

Moloka'i Study Guide

Moloka'i by Alan Brennert

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Plot Summary

The novel *Moloka'i* tells a story full of tragedy and hope that spans seventy-nine years of history. Most of the novel takes place in the Kalaupapa Peninsula of the island of Moloka'i, a place infamous for being the location of a settlement where people with leprosy were detained. The story focuses on the life of Rachel Kalama and covers the course of her life.

Rachel's story begins in 1891. She has a happy childhood, surrounded by loving family. Rachel's favorite uncle is arrested by a health inspector, called "bounty hunters" by many Hawaiians, and soon thereafter Rachel too develops leprosy symptoms. When her symptoms are discovered at school, she is sent to Kahili Receiving Station for several months, and then Rachel is sent to the leprosy settlement at Kalaupapa on the island of Moloka'i.

Adjustment to the life at the settlement is difficult at first, and the local religious authorities believe it is their duty to oversee her moral upbringing. They force Rachel to live in a school for girls called Bishop Home. Despite being required to live at Bishop Home, Rachel forms a bond with Haleola. Haleola functions as a kahuna, a faith healer, and she becomes a maternal figure to Rachel.

Rachel's leprosy shows few outward signs during much of her life, and she develops into a beautiful and athletic teen. Despite being a resident of the settlement, Rachel faces many of the same challenges as any other teen or young adult, but she overcomes them and finds her place in the adult world. Through it all, Rachel maintains the dream that her leprosy will one day be cured, and she follows all the advice of the medical personnel and even volunteers for all of their experimental treatments. Rachel meets a young man who displays the same rancor and rebellion she did when first sent to the colony. After saving him from drowning, she begins a conversation and a friendship. Eventually she marries Kenji.

Early in their marriage they have a daughter. The pregnancy is unintentional, and even though the baby is born healthy, her arrival adds another element of tragedy to Rachel and Kenji's lives. It is government policy to take away all babies born to leprous parents.

Rachel and Kenji grow into middle age and have a loving and happy marriage despite their medical conditions. Kenji is killed while trying to help another settlement resident, and Rachel loses the will to live. Her leprosy worsens over the course of many months, and she spends all of her time in a hospital room. Rachel does not expect to live much longer when doctors say they would like to try a new drug. Within three months Rachel has recovered, and soon thereafter she is granted release.

For the first time since she was seven years old Rachel can see the outside world. She does not see anything she recognizes, but she is delighted to experience all she can. Rachel reunites with her sister and discovers that they did not intentionally abandon her. They suffered a tragedy of their own and mistakenly believed Rachel was dead all these

years. Rachel also manages to meet the woman the baby she had to surrender has become. In her last twenty years of life, Rachel traveled extensively throughout the world. Her funeral takes place in 1970 in Kalaupapa.



Part One-The Blue Vault of Heaven, Chapters 1 & 2

Part One-The Blue Vault of Heaven, Chapters 1 & 2 Summary

Moloka'i is an epic novel that tells much of the history of the leper settlement at Kalaupapa on the Hawaiian island Moloka'i. The novel's main character is Rachel, who is sent to Kalaupapa when a young girl. Rachel witnesses events at Kalaupapa for over fifty years.

The novel opens in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1891. Rachel is five years old. Rachel's mother, Dorothy, and her siblings are introduced. She has two brothers, Benjamin and Kimo and a sister two years older named Sarah.

Rachel asks when her father, who is a sailor, will return home, but Dorothy does not know. The family walks the half mile to church. During Sunday school, the teacher is trying to tell a story from the bible, but Rachel repeatedly interrupts to ask questions. Rachel is particularly interested in geography, and she wants to know on which sea Jesus Christ was supposed to have walked. The teacher does not know the answer, and every time he mentions a new location name, Rachel wants to know more geographic details.

One day Rachel accompanies her mother and siblings to Honolulu Harbor and waits for her father's ship to arrive. The family is delighted to have their father, Henry Kalama, back home, and that night they have a feast and invite many relatives. Rachel is particularly fond of her Uncle Pono, and as usual she enjoys sitting in his lap. Henry always brings gifts for his family, and Rachel is fond of dolls from all over the world. This time Henry has brought her a matryoshka doll.

The next day in school Rachel and all of the students learn that King Kalakuana has died. School is dismissed for the rest of the day. Rachel and her family go to pay final respects to the king. Rachel's parents, like most Hawaiians, are deeply saddened by the king's death. Rachel doesn't understand dying. She thinks of it as a temporary going away, much like her father sailing away for months at a time.

When the family goes to see Henry off on his next sailing voyage, they notice a ship called the Mokoli'i. Rachel sees many people crying as others board the ship, and she learns that the people boarding the ship are sick. Rachel wants to know why they are getting on a ship instead of being taken care of, and Sarah says the people are lepers, and they are on their way to Moloka'i.

Chapter two begins in 1892. Health Inspector Nakamura visits the home of Uncle Pono. Uncle Pono is not at home, but Nakamura sees an extra place set at the dinner table.



Nakamura looks around in the area near the house, and then he climbs on top of a tractor to get a better view. Some workers have started a fire in the cane field, and as the fire spreads, Nakamura sees cane stalks move as someone runs in the field to escape the fire. Nakamura jumps from the tractor and runs to tackle a man staggering from the cane field. The man is Uncle Pono.

Henry Kalama, Rachel's father, arrives home in time for Christmas, but Rachel is still sad because her Uncle Pono is not present. Uncle Pono has been confined at the Kalihi Receiving Station. At night Rachel and Sarah can hear their father crying.

Rachel decides to pretend to make soup, and one of the "ingredients" she uses is Sarah's favorite felt hat. Sarah is furious, and the next day she takes Rachel's matryoshka doll. Rachel sees Sarah after school, and the two begin fighting. When Rachel gets home her mother sees how dirty she is, and while Dorothy cleans Rachel she sees blood on the back of Rachel's leg. Dorothy traces the blood up Rachel's leg to a cut near a blemish. While Dorothy cleans the cut she is surprised that Rachel does not flinch in pain.

After two weeks the blemish has still not healed, so Dorothy visits a kahuna, a practitioner of native remedies. The kahuna gives Dorothy some medicine, and Dorothy uses it for the next five days. The blemish disappears, and Dorothy is overjoyed.

Two weeks later the blemish reappears.

The entire family gathers for a ho'oponopono, an occasion which translates as "setting to right." They want to find out what they might have done to cause Rachel's sickness. During the meeting Henry says that before Rachel was born he had a dream that told him he should name his daughter Aouli, blue vault of heaven. Henry did not mention the dream because he knew Dorothy wanted all of the children to have Christian names. The family decides to begin calling Rachel by the name Aouli, and then they have a feast.

Part One-The Blue Vault of Heaven, Chapters 1 & 2 Analysis

Chapter one portrays Honolulu as an idyllic setting, seen mostly from the perspective of a five-year-old. The Kalama family seems like a happy one. In Rachel's immediate family she seems to have the normal relations with her brothers and sisters, and she gets attention and affection from her extended family, particularly from her Uncle Pono. The two seem to have a happy relationship.

The appearance of the leper ship Mokoli'i is an ominous sign, but the reader cannot yet know how the event will relate to the remainder of the novel.

Immediately in chapter two, the tone shifts from the happy environment surrounding a five-year-old. When the health inspector looks for Uncle Pono, one doesn't yet know



why, but it seems that he stalks Uncle Pono like a predator after prey, or at least like a police officer after a suspect. The health inspector smiles before capturing Uncle Pono, and the tone seems sinister.

When Dorothy first sees the blemish on Rachel, it might not be immediately clear why she reacts in such a way. At this point, the reader knows that the family has seen the ship Mokoli'i and that Uncle Pono has been arrested, but all the pieces pointing toward Rachel possibly having leprosy might not fit into place until Dorothy goes to see a kahuna rather than a "haole doctor" who would report a suspected case of leprosy. Once Dorothy thinks about visiting the kahuna and allows herself to think the word leprosy, everything seems to fit. Uncle Pono has leprosy. Rachel liked to sit in Uncle Pono's lap. Tension builds as the reader worries about the fate of a little girl.



Part One-The Blue Vault of Heaven, Chapters 3 & 4

Part One-The Blue Vault of Heaven, Chapters 3 & 4 Summary

Rachel and the other children are having an usual morning at school when Miss Johnson, their teacher, announces that they have a visitor. Mr. Wyckoff is from the Board of Health, and he walks down the aisles among the children. Sometimes he just glances at the children and sometimes he touches them, as if inspecting their hands or faces. Some of the children whisper and call Wyckoff a "bounty hunter." When Wyckoff approaches the desk of Harry Woo, he pinches Harry's ear. Harry does not flinch in pain, and Wyckoff asks for the boy's name and address. Rachel notices that Harry does not come to school the next day or any other day. A classmate of Rachel's whispers that Harry has the "separating sickness."

Dorothy convinces Henry to accompany the whole family to church, and during the sermon the preacher says that leprosy is a disease that comes from immoral behavior. He says it is just like the venereal diseases syphilis and gonorrhea, and that if Hawaiians continue to act in an immoral manner they deserve leprosy.

Over the next couple of weeks, Rachel hears her parents arguing often. Usually the arguments consist of Dorothy trying to blame Henry or Pono for Rachel's condition.

One day at school the children are making fun of Rachel for wearing shoes. Sarah joins in and Rachel gets even angrier. The two begin to fight, and Sarah yells, "Leave me alone, you filthy leper." Rachel is embarrassed, and Sarah regrets what she said. When Rachel arrives home from school, Health Inspector Wyckoff is waiting.

When Wyckoff arrives with Rachel at the Kalihi Receiving Station, he collects the ten dollars he gets for each leprosy suspect. Rachel has her first examination, and she is terrified.

The day after Rachel arrives in Kalihi, her mother and father come to visit. They must remain separated by a wire screen. Rachel is saddened to discover that she won't be going home right way. After the visit, Rachel is more depressed and doesn't want to talk to any of the other children at Kalihi, most of whom have more advanced signs of leprosy. Another little girl named Francine tries to befriend Rachel, but Rachel is terrified of Francine's diseased hand. Rachel runs to her bed and cries. She is unwilling to speak to anyone until she hears a familiar voice. When Rachel looks to the doorway of her room, she sees her Uncle Pono.

Chapter four covers the years 1892-1894. The day following Rachel's arrest, the board of health places a sign on the fence in front of the Kamala's house saying that it



contains leprosy. First the neighbors and then the church people ostracize Dorothy. Henry decides to take a job onshore rather than go away to sea for months at a time.

During one of Henry's visits to Rachel, Henry speaks to his brother Pono. Pono asks about his wife and children, and Henry says he saw them a month ago. Pono mentions that leprosy is legal grounds for divorce. He also tells Henry that he will soon be transferred to Moloka'i.

The day after Pono's departure to Moloka'i, Henry sees an American warship approach the harbor, and American soldiers come ashore. The queen surrenders, and a group of American businessmen declare a Provisional Government.

Rachel misses Pono, but she makes new friends, particularly Francine, the girl that tried to befriend Rachel on her second day at Kalihi. Rachel continues to behave in a rebellious manner, making routine examinations tough for the personnel at Kalihi. Henry and Dorothy receive a letter saying that Rachel will be transferred to Moloka'i.

The United States government declares that its troops were wrongly sent to Hawaii, but rather than turn the government back over to the queen, the Provisional Government declares itself the Republic of Hawaii.

When Rachel is taken to Honolulu Harbor to board the Mokoli'i, she briefly sees her family on the other side of a wooden fence.

Part One-The Blue Vault of Heaven, Chapters 3 & 4 Analysis

Among the many names the Hawaiians have for leprosy is "the disease that tears families apart." This seems to be exactly what is happening to Rachel's family. In addition to damaging Rachel's health and putting her in danger of being taken from her family, leprosy has caused the once loving relationship between Henry and Dorothy to turn into a daily rancorous debate over who is to blame for Rachel's condition.

Whether it is government authorities who are treating those afflicted by leprosy as criminals or religious authorities that claim that leprosy is a punishment for immoral lifestyles, no one with any authority seems to think of those with leprosy as victims. The fact that Pono and Rachel were both "arrested" by "bounty hunters" perhaps best illustrates the view of leprosy sufferers as culprits rather than victims.

In chapter four, the social stigma for Dorothy and her family is immediate and widespread. This adds to what amounts to a disaster for everyone in her family. While Rachel endures what must be difficult for an adult and absolutely terrifying for a child, the rest of the family also suffers. Henry knows that his family is falling apart, and he also knows that his nation is also crumbling. What once was a happy life for the Kalama family is over.

The image of Rachel, the youngest of the Kalama family, being taken away while her parents and siblings strain to reach out and touch her is an image that will haunt every member of the family.



Part Two-The Stone Leaf, Chapters 5 & 6

Part Two-The Stone Leaf, Chapters 5 & 6 Summary

During the ten-hour journey from Honolulu to Moloka'i, the thirty people infected with leprosy are confined to a pen on the deck of the ship, just like the penned cattle nearby. A storm rages during the entire trip, and all of the confined people are sick. As the boat nears the Kalaupapa Peninsula, those on board the ship are shocked at the size of the cliffs. These cliffs, called pali, are what keeps the peninsula in isolation and makes it the perfect place to quarantine lepers.

Once on Moloka'i, Rachel is reunited with her Uncle Pono, and she meets Pono's friend Haleola. Haleola came to Moloka'i from Maui many years ago to take care of her husband who had leprosy. During her time on Moloka'i, Haleola also caught leprosy. Pono's wife divorced him, and he hasn't heard from any of his children. Haleola is a kahuna who takes care of many of the residents who do not trust "haole doctors."

Not long after Rachel's arrival, Ambrose and Sister Catherine arrive at Haleola's house and inform Pono and Haleola that Rachel must reside at the Bishop Home. Haleola and Pono go to Bishop Home to try to get permission for Rachel to live with Pono.

Haleola remembers the early days of the settlement when she knew Father Damien, a priest who became famous for coming to Moloka'i to try to help the lepers when everyone else had abandoned them. While Haleola's husband lay in bed dying, Damien arrived and tried to use the occasion to convert him. Damien tried to bully Haleola and referred to her dying husband as a "sinner." Haleola angrily told the priest to go away. Haleola hopes that the authorities at Bishop Home will be more reasonable than Father Damien who died years ago.

They meet with Mother Marianne, who does not like Haleola and believes her pagan practices as a kahuna and her living with Pono without being married are a bad influence for Rachel. Pono and Haleola agree to let Rachel stay at Bishop Home but intend to write letters protesting the decision.

Chapter six opens with Sister Catherine trying to pretend not to be revolted by the sights and smells she encounters while attending to the leprosy patients. Overcome by nausea, she rushes outside and is comforted by Sister Victor, who explains that she also finds helping the victims difficult.

Rachel moves into the dormitory at Bishop home, and although she is determined to hate the place, she begins making friends immediately. She particularly likes a girl named Emily. Rachel and Emily trade stories, and Rachel is shocked to discover that Emily is happy to have leprosy. Emily lived in an abusive household, and she never knew any sort of stability or kindness until she was diagnosed with leprosy and taken from her home. At night there is a storm, and the girls in the dormitory tell ghost stories.



The girls of Bishop Home are allowed to go on a trip to the beach, and Sister Catherine asks Haleola to come along. When Haleola and Catherine talk, Haleola reveals some of what she sees as unfair. She says the whole world knows of Father Damien, a white priest, but no one knows the names of the countless Hawaiian victims of leprosy. Rachel spends time with Haleola, and Haleola tells Rachel Hawaiian folk tales.

Rachel reads letters from her family in the dormitory. She hears a voice ask her if she got letters, and she discovers the voice comes from one of two girls who never gets out of bed. Rachel talks with Violet and lets Violet read her letters. The next day Rachel plans to spend time with Violet, but when Rachel arrives in the dormitory after school, she sees that Violet's bed is empty.

Part Two-The Stone Leaf, Chapters 5 & 6 Analysis

Again on the voyage to Moloka'i, the treatment of the leprosy victims is more like the treatment of criminals than medical patients.

The meaning of Haleola's name, house of life, is significant in that she provides care to other leprosy victims. Perhaps she can provide care and hope for Pono and Rachel.

When the sisters come to take Rachel to Bishop Home, this is once again a traumatizing experience for Rachel. First she is taken from her home, then she is taken far away so that her family cannot even visit, and again she is taken from her only relative. The decision to keep Rachel in Bishop Home has more to do with Mother Marianne's prejudice against Haleola, a non-Christian, than it does with Rachel's welfare.

In chapter six, Bishop Home holds more ironies and contrasts for Rachel. She is determined to hate the place, yet she immediately begins making friends. Rachel views the place as a cruel prison, but the first girl she befriends, Emily, is happy to be there and even happy to be a leper. Perhaps the most shocking irony of all involves the young girls free time. Despite being surrounded by suffering and death, when they are left alone, the little girls behave just as other girls at a slumber party on a stormy night. They tell ghost stories.

Rachel's brief friendship with Violet is a significant event in her life. It marks the beginning of her understanding of death.



Part Two-The Stone Leaf, Chapters 7 & 8

Part Two-The Stone Leaf, Chapters 7 & 8 Summary

Rachel, still depressed over missing Violet, stays in bed. Sister Catherine comes to comfort Rachel, and Rachel asks if Violet has died. When Rachel says she hates God for what he did to Violet, Catherine slaps Rachel, and Rachel runs away. Catherine tries to chase her and apologize, but Rachel gets away.

Pono is sick and unable to visit Rachel. While Haleola watches Pono sleep, she reads a letter from R. W. Meyer, the superintendent of the leper settlement. The letter states that Meyer has sided with Mother Marianne, and Rachel must stay at Bishop Home.

Catherine wakes one morning, and Mother Marianne informs her that Rachel has run away during the night.

Chapter eight begins with Rachel deciding to run away at midnight because Pono has not come to visit and she is worried about him. The three-mile route to Kalawao is dark, and Rachel becomes muddy and lost. After being charged by a wild pig, Rachel is frightened until she encounters a man named Moko, who takes her to his house. Rachel explains that she wants to visit her Uncle Pono, and Moko says he will take her there in the morning. The following morning Rachel wants to go to Pono, but Moko says that she must first help him with chores. Rachel works all day, and then Moko says they will go to Pono's the following morning. The following morning Moko says Rachel must wash clothes, and Rachel angrily protests. Moko strikes Rachel and threatens her. While Rachel washes clothes, Moko sleeps, and Rachel takes the opportunity to escape. Moko wakes as Rachel is leaving, and he chases after her, but Rachel strikes him in the neck with a stick, and she gets away.

A man on horseback finds Rachel and takes her to Sister Catherine, who is waiting at the Baldwin Home for Boys. Catherine takes Rachel to Pono. While Rachel stays with Haleola and Pono, Catherine goes back to Bishop Home to get permission for Rachel to stay a few days with her uncle. Pono is able to play with Rachel one last time before dying.

After Pono dies, Haleola asks Rachel if she can be her adopted aunt.

Part Two-The Stone Leaf, Chapters 7 & 8 Analysis

The discussions between Sisters Victor and Catherine say as much about the residents of the settlement as they do about the nuns. If Victor, a nun who has many years experience tending to the sick and dying, finds Moloka'i so horrific and depressing that at times she cannot get out of bed, then Catherine should not feel as if she is failing the leprosy victims because she is at times squeamish.



The conversation between Rachel and Catherine says a great deal about both. By asking if Violet died, Rachel reveals that she is beginning to understand the concept of death. When Catherine reacts violently to Rachel's comment that she hates God, the reader knows that something must be troubling Catherine. Thus far, Catherine has been a caring kind person. It is not at all unusual for a young girl Rachel's age to say things in an overly dramatic fashion such as, "He killed Violet! I hate him!" Surely, Catherine is accustomed to dramatic outbursts by the children at Bishop Home. Her impulsive reaction in slapping Rachel indicates that she is troubled by something in her own mind.

In chapter eight, Rachel displays a resilience and resourcefulness not common for a girl her age. She is also an uncommonly brave child. A nighttime journey does not deter her from reaching her uncle, nor does an abusive man. By escaping Bishop Home, Rachel also reveals that she is willing to defy authority under certain conditions. The authorities provide some surprises of their own. They show that despite forcing their views of morality on others, they are also capable of humanity and sympathy when they grant permission to Rachel to stay with her dying uncle.

With the death of Pono, it seems that Rachel's last tie to her family is severed, and she is alone. But Haleola's request to be her adopted aunt provides some hope. Haleola's view that, "Sister Catherine's Heaven is not mine," immediately gives Rachel some reassurance when Haleola tells Rachel that some Hawaiians believe that loved ones who have died do not always go away. Sometimes they stay around as sharks or owls that watch over their relatives. This helps Rachel to believe that she is not isolated and without hope.



Part Two-The Stone Leaf, Chapter 9

Part Two-The Stone Leaf, Chapter 9 Summary

After the death of Pono, Mother Marianne decides that Haleola will not be allowed to visit Rachel. Sister Catherine ensures that Rachel gets to see her adopted aunt by inviting Haleola to come along anytime Catherine takes girls on outings away from Bishop Home. On many of these outings Haleola tells Rachel traditional Hawaiian folk tales, and Rachel retells them at Bishop Home. This makes Rachel a very popular storyteller with the other girls.

Rachel gets frequent letters from her father, but letters from her mother get less and less frequent until they stop altogether. Rachel tries to write to her mother, but the letter is sent back with a stamp that says "Moved—No Forwarding Address." Rachel is saddened and her behavior becomes more unruly than usual. Sister Catherine tries to write to Rachel's mother to see if some bad news at home can explain Rachel's behavior. Catherine's letter is returned with the same stamp.

Rachel is overjoyed when her father comes to visit. Catherine takes them to Kalawao so Henry can see Pono's grave and meet Haleola. During Henry's visit, he tells Rachel that Dorothy took the children and moved away.

Part Two-The Stone Leaf, Chapter 9 Analysis

Despite being abandoned by her mother and siblings, Rachel has a family of sorts in her relationship with Sister Catherine and Haleola. The two women are very different on the surface, but they are alike in that they are devoted to Rachel. Both women serve as mother figures for Rachel. When Rachel's father comes to visit, this gives Rachel a sense of security she has not experienced before. When Henry comes to visit, Rachel learns, whether she realizes it or not at the time, that some things such as love can never be destroyed by separation and distance. She might have lost her mother and siblings, but she will never lose the love of her father.

As Rachel watches her father leave, she is determined that someday she will leave the settlement.

In this chapter the Hawaiian word "kapu" is introduced. By context the reader understands the word to mean forbidden. The next part of the novel is titled "Kapu!"



Part Three-Kapu! Chapters 10 & 11

Part Three-Kapu! Chapters 10 & 11 Summary

Chapter ten opens in 1903. Five years earlier Hawaii had been annexed by the United States, and Haleola notices the American flag as she walks to the beach to meet Rachel.

Rachel is now seventeen, strong and fit with few outward signs of leprosy. Of her childhood friends at Bishop Home, only Emily and Francine remain. Rachel has become a skilled surfer. At the beach, Haleola talks with Rachel and Catherine. Rachel's father has told her that her sister Sarah is getting married. None of Rachel's family except her father has made any effort to remain in contact with her.

While Rachel and Catherine go back to Bishop Home, Haleola begins to walk back home and falls. No one sees her fall, and she quickly stands and resumes walking.

The settlement has a new Canadian doctor, Dr. Goodhue. Rachel sees him frequently to try every treatment that might cure her leprosy.

At night at Bishop Home, Emily and Rachel talk to three other teenage girls, Louisa, Cecilia, and Hina. Hina is from a part of Moloka'i away from the settlement, and she says she knows some friends who are having a party. She also says she knows a way they can climb the pali and go to the party. The girls discuss it for a while, and then decide to sneak away and go to the party.

It takes two hours to climb the pali. When the girls arrive at the location of the party, Rachel is fascinated by a gramophone. At the party the girls drink alcoholic beverages, and a young man named Tom asks Rachel to dance. Tom kisses Rachel, and Rachel likes it, but she remembers her leprosy and pulls away.

On the way back to Kalaupapa, Emily asks, "Why the hell are we going back?" The girls think about not returning to the settlement, and Rachel says that while she does want to leave one day, she does not want to do so as a criminal. The girls make it back to Bishop Home. Mother Marianne sees them, but does not scold them. Instead she looks at them in a confused way, and asks Rachel why they returned. Rachel does not answer.

Chapter eleven begins in 1904, and the girls of Bishop Home having a going-away party for Rachel. Haleola has recently become sick and unable to take care of herself. While Rachel is still a few months away from turning eighteen, the sisters grant permission for her to leave so she can care for Haleola.

In the first few days after Rachel moves in with Haleola, she adjusts to her new freedom. Once while surfing with her friend, Nahoa, he kisses her, and Rachel doesn't know how to react. She merely says thank you and pulls away.



Dr. Goodhue would like to try surgery as a means of controlling Rachel's leprosy. Rachel agrees. While she recuperates, Rachel cannot surf or swim, so she spends her time relaxing. One day a ship brings new leprosy victims to the settlement, and Rachel notices a beautiful young woman named Lani.

Over the next few weeks, Rachel and Lani become close. At the beach they talk about men, and at Haleola's house both Rachel and Haleola are impressed with Lani's skills in traditional Hawaiian dances, such as the hula. One evening, Lani convinces Rachel to accompany her to a party. While Rachel is inside dancing she hears a woman scream. Again she hears a scream and she rushes outside to see a man brutally beating Lani. Rachel picks up a stone and hits the man in the head, and she and Lani escape.

Rachel takes Lani to Haleola's house, and Haleola helps Rachel clean Lani's wounds. When they remove Lani's dress, Rachel sees something shocking. She sees that Lani has male genitalia. Rachel looks at Haleola, who does not seem at all surprised. Haleola says that she knew Lani was a "mahu," and that the mahu did much to preserve the hula dance. Rachel is shocked and angry at first. Later Rachel returns and walks Lani back to her cottage. Before leaving Lani, Rachel says, "If that sonofabitch comes back, we'll show him that he can't get away with hitting wahines!"

Part Three-Kapu! Chapters 10 & 11 Analysis

Haleola's thoughts after seeing the American flag during her walk to the beach say much about larger issues in Hawaii. The American flag serves as a symbol, reminding Haleola that all the Hawaiian people have had as little choice in their situation as the residents of the leper colony.

All of the new aspects, such as Haleola's new house, the American flag, and a matured Rachel show the progression of time since the last chapter, but one event early in chapter ten is foreshadowing of things to come. Haleola falls while walking.

Rachel's determination to leave the settlement is remarkable. While others have accepted their fate, Rachel maintains hope that she will one day be cured. Her hope is not an unrealistic form of denial. It is a practical and informed hope. When a young man kisses her, she pulls away out of concern for him. When the girls contemplate not returning to Bishop Home, Rachel is the voice of reason, saying when she does leave the settlement, she wants to do so as a free woman. This line of reasoning is all the more remarkable coming from the grown version of a girl who nine years earlier defied authority and risked her safety to go see her uncle before he died.

Chapter eleven reveals much more about the person Rachel has become as a young adult. Even though all but her father have abandoned her, Rachel does not betray any sense of resentment toward her mother or siblings. Rachel seems very sensible in how she handles her new freedom. Rather than indulge in every activity that had been forbidden by the sisters at Bishop Home, Rachel continues doing everything she can to try to cure her leprosy, even agreeing to Dr. Goodhue's experimental surgery.

Perhaps nothing says more about Rachel's character than her reaction to Lani's "secret." While Rachel is at first shocked and angered at having been tricked, she quickly recovers and accepts Lani for who Lani really is, a beautiful, intelligent, caring, and fun loving young woman.



Part Three-Kapu! Chapters 12 & 13

Part Three-Kapu! Chapters 12 & 13 Summary

Chapter twelve begins in 1908. Rachel, Emily, and Lani watch a horse race where Francine rides against two men. Francine wins six races in a row. The other girls show the progression of leprosy, but Rachel shows few outward signs of the disease.

Rachel's biggest concern at this time is the teasing she endures about being a virgin. She decides to have sex with Nahoia, but she finds the experience less than fulfilling.

Rachel has heard that another patient was recently released from the settlement after his symptoms of leprosy went away. Rachel hopes that she too will be released if her symptoms continue to decline, and she gets tested by Dr. Goodhue frequently.

Rachel receives parcels and letters from Henry. Henry wishes that he could contract leprosy so he could live with Rachel.

Sister Catherine learns that her mother committed suicide, and this causes her to further question her religious beliefs. Rachel also experiences loss. One morning Rachel discovers that Haleola died in the night.

At the opening of chapter thirteen, Catherine is depressed and stays in bed for days. She gets up only after getting the news that Haleola has died. Rachel decides that she will personally direct Haleola's funeral rather than leaving it to the settlement's funeral societies. Lani, Emily, and Francine come to Haleola's house to help Rachel prepare Haleola for the funeral. Catherine soon joins them. Rachel warns Catherine that the funeral will not be a Christian service. Catherine says she does not care. Rachel speaks the Hawaiian she has learned from Haleola. Catherine is overcome with grief and anger. The service reminds her of her recently deceased mother, and Catherine walks away.

When the girls have said goodbye to the last of the funeral attendees, Rachel goes in search of Catherine and sees her on a cliff above the sea. Catherine jumps into the rough surf below. Rachel jumps in after Catherine and manages to save her, but both are severely injured. That night in the infirmary, Catherine thanks Rachel and tells her everything that has been bothering her.

Months after Haleola's funeral, Rachel gets the news that her third leprosy test is negative and that the Board of Health has asked for a law to be passed allowing settlement residents who no longer show signs of leprosy to leave the colony.

One night Rachel goes to the baseball field where a canvass screen has been set up. The settlement residents see their first movie. Rachel is amazed at the moving pictures, and she is more determined than ever to beat leprosy and leave the settlement.



Part Three-Kapu! Chapters 12 & 13 Analysis

Despite living in unusual circumstances, many of Rachel's concerns are normal for a young woman her age. She tries to eliminate one of these concerns by seducing Nahoa, and she learns that sex is no magic means by which a person can feel older and more mature. For Rachel, much like everyone else, sex simply opens an avenue for more questions and mysteries.

While Catherine mourns the loss of her mother, Rachel, though unaware, is about to lose one of her maternal figures. True to Haleola's character, signs of her impending death come to her in sensations that only a kahuna could interpret. In the last days of her life, Haleola demonstrates a zest for life. She tries to get the most out of what little time she has left.

In chapter thirteen, through the combination of Catherine's loss of her mother, her religious doubts, and Haleola's death, the reader gains insight into something about Catherine that seemed mysterious many chapters ago. In chapter seven, Catherine slapped a young Rachel when she expressed rage at God. Perhaps now one can see that the reason Catherine reacted violently was because the child Rachel said what Catherine actually believed but was afraid to admit.

The death of Haleola means the death of one of Rachel's two maternal figures. After saving Catherine and having a revealing discussion in the infirmary, the relationship between Rachel and Catherine, Rachel's remaining maternal figure, is strengthened.



Part Three-Kapu! Chapter 14

Part Three-Kapu! Chapter 14 Summary

On September 9, 1909, the new lighthouse goes into operation. Three lighthouse keepers and their families move to Kalaupapa. One of the keepers, Jake Puehu, arrives as a single man and soon attracts Rachel's interest.

Rachel learns that if one more test for her leprosy is negative she will be eligible to leave Molokai.

Rachel and Jake become acquainted and have a mutual interest in books. After many outings including horseback riding, Jake invites Rachel to see the inside of the lighthouse. Rachel hopes that Jake will kiss her, but instead he moves away, and Rachel sees apprehension in his eyes. Rachel remembers that to outsiders she is a contagious leper, and she leaves the lighthouse in shame.

After her next test is positive, Rachel volunteers to be a patient at the new United States Leprosy Investigation Station that will soon open. Rachel is one of nine initial patients at the new facility. The patients soon discover that the rules at the facility are even stricter than in the rest of the colony. One by one the patients leave the facility and return to the settlement. Rachel is the last remaining patient out of the original nine.

One night, after seeing Halley's comet and then having a dream that instead of Jake moving away in the lighthouse the two had sex, Rachel decides to leave the facility and return to life in Kalaupapa.

Part Three-Kapu! Chapter 14 Analysis

After Rachel's test is positive and she is ashamed of her actions with Jake, Rachel volunteers to go to the new facility for studying leprosy. This decision is more about Rachel's desire to flee and disappear than to continue battling her disease.

After seeing Halley's comet and realizing that she has only a finite time to live, Rachel decides to make the most of what time she has left. This desire to experience whatever life and opportunities are available to her rather than focus on what is denied is reminiscent of Haleola's zest for life.

Rachel may still have leprosy, but she also still has hope.



Part Three-Kapu! Chapters 15 & 16

Part Three-Kapu! Chapters 15 & 16 Summary

Chapter fifteen opens in 1911 with a letter from Henry. He tells Rachel that he cannot go to sea anymore. When his health worsens, he is at first delighted because he believes he has leprosy and can go live with Rachel. Henry does not have leprosy. He has gout.

Emily's health deteriorates, and Rachel moves in. After Emily dies, Lani is excited to show Rachel something. Lani shows Rachel her chest and what she believes are female breasts. Rachel believes that the changes might be tumors and convinces Lani to see Dr. Goodhue. While Rachel and Lani wait to see the doctor, they meet a young Japanese man. Dr. Goodhue says that Lani's breasts are the result of a hormonal imbalance that has caused her to grow breasts. Lani is ecstatic and believes her prayers to be a woman have been answered.

Rachel continues to see the young Japanese man, and each time he seems to be angry or brooding. One day while surfing she sees him swim out and not turn back. Rachel paddles her board after him and eventually convinces him not to swim out to sea. While the two ride her surfboard back to shore they talk and get to know each other. The man's name is Kenji. He comes from a Japanese family in Honolulu. Kenji explains that in Japanese culture to have a family member with leprosy is a source of shame. Rachel and Kenji spend a great deal of time together over the next several months and become intimate.

Lani catches influenza and soon dies.

Chapter sixteen opens in 1913, with Henry on a ship in rough weather. He is delighted to be at sea again, even though he is not working as a sailor. He is going to visit Rachel and attend her wedding.

One night while walking home from a movie, Francine steps on a nail. She does not know she has injured herself because she has no feeling in her foot. By the time she discovers the wound it is too late, and Francine dies. Rachel feels lost and alone because Francine was the last of the Bishop Home girls that Rachel grew up with.

In the days after Francine's death, Rachel begins to feel tired and nauseous most of the time. She thinks it is due to depression over losing Francine, but eventually she goes to Dr. Goodhue. Dr. Goodhue discovers that Rachel is pregnant. Rather than being overjoyed, Rachel is sad and angry. She knows that on Kalaupapa, babies born to leprous parents are taken away so the baby does not get infected. Rachel decides to secretly give birth at home rather than in the infirmary so that she can have one night with her baby. A midwife assists Rachel. After the baby is born, Kenji and Rachel have a few hours before they take the baby to the infirmary. They name the baby Ruth after Sister Catherine's given name.



When it comes time for the baby to be taken to Honolulu, Sister Catherine volunteers, and Rachel is grateful.

Part Three-Kapu! Chapters 15 & 16 Analysis

Henry's desire to have leprosy tells us a great deal about how he feels about life. His love for his daughter is so strong, and his loneliness is so acute, that he would gladly accept a disfiguring disease in order to be with his daughter.

Rachel does not see the similarity, but in her first encounters with Kenji, the reader must recognize the similarity to a younger Rachel. Kenji is violently at odds with all around him, just like a younger Rachel, who fought against the powers that took her from her family. A more mature Rachel is now a beacon of hope to all the people in her life. When she paddles out into the sea to convince Kenji to turn back, this is the second time Rachel has saved a person from drowning.

The depth of compassion Rachel feels towards those that she loves is illustrated vividly in her last look at Lani during the funeral. She sees Lani and thinks that she was the most beautiful woman she had ever known.

Chapter sixteen reveals that despite the cosmetic changes to Kalaupapa, some of the old attitudes remain. The new visitor center, which is beautiful on the outside, is a means to further isolate the residents and the few outsiders who still care about them.

The changes to Rachel's world seem to come at a faster pace in this chapter. With Henry's departure, the narrator reveals that this will be his last visit. In single chapter that encompasses three years of Rachel's life, she gets married, sees her father for the last time, sees the death of her last remaining childhood friend, gives birth, and gives her baby up for adoption.

Somehow Rachel manages to retain hope amid relentless and unending hardships. The chapter ends with Rachel being grateful that it is Catherine who takes her baby away. Rachel also knows that of all the pain she has ever felt in her life, watching her baby being taken away is by far the most painful thing she has endured.



Part Four-'Ohana, Chapters 17 & 18

Part Four-'Ohana, Chapters 17 & 18 Summary

Chapter seventeen opens in 1928. Both Rachel and Kenji are doing better than most residents in terms of the progression of their leprosy. A times Rachel finds it difficult to walk, and Kenji has had surgery on his eyelid. Kenji manages the Kalaupapa Store, and Rachel helps him, except on Thursdays when she works at Bishop Home.

Kenji used to send money home to repay the cost of his college education, but he stopped after years of no acknowledgment from his family. When he had to go to Oahu for surgery, his family did not visit, and upon his return he declared that Kalaupapa was home, not Oahu with the people that had forgotten him.

Bishop Home is falling apart due to age and lack of repair. Catherine, at age fifty-six, does the best she can. Mother Marianne died ten years ago, as did Henry.

Rachel is constantly aware of the age of her lost daughter Ruth. She buys her birthday presents every year, wraps them, and puts them away even though she may never be able to deliver them.

Rachel meets Lawrence McCully Judd, a Territorial Senator. He has come to inspect Kalaupapa. Rachel shows him several aspects of the settlement that need improvement. Judd promises to try to help.

Catherine returns to New York for a vacation with her brother's family. Despite having a wonderful time and being invited to stay by her brother's family, she decides to return to Moloka'i.

Chapter eighteen opens in 1931, and a group of dignitaries are visiting Kalaupapa. Judd is now Governor of the Territory of Hawaii, and Rachel is present to meet him.

During a sightseeing drive, Rachel meets a young man named Hokea, who is a painter. He paints many scenes of the Kalaupapa Peninsula, and Rachel says his paintings are beautiful.

Rachel and Kenji are regularly tested, and if two more of their tests have negative results, they will be eligible for temporary release from the settlement. Kenji and Rachel discuss what they will do if they are fortunate and get released. Rachel says that she would try to find her siblings and Ruth. Kenji is excited about the possibility of release, but Rachel says she has had her hopes ruined too many times.

The homes at the settlement have been provided with electricity, and many residents are happy to receive new luxuries like refrigerators.



Rachel fears that if they gain release that Kenji will discover that the only thing he and Rachel had in common all these years was exile. She fears that Kenji will no longer need or love her. One day when Kenji is alone in the store, the doctor arrives and informs him that he tested negative, but Rachel tested positive. Kenji says that he will never leave his wife. He says that Rachel is his 'ohana, family. He asks the doctor to say nothing to Rachel regarding the tests. When Kenji arrives home he tells Rachel, "We tested positive."

Part Four-'Ohana, Chapters 17 & 18 Analysis

In chapter seventeen, Kenji decides that home is where a person is loved and appreciated. To him, after many years of regrets, he decides that home is in Kalaupapa with Rachel, not back in Oahu where his family has never thanked him for the money he sent or bothered to visit during his surgery.

In contrast to Kenji's experience, Catherine returns home to New York and discovers that her brother and his family adore her and miss her. Yet despite this sense of belonging, she also comes to realize that Kalaupapa is also home because there she is also adored and needed. She decides that the need for her is greater in Kalaupapa.

In chapter eighteen the term 'ohana is introduced. This term means family, and Kenji uses it to describe why he will never consider leaving Rachel. She is his 'ohana, the dearest thing in the world to him. Kenji demonstrates his love for Rachel by concealing the fact that he is eligible for release from Kalaupapa. He does not want to be away from Rachel, and he does not want her to feel guilty for his decision to stay.

In relation to the concept of family, the reader can see a curious thing about Rachel. Despite years of separation and apparent abandonment by her mother and siblings, she never seems bitter.

'Ohana is the title of Part Three of the book. In chapters seventeen and eighteen, different versions of the concept of family have been presented. One deals with actual blood relatives, and the other concerns non-relatives that fulfill the functions of a family member. In both cases, 'ohana is of utmost importance to all characters.



Part Four-'Ohana, Chapters 19 & 20

Part Four-'Ohana, Chapters 19 & 20 Summary

Chapter nineteen opens in 1941, and a new group of leprosy victims arrives. Among them is a young white man named Gabriel Crossen. Crossen is a former sailor, still in his U.S. Navy uniform, and he appears angry all the time. While Rachel, Kenji, and other residents want to help, they recall their own difficult first days, and they give Crossen time to adjust. It is unusual for a white man to be confined at Kalaupapa, and when Kenji and Rachel inquire, they discover that the leprosarium on the mainland United States is in Carville, Louisiana, close to Crossen's family in Baton Rouge. Crossen chose Kalaupapa because he did not want to embarrass his family. Rachel and Kenji also learn that Crossen believes he got leprosy from a Chinese prostitute. He severely beat the prostitute and hates all Asians.

On the first Sunday in December, the usual tranquility of Kalaupapa is interrupted by radio broadcasts from Oahu, announcing that the Japanese attacked. Rachel and a group go to the highest point on the Kalaupapa Peninsula and see the smoke from the fires on Oahu.

Several people notice the increased anger Crossen displays after the attacks. Crossen lives next door to Rachel and Kenji, and they notice that he is almost always drunk. He regularly beats his girlfriend, and though Rachel and Kenji have called the police, nothing is done. One night while Kenji and Rachel hear a particularly severe beating, Kenji goes to Crossen's house to try to stop Crossen from beating the woman. Crossen turns his anger on Kenji. Rachel tries to stop Crossen from beating Kenji. She even gouges out Crossen's eye in her attempt to save her husband. Crossen knocks Kenji to the ground, and Kenji's head strikes a door. By the time the doctor arrives, Kenji is dead.

Chapter twenty opens in 1943 at Kenji's funeral. After the funeral, Rachel walks to the beach and sits in the sand for a moment. When she stands and walks toward the water, she hears Catherine's voice asking to join her on the beach. Rachel says she would prefer to be alone, but Catherine stays anyway. During the evening, several friends come to Rachel's house to keep her from being alone.

Because Hawaii is under martial law during the war, Crossen's trial is administered by military authorities. Rachel notices that military justice operates much faster than civilian proceedings. During the trial, Rachel sees all the military uniforms and remembers that Crossen was a sailor. She does not believe that the military authorities will punish Crossen, and she is surprised when the military authorities sentence Crossen to thirty-five years in prison. Because there are no nearby prisons that can take an inmate with leprosy, Crossen is confined to a room in Kalaupapa.



Rachel's leprosy symptoms increase over the course of many months. First she stays in Bishop Home, and then as her condition worsens, she is transferred to the hospital.

On April 1, 1946, a tsunami strikes the Hawaiian Islands. No one is killed at Kalaupapa, but there is much property damage. Rachel watches from her hospital room window as crews repair the damages, and she feels useless and near death. A month after the tsunami, a doctor says he would like to try a new drug that has helped patients at the leprosarium at Carville, Louisiana.

After three months, Rachel notices significant improvement. In June of 1947, she welcomes the settlement's new superintendent, her friend the former governor Judd.

Now in her sixties, Rachel is eligible for release from Kalaupapa. Immediately before leaving Kalaupapa, Rachel visits Crossen. She tells him that she is leaving, but he is staying. She says that even if his leprosy is cured, he will be transferred to a prison.

Rachel boards a plane and leaves Kalaupapa.

Nine days later the body of Crossen is found floating in the sea.

Part Four-'Ohana, Chapters 19 & 20 Analysis

After years of coping with leprosy, Rachel and Kenji encounter a new hardship when Crossen arrives: racial prejudice. In many ways, the settlement at Kalaupapa is sheltered from events in the outside world, but Crossen's arrival brings hatred and suspicion. Crossen serves as the ambassador for the rest of the country, who subject Japanese Americans to a variety of humiliations.

The tension is particularly heightened in chapter nineteen when "the first Sunday in December" is mentioned. To the characters, this morning is just like any other Sunday morning in Kalaupapa, but to readers with the benefit of historical hindsight, that first Sunday morning in December is December 6, 1941, the day of the attack by the Japanese military and the day that brought the United States into World War II.

The tension continues until the worst happens and Kenji is killed by a man blinded by prejudice and alcohol.

In chapter twenty, the trial and sentencing offers some resolution for Rachel but not enough. Her health rapidly deteriorates, and she is a resident of the hospital, not likely to ever leave, when the doctors offer to administer some new drugs that have been effective at the leprosy hospital in Carville, Louisiana.

Rachel's improvement is dramatic and rapid. She begins displaying some of her character traits of years past, like how she visits Crossen and tells him that she is leaving but that he is not. In a conversation with Catherine before Rachel leaves Kalaupapa, she says for the first time that she might recognize that most of her family

abandoned her. She also says that Catherine and everyone at Kalaupapa is her family. This sentiment echoes Kenji's notion of 'ohana.

The fact that Rachel gets to leave in an airplane, like a bird, gives the text a euphoric or dreamlike tone. Rachel has dreamed of leaving for over half a century, and now it is happening.



Part Four-'Ohana, Chapter 21

Part Four-'Ohana, Chapter 21 Summary

Rachel is in awe of the sights she sees as her plane flies to Oahu, and when she arrives she does not recognize Honolulu after more than a half century of changes. While she sees Honolulu as different, she still believes it is beautiful.

Rachel gets a room at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel and enjoys the luxury. During her stay at the hotel, she looks in the telephone book for listings for her mother and siblings but finds none. After a couple of nights at the hotel, she begins her search for an affordable apartment. She discovers that while leprosy can now be treated and while she poses no danger to others, the old prejudices remain. Most prospective landlords are rude, even cruel. One even throws an ashtray that strikes Rachel and cuts her head. She manages to find a small overpriced apartment that she can rent if she gives three months advance payment.

Rachel begins her search for Ruth but discovers that the adoption home shut down ten years earlier. At the offices of the Board of Health, Rachel learns that adoption records are sealed, and she must go to court to get the record unsealed. Rachel submits the paperwork for a court date, and she submits an application to get a copy of Sarah's marriage certificate.

Rachel visits the store where Henry said that Kimo had worked thirty years ago. No one at the store had ever heard of Kimo. Rachel cannot find her brother Ben, but she does find some of Uncle Pono's relatives listed in the telephone book. Rachel goes to the address listed in the telephone book, and her Aunt Florence, now in her eighties, answers the door.

Aunt Florence is shocked to see Rachel. She was certain that Rachel had died. Aunt Florence tells Rachel about the horrible prejudice that Pono's family endured after he and Rachel were taken away to Kalaupapa. Aunt Florence is still frightened that the neighbors will see her talking to a leper, and she asks Rachel to go away.

Rachel is sad and depressed after seeing Aunt Florence, and she gives up her search for any of her family. Weeks pass, and then one day Rachel receives a copy of Sarah's marriage certificate. After seeing Sarah's married name, Rachel calls the telephone operator and gets a number in Maui. Rachel calls the number, and a woman answers. Rachel immediately hangs up, but she is convinced that the voice she heard was her sister's.

Rachel buys an airplane ticket to Maui and then catches a taxicab to the address she got from the telephone operator. When she knocks at the door of a house, a woman answers, and Rachel recognizes Sarah. Rachel identifies herself, and Sarah faints. When Sarah wakes, she cries and hugs Rachel. She thought Rachel had died long ago.



As Rachel and Sarah talk, Sarah is confused about many of the things Rachel says. Rachel gets the names of Sarah's children wrong, and Rachel mentions a place that Kimo worked as an adult. Sarah is surprised that if Rachel knows she has nieces and nephews, she does not know that one of Sarah's children is named Rachel. When Sarah asks where Rachel heard the news about the family, Sarah says that Henry told her, and then Sarah says that Henry must have made up stories. Rachel doesn't understand, so Sarah explains.

Less than a year after Rachel had been sent to Kalaupapa, Kimo showed signs of leprosy. Dorothy said the government would never take another one of her children. She took the children and fled to Maui without telling anyone, not even Henry. Dorothy left Sarah and Ben with a relative, and she took Kimo to a hidden location and took care of him until he died. Henry never saw or heard from his children or wife ever again. He made up stories to protect Rachel.

Rachel and Sarah cry after learning that the situation was even more tragic than they had previously known. Rachel cries for her father who spent all those years alone but made up stories for her.

Part Four-'Ohana, Chapter 21 Analysis

The meeting with Aunt Florence seems to confirm what the reader has believed for the majority of the novel: all of Rachel's relatives except for her father have completely abandoned her. This event makes Rachel's meeting with Sarah even more poignant.

Upon learning the fate of the rest of her siblings, Rachel learns that the last half-century has been more tragic for the Kalama family than she realized. Her mother did not abandon her. Dorothy did the only thing she could to prevent the state from taking away another child, and in the process she did everything possible to give Kimo a happy, though short, life. Rachel is not the only member that lived in total isolation from other family members. Henry lived most of his life with no contact with the family he so dearly loved.

For the reader, the shock of these revelations must be even more significant given that during the course of the entire novel Rachel has avoided blaming her mother for abandoning her. All of her memories and thoughts of Dorothy have been kind and pleasant. Readers likely have not been so forgiving, yet one discovers that Rachel has been right all along. Dorothy loved Rachel and never abandoned her.



Part Four-'Ohana, Chapter 22

Part Four-'Ohana, Chapter 22 Summary

Rachel stays in Maui for ten days. While there, she has fond remembrances of tales Haleola told her of Maui. After returning to Honolulu, Rachel gets a job as a cashier at a gift shop. After a month at the job a customer notices her crippled hand, and soon thereafter she is fired with no explanation.

After Rachel gets permission to examine the adoption papers for Ruth, she discovers that Ruth was adopted by a Japanese family. Rachel tries to find the Japanese family, but she is unsuccessful. Catherine is able to find a nun who once worked at the adoption home, and the nun has a letter from Ruth's adopted family. The return address is in California. Rachel writes a letter to the address in California.

A couple of weeks later Rachel receives a telephone call from a woman identifying herself as Ruth. Ruth is cold at first and wants to know why Rachel gave her up for adoption. When Rachel tells her that the government forced her because of leprosy, Ruth seems genuinely shocked. She says she must go but promises to call the next day. Rachel waits by the telephone every day, but Ruth does not call again until a week later. Though apprehensive, Ruth agrees to meet Rachel if she goes to California. Rachel buys a ticket on the ship S.S. Lurline.

Ruth meets Rachel at a hotel. The visit is awkward at first, but the two get along and have much to discuss. Ruth tells Rachel of the relocation camps for Japanese people during the war. While in California, Rachel visits Ruth's family.

After returning to Hawaii, Rachel moves to Maui to live with Sarah.

Part Four-'Ohana, Chapter 22 Analysis

Along with the tragedies, Rachel carries the positive influences of those she has known. While in Maui, she is surrounded by sensations that remind her of Haleola. When Rachel feels the Kona wind, she thinks of Haleola, and Rachel is able to see some of the landmarks Haleola described when talking about her home in Maui. This chapter also reveals more information about how Rachel never allowed herself to believe that her mother had abandoned her. When Rachel gains access to the adoption papers, the reader learns that her baby's middle name is Dorothy.

Other things Haleola said are also proven to be true in this chapter. Haleola once said that everyone has heard of Father Damien, but no one has heard of the thousands of Hawaiians who suffered. When Rachel is trying to explain where she has been all of Ruth's life, she mentions Father Damien, and Ruth knows that Rachel had leprosy even though Ruth has not heard of Kalaupapa.



Another of Rachel's life-long dreams is realized in this chapter. When she boards the S.S. Lurliner to San Francisco, she is finally able to sail over the horizon just like her father.



Endnote and Author's Note

Endnote and Author's Note Summary

The Endnote takes place in 1970, when Ruth and her daughter Peggy travel to Kalaupapa. They arrive for Rachel's funeral. Rachel had decided to spend her final days at Kalaupapa. Hokea, the painter, meets Ruth and Peggy, shows them the settlement, and tells them fond stories of Rachel.

Hokea has all of Rachel's belongings, and many of them consist of items she purchased all over the world. Rachel traveled extensively in her last twenty years.

At Rachel's funeral, Ruth and Peggy speak in Hawaiian, much the same way Haleola did at Pono's funeral and Rachel did at Haleola's funeral.

The Author's Note provides an explanation of how much of the novel was taken from history. It also provides the names of books for further reading and expresses the author's gratitude to those that help with the writing and research for Moloka'i.

Endnote and Author's Note Analysis

In the Endnote, Hokea reveals that though the practice of forcibly confining people on Kalaupapa has been declared illegal, the current residents worry that they will again be relocated and the land sold to commercial interests.

The Author's Note reveals that in December of 1980, the Kalaupapa Peninsula is declared a National Historical Park. The residents will be allowed to live there as long as they want.



Characters

Rachel Aouli Kalama Utagawa

Rachel is the main character of the novel, and it is through the course of her lifetime that the book takes place. The novel opens when Rachel is a fun loving five-year-old amid a lively and caring family. The shocking revelation that she has leprosy is even more frightening given her age, but it is here that Rachel begins to demonstrate some of her most defining character traits. While most people, adults and children alike, blindly cooperate with authorities, Rachel is immediately willing to challenge the powers that exert control on her life. When a doctor fails to listen to her complaints during an examination, a seven-year-old Rachel grabs him in the groin and demonstrates what it is like to feel pain in a sensitive region. When nuns fail to appreciate her affection for her dying uncle, the child escapes during a rainy night and begins a long trek in darkness. As a young adult with the opportunity to leave the settlement, Rachel makes the rational decision to return because she cannot fulfill her dream of leaving the settlement if she must do so as a criminal.

This ability to resist outside forces and take initiative manifests in other areas of Rachel's character. Despite the circumstances, Rachel never gives up hope. For much of her life she hangs on to the hope that she will escape Kalaupapa. When it seems she has given up on that hope, it turns out that she has merely refocused her attention on having the best quality of life possible in the settlement.

Even in her twilight years, Rachel exhibits energy and passion that few people have at any time in their lives.

Sister Catherine/ Ruth Amelia Voorhies

Sister Catherine is a nun who works at Bishop Home, but unlike the other nuns, particularly Mother Marianne, Catherine does not view the rules as fixed proclamations that must be obeyed at all times. In fact, Catherine often bends rules to bring about greater happiness to everyone she encounters. Catherine has a particular fondness for Rachel and serves as a mother figure along with Haleola, who is also a dear and trusted friend to Catherine.

Another aspect of Catherine that sets her apart from other nuns is Catherine's trait of questioning her faith. Catherine endured intense hardship of her own before arriving at Kalaupapa, and the hardship she witnesses at the settlement is beyond any she could have imagined. These experiences test Catherine's beliefs, but somehow she manages to persevere and continue caring for others. During one moment of weakness, it is Rachel, the girl Catherine has mentored for so many years, that saves her. Actually, that occurrence is probably merely the most dramatic example. It is affection for Rachel that probably saved Catherine many times. Catherine's ability to persevere and never let go



of hope has a profound influence on Rachel, and Catherine influences Rachel in other ways.

There is more to Catherine than being a nun. She also has a delightful, if subtle, sense of humor, and she always manages to entertain those around her. Rachel's affection for Catherine is expressed when Rachel chooses a name for her daughter. Rachel names her daughter Ruth, after Sister Catherine's given name.

Charles Kenji Utagawa

When this character is first encountered, he is described as an angry young Nisei. Kenji is a graduate of college and feels like his life has been wasted before it began, and he has done nothing more than bring shame to his family. Kenji starts fights at the least provocation, and he has his first conversation with Rachel when she talks him out of drowning himself. The two become close and eventually marry. Because of his love for Rachel, Kenji is able to let go of his anger over having leprosy, and he puts his energy into helping those around him. He becomes a much liked and much admired member of the community at Kalaupapa. When Kenji has to say goodbye to his and Rachel's daughter, his words echo the same sentiments Henry has expressed to Rachel. Despite being abandoned by his family, Kenji feels the need to compensate them for the education they provided. He regularly sends money back to Honolulu, even though he and Rachel have no real assets. In time, Kenji comes to understand that his community and family is in Kalaupapa with Rachel, not back in Honolulu with the people that abandoned him in order to avoid social stigma. Through his relationship with Rachel, Kenji's view of the world evolves. It is Kenji who first mentions one of the most important concepts of the novel: 'ohana, or family. It is during an act intended to save someone else that Kenji is killed.

Henry Kalama

This is Rachel's father, and he remains devoted to his daughter throughout his life. For most of the novel, Henry is Rachel's only contact with her family. Henry is a sailor by vocation, and he is away from home for months at a time. During the weeks that Henry is at home in Honolulu with the family, he makes the most of the time taking the family on numerous outings around the island. After Rachel is sent to Kalaupapa, Henry writes frequently and sends packages. Henry's travels inspire Rachel's love of geography and her life-long desire to travel the world. When he can, Henry visits Rachel on Kalaupapa. Henry's love for Rachel never wanes. In his later years, he wishes he could be diagnosed with leprosy so he can go and live with Rachel on Kalaupapa. Rachel continues to learn about her father long after his death. When she learns the entire story, she realizes that Henry has endured more and is a kinder man than she could have ever imagined. Not all of the stories Henry tells Rachel over the years turn out to be true, but they do turn out to be further evidence of his love for her.



Haleola

Rachel calls this character her adopted aunt, but she is more of a mother figure to Rachel. Haleola is from the island of Maui, and she goes to the settlement on the Kalaupapa Peninsula when her husband is diagnosed with leprosy. Haleola is a kahuna, or traditional Hawaiian healer, and she helps many of the settlement's residents. Haleola is knowledgeable of Hawaiian folklore and tradition, and she shares this with Rachel over many years. Haleola often tells Rachel stories of her home, and Rachel remembers these stories when she visits Maui years later. Rachel remembers all of Haleola's folk tales and becomes in turn a skilled storyteller. Despite hardship, Haleola remains kind and caring to everyone, and this greatly influences Rachel's character.

Kapona Kalama

To Rachel, this man is Uncle Pono, the brother of her father. As a child in Honolulu, Rachel has a close relationship with her doting uncle. Pono is known for his hilarious sense of humor and friendliness to all people. All people in Kalaupapa have fond memories of Pono. When he first arrives at the settlement, rather than be depressed and frightened like all other new residents, he walks ashore and proclaims himself "President Pono." When Rachel is sent first to Kahili Receiving Station and later to Kalaupapa, it is Pono who is able to make her laugh and continue to hold on to hope. When her uncle fails to visit, Rachel leaves during the night to go see him before he dies. It is through Pono that Rachel meets one of the most important and influential people of her life: Haleola.

Dorothy Kalama

Rachel's mother is a devoutly religious woman who seems outwardly strict but is a loving and caring parent. After Rachel is sent away to Kalaupapa, the letters from Dorothy stop not long after Rachel's arrival, and Rachel's letters to Dorothy are returned. For much of Rachel's life it seems that Dorothy has abandoned Rachel, but Rachel refuses to think of her mother that way and always remembers the kind and loving aspects of Dorothy. When Rachel is able to speak with her sister Sarah, she learns the true reason she does not receive letters from Dorothy.

Leilani Napana

Rachel says this was the most beautiful woman she ever knew. Leilani, Lani, arrives at Kalaupapa in her twenties, and soon becomes a close friend of Rachel's. After a party where Lani is assaulted by a man, Rachel learns that Lani had been born a man but always dreamed of being a woman. Haleola explains to Rachel that the "mahu," or a third gender, is an important part of traditional Hawaiian culture, and Rachel accepts Lani for who she is. Lani remains a dear friend of Rachel's for the rest of Lani's life.



Sarah Kalama Kaahea

This is Rachel's older sister. When they are young they have the typical relationship of two girls, full of drama and bickering. It is accidentally that Rachel's leprosy is discovered at school through Sarah's taunting of Rachel. Sarah feels guilty about this for much of her life and feels like she was not a good sister to Rachel. But the two become close friends and even live together during their final years. Sarah is able to provide Rachel with a complete picture of what happened to the rest of the family while Rachel was detained at Kalaupapa.

Ruth Watanabe Harada

This woman's birth name is Ruth Dorothy Utagawa. She is the daughter of Rachel and Kenji, but she is adopted by a Japanese family because all babies born to leprosy victims are taken away by the government. Ruth has fond and loving memories of her adopted family, and when she meets Rachel late in the novel, she tells Rachel about the hardships she and her adopted family during the forced relocations of Japanese people during World War II. Ruth looks like both her mother Rachel and her father Kenji, and in time she develops a close relationship with Rachel.

Gabriel Tyler Crossen

This man is a former sailor sent to Kalaupapa after being diagnosed with leprosy. He believes he caught leprosy from a Chinese woman, and he is prejudiced against all Asians.

Florence Kiolani

To Rachel, this woman is known as Aunt Florence. She tells Rachel of the humiliation the family endured after Rachel is sent to Kalaupapa.

Hokea

This young man first meets Rachel when she is on a sightseeing drive. He is a talented painter and Rachel admires his work. Years later he meets Ruth and Peggy at the airport and takes them to a funeral.

Moko

This man encounters Rachel when she runs away from Bishop Home to see her Uncle Pono. He claims he will take her to her uncle but instead keeps her captive and makes her perform chores.



Tom Akamu

This young man is present at the party Rachel attends the night she escapes from Bishop Home. He asks Rachel to dance, and he also kisses her.

Jake Puehu

This man arrives in Kalaupapa with two other lighthouse keepers. Unlike the other keepers, he arrives as a single man without a family, and he attracts the interest of Rachel.

Nahoa

This young man is a friend of Rachel's. Their common interest is surfing.

Lawrence McCully Judd

This man visits Kalaupapa while he is a Territorial Senator and later as Territorial Governor and later still as the new superintendent of the settlement.

Father Damien

This Catholic priest goes to Kalaupapa in the nineteenth century to help the leprosy victims. He eventually catches leprosy himself.

Dr. Goodhue

This doctor remains at Kalaupapa much longer than most doctors. He performs many surgeries on Rachel to help slow the progression of her leprosy.

Health Inspector Nakamura

This man arrests Pono early in the novel.

Health Inspector Wyckoff

This man makes frequent visits to Rachel's school. The students call him "bounty hunter."



Peggy

This is Ruth's daughter and Rachel's granddaughter. She accompanies Ruth on a visit to Kalaupapa in 1970.

Miss Johnson

The teacher of Rachel's class at the Fort Street School.

Harry Woo

This child attends the same school in Honolulu as Rachel. During a visit from the health inspector, this boy's leprosy is revealed, and he never returns to class.

Emily

This is one of Rachel's first friends at Bishop Home. Unlike other characters who resent being sent to Kalaupapa, this character is happy to be there and happy to have leprosy because she escaped an abusive home.

Francine

This one of Rachel's closest friends. Rachel meets her first at the Kahili Receiving Station, and then they become friends again at Kalaupapa. This character is very skilled with horses and often wins races.

Violet

This girl is very ill and unable to get out of bed. Rachel befriends this girl early in her stay at Bishop Home, and after this girl dies, Rachel begins to understand death.

Louisa, Hina, and CeCelia

These three teenage girls are friends with Rachel during her teen years at Bishop Home. They all accompany Rachel when she escapes Bishop Home for one night.

Kimo Kalama

This is one of Rachel's two brothers. His real name is James, but everyone calls him Kimo.



Benjamin Kalama

This is one of Rachel's two brothers. Rachel visits Ben and his family on Maui in 1948.

Mother Marianne Cope

This Catholic Nun supervises the Bishop Home. Along with Father Damien, she is remembered for her humanitarian work at the leprosy settlement at Kalaupapa.



Objects/Places

Honolulu

This city on the island of Oahu is the capital of Hawaii. It is also the residence of Rachel and her family when the novel opens in 1891.

Waikiki

This an area of the coast in Honolulu now famous for its beautiful beaches and tourist hotels. Rachel and her family live near her long before the hotels.

poi

This is a common Hawaiian food made from the taro plant.

matryoska

This is a set of dolls with each doll smaller and placed in the next. Rachel's father brings her this type of doll from one of his sea voyages.

Forest Street School

This is the school Rachel and Sarah attend, and it is the place where Rachel's leprosy was reported to the authorities.

Kalihi Receiving Station

This is where people suspected of leprosy are sent for evaluation before deciding whether to sent them to Kalaupapa on Moloka'i.

Maui

This Hawaiian island is southeast of Oahu, and it where Haleola is from. It is also where Rachel and Sarah live late in the novel.

haole

This is a traditional Hawaiian word that can be translated as "white foreigner."



kahuna

This is a practitioner of traditional Hawaiian folk healing. Haleola is a kahuna who helps many of Kalaupapa's residents who fear or do not trust "haole doctors."

ho'oponopono

This is a type of family gathering which means "setting to right." It is usually led by a kahuna or a family elder, as in the case of the gathering of Rachel's family to help with her leprosy.

Aouli

This means "blue vault of heaven," and it is the name for Rachel that comes to her father in a dream.

bacillus laprae

This is the microscopic organism that causes leprosy. Today leprosy is sometimes called Hansen's Disease after the man who discovered this organism.

Kalaupapa/Kalaupapa Peninsula

This peninsula is located on the north shore of the island of Moloka'i. The village on the east side of the peninsula has the same name and is where most of the people in the settlement live.

Kalawao

This was the first settlement for lepers on the western shore of the Kalaupapa Peninsula.

pali

These are large and steep cliffs. The pali on Moloka'i rise two thousand feet and form the barrier that isolates the Kalaupapa Peninsula.

Bishop Home

This is a place for girls under the age of sixteen to live on Kalaupapa. People arriving in Kalaupapa did so without their families. Nuns administer Bishop Home and provide the



girls with an education. They also look after the girls "moral" welfare. Rachel moves into Baldwin Home soon after arriving in Kalaupapa.

Baldwin Home

Baldwin Home is an equivalent to Bishop Home but for boys. It is located in Kalawao.

Swipe

This is the name the residents of the Kalaupapa settlement give to a homemade alcoholic beverage. For many years alcoholic beverage are prohibited in Kalaupapa, and residents make and consume this in defiance of the authorities.

Gramophone

An early name for record player. The one Rachel is fascinated with during her nighttime escape from the settlement plays cylinders instead of flat disks of more modern record players.

Mahu

In traditional Hawaiian culture, these people were considered a third gender. Rachel's friend Lani is called a mahu by Haleola.

Wahine

This is the Hawaiian word for woman.

United States Leprosy Investigation Station

This federal installation opened near Kalawao but operated only briefly before all staff were transferred to Kalihi. Rachel is among the only nine patients ever admitted.

Nisei

This is a Japanese language term for children born to Japanese parents in a country other than Japan. When Rachel first sees Kenji but doesn't yet know his name, she thinks of him as "the nisei."



Issei

This is a Japanese language term for Japanese people who emigrate to other countries. Kenji is a "nisei," but his parents are "issei."

Board of Leper Hospitals and Settlement

After years of unsatisfactory management of the settlement at Kalaupapa by the Board of Health, this never government body is created to manage the settlement.

leprosarium

This is a hospital for the treatment of people afflicted with leprosy.

Carville, Louisiana

This is the location of the leprosarium in the mainland United States.

'Ohana

This is a traditional Hawaiian word for family. This can also apply to people who are not related by blood but who are needed and loved.

Royal Hawaiian Hotel

This is one of the earliest hotels to be built on Waikiki Beach. When Rachel returns to Hawaii in 1948, this is the largest building she sees from the airplane. Rachel stays here for a few days.

S.S. Lurline

This is an ocean going luxury liner that takes passengers between Hawaii and the mainland United States. Rachel buys a ticket on this ship and finally achieves her dream of sailing over the horizon the way her father did.



Themes

Family

The novel presents a concept of family that is different from the traditional definition of family being those people related by birth. In this novel the concept of family, called 'ohana by some characters, extends to those people who fulfill the functions of a family member. The practice of forcibly relocating people with leprosy strained the ties of family and earned leprosy the names "the separating sickness" and "the sickness that tears families apart." Faced with feelings of abandonment and isolation, many people reach out and form new groups, which offer mutual support. These groups provide the feelings of security and belonging that a traditional family would provide.

The first instance of an adopted family occurs when Haleola asks Rachel if she can be her adopted aunt. Haleola does this because she knows Rachel needs family, especially after the death of her Uncle Pono, the only relative she had at the settlement. In time, Haleola becomes more of a maternal figure to Rachel. Catherine also functions as a maternal figure to Rachel, and this is a sentiment Rachel expresses when she names her baby Ruth, after Catherine's given name.

When Kenji is faced with the decision of whether or not to leave the settlement without his wife, he introduces the term 'ohana, family. Kenji is adamant that he will not leave Rachel, his 'ohana.

This concept of 'ohana comes full circle when Rachel meets her daughter Ruth. Both Ruth and Rachel discover that their mutual affection does not express disloyalty to Ruth's adopted family, and 'ohana can include both adopted and blood related relatives.

Perseverance and Hope

In the face of so much adversity, characters in the novel can be divided into two types: those that give up and those that maintain hope. From the beginning, anyone diagnosed with leprosy is thought to have received a death sentence. As a child, Rachel witnesses the people being forced onto the boat bound for Moloka'i, the adults wailing and grieving as if they have just witnessed a death. No one ever returns from the settlement on Moloka'i. People go there to die, and most die sooner rather than later.

Confronted with this gloom, the natural reaction is to give up and surrender. Not all characters so readily give up the will to live. The first example of a character who refuses give up the hope of being detained for the remainder of her life is Rachel, a child who does not yet understand concepts such as death and forever. Only part of Rachel's drive can be attributed to her youth and lack of understanding. Even as a young adult who has witnessed much death, Rachel continues to hope for a cure and do all she can to facilitate that event. While other characters descend into alcoholism and depression, Rachel volunteers for every new experimental treatment.



It is ironic that Rachel's zest for life leads her to stop volunteering for treatments. It is when she contemplates the fleeting nature of life and realizes that she has only a finite amount of time to live that she returns to striving for quality of life.

Love, Fleeting or Forever

Early in Rachel's stay at Bishop Home, she realizes that she is unusual in that she receives frequent letters from home. Many of the girls have been forgotten by their families. When Rachel continues receiving letters from her father but not her mother, she is forced to contemplate the permanence of love.

Henry embodies unconditional love. He even tells Rachel that no matter where he is, no matter how far away, she can always rest assured that her father is thinking about her and loves her. Yet, from her mother, Rachel receives no word, not even an explanation for the absence.

Kenji's relationship with his family is even more clear-cut. He has no relationship. The social stigma of leprosy has caused his family to cut all ties. He is completely abandoned. While he still loves and longs for his family back in Honolulu, their love for him has seemingly ended. Even years later when he is near his family for a surgical procedure, he receives no visit, and he never receives acknowledgment for the money he sends over the years.

It is from Kenji, a man abandoned by his own family, that an expression of unconditional love is expressed. First he tells his daughter that he will always love her, and he will always be her father. Then when given an opportunity to leave Kalaupapa without Rachel, he adamantly declares that he will never leave his wife.

Sometimes love withstands the tests of hardship and time. Sometimes it does not.



Style

Point of View

Moloka'i is told by a third person omniscient narrator. Which Rachel is the main character, the narrator can access the thoughts of all characters whether or not Rachel is present. In this way, the novel becomes more than just the story of one woman. It is the story of all those who suffered because of the prevalence of leprosy in the Hawaiian Islands, whether or not they had the disease.

Dialogue plays an important part in the novel. The reader can learn as much about the characters' feelings and motivations through the dialogue as through the more expository sections in Moloka'i. When dialogue is not a significant part of the text, the descriptions of places, objects, and events usually come from a particular character's perspective. This gives the text an added feeling of realism.

Often the narrator gives contrasting descriptions of the same event from more than one perspective or character. This fully uses the abilities of a third person narrator and provides a fuller picture of the people and places in the novel. This also makes the narrator reliable in that different, often competing, perspectives are offered to the reader. This technique is especially valuable in the earlier portions of the novel when the main character is a child. Many of the events are beyond the comprehension of a child, and the narrator makes full use of the other characters' perceptions to tell a story that could not be told if limited to the perceptions of one character.

Setting

The setting in the novel Moloka'i is a crucial element for many reasons. The first reason is that the settlement on the Kalaupapa Peninsula of the island of Moloka'i was one of only two such settlements in the history of the United States. The location of the settlement in Hawaii was witness to important world-changing events in the middle of the twentieth century. To try and tell the same story in a different setting would have been impossible.

Unlike in other historical novels, we can't classify the setting of the novel Moloka'i according to a single time. The novel spans seventy-nine years, and the time element of the setting changes accordingly. When Rachel first arrives at the settlement, she was still a part of the nineteenth century. Though changes came to Kalaupapa later than much of the rest of the world, Kalaupapa did still experience the rapid technological changes in the twentieth century.

Setting plays another subtler role in the novel. Hawaii is a place that many regard as idyllic. In fact, the words "Hawaii" and "paradise" are often used synonymously in modern language. Pain, disease, and suffering are not things we associate with the tropical island paradise of Hawaii.



Language and Meaning

The poetic prose vividly brings the beauty of the setting to the reader. Few will ever forget the images of the green pali towering behind the peninsula, and few will forget the views of the peninsula that the narrator likens to a stone leaf. Time and time again the narrator uses long and flowing descriptions to create a cascade of images. Through this language, the narrator brings the majestic beauty of the Hawaiian Islands to the reader.

The narrator also uses another technique to give the novel a unique flavor. When possible, the narrator uses Hawaiian words to describe objects and concepts. The author uses these terms frequently and consistently enough that in time the reader scarcely notices. There are words that have direct translation, like *kieki* for children. Then there are other words that have a meaning that perhaps could not be expressed so succinctly in traditional English. In Part Four, the reader learns that *'ohana* has a deeper and more complex meaning than the English word "family."

Through the inclusion of geographic particulars, the author brings the characters to life. Many times in the dialogue the peculiarities of the English spoken in the islands is included, and this adds to what has already become a vivid picture of a particular time and place.

Structure

In terms of timeline, the novel *Moloka'i* progresses in chronological linear fashion. It begins when Rachel is five years old and ends after her death, when her daughter and granddaughter have come to Kalaupapa to attend her funeral. While the novel does progress in a chronological manner, there are some sizable gaps in the timeline. Sometimes these gaps span entire decades. In only a few rare instances are there any deviations from linear progression. One example occurs when Rachel decides to run away from home. The reader first learns that Rachel has run away when Sister Catherine hears about the incident first thing in the morning. Then the action shifts to Rachel, several hours earlier. In this case, the shift is more a change in perspective or point of view than a deviation from the established structure.

The novel is divided into four major parts. In the first, the reader meets Rachel and her family in Honolulu. The second part describes Rachel's childhood at Kalaupapa, and the third follows Rachel through early adulthood and into marriage. The fourth part opens with a middle-aged Rachel and closes shortly after her death after living to an old age for a person even without having suffered leprosy.

The endnote and author's note that follow the rest of the novel are welcome additions but not crucial to the understanding of the novel. For the purposes of understanding Rachel's story, the novel concludes at the end of Part Four, when Rachel in her sixties walks out into the Maui night and swims. For the readers that have become concerned about the place Kalaupapa, the author includes the remaining sections that provide the end of the greater story.



Quotes

"Even at her age Rachel understood money was often a problem in her family, and though she rarely wanted for anything of substance she knew Mama worked hard to stretch out the money Papa left her; particularly now, eight months after they last saw him." Chap.1, p. 7

"Friends and family crowded into the Kalama home that night, laughing and eating, singing and talking story. Rachel sat, as she often did at such gatherings, on the lap of her tall, rangy Uncle Pono—Papa's older brother, Kapona Kalama, a plantation worker in Wimanalo. 'Ey, there's my favorite niece!' he would say, hoisting her into his arms." Chap. 1, p. 9

"Pono lay on the ground, half blinded, the tears in his eyes not from the smoke but from the thought of what he was about to lose. His cheek had been abraded by the bramble of cane, but the livid red blemish beneath his left eye was a wound of a very different sort, a mark—permanent and ineradicable—of his shame and fear." Chap. 2, p. 20

"The young woman stared blankly at them. 'I have no idea what you're talking about,' she said, 'and I don't care! Young ladies, especially sisters, do not fight like cats and dogs in the street.' The teacher was obviously an only child." Chap. 2, p. 24

"The huddled exiles gazed up, taking in the towering pali that rose so impossibly high above the peninsula: a sheer vertical cliff, green and densely wooded, reaching two thousand feet into the sky. Waterfalls spilled like tears down its face." Chap. 5, p. 60

"Flying, Rachel discovered, wondrously distorted space and time. From up here the turbulent whitecaps of the Kaiwi Channel were reduced to tranquil combers, and half a day's steamer travel was miraculously compressed into a mere thirty minutes. It had even transformed her: no longer a sixty-one-year-old woman, she was a girl again, looking out the window with a child's eyes and a child's wonder." Chap. 21, p. 325

"'If that is your God, Father Kaimiano, your Jehovah, who would condemn a kind and tender man to hell for the sin of not believing in him—then I shall follow my Keo to hell, as I have followed him to this one, and together we spit on your God and his heaven!'" Chap. 5, p. 71

"San Francisco! The name resonated with memories of her father, the rag doll he'd bought for her back when California had been a place in another country, an exotic land called America. And as the last of the Hawaiian archipelago disappeared from sight Rachel realized that she had gone over the horizon, just as Papa had." pp. 363-364

"And as she watched the Lehua climb the steep incline of the ocean and gain the summit of the horizon, Rachel was filled with grief, loss, anger—and the wordless



resolve that someday, somehow, she would follow her father over that horizon and down the other side, where the world lay hidden." Chap. 9, p. 136

"Hawaii became only the second sovereign nation to join the United States. But unlike the Republic of Texas, where a public referendum was held, no one asked the thirty-one thousand native Hawaiians whether they wished to give up their country. Twenty-nine thousand of them signed a petition of protest, which was submitted to Congress and politely ignored." Chap. 10, p. 141

"Rachel watched as the inspector—bounty hunter, some whispered—stooped to examine a bruise on a boy's knee. Now Rachel began to feel self-conscious about her own blemish, hidden beneath a bandage and skirt. As Mr. Wyckoff probed the child's bruise with the tip of a pen, drawing a nice wince from him, Rachel thought about the red spot on her foot and how the strap of her sandal didn't seem to chafe there as it did on her other foot." Chap. 3, p. 33

"'Good-bye, akachan,' Kenji said softly as Ruthie's eyes focused on his face for the last time. 'Papa loves you. He'll always love you, and he'll always be your papa.' Rachel looked at her daughter and thought: Go. Go and be free. Go everywhere I dreamed of going, but never did; or stay at home, it doesn't matter, as long as it's your choice. Go!" Chap. 16, p. 250



Topics for Discussion

In the strictest sense, "epic" usually refers to poetry, but novels can be epic too. Some characteristics of epic novels include focus on a main character, or hero, over the course of time, such as a lifetime, and the description of great events. Based on this and anything else you know about epics, can the novel *Moloka'i* be described as an epic?

As a child and a teenager Rachel's circumstances are anything but usual, but in some ways her concerns are the same as any young person her age. Describe at least two times Rachel and other her age engage in behavior that is the same as other children anywhere and anytime else in the world.

Despite having lost contact with her mother, Rachel never seems bitter toward Dorothy. In fact, it is as if Rachel never acknowledges that she has been abandoned. Name some times that Rachel thinks kindly of her mother over the years. Explain whether you think this surprises most readers, and if so explain what someone else's reaction might have been if in Rachel's situation.

Rachel is the only person in her immediate family who is sent to Kalaupapa. Yet she is not the only person among her parents and siblings who is isolated. Which person in Rachel's family lives the most isolated life. Explain how this character is the most isolated.

Love is an important need for all people. Taking the concept of "unconditional love" examine the characters in the novel *Moloka'i*. Describe how some characters express unconditional love and describe what makes it seem like other characters' love is determined by conditions.

When Catherine strikes the child Rachel, most readers should be shocked. Thus far Catherine has shown to be a caring kind individual. Perhaps there is more happening than a little girl saying something blasphemous. Describe what might have caused Catherine to act in a manner so contrary to her usual character.

Sometimes when reading a historical novel the reader can know more than the characters. Describe a time when a reader might have been concerned about characters' welfare because the reader possessed historical knowledge a character could not know.