Magic for Marigold Study Guide

Magic for Marigold by Lucy Maud Montgomery

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Plot Summary

This novel by the author of the famous "Anne of Green Gables" series of books is the story of another spirited, independent girl who, over the course of the narrative's several years, grows into the beginnings of womanhood. Over time, as wealthy, nature-loving Marigold Lesley begins the struggle to discover and sustain her own sense of identity, she also learns important (and thematically relevant) lessons about being female, about the nature of imagination, and about religion and faith.

The story begins in the early days of Marigold's life, as the many members of her extended family gather, in Lesley family tradition, to decide what the newborn is to be called. The debate carries on for weeks, with no sign of resolution. At one point, however, the yet-unnamed baby falls dangerously ill, and much against the better judgment of most of the family, autocratic matriarch Old Grandmother calls in the area's first female doctor. The doctor prescribes treatment that eventually makes the baby well, and Old Grandmother decrees that in gratitude, the baby is to be given her name. Thus is the baby named Marigold.

The narrative then jumps ahead six years, and rejoins Marigold as she, along with the rest of the family, celebrates the birthday of Old Grandmother (family members include the regal Young Grandmother, Marigold's timid mother Lorraine, and the doctor who saved her life, married into the family and now called Aunt Marigold). Then follows a series of chapters in which Marigold encounters eccentric strangers (including the strong-willed princes Varvara and the mysterious peddler Abel), equally eccentric family members (including a seemingly endless parade of uncles and aunts), and a collection of cousins and friends who each bring change and challenge into Marigold's life. These include her deceptively perfect cousin Gwendolen, her once-pious friend Paula, and the God-hating orphan Bernice.

Running beneath and within all these encounters are references to Marigold's relationship to the mysterious Sylvia, eventually revealed to be an imaginary best friend who lives in the orchard at the back of the Lesley family property, Cloud of Cedars. There are attempts throughout the narrative to end the relationship between Marigold and Sylvia, but every time, those attempts result in profound unhappiness for Marigold leading, in turn, to a renewal of the friendship.

As Marigold matures, both important figures and important ideas move in and out of her life. In terms of the former, the most notable person to leave Marigold's life is Old Grandmother, who dies before reaching her goal of living to be a hundred but not before sharing a moment of deep connection with Marigold in the orchard that both of them love. In terms of the latter, the most formative idea Marigold has (or, that is, formative for a while), is the dream of becoming a missionary, but challenging encounters with people she tries to help result in her changing her mind.

The whole while, Marigold remains friends with Sylvia - that is, until Marigold begins to feel a tentative, almost timid interest in boys. Her first couple of relationships with the

opposite sex don't go particularly well, and for a while she refuses to have anything more to do with the male gender. Eventually, however, her relationship with an attractive, sometimes kindred spirit named Budge leads her to realize that not only can spending time with a boy be enjoyable for itself, but it also helps her get more of an idea of what it's like to be a woman.

Chapters 1 and 2

Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

This novel by the author of the famous "Anne of Green Gables" series of books is the story of another spirited, independent girl who, over the course of the narrative's several years, grows into the beginnings of womanhood. Over time, as wealthy, nature-loving Marigold Lesley begins the struggle to discover and sustain her own sense of identity, she also learns important (and thematically relevant) lessons about being female, about the nature of imagination, and about religion and faith.

What's in a Name? The extended Lesley family gathers for the traditional family debate over what the name of the latest baby (a girl) born into the family is to be. First person narration describes the circumstances of the baby's birth, including the family's background (see "Quotes", p. 10) and the estate where the family centers its life (Cloud of Spruce - see "Quotes", p. 10 - 2). Narration also describes how the family is dominated by the will and the ways of ninety-two year old Old Grandmother, who cherishes a portrait of Clementine, the beautiful first wife Marigold's father.

As the debate continues, narration describes the various family members - in particular, malicious Old Grandmother, regal Young Grandmother, and quiet Lorraine (who is finally getting over her grief at losing Leander - see "Quotes", p. 14/15). Narration pays particular attention to well-traveled, outspoken, Uncle Klondike (real name Horace), whose adventures have given him a determined taste for the single life. Klon, narration comments, has a special bond with Old Grandmother's two cats, Lucifer and The Witch of Endor.

As the debate continues without agreement (but with Uncle Klon's frequent, very pointed, comments), Lorraine reflects on what she wants the baby's name to be, and on how afraid she is to say so.

At one point during the debate, Lorraine reflects on how she'd love to name the baby Marigold (see "Quotes", p. 27), but timidly stays quiet, believing the family would never agree. Old Grandmother, however, notices that Lorraine is keeping something to herself. At another point, conversation detours into a discussion of the impossibility of anyone in the family going to the new woman doctor in town (Leander, narration reveals, had been the family's doctor). Later that night, after all the other Lesleys have gone home, and the dishes are being washed up, Lucifer and The Witch of Endor discuss the situation over a plate of chicken bones on the back porch.

Sealed of the Tribe, 1 - As the family debate continues and the baby remains unnamed, tensions between various family members become heightened to an alarming degree -

until, that is, the baby falls ill, and none of the town's male doctors is able to do anything to help it.

As the baby's condition deteriorates, Old Grandmother decides to send for the new woman doctor, Dr. Richards. Uncle Klon goes to see her, and immediately falls in love with her. Meanwhile, Dr. Richards issues some unconventional orders for the baby's care. Finally, she declares the baby out of danger, and Uncle Klon weeps "unashamedly like a schoolboy".

Old Grandmother states firmly that the baby must be named after Dr. Richards, in gratitude for having saved the baby's life. Uncle Klon reveals that "her full name," he says, "is now Marigold Woodruff Richards, but in a few weeks' time it will be Marigold Woodruff Lesley."

Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

This opening section of the narrative is essentially a prologue, introducing several important contextual elements. These include the family background into which Marigold is born, some of the particular (and colorful) family members that play important roles in both her life and in the narrative to follow, and two of the narrative's three central themes, specifically those having to do with questions of identity and the presence of strong and powerful women (see "Themes"). Other important elements introduced here include the work's sense of style (its chatty, intimate phrasing laced with rich vocabulary) and its sense of playful magic (including its references to the talking cats and the "coincidences" involved in finding Marigold's name). For further consideration of this particular aspect of the narrative, see "Topics for Discussion - Discuss the ways in which events and circumstances in Marigold's life ...")

Finally, there are important plot elements introduced in this section, the presence of which foreshadows their subsequent reappearances and/or manifestations as important components of Marigold's growing up. The most notable of these are the portrait of Clementine (whose presence is a thorn in Marigold's side for much of the book) and the presence of Aunt Marigold. This is important for two main reasons, one narrative (in that her wisdom, patience and perspective play an important role in Marigold's until the narrative's very final moments) and one thematic. Here it's important to note that female physicians were very much a rarity at the time (the early 20th Century) in which the book was written and published. In other words, Aunt Marigold is exceptional not only for the way in which she does her job, but the fact that she has/does that job AT ALL. In this sense, Aunt Marigold is one of the most important, and most apparent, manifestations of the novel's thematic interest in portraying strong and powerful women (see "Themes"), arguably a potentially influential role model to the girls and young women for whom, it could be argued, this book was written. One last point to note about Aunt Marigold has to do with the ironies associated with her coming into the family (i.e. the family's conservative resistance to the idea of a female doctor, Uncle Klon's determination to resist married life).

Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

April Promise. Six years later, on the day of Old Grandmother's ninety eighth birthday party, Marigold sits on the front steps of Cloud of Spruce, enjoying the wind, the view, and being alone with her thoughts and her considerations of what's "int'resting" (see "Quotes", p. 40). Narration describes how independent and private she is, how thoughtful and questioning, how glad she is no-one in her family knows what she's thinking, and how strange she seems to her family (see "Quotes", p. 41).

Narration describes how much Marigold is loved and cared for by her family, and how her vivid imagination uses the beauty of nearby Harmony Harbor and the fenced grove of spruce trees on top of a nearby hill as springboards for her imagination (see "Objects / Places - The Hidden Land"). Narration also describes how, on her way home from her explorations one day, she caught a glimpse of what she thought was a Little White Girl in the grove. She tells herself it was only a branch of blossoms waving in the breeze, but secretly hopes it really is a girl and that they'll meet one day.

Narration describes Marigold's closeness with French-born handyman Lazarre who, among other friendly traits, believes in ghosts and spirits.

Here narration describes Marigold's closeness with Uncle Klon (with his thrilling tales of travel and adventure) and Aunt Marigold (with her constant smile, her warmth, and generosity).

Narration reflects how Marigold both fears Old Grandmother and discovers a secret fondness for, and secret bond, with her.

Narration describes Marigold's deep-seated hatred of Clementine and a desire for vengeance after being punished by Old Grandmother for showing Alicia (Grandmother's precious doll) to a friend. Marigold, narration says, refused to include Old Grandmother in her prayers, but was unable to sleep. Only after she prayed that God bless Old Grandmother, the same way he blesses everyone else in the family, could Marigold get to sleep.

In the concluding section of this chapter, narration describes how Marigold learned the names of the stars from Uncle Klon, how she loved spring and summer, but loved fall and even winter more.

Marigold Goes a-Visiting. On her first ever overnight visit away from home, Marigold goes to see her Uncle Paul who, according to the family, has "a skeleton in the closet". She's also looking forward to seeing Uncle Paul's half-brother Frank, warm-hearted and smiling but about to go out west after being "jilted" by a girl named Hilda.

Marigold has a horrible time, homesick and lonely, sad because there's no sign of a skeleton, miserable because Frank is miserable and wife Aunt Flora is stern, particularly when Marigold begs to go home.

After being put to bed, Marigold's imagination, fueled by Lazarre's tales of ghosts and spirits, combines with the roaring wind to frighten her into screams of terror.

Uncle Paul, Aunt Flora and Frank try to calm her into going back to sleep, but she insists upon going home. Frank grumpily hitches up the horse and wagon (the family's car is being repaired) and starts down the road. Marigold interrupts him, pointing out trouble at a house they're passing. Frank jumps out of the wagon, runs to the house, and rouses its occupants, including Hilda - the place is on fire. A short, intense time later, the fire is out, and Frank and Hilda are reconciled. Back at Cloud of Cedars, Marigold is welcomed by her fretful mother, and happily goes to sleep in her own bed.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

Important narrative elements introduced in this section include Marigold's capacity for finding things "int'resting" (an aspect of her character which, as the narrative unfolds, proves to be troublesome), and, more importantly her imaginative dreaming about The Hidden Land and about The Little White Girl who, also as the narrative unfolds, evolves into Sylvia. Both these aspects of the work can be seen as manifesting one of the work's central themes, its contemplation of the power and role of imagination (see "Themes"). Other elements introduced here that play an ongoing role in the narrative include Marigold's unpredictable and ambivalent relationship with God and with religion (see "Themes - The Nature and Role of Religion") and the difficulties Marigold has while away from home. This latter is particularly important, in that her embarrassment over her behavior at Uncle Paul's, in spite of its happy outcome, colors her attitudes and actions on several other occasions. In other words, the unhappy visit here foreshadows several other unhappy visits (her visits to Aunt Stasia in Chapter 9 and to Aunt Anne in Chapter 15). The last point to note about the story of the visit to Uncle Paul and Aunt Flora is that that the narrative never reveals just what the "skeleton in [Paul's] closet", (i.e. the dark secret) actually is.

Then there is the incident of Grandmother's doll, the first of several occasions in which Marigold breaks her family's rules. There are two points to note here. The first is that these infractions of family propriety can be seen as manifestations of Marigold's determination to establish and maintain her own identity. The second is the sense that the doll is, to some degree, a metaphoric representation of Marigold herself, both the doll and Marigold defined as precious and as meant to be protected and, to some degree, isolated. This means that in taking the doll out of its place of safety, Marigold's actions are not only breaking the rules, but function on literary/metaphoric terms as a symbolic foreshadowing of her own excursions from her place of safety (i.e. her encounter with Varvara in Chapter 10, her encounter with Gwen in Chapter 11).

Finally, there is the reference to Marigold's deepening resentment of Clementine, itself foreshadowing several other instances throughout the narrative in which Marigold's resentment of this ghost's presence in her life leads to some extreme reactions.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

The Door that Men call Death. Narration describes the days leading up to the death of Old Grandmother (see "Quotes", p. 77), including stories she tells Marigold about how beautiful she (Old Grandmother) was when she was young, and how beautiful she thinks Marigold might eventually be.

Old Grandmother, in spite of having a premonition of the time of her death, convinces Young Grandmother and Lorraine to go to a party in another town. After they've left, Old Grandmother tells Marigold to sit with her. Marigold does, worried that she's not going to be able to meet Sylvia.

After a nap, Old Grandmother demands that Marigold help her dress and walk with her outside. Marigold does as she's told, and takes Old Grandmother's hand as she walks out into the orchard, enjoying the sea air and the smell of spring, and saying she wants to see "one more moonrise over that cloud of spruce" (see "Quotes", p. 84).

As she and Old Grandmother settle down on a stone bench near the orchard, Marigold senses the presence of ghosts, fairies, and spirits all around her. Old Grandmother speaks at length about several things, including the spirits in the orchard (which she says are friendly), and her longing to be called by her real name - Edith. Marigold tries, but Old Grandmother says it doesn't sound real. After giving Marigold several pieces of advice, Old Grandmother leads Marigold from the orchard, stopping one last time to look behind her (see "Quotes", p, 98). As she does, Marigold glimpses Old Grandmother's youthful beauty and impulsively calls her by her real name. Old Grandmother, Edith, says that THAT time, it sounded right.

Back at the house, Old Grandmother refuses to get changed, saying she's not going to die in a nightgown. She says she'd love a favorite snack from childhood, and is gratefully surprised when Marigold, who doesn't know how to cook, manages to make it for her. When Young Grandmother and Lorraine return from the party, they discover that Old Grandmother has died "with a strange, wise little smile on her face, as if she ... was laughing still but in no unkindly fashion at all blind suppositions and perplexities."

At first, as the family mourns Old Grandmother's death, Marigold is lonely and sad, But then she suddenly comes to believe that the Edith of the orchard lived on, "even in heaven - which must and would become an entirely different place the moment Old Grandmother arrived there"

Chapter 5 Analysis

Old Grandmother is one of several characters in the book whose identity and actions manifest and/or embody the narrative's thematic interest in strong, multi-faceted women

(see "Themes"). There is the strong sense here that even though Marigold doesn't realize it, she and Old Grandmother are very much alike, and indeed that Old Grandmother is, to some degree, passing the mantle of matriarchy (female power over family) on to her. Granted, it will be some time before Marigold is able to realize that power, but there is the feeling here that that realization is somehow inevitable. A related point is Old Grandmother's desire to be called by her real name, which can be seen as a manifestation of another of the book's themes, defining, understanding, and maintaining individual identity. Old Grandmother doesn't want to be defined as Old Grandmother anymore, she wants to be defined as the girl / woman she was. On another level, the incident foreshadows the incident later in the following section when narration describes how an old friend of Grandmother's refers to her by HER real name. On yet another level, the incident is actually one of several situations throughout the narrative in which characters go by nicknames rather than by names, and who also (coincidentally? deliberately?) have true selves concealed by masks of attitude and behavior in the same way as nicknames conceal real names. For further consideration of this aspect of the work, see "Topics for Discussion - Look through the narrative for ..." and also "Style - Language and Meaning").

Finally, this section is also notable for its introduction of Sylvia - specifically, for both the fact of the introduction (i.e. her first appearance) and the way in which she's introduced (casually, in passing in narration, without identifying who she is and what role she plays in Marigold's life). She's just there, a fact of the situation that, as presented here, seems to be human and fully real. It's not until the following section that she's revealed to be both imaginary and the evolution of Marigold's imagined Young Girl in White in the previous section. There are two further points to note about Sylvia. First, she is the primary manifestation of the novel's thematic interest in the power and nature of imagination. Second, there is significance in her name - see "Characters - Sylvia".

Chapter 6 and 7

Chapter 6 and 7 Summary

The Power of the Dog. Some time later, Marigold is excited about starting school. Meanwhile, Young Grandmother (now just called Grandmother) and Lorraine argue over whether Marigold should be spending so much time with her Sylvia, now defined in narration as imaginary. Later, as Grandmother drives Marigold to school, she (Marigold) is frightened by a neighbor's angry dog.

The next day, when Mother walks Marigold to school, the dog is not there, but a gander hisses at her through a fence. That night, Marigold prays that the dog leave her alone.

As Marigold walks to school alone the following day, the dog barks furiously at her, making her upset and fearful all day. God, she feels, had not answered her prayer.

Marigold fearfully walks past The Dog every day, unable to confide her fears to anyone (not even Aunt Marigold, who is away). "And then one day," narration comments, "The Dog did jump the fence."

One morning as Marigold walks to school, the gander escapes and attacks Marigold. The Dog jumps the fence and, much to Marigold's surprise, chases the gander back into his own yard. The Dog then playfully and happily says hello to Marigold, who apologizes for being angry with him. He says it's all right, and promises to take care of her (see "Quotes", p. 113). That night, Marigold finally tells Mother about the dog, saying she didn't say anything before because she didn't want Mother to think she was a coward. Mother, however, tells her that she thinks she was very brave.

Lost Laughter. About a year later, Marigold looks forward to celebrating Sylvia's birthday. Meanwhile, narrations reveals that Mother is about to go away for two months of rest. When Lorraine gives Marigold the key to the door to the orchard (the Magic Door through which Marigold has to go to get to Sylvia), Grandmother gets an idea. Meanwhile, Marigold goes out into the orchard (see "Quotes", p. 117) and finds Sylvia. "To think," Marigold laughs, "I once thought you were a plum blossom bough!"

A few weeks after Lorraine leaves, and Marigold has accepted her absence, Grandmother puts her idea into action, barring Marigold from using the orchard door and from seeing Sylvia. As the days pass, Marigold becomes increasingly unhappy. "When I die," she says, "I can go through The Magic Door without any key." Grandmother decides that if Marigold doesn't get better soon, Lorraine will have to come home.

Grandmother is visited by an old friend, Dr. Adam Clow, who remembers her as a beautiful young woman and still thinks of her as Marian. She tells him what's happening to Marigold, and he convinces her to let Marigold once again have the key to the

orchard door, saying she has the gift of vivid imagination and must be allowed to enjoy it while she can (see "Quotes", p. 124).

The next morning, Grandmother unwillingly gives Marigold the key. After a moment of happy disbelief, Marigold runs out into the orchard and finds Sylvia ...

... and that night, Grandmother stands "in the magic door at twilight", listening to Marigold laughing as she says good night to her friend.

Chapter 6 and 7 Analysis

For the first time in this section, Sylvia is defined as a manifestation of Marigold's imagination (specifically, as an outgrowth or evolution of the glimpsed plum blossom in Chapter 3) and, in spite of Grandmother's best efforts, is also defined as being a good thing. Here, the narrative makes the clear (and thematically central) suggestion that for children, the longer they can hold onto their imaginations, the better. The direct statement of this idea is echoed in a more metaphoric, oblique way by the image of Grandmother listening to Marigold laugh - in other words, an image of the pure joy that's possible when an imagination is exercised. Here it's important to note the juxtaposition of Grandmother's awareness of Marigold's joy with the reference to Dr. Clow's referring to her, and thinking OF her, as the young, beautiful, playful Marian. There is a clear echo here of the previous section, in which Old Grandmother longed to be referred to, and thought of, as her young beautiful (Edith) self. The irony here is that while someone else thinks of Grandmother that way, she doesn't seem to think that way of HERSELF ... although the reference to Marigold's joy, juxtaposed with Clow's remembrance, suggests that somewhere inside, she just MIGHT.

Finally, there is another thematic element developed in this section. This is Marigold's ambivalence about God and religion, explored in the context of Marigold's relationship with The Dog (who, in turn, might be considered another manifestation of the magic at work in Marigold's life - i.e. because she and The Dog can actually have a conversation).

Chapters 8 and 9

Chapters 8 and 9 Summary

TT. Marigold goes to Blue Water Beach and visits strict Aunt Stasia and three cousins - friendly Nancy, playful Teresa, and bullying Beulah. Blue Water Beach, narration reveals, is on the other side of the bay, close to what Marigold still dreams of as The Hidden World. Marigold is determined to behave better on this trip away from home than she did on the trip to Uncle Paul and Aunt Flora's, for which she is still teased.

After a lovely dinner, Marigold is shocked when Stasia and Teresa discover something wrong in her hair and send her upstairs without telling her what's wrong. Beulah laughs nastily as she goes ...

Marigold listens at an air vent that carries the conversation between Stasia and Teresa from the parlor below up to her. As the two women discuss, with quiet horror, what is to be done with Marigold, Marigold suddenly has an idea of what's happened to her - they've found GERMS, of the sort that Aunt Marigold has warned her about.

After a restless night, Teresa takes the very upset Marigold home, where Teresa tells Grandmother what they found. Grandmother says she doesn't believe it, finds a special comb, and runs it painfully through Marigold's hair. She says there was no sign of another whatever-it-was. Teresa leaves in a huff and Marigold is left to sit outside, with no idea of what happened. Aunt Marigold comes and calms her with an explanation (the narrative doesn't say what that is). Marigold scoffs at how unimportant it all seems, saying it must have happened when she changed hats with a new girl at school. When the opinionated but tactful Aunt Marigold stops herself from commenting on Stasia, Marigold cheerfully interjects, calling Stasia "an old fool".

A Lesley Christmas. As the family at Cloud of Spruce prepares to host the annual Christmas family reunion, Marigold prepares a recitation for the usual "programme of speeches and songs and recitations in the parlour after dinner".

On Christmas Day, Marigold watches from a secret hiding place as all the Lesley relatives arrive, noticing everyone's peculiarities. When the time comes for her to actually greet them all, she's very nervous, but an imagined whisper from Old Grandmother helps her through. After a wonderful dinner, just before Marigold gets up to begin her recitation, a (male) cousin makes a nasty comment about her throwing her off and making her unable to begin her recitation. She runs upstairs in an agony of loneliness and humiliation (see "Quotes", p. 144), is then comforted first by Aunt Marigold (who talks about her own experience of stage fright), and then by Lucifer (who prissily talks about how glad he'll be to finally have the festive ribbon around his neck taken off).

Chapters 8 and 9 Analysis

There are several points to note about this section. The first is the nature of what Stasia and Teresa discover on Marigold`s head which, as noted, is never explicitly identified but which the narrative clearly infers is head lice. Ultimately, though, the fact of what disrupts Marigold`s visit is less important than the fact that once again she has attempted a visit from home which has, once again failed (the echo here is of the visit to Uncle Paul and Aunt Flora in Chapter 4, while the foreshadowing here is of the visit to Aunt Anne in Chapter 15).

A second point to note is the portrayal, in both chapters in this section, of Aunt Marigold, whose gentleness, insight, and compassion are clear and important manifestations of the novel's thematic interest in portraying strong, powerful women, in Marigold's case power being defined not so much by strength of body as strength of character and wisdom of mind. By contrast, Aunt Stasia is one of several examples in the narrative of how female power can, and sometimes does, become narrow and autocratic (i.e. power manifested for its own sake). For further consideration of these two thematically central portrayals of strong women, and of all the portrayals of strong women in the book, see "Topics for Discussion - Discuss the various and specific ways ..."

Other points to note include the appearances of magic (i.e. the whisper of Old Grandmother, the conversation with Lucifer) and the references to Blue Water Beach (see "Objects/Places - Houses") and "The Hidden World", the latter a further manifestation of the narrative's thematic interest in the power of imagination.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

The Bobbing of Marigold. Marigold's desire to have her hair bobbed (i.e. cut to just below her ears) is met with absolute negativity from Grandmother. Meanwhile, Grandmother and Mother prepare to leave Marigold alone while they're away at a family event. Mother suggests she can spend time with Sylvia, but Marigold, for the first time, seems to want to spend time with a real best friend.

Marigold goes for a walk and meets the spirited Varvara, who says she's a Russian princess, and has run away from her minders. Marigold doesn't believe her, but invites her into the house anyway. As they play, she tells Varvara about her desire to cut her hair, and Varvara says she should do it just to spite Grandmother ...

Marigold and Varvara try to outdo each other playing games with their imagination, some instinct telling Marigold to not tell Varvara about Sylvia. They go to play in a neighbor's field, Varvara happily getting more dirty than, she says, she's ever been in her life.

Varvara insists upon eating the chocolate cake Grandmother is saving for impending guests, throwing a tantrum when Marigold refuses to let her. Eventually, though, she calms down and helps Marigold finish preparations for supper. As they sit down, Marigold is shocked to see that Varvara has cut some of Grandmother's prize roses, which had also been saved for the guests.

After supper, Varvara and Marigold have a fierce argument which becomes a fight, Marigold twisting Varvara's nose and Varvara grabbing a pair of shears and cutting off Marigold's braids. Immediately Varvara's anger dissipates, and she happily compliments Marigold on her newly bobbed hair. At that moment, Grandmother and Mother return. Varvara tells them who she is. Unlike Marigold, Grandmother believes her, knowing as she does there is a head of state visiting the island. A few minutes later, Varvara's regal grandmother and uncle arrive, apologizing for Varvara's behavior. Varvara goes with them, insisting that Marigold remember her and love her forever, which Marigold believes she will do.

Grandmother comments that Marigold is probably better off with quieter playmates like Sylvia, and Marigold agrees (see "Quotes", p. 162). As Marigold runs out to play with her best friend, she feels "a queer, bitter little regret" that Varvara was not like the princesses she'd imagined. "Marigold was the poorer for a lost illusion."

Chapter 10 Analysis

By far the most vivid of the important elements in this section is the portrayal of Varvara, the first of several strong-willed young women of Marigold's age that she encounters

who have a clear sense of self and individual identity that Marigold seems to lack (see "Themes - The Nature of Individual Identity". In other words, the appearance of Varvara here is a foreshadowing of several similar appearances of similar women in subsequent sections.

That said, there are other, more subtly developed elements in this section. These include the almost casual, but very telling, reference to Marigold's passing longing for a real companion, as opposed to the imaginary Sylvia. This is the first time in the narrative that that longing is mentioned, and is not the last - the reference here foreshadows several references, in sections to come, to similar longings. Here it's interesting to consider the juxtaposition between such longings and manifestations (i.e. Varvara) of such companions. Does this mean that on some level, Marigold is starting to outgrow her imagination? Perhaps, but as the narrative makes clear here (through her reluctance to share Sylvia with Varvara) and in subsequent sections, she's still got a long way to go.

Then there is the cutting of Marigold's hair. The sense here is that her longer braided hair is a metaphoric representation of her youth, a sense supported by a passing reference in Chapter 6 of this section to Lorraine weeping over the cut braids. This means, in turn, that the cutting of the hair into a short bob can itself be seen a metaphoric representation and/or foreshadowing of the eventual "cutting off" of both her imagination and her childhood.

Finally, there is the reference at the end of this section to Marigold's lost illusions about the behavior of princesses. There is a very clear sense here that Marigold's discovery of what a real princess is like is, to a significant degree, similar to her discovery that God will not always answer her prayers. Does the narrative go so far to suggest that God is as much of an illusion, an act of imagination, as Marigold's beliefs about princesses and, perhaps, as her affection for Sylvia? Not quite, but the POTENTIAL for parallels is certainly there.

Chapters 11 and 12

Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

A Council of Perfection. Narration refers to Marigold's anger at, and jealousy of, her distant relative Gwendolen, constantly praised by the frequently visiting Aunt Josephine. When Gwendolen's father asks if she can come for a visit, Marigold looks forward to meeting her in person.

When Gwendolen arrives, Marigold is upset and frustrated to find out that she is just as perfect as Aunt Josephine had said. Marigold works hard at being just as well behaved (see "Quotes", p. 171), with the result that the two girls end up bored with each other and with life at Cloud of Cedars.

One day, when Grandmother and Mother are out, Gwendolen reveals just how rebellious she really is. She and Marigold then reveal that they each have been told, by Aunt Josephine, that the other is perfect, and that they've both been on their best behavior all week in an attempt to live up to each other's reputations. Gwendolen says they'll make up for it the following week, narration commenting that Grandmother "never forgot that second week".

Marigold Entertains, 1- One day, while Grandmother and Lorraine are out picking apples, Gwendolen decides that she's going to try Grandmother's famous blueberry wine. She and Marigold are shocked, however, when they open the bottle and the wine explodes all over the dining room. Gwendolen tells Marigold their only option is to run away for the day until Grandmother's anger about the wine blows over. As they leave, they encounter Abel Derusha, "the Weed Man", who offers them a ride.

After Abel arranges for Grandmother and Mother to be told the girls are with him, Abel takes Marigold (who feels a kinship with him - see "Quotes", p. 83) and Gwendolen for a long ride, responding to Gwendolen's sometimes taunting questions with patience and wisdom. Eventually, they wind up at the home of wizened, eighty-seven year old Granny Phin.

The sharp-tongued Granny Phin and Abel banter back and forth, with Granny at one point referring to what an "int'resting" world it is. Marigold realizes she and Granny have a lot in common. After supper, as Abel and the girls are leaving, Granny Phin holds Marigold close and says she likes Marigold best - she looks "like a bit o' spring."

Abel takes the girls back to the home he shares with his sister Tabby, who gives them supper and responds patiently when Gwendolen rudely asks whether she believes in God (see "Quotes", p. 194). After supper, Abel tells the girls that because a rainstorm is approaching, he's not able to take them home, adding that the women at Cloud of Spruce know where they are.

Peevish Gwendolen complains about the accommodation at Abel's, but Marigold is happy - the room they're in looks out over the harbor. Gwendolen's taunts lead to an argument about keeping secrets, and to Gwendolen revealing that she knows about Marigold's hatred for Clementine. Seeing Marigold's embarrassment, Gwendolen taunts her further, but eventually goes to sleep. Marigold prays her special prayer (taught to her by Aunt Marigold) but is unable to go to sleep, lying silent, awake and fearful as Tabby makes a midnight visit and speaks lovingly to them.

The next morning is beautiful and clear. As Marigold looks out the window dreamily, Gwendolen asks what she's doing. "I think I'm praying," Marigold says.

Uncle Klon comes to get them, assuring them that everything's all right. When they get home, though, and discover the reaction to the exploded blueberry wine, Gwendolen mutters that it's a good thing they're too big to be spanked.

Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

This section introduces and develops the character of Gwendolen, the second of four strong minded young women (kindred spirits?) with whom Marigold develops friendships. Gwendolen, like Varvara before her and both Paula and Bernice afterward, have an image that they present to the world but which they eventually reveal is a mask for the true selves beneath. For Varvara and Gwendolen both, that mask was a veneer of propriety which for Gwendolen is a little thicker, but which for both of them is barely able to conceal the restless impulsivity beneath. Here it's interesting to note that in all four of these relationships, Marigold is more of a leader than a follower, inspired to independence and free action rather than inspiring it in others. This makes her a somewhat reactive protagonist. However, as her journey of transformation seems to be anchored in her capacity to learn rather than to teach, to discover her own identity as the result of the actions and influences of others, this sense of her being a follower rather than a leader seems to fit (see "Characters - Marigold Lesley").

Other important elements in this section include the return of Marigold's hatred of Clementine (an ongoing, unifying narrative element) and manifestation of the narrative's thematic interest in powerful women, specifically in the appearances of three very different women - the manipulative, domineering Aunt Josephine, the rough-edged but warm-hearted Granny Phin, and the nurturing but unusual Tabby Derusha. She, in turn and like her brother Abel, can be seen as a manifestation of another of the book's thematic interests, i.e. the role and/or nature of religion. The sense here, and throughout the narrative, is that it's possible to connect with and/or worship God and His spirit in ways other than the church. In this section, this premise is enacted not only through the eccentric but lovable Abel and Tabby, but also in Marigold's prayers, both the one given to her by Aunt Marigold (who is, for the time, a singularly open-minded and open hearted woman) and in Marigold's own "prayer" as she looks out at the harbor.

Chapters 13 and 14

Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

A Ghost is Laid. As Gwendolen and Marigold continue to spend time together, and as Gwendolen continues to taunt Marigold about Clementine (but only occasionally), Marigold takes comfort in imagining that Clementine would have ended up as fat as her self-indulgent, weepy mother, Mrs. Lawrence.

Gwendolen convinces Marigold to join her in a plan to secretly attend a costume ball hosted by Uncle Klon and Aunt Marigold to celebrate a family wedding,. They find some old dresses in the attic, narration revealing that the one worn by Marigold is one of Clementine's.

Following an enjoyable journey through the night, Marigold and Gwendolen arrive at the party. As they make their way into the room where the dancing is, Gwendolen slips and falls, knocking Marigold onto the floor in front of Mrs. Lawrence, who recognizes Clementine's dress, goes into hysterics, and accuses Lorraine of plotting to humiliate her. Gwendolen shouts that the whole thing was her idea, and the humiliated Mrs. Lawrence disappears. Later, as Uncle Klon is taking the family home, Marigold is surprised to hear both him and Grandmother almost laughing about Mrs. Lawrence, and is even more surprised that while everyone thought Clementine had beautiful hands, everyone also thought she had big, ugly feet! At that moment, Marigold's hatred of Clementine evaporates. The next day, Gwendolen goes home, and while everyone is glad of the quiet (see "Quotes", p. 219), everyone also misses her energy, Marigold goes out to spend some time with Sylvia.

Bitterness of Soul. One morning in fall, Marigold goes to school with a strange, uneasy anticipation, narration commenting that she's never found a good close friend there and that Sylvia seems somehow less real. During recess, Marigold is surrounded by maliciously gossiping girls, eager to see her reaction as they tell her Mother is going to marry the new minister, Reverend Thompson. Marigold reacts with shock, as this is the first time she's heard anything about it, and wonders whether God does anything for spite.

Time passes, fall moves into winter, and Marigold becomes more and more unhappy about what she thinks is going to happen between Mother and Reverend Thompson (see "Quotes", p. 226).

On Christmas Day, Grandmother is too ill to go to the family party, and Mother is staying with her. Marigold goes into town, and as she wanders its streets, passes Reverend Thompson's house. She sees a pig is rooting in the garden, and after debating with herself about whether she should do something nice for him, goes to tell him. The door is open, and through it she sees the minister kissing a distant Lesley relative, Aunt Ellice! Intensely relieved, Marigold runs home and tells Mother the whole story. Mother

says she never had any intention of marrying Reverend Thompson, or anyone else for that matter (see "Quotes", p. 232), and embraces the immensely relieved Marigold.

Narration describes Marigold's happiness for both Rev. Thompson and Aunt Ellice, commenting on how beautiful and bright the winter night is.

Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

The title of the first chapter in this section, "A Ghost is Laid", functions on two levels. Essentially, the term means that a haunting is over, that something from the past (not necessarily a person, but in this case that's what's involved) that had deeply and troubling affected life in the present has been laid to rest, or buried. In this particular case, the ghost is that of Clementine, who has been laid to rest for both Marigold and for Mrs. Lawrence (at least, that's what the narrative suggests). That said, there is an effective sense of suspense built into this chapter, with the reader being very aware that when narration juxtaposes the description of the ever-mourning Mrs. Lawrence with the description of Clementine's dress that a confrontation is both inevitable and forthcoming.

In the second chapter in this section, once again Marigold seems to question the value of her relationship with Sylvia, and once again seems to brush off her doubts. This is partly because she doesn't want to and/or isn't able to let her go just yet, and partly because she so quickly becomes distracted by thoughts of her mother and Reverend Thompson, those thoughts in turn, and once again, leading her to question the nature, purpose and values of God (see "Themes - The Role of Religion in Life").

One final point to note about this section is the reference, at its conclusion, to the weather. This is one of several occasions throughout the narrative at which the weather and/or the natural environment is portrayed in such a way as to echo and/or reinforce the emotional experience of the characters, most particularly of Marigold. Aside from functioning as effective writing (see "Style - Language and Meaning"), this technique also serves to reinforce the narrative's apparent contention that Marigold, her moods and her feelings, are quite tied and/or connected to nature, the one evoking and reflecting the other.

Chapters 15 and 16

Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

One Clear Call. Marigold reluctantly accompanies Mother into town to hear a missionary friend, her memories of dull, boring missionaries swept away when she sees Dr. Violet Meriwether's beauty and hears her passion. Marigold decides then and there that she's going to be a missionary (see "Quotes", p. 236).

As part of her new life, Marigold reads only missionary literature, intensifies her prayers, gives much less value to material things, says goodbye to Sylvia, and decides that she will go to India and minister to lepers.

Marigold decides to take God's word to lonely Mrs. Delagarde, described in town as "a little off" and who mistakes her for someone named Delight. After a night and a day locked Delight's old room, the increasingly terrified Marigold tries the door, discovers it's unlocked, and races back to Cloud of Cedars, where she finds everyone has been anxiously waiting for her.

The next day, Marigold explains everything to her family who, in turn, tell her that Mrs. Delagarde's daughter died a year before, and she hadn't been the same since. In the following week, Marigold reconsiders her choice to be a missionary, Mother telling her that the time to make that choice is when she's an adult. Mother also tells her that Mrs. Delagarde seems to have snapped out of whatever delusions made her capture Marigold. For her part, Marigold muses on the mystery of the locked/unlocked door and, once Aunt Marigold has said she's all better, returns to Sylvia and the orchard.

One of Us. Marigold visits her favorite aunt (Anne) and her husband (Uncle Charles) at Broad Acres, their house by the sea. Again determined to put the memory of her first overnight trip to rest (Chapter 4), Marigold has a wonderful time with Mats (Martha), the girl next door. But then, narration comments, Paula comes into their lives.

Marigold first encounters Paula at church, Marigold finding her spiritual intensity so fascinating that when Paula suggests that Marigold is "one of us" and must meet her to be saved, Marigold agrees. Mats tells Marigold that Paula gets fascinated with different things and then suddenly lets them go. But Marigold is determined to go, and Mats reluctantly says she'll come along.

When Marigold and Mats meet with Paula, she passionately instructs them in the ways they must sacrifice in order to be saved and reach heaven. Marigold agrees reluctantly, and Mats says she'll go along with it all as well, narration commenting that she suspects that this, like Paula's other passions, will pass.

Marigold becomes far more devoted to Paula and her teachings than Mats, at one point even spending the night at Paula's home. Even though the atmosphere and the food

are unwelcoming and uncomfortable, Marigold feels she's being religious and sacrificial enough to please both Paula and God.

Marigold slips from Paula's ways when she visits Mats' home and eats all the good things Mats' mother made for dinner. The next day, she confesses to Paula, who says that as a penance and because Marigold is afraid of the dark, she (Marigold) must spend the night outside. At first Marigold is terrified, but as the night passes, she suddenly realizes that the night is as beautiful as the day, falls into a peaceful sleep, and wakes the next morning full of joy - too full, according to Paula.

Marigold sees Paula stealing and eating a cake. Upset and angry, Marigold resolves to let herself have a good time. Paula scolds her, but Marigold confronts her about the cake. Paula says she was desperately hungry for something nice, admitting she was getting tired of being religious (see "Quotes", p. 269). The two girls settle down with a game, Paula commenting that she wanted to get playing before Mats returned, because she's "not one of us".

Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

Marigold gets religion twice in this section. The first is as the result of her encounter with Dr. Meriwether, yet another strong and independent female character (see "Themes - The Power of Women"), while the second is as the result of her encounter with Paula. She, like Varvara and Gwen previously, and like Bernice following, are strong personalities who assume a role of leadership over Marigold, who present an image and/or identity to the world, and whose genuine personalities are eventually revealed over the course of their and Marigold's adventures. The results of both encounters can be seen as manifesting and reflecting the novel's thematic interest in, and commentary on, the nature and value of religion (see "Themes"). Specifically, the action of both narratives (i.e. Marigold's eventual rejection of the missionary life, Marigold and Paula's mutual rejection of Paula's excessive moralizing) suggest that traditional religious beliefs and values are ultimately constricting and less true to the nature of - well, nature, and of being human. In other words, the novel seems to be suggesting that a full experience of God, faith and spirituality is not to be found in religious teachings, but in the teachings of the natural world.

Other important elements to note in this section include the fact that the visit to Aunt Anne is Marigold's first successful overnight absence from Cloud of Cedars (forever banishing the humiliations of the visits to Uncle Paul in Chapter 4 and Aunt Stasia in Chapter 9), and the reiteration of Marigold's ever-so-gentle moving away from Sylvia. Although she does return to Sylvia at the end of Chapter 15, there is the sense that she's becoming readier to move on. Finally, there is an example in this section of the "magic" that seems to happen to Marigold at different times throughout the novel - see "Topics for Discussion - Discuss the ways ..."

Chapters 17 and 18

Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

Not By Bread Alone. Grandmother and Mother leave the house in what they think is a shameful condition, with no cake or sweets in the pantry (see "Quotes", p. 270). This means that Marigold, now eleven, is all alone when relatives unexpectedly arrive, looking forward to good food.

Marigold, despite never having baked, decides she's going to bake both a cake and biscuits. She is interrupted by saucy cousin Jack, but matches him taunt for taunt. Once he's left her alone, the Lesley in her - and Providence, according to narration - makes her baking a success.

The dinner goes well, and Jack remains silent until the very end, when he starts taunting Marigold again. Again, she gives as good as she gets, winning the approval of the other relatives (as much for her cleverness as for her baking) as they leave.

When Grandmother and Mother arrive, they're excited, relieved and grateful that Marigold baked as well as she did.

Red Ink Or - ? For the first time in her life, Marigold visits relatives on Lorraine's side of the family. Making friends with a group of girls, she hears about a boy named Hip (real name Howard) Price, son of the minister, handsome and with the eyes of an archangel.

At church, Marigold finds she can't take her eyes off the handsome boy in the corner, and that he can't take his eyes off her. It's Hip Price, of course, who fills her thoughts so thoroughly the next day that she burns a pan of cookies.

Hip sends Marigold love letters, written in red ink which she momentarily imagines might actually be blood. Marigold defends him against gossipy girls who say he can't have done all the heroic, special things he's said to have done, and happily goes to a party with him.

Hip and Marigold quarrel over Marigold's refusal to tell him a secret. He says he'll kill himself if she doesn't, and when he disappears the next day, Marigold is worried. Later that day, she gets together with the other girls and discovers that Hip has been doing, for them, exactly what he's been doing for her. She realizes he's been nasty, deceitful and selfish, and congratulates herself for not telling him the secret.

When Hip eventually returns, having gone away for the day with a buddy, he visits Marigold, who in no uncertain terms lets him know that she knows everything he's done to and with the other girls. After he goes, she comments to herself that he wasn't all that interesting, definitely not as interesting as Jack.

Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

With the appearance of Jack and Hip, boys begin to make their presence felt in Marigold's life, their influence on her growing through this and following sections until the climactic relationship she develops with Budge in Chapter 21. For the most part, the boys are portrayed as being shallow and superficial - even Budge who, as is eventually revealed, is ultimately unable to let go of his attachment to his buddies (in the way, narration implies of men everywhere and throughout time). Billy in the following section has a certain degree of free-spirited kinship with Marigold that seems, in the eyes of the narrative, at least, to make him a little more worthy of Marigold's time and attention. Ultimately, though, the presence of ALL the boys marks the beginning of the next phase of Marigold's maturation, and ultimately the end of her relationship with Sylvia.

It's also important to note that the appearance of boys in her life also marks the end of Marigold's dependence on other women / girls to help her make her choices. To be specific, she stands up to both Jack and to Hip on her own, without being told to or guided to (or bullied to) by any of the other strong willed girls (Gwen, Varvara, Paula) for whom she'd been a devout follower. Marigold is becoming a leader in her own life, and here again it's important to note that the book was written at a time when women with independent minds and spirits were simultaneously making their presence felt in the world and facing oppression from authority figures as a result. In other words, for the young female readers of the time Marigold, and for that matter the strong, influential women in her life (i.e. Aunt Marigold), might well have been significant role models.

Chapters 19 and 20

Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

How It Came to Pass. Marigold goes to visit yet another set of relatives, the rigidly religious Uncle Jarvis (see "Quotes", p. 294) and generous Aunt Marcia.

Aunt Marcia hopes that Marigold will make friends with nearby farm girl Babe, who reacts jealously when Marigold finds a kindred spirit in Bernice, "the first real friend she had ever had - the first real rival to Sylvia" (see also "Quotes", p. 296).

One night, Aunt Marcia not only lets Marigold sleep in the hayloft, but also lets her have Bernice to stay. As Marigold prepares to say her prayers, she is shocked to discover that Bernice doesn't believe in God. If there was a God, she says, he wouldn't have let her parents and her kitten die, he wouldn't have made her ugly, and he wouldn't be about to let Marigold disappear from her life. Marigold struggles to convince her that God exists, but Bernice is having none of it.

Marigold accidentally refers to Bernice's lack of belief at the dinner table. Uncle Jarvis forbids her to see Bernice anymore. Later, Marigold tries to get Bernice to say she believes, or that she will try to believe, but Bernice refuses. Marigold spends the next few days exploring the wonders of the area alone ...

Babe tauntingly hints that she knows a secret about Bernice's father. Marigold forces her to reveal that Bernice's father isn't dead, but is in prison, her mother having died "of a broken heart" when he was jailed. After Babe leaves, Marigold resolves to give the bad news to Bernice herself, forcing herself to go down the unfamiliar, dark, tree-lined road to the farm where she lives with her aunt (see "Quotes", p, 305). Bernice hears the news happily, excited that she now has someone in her life, glad to have someone to care for, now convinced there's a God, and glad that she and Marigold can now play together. Together they face down Babe, disappointed that someone has gotten to Bernice first.

The Punishment of Billy. On the last of her family visits before starting school, this time to strict Aunt Min, Marigold befriends a distant cousin, Billy. He complains of how little fun he gets to have at Aunt Min's compared to the things he could do at his poor but playful Aunt Nora's. He also warns Marigold that she's going to hate Sunday because, he says, she'll be asked to write a synopsis of the sermon at church from memory.

The Sunday before Marigold is to leave, Aunt Min is called away, leaving Billy and Marigold to go to church on their own and telling them she'll read their synopses when she comes home. On their way, though, they're invited by the lower-class Dixon family up the road to join them on a trip to the beach. Marigold participates in a lot of fun activities, but guiltily can't bring herself to have a good time, even though Billy has said he has a plan for getting around the synopsis problem ...

Billy writes his synopsis based on a sermon he got out of a book. Marigold refuses to cheat, telling the returning Aunt Min that she simply could not write a synopsis. When she reads Billy's synopsis, Aunt Min reacts angrily to the beliefs it discusses, saying the preacher must be sent away. After she's gone, Marigold reveals that the preacher is engaged to her beloved Sunday School teacher back home, and that she has to tell the truth. Billy, fearful of Aunt Min as he is, resolves to stand by Marigold.

Aunt Min forgives Marigold, but takes some time to think about Billy's punishment, eventually revealing that because she feels she can't take care of Billy properly, he is to be sent to stay with his Aunt Nora.

Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

Here again, the narrative's primary focus is its thematic interest in God and religion. In Chapter 19 Marigold, for the first time in her life, comes face to face with someone who actively and defiantly refuses to believe in the same God. Interestingly, and in spite of all the various encounters Marigold has had (including those with Abel and Tabby, with Paula and with nature itself) that suggest her faith is limited, Marigold reacts to Bernice`s lack of faith with automatic dismay and simultaneous certainty that she (Bernice) is absolutely wrong. Also interestingly, she continues to hold on to this belief even while she struggles to convince the similarly dogmatic Uncle Jarvis that he's wrong to separate her from her best friend. And it's even more interesting to note that in response to Bernice's claim that she now believes, Marigold's reaction is NOT celebration that a soul has been returned to Christ, but that she and Bernice can play together again. In other words, Marigold focuses on an earthly reward for faith, not a heavenly one, arguably the exact OPPOSITE of what religion and faith would say. In short, Marigold is portrayed as being quite conflicted in this chapter, a very intriguing development given that the narrative is drawing to its close and Marigold is on the verge, it seems of becoming a grownup. In other words, she's moving out of her childhood of black and white, at least when it comes to faith and religion, and discovering there are shades of gray, a discovery that has clear echoes in the following section when she comes to realize that when it comes to relationships with boys, it's all ABOUT the gray.

Speaking of boys, the relationship Marigold develops with Billy is an intriguing one. Here again, her faith is challenged, here again she finds herself responding with automatic traditionalism (i.e. guilty at skipping church in order to enjoy herself), and here again she discovers that breaking what might be called God's rules (i.e. going to church) does not automatically mean something bad is going to happen. She learns this when Billy is "punished" by being sent to a place where Aunt Min thinks he's better off, but where Marigold and the reader both know he'll be much happier. It's important to note that the narrative never explicitly addresses this dichotomy, but brings it up through suggestion and implication in the final moments of Chapter 20. In any case, it's certainly an ironic twist to the question of how religion fits in Marigold's life, as is the fact that Billy is the one young man in all of Marigold's (admittedly limited) experience who behaves with true integrity, deciding to stand with her in the face of Aunt Min's wrath.

One last important element in this section is the reference to the continued slow loosening of Marigold's ties to Sylvia, which foreshadows the full letting go of those ties in the following section, an action. As will be discussed, the letting go of those ties can be seen as part of the book's thematically relevant suggestion that part of growing up and facing the reality of the world is a letting go of imagination.

Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Her Chrism of Womanhood. With the blessing of Mother and Grandmother, who hope that she's finally outgrowing Sylvia (see "Quotes", p. 20), Marigold makes friends with Budge (real name: Sidney Guest) who moves, with his family, onto the farm next door. Narration describes how he and Marigold find a lot in common, but that Budge suspects there's something that Marigold isn't telling him. Narration reveals that Marigold refuses to tell him anything about Sylvia, even though she's starting to feel that Sylvia is less important and less real. Aunt Marigold advises Marigold to stay connected with Sylvia as long as she can (see "Quotes", p. 323), and Marigold continues to visit her, but more and more of her time and heart are taken up with Budge.

A boy named Tad, of the same age as Budge, moves onto another nearby farm and, as the two boys make friends, Marigold is forgotten. She tries to pretend that nothing's wrong, but it doesn't work. Eventually Marigold decides to tell Budge about Sylvia, but when he says it all sounds silly, she's crushed. She's even more upset when she goes in search of Sylvia and finds she's no longer there, sensing she will never be there again (see "Quotes", p. 326/7)

The next day, Marigold is visited by an indignant Budge, angry after a fight with Tad. Marigold reassures him with spirit, leading Budge to think how great she is. As he makes plans to visit her the next day, Marigold asks whether he told Tad about Sylvia. Budge promises that it's her secret. Marigold feels "some lost ecstasy" returning to life.

The next day, Marigold is upset to see Budge going fishing with Tad as though nothing had happened, but happy later that afternoon when Budge comes by to follow through on their plans to search the orchard for the Holy Grail. They don't find it, but do find a long-lost china cup, leading Grandmother to reward them with a plate of sweets.

Miserable that Budge is out with Tad for the evening, Marigold is comforted by Aunt Marigold (see "Quotes", p. 330), who tells her that she "must share him with others. We - women - must always share." Now contented, Marigold enjoys the beauty of the night and the bay. "The old magic was gone forever - gone with Sylvia and the hidden land and all the dear, sweet fading dreams of childhood." But, Marigold thinks, there are good things coming ... including the return of Budge.

Chapter 21 Analysis

As is the case with all coming of age stories, the ending of "Magic for Marigold" is bittersweet. In this, the novel's climax (i.e. point of greatest emotional and/or thematic and/or narrative intensity), Marigold takes the inevitable next steps towards maturity. She lets go of the imaginings and illusions of the past (as represented by / embodied in Sylvia) and, in spite of the urgings of the wise Aunt Marigold, takes the first tentative

steps towards the hopeful, hopefully joyful, future that awaits her. She is moving away from girlhood and into womanhood, the narrative suggesting that she (and perhaps her young female readers) has a succession of strong, courageous, powerful female role models to emulate. There is also the suggestion that at least for now, she's come to the beginnings of understanding of how male/female relationships work in general, and how the relationship with Budge will work in particular. Contemporary young female readers might question the validity and truth of Aunt Marigold's comments about what it means to be a woman, but on the other hand, there is the sense that what was true at the time the novel was written continues to be true today. This is the idea that, in many ways, women must rely on themselves and each other for true support, true inspiration, and true companionship.

Meanwhile, it's interesting to note a few other elements that appear in this section. These include the motif, or repeated image, of the nickname (specifically Budge's), suggestive of a truth concealed or suppressed , and the lack of reference to religion or God(outside of the passing interest in the Holy Grail, historically the cup used by Jesus at the last supper. Finally, there is one last connection drawn between Marigold's inner mood and the outer world of nature - specifically, the stillness of the evening juxtaposed with her inner experience of contentment. It could be argued that there is at least an implied connection between this simultaneous experience of inner and outer ultimate contentment AND this chapter's lack of reference to God and religion, but that may be too much an inference to draw. Suffice it to say that at the conclusion of the narrative, Marigold has discovered what might be described as the ultimate "magic", that ineffable "something" that draws, and keeps, men and women together, that helps women keep the faith in themselves and in their purpose, and that helps young women discover and maintain their own sense of identity (see "Themes").

Characters

Marigold Lesley

Marigold is the book's central character and protagonist, one of several independent minded heroines (including "Anne of Green Gables") created by this particular author. Marigold is thoughtful and dreamy, sensitive and imaginative. She is portrayed as something of a mystery to most members of her family, who see her as too independent minded and too tied up in her imagination (the exceptions are Uncle Klon and Aunt Marigold - see below). On the other hand, she is also portrayed as being somewhat passive, more often than not going along for the ride as other, stronger personalities (i.e. Varvara, Gwendolen, Paula) push the boundaries of what is expected and proper. Here it's important to note that this aspect of Marigold's character is not portrayed as a negative, but rather as a fairly straightforward representation of who she is - an observer, a dreamer, a consider-er. She learns as much by watching and thinking as much as by doing. Yes, there are times when she takes initiative (such as her baking and cooking in Chapter 17) and stands up for herself (such as her confrontations with Varvara in Chapter 10 and Cousin Jack in Chapter 17). For the most part, though, she is a protagonist whose journey of transformation is defined more by internal contemplation and discovery rather than by active external searching or struggle. Finally, she is also both religious and spiritual, professing her faith in traditional, conservative Christian terms but, at the same time, sensing that there are values in God and Nature that go beyond what is taught in church. In exploring this aspect of her character and journey, the novel develops its thematic interest in the nature of God and religion.

Leander and Lorraine

Leander is Marigold's father, who died shortly before Marigold was born. He is described in narration as a favorite of the family - "they had all agreed in loving Leander - about the only thing they had ever been known to agree on." Lorraine is Leander's second wife, a Winthrop who married into the formidable Lesley family following the death of Leander's much loved first wife, Clementine.

The Lesley Family

Marigold is born into a large, wealthy, upper-class family with long-standing traditions and values that shape everything from how she receives her name to Christmas-time rituals to codes of behavior on visits. Marigold's relationships with her family and its rules are ambivalent and complicated. Sometimes she greatly values everything her family gives her, at other times she rebels against it, and at still other times she takes advantage of the status her name and situation give her.

Old Grandmother

Old Grandmother is the Lesley family matriarch, or senior female authority figure. To Marigold, she is in actual fact her great grandmother. Old Grandmother's word, as long as she remains alive, is law - everyone in the family does as she says, whether they agree or not. She is portrayed as caustically wise, observant and uninhibited when it comes to offering opinions and commenting on what she observes. Shortly before she dies, she offers Marigold (and the reader) an insight into the young woman she once was, and into the life she once led. Interestingly, she and Young Grandmother both (see below) were not born Lesleys, but married into the family.

Young Grandmother

Young Grandmother is Leander's mother, Lorraine's mother in law, and Marigold's grandmother. She is portrayed as being regal, distant and elegant, authoritarian in a quiet but unarguable way. She often becomes restrainedly exasperate with Marigold, finding her relationship with Sylvia (see below) particularly inappropriate. She is not, however, without compassion or humor, although it does take some doing to get her to reveal either aspect of herself. She, like Old Grandmother, is not a Lesley born, but married into the family and (happily?) took over the responsibility for living up to, and enhancing, the family's reputation.

Marigold's Aunts

Over the course of the narrative, Marigold interacts with several women who are called "aunts", but who may or may not be actual siblings of her father - many, in fact, are either great-aunts, spouses of biological uncles, or simply female relatives whose actual connections to the family are shortened to "aunt". Married aunts include Flora (stern and intolerant), Anne (generous and shy), and Marcia (loving and submissive) - see also "Marigold's Uncles", below. Single (maiden) aunts include Stasia (rigid and proper), Min (strict and religious), Josephine (proud and manipulative) and Ellice (flirty and playful).

Aunt Marigold (Dr. Richards)

Aunt Marigold, from whom Marigold got her name, is Marigold's favorite aunt. Wise and compassionate, she is portrayed as always being available to offer Marigold advice. The narrative suggests that she is, the narrative suggests, an even better mother to Marigold than Lorraine (see "Quotes", p. 330). Marigold is also significant because she is a female physician in a place and age where such things were a rarity. In short, and as previously discussed, Aunt Marigold is one of several strong and independent women whose place in the narrative is not only important to Marigold as a character but to young female readers of the time in which the book was written and published. She and other women characters (such as Dr. Meriwether - see below) were role models for new and more varied ways of being a woman in society.

Marigold's Uncles

Marigold interacts with fewer uncles than she does aunts, but they nevertheless play important roles in her life. Among the most significant are Uncle Paul (married to Aunt Flora, disapproving and unfriendly), Uncle Charles (married to Aunt Anne, quiet and kind), and Uncle Jarvis (married to Aunt Marcia, religious and judgmental)

Uncle Klondike (Horace)

Uncle Klon, as he is called, is Marigold's favorite uncle - and, it could be argued, she is his favorite relative. He is portrayed as being something of a wanderer and an adventurer in his youth, and a determined bachelor in his adulthood. But once he lays eyes on the woman who becomes Aunt Marigold, he is smitten and his single days are over. Outspoken and direct, Uncle Klon comes across as being something of a gentle giant, a bluff exterior covering a soft heart and a wise spirit.

Sylvia

Sylvia is Marigold's imaginary friend and confidante. She never actually appears in the narrative, but is instead referred to in narration and by the other characters. Neither her nature nor her appearance is described in any great detail, although the quote from p. 117 does offer a glimpse of both. There is also the implication that she is dressed in white, this implication arising from Marigold believing her to be, at their first meeting, a branch of pine blossoms). There is also the sense that she is closely connected to, or even a manifestation of, nature. Part of this has to do with the fact that Marigold interacts with her only in a natural environment, and part of this has to do with her name. . The world "sylvan" is used to describe a setting of natural beauty and grace, usually a woodland or a glade. There seems to be a clear connection between this word and the name Sylvia. That connection is, in turn, a further manifestation of an important aspect of Marigold's fundamental character and identity - her connection with, and love for, nature.

Varvara

Varvara is a boisterous, impulsive, selfish girl of around Marigold's age. She proclaims herself to be royalty, and to have escaped from her family and her minders. At first Marigold doesn't believe her, and tries to stand up to Varvara's tantrums and self-indulgence. Eventually, however, Varvara is revealed to have been telling the truth, and disappears from Marigold's life, never to be heard from again.

Gwendolen, Paula, Bernice

These three characters, like Varvara, come into Marigold's life and become close friends. Unlike Marigold's relationship with Varvara, however, these friendships seem to last, narration commenting on more than one occasion on how Marigold keeps in touch with them via letters. Gwendolen is a cousin, at first believed by Marigold to be perfect, but who later reveals herself to be almost as rambunctious and selfish as Varvara. Paula and Bernice are both friends Marigold makes when on visits to one or another of her aunts, and both are transformed as the result of what happens between them and Marigold. Specifically, the rigidly religious Paula becomes tired of living an austere, restrained life, while Bernice's anger at God dissipates and she becomes a believer. All three girls, therefore, can be seen as manifestations of the narrative's thematic interest in discovering, developing and maintain individual identity.

Salome Silversides, Lazarre

Salome is a distant relative of the Lesleys who also married a Lesley stepbrother and who is, essentially, the housekeeper at Cloud of Cedars. Lazarre is the Cloud of Cedars handyman, a colorful and opinionated Frenchman. Both characters are simultaneously authority figures and confidantes for Marigold.

Lucifer, The Witch of Endor

These two characters are actually cats, both black and sleek, both descended from a long line of similar Lesley-family cats, both capable of talking to each other and both capable of talking with humans - at least, that's what the narrative would have the reader believe.

Abel and Tabby Derusha, Granny Phin

On a day when the misbehaving Marigold and Gwendolen are eager to escape Cloud of Cedars, they are taken out for an afternoon and evening by eccentric Abel Derusha, who speaks to them of a different kind of God and faith than they're used to hearing of in church. Tabby's sister Derusha has a similarly unusual view of God and faith, with both characters serving as manifestations of the novel's thematically central questioning of the nature of God and religion. Granny Phin, meanwhile, is a sharp-tongued old woman (in her way, as uncompromising and untactful as Old Grandmother) who befriends Marigold during the afternoon she spends with Abel.

Dr. Violet Meriwether

On the other side of the narrative's thematic exploration of the nature of God is the character of Dr. Meriwether, a missionary whose beauty and passion inspire Marigold,

at least temporarily, to become a missionary herself. Dr. Meriwether is also important for another reason - she, like Aunt Marigold (who is a physician) is a woman essentially doing a man's job, and as such can be seen as the author's attempt to develop strong female role models for her readers of the time.

Hip Price, Cousin Jack, Billy, Budge

Late in the narrative, and as she is beginning to approach puberty, Marigold has several encounters with boys who, as a group, are beginning to become interesting to her. The handsome but shallow Hip Price (a manipulative minister's son) and the chatty Cousin Jack (who gets as good as he gives every time he taunts Marigold) do not, ultimately, make a good impression on Marigold and, in fact, firm her resolve to not spend any more time with boys than she has to. Billy, on the other hand, proves to be a surprisingly loyal and responsible friend, even though he initially behaves irresponsibly and convinces Marigold to do so as well. Budge is perhaps the most important of these characters, in that he is the first boy with whom Marigold feels a genuine kinship, for whom she feels an emotional attraction, and because of whom begins to understand the complicated nature of male/female relationships.

Objects/Places

Prince Edward Island

This small, lush island on the Eastern (Atlantic) coast of Canada is the part of the world in which the Lesley family makes its home.

Cloud of Spruce

This is the name given to the Lesley family's expansive home, an evocation of the forest (cloud) of spruce trees atop the hill at the back of the family's property.

The Orchard Room

This room in Cloud of Spruce is, in the early part of the narrative, inhabited by the elderly and infirm Old Grandmother. The room is also the only place in the house with a door that Marigold can use to directly access the abandoned orchard which is, in turn, the only place where she can connect with Sylvia. Finally, the Orchard Room is where the portrait of Clementine hangs.

The Portrait of Clementine

Clementine was the first wife of Leander, Marigold's father, and was much loved by the Lesley family. The fact that the repeatedly refer to how wonderful she was combines with the fact that Old Grandmother keeps a portrait of her on the wall, even though she's long dead, to upset both Marigold and her mother, but particularly Marigold, whose hatred and resentment increases over the years. All Marigold's negative feelings, however, disappear when Marigold, in Chapter 13, learns that Clementine (whose hands in the portrait are particularly beautiful) had big, ugly feet.

Clementine's Dress

In Chapter 13, the reluctant Marigold is convinced to attend a costume-and-mask party. Neither of them knows that the dress Gwendolen chooses for her used to belong to Clementine. Marigold's appearance at the party in the dress triggers a scene of emotional hysterics from Clementine's mother, but more importantly triggers a discussion of Clementine's faults that, in turn, triggers a release of Marigold's resentment and anger towards her father's much loved first wife.

The Orchard

Behind Cloud of Spruce is an old, unused orchard, returned to a natural, wild state after years of neglect. The orchard is where Marigold meets, and plays with, her imaginary friend Sylvia.

The Key to the Orchard Door

The orchard can only be accessed through a door in the Orchard Room which, in turn, can only be opened by a particular key. This key is, at one point, withheld from Marigold by Young Grandmother, who is determined to keep Marigold from becoming too indulgent in the fantasy of Sylvia. When Marigold becomes physically ill (i.e. sick from a lack of freedom to use her imagination), Young Grandmother returns the key to her.

The Hidden Land

Marigold fantasizes about a mysterious, beautiful land on the other side of the hills surrounding the harbor. The Hidden Land is even more wonderful and more beautiful than the land where she lives, and is a place where, she believes, she can be even closer to nature.

Houses

Houses in this book have character and identity, significance in the lives of the characters simply because they (the houses) are what they are. From the socially lofty Cloud of Cedars to Paula Pengelly's run down house on the bay, houses define, and are defined by, the people who live there and what they mean to Marigold and the narrative.

The Weather

On several occasions throughout the book, descriptions of the weather in narration echo Marigold's feelings and / or state of mind. When there's conflict, the weather is stormy and unpredictable. When she's happy, the weather is clear, calm, and fine. Does the weather trigger the mood? Possibly, but it's more likely that the author is using the weather as a metaphoric representation not only of Marigold's inner life, but of her connection with nature in general.

Themes

Experiencing Individual Identity

The process of experiencing identity manifests in several ways throughout the narrative, all of which can be broken down into four broad-strokes areas - discovering, defining, understanding, and maintaining. Marigold, as the novel's protagonist, experiences all three areas, as over the course of her various adventures she discovers who she is (and what she is capable of), defines who she is (often through defining who she is NOT), understanding who she is (often through attempting things she ultimately discovers she's not comfortable with), and maintaining who she is. This last is particularly apparent in her (obstinate? desperate? determined?) struggle to keep her relationship with Sylvia alive. Sylvia and everything she represents is, for Marigold, a fundamental component of who she is, and is also, for the READER, everything Marigold and her story represents - the power and beauty of both imagination and nature. Many (most?) of the other characters in the narrative go through one or more of these levels and/or types of experience. Old Grandmother, for example, in the moments just before her death, struggles to maintain her experience of a past identity, while later in the narrative, Bernice discovers a new aspect of her identity when she learns the truth about her father - not only that she can believe in God, but that it's important to her to have someone to love. There are, of course, shadow (darker) versions of these aspects of identity. For example, several members of the Lesley family use the status that comes along with their name as kind of a weapon, a standard of behavior to which other people (even other Lesleys) are instructed and/or expected to adhere. In short, the novel makes the sweeping thematic suggestion that there are a number of ways in which to experience identity, either positively or negatively. One of which is a defining component of another of the novel's core thematic interests, the power of women.

The Power of Women

The novel is heavily populated with strong women - women of wisdom and grace, women of passion and commitment, but also women of self-indulgence and greed, and women who use their strength to manipulate, and to develop and maintain status. At this stage it's important to reiterate a point made several times throughout this analysis, that the novel was written and published at a time when the role and place of women in society was just beginning to transform. Women physicians like Aunt Marigold, for example, were extremely rare and often viewed with mistrust and outright resentment, as Aunt Marigold is when she is first discussed. But almost immediately afterwards, the author portrays her as having the wisdom and the strength not only to cure Marigold and to win the respect of Old Grandmother, but also the grace and attractiveness to win over confirmed bachelor Uncle Klon. In short, the presentation of Aunt Marigold in such a determinedly positive light (wise, compassionate, loving, attractive, and something of a paragon - see "Quotes", p.330) suggests that opening the minds of her readers (who were, in all likelihood, going to be young women) and perhaps the public at large,

played at least some role in the shaping of the narrative. Then there are women like Old Grandmother and Young Grandmother, who are portrayed as being sources of strength that keep the Lesley family and its traditions alive, and independent thinkers like Tabby Derusha and Granny Phin. They live lives that many (most?) would argue exist outside the boundaries of conventional society but whom the narrative portrays as having solid, compassionate, honest values anyway. Finally, and as mentioned above, there are several women who wield other sorts of strength in ways that are less affirming - the manipulative Aunt Josephine, the judgmental Aunt Stasia, and the self-dramatizing Mrs. Lawrence (Clementine's mother), who plays upon the sympathy of others to get attention. In other words, the power of women is portrayed throughout the narrative in terms that clearly and vividly portray both sides of the coin.

The Place of Imagination in Life

The question of how much imagination is too much is a central one in the narrative, being played out primarily through various considerations of the relationship between Marigold and Sylvia. Marigold herself has no questions on the subject, feeling that the time spent with Sylvia is wonderful, healthy, and happy, a true expression of who she is (she'd never put it in those terms, but that's how it's portrayed). Most of the other characters are determined to bring (force?) Marigold further into the quote-unquote "real" world, convinced that spending too much time in the world of her mind, of her dreams, and of her imagination will ultimately damage her. Only wise Aunt Marigold (who, in many ways, can be seen as manifesting the voice and intent of the author - see "Style - Point of View"), stands up for Marigold, discussing how precious the imagination is, what an unconditional source of joy and freedom it is, particularly for someone Marigold's age. She, and the novel, both seem to be of the opinion that each individual will find the balance between imagination and reality in his or her own time. Marigold certainly does so, growing away from Sylvia at the same time as she's growing into a deeper, fuller, broader experience of relationships in the world (read: she starts to be interested in boys). It's interesting to note that the novel also presents situations in which the power of imagination darkens, and becomes corrupting. The character of Mrs. Delagarde, for example, is portrayed as getting caught up in the dark, lonely side of imagination and losing her grip on reality. Even Marigold can occasionally get caught up in her imagination, as happens when she starts reading too much into the attentions of Hip Price and becomes angrily hurt when she discovers uncomfortable truths about him. Ultimately, the novel takes a similarly even-handed approach to its considerations of the power of imagination as it does to considerations of the power of women - there are clear benefits to recognizing the positive value of both, but there are also clear dangers.

Religion and Faith

The narrative was written and published at a time when Christian faith and practices, specifically Protestant, were the foundation of virtually all Western culture and society. The values were conservative and traditional, based upon the Bible, and rigidly adhered to on almost every level, from the household to the barnyard, from schoolhouse to

corner store, from local to national government. God was in church, the church's rules were carried into life, and that was that. This state of affairs is the predominant situation into which Marigold is born and within which she functions happily, comfortably, and without question - for the most part. The narrative never explicitly indicates that Marigold questions the nature and value of traditional religion and faith-based values - in fact, the opposite is the case, as she espouses those teachings thoroughly and consistently (consider, for example, her shock when Bernice states that she doesn't believe in God). The narrative does suggest, however, that she has, without actually being aware of it, a perspective on God and understanding of his nature that goes beyond the bindings of the Bible and its teachings. She sees and experiences God in nature, referring at one point to her staring out the window and contemplating the beauty of the harbor as "praying". Neither does she react with complete dismay and/or dismissal when, for example, Tabby and Abel Derusha discuss their different perspectives of God. In other words, Marigold's experience of God and religion is limited but not closed, and there is the clear sense that in its subtle way (i.e. in its lack of condemnation of those who believe differently), the novel is suggesting the positive value of such openness.

Style

Point of View

For the most part, the story is told from the third person limited point of view - that is, from the perspective of central character and protagonist Marigold Lesley. There are, however, a few diversions from this point of view. Occasionally, the narrative detours into a more omniscient (all knowing) perspective, including includes comments and perspectives from other characters. At other times, the author interjects first person commentary on the action, using first person pronouns like "I" or "we" or "us" to create a sense of commonality or connection with Marigold's experiences, and also a sense of immediacy and intimacy with her.

In terms of the book's thematic point of view, there seems to be a central perspective that simultaneously animates and inhabits its four central themes as outlined in "Themes". This is the idea, principle and practice of open-mindedness, which is present as much in in their lack of negative RE-actions as in the characters' actions. For example, when Marigold is confronted with the very different (some might say sacrilegious, or profane) perspectives on God offered by Abel and Tabby Derusha (among others), she doesn't accuse them of being heathen, or take the moral high ground and immediately get away from them, or try to convert them. She doesn't react at all. This makes a similar statement about the positive value of non-judgmental open mindedness as the more active acceptance, by the Lesley family in general, of the presence and decisions of the town's first female doctor. In other words, by portraying characters as not having negative reactions where they are perhaps expected by the reader, the author is making as much of a positive comment on their actions and attitudes as if she were coming right out and SAYING something positive. It is, in short, not just a plea for open-mindedness, but a PORTRAYAL of it.

Setting

There are two important components of setting to take note of. The first is the work's placement in geography - specifically, on an island, a situation that suggests both independence and a lack of too much outside influence, both aspects (for better or worse) of the character of the Lesley family in general, and, perhaps more importantly, of protagonist Marigold Lesley in particular. Being isolated and free from outside influence is arguably the perfect setting for a story about the importance of imagination (which this book is, to a significant degree). Another important aspect of the piece's setting in geography is the particular island in question - Prince Edward Island, on Canada's east coast, renowned for its natural beauty and near-magical sensibility, both of which play important roles in developing and defining Marigold's character.

The second important component of the book's setting is its placement in time. As noted several times throughout this analysis, the novel was set, written and published in the

early 1920's, a time of great change in Western culture, particularly in terms of how that culture viewed women. The suffrage movement (i.e. the fight to gain the vote for women) was just coming into full swing, as was the movement of more women into male-dominated areas of the work force. The narrative contains a clear and vivid example of the social tension created by this latter circumstance. This is the conservative Lesley family's initial rejection of a female doctor (Chapter 2), a woman who not only treats the sick Marigold more effectively than the male doctors, but who actually marries into the family (interestingly, the book is silent on the question of whether Aunt Marigold continues her medical practice once she marries Uncle Klon ...). It could be argued, in fact, that the novel's setting in time is more important than its setting in place, in that life would be very different for the independence-minded Marigold if the book was set much earlier, in the even more conservative Victorian era or even before.

Language and Meaning

Language is used in some very intriguing ways in this novel. First there is the vocabulary, quite rich and advanced considering the book's apparent target audience (i.e. young women in their pre- or early teens who were, it must be remembered, generally less educated at the time in which the book was written and published). A related point is the slight datedness of the narration, word usage at times verging on the precious (several times throughout the narrative things are referred to as "dear", as in "the dear little thing"). This is, at times, at odds with the sophistication of the vocabulary, the imagery, and the thematic perspectives / point of view. Third, there are the aforementioned interjections of first person narrative (see "Point of View" above), commentaries that add a sense of coziness and intimacy to the storytelling, almost as though the reader is actually being read to in bed. Fourth, and as previously discussed, there is the frequent use of nicknames, particularly for men, which suggests a certain layering of identity, the keeping of some aspects of the self quite secret and private. Finally, there are particular ways in which imagery is used. Descriptions of weather, for example, often reflect Marigold's feelings - it's sunny when she's happy, cold and desolate and rainy when she's sad, stormy and violent when she's upset. These last two relate to perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of language usage in the book - specifically, the idea that there is more to individual human existence, to identity, and to nature, than meets the eye. This, in turn, relates to the previously discussed core point of view beneath the narrative and its themes - that there is both value in, and necessity for, open-mindedness (see "Point of View" above).

Structure

The primary point to note about the novel's structure is that for the most part, it is what is described as "episodic". This is a term to describe a story composed of a collection of individual events as opposed to an ordered SEQUENCE of events that takes a character on a journey of transformation, building narrative and/or emotional tension to a point of climax. In other words, the book is almost more of a collection of short stories

than an actual novel. Yes Marigold ages over the course of the book, and yes, later chapters contain references to events in previous chapters. But the events themselves are not connected by an overall through-line of dramatic, or for that matter thematic, action. There is no sense of cause and effect - events in a given chapter don't affect events in a subsequent chapter, and neither are they affected by events in a PREVIOUS chapter. For the most part, each chapter is independent of the others. This is not necessarily a bad thing - it is, however, an unusual way to structure a novel. The first two chapters can be viewed as even more separate from the other chapters, serving as a kind of prologue to the main body of the narrative. They establish the context for the story, rather than actually beginning to tell the story. The final chapter, meanwhile, functions well on two levels - as both an ending (to this particular phase of Marigold's life) and as a prologue, or a beginning (of the NEXT phase of her life). She has ended the imagination-driven phase of her life, and is about to enter what might be called the reality-driven phase. She has, to some degree, come of age, no longer a child but not yet a woman, inhabiting the mysterious, transforming place between.

Quotes

"You were born to the purple of you were a Lesley. Even the pedigrees of their cats were known." Chapter 1, p. 10

"Cloud of Spruce, the original Lesley homestead ... was on the harbor shore, far enough out of Harmony village to be in the real country; a cream brick house - a nice chubby old house - so covered with vines that it looked more like a heap of ivy than a house; a house that had folded its hands and said 'I will rest.'" Ibid, p. 10 (2)

"Her arms, that had reached out so emptily in the silence of the night, were filled again. The fields and hills around Cloud of Spruce that had been so stark and bare and chill when her little lady came were green and golden now, spilled over with blossoms ... one could not be altogether unhappy, in springtime, with such a wonderful, unbelievable baby." Ibid, p. 14/15

"In her girlhood she had had a dear friend named Marigold. The only girl-friend she ever had. Such a dear, wonderful, bewitching, lovable creature. She had filled Lorraine's starved childhood with beauty and mystery and affection. And she had died." Ibid, p. 27

"... from then to the end of life things would be for Marigold interesting or uninteresting. Some people might demand of life that it be happy or untroubled or successful Marigold Lesley would only ask that it be interesting. Already she was looking with avid eyes on all the exits and entrances of the drama of life." Chapter 3, p. 40

"For instance, that habit of hers of staring into space with a look of rapture. WHAT did she see? And what right had she to see it? And when you asked her what she was thinking of she stared at you and said 'Nothing', or else propounded some weird, unanswerable problem such as 'Where was I before I was me?'" Ibid, p. 41

"The bottom seemed to have dropped out of everything for Marigold. Not that she was conscious of any particular love for Old Grandmother. But she was one of The Things That Always Have Been. And when one of The Things That Always Have Been disappear, it is a shock. It makes you feel as if NOTHING could be depended on." Chapter 5, p. 77

"There was a queer sort of expectant hush as Marigold and Old Grandmother went through it to where the great spreading cedar rose out of a drift of blooming spirea bushes. Marigold thought it must be because the flowers were watching for the moon to rise." Chapter 5, p. 84

"At the gate she paused and looked back, waving a kiss to the invisible presences behind her. The moonlight made jewels of her eyes. The black scarf wound tightly around her head looked like a cap of sleek black hair. Suddenly the years were bridged. She was Edith - Edith of the gold slippers and the Paddy-green petticoat." Ibid, p. 98

"To other people this part of the world was only the orchard and the 'big spruce-bush' on the hill. They knew nothing of the wonderful things there. But you could find those wonderful things only if you went through The Magic Door and The Green Gate. And said The Rhyme. The Rhyme was a very important part of the magic too. Sylvia would not come unless you said The Rhyme." Chapter 6, p. 102/3

"It seemed to [Marigold] that she had redeemed herself from some taint of disgrace that had clung to her ever since the night at Uncle Paul's." Ibid, p. 113

"Marigold ... went through The Magic Door into The Land Where Wishes Come True - which unimaginative people called the old orchard. You went through the orchard and up the stone steps until you cane to The Green Gate, about which grew the seven slim poplars that always turned into nymphs when she and Sylvia played there. Marigold opened the gate - shut her eyes - said The Rhyme - opened them. Yes, there was Sylvia with her floating dark hair and her dreamy eyes, her snow white hands and feet among the fine, fair shadows of the poplars." Chapter 7, p. 117

"'...the earth has grown very old for us, Marian. Let us be thankful it is still young and full of magic for Marigold.'" Ibid, p. 124

"...she loved, without knowing she loved, all the old clan customs and beliefs and follies and wisdoms ... they were all part of that int'resting world where she lived and moved and had her being ... [she] possessed the talismanic power of flinging something glamorous over the most commonplace facts of life. As Aunt Marigold said, Marigold saw the soul of things as well as the things themselves." Chapter 9, p. 137

"In the rose and purple twilight they went away. Marigold lay and listened to the cars snorting and the sleigh bells jingling and then to a tired little lonely motherless wind sobbing itself to sleep in the vines - a wind that had made a fool of itself in the great family of Winds and daren't lift its voice above a whisper." Ibid, p. 144

"Back to Sylvia, her comrade of star-shine and moon-mist, who did not pull hair and slap - or provoke pulling and slapping - Sylvia, who was waiting for her in the shadows beyond the Green Gate." Chapter 10, p. 162

"'Please make me pretty good but not quite as good as Gwen, because she never seems to have any fun.'" Chapter 11, p. 171 - Marigold to God

"... there may be other worlds where getting on is estimated by different standards, and Abel Derusha lived in one of these - a world far beyond the ken of the thrifty Harbour farmers. Marigold knew that world, though she knew it didn't do to live in it ALL the time as Abel did. Though you were very happy there. Abel Derusha was the happiest person she knew." Chapter 12, p. 183

" 'As long as I can laugh at things I can get along without God,' said Tabby mysteriously. 'When I can't laugh, I'll have to believe in Him.'" Ibid, p. 196

"[Marigold] had never even seen Sylvia since Gwennie came, and there were times when she was consumed with longing for her. But she never went up the hill. Gwennie simply must not find out about Sylvia." Chapter 11, p. 206

"She was like one tasting the beauty of quiet after days of boisterous, stimulating wind. The velvet faces of pansies were waiting for her in the twilight and her won intimate, beloved trees welcomed her once more to their fraternity. When she shut the little Green Gate behind her she went into a different world. She turned and looked down on the old vine-hung house and the harbor beyond. There was no sound in the great quiet world but the song of the wind." Ibid, p. 219

"Marigold felt that it was going to be November forever. Tomorrow had once been a word of magic to her. Now tomorrow would only be more cruel than today." Chapter 14, p. 226

"'I've had love - and now I have its memory - and you. That is enough for me.'" Ibid, p. 232 - Lorraine to Marigold

"A missionary ... must be calm, serene, patient, tactful, self-reliant, resourceful and deeply religious ... it was something of a large order but Marigold in her uplift had no doubt she could fill it eventually. And she would begin at once to prepare herself for her life-work. At once." Chapter 15, p. 236

"Marigold looked at Paula, all the anger and contempt gone out of her eyes. Little sinning, human Paula. Like herself, Marigold no longer worshipped her but she suddenly loved her." Ibid, p. 269

"Kingdoms of Europe might rise and fall - famines might ravage Indian and revolutions sweep China - Liberals and Conservatives, Republicans and Democrats might crash down to defeat, but so long as cake-box and cooky-jar were filled there was balm in Gilead." Chapter 17, p. 270

"She didn't know what Uncle Klon meant when he said Jarvis took the universe too seriously. But she did know she had never seen Uncle Jarvis Smile. And when Uncle Jarvis once asked her if she loved God and she had said yes, she had the oddest feeling that she was really telling a lie, because her God was certainly not the God Uncle Jarvis was inquiring about." Chapter 19, p. 294

"...she and Marigold talked the same language ... the could both have supped on a saucer of moonshine and felt no hunger - for a time, anyhow. They both understood the stories the wind told. They both liked silk-soft kittens and the little fir woods that ran venturesomely down to the shore and the dancing harbour ripples like songs ... they made every day a gay adventure for themselves." Ibid, p. 296

"By daylight Marigold was a little sister to all the trees in the world. But trees took on such extraordinary shapes in the dark. A huge lion prowled through John Burnham's field. An enormous, diabolical rooster strutted on the fence. A queer elfish old man leered at her over a gate. A very devil squatted at the turn of the road." Ibid, p. 306

"Mother had always defended Sylvia sympathisingly against a Grandmother who did not understand some things. But sometimes lately she wondered if she had been wise in so doing. It would not be a good thing if the wild secret charm of fairy-playmates spoiled marigold for the necessary and valuable companionship of her own kind ... surely it was time she was outgrowing Sylvia." Chapter 21, p. 320

"'Keep your dream, little Marigold, as long as you can. A dream is an immortal thing. Time cannot kill it or age wither it. You may tire of reality but never of dreams ... the dreamer's joy is worth the dreamer's pain,' said Aunt Marigold, knowing that since Marigold had begun to think of Sylvia as a dream that the sad awakening was near." Ibid, p. 323

"Was it because she had told Budge about her? Or was it because she had suddenly grown too old and wise for fairyland. Were the 'ivory gates and golden' of which Mother sometimes sang, closed behind her forever? Marigold flung herself down among the ferns in the bitterest tears she had ever shed - ever would shed, perhaps. Her lovely dream was gone. Who of us is there who has not lost one?" Ibid, p. 326/7

"Aunt Marigold, who had never had any children of her own, knew more mothercraft than many women who had. She had not only the seeing eye but the understanding heart as well. In a short time she had the whole story. If she smiled over it Marigold did not see it." Ibid, p. 330.

Topics for Discussion

Discuss the ways in which events and circumstances in Marigold's life might be seen as a reflection and/or manifestation of the book's title. In other words, what are the ways in which "magic" manifests in Marigold's life?

Look through the narrative for situations in which characters have both nicknames and given names. Then look at these characters for ways in which they have both "presented" identities and "real" identities. Discuss the connection between the two aspects of these characters, and what ways in which they can be seen as reflecting the narrative's thematic interest in questions of finding the self and individual identity.

Discuss the various, and specific, ways in which the various female characters, both adult and child, manifest the novel's thematic interest in portraying both positive and negative aspects of female power and influence.

Do you agree or disagree with Aunt Marigold's assertion in Chapter 21 that when it comes to relationships with men, women must learn to share and be patient? Explain your answer.

What influential women have played a role in your life? Consider both those in your immediate circle and those of whom you've read about or studied. How has their example affected you?

Discuss ways in which you've discovered, defined, understood and maintained your identity. What challenges have shaped how you come to yourself? What positive experiences?

Did you ever have an imaginary friend? Describe the nature of that friendship, how other people reacted to it, and how it evolved out of existence.

What is your view of the relationship between nature and religion? Where is God in nature? Do you agree with Marigold that one can feel like one is praying when one is feeling a strong connection to nature? Or do you feel that nature and religion are very separate, very different things?