ballet instructor who was once an excellent dancer in her own right. Cathy has a bad knee and when she injured it beyond full recovery during a ballet, she begins writing a story that she calls a "novel," but that is later revealed to be the true story of her own childhood. Cathy has been married twice before and now lives as husband and wife with her brother, Christopher.



Emma

The housekeeper for Chris and Cathy's home who is treated almost as a member of the family. Emma constantly fusses at Bart, chastising him for his lack of manners, his clumsiness and his tendency to get himself and his clothing dirty. Emma does the cooking and cares for Cindy after the little girl comes to live with them.

Corrine Winslow

The woman who identifies herself as grandmother to Bart and who is really the mother of both Chris and Cathy. Corrine is very wealthy but suffers from the guilt of having locked her own children in an attic and having caused the deaths of two of them. She spends years in an insane asylum and moves next door to Cathy and Chris upon her release in hopes of reconnecting with her children.

Christopher

Chris is a physician who is busy with his medical career. He is living as husband and wife with Cathy, who is actually his biological sister. Chris takes the role of stepfather to Jory and Bart seriously and though he initially objects, agrees to take in a two-year-old orphan. Chris doesn't seem ashamed of his relationship with his sister and tells Jory only that he hopes Jory can understand.

John Amos Jackson

The butler who is married to Corrine Winslow, John Amos is a greedy man who resents his former role as servant in the household and who never quite escapes that role even after his marriage to Corrine. He spends a great deal of time brain-washing Bart and setting the stage to ensure that Bart will be blamed for the deaths of Corrine and Cathy. John dies in the fire that destroys the mansion.

Madame Marquet

Grandmother of Jory, she is seventy-four years old and lives in South Carolina. She is the mother of Jory's biological father and is a ballet instructor. It's Madame M. who first comes to question the relationship between Cathy and Chris, who she knows as brother and sister. Madame M. initially insists that she take Jory away from Cathy in order to protect him from the scandal that will naturally erupt if the secret is ever discovered for public display. Jory notes that she once whispered to him that he could call her "mother," but that it doesn't feel right to do so.



Cindy Nickols

The two-year-old daughter of Nicole, Cindy is taken in by Cathy and Chris though Chris initially objects, saying that going through an adoption could leave them open for public scrutiny that he wants to avoid. He relents, saying that had his own stepsons been orphaned, he would want to know that they'd gone to a good home.

Carrie and Cory

Honored on May fifth each year which Jory and Bart are told is the anniversary of their deaths, Carrie and Cory are twins, the aunt and uncle of Jory and Bart. Cathy indicates that part of her reason for wanting to adopt Cindy is that the child reminds her of Carrie. Carrie and Cory were twins who were also kept in an attic as youngsters.

Bart Winslow

The second husband of Corrine Winslow, who is Bart's grandmother. Corrine says that Bart Winslow is Bart's biological father. Cathy, in an apparent effort at revenge against Corrine, becomes pregnant with Bart's child while he is married to Corrine.

Malcolm Neal Foxworth

The name told to Bart by John Amos as being Bart's great-grandfather. Bart is given a journal written by Malcolm and John Amos periodically quizzes Bart on the man's superior qualities.



Objects/Places

Foxworth Hall

Home of Malcolm Foxworth, the mansion burned on a Christmas many years prior to the arrival of Corrine.

The Wall

A border between the homes of Jory and Bart and that of their grandmother, Corrine, the wall is where Jory and Bart sit sometimes and where they realize that the mansion next door is being renovated.

Fairfax, Marin County, near San Francisco

Where the Sheffields live.

Greenglenna, South Carolina

Where Madame Marisha, Jory's grandmother, lives.

Marie Dubois School of Ballet

The school owned and taught by Cathy.

Clover

The poodle who was Jory's pet until someone strangled the dog with wire.

Apple

The Saint Bernard puppy given to Bart by Corrine and named Apple because Bart had wanted a pony.

The Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia

Where Jory had lived with his mother when he was three.



The Cellar

Where Corrine and Cathy are held prisoner by John Amos.

The Attic

Where Chris is certain Cathy and Corrine will be held because it's where he and Cathy were held as youngsters.

Hawaii

Where John Amos tells Chris that Corrine has gone.



Themes

The Power of Love

Chris and Cathy are siblings who, facing extraordinary circumstances, were forced to spend a great deal of time together as adolescents. This situation results in a lasting love between the two that transcends the social boundaries of siblings. That love prompts Cathy and Chris to hide their familial relationship and to live together as husband and wife instead. What's interesting about the situation is that no matter how deeply they love each other, Cathy is haunted by what they are doing and seems constantly to worry about the situation and the possibility of being caught.

When their secret is revealed to their sons, Jory takes a hard look at the man he has known as "dad" for most of his life. While Jory is initially shocked by the secret lives of his mother and stepfather, he is also old enough to realize that they do truly love each other. Jory also realizes that they have let this love control everything and everyone else, and that the power of their love is so strong that it could possibly destroy everything Jory has come to love.

Coming of Age

Though the story is not a traditional coming of age story, there are many of the earmarks of this theme. One of the most important is seen in Cathy who is already an adult and mother by the time the story begins. To see fully Cathy's emerging maturity, the reader must be familiar with the basic storylines of the lives of the main characters. It's noted that Cathy has continued to seek revenge against her mother, Corrine. Cathy goes so far as to seduce her mother's husband with Bart being the issue of that affair. Cathy watches helplessly as Bart seems on the brink of insanity and comes to realize that this driving need for revenge is less important than she'd thought.

It seems that Cathy only realizes this fact when she is able to see what it does to Bart, though she remains helpless in her efforts to aid Bart in getting past this situation himself. It's here that Cathy exhibits the earmarks of having matured though the story ends before the reader can discover whether this aging has reached other points of Cathy's life.

Desire

While sexual desire was at the heart of this story, there are other desires at work. It seems possible that the revelation of Cathy's relationship with Chris would have been avoided or at least postponed if Madame M. hadn't shown up, and it should be noted that Madame M. likely would not have arrived if Cathy hadn't been seeking an opportunity to fulfill her own desire - a performance with Jory, son of Julian. Fulfilling this desire results in a serious injury to Cathy, one she'd been warned as a possibility.



John Amos's desire to be rich without having Corrine around was also a major part of the story as he plots to wreak revenge on both Corrine and Cathy for wrongs that he believes were done by them in the past. John Amos's desire to have Bart take the blame for the crimes results in a serious situation for Bart as he teeters on the edge of insanity and seeks to fulfill his own desire which become increasingly confused with the desires of the long-dead Malcolm Foxworth. Through it all, Chris and Cathy's sexual desire for each other override their ability to make decisions to protect themselves and Cathy's sons.



Style

Point of View

The book is written in first person but is different from most first-person books in that there are two first-person perspectives - that of Jory and that of Bart. The two generally alternate chapters with Jory acting as the point of view for one chapter and Bart for the next. This would be confusing except that the reader can quickly find the difference in tone that marks the difference between the two characters. For example, Bart's speech is generally very choppy with many half-formed sentences. He might say, "Hate that," rather than offering up a full sentence. Bart also has a tendency to drop the "g" from the end of words so that "going" become "goin." These differences are sufficient and the result is that the reader must decide from the first few words which of the boys is providing the perspective.

Generally, the two take turns with first Jory, then Bart, then Jory taking over the telling of the story. However, there are some exceptions to this pattern though most readers will not be taken by surprise. The perspective is limited but information needed to make sense of the situation is presented through several ways, usually by conversations overheard by either Jory or Bart.

Setting

The story is set on the West Coast of the United States, near San Francisco. The time is modern-day though dates are not specified. The specific places do not all exist, but the general setting is believable and appropriate to the story. What is noted is that there is a great deal of coincidence involved. For example, Chris and Cathy manage to purchase land in an area where their mother owns land and she - despite supposedly being held in an insane asylum - arranges for them to make the purchase at a cheaper price. There are other similar questions that arise, but the setting, both in time and place, are overall believable.

Language and Meaning

The book is fairly easy to read with vocabulary that should be familiar to most readers. The overall tone tends to be dark and foreboding with a great deal of emphasis put on the relationships of the family members involved and those who have died. In this aspect, the story becomes confusing because there are many details that are withheld from the reader until near the end of the book. These details are meant to provide suspense, and in that respect, are appropriate. However, it should be noted that this book is part of a series and that two previous books detail the lives of Cathy and Chris that brought them to this point. A person who has read these prequels will have a definite advantage over a reader new to the series. The story will theoretically stand

alone though a reader unfamiliar with the previous story lines may have unanswered questions as the story draws to a close.

It should be noted that the book deals with sex and incest and that some readers may find this content disturbing or objectionable. It's noted that some books of this series were banned for this reason.

Structure

The book is divided into three parts, each of which is divided into chapters. These chapters range from only about two pages to more than sixteen. Unlike traditional chapters, these chapters sometimes end and begin in the middle of a page rather than having left the remaining part of the page after the end of the chapter blank and beginning the next chapter on the following page. The sections are numbered with Roman numerals I, II and III. The chapters are named and there is no number attached to the chapters.

Chapter names tend to offer a clue as to the contents of that chapter. For example, "Where's Momma" is about the realization that Cathy is missing and their first endeavors to find her. "The Snake" is the chapter in which Bart pretends to be a snake, frightening Cindy in her wading pool. There are other more obscure titles though most make sense after the chapter's contents have been read. For example, "Whispering Voices" is about Bart overhearing his grandmother talking to Cathy while the two women are being held in the cellar. The first two chapters are titled "Jory" and "Bart," and each is written from the point of view of that character and is used to introduce characters and the scene. There are two chapters at the end of the book with the same titles that help wrap up the story. It should be noted that this story is part of an overall series though it could be read as a single book as most important details are revealed through several methods.



Quotes

"So ... it was up to me to save Bart from himself. Up to me to straighten out something crooked that had begun a long time ago. And way back in the shadowed recesses of my brain, there were vague, unsettling memories of something that had troubled me years ago when I was too young to understand." Sugar and Spice, page 67

"Each morning I woke up knowing that I'd have to face a brother that was growing more and more strange. And I loved him, loved my parents, and darn if I wasn't beginning to love City too. Somehow I knew I had to protect everyone - but from what I didn't know and couldn't even guess." Shadows, Page 88

"Something weird was going on in Bart's head. Where was the shy, introverted little brother I used to have? Gradually he was changing into an aggressive, suspicious, cruel boy. Now he was staring at Dad as if he had done something wrong - but it was Mom who drew most of his scathing looks." Tales of Evil, Page 96

"Safe was a word that no longer had substance. Like dead people who were only shadows in my memories, nothing as concrete as Bart's hate, which was growing larger, day by day." Tales of Evil, Page 114

"Made me feel so uneasy, even more uneasy than when Bart spoke of how he hated graves, ole ladies, cemeteries and almost everything else. Hate was an emotion he felt often, poor kid." Wounds of War, Page 131

"Didn't hurt but later it would swell up so big Momma would have to feel worried. That would be good. She should be worried about what was happening to me." The Snake, Page 163

"But before she went down the stairs, she locked the door to keep me up in that miserable dry attic that I hated and feared. She was goona make me strong like Malcom, and mean too." The Snake, Page 170

"All the while I carried Bart I suffered from the guilt I felt. I loved his father so much ... and in a way I helped kill him." Cathy, Gathering Darkness, Page 182

"I sneaked along the winding jungle paths that were taking me straight into hell. Down, down, down. Caves and canyons and deep pits, and sooner or later we'd find the door. Red. The door to heel would be red - maybe black." Honor Thy Mother, Page 217

"I felt sick, ready to throw up. Ready to cry out and run and do something wild and painful to myself, like Bart did when he was hurt and disturbed. Bart - for the first time I was feeling what it was to be like Bark." Madame M., Page 268

"I don't give a damn what you and your brother do. If you sleep in his bed and you find the happiness you feel was stolen from you long ago, I can rationalize and say that



much worse goes on every day than brother and sister who pretend to be husband and wife." The Terrible Truth, Page 273

"Dully I turned away. So that was what everlasting burning love was like, destroying everything that got in its way. On my bed I lay down and sobbed." Where's Momma? Page 327



Topics for Discussion

Early in the book, it's revealed that there is a terrible secret at the heart of the story. What is this secret? How does the secret impact the family? How is the secret revealed? What is the social significance?

How does Bart become acquainted with Corrine? Describe their relationship. How is the situation impacted by John Amos Jackson's presence? Compare that with Jory's relationship with Corrine.

Who are Clover and Apple? What is the fate of each? What is the reader led to believe about the two? What is eventually revealed about them? Is it possible that there's some other explanation? Support your answer.

What is the significance of Malcolm's journal? What happens to that journal? What is the significance of Bart's red-bound book with blank pages that he seems to read from after the fire? Compare this journal to the story Cathy has written.

Who is Bart Winslow? Julian Marquet? John Amos Jackson? Corrine Winslow? Malcolm Neal Foxworth? Madame M? Emma? Nicole Nickols? Paul?

Could it be said that Bart is on the verge of suffering from multiple personality disorder? Describe in detail three incidents that support your answer.

Bart has a particular disability. What is it? How does it affect Bart's life? What happens when Bart injures his knee? Why does he enjoy the pain? What would be the benefits of this disability? The negatives?

What is the significance of the garden plots planted by Jory and Bart? Is this as significant as Bart believes it to be? Why or why not?