

Rainbow Valley Study Guide

Rainbow Valley by Lucy Maud Montgomery

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Plot Summary

"Rainbow Valley" by L. M. Montgomery is the seventh in the "Anne of Green Gables" series. This story takes place in the conservative community of Glen St. Mary in Nova Scotia. The story unfolds when the town busybody, Mrs. Marshall Elliot, who everyone calls Miss Cornelia, is on her way to Ingleside, the residence of Anne Blythe and her husband, Dr. Gilbert Blythe. The Blythes had just returned from a long vacation to Europe. Their four eldest children were sent to Anne's childhood home in Avonlea and Green Gables. The two younger children stayed behind with Susan, the family's nanny. Miss Cornelia was anxious to see Anne but also to gossip about the new Presbyterian minister.

Miss Cornelia was one of the church members who decided on John Meredith as their new minister. There were issues with Mr. Meredith but the problems with other candidates were considered worse. Mr. Meredith was a widower and had four children who he moved into the church's manse with his elderly Aunt Martha. The problem with John Meredith was his remoteness and his dreamy attitude. However, he did come alive when he gave the Sunday morning sermon. The old maids in the area had not failed to notice that the new minister was quite handsome and, as a widower, quite available.

The four older Blythe children, Jem, Walter, and the twins Nan and Diana, loved to play in a lovely valley that was filled with beautiful trees and flowers and had a babbling spring that ran through it. The children dubbed the area "Rainbow Valley" after a rainbow made a huge arc over it one afternoon. The new minister's four children, referred to as the manse children, were named Jerry, Carl, Faith and Una. One day they ventured down into the valley and met the Blythe kids and they all became fast friends.

Another young girl becomes a new member of the Rainbow Valley friends when the manse kids find her sleeping in Mr. Taylor's barn. Mary Vance was an orphan and had run away from the family she was staying with. The woman, Mrs. Wiley, treated her like a slave and beat and starved her. The manse kids took Mary in and eventually she was adopted by Miss Cornelia who had no children.

The manse children were allowed to run free by their preoccupied and distant father who was also wrapped up with his studies, his pastoral responsibilities and his grief for his late wife, Cecilia, who died four years before. The children became a thorn in the side of the prim and proper members of the community. The kids were all wild but Faith was considered to be the worst. She was always in trouble and it always reflected badly on her father. Faith went to great lengths to explain and defend her behavior but mainly to rescue her father's reputation and, in some cases, his job. Faith and the other manse kids were not mean-spirited and never meant any harm. But they were undisciplined because their father was not engaged in their activities.

One moonlit night John stopped in the valley to get a drink of water at the spring and ran into Rosemary West. He barely knew her but in the moonlight that night, he had never seen a more perfect beauty than Rosemary. He was smitten from that point on.

Rosemary's fiance was a sailor who lost his life at sea. Both John and Rosemary thought that romance was no longer in their grasps.

But there were a few stumbling blocks in their courtship including Rosemary's selfish older sister who held her to a promise to never leave her alone. Rosemary was forced to turn down John's proposal because of her sister's refusal to release her from her vow. However, when things with the children get so bad that John was completely at a loss, young Una overheard him pining for Rosemary. Una rushed to Rosemary and asked her to marry her father. Once a few misunderstandings were cleared up, the two reunite in Rainbow Valley. John loved Rosemary and wanted her to be his wife. But he also loved his children and wanted them to have a loving and caring mother whom he knew he had found in Rosemary.



Chapters 1, 2 and 3

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 Summary

In Chapter 1, Miss Cornelia Marshall Elliot had been married to Marshall Elliot for thirteen years but most people still thought of her as Miss Cornelia. Except Susan Baker who, with the most pointed emphasis, always called her Mrs. Marshall Elliott. Miss Cornelia, from Glen St. Mary, was on her way to Ingleside to see Dr. and Mrs. Blythe who had been in Europe for three months. She had much to discuss with them especially the new family in the manse.

Susan Baker and Anne Shirley Blythe were on the veranda as Cornelia made her way to Ingleside. Anne was beautiful and girlish for a woman with so many children. Rilla Blythe, a chubby little six-year-old, was asleep in the hammock. Shirley, who was called "the little brown boy" was asleep in Susan's arms. He was Anne's child but had been mothered by Susan due to Anne's poor physical condition after his birth. Shirley always ran to Susan with all his bumps and bruises.

Anne was glad to see Cornelia coming. She was anxious for some good gossip from Glen St. Mary after being away for so long. Even Susan, who was an old maid, was anxious to hear who got married. While Anne and her husband had been away, Susan had taken Shirley with her to stay at her brother's in Avonlea. Susan had heard that Mrs. Harrison Miller had tried to hang herself but failed. Harrison Miller was considered a man of extremes, some due to religion and some due to his nature.

In Chapter 2, Cornelia wanted to know where all the kids were. Shirley was in bed, Anne told her. Jem, Walter and the twins were in their favorite place—Rainbow Valley. They just came home that day and were anxious to visit there. Cornelia said she was glad everyone was back. She'd been lonely. Cornelia told Anne and Susan about the new minister, the Reverend John Knox Meredith. He was very nice and spiritual but had no common sense.

Since Cornelia was behind getting a new minister, why did she select him with all his apparent flaws, Anne asked. There were many objections to the other candidates and the church was anxious to settle on a new minister. Susan mentioned that the Reverend Meredith was quite handsome and that there was no Mrs. Meredith. He was a widower. His wife died four years before. He had four children and moved them and his old Aunt Martha with him to the manse.

Cornelia described how dirty and neglected the manse was and the children, especially eleven-year-old Faith, were all undisciplined. Thomas Carlyle, who they called Carl, was nine and always bringing toads and bugs in the house. Una was ten—sweet but not pretty. Gerald, clever and smart, was twelve and the oldest. Cornelia mentioned that the children were never well-dressed. The children played in the graveyard next to the manse which Mr. Meredith should not have allowed. Reverend Meredith was always



reading and walking around in a daydream. He came alive during his sermons—his delivery and spirituality superior to that of the Methodists.

Anne would have the children come see her. The twins would be taking music lessons from Rosemary West. Rosemary was a pretty girl and engaged once but her husband-to-be was a sailor who died at sea. Rosemary and her sister Ellen stayed very isolated hardly even going to church. The family had a strong Episcopalian heritage.

In Chapter 3, in the daytime, the Blythe children liked to play in the big maple grove between Ingleside and the Glen St. Mary pond. But in the evening there was no place like Rainbow Valley. The children named the valley after seeing a huge rainbow from the window of their house one late afternoon. There was winding paths and wild cherry trees in the valley. A little brook ran through it. No houses were nearby to spoil the natural beauty. It wasn't far from the village yet it seemed isolated and remote. There was a beautiful white birch tree that the children called "White Lady." They called a spruce and maple tree which grew close together the "Tree Lovers."

Jem was thirteen and a big strong boy with his mother's fine features and red hair. He was a great talker and a loyal friend. It seemed he always could find the ripest berries and tastiest nuts in the forest. He would catch trout and then fry them in a pit he built outside. Walter was the handsomest of the Ingleside kids and had his mother's love of the arts. Jem was the kid who could do everything at school from scholastics to athletics. Walter rarely participated in sports and loved to read poetry. The ten-year-old twins, Anne who was called Nan, was pretty with dark brown hair and eyes. She was blithe and dainty. Diana looked like her mother with gray-green eyes and red hair. She was her father's favorite. On evening in the Valley, they stopped their playing and wondered who was coming down the hill from the manse.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 Analysis

In Chapter 1, Anne Blythe and her doctor husband had been away for an extended period of time in Europe. Cornelia, apparently in charge of recruiting a new minister for the Presbyterian Church and also the town gossip, is on her way to talk with the Blythes. When Anne and Susan Baker see her coming, Susan is not happy. There is an apparent rift between Cornelia and Susan. Susan is an old maid and for some reason relishes calling Cornelia "Mrs." This introductory chapter introduces some of the main characters and defines some relationship issues between them.

In Chapter 2, Cornelia has news about the new minister, the Reverend John Meredith. Cornelia tells Anne about all the pastors who had tried out for the position but had failed to impress Cornelia and the others who were charged with selecting a new minister. Cornelia is critical of him and his lifestyle. Susan slyly slips in that the man is handsome. He also happens to be a widower. Those two facts about the new minister makes the reader wonder how many women in the area will be after him. Although Cornelia is married, does she have an interest in the new minister herself? Even though she complains about him, she did select him and can't seem to stop talking about him.



Rosemary West is mentioned as the the kids' new music teacher. She is beautiful and single - perhaps a possible love interest for the new Reverend.

In Chapter 3, the reader learns more about the Blythe children in this chapter and the magical area they love to play and explore in and which they dubbed Rainbow Valley. Jem is the oldest boy and is smart and apparently a natural leader. Jem is the favorite of old Aunt Marilla who lives at Green Gables where his mother romped and played as a youngster. The younger boy, Walter, is the introspective type who likes to be alone and ready poetry. The stark differences between the two boys may come into play as the story unfolds. Nan, one of the ten-year-old twins, is named after her mother but looks nothing like her. Her twin, Diana, looks exactly like her mother. There is a comment that their father favors Diana perhaps because she looks so much like her mother. The favoritism of a parent for a child can evolve into an unhealthy relationship. A cliffhanger at the end of the chapter indicates that the Blythe kids are about to mee Reverend Meredith's children. How will all the children get along?



Chapters 4, 5 and 6

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Summary

In Chapter 4, although the manse was messy and suffered from neglect, it was undeniably a charming and happy place. The Reverend was criticized for spoiling his kids something that he did not hesitate to admit to. They had no mother. Meredith was so engrossed in his reading and studies that he failed to pay close attention to the kids. He didn't know that his boys were playing leap-frog over the graves of former members of the church. The Meredith kids didn't like the tall monuments in the old graveyard. They liked the flat stones that they used as seats. When Jerry tired of leap-frog, he'd play his Jew's harp. Carl was often searching for bugs; Una playing with her doll; and, Faith playing with her pet rooster, Adam, or swinging her feet in rhythm with the music from the harp. Una was shy and sensitive while Faith felt a need to improve their lives. They liked to read the epitaphs on the gravestones and noticed that they were all positive. Una told the others that Aunt Martha warned her not to say anything bad about the dead because they could come back to haunt her.

They were curious about the Blythe children. The manse children had been at the train station the afternoon when the Blythe children arrived. Faith said she liked their looks, especially Jem. Una thought Walter was handsome even though Jerry heard he was a sissy. Una liked their mother, Anne. Of course, Una was only six when she lost her mother and envied all children with mothers. They heard that Anne had never really grown up even though she was taller than Mrs. Elliot.

The kids smelled something cooking and followed their noses to Rainbow Valley where they met the Blythe children. Diana invited them to join them for trout dinner. By the time they finished dinner, they had bonded and were great friends. The children exchanged stories about their lives. They were accepting of each other and offered no criticism or judgments. Jerry asked who lived in the house on the hill above the valley. It was the West sisters who lived there - Rosemary and Ellen. Rosemary would be teaching music that summer to the Blythe girls. Una wished she could take music lessons. Rosemary was beautiful with hair the color of taffy. Di was frightened of Ellen who had black brows and a deep voice. As evening fell, the children parted, filled with the joy of new friendship. Jem lingered behind. As always, he knew where to find the prettiest flowers to bring to his mother.

In Chapter 5, much to the consternation of some old maidens in the area, Faith and Una were free to roam and play with no real responsibilities. Faith loved the freedom but Una wished they were being taught to sew and cook like other girls they knew. One morning the manse kids all ran over to Mr. Taylor's farm. They were exploring his barn when they heard a noise in the loft. They all crept up the shaky ladder to find a girl curled up in the hay, looking like she just woke up. It was twelve-year-old Mary Vance. Her blue eyes were so light that the kids thought she had white eyes.



Mary started crying and immediately Faith put her arms around her to comfort her. Mary hadn't eaten in days and only had water from the brook. Faith insisted that Mary come home with them and eat. They fed Mary Vance who attacked the food like she'd never eaten before. After she ate, they went outside to the graveyard. The kids wanted to know all about her. Mary had run away from Mrs. Wiley who worked her to death and starved and beat her. They didn't blame her for running away, they told her. Mrs. Wiley was going to give her away to another woman who was even meaner. She'd rather live with the Devil himself—words that sent chills through the girls. She left with seventy cents and was planning to going to Charlottetown to look for work. But she lost her money. The kids asked her to stay with them. Mrs. Wiley got her out of the asylum when she was eight. Her mother had hung herself and her father slit his throat.

They discussed death and dying and heaven and hell. Mary didn't know that the Devil lived in Hell and didn't know that bad people went to Hell and burned eternally. It frightened Mary. They told her to be good she had to read the Bible and go to church. That afternoon, the manse kids took Mary to Rainbow Valley and introduced her to the Blythes. Faith gave Mary one of her nice dresses. They let Mary stay all night and sleep on a cot. Mary cried that night worried that she'd have to return to Mrs. Wiley's. Faith said she didn't think God would send her back there. In the study below Rev. Meredith worked on his sermon not knowing about the lost soul under his own roof.

In Chapter 6, after getting some proper clothing, Mary went to church with the manse children. She behaved well although some people wondered who the shabby little girl was. The kids tried to convince Mary to go to school with them but she said she was done with school. While the kids were at school, Mary cleaned up the manse. Aunt Martha wouldn't let Mary cook. After school, they'd go to Rainbow Valley. Mary wouldn't play in the graveyard. She was afraid of ghosts—she'd seen them before.

Mary admired Jem and made points with Carl when she showed interest in all his critters. Mary didn't do as well with the girls. She told Nan her mother was a witch because she had red hair. Mary criticized Una's dolls and made her cry. But the girls didn't stay angry with her because she was jolly and told great ghost stories. Mary was on the bossy side and bragged about her talents. She could do anything she put her mind to she told them. Mary still feared that Mrs. Wiley would find her. The manse kids told her that neither they nor the Blythe kids had ever been beaten.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Analysis

In Chapter 4, it seems as though the manse children and the Blythe children were fast friends. They come from different circumstances which may portend conflict in the future. Una is especially troubled by not having a mother and envies the Blythe children for having Anne as a mother. Perhaps part of Anne's allure to Una is that the kids heard that Anne had never grown up. Since Una is the youngest, the youthfulness of Anne might be particularly appealing to her.



Una is envious because Nan and Diana will be taking music lessons. Jem is especially thoughtful and close to his mother which is symbolized by his gathering a bouquet of flowers for her. There is more mention of the West sisters—the sweet and lovely Rosemary and the somewhat frightening Ellen. They apparently have a close relationship but are nothing alike. One thing they have in common is that they keep themselves isolated. There is a mystery about these two women that will probably be revealed as the story unfolds.

The children play in the old graveyard by the manse, an indication that Mr. Meredith does not properly attend to them. They don't seem to fully realize that they are literally dancing on other people's graves. They notice that only good words are said about the dead on their gravestones. Only Una seems to have a fear of the dead because Aunt Martha told her that if one speaks ill of the dead they might come back to haunt him.

In Chapter 5, Mary Vance is introduced. She is a run-away child who left an abusive situation in which she apparently was treated like a slave. It is ironic that Mary, who didn't know about Hell and the Devil, wound up in the Reverend's house. Was it coincidence or providence? The children discuss profoundly deep and adult subjects—illness, death, eternal damnation and the Devil. Faith gives Mary a new dress to replace her old worn dress. But the manse children soon find out that much more important things about Mary Vance are in need of repair than her outward appearance. They tell her to be good and stay out of Hell, she needed to study the Bible and go to church. It seems the perfect person to "save" Mary is in the very house where she finds herself. But Reverend Meredith is so caught up in writing his sermons that he's unaware that someone who is under his roof at the very moment is in desperate need of his counseling. It is almost a certainty that they will soon have a confrontation.

In Chapter 6, Mary is displaying some characteristics that may cause problems. She is bossy and brags about herself. The boasting is indicative of a person who has no self-worth or self-identity. Her bragging masks the fear and uncertainty within. Another sign of her lack of self-esteem is her endless defensiveness. The suffering she has endured in life has toughened her but the pain is wide and deep within her. Mary is afraid of ghosts and claims she's seen them. With both her parents dead, she may be afraid that she might see them.



Chapters 7, 8 and 9

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 Summary

In Chapter 7, Susan sent Rilla up the hill to the manse with a basket of early strawberries. Susan had let Rilla wear her best dress and hat. The little girl was proud that she was given such an important task. Susan told her to give the basket only to Mr. Meredith or Aunt Martha. Mary, who wasn't in a good mood after having just clashed with Aunt Martha over potato peeling, watched the little girl walk up the hill. Mary greeted Rilla and said she'd take the basket. But Rilla wouldn't give it to her. Rilla tried to leave but Mary blocked her. Mary grabbed a fish that was drying nearby and hit Rilla with it. That was too much for the little girl. She dropped the basket and ran. The berries all spilled out and were ruined. Mary chased Rilla down the hill.

Right when they were passing through Glen Street, Rilla fell in a mud puddle. Just then Miss Cornelia emerged from a store and immediately sensed what was going on. Mary high-tailed it up the hill. Miss Cornelia picked up the sobbing Rilla and brought her home. Susan was livid. Cornelia said it was time for Mary Vance to move on. They discussed with manse children—Miss Cornelia worried about how they were allowed to run wild. But Anne said they were good and fun-loving kids. Miss Cornelia said that if Mr. Meredith had a wife all would be well. Elizabeth Kirk was single and would make a good wife. But she was homely and Mr. Meredith had an eye for beauty. They discussed several other young women but none were suitable for Mr. Meredith according to Miss Cornelia. Susan told Anne that the teacher said Walter was falling behind in math because he preferred writing rhymes. Anne pointed out that Walter was a poet - like Shakespeare and Milton.

In Chapter 8, Miss Cornelia confronted Mary Vance the very next day. Mary was honest about her mistreatment of Rilla. Her honesty seemed to impress Miss Cornelia. None the less, Miss Cornelia scolded her and told her she should show her gratitude to the family that took her in and not chase away their little friends. Mary told Miss Cornelia she was sorry and that she had cried all through the night about her behavior. She told her about being Mrs. Wiley and that she was afraid she would be coming after her. Miss Cornelia warned her to change her ways.

Miss Cornelia told Anne about her conversation with Mary. She was sending her husband to speak with the Wileys. Anne said that if Mary was mistreated by the Wileys, she should be made to return there. But Miss Cornelia insisted that Mary was a bad influence on the Meredith children and should return to the asylum. Miss Cornelia returned a few days later and told Anne that her husband learned that Mrs. Wiley was found dead in her bed the very day that Mary was missing. Miss Cornelia said that Mary should be returned to the Hopetown Asylum. Miss Cornelia planned to speak with Reverend Meredith about the entire situation the next day.



Nan was on the porch doing her lessons while the women talked. After she completed her work, she left and joined the other kids in Rainbow Valley. The kids were talking about the story of the Pied Piper. Carl gave everyone an update on his ants. Mary had watched them with Carl. She almost took god's name in vain and everyone knew it. Faith and Una both said it wasn't right for a lady to talk like that. Mary reminded them that she wasn't a lady. Mary couldn't expect god to help her if she took his name in vain.

Nan arrived breathless from running. She told Mary that Mrs. Wiley was dead. The other kids convinced Mary that she hadn't prayed Mrs. Wiley dead. Mary would probably have to go back to the asylum. Una said she would pray that she wouldn't have to. Maybe their father could help her. Mary wanted to stay she liked them and the Blythes. They were all the friends she ever had.

In Chapter 9, Miss Cornelia confronted Mr. Meredith about allowing Mary Vance to come into his family without knowing anything about her. Mr. Meredith was shocked over his carelessness with his children. Mary wasn't bad, Miss Cornelia told him, but rugged and unrefined. Miss Cornelia would contact the asylum but Mary would have to stay on at the manse until word came from Hopewell. Mr. Meredith called Mary into his study. She was terrified but she had the surprise of her life. He was the kindest man she ever met. She poured her heart out to him.

Nan suggested that Miss Cornelia take her in. She was always looking for household help. But everyone was afraid to ask her. Word came from the asylum that Mary was to be sent back immediately. She cried herself to sleep that night. Una sneaked off and went to Miss Cornelia's. She asked Miss Cornelia to take Mary in. At first she was appalled by the thought but the more that Una begged, cried and pointed out all of Mary's good qualities, she weakened and agreed to think about it. She talked with her husband who told her without hesitation to take her in. Anne was so happy. The girl needed a home.

Mary was happy to hear the news, a little subdued, but happy. Una warned her that she better not use bad words there or tell lies. But no matter what, Miss Cornelia would never whip her. The manse kids gave her a picnic and gifts on her last day there. Una reminded Mary that it was God who allowed her to stay cause she'd be praying to him not to send her back. Mary wanted to give God a chance. She thought of Him as a lot like Mr. Meredith. Una told her to talk to her father about God.

Mary told Una to keep the house clean so that everyone didn't gossip about it. Before long, she told Una, she'd probably have a step-mother. Una had never thought about that possibility. Una was sure her father wouldn't marry again. Mary told her that all the old maids had their eyes on him. Una laid awake for hours thinking about the prospect of a step-mother. She wished Mary wouldn't have mentioned it. She wished her mother was still with them. John Meredith had never considered marrying again. He had loved Cecilia so deeply.



Chapters 7, 8 and 9 Analysis

In Chapter 7, Mary Vance's personality problems have come to the notice of Miss Cornelia who thinks Mary should be on her way. Mary has wakened the sleeping dog with her aggressiveness toward little Rilla. Mary seems to sense that she has met her match in Miss Cornelia since she runs away when she is caught terrorizing Rilla. Unless Mary changes her ways, she may be losing her happy home. Mary's treatment of Rilla reminds Miss Cornelia that the the manse children are wild and need a mother and Reverend Meredith needs a wife. No one seems to be good enough for Mr. Meredith in Miss Cornelia's view. Perhaps she pictures herself with the handsome pastor.

In Chapter 8, even though Mary Vance was known to lie, she somehow has the sense to tell Miss Cornelia the truth and impress the very prim and judgmental woman. She said a little too much, however, because she told her about Mrs. Wiley which set off a chain of events that could lead to Mary Vance leaving the manse. Mary was convinced of her evilness when she learned that Mrs. Wiley was dead. She thought she prayed her to death. But the incident served to get everything in the open. It leads to Miss Cornelia confronting Reverend Meredith about Mary and how he had exposed his children to a total stranger. When Mary opens up to the Reverend herself, she is comforted by his kindness and there is a hint that she may become more of a believer. Miss Cornelia opens her heart and takes Mary in saving her from returning to the asylum. Miss Cornelia and Mary Vance are both very strong-willed and aggressive people. How they will get along with be interesting to see.

In Chapter 9, Una, who was most impacted by her mother's death, frets over the possibility that her father could marry someone else. It never occurred to her because her father had never mentioned remarrying or showed any signs that he was interested. Mary seems to understand that Mr. Meredith would be quite a catch for some of the single women in the area. Una feels hurt. The memory of her mother is so raw and important to her that she can't stand the thought of someone taking her place. She is too immature to understand that it might be beneficial to Mr. Meredith and the children should he remarry. The concept of his remarriage has been threaded throughout the story and it is sure to come to some resolution. Perhaps it's a good thing that Mary mentioned the possibility of Una's father remarrying because if it happens it won't be such a shock to her.



Chapters 10, 11 and 12

Chapters 10, 11 and 12 Summary

In Chapter 10, Faith and Una discussed how dull Sundays were. They shouldn't feel that way, Una said, because they were the daughters of a minister. Aunt Martha was very ill, moaning and bedridden. But she wouldn't let the girls call Dr. Blythe. She never had a doctor in her life and she wasn't going to start then. They missed their father. He was off with Jerry to Nova Scotia for a vacation. The girls were having to cook and they weren't having much success. Faith got inspired and decided that she and Una should give the entire house a good cleaning.

The next day, Aunt Martha was sick and so was Carl. He had a fever and sore throat. The girls decided to clean every room except their father's study. The girls pulled all the furniture out on the veranda. They took all the rugs outside and beat the dust out of them. Faith stood on one of the tombstones while she beat the rugs just when Elder Abraham Clow and his wife passed by in their buggy. They were horrified.

The girls thoroughly cleaned the parlor and dining room. They stopped for a bit to eat and sat in the kitchen reading a new book that Diana had loaned them. Word got back to Miss Cornelia that the girls had cleaned house on Sunday. It was scandalous. They were just about out of food when Aunt Martha finally recovered and got the butcher to deliver some meat. It had rained for days but the sun was shining again. The manse kids met the Blythe kids and Mary in Rainbow Valley.

In Chapter 11, Mary met the other kids in the valley. She told them that everyone was gossiping about Faith and Una skipping Sunday School to clean house when their father was on vacation. Mary scolded them for ruining their father's reputation. The girls denied it passionately. They just had their days mixed up. Jem said they'd have to clear up the misunderstanding up. They got confused because the prayer meeting was changed from Thursday to Wednesday that week. Una was upset but Faith had a great plan that would explain it to everyone.

In Chapter 12, the Reverend Dr. Copper preached at the Presbyterian Church in Glen St. Mary that evening and gave a splendid and impressive sermon. After the sermon, Faith surprised everyone by walking to the pulpit platform and facing the congregation. Although Faith was nervous, she had to save her father's reputation. She explained how she and Una had gotten their days mixed up. It was Elder Baxter's fault because he changed prayer meeting night. They went to Sunday School but left when no one showed up. They cleaned house on what they thought was Monday - not Sunday! She scolded the group in general for blaming their father for their mistake. She ran from the pulpit sobbing.

The next day, she rode a pig through town and dared Walter to ride another one with her. The pigs were strays that belonged to Bertie Shakespeare Drew's father. Faith was



actually doing the Drews a favor by returning them to their farm. Faith had a great time but Walter was crimson with shame. Some people shrieked in horror. Rosemary West laughed. Mr. Meredith happened to return just as they rode through town. He made a mental note to talk to Faith about her behavior but forgot by the time he saw her.

Miss Cornelia was still reeling from Faith's performance at the church. It had become a bigger scandal than the housecleaning. Anne and the West sisters admired Faith for speaking up for her father. Miss Cornelia was in a tizzy about the pig ride. She didn't blame Walter. She knew it was Faith's idea. Anne scolded Walter about it but only very mildly. The manse kids were impetuous but Anne was too as a child. Mary was doing fine. Miss Cornelia was astonished at how hard she worked. Miss Cornelia told Mary that she had to go to school when it started in the fall.

Chapters 10, 11 and 12 Analysis

In Chapter 10, Una and Faith get a taste of being on their own and learn that it isn't fun. They also learn that good intentions are not always rewarded. They worked hard to clean the house because everyone in the community complains about how unkempt it is. However, a neighbor saw them cleaning house on Sunday resulting in a real scandal. Another lesson the girls need to learn is that because their father is a minister, people expect more out of them and criticize them more harshly. It's not fair but deep down they know life is not fair because they lost their mother so early. The neighbors seem to treat the manse children very unfairly. They have no compassion for the children who lost their mother and are often left to fend for themselves.

In Chapter 11, Una and Faith are the topics of a scandal. They became confused about the day of the week - probably there were no calendars in that disorganized house - and missed church. They attended church on what they thought was Sunday but it was actually Saturday. Their father had gone away and their aunt was sick. Seems like no one in the community wants to give the manse children the benefit of the doubt and are quick to criticize them. Some of the criticism may come from the fact that they are motherless which, of course, the children had no control over or fault in.

In Chapter 12, Faith shows not only her high-spirited personality but her willingness to put herself out on a limb to defend someone else - in this case, her father. Although she is criticized for trying to explain that the rumors were false about her and Una, she opens herself up for more criticism for being too bold and inappropriate. And, of course, the criticism redounds back to her father. They blame him for not raising her to be more subdued and ladylike. And the town gossip, Miss Cornelia, is one of her biggest critics. But Anne admires Faith and relates to her spirit. She was like that herself as a child and understands and can't help but admire the young girl. No one can read about Walter and Faith riding through town on pigs without laughing. Just when no one could have bet that Faith could top her performance at church, she rides through town on a pig. Her critics didn't recognize that Faith was returning some rogue pigs to their owner. She has good intentions but her methods are not conventional.



Chapters 13, 14 and 15

Chapters 13, 14 and 15 Summary

In Chapter 13, there was a little secret spring in Rainbow Valley. The kids all knew about it but most adults did not. Rosemary West had sat by the spring with Martin before he sailed on his fatal voyage. John Meredith knew where it was and on one occasion after returning from the harbor on his pastoral rounds, he stopped for a drink of the spring water when Rosemary West happened by.

John had met Rosemary before but seeing her in the moonlight by the spring, he knew he had never before seen such a beautiful woman. He was startled by her loveliness and Rosemary was startled by his presence. Rosemary had been there so many times before and had never run into anyone. Rosemary told John she came by for a drink. He insisted on getting her a cup of water. After she drank the water, he filled it again. She noticed that he drank from exactly the same spot that her lips had touched. John and Rosemary were both people who thought their chances for romance had ended. When they arrived at her home, he went inside with her to get a book he wanted to order.

While Rosemary hunted for the book, John visited with Ellen who was surprised to see him. Ellen was ten years older than Rosemary and opposite in every way. She was dark and big and masculine and had a forbidding quality about her. But she was jolly and well-bred and quite intelligent. They discussed the German Kaiser and German militarism. The three sat for a while. Rosemary just listened to their conversation but, as Ellen noted later, John could not keep his eyes off Rosemary. She told Rosemary that John wanted to court her. She was sure John just wanted to be friends. He had told her how much he loved his wife. Ellen reminded her of her promise. In her room later, Rosemary felt unsettled. She was tired of old worn out dreams.

In Chapter 14, on his way home, John was thinking more about his conversation with Ellen than about the lovely Rosemary. His interest was diverted from German militarism to German theology. As he was known to do, he came deeply immersed in the subject that he allowed it to take over his life. For weeks he let everything else go, obsessed with learning more. A couple stopped by to get married. With uncombed hair and wearing his bathrobe he began the ceremony. He inadvertently turned to a funeral service. The bride cried when she heard him say "ashes to ashes and dust to dust." He failed to attend to a sick parishioner and forget the prayer meeting.

One day Mrs. Alec Davis, the richest woman on the church's board of managers, came by to see him. She was the one person in the congregation that he detested. But she was important and influential so he had to be respectful. Mrs. Davis had come to see John with a proposal, something that would be a real favor to him. When John came in she came right to the point. She wanted to adopt Una. John couldn't believe what he was hearing.



Ever since her husband died, she had wanted to adopt a girl. She liked Una's mild nature. She would bring her up properly, give her painting and piano lessons. She would be a real lady. And, she would leave every cent of her money to Una. John glared at the vulgar women who idolized money. He thought back to when his wife died. She had held Una close to her and told John to take care of the little girl.

John thanked her for her intentions but he declined her offer. He would not give up his child. The material things that she offered paled in comparison to a father's love. She was angry and surprised by his response. She told him it was common knowledge that he cared little for his children and in fact neglected them. Everyone considered his children wild and ill-mannered, she told him. The more she said the angrier she got. But so did John. He stood and said good afternoon to her.

When Mrs. Davis left, John did not return to his reading. Mrs. Davis' visit had disturbed him to the core. Now his focus was totally on his children. He regretted his mishandling of them. He loved his children as deeply as any father. What he needed, what they needed, was the influence of a good woman. But if he brought in another housekeeper, Aunt Martha would be devastated. But Aunt Martha herself had even hinted to him that he should remarry. The most sympathetic woman he knew was Anne Blythe. He would go talk to her about his problems. Just when he was walking over to see Anne, he saw Anne and her husband riding off. He then thought of Ellen and her engaging conversation and of Rosemary and her sweet face.

In Chapter 15, Miss Cornelia and Susan gossiped about the funeral of a woman in the community named Myra Murray. Her husband, Jim, would not find another woman like her. Anne preferred not to be part of the conversation and kept her distance, only adding that she hoped to see Myra again in heaven. Mary sat by Miss Cornelia knitting a sock. She had to sew three inches before she could join her friends in Rainbow Valley.

Miss Cornelia would miss Myra in church, especially because of the wonderful job she did in her Sunday School class. Mrs. Laurie Jamieson had offered to take over the class. Miss Cornelia said her family was too new to the church. She couldn't be trusted. She could turn Methodist at any minute. They discussed Mrs. Alec Davis who had left the church without giving a reason. The only thing she said was that she would not pay one cent toward Mr. Meredith's salary. Miss Cornelia assumed that his ill-mannered children had annoyed her.

Everyone knew that Mrs. Davis had visited Mr. Meredith and that she called the kids "varmints." But other than that, no one knew what had happened between Mrs. Davis and the Reverend. Miss Cornelia worried about the money the church would lose without Mrs. Davis. And, she could influence her other wealthy friends to leave the church as well. Norman Douglas used to make a big yearly donation but he had left the church years before due to a conflict with another church member. Miss Cornelia told Mary she had sewed enough and could go play. Mary raced off toward the valley.

Mary told the manse kids that the church was losing money and that soon their father would be out of a job. Faith took it to heart and could barely sleep that night. She could



not bear to think about leaving her friends. She blamed her problems on being the daughter of a minister. Early in the morning, Faith sat up in her bed. Mary had said that if Mr. Douglas returned to the church, her father would keep his job. She knew exactly where he lived. She would somehow convince Mr. Douglas to come back to the church.

Chapters 13, 14 and 15 Analysis

In Chapter 13, from the beginning the story was heading for a romance between the Reverend John Meredith and one of the single women in the community. One of the most likely candidates was Rosemary West. And finally, when they meet by the spring it seems as though a romance may be in bloom. The reader learns a little more about the relationship between Rosemary and her sister, Ellen. Rosemary is ten years younger than her sister. Rosemary is blond and tall and beautiful and Ellen is dark and massive and unattractive.

After Ellen observes John and Rosemary together, she notices that he cannot take his eyes off her. Ellen reminds Rosemary of her promise which has not yet been revealed in the story. Ellen is apparently the dominant sister and does not want to lose her only companion, her sister. Although Rosemary tells her that John only wants to be friends, she doesn't really believe that any more than Ellen does. For John, he had never seen such a beauty. He was smitten from the moment he saw her in the moonlight by the spring.

In Chapter 14, surprisingly, John seems to have enjoyed the homely Ellen for her intelligence and great conversation more than the lovely Rosemary who he was initially so taken with. His obsessive personality comes to bear in this chapter. He becomes so engrossed in studying German theology that he neglects his family and his responsibilities as a pastor. His obsessive nature nears an unhealthy level.

But John gets a dose of reality from the most unlikely of sources. The one person from the congregation that he can't stand - the rich snobby Mrs. Davis - wants to adopt his child. The reason she makes such a bold move is because everyone assumes that John doesn't care that much for his children since he neglects them and lets them run wild. It shakes John up but Mrs. Davis' proposition is perhaps precisely what he needs to realize that he is not being a good father. He loves his children but that's not enough. Loving a child means putting them ahead of one's own wants and needs and John has not been doing that. Perhaps he eyes will finally be opened.

John feels the need to reach out to a woman. Instead of thinking of Rosemary, he thinks first of Anne and then Ellen and her engaging conversation. He needs to talk to someone. His best bet would be Rosemary but he seems to be rather dense when it comes to children and women.

In Chapter 15, Faith is initially described in the book as a child who likes to fix things, make things right. She has demonstrated this trait in several important matters. First, she spoke before the church congregation in order to save her father's reputation. Now



she plans to speak with a wealthy former church member to try to convince him to come back to the church. Again, it's for her father's sake. If the wealthy donors leave, the church would dissolve and John would lose his job. Faith doesn't want to see that happen but she also doesn't want to leave Rainbow Valley and all her friends.

The town gossip, Miss Cornelia, is curious about Mrs. Davis leaving the church. Her curiosity may drive her to dig deeper and find out what caused her to get so angry and quit the church. Once she finds out that Mrs. Davis left because Mr. Meredith refused to let her adopt Una, Miss Cornelia will feel justified in warning the Reverend to pay more attention to his children. Miss Cornelia sticks her nose in other people's business but in the case of Reverend Meredith and how he treats his children she is right on.



Chapters 16, 17 and 18

Chapters 16, 17 and 18 Summary

In Chapter 16, after school the next day, Faith headed out to see Mr. Douglas. She passed Walter on the way and told him she was out on church business. Dan Reese made pig noises at her. She didn't expect Walter to defend her the way Jem or Jerry would and she didn't hold it against Walter. He was a gentle creature. Walter felt bad that he hadn't defended Faith. He knew Jem would have. He was afraid that Faith despised him.

Although Faith had been enthused about seeing Norman Douglas, she was growing nervous now that it was time to make her appeal to him. She had heard that he was mean and called the boys names. What if he called her names? Mr. Douglas was on the veranda when Faith arrived. She meekly stepped onto the porch. Mr. Douglas looked up and scowled. He wanted to know who she was and what she wanted - and he didn't ask in a kind a gentle way. After prodding her, she finally told him her name.

Norman had heard tales of her breaking the Sabbath and riding on pigs. Finally, she mustered up enough nerve to tell him she came to ask him to come back to the church so he could help pay her father's salary. He accused her of being dispatched by the old maids who were enamored of the Reverend. She insisted she came on her own. He told her to get off his property. She stumbled down the veranda stairs but by the time she made it to the path, she was no longer terrified, she was angry. She turned and headed back. She would tell the old ogre what she thought of him. And tell him off she did. He was rude, unfair and disagreeable, she told him. She vowed to make face at him every time she saw him. She would write his name under the picture of the Devil.

To her utter surprise, Douglas was delighted with her show of temper. He told her she had spunk. He apologized for being rude to her. If she sat down with him, he'd come back to church and attend once a month and pay the salary. Douglas told her that her name didn't fit her. He'd call her Red Rose - it fit the way she looked when she was angry. He told her to tell her father to preach some hell - it liked fiery sermons. He'd pay an extra ten dollars for every such sermon the Reverend gave.

In Chapter 17, Norman made quite a stir on his first visit to church in November. John said he hoped Mrs. Douglas was well. Norman responded that she wasn't very well when he buried her ten years before. He stopped Faith, calling her Red Rose, and told her to tell her father that he had contradicted himself and that he wanted to hear a fire and brimstone sermon when he came in December. He said to ask her father if God could make a stone so big that he would not be able to lift it.

At school, Dan Reese called Faith pig-girl again. This time Walter rushed at him to defend her. Dan called him a coward. Walter knocked Dan off the fence he was perched on. Dan vowed revenge and challenged him to a fight the next night after school. Faith



told Una about the fight and they both feared that Walter would get hurt. But Faith was beginning to think the real coward was Dan. Anne and Susan could sense something was wrong with Walter who was quiet and removed and didn't want to play with the other kids.

Walter slept very little that night and his teacher found him to be not a very good student the next day. Una refused to watch the fight and went home but Faith stayed. Word had spread about the fight and quite a crowd encircled the two boys. Dan leveled the first punch which sent Walter reeling a bit. He retaliated and lunged at Dan with a fury. Walter's anger drove him to victory. He pinned Dan to the ground and made him surrender and take back all the things he said about Faith and his mother and all the other mean things he said.

Walter didn't wait to take a victory lap although the boys who had gathered were applauding him. He encountered John on the way home who could see he'd been fighting. He defended Faith and his mother he told the pastor. John said fighting should be rare but it was justified when women were insulted. Anne, Susan and even Miss Cornelia were proud of Walter. The women discussed the many visits that John was making to the Wests. They speculated about John and Rosemary becoming man and wife.

In Chapter 18, Mary Vance joined the twins in the Valley. They had gathered and were chewing spruce-gum. The Blythe girls were not allowed to chew it any place other than in the seclusion of the valley. But the manse kids were, of course, unrestricted as to where they could chew gum. Older brother Jerry scolded Faith for chewing gum in church. Mary was wearing a fine new hat and coat which almost made Una envious. By comparison, the manse girls' clothing was shabby and in poor condition. Aunt Martha couldn't see well enough to repair them. Mary got a piece of gum from Di and began chewing it. She loved chewing gum but wasn't allowed to in front of Miss Cornelia.

Mary noticed that Una was eyeing her new squirrel muff and let her put her hands in it. Miss Cornelia was treating her well but of course she worked very hard for her. Miss Cornelia never had laid a hand on her. Mary heard that it was Faith who gave Mr. Douglas a tongue-lashing and got him to return to church. John was exchanging duties with another pastor, Mr. Perry from Charlottetown, and wouldn't be preaching the sermon that day. Mary said she knew something was up. She heard that Aunt Martha was in the barn killing a rooster for Sunday dinner. Faith leaped to her feet. There was only one rooster in the barn, who is her pet, Adam. Faith ran off for home.

Chapters 16, 17 and 18 Analysis

In Chapter 16, Faith's courage sees her through once again when she appeals to Mr. Douglas to return to church. It was an especially brave step for Faith since she had heard from the boys at school that Mr. Douglas was mean and called them names. But the speculation about him did not stop her. She has a tenacity about her, an



independent spirit that compels her on to accomplish things that are beyond what would be expected of a child.

Faith also learns that the best person she can be is herself. When the normally aggressive and bold young girl acts frightened and timid, Mr. Douglas tells her to get off his porch. But his rudeness angers her and allows the real Faith to shine through. Amazingly, when Faith tells Mr. Douglas off, he is totally seduced by her charm. He finds her exciting and engaging. She was clever when she told him she'd write his name under the picture of the Devil. Although it wasn't Faith's intention when she told him how mean and cruel he was, she wound up wrapping him around her little finger. And, once again Faith saves the day and her father.

In Chapter 17, Walter is maturing and although he's not naturally aggressive, he feels humiliated when he doesn't defend Faith. When the opportunity arises again, he feels he must defend his friend. Although it was totally against his nature, he is supported by John who is much like Walter. He tells Walter that fighting is generally wrong unless one is defending someone weaker than he is - for example a woman. John seems to feel a pride in Walter's actions. John has shown an inability or reluctance to defend those who are weaker than he is - in his case, his children. Perhaps John will be inspired by the young boy to defend those who are dear to him.

Curiosity is building about John's frequent visits to the West house. Cornelia and the others are assuming that he's visiting Rosemary. But could it be that John has more interest in the intellectual sister, Ellen?

In Chapter 18, the shabbiness of the manse kids pointed to their need for a mother. Also, their lack of discipline continued to be a problem. It was ironic in a way that the poor orphan that the manse kids rescued, was wearing better clothing and displaying better manners than the manse children. Faith was stricken with another emotional trauma when she learns that her pet rooster was probably going to become dinner.



Chapters 19, 20 and 21

Chapters 19, 20 and 21 Summary

In Chapter 19, by the time Una got home, Faith was sobbing in her bed, inconsolable. Aunt Martha had killed Adam. Faith would not come down for dinner that night or go to church. She had to come down and meet the minister but was unfriendly and contradicted him. Pastor James said that little girls shouldn't interrupt or contradict their elders. Being called a "little girl" didn't help her mood and neither did the rotund Pastor James who picked poor Adam's bones clean. Neither Faith nor Una would take a bit of the old rooster.

After dinner, Faith went to her father's study by the warm fire where she thought she'd be alone. Instead, Pastor James followed her in and criticized her for not being a better housekeeper. As he prattled on with his back to the fireplace, she saw that his long coat-tails had caught on fire. She had to stifle her giggles until he suddenly realized that he was on fire. He stomped the flames out but there were two big holes in the tails of his new suit. He scolded her for not telling him. But she said she was obeying him. He had told her little girls didn't interrupt. He had to give the evening sermon in his singed coat. Faith felt that Adam had been partially avenged.

In Chapter 20, the boys belittled Faith the next day at school about Adam, writing her sarcastic condolence notes. After school, she felt the need to talk to someone who understood her and immediately thought of Anne. She was running through the valley when she spotted Rosemary West. She learned that Anne wasn't home. She didn't know Rosemary that well but the beautiful woman could tell she was upset and offered to try to help her. Faith was afraid that she would laugh at her. Rosemary told her she never laughed at anyone's misery.

Faith told him how she detested Pastor James for eating Adam. Rosemary didn't like him either. She went to school with him and indeed, none of the girls liked him. But she reminded Faith that the pastor didn't know that he was eating her pet rooster. Rosemary agreed that it wasn't fair that her pet had been killed for dinner. Rosemary had a pet hen when she was a child.

Was it wicked of her not to tell the pastor his coat was on fire, Faith asked Rosemary. It was wicked but she would have done the same thing Rosemary told her, her eyes dancing with mischief. They both laughed at the thought of Pastor James' burning coat-tails. Faith said now that Adam was gone, she could never love anything again. Rosemary told her not to think that way. Without love, one's life is empty. Rosemary offered Faith one of her canaries. She could position the cage high enough so that Aunt Martha's cat couldn't get near it. Faith said she would love to have the bird. Rosemary promised to bring it to her the next time she came to town. Rosemary knew that tongues would be wagging.



At dinner that night, Faith told Una about Rosemary. John's ears perked up when he heard her say that she was thrilled when Rosemary hugged her and called her dearest. He asked if she liked Rosemary. Faith said she loved her.

Chapter 21: The Impossible Word

John walked through the snow-filled valley toward Rosemary's house. He was going to tell her what was on his heart. It had been sparked that first night in the valley and had blossomed with Faith's praise of her. Not that he could love her as deeply as he loved Cecilia, but she would be a good mother and perfect mistress for his home. And, he was happy in her company—happier than he had been in years.

It was Saturday night, a night he usually reserved for sermon preparation, but he learned that Ellen wouldn't be home and he could be alone with Rosemary. All the times he had visited them, Ellen was always there. He liked Ellen and admired her knowledge and intelligence, but on this occasion it was important that he talk with Rosemary by herself.

Rosemary had vowed to Ellen that when their mother died, she would never marry and leave her. Ellen was so distraught with the thought of being alone that she forced Rosemary to swear to it on their mother's Bible. At the time, Rosemary was sure she would never want to marry. She had already lost the love of her life. Rosemary knew that John was coming to propose to her and had prepared words of refusal because of the promise to Ellen. But when he came and asked, the words she had prepared to say had vanished. Her silence disturbed John. He thought she would say yes. She told him she would tell him in a few days.

Chapters 19, 20 and 21 Analysis

In Chapter 19, Faith is certain that if her mother were alive, she would have never allowed Adam, her pet rooster, to become dinner. Faith is hurt and feel powerless. She displaced anger for Pastor James who feasts on Adam but is innocent in that he didn't know it was her pet. She also enjoys some displaced revenge when his coat-tails catch on fire. But the man was pompous and condescending to Faith and is not a sympathetic character and most readers will enjoy envisioning the pastor on fire.

In Chapter 20, just like her father, the first person that Faith thinks of to talk to and find comfort in from her pain in losing Adam is Anne. But because Anne is not home and Rosemary is there to offer her sympathy, Faith easily falls under her spell. The hurt and pain of Faith comes off the page. She so needs a mother, or a mother figure, to talk to and share her pain and fears with - not just about Adam but about a myriad of matters. And as Faith matures, she'll need a mother even more. Faith tells Rosemary that since she's lost Adam, she can never love anything again. When Faith responds that every life needs love, she is talking as much to herself as she is to Faith. Rosemary is so sweet and understanding that Faith tells her father that she doesn't like Rosemary, she loves



hers. Does John share that emotion for Rosemary? Perhaps Faith's feelings for Rosemary will wake John up once and for all.

In Chapter 21, Faith's love for Rosemary has finally compelled John to realize how much Rosemary means to him. He doesn't think he'll love her as much as he did Cecilia but that sentiment is probably attached more to guilt and loyalty than it is to reality. John knows that his children need a mother and he is finally admitting to himself that he needs a woman to love.

Rosemary knows that John is coming over to propose. Her promise to her sister was to never marry and leave Ellen alone. It was an unfair promise for Ellen to force her sister to make. But Rosemary was still in mourning over losing her fiance at sea and was of the mind that she'd never find anyone to love like she did him.

But when John proposes, Rosemary cannot turn him down. He is disappointed that she will not answer him and needs time to think about it. He, of course, is not aware of the pressure she is under. Ellen had been fearing that John would be proposing to Rosemary and has been reminding Rosemary about her vow. Rosemary obviously wants to marry John. Will she break her vow or will her sister do the right thing and release her from that bind?



Chapters 22, 23 and 24

Chapters 22, 23 and 24 Summary

In Chapter 22, Ellen returned from a wedding party that Norman Douglas also attended. He had courted her in their youth before his surprise marriage. Ellen wondered how John had reacted to Rosemary's rejection of his proposal. When Ellen arrived home, a frantic Rosemary told her she had not turned John down but told him she would think about the proposal. Ellen was upset—there was only one answer she could give him. Rosemary told Ellen that she loved John and wanted to be his wife. Ellen refused to release Rosemary from her promise and would not discuss it again. The next day, Rosemary wrote John a letter with her answer. She turned him down and made it appear that she didn't care for him at all. After reading the letter, he realized that he did love Rosemary now that he had lost her. He was devastated. Ellen told her cat, St. George, that Rosemary would be upset for a while but would survive.

In Chapter 23, Mary warned the manse kids that Mrs. Davis said that if they didn't behave better she would see to it that the Reverend would be asked to resign. The kids were being criticized for playing and blowing bubbles in the graveyard and Carl, in particular, for bringing his critters everywhere. Mary told the kids she also heard that Rosemary was going to become their step-mother. Faith wanted to be good for their father's sake. Jem stopped by and after he heard about their problems, decided they should form a Good-Conduct Club. They would be punished every time they did something wrong. They'd have to think of ways of punishing each other but no physical punishment would be allowed. Jem would provide a fifth vote in case of a tie between them. Faith emphasized that there would be punishment for anything they did that would hurt their father. They wrote down their rules and all four kids signed the document.

Una hoped it wasn't true about Rosemary and her father. Faith hoped it was true. Mary had told Una that all step-mothers were mean but Faith assured her that Rosemary would never be mean to them. None the less, Una cried herself to sleep that night.

In Chapter 24, a little neighbor girl, Lida, walked over in the rain with some mackerel for the family. She wasn't wearing any shoes because she didn't have any. Faith was appalled and pulled her socks and shoes off and gave them to Lida. Faith felt deflated when Una pointed out that the only other pair of socks she had were the hideous blue and red striped ones that Aunt Martha knitted for her. The boys would ridicule her for sure. Faith walked around barefoot in the icy water trying to catch cold so she wouldn't have to go to church until her brother pulled her off. Henry Warren happened to be passing by the house just then and thought he caught the manse kids having a big fight in the graveyard. She didn't catch cold but swore she would not wear those socks to church.



Chapters 22, 23 and 24 Analysis

In Chapter 22, Ellen is showing herself to be completely self-centered. She is denying her younger sister personal happiness just because she's miserable. She had been involved with Norman Douglas when they were young. Is there a chance that the two could spark up a relationship? If so, she would be more likely to release Rosemary from the unfair vow she made years before.

In Chapter 23, the manse children are sincerely trying to improve their reputation not so much for themselves as it is for their father. Even though he's been a distant and hands-off parent, his children obviously love him. Una, still clinging to the memory of her mother, is upset at the prospect of having Rosemary for a step-mother. Faith is hoping that Rosemary will become their step-mother because she knows how kind and loving Rosemary is. Of course, Faith doesn't know the drama that is taking place between her father and Rosemary. Since Faith is always concerned with her father's well-being and since she likes to "fix things" perhaps she will try to help her father win Rosemary.

In Chapter 24, Faith shows her charitable spirit and compassion by giving her socks and shoes away to Lida who has none. But as she already learned, no good deed goes unpunished. Faith will pay in the end. When Una and Jerry tried to stop her from walking in the icy water, a neighbor spread the rumor that the manse kids were having a big fight in the graveyard. The news will surely be the next scandal that the manse kids will have to deal with.



Chapters 25, 26 and 27

Chapters 25, 26 and 27 Summary

In Chapter 25, Faith's long brown dress didn't cover her boot tops which exposed at least two inches of bare leg. Although her father and Carl hadn't noticed, plenty of other people noticed that Faith was barelegged at church. Mrs. Davis feared that the manse children might come to church with no clothes on at all. Anne figured Faith just forgot her socks. Miss Cornelia officially gave up on the manse kids. Anne planned to knit Faith a couple pair of black socks immediately.

Mary told Faith about the gossip. A tearful Faith explained why she gave her socks and shoes to Lida. Jerry was upset with her because everyone would blame their father. Faith devised a plan to explain her actions and thereby once again rescue her father. She published a letter of explanation in the Glen's weekly newspaper called "The Journal." She described the entire situation, her motivations and the reason she didn't want to wear the socks. She pleaded with everyone not to blame their father.

In Chapter 26, Miss Cornelia stopped by Anne's house with The Journal. Anne had read it and had to hide her smile from the trembling Cornelia. The editor was away and his capricious young son allowed the letter to be printed as a joke. Mr. and Mrs. Burr vowed to leave the church. Cornelia had hoped that Mr. Meredith would have solved everything by marrying Rosemary but that seemed to be over. Mr. Meredith didn't go to the West house any longer and Rosemary looked ill the last she saw her. She heard Ellen had sent her away for a good rest. Apparently, Ellen was seeing old Douglas again. Apparently, he fell in love with Ellen all over again when he saw her again after he returned to church.

Anne suggested calling a meeting of all the ladies in the community - Methodists and Presbyterians - and proclaim their love and support for Reverend Meredith and his family. Anne went on and touted all the good qualities of the minister and his children. After she was done, Miss Cornelia felt guilty about all the harsh criticisms she had leveled against them. She, for one, would never apologize for the family again and would never publicly criticize them again.

In Chapter 27, Cornelia held her tongue but it wasn't easy. The manse kids held an hour-long concert in the old graveyard. They sang to the top of their lungs—mainly hymns but ended up with a resounding version of Polly Wolly Doodle. They held the concert on the same night as the Methodist prayer meeting. The Reverend was home in his study with the windows open. He couldn't help but hear them. Miss Cornelia talked with Mr. Meredith about the concert. Meredith also didn't know about Faith's letter in The Journal because he never read it. He called the children into his study that night.

Faith confessed that the concert was her idea. They only sang Polly Wolly Doodle to end on a happy note. They didn't know the Methodists were holding their prayer



meeting that night. John blamed himself more than the kids. They vowed to impose self-punishment on themselves. Later, in his study alone he wept and called out to Rosemary. He needed her. If only she had cared for him.

Chapters 25, 26 and 27 Analysis

In Chapter 25, everything Faith does turns into a scandal. She was barelegged at church because she didn't want to wear her stripped socks which she knew she would be ridiculed for. She was barelegged because of her compassion for a child who was less fortunate than she but, of course, no one knew that and no one thought to ask why Faith was barelegged. Her reputation was now preceding her. The community expected to worse from her and that's what they looked for. Although Faith explains everything in the local newspaper, she only creates another scandal.

In Chapter 26, Faith's letter in the newspaper, although first perceived as yet another scandal, turns out to be a pivotal point in the life of John Meredith and his children. Cornelia is shamed by her prior treatment of them and vows to never spread any more tales about them. Since Ellen is being courted by Douglas again, perhaps she will release Rosemary from her vow. But will it be too late?

In Chapter 27, yet another scandal is circulating about the manse kids. Cornelia once again confronts John with the story. He blames himself more than he blames the kids. John is at a loss. He loves his kids but he is just not a good disciplinarian. He realizes how much he needs Rosemary but knows it's hopeless. But it may not be hopeless since Ellen may have found some happiness of her own.



Chapters 28, 29 and 30

Chapters 28, 29 and 30 Summary

In Chapter 28, the Good-Conduct Club decided to impose a one-day fast for their punishment. Jerry said they needed to pick next Sunday because the biggest dinner of the week was served on Sunday and it would hurt the most. They were all starving and dinner was difficult to resist. Una mentioned she felt dizzy. At church that evening, she fell out of the pew and fainted. Dr. Blythe brought Una around. When John found out that the kids were fasting for their punishment he told them that he had scolded them and that no further punishment had been necessary. The doctor said that all Una needed was a good square meal. John felt guilt and shame for once again not being aware of what his children were doing. He needed a wife. Other women would marry him but he loved Rosemary. And so long as he felt so much for her, no one else would do. He would have to suffer through himself. He told the kids to come to him with their problems.

In Chapter 29, Mary told the kids the eerie tale of Henry Warren's ghost. He was raised in the Glen by an aunt and uncle who were mean to him and murdered him to get the money his departed parents had left him. He came back and haunted the Bailey garden, moaning and crying. Legend had it that he grabbed people by the legs as they walked by. Carl, Una and Faith had to walk home alone. They stayed close together and made a wide berth around the Bailey farm.

In Chapter 30, the tale of Henry Warren's ghost lingered with the kids. One summer night in the valley, Faith, Una and Carl sat under the Tree Lovers and saw a shapeless white form off in the direction of Bailey farm. It started coming toward them. They shrieked and ran up the hill to the manse but no one was there. They ran to Ingleside and ran right in to Rosemary who was visiting there. They told her they had seen Henry Warren's ghost. Susan ran down to the valley to find out what they saw while Rosemary calmed the children down. As it turned out, Mrs. Stimson had hung a pair of white sheets on the Bailey dyke. Later, Faith pointed out to Una how sweet Rosemary had been.

Chapters 28, 29 and 30 Analysis

In Chapter 28, John's continued lack of attention to his children is placing the children at risk. John needs a wife but he loves Rosemary so much that no one else will do. He tells the children to come to him with their problems. But since past is prologue, John will probably continue to get lost in his thoughts and works and not really be there for them. Besides, they have been "on their own" for so long, that they have learned to follow their instincts and not think of getting advice from a parent.



In Chapter 29, the kids are spooked by Mary's ghost story. Will their fears lead to other problems for them and their father?

In Chapter 30, the children cause another near scandal as they tear through the valley to escape a ghost they think they see. Rosemary is kind to them and doesn't ridicule them. Faith is happy to point out to Una how nice she was to them. Faith has not given up on the idea of Rosemary becoming their step-mother and Una is at least warming to the idea.



Chapters 31, 32 and 33

Chapters 31, 32 and 33 Summary

In Chapter 31, Jerry decided his siblings should be punished for their latest antics. Carl's punishment would be to sit on a gravestone by himself until midnight. He could leave when he heard the study clock strike twelve. At eleven, it began to rain. At twelve the cold and drenched Carl went inside. The next morning he was deathly ill with pneumonia. Dr. Blythe tended to him. Carl's condition worsened to double-pneumonia. After nights of fretting and worry by the family and Dr. Blythe, Carl finally pulled through. After all the details came out about why Carl was in the graveyard that night, Miss Cornelia forbade Mary to tell any more ghost stories.

In Chapter 32, Norman Douglas spotted Rosemary entering Rainbow Valley and followed her. He wanted to talk with her. Ellen was afraid to ask her to forget the promise. She and Douglas wanted to marry. Of course, Rosemary agreed immediately. He'd arrange for the wedding right away. Douglas told her she could live with them. Ellen apologized to Rosemary and hoped it wasn't too late for her and John Meredith. It was too late. John despised her. Ellen said if Rosemary would not come live with her and Douglas, she would not marry him. Neither sister would budge.

In Chapter 33, Mary told Faith and Una that Rosemary wouldn't marry their father because she thought the kids were hopeless. She also heard that Carl was wrongly blamed for throwing stones through someone's windows but that he was guilty of putting an eel in Mrs. Carr's buggy. Mrs. Carr thought it was a snake and jumped out of the cart and hurt her legs. John found out about the eel story and confronted Carl about it. John told Carl he'd have whip him. John was miserable all day thinking about whipping Carl. He didn't even know how to whip him or what to use. After dinner, Carl and John went into the study. John had a switch but threw it down. He told Carl to go. He couldn't whip him. Una slipped into the study later to comfort her father. He was holding his head in agony and talking aloud.

Chapters 31, 32 and 33 Analysis

In Chapter 31, once again, the children left to their own devices has placed another one of them at risk. Carl is near death after sitting out in the cold and rain on one of his punishments. Will almost losing one of his children finally make John a more attentive parent? At least Miss Cornelia understands that Mary's ghost stories have contributed to the problems of the manse kids.

In Chapter 32, the sisters are in a stand-off. Since Rosemary can't stand Douglas, there's no reason why she would leave her home to live with him. Ellen feels guilty about ruining her sister's chance for happiness and refuses to marry Douglas because she won't leave her sister alone. Misery loves company?



In Chapter 33, John cannot bring himself to whip Carl. He realizes that he is a failure at parenting and needs Rosemary more than ever. Una overhears his private words. Will she follow her big sister and take matters into her own hands?



Chapters 34 and 35

Chapters 34 and 35 Summary

In Chapter 34, the other kids were in the valley. Una crawled into the spare room closet where her mother's wedding dress hung. She told her mother she'd never forget her and would always love her but she had to do something for her father because he was so unhappy. She found Rosemary sitting in the garden reading. Ellen was still refusing to marry Douglas who hadn't given up on her. Rosemary greeted Una warmly. She stuttered at first but finally blurted out that she came to ask her to marry her father. He thinks you won't marry him because us kids are so bad, she told her. He was so unhappy. If she would marry her father, the kids would all be as good as they could be. Una overheard him yearning to be with Rosemary.

Rosemary had Una take a letter to her father. She told Una that she was a brave girl. And to not listen to Mary Vance. She would never turn their father against them. After Una left, Rosemary told Ellen it was quite likely she would be marrying John. Ellen laughed and cried at the same time and said she hoped they'd all be happy. John read the letter. Rosemary asked him to meet her by the spring in Rainbow Valley.

In Chapter 35, Miss Cornelia told Anne that the double wedding would be in the middle of September. They could already see that Rosemary was transforming John. He wasn't dreamy and absent-minded any longer. He would be closing the manse and deposit the children with different caretakers while they're off on their honeymoon.

The kids all met in the Rainbow Valley for one last time before Jem would be taking off to attend the academy in Charlottetown. Jem wished he had his childhood days back again, thinking of all the fun times in the Valley. He said the Piper was coming and when he did he'd be glad to follow him all around the world.

Chapters 34 and 35 Analysis

In Chapter 34, Una is following in her sister's footsteps. She is putting aside her own fears about having a step-mother and focusing on her father's happiness. She resolves her feelings for her mother and realizes that life has to go on. She will always love and respect her mother but her father is alive and she wants to do what she can to make him happy.

Ironically, it takes one of the unruly Meredith kids to solve a whole lot of problems that the adults were unable to resolve.

In Chapter 35, John has already benefited from the love of a good woman. He may have been in mourning in the years since his wife died and buried it in his work which caused him to neglect his children and his own emotional needs. The kids are all

maturing but as the oldest of the group, Jem, gets ready to leave the valley to attend the academy, he grieves for the carefree days of childhood.



Characters

Faith Meredith

Faith Meredith was the third of John Meredith's four children. Although all the kids were independent, Faith was the most high-spirited. She was a positive young girl who laughed a lot and always thought she could fix things—right wrongs, heal relationships. When the manse kids discovered the runaway, Mary Vance, sleeping in a neighbor's hay loft, she was the first to embrace her and invite her home to eat and then to stay with them. Mary was wearing a dirty and tattered dress so Faith gave her one of her new dresses.

When Lida stopped by the house with some mackerel her father had caught, Faith was astounded to see that the little girl was shoeless and was walking barefooted in the cold mud and icy waters that covered the ground. Faith didn't think even a minute before she was taking her socks and shoes off and giving them to Lida. She had two pairs of shoes and Lida had none. To Faith, there was no choice in what she must do.

Like any child left virtually on her own, Faith made a lot of missteps for which she was soundly criticized by the town busybodies. Faith didn't care as much about her own reputation as she did for that of her father. She would go to any length to save his reputation and take the blame for her actions so that her father's position and standing in the community wasn't threatened.

Faith was a good judge of human nature. When she met Rosemary West, she knew that the kind woman would make the perfect wife for her widowed father and the perfect step-mother for her and her brothers and sister. Eventually, Faith was proven right when the two got together and plans were being made for their wedding.

John Meredith

The Reverend John Meredith was chosen by the church council to become the new minister at the Presbyterian church in Glen St. Mary, Nova Scotia. He was a very stoic individual who was not especially warm or approachable. He was described as dreamy and remote. He would become obsessed his studies and so absorbed in his work that he wasn't aware of things that were occurring in his own household.

Four years before John came to Glen St. Mary, his wife, Cecilia, died. He had four children who ranged in age from six-years old to thirteen. The children were left to run wild as he had little supervision over them. He loved them - but he loved them from afar. He had withdrawn into himself after his wife died and found having a career and raising four rambunctious children was just too much to deal with. It was easier to read books about theology and German militarism.



When his younger son almost dies from one of the antics the children pull, he is finally shaken and knows that he has let his children down. He is in love with a woman who he thought had rejected him but one of his children is able to clear up a big misunderstanding and get the two back together again. Little six-year-old Una rushes to Rosemary's house and proposes to her. "Will you marry my father," she asks.

A visible change comes over John after he and Rosemary have plans to marry. The people in the community notice that John is no longer distant and dreamy and seems happy with the prospect of having a new wife and a new mother for his children.

Anne Blythe

Anne Blythe is married to Dr. Gilbert Blythe. They live with their six children in Glen St. Mary in their home called Ingleside. Anne is the "Anne of Green Gables" fame.

Rosemary West

Rosemary West's fiance was a sailor who died at sea some years before the story begins. She and John Meredith eventually meet and fall in love. Although there are a few bumps in their road to happiness, the story ends with the couple planning their wedding.

Miss Cornelia

Miss Cornelia is the town busybody and gossip who is always into everyone's business. She confronts John Meredith several times about the bad behavior that his children display.

Mary Vance

Mary Vance is a twelve-year-old runaway and orphan who the manse kids discover. They invite her home and let her live with them until Miss Cornelia adopts her.

Una Meredith

Una Meredith is the youngest of the manse kids. She is sensitive and unsure of herself. But she makes a bold move when she asks Rosemary West if she will marry her father.

Jem Blythe

Jem Blythe is the eldest of the Blythe children. He is smart and athletic and is a natural leader. As the story concludes, Jem is off to the academy in Charlottetown. He laments about leaving his childhood behind.



Walter Blythe

Walter is the second oldest son of the Blythe kids. He is artistic and creative like his mother. He loves to read and write poetry. Although he's not a natural fighter, he defends Faith against a bully at school and gets the better of him.

Jerry and Carl Meredith

Jerry and Carl are the two older children of John Meredith. Jerry is savvy and the dominant sibling. He feels terrible when he makes Carl sit out in the rain for a punishment for his bad behavior and then contracts pneumonia and almost dies. Carl loves all insects and critters and often brings them inside with him.

Nan and Diana Blythe

Nan and Diana Blythe are twins. Nan has dark hair and looks nothing like her mother. Diana is a clone of her mother, Anne, and her father's favorite.



Objects/Places

Glen St. Mary

The story of Rainbow Valley" takes place in a small community called Glen St. Mary.

Rainbow Valley

In the area that surrounds the small community of Glen St. Mary, is a valley that is lush with trees and flowers and has a bubbling spring that runs through it. The kids dub the area "Rainbow Valley."

Prince Edward Island

The small town of Glen St. Mary is located on Prince Edward Island, Canada.

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia is located a short distance away from Prince Edward Island. John and his son Jerry take a short vacation to Nova Scotia.

Ingleside

Anne of Green Gables and her husband Dr. Gilbert Blythe and their children live on an estate on Prince Edward Island called Ingleside.

Presbyterian Church

John Meredith is selected as the new minister for the Presbyterian Church in the Glen St. Mary community.

Methodist Church

There is a Methodist Church in Glen St. Mary. The Meredith children scandalize their father by singing hymns in the graveyard on the same night that the Methodist Church is having a prayer meeting.



Avonlea and Green Gables

When Anne and Gilbert travel to a Europe for a months-long vacation, they send their older children to Avonlea and Green Gables, two locales where Anne spent much of her childhood.

Reverend Meredith's Study

John Meredith spends most of his time in his study. When the girls decide to clean the house, they do not clean the study because they are not allowed to disturb anything in their father's study.

The Old Graveyard

The Meredith children spend most of their play time in an old graveyard located by the manse.



Themes

Communication

As in most stories about relationships, communication comes into play in many different ways in "Rainbow Valley." The most glaring communication problem is that between the Reverend John Meredith and his four young children. That communication problem is that there is hardly any communication at all. John lost his wife four years before the story begins. Although he doesn't vocalize it, he is depressed and misses his wife who he loved dearly. His pastoral duties coupled with raising four rambunctious children proves to be much for him and he retreats, withdraws within himself and focuses on his work and study and his grief.

The manse children have no problem communicating with each other. They are probably somewhat forced to talk openly with each other because they really have no one else to go to for guidance and must rely on themselves and each other to get through the day.

Miss Cornelia is also quite a communicator in fact she's kind of a busybody and the town gossip. She has an opinion about everyone and everything that everyone does - especially the manse kids that she is never reluctant to criticize. Miss Cornelia adopts the orphan Mary Vance who is quite a talker herself. She was orphaned when her parents both committed suicide and has had to learn to fend for herself and be able to come up with the quick response in order to survive.

Mary, like her adoptive mother, begins to gossip about everyone in town. Miss Cornelia realizes that her harsh criticism of the Meredith children has been harmful and not at all productive and vows not to speak ill of them any longer. When she learns that Mary is following in her footsteps, she orders her to stop telling tales, especially ghost stories that led to near tragedy for young Carl Meredith.

The two women in the community who understand the young Meredith kids are Anne Blythe and Rosemary West. Anne is a free spirit who used to be much like the kids in her childhood and Rosemary is just naturally sweet and positive and generally has nothing bad to say about anyone. These two women speak up on behalf of the kids and communicate their support for them.

Parental Responsibilities

The Reverend John Meredith was widowed four years before the story of "Rainbow Valley" unfolds. John is suffering from grief and depression and withdraws from his children. Perhaps the burden of being a single parent is too much for him after losing his wife who he dearly loved. Since he can't seem to cope with them, he neglects them and is unaware of most of their activities.



The four children range from a young teen to a six-year-old. The children are good kids but because of their immaturity they make a lot of missteps because they have no guidance. John is aware of the problem - Miss Cornelia the town busybody - has told him on several occasions that the children's behavior is scandalous. While Miss Cornelia is using hyperbole, the children do get in quite a bit of mischief, even placing themselves at risk on several occasions.

While it was very tragic that John lost his wife and anyone would have sympathy for him, he still had a responsibility to his young children. But, it was a responsibility that he mainly shirked; that is, until one child was near death from one of their antics.

Another child in the story, Mary Vance, was completely abandoned by her parents through a double-tragedy. Life and its problems were too much for her parents who were both alcoholics and both committed suicide, leaving Mary orphaned and at the mercy of an unforgiving asylum system for homeless children. Although Mary's parents without a doubt had personal demons, they brought a child into the world who they abandoned and shunned their responsibilities as parents.

Low Expectations

After the manse kids moved into the Glen St. Mary community, it wasn't long before the conservative members of the area began to notice that the new minister's kids were wild and undisciplined. The community knew that John Meredith was a widower and attributed some of the children's misbehavior to that fact that they were motherless and that the pastor was a dreamy, preoccupied type who was absorbed in his studies and pastoral duties.

However, as time went on the conservative congregation and members of the community ceased to make any excuses for the children. The manse kids were living up to the low expectations that the judgmental congregationists had perceived for them. The kids were seen playing in the old graveyard at all hours, sitting on gravestones and playing leap frog over them. Faith and Una were accused of cleaning house on Sunday and skipping Sunday School while their father was out of town. The girls just had just mixed up their days and had gone to church on Saturday morning, wondering why no one else showed up.

The very compassionate and charitable Faith gave up her shoes and socks to a young girl who had none. When she failed to wear socks under her boots to church, a scandal about her being barelegged at church took over the community. No one bothered to give her the chance to explain. She was behaving as they expected. Her critics began to look for things to criticize her about. She rode a runaway pig through town in order to return it to its owner. There was no recognition that she was returning a valuable animal to its owner. There was only criticism of her method of doing so.

Part of the negativity toward the manse children stemmed from the fact that they had no mother—a circumstance that they had nothing to do with. Mothers are usually the

parent who defends their children. With John rapped up in his own issues, the children were defenseless and the cruel and shallow people of Rainbow Valley were allowed to mistreat them without any repercussions.

Style

Point of View

"Rainbow Valley" by L. M. Montgomery is written in the third person limited-omniscient. The narrator tells the story of the manse kids and the struggles they have in their new home in Glen St. Mary on Prince Edward Island. The point of view is often that of young Faith Meredith, who is the daughter of the new minister. The reader also gains insight and the story gains depth from the perspectives of the characters Una Meredith, the Reverend John Meredith and his beloved Rosemary West, among others.

The author, L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery, was the author of the "Anne of Green Gables" series of books of which "Rainbow Valley" was the seventh book. Montgomery was born on beautiful Prince Edward Island, Canada, where the story takes place.

Montgomery lost both her parents at a very young age and was brought up by her grandparents. The relationships between parents and children are the focus of "Rainbow Valley" which obviously was a very personal subject for her. The manse children lost their mother when they were young, especially Una who was the youngest and was only six-years old when her mother died. Like Montgomery, the character Mary Vance lost both of her parents as a youngster. There are obviously very personal and emotional elements of the story that originate directly from the author's own experiences.

Setting

"Rainbow Valley" by L. M. Montgomery is set in the the Glen St. Mary community in Nova Scotia. The widower Revered John Meredith is the new minister in the community's Presbyterian church. He moves into the church's manse with his four children and his elderly Aunt Martha. The people of the Glen St. Mary community criticize the Merediths for the untidy manner in which the manse is kept by the Merediths. "Rainbow Valley" is the seventh book in the "Anne of Green Gables" series. The adult Anne is now married to Dr. Gilbert Blythe and the couple and their six children live in an estate referred to as Ingleside.

The manse kids are notorious for playing in the old graveyard by the manse. The Blythe children's favorite place to play and explore is in a valley near the community. Once the Meredith children are introduced to Rainbow Valley, it becomes their favorite place as well. One late afternoon the Blythe children had seen a huge rainbow arc over the valley and henceforth dubbed it Rainbow Valley. The lush valley is described as filled with beautiful trees and flowers. The children named a white birch, "The White Lady," and a maple a spruce that have entwined branches, "The Tree Lovers." Jem Blythe is clever and always finds the best tasting nuts and freshest berries in the valley and the most beautiful flowers to bring home to his mother.



A spring runs through the valley which most of the adults in the area haven't discovered. However, John Meredith was told about the spring by one of the children and he sometimes stops by there to get a fresh drink of spring water. It is there one evening, when the moon is shining over the valley, that he encounters Rosemary West, a beautiful woman in the community who he becomes smitten with. Rosemary used to come to the spring and sit and enjoy it with her fiancé, a sailor who was subsequently lost at sea. The two begin to fall in love that very night. The beauty and the magic of the valley might have been at least partially responsible for sparking the romance.

Language and Meaning

"Rainbow Valley" by L. M. Montgomery was written and first published in 1919 and is a story about the people in a community called Glen St. Mary on Prince Edward Island. The language that is used in the book reflects the culture and the era in which the book was written.

There is a short biography about the author, L.M. (Lucy Maude) Montgomery that follows the book. In the biography, the reader learns that Montgomery began her writing career at just fourteen when she began keeping journals. One of the main characters in the story is the Reverend John Meredith who is a Presbyterian minister. Montgomery herself was the wife of a minister and her knowledge of church sermons and pastoral duties is evident in "Rainbow Valley."

The societal mores of the time while quaint and charming at times, also illustrate how society has advanced from those times. The "scandals" that the Meredith children were accused of today would not even gain attention. For example, when Faith attends church without socks, it is a scandal that literally rocks the small, conservative community. Rosemary West is forced to vow to her spinster sister that she will never marry and leave her alone—something modern women would not even consider. The way the Meredith children are allowed to literally run wild, would probably gain the interest of Child Protection agencies in today's world - even though they were children of an respected religious leader.

Structure

"Rainbow Valley" by L. M. Montgomery is the seventh in the "Anne of Green Gables" series. The book is separated into thirty-five small to medium-sized chapters. The story focuses on the children of Rainbow Valley in the conservative community of Glen St. Mary in Nova Scotia. The story progresses in chronological order with a minimum of flashback scenes or references to prior events. Some of the characters are from previous "Anne of Green Gables" stories but knowledge of those prior works are not required to enjoy and understand this story.

The story focuses on a new minister who is chosen to be pastor of the Presbyterian church in Glen St. Mary. The widower, John Meredith, is selected for the position and he brings with him his four young children. The storyline is based on the loving but



neglectful father who is preoccupied with his duties and studies as a pastor and more subliminally his endless grief over losing his loving wife.

The character arc of John Meredith is an interesting aspect of the story. He is initially portrayed as remote and dreamy, although some of that demeanor stems from clinical depression. He is transformed through a series of mishaps and one incident of near tragedy involving his children. In the end, he faces the fact that while his high-spirited and independent children enjoy their liberty, in reality what they want and need is parental guidance.

"Rainbow Liberty" contains plot twists and cliffhangers that engage the reader. The story is a page turner which the author accomplishes by the quick pace of the story and its structure as a uncomplicated story that is enriched and made more complex by the characters who are struggling to find their way in Rainbow Valley.



Quotes

"You wanted to be Mrs. and Mrs. you shall be with a vengeance as far as I am concerned." (Chapter 1, page 1)

"The Good Book says that favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but I should not have minded finding that out for myself, if it had been so ordained. I have no doubt we will all be beautiful when we are angles, but what good will it do us then?" (Chapter 1, page 3)

"Once, looking from the attic windows of Ingleside, through the mist and aftermath of a summer thunderstorm, they had seen the beloved spot arched by a glorious rainbow, one end of which seemed to dip straight down to where a corner of the pond ran up into the lower end of the valley." (Chapter 3, page 14)

"The Rev. John Meredith walked the floor with rapt face and shining eyes, thinking out his message of the morrow, and knew not that under his own roof there was a little forlorn soul, stumbling in darkness and ignorance, beset by terror and compassed about with difficulties too great for it to grapple in its unequal struggle with a big indifferent world. (Chapter 5, page 40)

"I haven't got anything against God, Una. I'm willing to give Him a chance. But, honest, I think He's an awful lot like your father—just absent-minded and never taking any notice of a body most of the time, but sometimes waking up all of a sudden and being awful good and kind and sensible." (Chapter 9, page 64)

"'There are cities, too,' said the young dreamer, 'splendid cities—colored just like the sunset, with sapphire towers and rainbow domes.'" (Chapter 12, page 77)

"The Reverend Doctor was reputed to be a very eloquent speaker; and, bearing in mind the old dictum that a minister should take his best clothes to the city and his best sermons to the country, he delivered a very scholarly and impressive discourse." (Chapter 12, page 78)

"They two had drunk of the same cup. She remembered idly that an old aunt of hers used to say that when two people did this their after-lives would be linked in some fashion, whether for good or ill." (Chapter 13, page 88)

"It is never quite safe to think we have done with life. When we imagine we have finished our story fate has a trick of turning the page and showing us yet another chapter." (Chapter 13, page 89)

"Mr. Meredith shook hands with him absently on the church steps and hoped dreamily



that Mrs. Douglas was well. 'She wasn't very well just before I buried her ten years ago, but I reckon she has better health now,' boomed Norman." (Chapter 17, page 119)

"'Fear is more pain than is the pain it fears.' Do you know who wrote that, Walter? It was Shakespeare." (Chapter 17, page 126)

"I know you hate me, but, Lord, it'll be great fun living with someone that hates me. Life'll have some spice in it after this. Ellen will roast me and you'll freeze me. I Won't have a dull moment." (Chapter 32, page 208)

Topics for Discussion

In what ways was Rainbow Valley a magical and positive place? What adults knew about the valley and how did that play into the storyline?

Faith is described near the beginning of the story as a child who liked to make things right. Describe the ways in which she tried to "fix things" and the results of her efforts.

How was Ellen unfair to her sister? In what way did Rosemary demonstrate that she had more character than her sister?

What traits did Mary Vance pick up after she moved in with Miss Cornelia? Which of these traits was not especially a positive one?

When did Miss Cornelia realize that gossip was unfairly hurting Reference Meredith and his kids? What did she vow to do? What specific thing did she tell Mary Vance to stop gossiping about?

Name some of the instances where the author used comedy to make a point. Why is the use of comedy a useful literary device for a writer to use?

Why did Anne Blythe relate to the manse children, especially Faith? Describe some of the instances in which she supported them against the opinions of most other adults.