

# **Love Takes Wing Study Guide**

## **Love Takes Wing by Janette Oke**

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## Plot Summary

In the novel "Love Takes Wing" by Janette Oak, Belinda Davis learns that without friendship, wealth means nothing; just as a life without God can leave one feeling empty and meaningless. In the course of the novel, Belinda allows herself to lose focus on God as she moves to Boston to provide private nursing assistance to an elderly lady. This new life introduces Belinda to wealth, parties, and travel, experiences she never believed that she had gone through. However, she finds herself feeling restless and desperate in her attempt to find her place in a new society. The words of an elderly minister help her to recognize that the reason behind her unhappiness is that she has left God behind in her search for happiness.

In the beginning of the novel, Belinda feels left behind in her small prairie town as her younger nieces get married and move away. An accident causes a rift in the family - a situation that causes Belinda much distress. She also feels pressured to make a commitment that she doesn't feel ready to make by the two young men who are courting her. Hence, it is easy for Belinda to decide to go to Boston when an elderly woman whom she has been nursing invites her to go to that town to be her personal nurse.

In Boston, Belinda enters a world that is entirely foreign to her. Her employer, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth intends her to be both a nurse and a companion. Since she is given special privileges as a companion, the other members of the staff are hateful to her and distance themselves. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth arranges for her visiting grandson to accompany Belinda around Boston. Although Belinda begins to have feelings for Pierre, he returns to France, knowing their relationship wouldn't work. Feeling restless, Belinda and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth travel abroad to France and Spain. It is not until Belinda talks to an elderly minister on the ship back to America that Belinda realizes her emptiness is the result of leaving God behind. In the conclusion, Belinda renews her relationship with God. She also makes up her mind to be a better friend and Christian witness to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth.



# One and Two

## One and Two Summary

In the novel "Love Takes Wing" by Janette Oak, Belinda Davis learns that without friendship, wealth means nothing just as a life without God can leave one feeling empty and meaningless. In the course of the novel, Belinda allows herself to lose focus on God as she moves to Boston to provide private nursing assistance to an elderly lady. This new life introduces Belinda to wealth, parties and travel, experiences she never believed she'd had. But she finds herself feeling restless and despairing in her attempt to find her place in a new society. The words of an elderly minister help her to recognize that the reason behind her unhappiness is that she has left God behind in her search for happiness.

In Chapter One, Belinda is a little bit cross after a day of taking care of accident victims in her brother's doctor's office. She thinks about their last case of the day, a young boy whose fingers were severed after they were caught in a piece of farm equipment. As she cleans the operating room, Luke tells her that he will take care of the cleaning so that she can get ready to meet the train. At this mention of the train, Belinda remembers that Melissa, her niece, is due home for a visit.

As Belinda gets ready to meet the train, she wonders what changes there will be in Melissa, who has been studying to be a teacher in the East. Although they had written to each other, the letters had not been the same. Belinda has a bath, then hurries to get ready. As she is finishing up, Abbie, Luke's wife, knocks on the door and tells her she and Luke would take care of emptying the bathing tub later.

Abbie and her two sons, Thomas and Aaron, accompany Belinda to the station where other members of the Davis family have gathered. Amy Jo, another of Belinda's nieces is overly excited to see Melissa and wonders aloud how much she will have changed. The train appears, and soon Melissa steps down. The family greets her with no reserve. As they gather Melissa's luggage to leave, Clark asks Belinda if she is ready to go also. She is, just needs to stop and pick up her bags, as she will be staying with her mother and father for a week.

As they are headed home in the wagon, Belinda's mother hears her daughter sigh because she knows there will be no time for a quiet talk with Melissa that night. Her mother looks at her with a worried expression and Belinda admits she is tired.

In Chapter Two, Belinda falls asleep quickly after family goes home for the evening. It is 10 o'clock the next morning before Belinda wakes up. Her mother fixes her some breakfast then the two talk briefly about Belinda's job and the possibility of Jackson coming back to the area to work as a doctor. When Jackson had gone away to school, he and Belinda had written each other for awhile, but Belinda had finally put the long distance relationship on hold.



After breakfast, Belinda finds Melissa and Amy Jo and settles in for a chat. Melissa talks about how she has enjoyed getting to see some of the world, but adds that she is ready to get home. Belinda believes she knows what Melissa means when she speaks of becoming ingrown in one area. Melissa even mentions the time when she would not have thought life was worth living without Jackson but than now she knows there are plenty of boys to choose from. Belinda is happy to learn that Melissa won't be too hurt if Jackson chose to marry someone else.

## One and Two Analysis

Some conflicts have already begun to be mentioned in the first section of chapters of this novel. First, the setting is a small prairie town. It has only been recently that a train has begun passing through the town. Because of its size, the town also has only one doctor, Luke. His sister Belinda works as his nurse. Although the town is small, it is growing and the two almost have more work than they can handle, especially on days when there are many emergencies. Belinda is often tired, and Luke has little time to spend with his children. Luke is trying to get Jackson, a young man who formerly lived in the area and is now studying to be a doctor, to agree to practice in their town when he finishes school.

Another conflict comes in relationships Jackson had when he left the town. Apparently, he and Belinda, the main character of the novel, were close enough friends that they wrote to each other for a short while after he left for school. Belinda finally tried to put a halt to the relationship, but Jackson indicates their friendship is only on hold "for now." Although Jackson obviously has romantic feelings for Belinda, Belinda's niece, Melissa was madly in love with Jackson at one point.

These issues are set against the backdrop of Melissa, Belinda's niece, stopping in their town for two weeks on her way home from earning her teaching certificate. The extended family is excited to have Melissa back for a visit as they had only met her two years earlier when she traveled through town on her way to school. Change is an issue as Belinda wonders how much her niece and friend will have grown up over the past few years. One of the things that Belinda finds that Melissa has changed in regards to is her feelings for Jackson. Melissa indicates that it was not until she left town that she realized just how many boys there were in the world. Belinda is relieved to know that Melissa will not be heartbroken if Jackson were to decide to marry someone else.

Another theme begun in these first introductory chapters is the excitement of traveling to unknown places. Although she doubts that she will ever have the opportunity, Belinda wonders what it would be like to be able to travel by train and see other places and people. Notice also the way that Oke captures the language and accent of the country people in the dialogue of the novel. Notice that the speech of the schooled Melissa does not have the country drawl that is evidenced in some of the other characters.



# Three and Four

## Three and Four Summary

In Chapter Three, a party for the youth of the community is being thrown in Melissa's honor. Belinda watches the group play softball and then goes to start a fire when it begins to get dark. Rand O'Connell, a man with whom she had gone to school, surprises her by offering to help with the fire. They catch up on what they've been doing since they left school. Rand has been working at his uncle's dairy farm, but doesn't seem too happy with the position. Belinda questions him and discovers that Rand has always wanted to build things. He tells Belinda that he doesn't have the money to go to school, but Belinda suggests he learn by helping an established builder. Belinda, who thinks that Rand might like Melissa, tells him she is sorry that Melissa is leaving. Rand is first shocked, then tells Belinda that he doesn't like Melissa. He shares with her that he has paid attention to only one girl that evening.

In Chapter Four, after the party Amy Jo is upset because Melissa will be leaving soon, and taking the fun times with her. Amy Jo tries to convince Melissa to stay with them. As they talk, Melissa tries to remember any of the boys that she grew up with back home and wonders if any would be interesting to her now. Talk turns to Rand and the interest that he showed in Belinda during the party. Belinda is more comfortable when the attention turns toward Jackson but soon Melissa points out that although she was interested in Jackson, the only girl that he ever saw was Belinda. Amy Jo agrees that lots of men have been interested in Belinda, but she has not been interested in them.

One day before Melissa leaves to go back to her home in the west, Amy Jo's mother visits Marty to ask advice. She wonders if it would be best to allow Amy Jo to visit with Melissa and her family in the west for awhile since Amy Jo seems to be getting more and more depressed with the idea of Melissa leaving. Marty agrees that the trip would be a good idea for both Amy Jo and Melissa. Clare, Amy Jo's father has also talked to his father, Clark, who has also said he believes the trip is a good idea. Clark wishes that Belinda could go along with the two girls, but she is too busy with her nursing. Belinda is able to take an afternoon off to bid them farewell at the train depot.

## Three and Four Analysis

Belinda's personality begins to develop in this section of chapters. It has already been shown that she is a hard worker. This is evidenced by her work in her brother's office. Notice in this section that while the other girls are joining in the play with boys, Belinda is working. She does not seem drawn to having fun and flirting as the other girls are. Amy Jo points out this quality in Belinda when she mopes about how lonely it will be after Melissa leaves. She wishes they could have parties more often, but Belinda is not interested in having them as she is always so busy nursing.



Another topic that is discussed in this section of the novel is the way that Belinda seems to attract men even though she doesn't seem interested in any of her would-be suitors. Melissa comments on the way that she was always attracted to Jackson but says that he never noticed anyone but Belinda. Amy Jo points out there have been other men in the community who have tried to woo Belinda with no success. She comments that she expects they will soon see Rand coming around the house often. Belinda is not comfortable with this conversation. She also does not appear to notice Rand's broad hint that he has his eye on her. In fact, she at first apologizes to him because she thinks that Rand is interested in Melissa.



# Five and Six

## Five and Six Summary

In Chapter Five, the entire Davis family misses Amy Jo. They are surprised when she requests in one of her letters to stay a few months longer. She promises to return by Christmas. Belinda is disappointed that her niece isn't coming home sooner but is so busy helping her mother work on the fall preserving and her nursing work that she doesn't really have time to dwell on her disappointment. One day Belinda gets a letter from Amy Jo telling her that Melissa is being courted by a young man named Walden while his brother, Ryan, is courting her. Amy Jo includes a sketch she has drawn of her beau, but asks Belinda not to tell the family yet.

In Amy Jo's next letter, she tells her parents about Ryan. She also begs to be allowed to stay longer, this time she promises to be home by Easter. Amy Jo's parents are surprised that so much has taken place on their daughter's trip. A letter from Missie helps to clear up some issues about Ryan as she describes his family and character to Kate and Clare. Just before Christmas, Luke and his wife have a new baby, Ruth Ann. Because she might be needed to care for the new baby if Luke was called away on a medical emergency, Belinda hurries through Christmas dinner and the opening of gifts. Later that day, Belinda talks to her tiny new niece about the true meaning of Christmas.

In Chapter Six, Belinda is helping to get the baby ready for bed when she hears a knock on the door. Rand O'Connel has come to pay a visit to Belinda. He suggests they go for a walk and Belinda agrees. As they walk, Rand tells Belinda that he had taken her advice. He has been working with a builder to whom his uncle recommended him. Now he wants to take Belinda to supper as a way to show his gratitude. He has already been hired to build a house for the Kirbys just as soon as Mrs. Kirby makes up her mind what she wants in the way of a house.

## Five and Six Analysis

In these two chapters, Belinda seems overrun with people in love. Both Melissa and Amy Jo have suitors even though they are both younger than she. The family is disturbed that Amy Jo has fallen in love so quickly and worries that she will be hurt. They wish that she had fallen in love with someone from a family they knew. Although Missie, Melissa's mother, writes to them about the young man's family and background, they aren't completely at ease. Although the family must have known they would take this chance by letting Amy Jo go away to a larger city, they must wonder if they have made the right decision in giving Amy Jo a taste of freedom.

Meanwhile, Rand continues to try to court Belinda. He comes to her house and offers to take her for a walk. He explains that he is grateful for the words of encouragement she gave him and has taken her advice. He wants to take her to dinner as a way to thank





her for helping him to make his dream come true. Although it is clearly a date, Belinda will not allow herself to think that Rand might be interested in her in any other way than as just a friend.



# Seven and Eight

## Seven and Eight Summary

In Chapter Seven, although Belinda has convinced herself that's Rand's supper invitation is only a way to thank her, she has a more difficult time convincing her family of this, particularly her young nephews. It is the older nephew, John, who explains to his younger cousins that Belinda and Rand are courting, a description that Belinda doesn't agree with, but doesn't argue with either. Belinda feels awkward at first, but soon she and Rand are talking easily. Despite her nephew's description, Belinda fights down the urge to invite Rand to tea because the two aren't courting she continues to tell herself. On their walk back to Belinda's house, Rand when Amy Jo will be back. Belinda tells him she is afraid Amy Jo won't come back because she has met a man. Rand uses the opening to ask Belinda is she is ready for marriage. Belinda says she is not, and Rand changes the subject, sensing her uncomfortable stand on the subject. After church on Sunday, Rand asks Marty if any of their boys might be interested in a job helping them. Clark wonders why Amy Jo couldn't have stayed in town and fallen in love with Rand.

In Chapter Eight, the family receives a telegram from Amy Jo stating that she will be home for Easter. She says nothing about Ryan, and her parents wonder what happened with the romance. The next afternoon, Belinda is trying to find things to do to occupy her time until Amy Jo's train when she happens to run into Rand. Their conversation seems to focus on courting and love affairs. On the day that Amy Jo's train is to arrive, Belinda and Luke are unusually busy in the office. Although Belinda worries that she won't be finished in time to meet Amy Jo's train. They are done just in time and Belinda walks with Abbie and the children to the train station.

As they wait, Kate worries that Amy Jo will mope because she has lost her beau. She suggests to Belinda that she introduce Amy Jo to Rand. When the train finally comes and Belinda mentions to Amy Jo how good she looks, Amy Jo contributes her look to love. Amy Jo steps back to introduce the young man behind her. She and Ryan have come home to be married. As Belinda watches Amy Jo preparing for her wedding, and thinks about Melissa getting ready for hers, she has to admit she feels as if she is being left behind.

## Seven and Eight Analysis

In this section of the novel, Amy Jo surprises her family by bringing her beau home with her when she comes home for Easter. She announces that they will be getting married June first, the same day as Melissa. Although Belinda doesn't seem like she is ready to get married, or even interested in the proposal, it appears that she feels she is being left behind by her younger relatives.



Also in this section notice Belinda's continued refusal to believe that her dinner with Rand is anything but the result of a friendship. Even when her young nephew explains to his younger brother that Rand is courting Belinda, Belinda refuses to see her relationship with Rand as anything other than friendship. What is clear even to the young children is not clear to Belinda. Even so, she refuses to invite Rand to tea because she feels this would be encouraging him and acknowledging the idea that they might, indeed, be courting.



# Nine and Ten

## Nine and Ten Summary

In Chapter Nine, although Belinda is dismayed by the way things keep changing in her world, she is so busy at the doctor's office that she doesn't have much time to think about it. She wonders if she would still be interested in marrying Jackson, but then quickly dismisses the idea. Rand continues to be a companion for her. Rand suggests to her that she might be tired of nursing and ready to take on a new challenge. Belinda doesn't understand what he means. He mentions the Kirby house and tells Belinda he'll take her to see it as soon as he has enough done to show her. Before they part, Rand invites her to a drive the coming Sunday and kisses her hand.

After church on Sunday, however, Abe is badly injured by a new bull on the farm. After they rescue the boy from the animal, Clare shoots the bull. Belinda remembers her training as a nurse and tries to be as calm as possible even though she is working on a loved one. She and Luke take the boy to the doctor's office in town to fix his up as best they can. Several ribs are broken and his left arm is broken and mangled. Despite his injuries, Abe slowly begins to improve.

In Chapter Ten, Belinda senses there is something about Abe's slow improvement that is concerning Luke. Belinda asks Dack why Abe was in the bull's pen to start with. He explains that their ball had gone into the pen and Abe thought he could get it without upsetting the bull.

A few weeks later, Rand and Belinda are able to reschedule their Sunday afternoon ride. He suggests they ride into town to see the progress he has made on the Kirby house. It will have a library, a morning room, four bedrooms and a nursery.

The next time Arnie brings Abe in for a checkup, Luke finally talks to the father about what has been on his mind concerning the boy. Luke tries to explain that the left arm is healing crooked and needs surgery to fix it so it will heal properly. Arnie does not understand why it was not fixed correctly in the first place, and does not want to put his son through any more pain. Luke, who knows that Abe will be crippled without the surgery, cries after Arnie leaves.

## Nine and Ten Analysis

In Chapters Nine and Ten, a new problem crops up. One of Belinda's nephews is badly hurt after he is attacked by a bull. Although Luke does the best he can for the boy, he is unable to set his badly mangled left arm so that it heals properly. When Luke suggests a surgery to Arnie that will help the boy's arm, Arnie responds in anger, first accusing Luke of not caring for the boy properly, then telling him that he is trying to play God. In his lack of understanding, Arnie believes he will be being cruel to his son by putting him through more pain to fix the arm. He also doesn't completely understand why it couldn't



have been properly set to start with. Arnie leaves angry. Luke cries because he knows what is in store for the boy if his arm is not fixed properly.

Meanwhile, Rand continues to try to develop a relationship between himself and Belinda. Although he is obviously hinting that he believes they have a serious relationship, Belinda continues to believe they are just friends. Rand remarks openly to Belinda that she might be ready to do something other than nursing, and also tells her there is something that he wants to discuss with her after he has some money in the bank. Belinda is confused by these statements and wonders where Rand is going, but does not seem to understand how deeply he is feeling for her. She does notice, however, how comfortable she feels talking to Rand and how naturally her hand seems to fit in his.



# Eleven and Twelve

## Eleven and Twelve Summary

In Chapter Eleven, Belinda senses the sorrow that her brother is feeling about Abe's arm. One day she decides to talk about the matter with him. She suggests that he talk to their mother and father about what has happened between himself and Arnie. Marty has already noticed that Arnie has distanced himself from the family and wonders what is wrong. Luke has noticed the boy is not using his left arm. He explains to Belinda that the way the arm was broken and twisted, he was unable to get the bones to line up properly. Although he'd hoped they might adjust as they healed, this hadn't happened. The surgery Luke has suggested could help the boy, and keep him from being crippled for life. Belinda remembers years ago when she had seen a crippled boy selling newspapers. Other boys had been cruel to him. She does not want this same future for her nephew.

Luke decides to drive Belinda home to Marty and Clark's house Friday so he can talk to them about Arnie and Abe. Belinda goes upstairs to change while Luke talks to their parents. Marty and Clark offer money but Luke explains that isn't what is holding Arnie back, it is the idea of causing Abe more pain. Marty and Clark promise to talk to Arnie about the issue. When they do talk about the subject, Anne is surprised to learn about the need for surgery on her son's arm as Arnie had not said anything to her about it. Not only are Clark and Marty unable to convince Arnie to let Abe have the surgery, Arnie also does not attend church that Sunday. The family does not join the others for Sunday dinner.

In Chapter Twelve, Arnie's entire family begins to miss church. They also don't attend the family Christmas celebration. Although the preacher visits with Arnie, it seems to make no difference. He also resigns from the church board. Clark and Marty try to visit and talk, but the visit is strained and they leave feeling worse than before. Belinda learns from her mother that Clare also tried to talk to Arnie, but that Arnie was only angry with him. He blames the whole affair on Clare because it was his bull that injured Abe.

Marty finally goes to see Arnie in person. Although Arnie had seen his mother coming, he has not come to the house to meet her. She tells Arnie how much the family misses him and his family. When Arnie cries, Marty hugs him and then leaves. After the talk, Arnie and the family do come back to church and family lunches, but the atmosphere is not the same. Belinda wishes there was an opportunity for her to get away from the strain caused by the family rift. One day, a lady falls ill on the train and is brought to Luke's office. Belinda is both concerned and excited by the sophisticated lady who is now under their care.



## Eleven and Twelve Analysis

In this section of the novel, the rift in the Davis family becomes deeper and deeper as Arnie and his family avoid the rest of their family members. Luke had intended to help the issue by bringing it to the attention of his father and mother, but the well-meant action has only seemed to make matters worse. Even after Marty goes and talks to her son in person and convinces him to return to church and family gatherings, there is still a tangible tension that was never present before. The whole family is hurt by these feelings. Even Belinda, who stays busy working with Luke, wishes that she had the opportunity to get away from her problems for awhile.

Another important aspect of this section of the novel is the major personality change that has apparently taken place in Arnie. Though he is described as a thoughtful, sensitive man, he has been acting very out of character ever since Luke has told him that his son needs an operation to properly set his arm. Belinda describes Arnie as one who avoids causing suffering for others, yet she and the rest of the family acknowledge the emotional suffering that Abe will have to endure if his arm becomes permanently crippled. Marty suggests they try to make Arnie understand that suffering can be caused by more than just physical pain, it can also be emotional.

Although the tone of the novel at this point is very melancholy and depressive, Belinda expresses excitement when an ill lady is brought in from the train station. It appears that this lady's introduction into the action of the novel may signal a change for the tone of the novel as well as Belinda's state of mind.



# Thirteen and Fourteen

## Thirteen and Fourteen Summary

In Chapter Thirteen, Luke diagnoses the woman as having suffered from a stroke. Although she almost dies twice, she survives each close call. Luke fears she may have some lasting paralysis on her right side. Three days after she is brought to Luke's office, a man who identifies himself as Windsor, come to take charge of the lady, whom they have learned is Mrs. Virginia Stafford-Smyth.

Although Belinda does not allow the man, who identifies himself as the lady's butler, to visit until Luke gives permission, she does tell the lady that Windsor has come. There is no sign the lady has heard Belinda's comments. When Luke returns, he goes in search of the butler to allow him to visit. The butler is shocked at the small office and makes his wishes that his employer had never gone on the train trip known. Belinda fixes the visitor tea, which he appreciates.

Belinda manages to learn a few things about their patient from Windsor. He had been working for Mrs. Stafford-Smyth for forty-two years. Her husband, a lawyer, had died of a heart attack at a young age. Belinda also learns that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth had two children, one who died in infancy, and the other who died as an adult. She has two grandchildren who live abroad. Three days after the arrival of Windsor, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth begins to regain consciousness. After several days, the woman is more and more conscious and becomes able to talk. At this point, she is moved to a room in the hotel.

Later when Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is able to talk better, she tells Belinda about how she and her staff raised the two grandsons. They are grown men now, visiting their mother's family in France. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth explains that she travels to keep her mind off her now distant family. Though her nurse usually traveled with her, the lady had been sick and unable to travel, that is why she was alone.

In Chapter Fourteen, during a walk one afternoon, Belinda notices that Rand seems unusually interested in how soon Mrs. Stafford-Smyth will be better. Then he asks Belinda to the coming church picnic with him. The day of the picnic, Belinda is ready early so she stops to play with Ruthie while she is waiting for Rand. She is interrupted in her play by the entrance of Jackson, who has returned to the town to help Luke with his practice.

Jackson attempts to take Belinda to the picnic, but Rand arrives just in time to show Jackson she already has an invitation. At the picnic, Belinda is troubled by the continued tension between the members of her family. She is also disturbed that Abe's arm is getting worse. Rand also questions Belinda about her relationship with Jackson.





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# Fifteen and Sixteen

## Fifteen and Sixteen Summary

In Chapter Fifteen, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is pleased when Belinda returns to her room after a couple of days away. She helps the lady to sit up in a chair for the first time since she has been sick. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth tells Belinda she has a gift of knowing what others need. She is telling Belinda how much she looks forward to the days when she is working when Jackson comes in to check on her. After Jackson finishes examining Mrs. Stafford-Smyth, he asks to see Belinda outside the room. He asks Belinda to dinner. Believing that he intends to discuss the medicine with her over dinner, Belinda agrees. When Belinda goes back to her patient, she asks Belinda about Jackson, and mentions that the man likes her.

As the two continue to discuss, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth tells Belinda she intended to ask Belinda to go back to Boston with her. When Belinda asks how long the trip will take, the older woman indicates that she had hoped Belinda would stay with her. When Belinda falters, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth tells her to keep her proposal in mind.

In Chapter Sixteen, Belinda enjoys her supper with Jackson. She is surprised when he does not bring the medicine with her as planned. When she asks about the medicine, Jackson explains the simple directions to her. As they walk back to Luke's house, Jackson asks about Rand and his relationship with Belinda. Belinda assures him there is no special relationship between the two. The two run into Rand on the way home. He has been to see Belinda. He appears to be upset to learn that she has been with Jackson.

## Fifteen and Sixteen Analysis

In Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth notices that Jackson is interested in Belinda. She points out the situation to Belinda, who does not fully believe that the woman has read the situation correctly. It turns out that Belinda now has two men who are prepared to go head to head for Belinda. Rand seems to believe they have some sort of understanding but Belinda does not feel the same way. She is, however, confused when Jackson invites her to dinner. She believes they are going to eat only as colleagues discussing a case. Belinda is surprised to learn that Jackson had no intentions of discussing Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's case over dinner. She is equally dismayed when the two young men whom she considers to be only friends meet one another as she and Jackson are on their way home from dinner. Rand is obviously offended and hurt by the fact she has gone to eat with another man, but Belinda does not understand his coolness toward her.



# Seventeen and Eighteen

## Seventeen and Eighteen Summary

In Chapter Seventeen, Luke and Belinda discuss briefly how strained their family still is after Abe's accident. They are both concerned the way that Marty and Clark look as if they have aged badly since the accident and Arnie's division from the family. When Belinda learns that there are revival services starting at the church. She believes the services will help Arnie.

When Belinda returns to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's room, she learns that the patient has met Rand also. She comments that dating has changed since she was courting her husband. The next day, Rand brings candy to Belinda. The following morning, Jackson has sent her a bouquet of flowers. Belinda is angered by the acts of her two friends. She refuses to go out with either of the two. She instead goes to her parents for the weekend. While there, she discusses with her mother Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's offer to let Belinda go to Boston with her.

In Chapter Eighteen, Jackson continues to seek time with Belinda. She continues to put him off. Rand, meanwhile, tries to bring sketches of the house he'd like to build for himself by to let Belinda look at them. She is afraid she might have given Rand the wrong idea. Belinda asks Jackson over coffee whether or not Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is ready to travel. She explains that she is considering going to live in Boston with Mrs. Stafford-Smyth. Jackson is angry because he believes that Belinda is asking him to continue to wait for her. Belinda points out that she has never asked Jackson to wait.

Rand does not take the news any better as he has brought sketches for Belinda to look at. She reminds him that they have not talked about any plans. Rand points out that Belinda is getting past marrying age. The next morning, Belinda asks Mrs. Stafford-Smyth how soon she can be ready to go back to Boston. Belinda tells her that she will go to Boston with the lady and stay in Boston with her.

Meanwhile, Luke goes to Marty and Clark to tell them that he is on his way to Arnie's house to ask his forgiveness. He feels Arnie has taken his opinion as an attempt to butt into his life and make himself self-important. After their discussion, both men have forgiven one another. Later, Arnie and Anne talk to Abe about the surgery that might help his arm. Abe tells his father that despite the fact there might be pain, he wants the surgery to help his arm.

## Seventeen and Eighteen Analysis

It is in this section of the novel that there is finally a breakthrough in the family's strained relationship with Arnie. While Belinda had thought that the revival meetings would help Arnie to see where he had gone wrong, they instead show Luke where he might have made a bad decision in the way that he conveyed the information about Abe's arm. Luke



chooses to be a better person and go to Arnie to apologize to him for meddling where he might not have belonged. His heartfelt apology to his brother is successful because Arnie soon sees the need to talk to Abe about the possibility of surgery helping his arm.

When Arnie does talk to Abe about the possibility that surgery would correct his arm, Abe is excited by the hope that his arm can be fixed. Arnie is still concerned that his son will be put through a great deal of pain as a result of the surgery, but realizes this is not as much a concern for his son when the young boy asks if it is the cost of the surgery that is troubling his father. It is interesting to note that even as a young child, Abe has known that his father has been worried about something. He just didn't realize that all of his father's stress was a result of the pain he was afraid that he would put Abe through if he decided to have the surgery. Abe also reasons with his father that if he'd known about the surgery sooner, he might have wanted to put it off, hoping the arm would heal on its own.



# Nineteen and Twenty

## Nineteen and Twenty Summary

In Chapter Nineteen, Belinda and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth are on the train on their way to Boston. Belinda is still not sure how long she plans to stay in Boston. As Belinda thinks over the things that she is leaving behind in her hometown, she is glad that the argument with Arnie has been cleared up. She is angry, however, about Rand's insistence that she should be ready for marriage and a family at this point. She wonders if her life is really not on the proper track but then realizes that she does know what she wants, and that she is not ready for marriage.

On the third day of travel, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth gets excited because she will be home soon. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth tells Belinda that Windsor will meet them at the station with the carriage. Although Belinda would have liked to have watched through the carriage window at the scenery passing by, she keeps her composure and instead sits back in the carriage. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth tells Windsor that as soon as she gets home, she wants tea in the drawing room, and then wants to see her rose garden. She also tells Windsor that Belinda is to occupy the Rosewood suite, next to her own rooms. Belinda is shocked when she does see the size of Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's house.

In Chapter Twenty, Belinda is surprised by her suite of rooms. The bedroom is decorated in blue velvet and lace with polished wood furniture. After she finishes her washing, Belinda follows the maid to the drawing room. As Belinda enters the room, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth tells Windsor and an elderly lady how Belinda nursed her the whole time she was sick. Belinda pours tea for Mrs. Stafford-Smyth, then pours a cup for the other lady in the room. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth indicates that Mrs. Potter does not take her tea in the drawing room. Mrs. Potter, likewise, seems unsure how the situation should be handled but Mrs. Stafford-Smyth instructs her to serve Belinda. After tea is finished, Belinda tries to help Mrs. Potter, but is given a look of disapproval by the older lady.

Later, Belinda learns there is a buzzer system in the house where Mrs. Stafford-Smyth can ring for whom ever she needs without a person having to be with her all of the time. Belinda asks to be given duties, but is only met with surprised disbelief by the rest of the staff members. Belinda finds a way to keep herself occupied when she is shown the library.

Belinda senses a tension in the household, but is unable to determine the cause of this tension. When Mrs. Stafford-Smyth shares her plans to have a dinner party there is confusion among the staff because their employer includes Belinda, who is also an employee, as one of the guests. Belinda notices that Windsor looks surprised when he learns that Belinda will be included in the party while Mrs. Potter shows open resentment. Belinda decides to talk to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth about the feelings she was getting from the staff. The prior nurse had not been treated as Belinda is, but Mrs. Stafford-Smyth admits Belinda is like a daughter to her.



Belinda had been saving the money that she was earning at her job, but decides she needs to update her wardrobe. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth arranges for Windsor to take her to LeSoud's. She writes a note for Belinda to give to Madam Tilley, who works at the shop.

## Nineteen and Twenty Analysis

Belinda is excited as she and her employer travel to Boston. Although she understands that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is well off, she is still shocked by the grandness of the home in which she lives. She has never seen anything like the beauty and richness of which she has suddenly become part. For a person who has never visited outside of her prairie town, Belinda doesn't seem to feel as out of place in her surrounds as one might expect her to. She maintains her composure and holds in check her excitement concerning her new surroundings. One should consider this is just an offset of Belinda's personality. Just as she is hardworking, she is not easily distracted by things that are happening around her.

One aspect of Boston that does bother Belinda is her relationship with the other workers at Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's home. In fact, this is the only area where she seems backward or unsure of herself at all. This uncertainty comes out when Belinda is first called upon for tea with Mrs. Stafford-Smyth. There are two cups on tray, but four people in the room. Belinda pours for Mrs. Stafford-Smyth but is then unsure to whom to give the second cup. Both Mrs. Potter and Windsor shake their heads no when she offers to them. She has to be told that it is for her. When serving the items on the tea tray, Mrs. Potter has to be nudged by Mrs. Stafford-Smyth to serve Belinda. In her desire to be useful, Belinda tries to help Mrs. Potter with the tea tray but is met with open disapproval by the older lady. After this uncomfortable encounter, Belinda feels as if the staff disapproves of her. This feeling is even stronger when Mrs. Stafford-Smyth announces that she will be having a dinner party and that Belinda will be considered one of the guests. Belinda considers Mrs. Potter's look as being of open resentment. She does not understand why the staff treats her as they do.



# Twenty-one and Twenty-two

## Twenty-one and Twenty-two Summary

In Chapter Twenty-one, Belinda is confused by her trip to LeSound's. Two ladies bring her dresses and have her try them on, but no mention is made of which ones or one she'd like to purchase. The ladies, who don't seem to be speaking in English, also have her try on shoes, gloves and coats. She leaves the store believing that she has impressed upon the ladies that she liked one particular green dress. Belinda believes that it will be delivered later. When Belinda tries to pay for her gown, she is told that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth has requested the bill be sent to her. When Belinda later questions the lady, she tells Belinda that her wardrobe comes with the position as she is to be Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's companion.

Belinda is surprised when not just the one dress is delivered but several boxes of clothes are delivered to Marshall Manor. Belinda almost runs directly into Mrs. Stafford-Smyth in her effort to stop the delivery boy and tell him he must return some of the items. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth does not seem surprised but instead asks Belinda if they can open the boxes together. Belinda is slightly surprised when Mrs. Stafford-Smyth tells her which of the new dresses she should wear to the dinner party and how she should wear her hair.

On Sunday, Belinda is surprised by the coldness that she senses at the Boston church. The church is huge and beautiful with much pageantry. The organ music is beautiful and fills Belinda with awe but she realizes the men and women around her have blank stares and seem stiff and uncomfortable.

In Chapter Twenty-two, it is explained that while Mrs. Stafford-Smyth was in Belinda's home town, she had learned some of the basics of survival. She had also learned to consider Belinda as a friend and had come to treasure this friendship. Now the older lady is unwilling to give up this friendship regardless of what her other employees might think of her behavior. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth continues to mention a blue silk dress that she believes will look beautiful on Belinda. Belinda indicates that she does not remember trying on a blue silk dress. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth just smiles as she realizes that Belinda probably did not try on the dress as it was too elegant to be tried on even at LeSound's.

Later that day as she reads in the garden, Belinda is interrupted by a strange young man. She recognizes him as one of Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's grandsons. He tells her that his grandmother is unaware he is in Boston, he had wanted to surprise her. She learns the man is Pierre, or Peter. The two talk about his grandmother's health and then the evening's dinner party. Belinda sees the surprise as Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is greeted by her grandson at tea. She then leaves the two alone to get reacquainted.



Later that evening when Belinda puts on the blue silk dress, she is disturbed by how low cut the gown is in the bust. She believes that she looks indecent and knows that she did not ever try the dress on. Belinda is determined that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth must not be aware of how skimpy the dress is. When she shows the lady her dress, however, she is pleased with how beautiful Belinda looks.

## Twenty-one and Twenty-two Analysis

In this section of chapters, Belinda is again bewildered by her shopping trip to LeSoud's. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth has not thought to warn her of what to expect, and the experience is like none that Belinda has ever had. She expects a shop with dresses she can browse through can choose her own. Instead, the shopkeepers bring her dresses that they believe will look good on her. She doesn't understand what they are saying, so she isn't sure if they understand which dress it is she wants to purchase. At the end of the afternoon, however, she believes that she has gotten through to them that she wants a particular green dress that she tried on. She considers briefly that she should have also purchased some accessories, but seems too worn out by her experience to try to converse with the strange ladies any further.

Once she is back at Marshall Manor, Belinda talks to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth about how the dress was to be paid for and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth tells her that since she expects Belinda to be her companion and accompany her to various social events, she will be in charge of paying for the wardrobe. At first, Belinda feels offended by the lady's words believing that her simple wardrobe is not good enough, but then realizes how lonely that older lady must be. Although she has all of the money and the things that one could hope for, she does not have close friends or family. Belinda realizes that though she has no money or means, she can give Mrs. Stafford-Smyth the companionship she desires.

It is also during these chapters that Belinda meets one of Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's grandsons. This is one of the main instances in the book where Janette Oke chooses to tell the story from the point of view of someone other than Belinda. However, there is no way to tell this story except by telling it through Pierre's view because his views are ones that Belinda is never told.





# Twenty-three and Twenty-four

## Twenty-three and Twenty-four Summary

In Chapter Twenty-three, Belinda still feels uncomfortable in her dress. She is even more uncomfortable when the time for dinner arrives but Aunt Celia has not yet appeared. Pierre tries to get her to walk in the garden with him but she refuses, worries the lady will show up at any minute. When she does arrive, Celia assumes that Belinda has come with Pierre. No one attempts to clear up the confusion. As Pierre gets to know Belinda, he briefly wonders if she might be interested in his grandmother because of her money. Instead of joining the men for cigars and brandy after dinner, Pierre takes Belinda for a garden walk. During their walk, Pierre learns the story of how Belinda met his grandmother. Pierre tells her that his grandmother has requested that he show Belinda around Boston. Belinda agrees.

When Belinda tells Pierre that how long she stays will depend on how she and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth get along together he again wonders about her intentions. He admits to himself that he has come to his grandmothers in an attempt to try to win her favor. He again wonders if Belinda is after the same thing.

Pierre does not sleep that night as he thinks about the possible situation with Belinda. He wonders if he should be happy with whatever part of his grandmother's estate he might inherit or if he should question his grandmother about Belinda's possible intentions. He wonders if it would be possible for them to share the estate but wonders if Belinda is as sly as he suspects that she is, if he would want to be married to her. He decides he needs to talk to his grandmother about his suspicions, so he meets with her before his appointment with Belinda.

It is while he is talking to his grandmother that he learns that Belinda is actually an employee of his grandmother, her nurse. Pierre seems offended that his grandmother is friends with this employee and tries to make her understand that her behavior toward the girl might be inappropriate. He believes that it is also inappropriate that his grandmother has asked him to escort Belinda around town since she is actually a staff member. Pierre realizes he has no room to argue with his grandmother when she insists that Belinda is better than any of the other girls that he has dated.

In Chapter Twenty-four, as Pierre gets to know Belinda, he feels more and more troubled about the situation. He is no longer concerned that Belinda is after his grandmother's money but instead wonders if she would be able to fit into his world. He decides not and allows himself to enjoy her company, but to expect nothing else.

One day Celia Prescott comes to pay Mrs. Stafford-Smyth a visit. Celia is upset because she has heard that Belinda is actually the hired help. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth calmly tells Celia that she is correct. She describes her relationship with Belinda. She



tells Celia she'd rather see her grandsons marry a working girl with some sense than an airheaded socialite.

When Pierre decides to leave his grandmother and return to France, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is devastated. She halfway admits she hoped Belinda and Peter would get married. Belinda admits to herself that she also hoped she could keep Pierre in Boston. Her employer tells her that she has realized that if she wants to see her grandsons, she will have to go to them.

Belinda is sad to see Pierre go and had hoped that he might care for her a little. What she doesn't realize is that Pierre is running away because he is beginning to have feelings for Belinda. He realizes, though, that their two worlds are too different and they could not coexist.

## Twenty-three and Twenty-four Analysis

In the first chapter in this section, it is learned that Pierre has come to visit his grandmother with the intent of winning her favor so that he will be remembered as generously as possible in her will. It is upon his own reasoning for "courting" his grandmother that Pierre tries to interpret Belinda's actions. He wonders if she has latched onto his grandmother and is trying to win her favor in order to get rich. In his business-like attitude toward the situation, he wonders if it would be best for him to try to compete against her, or join forces with her. He decides that if she is the type who would try to scam an old lady out of her money that she probably wouldn't make a good marriage partner. He decides instead to warn his grandmother against Belinda's possible foul motives behind her friendship.

When Pierre goes to speak to his grandmother about his suspicious he is more surprised by what he learns from her. He had not known before that Belinda was his grandmother's nurse. He is offended that his grandmother would allow him to be so friendly with a member of the staff. He is equally offended when his grandmother demands that he accompany Belinda about and show her the town. He is worried what people will think when they learn that he is appearing in public with a member of his grandmother's staff. His grandmother basically tells him to get over his feelings and do as he is told.

As Pierre gets to know Belinda, he soon begins to realize she has no intent to steal his grandmother's money. In fact, he leaves quickly because he has realized that he has feelings for her but that their two worlds could never coexist. Although Belinda feels some sorrow because he has left so quickly and wonders if he might have had any feelings for her, he has in a way, saved her from a life of hurt. As he is a suspicious and manipulative person, he is not the sort of person who would make a good marriage partner for Belinda, who is so innocent and trusting.



# Twenty-five and Twenty-six

## Twenty-five and Twenty-six Summary

In Chapter Twenty-five, in the letters that Belinda receives from home she learns that Rand is building a separate medical office for Luke. Abe has also had two surgeries on his arm that have greatly improved its condition. Belinda is especially homesick because Christmas is coming. Although she finds things to do to fill her time, Belinda also feels a loneliness that she isn't sure what to do about. While talking to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth one day, Belinda decides they should have Christmas. They soon have informed the staff of their plans and have the whole household busy in preparations. Belinda suggests they also invite guests but Mrs. Stafford-Smyth says that all of her usual guests have Christmas with their families or go out of the country. Belinda talks to a minister to find people with no place to go on Christmas to join them.

Belinda enjoys the morning worship service even though the day is cold and windy. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth and Belinda share their gifts with the staff during the afternoon tea. As 5 p.m. nears Belinda is afraid no one will come, but soon the house is filled with ten guests. The food and fellowship of the evening is enjoyed by all.

As the winter drags on, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth suggests they go on a trip. Italy, Spain and France are some of the places that she suggests they visit. Belinda is excited at the idea of going abroad and allows herself to be outfitted as Mrs. Stafford-Smyth feels appropriate. On the day they leave to board their ship, Belinda wonders if she will like the experience so much that she will not want to return.

In Chapter Twenty-six, Belinda gets seasick on the way to Spain. Once they arrive, Belinda has to remind herself that she is in Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's employ to keep from leaving the older lady behind. The two move on through their travels, and Belinda loses track of the day as she tries to see and take in everything. As time passes, though, Belinda begins to feel restless again. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is concerned that Belinda is ill or that they have taken their trip too quickly. Belinda assures her it is neither one of these things. Belinda suggests that perhaps she just wants to see France, so the two move on to that country.

When the two ladies arrive in Paris, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth makes a comment about how she recognizes the city yet at the same time it seems different. Belinda realizes this is how she feels about herself. She wonders if she has lost her true identity somewhere. As she looks over the city skyline with the older lady, Belinda hears the sound of a church bell. She realizes that she misses church, they have not been since they have been overseas both because of their busy travel schedule and the language barrier.

When the two meet up with Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's grandsons, Pierre has married. Franz is planning to marry soon. Soon, Paris loses its charm for Belinda and becomes just



another city. When Belinda mentions it is spring in Boston, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth suggests the two of them return home.

On the ship on her way home, Belinda is restless. One day, an elderly Irish minister reaches out to her. He tells her that he is leaving his home country but has reminded himself that he does not have to leave God behind. As Belinda thinks about his words, she realizes that she has left God behind, perhaps even back in her hometown. She begins to realize how busy she was nursing Mrs. Stafford-Smyth and how upset Rand and Jackson were making her with their pursuit of her attachment.

Once she is back in her stateroom, Belinda locates her Bible, then begs God to forgive her for leaving him out of her life for so long. She wonders how she could have allowed Satan to lead her away from God and the habits of her childhood. Belinda also realizes that she has not been the Christian witness to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth that she should have been. She has a fresh realization of just how much Mrs. Stafford-Smyth needed her as a friend and recognizes that she is not free to go back to her home. She does realize, however, that with God inside her, she can be peaceful where ever she goes.

## **Twenty-five and Twenty-six Analysis**

In Chapters Twenty-five and Twenty-six, Belinda becomes increasingly restless. Even though she is living the life that she once could only have dreamed of, Belinda is not happy. She feels empty, but cannot find any specific reason for her emptiness. It is not until she is on the ship on the way back to Boston that Belinda realizes what it is that is missing from her life. An older man who is a minister talks to her about his decision to sail to America. He tells Belinda he is comfortable with the trip because he knew that he could take God with him. It is at this point that Belinda realizes that she has left God behind in her life. She feels empty because her belief in Christ has always been important to her, but has been ignored for such a long time. As she thinks back, she realizes how slowly she began leaving God behind. As she repents for her lack of faithfulness to God, she realizes that she has a job to be not only a friend to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth, but also a Christian witness. In the conclusion of the novel, Belinda promises both God and herself that she will put more effort into both of these jobs.



# Characters

## Belinda

Belinda Davis is the main character of this story. She is the youngest daughter of Clark and Marty Davis. She is the sister of Luke Davis, the town's doctor. Belinda works for her brother as a nurse. In the beginning of the novel, Belinda lives with her brother, his wife Abbie and their two sons. She goes home to visit her parents on the family farm on weekends. Although Belinda is of marriageable age, she has not gotten married yet. She often thinks about marriage and wonders if she is being left behind when she sees her younger nieces getting married, but does not seem to feel ready to settle down yet. Through the course of the novel, she is courted by three different young men. She leaves two of them behind when she goes to live in Boston because she feels as if they are pressuring her to make a decision for which she is not ready. The third leaves her behind in Boston when he finds himself falling in love with her because he realizes that they could never coexist happily because their two worlds are so different.

Belinda is given the chance of a lifetime when she nurses an elderly lady who had fallen sick on the train and was left in Luke's care when the train passed through their town. Luke diagnoses the lady with a stroke and fears that she won't recover, but she soon begins to get better. As the lady gets to know Belinda and enjoys her style of nursing, she decides to ask Belinda to accompany her back to Boston and serve her there as her personal nurse. Because of the pressure that Belinda is feeling from her suitors, she agrees.

In Boston, Belinda is swept into a life of which she never dreamed that she would be a part. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is rich, but lonely, and wants Belinda not only to be her nurse, but also her companion. For this reason, the rest of the staff treats Belinda with resentment, which Belinda does not understand. As Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's companion, Belinda is fitted out with a new wardrobe purchased by her employer. Belinda feels uncomfortable wearing what she deems "borrowed" clothes, but does as the lady asks. Even when she discovers that one of the dresses that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth has ordered for her is indecent in her eyes, Belinda wears it because the lady believes she looks beautiful in it.

During this time, Belinda is also being shown about town by Pierre, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's grandson. Her days become busy to the point that she even stops attending Sunday church. After Pierre leaves to return to France, Belinda begins to feel restless and empty. When her employer suggests that they make a trip abroad, Belinda jumps at the chance. After the excitement of travel wears off, Belinda begins to again feel restless. It is not until she speaks with an elderly minister on the return trip to America that she realizes that she has left God behind in her life. Belinda's story concludes as she becomes reunited with her God and promises to be both a better Christian witness and friend to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth.



## Mrs. Virginia Stafford-Smyth

Mrs. Virginia Stafford-Smyth is the elderly lady who has a stroke on the train and is taken to Luke's office for treatment. Luke is afraid she will not recover, but with his care and Belinda's nursing, she does get better. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is from Boston. She was traveling alone because the lady who usually traveled with her had surgery from which she had not yet recovered. While Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is staying in Belinda's town, Windsor, her butler, is the only person who comes to see her.

Belinda learns that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is very rich, but also very lonely. Her husband died at a young age of a heart attack. She lost a daughter in infancy. Her son was later killed in an accident in France. She has two grown grandchildren, but they both live in France. While in Belinda's care, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth becomes very fond of her young nurse. When she is well enough to return to Boston, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth asks Belinda to travel with her, and then stay in Boston as her personal nurse. Belinda agrees. Though it goes against common practice at the time, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth chooses to treat Belinda as a friend rather than as a staff member. The other members of her staff are resentful because of the special treatment that Belinda gets. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's friends believe it is shocking and shameful that she is such close friends with a member of her staff. Her grandson, likewise, tries to refuse to be seen with Belinda because he believes she is below him. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth, however, insists there is nothing wrong with the way she has chosen to treat Belinda and basically tells those around her that she has the right to do as she pleases without regard to their opinion.

## Luke

Luke is Belinda's older brother. He is the town's doctor. Because he is the only doctor in a rapidly growing town, he hopes to add Jackson, Belinda's former suitor to his practice as a second doctor. During the course of the novel, Luke is able to add Jackson as a doctor. In the beginning of the novel, Luke insists on cleaning up the surgery for Belinda so that she can be free to meet Melissa's train on time. This action shows his selflessness as well as his humility. Some doctor's would not have done what they considered to be nurses' work.

One of the greatest challenges for Luke seems to be that he not only has to take care of the general population of the town, but also has to take care of his own family members when medical disasters strike. It is Luke that cares for Abe after he is attacked by a bull. Abe survives the attack even though his uncle had feared that he would not. Unfortunately, Abe's broken arm is damaged in a way that Luke does not have the training to fix properly. When he suggests to his brother that Abe needs to go to a surgeon to have the arm rebroken and set properly, Arnie becomes angry with his brother because the arm was not set correctly in the first place. He is also scared by the idea of putting his son through more pain than he has already suffered. The disagreement causes a rift that affects the entire Davis family. In his selflessness, it is



again Luke who puts the rift right when he goes to Arnie and apologizes for being so pushy about the surgery.

## Melissa

Melissa is Belinda's niece. She is the daughter of Belinda's oldest sister. Melissa stayed with Belinda and her parents for awhile after she finished high school. In this novel, Melissa visits the town for a short while after she has been away at school earning her teaching certificate. She plans to return to her parent's home in the west where she will seek a teaching career. At the beginning of this novel, Belinda is excitedly looking forward to the arrival of her niece on the train from the East. Later in the novel, Melissa meets and marries Walden. Although she had a crush on Jackson Brown, the man who returns to Belinda's town as the second doctor, Jackson had never returned the feelings for her. When Melissa visits the town after getting her teaching certificate, she realizes that she really doesn't like Jackson that much anymore.

## Pierre (Peter)

Pierre, or Peter, is one of Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's grandsons. He comes to visit his grandmother in order to try to earn an ideal spot in her will. At first, Pierre suspects that Belinda may be intending to try to befriend his grandmother in order to try to take advantage of her, but soon realizes she is too innocent for that. Pierre is at first upset that his grandmother wants him to accompany Belinda around town even though she is a member of the staff, but soon begins to enjoy his time with her. Pierre leaves Boston to return to France with little warning because he feels that he is developing feelings for Belinda but realizes that their two worlds will not mesh. When Belinda and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth visit Pierre in France, Pierre has married Anne-Marie.

## Arnie

Arnie is Clark and Marty's son. He is also Luke's brother and Abe's father. Arnie becomes angry when he is told that his son's arm needs to be rebroken and set in order to heal properly. Most of his anger comes from the fear that the operation will put the young boy through more pain. He does not seem to notice that his son's arm is unusable and that the boy will become a cripple if it is not fixed. When Luke tries to talk to Arnie about the surgery, Arnie becomes more angry and pulls away from the family. It is not until Luke apologizes to Arnie for being so pushy about the surgery that Arnie is able to articulate his true fears. He allows his son to decide if her wants the surgery to repair his arm.

## Jackson Brown

Jackson Brown is a young man who lived in the same town as Belinda and Melissa. Although Melissa had a crush on him, Jackson had a crush on Belinda. When Jackson



leaves the town to go to medical school, he writes Belinda for awhile but Belinda soon discourages the long distance relationship. When Jackson returns of the town's doctor, he expects to be able to pick up their relationship where he believed they had left off, but Belinda does not want to do so. It is partially because of pressure that she believes that Jackson is putting on her to make a commitment to him that she takes the opportunity to go to Boston with Mrs. Stafford-Smyth.

## **Celia Prescott**

Celia Prescott is one of Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's friends. She is one of the ladies who Mrs. Stafford-Smyth invites to the first dinner party that she has when she returns to Boston. Pierre points out to Belinda Celia Prescott's habit of being late to every occasion. It is Celia who reports to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth how upset she is to learn that the lady is treating one of her staff members as a guest. Although Celia is deeply troubled, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth assures her that Belinda is being treated as Mrs. Stafford-Smyth wants to treat her and plans to continue treating her, regardless of what other people are saying.

## **Thomas and Aaron**

Thomas and Aaron are the sons of Luke and Abbie. They provide humor for the novel as they banter back and forth in the way that only young brothers can. It is also these two boys that make Belinda wonder is her relationship with Rand is more serious than she believes that it is. As the boys watch her get ready, the two talk with their older cousin John about why she is going to eat with a man alone. As John tells them she is courting and describes the process, Belinda begins to wonder if this might, indeed, be what is happening.

## **Rand O'Connel**

Rand O'Connel is a young man with whom Belinda attended school. She meets him again at a church party for Melissa. It is during this party that Belinda suggests to Rand a way that he can realize his dream of becoming a builder. Although Belinda at first believes that Rand is interested in Melissa, it soon becomes evident he is interested in dating Belinda. Although her speaks of their future, asks Belinda about her future, and hints that he has a proposition to make to her once he gets some money in the bank, Belinda does not seem to notice Rand is interested in her as a marriage partner.

## **Abe**

Abe is the son of Arnie and Anne. Abe is badly injured when he is attacked by a bull when he goes into the animal's pen in an attempt to retrieve a ball. Even with Luke's care, Abe's badly broken left arm does not heal correctly and becomes unusable. As time goes by, the arm gets worse and worse. Though his father is afraid of the pain his





boy will face if he undergoes surgery to repair the arm, Abe is hopeful that the surgery will be successful. He decides that he want to try the surgery. At the same time he comforts his father claiming that he can handle any pain the surgery might cause.

## Clare

Clare is Amy Jo's father. It is he who owned the bull who attacked Abe. As the men are trying to get the bull off Abe, Clare is also attacked but will not let anyone take time away from Abe to tend to his wounds. Clare shoots the bull after the attack. He is also the one who drives the wagon to transport Abe into town. It is at one point in the family rift over the bull attack and Abe's injuries that Arnie blames Clare for Abe's injuries because the bull did belong to him.

## Madam Tilley

Madam Tilley is the lady who appears to be in charge of Le Soud's dress shop. She directs Belinda's fitting and also chooses which dresses Yvonne should bring to Belinda to try on. It is to Madam Tilley whom Mrs. Stafford-Smyth addresses the note instructing what kind of dresses she wants purchased. It is also Madame Tilley who tells Belinda that the cost of her dress has been taken care of and that the dress she wants will be delivered to her.

## Windsor

Windsor is Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's butler. It is Windsor who comes to visit Mrs. Stafford-Smyth when she is being cared for at Luke's doctor's office. He is unhappy with his mistress's habit of traveling and "gadding about" as he calls it. When Belinda and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth return to Boston, it is Windsor who is in charge of ordering the carriage and traveling with them about town.

## Abbie

Abbie is Luke's wife. She is the mother of Thomas, Aaron and Ruth Ann. Abbie and Belinda walk to the train station together the day that Melissa is due to return to their town from the East, then again when Amy Jo comes back from the West to visit. It is during the course of the novel that Abbie gives birth to Ruth Ann. Especially after the birth of Ruth Ann, Belinda often helps her sister-in-law out with the children.

## Clark and Marty

Clark and Marty are Belinda's parents. Belinda spends the weekends with her parents in their home. Clark and Marty are the ones who are perhaps the most hurt by Arnie's behavior after Abe's accident. They pray that he will come to understand that Abe's arm



must be fixed and the boy not allowed to become a cripple. Clark and Marty are also the ones who advise Kate to allow Amy Jo to go visit out West with Melissa.

## **Amy Jo**

Amy Jo is Belinda's highly active niece. She is also younger than Belinda. Unlike Belinda, Amy Jo has shown no interest in doing anything in the small town in which she grew up. In order to give her some experience in the world, her parents allow her to visit out West with Melissa. While she is out West, Amy Jo meets a man to whom she gets married.

## **Ella**

Ella is the young maid who shows Belinda to her suite when she first arrives at Marshall Manor. It is also Ella whom Mrs. Stafford-Smyth employs to fix Belinda's hair on the night of the dinner party. Ella is also the one who explains to Belinda that her low cut dress is supposed to look as it does. She tells Belinda the dress is very attractive.

## **Jamie**

Jamie is the patient whom Luke and Belinda have just finished working on when the novel opens. Jamie had gotten his hand caught in a piece of farm machinery. Although Luke had tried to save all of the fingers, Belinda worries that the boy may still lose some of these digits. She prays for Jamie as she cleans up the office.

## **Ruth Ann**

Ruth Ann is the infant born to Luke and Abbie during the course of the novel. Although Ruth Ann comes two weeks early, she is strong and grows quickly. Belinda is playing with Ruth Ann when Jackson enters the house and Belinda realizes that he has returned from medical school.

## **Mrs. Potter**

Mrs. Potter appears to be the head of Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's household servants. Mrs. Potter gives Belinda a disapproving look when she tries to help gather the tea things after tea is served. She is also openly resentful when it is announced that Belinda will be served as one of the guests at Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's dinner party.



## Mattie

Mattie is the old, Irish priest who stops to talk to Belinda on the ship on the way to America. It is Mattie who reminds Belinda that she should, and is able to, take God with her where ever she goes. It is from their conversation that Belinda realizes how far she has strayed from her Christian course.

## Kate

Kate is Amy Jo's mother. It is Kate who asks Marty if she believes it is a good idea for Amy Jo to go and visit with Melissa out West. After the family learns that Amy Jo has met a man out West whom she intends to marry, Kate secretly prays that the relationship will fall apart so that Amy Jo will marry someone closer to home.

## Walden

Walden is the young man who calls on Melissa almost as soon as she returns East from earning her teaching certificate. He eventually asks Melissa to marry him and she agrees. He is Ryan's older brother.

## The Newspaper Boy

Belinda remembers seeing this crippled boy during a trip to town with her parents when she was a young girl. She remembers the other boys making fun of this young man as he tried to sell newspapers. She does not want the same future for her nephew, Abe.

## Ryan

Ryan is the young man with whom Amy Jo falls in love. He is the younger brother of Walden, the man who marries Melissa.

## Yvonne

Yvonne is the young French girl who assists Madam Tilley in helping Belinda try on dresses at LeSoud's.



## **Objects/Places**

### **The Train**

The train is the newest form of transportation that has come to Belinda's prairie town. Melissa rides the train when she comes to visit after finishing her schooling.

### **An Open Brick Pit**

Belinda is arranging wood in this brick pit at her parents' home during a party held in Melissa's honor when Rand first approaches her and strikes up a conversation.

### **Hotel Dining Room**

Rand invites Belinda to the hotel dining room for supper as a thank you for getting him started in his building career.

### **Mrs. Lacey's Boardinghouse**

Rand lives at Mrs. Lacey's boardinghouse.

### **June First**

June first is the date that both Melissa and Amy Jo have chosen for their weddings.

### **The New Bull**

The bull attacks Abe when the boy enters its pen to get his ball. Abe's arm is badly broken by the animal.

### **The Kirby House**

The Kirby house is one of the homes that Rand is contracted to build after he gets his building experience.

### **A Ball**

It is this toy that Abe runs into a bull's pen to retrieve when he is attacked by the animal.



## **Morning Room**

Although she has no maids to clean her house, Mrs. Kirby insists that a morning room be included in the building plans.

## **Library**

Since his wife wants a morning room in her house, Mr. Kirby requests a library for himself.

## **The Worn Family Bible**

The worn family Bible is the book that Clark and Marty turn to when they have trouble with Arnie.

## **The Rose Palace**

The Rose Palace is the name of the hotel in Belinda's town. It is to this hotel that Windsor is sent when he comes to visit Mrs. Stafford-Smyth.

## **A New Medication**

Jackson makes a dinner date with Belinda under the cover that they will be talking about this new drug that he wants to start giving Mrs. Stafford-Smyth.

## **A Box of Nicely Wrapped Candy**

A box of nicely wrapped candy is Rand's gift to Belinda after he discovers that Belinda has had dinner with Jackson.

## **A Bouquet of Flowers**

Jackson sends a bouquet of flowers to Belinda at Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's hospital room.

## **Sketches of Home Plans**

When Belinda leaves for Boston with Mrs. Stafford-Smyth, Rand sends a packet of home plans with her.



## **Boston**

Boston is the town where Mrs. Stafford-Smyth lives. Belinda travels with the lady to this town to continue to care for her after her stroke.

## **Elaborately Ornate Carriage**

It is in this elaborately ornate carriage that Windsor meets Mrs. Stafford-Smyth and Belinda at the Boston train station.

## **Omberg Suite**

Windsor asks Mrs. Stafford-Smyth if she wants Belinda to stay in this suite of rooms.

## **The Rosewood Suite**

The lady wants Belinda to occupy the Rosewood Suite, next to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's rooms.

## **Marshall Manor**

Marshall Manor is the name of Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's estate.

## **A Rose Garden**

This garden is one of the first things that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth asks to see when she returns home.

## **The Button Idea**

Belinda likes the button idea in which there are a variety of buttons, or buzzers, scattered around Marshall Manor so the Mrs. Stafford-Smyth can call for assistance when she needs it.

## **LeSoud's**

LeSoud's is the dress shop to which Mrs. Stafford-Smyth sends Belinda to have her outfitted.



## **Soft Green Voile Dress**

It is this one dress that Belinda likes and believes she has bought at the end of her shopping trip.

## **Blue Silk Dress**

Mrs. Stafford-Smyth instructs Madame Tilley to include a dress like this in Belinda's purchases. When Belinda first tries this dress on, she is shocked because the neckline is so low she considers it indecent.

## **A Pipe Organ**

It is at the stone church in Boston that Belinda first hears the sounds of a pipe organ.

## **A Lace Hanky**

Belinda tries to cover herself with a lace hanky but believes it only makes the low neckline of the blue silk dress more noticeable.

## **SS Victor**

The SS Victor is the ship on which Belinda and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth sail to Spain.



# Themes

## Losing Focus

The main theme of this novel is the idea that one can lose focus on what is important in life without even realizing what has happened. Belinda is a young lady who comes from a family that strongly believes in God. Remember that when Marty and Clark are trying to find some way to mend their relationship with Arnie, they turn to the worn family Bible for support and advice. Belinda shares her family's faith. At the beginning of the novel, she prays for the young boy who has just been in the office to have his hand repaired after a farm accident. At the conclusion of the novel, however, Belinda suffers with restlessness and a feeling of emptiness. It is not until an elderly minister talks to her about how he has conquered his fears of moving to America by realizing that he could take God with him that Belinda realizes that she has left God behind.

As Belinda thinks back over the time since she prayed for Jamie in her brother's doctor's office she realizes that her movement away from God happened so slowly that she didn't even realize what happened. Although Belinda continued to go to church while she was taking care of Mrs. Stafford-Smyth while still in her hometown, Belinda realizes that it was at this time that she began to move away from God. She was so busy with Mrs. Stafford-Smyth and so distracted by both Jackson and Rand that God took a backseat in her life. She realizes that she never considered what God would have wanted her to do when she decided to move to Boston. In Boston, she tried to continue attending church, but did not feel the same warmth from the church in Boston as she did at her home church.

Belinda strays even further from God when she begins dating Pierre. They soon become so busy that they no longer find time to even go to church. Soon after Pierre returns to France, Belinda and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth also go abroad to travel. Once again, Belinda is so busy that she forgets to spend time with God. The two don't even attend church services because Mrs. Stafford-Smyth reasons that since they don't know the language, they won't understand the service. Belinda hears church bells and recognizes how deeply she is missing God. Her need to get back in touch with God and recenter her focus on Him does not become clear to her until she talks to the minister on the ship.

## Class

One's role in the world is another of the themes of this novel. In Belinda's home town, a person's class or role did not determine how they should be treated or what they could do in life. Each person in the town seemed to respect each other just because they were people. In Boston, however, class and social standing takes on a very important role in the way that people are treated. Belinda feels resentment from the other staff members at Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's house because she is treated differently by Mrs.





Stafford-Smyth. Information in the novel indicates that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth had learned while she was recuperating in Belinda's town that Belinda was the best friend that she had found. Although the girl is technically a staff member, Mrs. Stafford-Smyth intends to treat her as a friend. She is willing to let go of anyone who will not accept her friendship with the young girl.

The idea of social class becomes important again when Pierre and Belinda meet. Before Pierre knows Belinda's position in his grandmother's household, he has no trouble accompanying Belinda. When he learns that Belinda is actually a member of his grandmother's staff, he is offended that she asks him to take her around Boston. He is worried about what might happen to his reputation if it becomes common knowledge that he is courting a staff member. Even though Pierre does not want to be seen spending time socially with the staff, his grandmother insists that he do so. He doesn't argue with her.

## Value of Friendship

In this novel two people from very different backgrounds meet. Mrs. Stafford-Smyth is wealthy and has everything that she could want. She has a beautiful home, dedicated staff and free money to travel and do as she likes. The one thing that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth does not have that she wants more than anything is something that cannot be bought with money. When Mrs. Stafford-Smyth meets Belinda and gets to know her, she does not want to live without the girl's friendship. It is not until after Mrs. Stafford-Smyth has bought Belinda's wardrobe so that she can be properly dressed to accompany the lady about time that Belinda realizes how much her friendship means to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth.

As a person who has never had to worry about wealth or position before, Belinda is at first hurt and believes that Mrs. Stafford-Smyth does not think her clothes good enough when she first learns that her employer intends to provide her wardrobe. Belinda chokes back her offense when she realizes that of all the things this lady can buy for herself, she cannot buy friendship. This relationship, which is more important than anything that money can buy, is the one thing that Belinda has to offer the lady in exchange for all of the fine things that the lady has bought for her.



# Style

## Point of View

This story is told through the point of view of a third-person and omniscient narrator. This narrator knows the thoughts and emotions of each character. The action of the novel, and most of the narration, centers around Belinda who is the main character of the novel. The majority of the insights of the action of the book are given through her eyes. It is proven that this narrator has this same insight into other characters emotions and thoughts through characters such as Pierre, for instance. When Pierre meets Belinda, the narrator records the thoughts going on in his mind concerning his doubts about her.

The story is told more through exposition than dialogue. Even though this is the case, there is still a considerable amount of dialogue included. Exposition is important to the story because it gives the narrator space in which to describe what is happening around Belinda and her reactions to what is happening. She is also seeing new sights and having experiences on which she has a unique outlook. Dialogue is also needed in this book as it helps to clear up the issues about which Belinda doesn't understand.

## Setting

There are three main settings included in this novel. The first is Belinda's hometown, the second is Boston, and the third is made up of the places that Belinda and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth visit when they go abroad.

Belinda's hometown is never directly named. It is only known that the town lies somewhere on the prairie somewhere between Boston and the far west where Melissa and her family live. Important locations in this town include Luke's medical office where Belinda works as a nurse as well as Luke's home, where Belinda lives during the week. Belinda's parents home and farm are also important settings in the beginning of the novel. It is here that Belinda spends time with Melissa and Amy Jo. It is also on this property that Abe is injured by the bull.

About halfway through the novel, the setting changes from Belinda's hometown to Boston where she travels to work as Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's personal nurse. The major setting in this city is Marshall Manor, which is Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's home. Belinda spends her time in the Rosewood Suite, which is her personal group of rooms in the home. She also spends time in the library, the drawing room and the formal dining room of the house. Another important setting in the novel is the dress shop, LeSoud's where Belinda is fitted for her new wardrobe. A final important setting in Boston is the stone church where Belinda goes to worship, but does not see the presence of God in the other worshippers' faces.



In the final chapter of the novel, Belinda and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth go abroad. They visit a variety of places including Spain, Italy, and France. It is in France that they learn that Franz has married and that Pierre is planning to be married soon. On the deck of the ship back to America Belinda meets Mattie, the minister who helps her to realize that she has left God behind.

## Language and Meaning

The most interesting facet of the language used in this book is the way that Oke tries to capture the actual ways that her characters might speak. For instance, for Belinda's older, less educated parents, Oke writes their dialogue using a country accent with "ya" for "you," "yer" for "your," and "git" for "get." The more educated among Belinda's family, such as Melissa and Amy Jo, speak with less of a country accent. When Windsor and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth are introduced into the novel, their dialogue is characterized by a soft "r." In their conversation, "theah" is used instead to "there" and "aftah" instead of "after." In this way, Oke catches the essence of the characters by sharing their personality through their speech patterns.

While all of the character's captured speech patterns are interesting, the most interesting of these characters in Belinda. In the beginning of the novel, Belinda has this same country slang in her dialogue as her relatives. When she moves to Boston and is surrounded with more educated and influential people, Belinda tries to remove the country slang from her language. This change in Belinda's speaking patterns is an external symbol of Belinda's transformation when she moves from her country hometown to Boston.

## Structure

The novel is divided into twenty-six chapters, each designated with only a number as a title. The average length of the chapters is nine pages. The longest chapter is thirteen pages while the shortest is seven pages. The story is told in a linear fashion without any flashbacks or jumps ahead in the future. The story starts when Belinda is working in her brother's doctor's office. It follows the path through her family's rift over Abe's accident, her chance meeting with Mrs. Stafford-Smyth and her decision to go work for the lady as her nurse. The story ends when Belinda realizes that she has left God out of her life and needs to refocus. She decides to concentrate on being a better friend and Christian witness to Mrs. Stafford-Smyth.



## Quotes

"She knew Marty had been afraid Melissa would be so taken with eastern civilization that she would almost forget her country relatives. But the girl had come back with her teacher's certificate and her genuine love and appreciation of family still intact" (Chapter Two, p. 20).

"One thing for sure was that she was no longer concerned about Melissa being heartbroken if Jackson should choose someone else" (Chapter Two, p. 27).

"She had forgotten most everything about Rand O'Connel. Not that she had ever really noticed him much in the past. He had been just a boy—a fellow student at their small school, neither stupid nor brainy, loud nor shy. He had just been there" (Chapter Three, p. 30-31).

"Belinda gathered from his statement that he had never been fond of farming. She also sensed that there was something else he felt he would enjoy. Whatever it was, he seemed to consider it unobtainable" (Chapter Three, p. 32-33).

"After her two nieces departed, Belinda's days—and often nights—were filled, as before, with assisting Luke. But the weekends at the farm no longer seemed as inviting and pleasurable" (Chapter Five, p. 44).

"Dreams are fine ... iffen they don't jest stay dreams. But they git ya nowhere iffen ya don't put some effort 'long with 'em" (Chapter Six, p. 54).

"She was surprised, however, at her feeling of reluctance to be a matchmaker between Amy Jo and Rand. She felt hesitant. Were they right for each other" (Chapter Eight, p. 73-74).

"Belinda blinked back her own tears. It was hard to believe that her own brother — tender, sensitive Arnie — could say such cruel things" (Chapter Twelve, p. 102).

"She had been missing Rand's company, she realized, surprised at the discovery" (Chapter Fourteen, p. 119).

"I would welcome you as my traveling companion and as my nurse in my home in Boston for as long as it would convenience both of us" (Chapter Fifteen, p. 133).

"'Thet's it! Thet's it!' she cried. 'We need to get Arnie out to those meetin's. Can't ya see? If Arnie would get things in his life straightened out an' let God lead him — then God could talk to him about young Abe, an' the family wouldn't need to'" (Chapter Seventeen, p. 143).

"But Abe obviously was not hearing his pa's words of caution. He was hearing words of hope" (Chapter Eighteen, p. 160).



"And I do know my own mind, too. I knew then and I know now that I'm not ready to marry either Rand O'Connel or Jackson Brown. It would be wrong, wrong, wrong for me to do so" (Chapter Nineteen, p. 165).

"You must realize you have a unique station in my home. You are not just my nurse in the same fashion that Pottah is my housekeeper. No, you are also my companion-and as such I expect you to accompany me into society, to sit at my table, and welcome my guests" (Chapter Twenty-one, p. 185).

"Belinda let her eyes fall to the dress she was wearing. Her best. And yet it was so inferior to the gown of the grand lady who stood before her. And this lady who had everything money could buy was looking for a friend" (Chapter Twenty-one, p. 187).

"Mrs. Stafford-Smyth had learned a new set of rules in the crude little prairie town. The rule of survival. There seemed to be no social status there, no class distinctions, and Mrs. Stafford-Smyth had discovered in Belinda an open, friendly, clear-thinking girl who would share her thoughts, her feelings, and her humor" (Chapter Twenty-two, p. 193).

"The thought did occur to him that his grandmother was a very wealthy woman and that Belinda might have interest in her money. But Pierre, even with a somewhat suspicious turn of mind, dismissed that thought" (Chapter Twenty-three, p. 205).

"He was quite sure that his grandmother's will was still unsettled. She had wanted first to "try" her grandsons. Now that Franz was about to settle in France with his new love, Pierre felt it an opportune time for him to "get in good" with his grandmother" (Chapter Twenty-three, p. 208).

"But as Belinda asked her question, the reality of the situation hit the young man. He was here to get what he could from his grandmother's will" (Chapter Twenty-three, p. 208).

"Eventually there was not even time to fit in Sunday church services. The day was spent instead with plays or concerts. Belinda had never had such full, fun days in all her life" (Chapter Twenty-four, p. 217).

"Little did Belinda know that Pierre was running away. He was beginning to care too much for Belinda, but unlike his grandmother, Pierre was thoroughly convinced their two vastly different worlds would not mix" (Chapter Twenty-four, p. 220).

"That's the way I feel about myself, she thought restlessly. Like I don't know myself anymore. Have I lost myself somewhere along this journey" (Chapter Twenty-six, p. 234).

"No! No, that wasn't when it happened, Belinda realized as she thought further. She had left God out of her life even before leaving Boston" (Chapter Twenty-seven, p. 237).

"Why, even the thought of Jackson and Rand brought no accompanying anxiety. Belinda felt she was ready to offer honest friendship to both of them. Friendship - but no

more at least at present, she told herself and felt no guilt concerning her decision. She smiled again, thankful for the feeling of peace" (Chapter Twenty-six, p. 239).



## Topics for Discussion

Consider travel in the days when "Love Takes Wing" was written. Why is it so exciting to the family when Melissa comes to visit? Why doesn't she come more often? Compare and contrast travel in pioneer times with our modern travel system.

Discuss the relationship between Belinda and the remainder of the staff at Marshall Manor. Why do they seem at odds with one another?

Belinda seems unaware that Rand and Jackson are both trying to woo her. Even though the two men realize they are enemies in their quest for Belinda, Belinda does not seem to realize what is going on. What signs and hints do both men leave that should clue Belinda into the idea that they are interested in her? How does she choose to interpret these clues?

Compare and contrast the modern medical profession with that of Belinda's day. What has changed? Has medical care improved? Are there any ways that care in the past was better than that now?

Compare and contrast Belinda's attitude toward Mrs. Stafford-Smyth with Pierre's attitude toward his grandmother. How does Pierre's attitude color his opinion of Belinda?

Why is Celia so upset that Belinda is treated as a guest even though she is actually a member of the staff? Why does this setup also upset Pierre?

Consider the idea that Belinda has left God out of her life and her decisions. How did this happen?

Discuss Belinda's dismay as a result of Mrs. Stafford-Smyth's purchase of her clothes, particularly with the dress that she feels is indecent. How does Belinda cope with the feeling of discomfort?