

# **Redeeming Love Study Guide**

## **Redeeming Love by Francine Rivers**

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# Plot Summary

Redeeming Love is based on the Biblical chapter of Hosea, in which God tells his prophet, Hosea, to marry the prostitute, Gomer, to illustrate God's faithfulness to Israel despite Israel's sin. The novel is set in the nineteenth century, and told mostly from the perspective of the prostitute, Angel. Her birth name is Sarah, but she hasn't told anyone her name since being sold into prostitution at the age of eight. When God tells Michael Hosea to marry her, he obeys, but this command proves to be more of a challenge to him than he bargained for. Angel continually runs from him, first in search of freedom, and then to escape the love she is starting to feel for Michael. However, Michael's steadfast love and God's faithfulness and protection eventually prove to Angel that she is worth loving, and she is able to give in to the love of her husband and of her God.

Even before being sold into prostitution, Sarah has known only rejection from men, as she overhears her father say that she should never have been born. From the relationship between her parents, Sarah learns what happens to women who love men, as she watches her mother grieve and eventually die feeling only rejection from the man she loves. Now eighteen and going by the name Angel, she believes that she knows everything about men and how to give them what they want. When Michael Hosea enters her room and tells her he wants to marry her, she is thrown off guard, but remains aloof toward him. It is not until she is nearly beaten to death that she agrees to marry Michael and leave with him as he nurses her back to health. Michael continues to surprise her as he claims to love her as his wife, and refuses to have sex with her. He is different from any other man Angel has ever known and this makes her confused and unwilling to trust him. She runs away at her first opportunity, but Michael is quick to find her and convince her to come home.

The next time Angel runs away, she gets a ride with Michael's brother-in-law, Paul, who hates her because of her past. When he demands payment for the ride, she pays him the only way she knows how, by allowing him to have sex with her. Their relationship is poisoned by this event until the very end of the novel. Back in the city, Angel is forced back into prostitution, but finds it more difficult now to remain distant. When an angry Michael shows up at the brothel and takes her home again, it is the relief on her face when she sees him that gives him hope and allows him to forgive her. For the first time, Angel is truly honest with Michael about her past, and their relationship begins to grow, based on honesty and affection.

Angel does not run away from Michael again for a long time, but when she does, it is because she is terrified to find herself falling in love with him. When she realizes that she does love him, she remembers what love did to her mother, and forces herself to leave. This time, however, she stays away from her old life, and is able to make an honest living for the first time in her life. When Michael comes to find her yet again, she confesses that she ran away because she was scared to love him, and he assures her that she can trust him. She agrees to go home with him again.



The final time Angel runs away, it is not because she doesn't love Michael, or even because she is scared of her love. This time, she proves that she loves him enough to make sacrifices for him. She believes that what Michael wants most in the world is children, but she is unable to bear children herself. She believes that by leaving, she will give Michael freedom to find someone else to marry, and he will therefore be happier without her. When she leaves this time, she intends to stay away forever. This time is also different because Michael does not go after her, believing that she needs to come back on her own. Angel is gone for three years, and has started a successful mission to help other young prostitutes, when Paul finally comes to find her. He soon realizes that he has been wrong about Angel all this time, and convinces her that Michael is still in love with her.

Angel returns home to Michael for a final time, offering her love and her life. He knows that she is back to stay this time, and is overjoyed when she gives him the only gift she has left to give: her real name, Sarah. God shows his faithfulness to Michael and Sarah throughout their lives, eventually blessing them with children and success in all their endeavors, and they are happily married for the rest of their lives.



# Prologue

## Prologue Summary

Redeeming Love is based on the Biblical chapter of Hosea, in which God tells his prophet, Hosea, to marry the prostitute, Gomer, in order to illustrate God's faithfulness to Israel despite Israel's sin. The novel is set in the nineteenth century, and told mostly from the perspective of the prostitute, Angel. Her birth name is Sarah, but she hasn't told anyone her name since being sold into prostitution at the age of eight. When God tells Michael Hosea to marry her, he obeys, but this command proves to be more of a challenge to him than he bargained for. Angel continually runs from him, first in search of freedom, and then to escape the love she is starting to feel for Michael. However, Michael's steadfast love and God's faithfulness and protection eventually prove to Angel that she is worth loving, and she is able to give in to the love of her husband and of her God.

It is 1835 in New England, and young Sarah is meeting her father for the first time. She has been raised by a loving mother, Mae, with the help of a woman named Cleo who helps to look after Sarah and the house. Every other time Sarah's father has come to visit, Sarah has been sent away, so she is excited about meeting him and apprehensive about what he will think of her. The meeting, however, is not the pleasant reunion Sarah is anticipating. Instead, Alex Stafford seems disgusted by her presence and insists that Sarah leave him alone with Mae. Eavesdropping outside the door, Sarah learns that she was never wanted by her father, who has a wife and another family, and would prefer his relationship with Mae to remain uncomplicated by Sarah's existence. The visit ends with Stafford storming out, leaving Mae in a deep depression. However, when Stafford wants to see Mae again a few months later, Sarah's fears of rejection are confirmed when Mae sends Sarah away with Cleo for a few days. On this trip, Sarah learns from Cleo's experiences that men cannot be trusted and that crying accomplishes nothing.

When Sarah returns to her home, things have changed. Her mother is packing up the house, maintaining a facade of happiness. Sarah's father no longer wants to have anything to do with Mae, leaving her without any money or place to live. After a fruitless attempt at asking her parents for their forgiveness and help, Mae takes Sarah to the docks of New York to live, slowly selling their possessions to survive. She eventually resorts to prostitution, and Sarah watches her cry herself to sleep at night. Eventually a man Sarah calls Uncle Rab comes to stay with them, and he seems to genuinely care for them, despite his dull personality. Life is not so bad for a while, but the winter that Sarah is eight, her mother becomes ill and dies, leaving Rab with the responsibility of caring for her little girl.

Initially, Rab forgets about Sarah in his grief over Mae, but he soon comes to his senses and wants to do right by Mae's final wishes. He hears about a wealthy man who wants to adopt little girls, and believes that this would be best for Sarah. After making sure Sarah was cleaned up and looking her best, Rab takes her to a big house and leads her



inside. The woman who greets them inside, Sally, seems hesitant to take Sarah, and advises Rab to take her home. Rab is sure he is doing the right thing and leads Sarah to the room upstairs. When Duke and another dark stranger enter the room, a drunken Rab can't even remember Sarah's name, but he does remember to take the money he is offered in exchange for leaving the pretty young girl behind. However, before he has a chance to leave with the money, Rab's throat is slit while Sarah watches from the corner. The dark stranger drags the body from the room, leaving Sarah alone with Duke. He carries her to the bed, and as he begins to undress, he decides to call her Angel. By morning, Sarah believes everything she's ever heard about the cruelty of men.

## Prologue Analysis

This prologue is crucial to the rest of the novel, because it provides the best insight into why the adult Angel is in the situation she is in, how a defenseless and innocent young girl can become a hardened and cynical prostitute. It is here that the core of Angel's personality was developed. Abandoned by everyone who loves her and sold into child prostitution, it is no surprise that she later refuses to love or trust anyone.

When Cleo tells Sarah about the cruelties of life, she says that she is going to teach her "God's truth" about life. By the end of the prologue, Sarah is sure she knows what God's truth is. Sarah spends the rest of the novel discovering whether she is right about God's truth or not. The prologue is also the only time the protagonist's real name is spoken until the book's final chapter.



# Chapter One

## Chapter One Summary

It's 1850 in California, and eighteen-year-old Angel hates her life. She is in a town called Pair-a-Dice, and the gold miners passing through look at her with the same lust and greed with which they look at the gold they work for. Angel hasn't been in California long, however, having traveled by ship from New England. She had been planning to leave her life of prostitution behind, but discovered on the ship that she either could return to prostitution, like the other two women on the ship, or be raped. Hoping to keep the money for a new life in California, Angel had decided to sell herself just until she got to shore. However, she was robbed and beaten by the other two women on the boat, so she was left with nothing to live on in her new city. It is not long until her beauty and moneymaking potential are discovered by the Duchess, Madame of the Palace, a Pair-a-Dice brothel. Angel agrees to work for her, giving up eighty percent of her wages in return for shelter and protection. Therefore, Angel continues to live the life of a prostitute, lacking the courage to end her misery in the only way she thinks possible — suicide. Her only friend is a fellow prostitute named Lucky, who encourages Angel to have hope for something. Angel, however, does not open up about her life or her past even to Lucky, and insists that she survives by not hoping for anything.

## Chapter One Analysis

In this first chapter of the book, we meet the adult version of the pretty, innocent little girl of the prologue. Still believing she knows God's truth about things, the adult Angel has become hardened, cynical, and completely closed to the world. However, her personality is not entirely harsh and unappealing. She has a soft spot for Lucky, her friend, and she remains cynical and somewhat humorous in her circumstances. We begin to get to know the person she has become, and we understand why she doesn't believe she can survive any other way. This chapter is also significant in the total powerlessness and sense inevitability Angel feels about her life. She manages to escape from Duke in New England, thus showing her desire for freedom, only to fall into the hand of the Duchess in California. Angel is resigned to her fate, because all her attempts to escape it have proved futile.





# Chapter Two

## Chapter Two Summary

Michael Hosea is in Pair-a-Dice selling his fresh vegetables to Joseph Hochschild when he sees Angel for the first time. He is struck by her beauty and her graceful composure as she walks down the street and he cannot stop looking at her. As she passes him, he hears the Lord speak to him, saying, "This one, beloved." At first, Michael is pleased by this, but when he asks Joseph about her, he is confused by the details of her profession. He thinks he may have misunderstood God's message, because why would he be told to marry a prostitute? In his conversation with Joseph, he learns that meeting Angel will be an expensive process, costing him most of the gold he is earning in his vegetable sale. He says he will spend the money on cattle instead, but does drive by the brothel on his way out of town. As he looks at the building, full of drunk and rowdy men, he looks up and knows that the woman he is going to marry lives in one of those upstairs rooms.

## Chapter Two Analysis

This is the chapter that introduces the book's second protagonist, Michael Hosea. His idea of God's truth is much different from Angel's, as he is sure he is going to marry a prostitute he's never met simply because God tells him so. From his interaction with Joseph, it is apparent that he is a well-liked and well-respected person. He's a quiet man, but not soft, and he is confident in himself.

This chapter is also significant because it is the first time Angel is discussed from the perspective of another character, which gives a sense of how beautiful and mesmerizing she really is. Both of these main characters have personalities that appeal to the reader, but in very different ways. This foreshadows their tumultuous relationship.



# Chapter Three

## Chapter Three Summary

Angel is preparing for her final customers of the evening. As she changes her clothes and listens to Lucky laughing in the next room, she remembers the time she tried drink whiskey with Lucky so that she could laugh away her problems, too. Instead, she became ill and unwilling to see any customers that night. She hadn't been scared of Bret Magowan until that evening, when he had come up to her room and nearly drown and strangled her the Duchess had come up to stop him. Since then she had known that Magowan would be willing to kill her and that she had better do exactly what she was told if she hoped to avoid him. So, she waits for her last customer, hoping it will be over soon.

When Michael Hosea enters the room, Angel can tell he looks very uncomfortable to be there, and he is. He wishes he had come up with another way of meeting her, but he knows that that is impossible. They spend the next half hour in awkward conversation, with Angel impatiently trying to seduce Michael, and Michael trying to convince Angel that he is not like every other man. He calls her Mara, which means bitter, and eventually puts her off her guard. However, she remains unconvinced of his sincerity and is relieved when he finally leaves.

## Chapter Three Analysis

In this chapter, Angel and Michael meet for the first time, and Michael realizes what a challenge it will be to convince Angel to marry him. However, Angel is a little surprised by Michael, and she struggles to maintain her shell of detachment intact. When Michael looks around Angel's room, he learns more about her than she is willing to tell him. She keeps all her secrets, particularly her real name, close to her but the absence of photographs or keepsakes in her room reveals more about her than she thinks. It is also important to note that Michael is very much attracted to Angel, and must work hard to resist his attraction to her physical appearance and seduction. He is offering to marry her and to look after her, but he is not a saint himself; he is a man, unsure of himself, doing his best to follow God.



# Chapter Four

## Chapter Four Summary

As Michael's nightly visits to Angel's room continue, the other girls in the brothel begin to get curious and jealous of such a handsome man coming for three nights in a row. Angel tries to convince them, and herself, that he is the same as any other visitor and that his presence is not disconcerting. She even tells one of the other girls, Rebecca, that she should convince Michael to come to Rebecca's room instead that night, hoping that this would put Michael out of her mind.

Meanwhile, Michael only has enough gold for one more visit, and is becoming frustrated by his conversations with Angel. He can see that she sits without listening to him, and that she lies when answering his questions, impatient for his half-hour visit to be over. When Rebecca tells him that Angel tried to pass him off onto her that night, his frustration turns to anger, and his visit with Angel is even more frustrating than usual. He does not know what to say to convince her to come with him, and she is unwilling to believe that her life could ever be better than it is. When he angrily calls her Angel instead of Mara, she is hurt by this, which surprises her. When he finally succumbs to temptation and kisses her, she believes his nervousness is because he has never been with a woman. Finally, Michael storms out in frustration, slamming the door behind him.

As he walks down the road away from the brothel, Michael does his best to ignore the words of God telling him to go back and get Angel. Instead, he decides that the next time he asks God for someone to share his life with, he will be more specific about what kind of woman he is looking for. He gets in his wagon, and leaves town, not even glancing up at Angel's window as he passes. Angel stands at her window, watching him drive away, and wonders why she is not more relieved at his departure.

## Chapter Four Analysis

This chapter is the culmination of Michael's meetings with Angel, and it shows his humanity despite his virtue. Michael becomes very frustrated with Angel, partially gives in to his temptation and kisses her, and then ignores the words of God by driving away from her. Meanwhile, Angel's protective shell begins to crack. She does not want to be affected by men, but she finds herself thinking about Michael more often than she wishes, and is disappointed when he leaves for good. She had come to accept the way things were, but Michael has forced her to again hope for a better life.

Another significant point in this chapter is when Michael angrily calls Angel by her brothel name instead of by the name he had given her earlier. Angel is hurt by this, because it shows that he is looking at her as a prostitute instead of as the woman he wants to be his wife. She refuses to tell anyone her birth name, but saw the significance in the fact that Michael refused to call her by the name used by everyone else.



# Chapter Five

## Chapter Five Summary

In the days since Michael Hosea left for the last time, Angel has become more and more discontented. She has begun again to think about the past and to wonder if there was any way out of her empty life. She shares a small amount of her story with Lucky, but remains guarded, careful to only disclose vague aspects of her past. She also tells Lucky that she is not sick, but she is sick of living. She wonders what could have been if she had run away with Michael, but she also remembers what happened the last time she trusted a man's promises and ran away with him. She was fourteen when she met Johnny, and does not want to relive the experience of what happened when Duke had had them brought back.

Angel's restlessness leads her to the office of the Duchess, where she asks for her earnings so she can leave and make a way for herself. At first, the Duchess is simply discouraging of the idea, but eventually claims that all of Angel's money is out of her reach, and then threatens her with violence. Angel does not believe the Duchess but has no choice but to return to her room and to her life. When Magowan knocks on the door a little while later, Angel knows what to expect. A method of escape dawns on her, as she decides that with a few choice words, Magowan will end her miserable life for her. As Angel laughingly goads him on, Magowan begins to beat Angel to unconsciousness.

## Chapter Five Analysis

Angel is becoming increasingly desperate, and here realizes that she truly has nothing. Even the money she is supposed to be earning for her work is not hers to use, and the very person who is paid to protect her doesn't care about her happiness and will even go so far as to have her literally beaten into submission. This is about as dark as it can get for Angel, and her despair is seen in her desire to die at the end of the chapter. The care and protection provided by the Duchess in this chapter will act as a sharp contrast to that which is provided by Michael in the chapters to come.



# Chapter Six

## Chapter Six Summary

Michael has left Angel, but he cannot stop thinking about her. He continually reminds himself of her attitude and behavior toward him, but even when he swears to stop thinking about her, he begins to see her in his dreams. Eventually his dreams turn to nightmares, and it is only when he decides he will go back one more time that he sleeps peacefully.

When Michael arrives in Pair-a-Dice the next day, he sees that Angel's curtains are drawn and bitterly decides that she must be working. He hears from Joseph that Angel hasn't been working for a while, and he becomes more frustrated, realizing that he may have difficulty even getting in to see her. He goes toward the Palace and is trying to decide what to do when he is approached by Angel's friend Lucky. She clearly recognizes him, and begs him to go ask Angel again to go with him. At first, Michael thinks she is mocking him, but eventually senses the urgency in her request. He hurries over to the Palace and up the stairs, where he finds the Duchess and a bodyguard looking over Angel, who is lying in bed.

Michael agrees to leave but insists he is taking Angel with him. Angel wakes up when someone touches her, but she is unable to identify who it is. She does know that he wants to take him with her, and she even agrees to marry him, thinking that she'd do anything to get away from the Palace. She says goodbye to Lucky, and leaves with the stranger who is her husband.

## Chapter Six Analysis

This is obviously an important chapter because in it, Michael and Angel get married. However, it is not the happy ending the reader expects. Instead, Angel doesn't even know who she has married, and the marriage is sure to be a difficult one when she becomes healthy enough to realize what has happened.

Also significant in this chapter is the behavior of the Duchess. She is quick to point out to Michael that she did not intend to have Angel beaten so badly, and that Angel has been trouble since the day she arrived. However, this does not mean she is happy to be rid of her, and insists that Michael even pay for her before they leave. It is clear that the only person from the Palace who truly cares about Angel is Lucky, and it is Lucky who saves her life by making sure Michael finds her.



# Chapter Seven

## Chapter Seven Summary

When Angel wakes up in Michael's cabin, it takes her a few minutes to remember where she is and what has happened. When she does, she is not pleased. Michael sees that she is awake and gently encourages her to eat, despite her weak anger and cruel sarcasm. She insists that he call her Angel instead of Mara, and she claims that Angel is all he's going to get. After her meal, she fights his care and her exhaustion, but soon finds that his hands massaging her temples are gentle and relaxing is easier than fighting. When she asks him why he came back, he says it's because God sent him back. Angel decides that he is just plain crazy, and tells him not to expect much. When he tells her he wants everything, she knows she has nothing to give him.

## Chapter Seven Analysis

This is a short chapter, but it's important because of the interaction between Michael and Angel, and because of the care we see Michael provide. In their brief conversation, it is clear that neither character has changed since the marriage. Michael is still confident and certain about what he wants, while at the same time careful and loving in his actions. He does not seem worried by the fact that Angel is still cruel and sarcastic, or that she treats him like any prostitute would treat a customer. The care provided by Michael is strictly contrasted in this chapter with the "care" provided by the Duchess a few chapters earlier. Angel admits that the food is better than anything she had at the Palace, and it is obvious that Michael's care provides healing instead of harm. The question that remains is whether Angel will be able to accept Michael's genuine care, when nothing like it has ever been presented to her before.



# Chapter Eight

## Chapter Eight Summary

Physically, Angel is slowly recovering under the quiet care of Michael Hosea. Emotionally, however, she is in turmoil. She has fallen from one trap into another, having married the one person she was hoping to avoid. She was taught from a very young age to understand men, to pick them apart and put them back together like puzzles. She knows how to figure out what it is they want, and that the best way to protect herself is to give it to them. Michael, however, remains a mystery to her. He is looking after her every physical need, but is then leaving her alone for hours at a time with nothing but her thoughts. When he is in the room with her, she is harsh and cruel, but this does not seem to bother him. She feels as though she is owned by a man again, and plans to leave as soon as she is able.

Michael is giving Angel, or Mara, as he still calls her, enough space to be alone with her thoughts. He is confident that he is doing the right thing because he is following God, and he is confident that everything will eventually work out. When Angel is well enough to stand up, she stubbornly chooses to stay up for as long as possible, despite her physical weakness. Michael gives her some simple clothes to wear, and tells her that they belonged to his sister who died on the trip west. Her husband Paul lives close by, and Angel speculates that she's probably met Paul at the Palace. She assures Michael not to worry, because she will be long gone by the time Paul returns from his travels. At the end of the chapter, Michael reminds her of their wedding, and assures her that the fact that she said "why not" instead of "yes" is good enough for him.

## Chapter Eight Analysis

This chapter continues to show the developing relationship between Michael and Angel. Each is intrigued by the other, but neither is willing to compromise their desires and beliefs. It is interesting to note the difference between Angel's thoughts and her actions and words. She seems to be confident in herself, and determined to get away from Michael as soon as possible because she is not happy with him. However, her thoughts indicate that she actually loves the cabin because it reminds her of her childhood, but she wants to get away because of her insecurity. She longs to be away from men as she doesn't trust anyone, but at the same time, she is terrified to live alone. Michael worries her even more than other men, because she can't use her only weapon, her sexuality, against him. Michael's intentions are only honorable and good, but to Angel this doesn't matter, because they are his intentions, and not hers, so she feels completely out of control.



# Chapter Nine

## Chapter Nine Summary

A week later, Angel is strong enough to venture outside. Michael knows that she only joins him outside because she is bored of being inside, but he takes advantage of the opportunity anyway to take her for a walk around his property and show her what his land is like, and what he hopes it will be like in the future. Angel is discouraged by his lifetime's worth of plans, and informs him that her plans do not include him. She decides to learn some chores, because she's going to need to know them if she ever does get out on her own. At the garden, she realizes that she knows nothing about plants and weeds, and in the kitchen, she lights her skirt on fire. She yells at Michael in frustration, telling him that if he wants her to work, it will have to be in the bedroom, because that's the only work she knows. She storms out, frustrated, confused and unwilling to listen to the voice telling her that she will eventually learn.

## Chapter Nine Analysis

This chapter further develops Angel's insecurities. She wants to be able to survive on her own, but realizes that she lacks the skills to do so. She becomes frustrated with Michael's infinite patience, and wonders if he is using her to test his faith. How long will Michael remain patient with Angel, and if he can convince her to stay with him, will he ever be able to teach her the skills she needs to know to survive as a farmer's wife? If so, they both have a long way to go. Also, this is the first chapter in which Angel hears the voice of God speaking directly to her. She chooses to ignore it, but she was certainly able to hear.





# Chapter Ten

## Chapter Ten Summary

After her outburst at the fire, Angel is worried when she returns to the cabin and finds it empty. She assumes Michael is out thinking of a suitable punishment for her. While she waits for his return, she busies herself by trying to make a fire. Soon Michael joins her, and offers to show her how it is done. He had been watching her for sometime, but she was so wrapped up in herself that she didn't notice him. Michael's attempt to teach her, however, ends in frustration, as Angel becomes discouraged at her inability to do it herself. She becomes annoyed, especially with Michael's sense of peace and calm. She asks him to rub her shoulders, and soon begins to use the only skills she knows, tempting him to succumb to her sexuality. She is calculating and relentless, and Michael begins to give in to her. However, when he finally pushes her away, she sees that he is not fooled by her and knows what she is trying to do.

After Michael and Angel have both had the chance to cool off and calm down, they talk about what happened, with Michael saying that he realizes that it doesn't feel good to be used. He then tells her about the Biblical story of Hosea, a prophet told by God to marry a prostitute. At first, Angel's tone is teasing and patronizing, but she becomes defensive when she hears that the prostitute in the story left Hosea several times to return to prostitution, and that he continually took her back. That night, after Angel has crawled into bed, Michael comes to lay beside her. Thinking she knows what he finally wants, Angel is surprised when she says that he only wants to sleep next to his wife.

## Chapter Ten Analysis

The relationship between Michael and Angel continues to grow in this chapter, as Angel finally begins to fight Michael the only way she knows how. Michael is trying his best to chip away at her armor, and Angel is trying her best to stay securely behind it. It is also important to note the Biblical story of Hosea that is discussed in this chapter, as it is this story that this novel is based upon. The fact that the prostitute in that story leaves Hosea, and that Hosea doesn't give up on her, is clear foreshadowing of what is to come in the novel and in the marriage of Michael and Angel.



# Chapter Eleven

## Chapter Eleven Summary

When Angel has a nightmare, she is comforted when woken by Michael. She had been dreaming about Duke coming for her, and telling her that she will never be free of him. Michael's touch provides some comfort, but Angel refuses to tell him about her fears. A still frustrated Michael sees that she will not open up to him, and instead takes her on a long walk in the dark. Angel's genuine fear of the dark makes her stubborn and dependent on Michael, but the sunrise she witnesses at the end of the journey is unlike anything she has seen before. As she stands in awe of the beauty of her surroundings, Michael tells her that this is what he wants to offer her, that he wants to fill her life with color and warmth. Angel wishes she could believe his words, but instead knows she can't erase her past. Even if she could erase the last ten years of her life, she was still guilty simply for existing. Her father hadn't wanted her, and her mother would have been better off without her. She now thinks Michael may be genuine, but she knows that his promises will never be true.

## Chapter Eleven Analysis

In this chapter, the extent to which Angel is haunted by her past is made apparent. Her nightmares are vivid and terrifying, and they act as a constant reminder of why she does not deserve anything good to happen for her. Angel finally realizes that Michael is not the problem, at least not yet. Instead, she believes the problem is that life is what it always has been, and nothing will ever change that.



# Chapter Twelve

## Chapter Twelve Summary

After her evening walk to see the sunrise, Angel has been keeping her emotional distance from Michael. Michael's impatience is growing, and he thinks about what his own father would say if he knew his son hadn't yet slept with his own wife. However, Michael also knows that Angel would treat him as she would treat any other man, and that is not what he wanted. Meanwhile, Angel is beginning to appreciate her life at the cabin, discontented only by Michael. He is good to her and encouraging, so she does not know what to expect. She keeps her mind on her unfinished business in Pair-a-dice, and vows to return as soon as she has an opportunity. However, she learns that Michael doesn't plan to go back to Pair-a-Dice again, and doesn't know how she will get there.

Eventually, the uneasiness dissolves into an argument, and Michael is pleased with Angel's anger. He tells her that when she is angry with him, she is at least looking at him instead of through him. That evening, they have a conversation that is more honest than any other yet in their relationship, but Angel is still fearful of opening up to Michael. She says that she has already given him everything except the one thing she knows how to give, and that her gratitude to him should be enough reason for him to sleep with her. Michael cannot explain to her what he wants, but wishes he could comfort her. He eventually decides that she will never understand with just words, and that he will have to show her the difference between having sex and making love. Angel tries to take charge of the situation, but Michael continues to tenderly put her off guard, giving her an experience with sex unlike any other experience of her life. When it's over, Angel feels different than she ever has before, and listens to the voice in her head, telling her to flee as soon as possible.

## Chapter Twelve Analysis

This chapter is a turning point in the relationship between Angel and Michael. Michael truly loves his wife, and concludes that he does finally need to show her that love in a physical way. It is more significant for Angel, however, as she believes that she knows all there is to know about men, sex, and declarations of love. However, Michael continually throws her off guard and prevents her from closing her mind and her heart to him. As he makes love to her, he has her look in his face and say his name, something he's been longing to hear from her. This request forces her to stay in the moment, and look at him, and therefore to see that his declarations of love are, in fact, genuine. After this, Angel will be forced to either surrender to her feelings or to fight them and run. Angel has good reason not to trust anyone, and will not choose to stay.



# Chapter Thirteen

## Chapter Thirteen Summary

This chapter begins with Angel running away the next morning, on foot. She intends to head to Pair-a-Dice, but it is not long before she is lost and frustrated. When Michael comes home from his morning chores and sees that Angel is gone, he is not surprised and immediately goes to look for her. When he finds her in the woods, he takes her to the road and gives her a choice: she can walk downhill one-mile back home, or uphill thirty miles to her old life. He then leaves her alone. When Angel arrives at the cabin that evening, she expects Michael to gloat or to mock her, but is pleased when he simply feeds her dinner and washes her feet. That night in bed, Michael comforts Angel as she sleeps and he wonders how to reach her.

## Chapter Thirteen Analysis

This is the first time Angel runs away, and the first time Michael goes after her, establishing a pattern that will be repeated. She comes home this time, and experiences what true acceptance and forgiveness feels like. The end of this chapter is significant as it seems to indicate that some of Angel's resolve is cracking, but at the same time, foreshadows trouble in the future. Michael still does not know how to break through Angel's walls, and the last sentence of the chapter informs us that Michael's brother-in-law, Paul, will soon be in the picture.



# Chapter Fourteen

## Chapter Fourteen Summary

When Michael's brother-in-law, Paul, returns from his search for gold, he is surprised to hear that Michael has gotten married in his absence. He assumes that Michael's wife will be to Michael what Tessie was like for Paul. He is initially jealous of the fact that he will not have Michael's conversation, company and advice all to himself, but he soon decides that it may be nice to have a woman around again. However, the instant he meets Michael's wife, Amanda, he recognizes her as the high-priced prostitute from Pair-a-Dice. Angel sees the recognition in his eyes, but does her best to pretend that his condemnation doesn't bother her. Paul assumes that Angel must have fooled Michael into marrying him, and tells Michael who she is. When Michael says he already knows who Angel is and fights to defend her as his wife, Paul decides that it is up to him to drive Angel away. He thinks this may be difficult, so he is surprised when Angel asks for a ride to Pair-a-Dice when he goes for supplies.

On the ride to Pair-a-Dice, Paul does whatever he can to make Angel feel bad for who she is and for what she has done to Michael. Meanwhile, Angel tries to ignore the fact that he is hurting her feelings and instead focuses on the getting her money from the Duchess and the fact that she will soon be free. As Paul becomes more and more disgusted with what he interprets as Angel's detached coldness, he remembers that he could never afford Angel while she was with the Duchess. Now, however, he says he wants payment for the ride to town. He is shocked to see Angel jump down from the wagon and ask where and when. After he has finished with her, Angel tries to remind herself to remain detached, but can't stop herself from feeling guilty and nauseous. When she gets back to the wagon for the remainder of the ride, she tells Paul that she has never pretended to be anything other than what she is, but he claims to be Michael's brother. Paul wants to leave her on the side of the road, but she reminds him that she has now paid for the ride, and they continue silently to Pair-a-Dice.

## Chapter Fourteen Analysis

This is a very significant chapter in that it is the first time Michael and Angel's marriage is seen from the point of view of an outsider. When it was only the two of them, Angel was beginning to believe that she could actually stay with Michael, and Michael was beginning to believe that the woman he loves might actually love him back. However, when Paul enters the picture, he cannot look past the obvious flaws in this unconventional marriage. Paul also acts as a foil to Michael, as they react to Angel in exactly the opposite way. Paul represents the rest of the world, and Angel is immediately reminded of who she has always been to everyone but Michael. She seizes the first opportunity she has to run away again, and even allows herself to fall into prostitution as soon as she away from her husband. However, we do see that it is different for her this time. She cannot remain distant, and has a physical reaction to her

emotional pain. This is the first time she has been with someone else since Michael married her, and it will certainly be a crucial moment in their relationship.



# Chapter Fifteen

## Chapter Fifteen Summary

When Angel arrives in Pair-a-Dice, she discovers that the Palace is gone, and the Duchess has left town. There had been a fire, started by Magowan, in which Lucky and another prostitute had been killed. Magowan had been hanged, and the Duchess had left the dying town of Pair-a-Dice. Angel's dream of collecting her money and being free for the first time in her life shatters before her, and she agrees to go to work again, this time for the bartender of the Silver Dollar, Murphy. She wonders why she didn't stay with Michael, but reminds herself of what happened when Paul came, and that it would never have worked.

Angel works in silent agony for several days, when suddenly Michael bursts into the room where she is working. She is incredibly relieved to see him, and says his name in gratitude. This brief reaction may have saved her life, because Michael is so angry he thinks he may have beaten them both if it hadn't been for the relief on her face. He drags her out of the bar, beating up several men on the way out, telling them to avoid getting between him and his wife. On the wagon ride home, Angel is so terrified of Michael's anger that she tries to run away from him. When he catches up to her and she calms down, she asks him why he keeps coming back for her. He tells her that he was very angry with her, and with Paul, but that marriage does not stop for him when things get tough. When she tries to explain that she left because she wants the freedom of a cabin in the woods, his anger vanishes. Instead, he tells her that she is free, but she just doesn't know it yet.

## Chapter Fifteen Analysis

Again in this chapter, Michael proves that he will come after Angel if she runs from him, no matter where she goes. However, his extreme anger proves that he is human. For Angel to leave him and to go back to her old ways, including with Paul, is not something that should be easily forgiven and forgotten. Michael proves in this chapter that he can be severely hurt and angered by Angel's actions, but that this hurt and anger will not allow him to give up on her. The final conversation in this chapter is important because Angel opens up to Michael and actually tells him the truth about why she left and what she wants.



# Chapter Sixteen

## Chapter Sixteen Summary

On the wagon ride home, Angel struggles with her guilt, angry with herself for leaving Michael and for all the mistakes she'd made. Michael questions his judgment, wondering if he can ever forgive his wife, and if she was even meant to be his wife in the first place. At home, Angel feels so guilty and unclean that she goes to the creek to clean herself, rubbing herself raw before Michael finds her and pulls her out. In the cabin, Angel finally opens up fully to Michael, telling him about her entire past, saying she was never meant to be born and she will never be anything but a prostitute. When Michael hears about her childhood for the first time, he begins to see her as the nameless child, abused and mistreated, instead of as the prostitute who betrayed him. He tells her that she can't control what had happened to her, but she could decide to trust him every day for the rest of their lives. Angel decides that her life was unbearable without Michael, so she may as well try it with him.

## Chapter Sixteen Analysis

It was very important for Michael to hear about Angel's childhood. It is important that he hear it now, because it makes his forgiveness of her infidelity more understandable. It is also important for her to share it with him because, as she falls more and more in love with him, she needs him to know who she really is, and not just who she has become.





# Chapter Seventeen

## Chapter Seventeen Summary

Unable to simply accept Michael's forgiveness, Angel begins to work constantly on the farm, doing far more than Michael would ever request of her. Michael does not know how to convince her to relax, but does decide to give her a physical break by taking her with him on a trip to Sacramento where he visits Joseph Hochschild's store. Many people stare at Angel, but everyone is friendly, which is not what she is used to. They spend the night at Joseph's, where Michael is able to have an evening of conversation. Joseph sees that Michael is still as strong as he once was, and that Angel seems to be somewhat changed. Joseph is worried about their future together, but remains hopeful on Michael's behalf.

## Chapter Seventeen Analysis

This chapter presents another opportunity to see the relationship of Michael and Angel from an outsider's perspective, this time through Joseph. While Joseph remains concerned for Michael's well-being, he acknowledges that maybe Michael's love is what is causing Angel to change. In this chapter, Angel is able to see herself from the perspective of other people. She is referred to as a "lady" by some young men she has never met, and is therefore forced to acknowledge that they cannot recognize her as a prostitute.



# Chapter Eighteen

## Chapter Eighteen Summary

In the morning, Michael takes Angel to church, but she is unable to stay for the whole service. After it is over, they discuss what Michael believes, and why Angel cannot believe in God. She has known too much hurt and pain, and too many good people have treated her badly for her to believe in a God who would allow it. Michael says he won't give up his beliefs for her, but he also shows genuine sympathy for her pain. He also shares stories about his family and childhood.

On the way home, Michael and Angel come across the Altman family, whose wagon has broken down on the side of the road. While Michael assists John in fixing the wagon, Angel is introduced to Elizabeth, the mother of the family, Miriam, who is a daughter close to Angel's age, and four younger children: Jacob, Andrew, Leah and Ruth. They are on their way to Oregon, but Elizabeth has been ill for several weeks, and the winter is coming. They decide to travel together and spend the night in one wagon for warmth. Soon, Michael invites the Altmans to stay with him and Angel for the winter. Angel is very hesitant to trust this fun-loving family, or to spend any time with them, but Michael insists that it will be good for her to make some friends.

When Angel is alone with Miriam and Elizabeth, Miriam begins to ask Angel some questions about her family and past. Not wanting to keep track of lies, Angel blurts out the truth, thinking that she will scare Miriam away. Instead, Miriam apologizes for being nosy, and insists that she wants to be Angel's friend. That night, little Ruth wants to sleep next to Angel. Late at night, Angel looks at the sleeping child, and remembers a time when Duke had a doctor come to visit Angel and destroy her ability to bear children. Michael wakes up and lovingly tells Angel that she has made some new friends, and voices his hope that perhaps he and Angel will have a child like Ruth one day. This leaves Angel with a feeling of guilt and despair.

## Chapter Eighteen Analysis

Meeting the Altmans is a turning point in the book, as they become major characters for the rest of the story. They are the first example of a genuinely happy family that Angel has ever seen in her life. She is in awe of the fact that they all seem to love each other, with parents who expect obedience but are not cruel, and with children who care about and have fun with each other. She is especially surprised by Miriam, the first "good girl" Angel has ever spoken with. Miriam blows Angel's expectations apart by being good, but still full of fun, love and acceptance. Angel is just getting used to being loved and accepted by Michael, and suddenly she finds herself in the company of more people like him. At the same time, she is forced to fight feelings of resentment, as her newly comfortable life with Michael will suddenly have to be shared.



Angel's names have so far been a beautiful symbol in this book, as Michael has only called her Angel when he was extremely angry with her. In this chapter, Angel refers to herself by a name other than Angel for the first time: Mrs. Hosea. She does not yet give herself a first name, but can force herself to give herself the title that most closely attaches her to Michael. It is also in this chapter that we learn of another significant aspect of Angel's past, her inability to have children. This news is sure to be difficult for Michael to take, as children are certainly a part of his future plans.



# Chapter Nineteen

## Chapter Nineteen Summary

At first, Angel is hesitant to have the Altman family stay with them, and doesn't know how to act around them. She slowly becomes more comfortable, however, thanks to the persistent efforts made by Miriam to get to know her and to become friends, and because of little Ruthie's unquestioning attachment to her. The two families spend a lot of time getting to know each other, spending the evenings reading and singing and the days working and playing. Angel grows especially fascinated by the interaction between Elizabeth and Miriam, who are two women unlike any Angel had met before. Elizabeth offers to sew Angel's new clothes, and Angel gratefully accepts, but is embarrassed by the condition of her undergarments. Miriam puts her at ease with a joke about her own threadbare clothing, but a few days later, Elizabeth surprises Angel with a gift. When Angel sees that Elizabeth has made her new things, she is embarrassed, and tells Miriam that she doesn't want them. Miriam helps to convince Angel that her mother only feels that every new bride should have nice things, and truly want nothing in return for her thoughtful present. As Angel gets to know the Altmans better, she also is able to observe Michael interact with them, and to crave time alone with him. She finds herself falling more and more in love with him, despite her better judgment.

## Chapter Nineteen Analysis

As we continue to learn about the Altman family, we continue to see through Angel's eyes. She has never seen a family like this, and is therefore skeptical of some of their kind actions. However, the more she gets to know them, the more she sees the good in them and her desire to be like them grows. Even more significant in this chapter, however, is Angel's growing desire for time with Michael. She feels safe when he is around, and even begins to physically respond to his touch in a way she has never felt toward a man before. Michael continues to give her all the time and space he think she needs, oblivious to her growing affection toward him.



# Chapter Twenty

## Chapter Twenty Summary

As the Altmans' visit continues, Michael becomes concerned with Angel's growing attachment to them. He worries that she will not be able to handle their departure when it comes time for them to continue to Oregon. To convince John to stay in California with his family, Michael offers the best portion of his land for John to build his own settlement on. Although reluctant at first, John decides that staying near Michael and Angel will be what is best for his family. John, Michael, and Paul begin work on building a cabin. This means that Angel and Paul see each other for the first time since their eventful trip to Pair-a-Dice, and their interaction is still not friendly. Paul is still full of hatred toward Angel, and does little to hide his feelings from Michael and the Altmans. Miriam, however, finds Paul to be attractive, and pummels Angel with questions about him and about being in love. These conversations remind Angel of what she learned about love from her mother, and from Sally, and she is concerned about her own growing love for Michael.

When the cabin is ready, the Altman family makes the two-mile journey to their new home. The occasion should be filled with joy, but instead, Angel uses the opportunity to pull away from the Altmans again. She thinks that she will hardly ever see them anymore, and it reinforces her belief that the people you love will leave you. When she and Michael are alone that night, he tells her that he was hoping she would fall in love with him, but instead she fell in love with the Altmans. Angel replies that she does not want to fall in love with Michael, because he would only use it against her.

## Chapter Twenty Analysis

This chapter gives a real sense of Angel's fear of betrayal. The Altmans are moving only two miles away, and she should be happy about how close they are staying. Instead, she is certain that they will become too busy for her and that she will hardly ever see them again. She overreacts to their departure to such an extent that it shows there is more going on than the simple sadness of friends leaving. She believes everyone she loves will leave her, and she is worried that Michael will do the same. This chapter is also significant in its reintroduction of Paul. He is so cruel to Angel, but seems to be kind to everyone else. His true anger and hatred is not toward Angel, but toward himself for his own guilt, but neither he nor Angel can see that yet.



# Chapter Twenty-one

## Chapter Twenty-one Summary

Now that she is again alone with Michael, Angel finds her love for him growing, and therefore becomes lonelier. She does not want to share herself with him, so she seeks a way to push him as far away as possible. She thinks that there is still one thing she could do that would finally prove to him that he does not want her. She is so scared of ending up like her pathetic mother that she approaches Michael and tells him the worst thing in her past; she had sex with her own father. This makes Michael feel as though he's been punched, but he listens as she tells the story of her father coming to see her, and of her desire to destroy him. When it was over, she told him who she was, and the next day, he committed suicide. As Michael becomes angry and disgusted, she also reveals that she was once in love with Duke, despite the way he mistreated and controlled her. By the end of the sad story, Angel is shaking and tormented, and Michael is no longer angry. She finally confesses that she had been pregnant twice, and then Duke had had a doctor come and make sure that could never happen again. Angel is prepared to leave Michael for the last time when Michael makes her a beautiful gift of wind chimes, and renews his wedding vows to her. When he takes her in to his arms to make love to her, Angel experiences sex like never before, where none of the old rules and feelings apply. The next morning when Michael wakes up, Angel is gone.

## Chapter Twenty-one Analysis

As Angel falls deeper in love with Michael, her fears of him leaving her come to a head, and she plays her final cards. If he is going to leave her, she wants it to happen as soon as possible, and so hurries the process by revealing the very worst of her secrets. Instead of driving Michael away, however, her efforts bring them closer. Michael's tenderness and love, even in the worst of circumstances, is more than she could imagine, much less expect, and she finally gives herself fully to him. The chapter ends with the news that she has left him again, and this is not surprising. Angel has always wanted freedom, and now that she is so in love with Michael, she is sure to feel imprisoned by this love. Her whole happiness is wrapped up in one other person, and this is too much pressure.



# Chapter Twenty-two

## Chapter Twenty-two Summary

When Angel leaves Michael, she gets a ride with Sam, an old Peddler on his way to Sacramento selling pots and pans. Angel aches when she thinks of Michael, but continually reminds herself that her mother loved Alex Stafford just as much as she, Angel, loves Michael. She is determined, however, that she will make a living doing something other than prostitution, but she has a difficult time thinking of what she can do. She gets a glimpse of another talent she may possess when she helps Sam sell some of his cooking pans, but she doesn't know how to put that skill to use once she is in Sacramento. Just as she is tempted to step into her old life, she sees the store of Joseph Hochschild, and runs to it. Joseph and his family are somewhat confused by her departure from Michael, but they give her a place to sleep, and put her to work in the store. She discovers that she is quite good at her work, and the payment they give her at the end of each day causes her more pride than any other money she'd made in the past. When a stove Michael ordered arrives, Angel knows she has to leave before Michael comes to pick it up, but she is too late. Moments before she plans to leave, Michael shows up.

## Chapter Twenty-two Analysis

This is a significant chapter for the development of Angel's personality as it is the first time she has professional success in anything other than prostitution. She is smart and hard working, and for the first time in her life, these skills benefit her. It is also an important time for her love because her love for Michael is solidified. Instead of growing separated from him, she becomes more in love with him the longer they are apart. Michael proves, yet again, that he will come and get her when she leaves.



# Chapter Twenty-three

## Chapter Twenty-three Summary

Michael and Angel are alone in Joseph's store, and Michael tells Angel that he knows she loves him and that that is why she left. Angel tries to deny it at first, but then confesses that she does not want to love him because she doesn't deserve his love. Eventually she gives in to the hope he gives her and goes home with him. At home, they continue to live and work together, this time more in love than ever before. Angel also opens up in her friendship with Miriam, only to learn from Ruthie that Miriam and Paul have been arguing about her behind her back. Feeling guilty about her happiness, Angel begins to pull away from Michael yet again. Michael does his best to convince her that he is just as full of sin as she is, and that every good gift comes from God. The mention of Michael's God causes Angel to become upset and sparks an argument about a God who has let Angel down at every point in her life.

## Chapter Twenty-three Analysis

Michael and Angel's relationship is at its best in this chapter, tainted only by Angel's inability and unwillingness to trust that God loves her and wants the best for her.





# Chapter Twenty-four

## Chapter Twenty-four Summary

Paul is sitting alone in his cabin, looking at a picture of his late wife, Tessie, and remembering how a year ago he didn't think he would ever get over her. Instead, he is now trying to get Miriam Altman out of his mind. Whenever she comes over, he tries to discourage her affection, and tries to convince himself that he is not attracted to her, but it is getting more and more difficult to do so. He reminds himself of his love for Michael, and how much it is going to hurt him when Angel ultimately leaves him for good. Paul tells himself that Miriam will be the wife that Michael deserves when Angel is finally out of the picture.

Later, Miriam and her siblings trick Angel into climbing a tree for the first time in her life, and Michael laughingly comes out to join the fun. Miriam and Angel watch as Michael plays and laughs, and Miriam confesses that she wants to marry someone just like Michael, who is unafraid to live life to the fullest and to love with his whole heart. Angel assumes that Miriam is in love with Michael, and later asks him if things would be different if he had met Miriam first. Michael assures her that they are together for a reason.

Later, at a celebration at the Altman's, Paul and Angel are forced to spend time together again. During the mealtime prayer, Angel feels Paul's eyes on her, and knows that he is condemning her as a hypocrite. Michael asks her to be patient with Paul, so Angel tries her best to do so, but Paul works hard to make this difficult. When Michael and Miriam dance together later in the evening, Paul is sure to point out to Angel how happy Michael looks when he is with Miriam, and how good they look together.

## Chapter Twenty-four Analysis

Paul is an expert at planting doubt in this chapter, which is full of misunderstanding. When Michael points out the beauty of Miriam's eyes, Paul assumes he is attracted to her, and when Miriam talks about her love for Michael, Angel assumes Miriam means that she is in love with him. The irony comes in the fact that the reader knows what each character is saying, even if the other characters are quick to misunderstand. Angel is determined to stay with Michael this time, but the seeds of doubt being planted by Paul are sure to erode her resolve and make her question what really is best for the man she truly loves.



# Chapter Twenty-five

## Chapter Twenty-five Summary

Paul's efforts to drive Angel away continue, but Angel uses them to remind her that Michael loves her, and that she is not a harlot anymore. She begins to cling to Michael and he becomes all that matters to her. She begins to hear a voice telling her to come, but instead of worshiping Michael's God, she simply worships Michael.

When Elizabeth asks Angel to be her midwife, Angel is reminded of more unpleasant memories, as well as her own physical limitations. However, she agrees to the task, and becomes less concerned about it when Michael says that he will be there to help if something goes wrong. Angel's doubt is kindled slightly when Miriam comes over and wants to talk to Michael alone. Watching them together through the window, Angel can't help but be concerned. Michael reassures her that he loves Miriam only like a sister, and that Miriam only wanted a man's opinion about her desire for a husband. Angel insists that Miriam had better marry someone more deserving than Paul.

## Chapter Twenty-five Analysis

Although Michael and Angel seem to be happy together, this chapter shows that things are not yet perfect or settled. Nobody would be able to live up to the expectations that Angel holds Michael to, and the use of the religious language in the descriptions of her feelings for him indicates that her true adoration for him is somewhat misplaced. It also foreshadows the fact that Angel will soon redirect her "worship" from Michael to the God whose voice she is beginning to hear.



# Chapter Twenty-six

## Chapter Twenty-six Summary

When the Altmans come over for another visit, Angel finds herself in conversation with a now very pregnant Elizabeth. As they watch the others work and play, Elizabeth confides that she was hoping for Miriam to fall in love with Paul, but that she seems to be in love with Michael instead. Elizabeth immediately regrets her words, but Angel assures her that she had the same suspicions, and she completely trusts Miriam and Michael. Later, in an encounter with Paul, Angel tries to stand up for herself. Paul, however, tells her she is merely a good actress, and that Michael must see the difference between Angel and Miriam. Angel does remain close to Miriam, however, and even answers some of her questions about her former life. Miriam expresses desire for love and for children, and Angel realizes that she and Miriam both long for the same thing, and it's something neither of them can have at this point in their lives.

## Chapter Twenty-six Analysis

Angel's pain over not being about to have a child grows as Elizabeth gets closer to her due date. Their conversation convinces Angel that Miriam loves Michael, and when Miriam talks about her own desire for children, Angel begins to wonder if everyone would be better off without her. Miriam also speaks of childbirth as the divine privilege of women, and now Angel has a spiritual reason to regret her past and be sad about the future.



# Chapter Twenty-seven

## Chapter Twenty-seven Summary

Angel is working in the garden when she hears God's voice more clearly than before. This time it is telling her that she has to die to be reborn. She does not have much time to contemplate what this could mean, however, because Miriam comes running to announce that Elizabeth has gone into labor. Angel runs to the Altman house, but realizes when she gets there that Elizabeth knows what she is doing and is still in charge. Throughout the labor and birth, Elizabeth continues to be in control, but Angel is there with her to catch the baby and to do anything Elizabeth asks of her. When the baby boy is born, Angel is so overcome with emotion she can hardly speak. Without thinking, Michael expresses excitement about having a child of his own one day. When they leave the Altman house later that day, Angel tearfully apologizes to Michael again for her infertility, and tells him she wishes she could be whole for him.

## Chapter Twenty-seven Analysis

Angel's guilt continues to grow with the birth of the Altmans' baby. She does not doubt Michael's love, but wants him to have the one thing he wants most. Her belief about Miriam's feelings for Michael also grows in this chapter, although in reality, Miriam's feelings are for Paul and not for Michael.



# Chapter Twenty-eight

## Chapter Twenty-eight Summary

Christmas has arrived, and Michael and Angel spend the day at the Altmans'. Paul is there as well, but he does not speak or even really look at Angel all day, which is not what she has been expecting. During the reading of the Bible story, Angel wonders what kind of father God would have to be to allow his own son to be born with the singular purpose of being crucified. She suspects that God must be like her own father. When Michael holds the new Altman baby, Angel knows that Michael deserves to have a child of his own, and she realizes that there is only one way she can give that to him. Later that evening, she takes Michael up to the top of their hill and expresses her love for him. Michael knows that she is saying good-bye, but does not know how to convince her to stay. He does not want her to leave again, but obeys the voice of God, telling him, this time, to let her go.

As she is packing up to leave the next day, Miriam comes by to visit and sees what she is doing. Miriam begs Angel to stay, and is very confused about Angel's motives for leaving. As she is getting on the departing wagon, Angel tells Miriam to give Michael the children he wants. Miriam suddenly realizes why Angel is leaving, and tries to explain that Angel has made a mistake, but it is too late. Angel is already gone.

## Chapter Twenty-eight Analysis

Angel prepares to leave Michael for the fourth time, but this time her motives are completely different. She used to be scared of the love Michael was offering to her, and that she felt for him. This time, she embraces this love, and acts on it in the way she feels is best. Because of her love for Michael, she is willing to make a huge sacrifice for him. Her actions may be misguided and things will not turn out the way she has planned, but Angel is making a truly selfless choice. Miriam acts as a witness to Angel's departure and motives for leaving. This is significant because it will give Michael an ally in his defense of Angel to Paul.



# Chapter Twenty-nine

## Chapter Twenty-nine Summary

Angel goes to San Francisco, which has grown considerably since her last visit. She has some money left over from her time working in Joseph's store, but not enough to survive on. As she wanders the street, wondering what to do, she hears a voice telling her to sit down and rest in a small cafe. While she is there, the cook quits, and the customers complain about the quality of the food and storm out, leaving Angel with an opportunity, and then a job. The proprietor's name is Virgil Harper, and he is thrilled when he discovers that Angel is capable of cooking simple meals, and even a variety of pies. When he asks for her name, she tells him to call her Mrs. Hosea.

Meanwhile, Michael has continued with his farm work, refusing to go and look for Angel this time, despite the advice from Miriam and John. He hears the voice of God telling him, "thou shalt have no other gods before me." Michael knows that he has never worshiped anyone but the true God. Suddenly he realizes that he, Michael, had become like a god to Angel.

Six months later, Angel stands in front of Harper's Cafe, which is burning to the ground. Everything she and Virgil had built over the last months is gone as their entire San Francisco street burns to the ground. As she tries to decide what she can possibly do next to survive, Angel hears the last voice she expects or wants to hear—Duke's.

## Chapter Twenty-nine Analysis

Angel is again determined to stay away from prostitution, and is again able to depend on other skills she possesses. She also listens to the voice of God in going into the cafe in the first place, which demonstrates her own growing trust in the provision God is providing. At the end of the chapter, however, she loses everything she has worked for. At this point, we know that she is resilient and skillful, and will be able to stay away from prostitution, even if left to her own devices. However, the reappearance of Duke means that she will soon be faced with the ultimate challenge. What will Angel do when faced with the man who is at the core of her being, and who has always had the ability to control her?

Also in this chapter, we see growth in Michael. His instinct is to go after Angel and to bring her back, but he resists this urge for the first time. He knows that he can no longer be the Angel's savior, and that if she is going to come back, it must be of her own volition.



# Chapter Thirty

## Chapter Thirty Summary

Despite Angel's resistance, Duke drags Angel away from the cafe. Angel refuses to fight back because she knows that Virgil would come to help her, and he would surely be killed by Duke for helping her. Duke has a big house in town, just a few blocks from where Angel has been all this time. As he pulls Angel through the house, his behavior toward the other girls he encounters shows Angel that he has not changed. She remains defiant, but Duke shows her to her "new" room, where her old life is sure to begin again. A young girl named Cherry comes in to serve Angel a decadent meal and to provide her with anything Angel says she needs. Angel can see that Cherry is very young, but has been taught to do whatever Duke tells her to. When Duke comes into the room later, Angel still tries to be in control. She talks about Michael, which gives her strength and seems to make Duke somewhat uneasy. Locked in her room that night, Angel dreams of her mother. She also dreams of escaping Duke by jumping out her window, which is the only possible way out. She hears the calm voice of God telling her to live, and to follow him. Sarah wakes up and hears Duke in another room, talking over the cries of a child.

## Chapter Thirty Analysis

Duke compares himself with Michael in this chapter, saying that he always forgave Angel, and went to find her when she would run away. This comparison backfires on him, because instead of making himself look better, it simply illustrates to Angel the clear difference between real love and simple control. Angel is back under the control of the person who essentially ruined her life, and who still comes to her in her nightmares. However, her experiences with Michael, and with her growing trust in Michael's God, make it impossible for Duke to control her the way she used to. She can no longer simply turn off her mind and emotions and bear the life he offers, but she does have the strength to face it. She does not fight against the voice of God and may soon learn to listen for it.



# Chapter Thirty-one

## Chapter Thirty-one Summary

Back in the Valley, Paul has decided that he can no longer stay so close to Miriam and not be with her, so he decides to return to his old life in the gold rush rather than to stay in the path of temptation. Michael and John are both hesitant to buy his land because they think that he would be making a big mistake if he left the Valley. Miriam agrees, and finally admits to her parents that she is in love with Paul. She claims that she has a plan to keep him from leaving.

In San Francisco, Angel confronts Duke about the young girl she heard crying. Duke refuses to discuss his own personal taste, but gives Angel a choice. She can either go back to her old role as prostitute, or she can become the manager of the keys, which had been Sally's job when Angel was a child. She tells him that she would prefer being the manager, hoping it will give her access to the little girl so she can help her to escape. Duke sees through her plan, and tells her that she will be introduced that night and work for a week before being the manager of his girls.

Paul wakes up to find Miriam in his cabin. Saying she has learned from Ruth and Boaz, Miriam tells Paul that she is moving in with him. She confesses that she loves him, and that she knows he loves her too. Paul finally admits his feelings for her, and they decide to get married.

That night, Duke forces Angel to stand on a stage in front of a crowd of jeering men so they can imagine what they want to do with her, and how much they are willing to spend in order to do it. On the stage, Angel forces herself to look into the eyes of the crowd. She hears God's voice, telling her to sing. She sings the only song that comes to mind, but forgets the words in the middle. A man at the back of the crowd joins in, and walks to the front. When she walks off the stage, Duke is livid, but the man who had sung with her comes backstage and tells Duke to keep his hands off her. His name is Jonathan Axel, and he is a prominent banker in the city. Duke is forced to listen to him when Angel agrees to leave with Mr. Axel, and even when Angel takes Cherry and the little girl with her. At Jonathan's insistence, they leave through the main entrance, walking through the crowd. Everyone sees Angel with the two young girls, and is able to see for themselves what Duke is really like.

Jonathan takes the three young girls back to his own house, where they meet his wife and daughter, Priscilla and Susanna. Jonathan explains to his wife that he went into the brothel because he thought God was telling him to do so. Then, when Angel began to sing "Rock of Ages," God's message to him couldn't have been clearer, and he knew that he had to rescue her.





## Chapter Thirty-one Analysis

This is a longer chapter, and very significant for both plot and character development. Paul and Miriam finally reveal their feelings for one another, and it is clear that Angel's plan for Miriam to marry Michael will never come to be. Angel is able to escape from Duke's clutches for a final time, and this time she takes him down, revealing to everyone his true nature. His career will be ruined and his reputation destroyed. This was only possible because Angel trusted God fully for the first time, and simply obeyed his command. Jonathan Axel was a true servant of God, and he was used in a miraculous way to save Angel, and Cherry and little Faith as well.



# Chapter Thirty-two

## Chapter Thirty-two Summary

Miriam and Paul argue again about Angel. Paul continues to insist that Michael should get over her because she never loved him, and Miriam continues to tell Paul that it was Paul who didn't ever get to know Angel.

Meanwhile, Angel is still living with the Axels, becoming close friends with Susanna, but still missing Michael and hoping he is okay. She has been going to church with the Axels, and at one service finally listens to the urging she feels in her heart, and receives God's mercy, publicly giving her life to Jesus. After this service, she has a long conversation with Susanna about her uncertain future, and Susanna helps Angel discover what it means to give something up to God, how to pray about it, and then let it go. Soon after Angel sincerely prays about her future, she runs into Torie, a prostitute from her days at the Palace. Angel takes Torie to lunch, and introduces her to Virgil, giving Torie the opportunity to make an honest living for the first time in her life. This encounter gives Angel an idea, and she runs home to the Axels to discuss it. With the financial help of Jonathan Axel and some of his wealthy contacts, Angel decides to start a home to teach young prostitutes and ex-prostitutes useful skills, and then find jobs for them. Susanna is also very excited about the idea, and ready and willing to do all she can to help.

## Chapter Thirty-two Analysis

In this chapter, Angel searches for something of lasting value to commit her life to. She was proud of herself for making an honest living with Virgil, but now does not feel like going back to work for him is what she wants for her life. Most significant to the growth of her character is that she finally surrenders herself to the God who has been calling her. She genuinely feels the love of God, and finally understands what Michael was talking about. If she had not left Michael, she may never have been able to separate God from Michael, and her faith would have depended on another human being. Instead, she is able to surrender fully to God, unencumbered by her admiration for and dependence on Michael.

Meanwhile, Michael is also experiencing growth. He is still fighting the urge to go and look for Angel and bring her home. Instead, he is learning to have faith that God will look after the woman he loves, instead of protecting her himself.



# Chapter Thirty-three

## Chapter Thirty-three Summary

It has now been three years since Angel left the Valley. Paul goes to Sacramento and then San Francisco to look for Angel, motivated by his desire for peace in his marriage. He does not think that Miriam will rest until he goes to look for Angel. Paul is sure what he will find when he gets to San Francisco, and decides that he will make up a story to tell Miriam, even if he does not find Angel. However, in San Francisco, he sees Angel across the street. She is dressed well, modestly and simply, and he follows her first to the bank, and then to a building called The House of Magdalena. Paul assumes that this is a brothel, and is not surprised. He considers going home and telling Miriam that Angel is dead, but knows that Miriam will not simply accept this lie without a lot of questions. He decides that he has no choice but to go and talk to her.

The next day, Paul enters the House of Magdalena and is surprised at what he finds. He expects to see a brothel, but there are no men in the building at all. Susanna approaches, and he begins to ask for Angel, but soon Angel herself is there, and she takes him to a small office with her. In the conversation that follows, Paul continues to hate Angel and think the worst of her, assuming that she does not regret her past choices or miss Michael at all. Angel feels his hatred, but does nothing to defend herself. Instead, she answers his questions simply, and asks her own questions about life in the Valley. Paul tells her that Miriam is pregnant, and is confused when Angel reacts in relief. However, when he realizes that Angel thinks Miriam is married to Michael, Paul is forced to face the fact that he has been wrong about Angel all this time. He finally apologizes for his behavior and tells Angel that Michael is still waiting for her at home. When he comes back the next morning, Angel has decided to go home with him.

## Chapter Thirty-three Analysis

This chapter is not only about the development of the plot but is the turning point in the characterization of Paul. He only goes to look for Angel for selfish reasons, wanting to stop Miriam from bothering him about it. However, by the end of the trip, he is forced to face his own selfishness, and realizes that Angel has shown more love by leaving Michael than he has ever showed by staying. He expects only the worst from Angel as he is blinded by his hatred, but is soon forced to admit that he is really only unable to forgive himself for betraying Michael all those years ago. He sees that he had a major part in causing Michael pain, and realizes that he has to take Angel home to make up for his own mistakes.

Also in this chapter, we are able to see all that Angel has accomplished. She no longer needs Michael for her safety, or even for her own happiness and fulfillment. She is truly free and happy for the first time in her life, so when she chooses to go back to Michael,

it is because she loves him. Being with him is truly what she wants. Earlier in the novel, she heard the voice of God saying "you have to die to be reborn" and in this chapter she can really see what that means.



# Chapter Thirty-four

## Chapter Thirty-four Summary

Miriam excitedly welcomes Paul and a nervous Angel home. Angel is anxious to see Michael, saying that if she doesn't go to see him right away, she may never have the courage to do so. Paul and Miriam walk her home, but Angel insists that she walk the last few minutes alone. As she walks toward the house, she sees Michael working in the field. As she walks toward him, he glances up, and she knows the exact moment he sees her. As she walks, Angel takes off her jacket, followed by her shirt and skirt, and even her undergarments. She wants to arrive at Michael unburdened by the things of the world. When she arrives at her husband, she falls to her knees and says that she is sorry. Michael pulls her to her feet, and puts his own shirt around her shoulders. When he says they have their whole lives to talk, Angel knows that he has forgiven her, and Michael knows that she is back for good. Angel has only one gift she is able to give Michael: her name. When she tells him her name is Sarah, Michael is filled with joy. The name fit Sarah perfectly, as it is the Biblical name of a barren woman filled with doubt. Michael also takes the name as a sign from God that he and Sarah would, in fact, be blessed with a child, just as Abraham and Sarah were.

## Chapter Thirty-four Analysis

This final chapter is the culmination of the love story in this novel. Michael is reunited with his wife, and for the first time they are equals in their love for each other and in their relationships with God. In shedding her clothes as she walked toward him, Angel symbolizes her willingness to be completely vulnerable in front of him, and that she was coming to him just as herself, with no mask or shield held in front of her. When Michael takes the shirt off his own back and puts it on his wife, he is offering his protection and love, saying that she is safe with him. Angel, now Sarah again, is able to give Michael the last part of herself that she was holding on to for so many years. Telling Michael her name symbolizes her full surrender to him and to his love. She is able to completely trust him and to completely let go of the person who she became when the sexual abuse began. She again feels as innocent and pure as she did when she was a child. The chapter ends with a call to the reader to love God and to love each other.



# Epilogue

## Epilogue Summary

For the rest of their lives, Michael and Sarah live in the Valley, along with Miriam and Paul. Both couples are blessed with children, and their valley grows into a small settlement complete with church and school. The House of Magdalena continues to help young prostitutes find better lives, and Susanna Axel works at that ministry until her death. Sarah herself continues to return to the House of Magdalena yearly, talking to prostitutes on the docks about her life and encouraging them to change theirs. She said it reminds her of where she has come from and all that God has done for her. After sixty-eight years of marriage, Michael and Sarah die within a month of each other and are buried next to each other in graves marked with simple crosses. However, an epitaph is soon scratched into Sarah's grave marker: "Though fallen low, God raised her up, an Angel" (Chapter 34, p.464)

## Epilogue Analysis

In the epilogue, all of the reader's unanswered questions are answered, clearly stating that the main characters of the novel did live the lives they hoped they would. We are told that Michael's belief that they would have children came to be, and even that those children grew up to be successful and happy themselves. The fact that Miriam and Paul remained good friends with Michael and Sarah shows that Paul and Sarah were able to finally move passed what had come between them and forgive each other. However, Sarah's work with the prostitutes on the docks is most significant in the epilogue. Although she was able to fully forgive herself and move on from her past, she did not forget or deny who she had been or where she had come from. The story of God's faithfulness to her was much more powerful because of her history, and so to deny her past life would have been to cheapen her current one. Michael and Sarah's deaths occurring within a month of each other reinforces the romance aspects of their love, as neither could live without the other.



# Characters

## Sarah / Angel / Mara / Amanda

The protagonist of this story goes by many names, and each one is significant to her character as well as to how others view her. First, as Sarah, she is a young girl. She lives with her mother, Mae, and their employee, Cleo. Much of her personality and opinions are formed at this young age when she learns that her father doesn't want her and that her mother would get rid of her if it meant keeping her father around. When her mother dies, Sarah is sold into prostitution at the age of eight.

At eighteen, Sarah has become Angel, and she possesses the kind of beauty that causes strangers to turn their heads and watch as she goes by. Her attitude of coldness and distance only add to her appeal for the men who are willing to pay a lot of money for half an hour of her time. However, Angel is very careful to maintain high walls around herself, not letting anyone know her, because that protects her from being hurt. Underneath her facade of distance and beauty, Angel is a caring and talented woman. She is very smart, quick to learn new skills and determined to prove herself. She also is very proud. Once she is married to Michael, she does all she can to avoid prostitution again, but desires freedom and independence above anything else. By the end of the novel, she is able to make the choice to be with Michael, and therefore gains the freedom she had longed for her whole life.

Michael's names for Angel illustrate the fact that he does not see her as a prostitute, unlike everyone else she knows. Angel finds herself drawn to Michael, despite, and because of, the fact that she does not understand him. She is sure she knows everything there is to know about men, but Michael Hosea turns her ideas around.

## Michael Hosea

Michael Hosea is the second protagonist in this story, which is often told from his perspective. He is a farmer and a bachelor, hard working and well respected. Most important to him, however, is that he is a man of God, always showing obedience and trust. Michael is patient and loving, very gentle and quick to forgive. However, he is also full of confidence and holds firm to what he believes. He enjoys good conversations, even with people who disagree with him, and he does not back down in the face of adversity. He has a sense of humor, and enjoys laughing, singing and telling stories. Despite all these positive characteristics, however, Michael is not perfect. He loses his temper occasionally, with the severity of his anger scaring even himself. He has long periods of doubt, during which he questions God and himself. The aspect of Michael's character that is most significant to the story, however, is his ability to love Angel, consistently, faithfully and genuinely from the moment he meets her. His love changes her in a deep and profound way.



## Mae

Sarah's mother is only in the prologue of the novel, but she is a significant character nonetheless. She loves her daughter very much, but cannot let go of the love she has for Sarah's father, even when he turns her away. She does her best to provide for her daughter, selling her belongings and eventually her body, but it is not quite enough. When she dies, Sarah is eight-years-old and all alone. Sarah learns from her mother that loving a man will only cause you pain.

## Alex Stafford

Although this character only makes an appearance in the prologue, Alex is significant in his absence. He is Angel's father, and he never wanted her to exist. He seems to have genuinely loved Angel's mother at some point, but not enough to leave his wife and other family for her. We learn late in the novel that he was once brought to his daughter but did not recognize her. Only after spending the night with him did Angel tell him who she was. He killed himself the next day.

## Cleo

Mae and Sarah's nanny-housekeeper, Cleo was often left with the responsibility of caring for young Sarah. She takes Sarah on a trip to the sea, but leaves her alone in the hallway in order to spend the night with a man. In the morning when she is abandoned by the man she loves, Cleo tells Sarah everything she knows about men.

## Rab

The well-meaning and ignorant companion of Sarah's mother, Rab unwittingly sells Sarah to a man he believes wants to "adopt" pretty, young girls. He is killed in front of Sarah after the transaction is completed.

## Duke

Duke is a pedophile and a pimp, and has a major influence on Angel's personality and psyche. He begins to rape her at the age of eight, and when she is too old for him, he uses her as his highest priced prostitute. Duke is a violent and powerful man, killing those who are a threat to him, or who anger him. Angel has nightmares about him for years after she escapes his clutches. In the end, Angel reveals what he is to the public by carrying his new young child prostitute out of his brothel through the large, shocked crowd, ruining his reputation and stealing his power.





## The Duchess

The Duchess is the proprietor of the brothel in Pair-a-Dice. While not violent herself, she is not afraid to have others be violent on her behalf. She pretends to be generous and gracious, but in reality she steals from the girls who work for her, and keeps all of the best food and supplies to herself.

## Bret Magowan

Magowan is the Duchess' right hand man, and part of his job is to make sure that Angel is safe when out of the Palace, and that she returns to the Palace when she says she will. Initially, Angel is not scared of Magowan, but he soon displays an extremely violent and angry side. He beats Angel almost to death. After Angel leaves the Palace, Magowan burns it down, and is later hanged for his actions.

## Lucky

Lucky is Angel's only friend in the Palace, but even she is unable to break through all of Angel's defenses. She is a heavy drinker, believing that life is more bearable and more fun if you are drunk. Angel learns that Lucky died in the fire when the Palace was burned down.

## Torie

Another one of the girls working in the Palace, Torie is jealous of Angel's beauty and status. At the end of the novel, she sees Angel again, however, and greets her happily. She is the first girl Angel sets up with a job and her inspiration for the House of Magdalena.

## Joseph Hochschild

Joseph is a Jewish storekeeper who is a business contact and friend of Michael's. He is there to watch Michael fall in love with Angel, and is also there for Angel when she runs away from Michael. He is a very kind man, and gives Angel the benefit of the doubt regarding her motives for leaving Michael. He is able to see the good in her, and offers her a job in his store. Joseph acts as a foil to Paul, because both men know who Angel is, but Joseph reacts with understanding and love.

## Paul

Paul is Michael's brother-in-law, having been married to Michael's late sister, Tessie. He is still grieving the loss of his wife when he returns to the valley from a gold-mining expedition. Paul loves Michael and wants the best for him, but is blinded by his own



prejudices against Angel. He is sure that Angel will never change, but that she has fooled Michael into thinking that she can. In order to prove his theory and satisfy his lust, Paul demands payment from Angel for the ride he gives her. Paul spends the rest of the novel denying his own guilt about this experience and focusing all his energy on hating and blaming Angel for everything that is wrong with his life. Paul is a caring person at heart, but he cannot let go of his guilt and bitterness. It is not until the end of the novel that Paul is able to forgive himself and to see that he was always more selfish than Angel was. Because Paul is a good man making bad choices, he makes for a complex and interesting antagonist to Angel.

## **John Altman**

John Altman is a loving family man, who is willing to make sacrifices for his family and to always do what is best for them. He is firm with his children, but also loving and playful, and they obviously love and respect him. His relationship with his wife is also very loving. John is the first good father Angel has ever met, and the first proof she sees that there are other men in the world that are like Michael.

## **Elizabeth Altman**

Elizabeth is the mother of five children. She is very loving, and is at her best when she is organizing and running her large family. She remains friendly with Angel even when she learns about her past, and she offers support and advice whenever she can. When she has her sixth baby, she shows that she trusts Angel by having Angel act as a midwife for the delivery. Elizabeth knows what she wants, but is willing to listen to her husband if and when they disagree. Her priority is to do what is best for her family.

## **Miriam Altman**

Miriam is the oldest of the Altman children, and only a few years younger than Angel. She is a very kind and obedient daughter, the first "good girl" Angel has ever met. However, she is constantly surprising Angel because, while she is good, she is also very funny, full of life, and curious about people who are different than herself. Miriam wants to be Angel's friend, and declares Angel to be brutally honest for telling her the truth about her past. Miriam is always able to see the best in people, which often puts her at odds with Paul's opinions about Angel, and Angel's about Paul. Miriam is a wonderful young girl, full of excitement about the future, and not afraid to be honest and genuine.

## **Ruth Altman**

Ruthie is the youngest of the Altman children, and she attaches herself to Angel almost as soon as they meet. She can see that Angel is a kind person behind her hesitancy, and the two become very close. Ruth is full of love and fun, and makes Angel long for a child of her own.



## Virgil Harper

When Angel runs away for the last time, she encounters a kind but desperate cafe owner, Virgil Harper. He is desperate for a new cook, and thankful to God when one is provided. Virgil is nothing but kind and grateful to Angel, and is quick to come to her defense when she is in danger. He is physically a small man, but his faith and kindness are very big.

## Jonathan Axel

Jonathan Axel is an important man in San Francisco, giving off an aura of power and authority. He is a prominent banker in the community, well-known and respected enough that most people in a crowd of strangers recognize who he is. Like Michael, he is a man of God, who is obedient to even the strangest command, and it is his obedience that saves Angel, Cherry and Faith from the clutches of Duke, and his confidence that causes Duke's ultimate downfall. He is also a loving husband and father, in addition to being very trusting and generous.

## Susanna Axel

Jonathan's daughter Susanna is around Angel's age, and is full of faith and love. She quickly becomes friends with Angel, and she teaches her to read. She also acts as a spiritual guide and resource of Angel's and her new-found belief. Susanna is confident and full of life, and very capable to run the House of Magdalena, first with Angel and then on her own.



# Objects/Places

## New England

The prologue takes place in New England, first in a small cottage and then in the city of New York.

## The New York Docks

Sarah and her mother move to New York, and eventually live near the docks.

## Rosary Beads

Sarah's mother had a necklace of these Catholic prayer beads that were very important to her, and that were given to Sarah when her mother died.

## Pair-a-Dice

Pair-a-Dice is the fictional California gold rush town that is home to Angel, and is where Michael goes to sell and trade his produce.

## The Palace

The Palace is the name of the brothel in which Angel lives and works before her marriage to Michael.

## The Valley

Though not given an official name, the area that contains the settlements of Michael, Paul and the Altmans is referred to by the characters as "the valley."

## The Silver Dollar

The Silver Dollar is the bar across the street from the Palace. When Angel returns to Pair-a-Dice to find the Palace burned, she works for the bartender at the Silver Dollar instead.



## Sacramento

Sacramento is a growing California city. Angel travels there with Michael, and later leaves Michael and lives there on her own.

## Wind Chimes

When Angel was a little girl, she set up tins in her hut on rainy days to enjoy the noise of the drips into the metal. When she tells this to Michael, he makes wind chimes in the barn out of old metal scraps, saying they are her "own private symphony." (chapter 21, p. 284)

## The Altman Cottage

With the help of Michael and Paul, John Altman builds a cottage for his wife and family, so they can settle near their new friends. Angel and Michael often visit the Altman family at their cottage.

## San Francisco

San Francisco is a growing California city, with docks similar to the ones in New York. Angel goes to San Francisco when she leaves Michael for the last time, and lives there for three years.

## Harper's Cafe

A small cafe owned by Virgil Harper, Harper's Cafe is unsuccessful and going bankrupt before Angel becomes the new cook. It burns to the ground in a fire six months after she begins to work there.

## Duke's Brothel

The last brothel Angel is forced to work in is Duke's. There is a stage downstairs that Angel later sings from.

## The Hatbox

A hatbox is a round piece of luggage intended for carrying hats, and was common in the 19th century. Susanna Axel uses a hatbox to place her prayer requests in, and there is another hatbox in Angel's office in the House of Magdalena.

## **The House of Magdalena**

Founded by Angel with the help of Jonathan and Susanna Axel, the House of Magdalena is a boarding house and drop-in center for a prostitute looking for a way out of her lifestyle. At the House of Magdalena, girls are taught to read and write, and also other marketable skills. They then are provided with help in finding new jobs.



# Themes

## Love Versus Lust

One theme that is prominent throughout this novel is the difference between genuine love, and the sex that goes with it, and the sex that accompanies lust. Angel has been exposed to sex for her whole life, far longer than healthy, as she was sold into prostitution as a child. She is sure that by the age of eighteen, she knows everything there is to know about men, and so far, she has not met anyone who has contradicted her expectations. The advice she had been given by Duke, the man who stole her innocence and her ability to trust a man, was "Love is a trap, Angel. Stick to pleasure. It doesn't require any great commitment" (chapter 21, p. 277). All of Angel's experiences have taught her that men do not want anything from women except for their bodies, and that a skilled woman can use her sexuality to control men.

When Angel meets Michael, he is unwilling to be controlled by her. She tries to seduce him, but he won't sleep with her, even after they are married. She is confused by him and his claims of love. She has heard claims of love before, but they were always accompanied by sex, and then by a man who leaves. Michael is certainly different. Michael's differences, however, do not mean that he does not feel attracted to Angel, or does not want to sleep with her. It takes all his self-control to resist her temptation, but he knows that if he sleeps with her, he will become like every other man she has ever known, and not like the loving husband and equal he hopes to become.

The difference between love and lust is very apparent to Angel the first time she has sex without love, after being with Michael. She pretends to be indifferent to Paul and to what he wants from her, but as soon as she is out of sight, she has a physical reaction to her emotional pain, vomiting against a tree (chapter 14, p. 186). Sex without love has done nothing but hurt her, and after her first experience with genuine love, she cannot easily go back to her old ways.

Eventually, Angel is able to experience love and sex together, and all of her preconceived notions of sex are shattered. Sex with Michael involves more than physical pleasure, and it is without shame, which is also new to Angel. She learns that genuine love does not quit when she pushes away, and that it is possible to make love, and not just have sex.

## God's Faithfulness

Angel's first experiences with God are not positive ones. Her mother did not have an abortion because she believed that it was a mortal sin, and she was punished for this choice by the man she loved. Then, when turned out in the street with nowhere to go, Sarah's mother is turned away by the church. When Sarah's mother dies, young and lonely, Sarah concludes that the reward for believing in God is vulnerability and abuse.



When Angel meets Michael, it is the first time she has contact with a person who takes his belief in God seriously, and truly wants to obey him. It is with Michael that Angel first hears God's voice, and though she tries to ignore it, she can't help but listen. It is not long before Angel sees that Michael's love for her is genuine and his love for God is, too. However, Angel does not fall in love with God. She falls in love with Michael, and puts her faith and trust in him.

Eventually this love for Michael becomes strong and real enough that she leaves him for selfless reasons. By then she had met other genuine Christians and saw that it wasn't only Michael who did not use religion as a way to bring her down. Once on her own, however, she does not have Michael to rely on. She is desperate to avoid prostitution, and has no choice but to listen to the voice of God. When she does so, He leads her to a café that needs a cook, and a job virtually falls into her lap.

Later, when she is back in Duke's clutches, Angel is forced to step on stage in front a crowd of leering men. Listening to God again, she sings the only song that comes to mind, the hymn, "Rock of Ages." This leads her to Jonathan Axel and her escape from Duke in a coincidence that can only be called miraculous. Angel is finally ready to fully believe, and she is with the right people to lead her there.

After Angel makes the decision to follow and believe, God's faithfulness to her does not end. In starting the House of Magdalena, we see that God's plan for her did not begin when she met Michael, but was in place much before that. Without her past, Angel would not have been such an effective servant to those who had been in her shoes. She would not have had the vision for the House of Magdalena because she would not have known exactly what was needed.

## Growth

The various settings in this novel are crucial to establishing tone, both in the cities and in the rural areas. However, the inclusion of nature in the story does more than establish setting, but it sets up the theme of growth. Throughout the novel, each person experiences character growth, and this growth is mirrored in the natural environment of their surroundings.

When Angel first arrives at Michael's cabin, she has never spent a day working outside. As her hands become calloused with hard work, her heart becomes less so. Angel "could scarcely believe that the small shriveled kernels Michael had given her to plant had become stalks taller than he" (chapter 24, p. 340). Angel's spirit and faith are as small as those kernels, but by the time she walks back into the fields and is reunited with her husband, she is full of life, faith and love. The roses she plants before she leaves have continued to flourish in her absence, just as she has grown as well.





# Style

## Point of View

*Redeeming Love* is told in the voice of a reliable and omniscient narrator, which means that the readers have access to the thoughts and feelings of several of the characters. However, each chapter or section of the book is told from the point of view of one character at a time. This is valuable because it allows the reader to get to know each character better, as we can see them from the perspective of others some of the time, but are able to see their thoughts and feelings at other times. For example, if the story was told only from Angel's perspective, the reader would not know how she appeared to others, and her beauty and aloof coldness are crucial to her character. We would also have difficulty understanding Michael's motives for marrying Angel, or for staying with her for so long. The story is usually told from the point of view of Michael or Angel, but there are portions from the perspective of Joseph Hochschild, Paul, Miriam, Elizabeth and others.

The story is told through a mixture of exposition and dialogue, and is presented for the most part in chronological order. There are occasions when the reader is presented with something from the past, but these moments usually come from the memories or the dialogue of a character. The straightforward and simple approach to point of view allows for an easier read in which the reader is able to focus on the plot and the messages being presented.

## Setting

Set in nineteenth century America, when immigrants and settlers were still arriving from Europe, and young men searched for their dreams in the gold rush of the west, *Redeeming Love* is full of images of a humankind struggling for survival and love in a harsh and unforgiving environment. The images of the rough streets of the quickly growing towns and cities are juxtaposed with those of the idyllic landscape of the untouched areas of the country.

In the novel's prologue, the reader is first introduced to New England in 1835, beginning at a peaceful and lovely cottage in the town, and ending in the harsh realities of the growing city of New York. Specifically, Sarah lives in a shack near the docks of New York, where prostitutes, beggars and drunks all spend their time.

The rest of the novel takes place in various California locations, and takes place at the end of the 1800s. Pair-a-Dice is a decrepit gold-mining town, and is described as "the worst place [Angel] could have imagined, a shanty town of golden dreams built out of rotting sails from abandoned ships.... Pair-a-Dice was wild jubilation. It wed black despair with fear and the foul taste of failure" (chapter one, p. 47). This is the setting for much of the first half of the novel, and it is not a happy place for anyone. However,



Michael's cabin is located in a valley not far from Pair-a-Dice. It is in this valley that Angel first learns to listen to the sounds of nature, to work with her hands and take pride in her success, and it is in the valley that she watches her first sunrise pour light onto the surrounding hills, trees and mountains. These examples illustrate the fact that the setting in the novel reflects the mood of the characters and the reader. The tone used to describe the city is one of grit and dismay, and it is obvious that this location is not where our protagonist should be.

Later, the characters of the novel travel to other California cities, including Sacramento and San Francisco. The descriptions of the rapid growth of these cities are historically accurate, including the frequent fires in the young San Francisco. While not as harsh as the gold mining environment of Pair-a-Dice, Sacramento and San Francisco at this time were often cruel and difficult places to find happiness. In them, however, Angel finds the kind and generous characters of Joseph Hoshchild, Virgil Harper, and Jonathan Axel. These characters redeem these cities for Angel a way that was not possible in Pair-a-Dice.

## Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel is relatively simple, complicated only by the nineteenth century setting. The author will occasionally use terms that may be unfamiliar to the reader in order to maintain authentic to the time period. Because these terms are used in context, however, it is not difficult for the reader to figure out what exactly the narrator or character is referring to. For example, when Angel says to Michael, "Sooner or later a wagon train of virgins will arrive, all respectable in their dusty, worn-out linsey-woolsey" (chapter 8, p. 118). The reader may not have heard of "linsey-woolsey," but can certainly conclude that it is a sort of fabric worn by women who walk and work hard in their clothes, and not by those who wear dresses to be fashionable or attractive. The author does a good job of this throughout the novel, as it is important for her characters to speak with the vocabulary of their time.

There is a considerable amount of dialogue used in the novel, which makes the novel easy to read and relatively fast-paced, despite the fact that it is over 400 pages long. The dialogue is also important as the story is character-driven, and it is often through dialogue that the interactions between characters are revealed. The dialogue is often also reflective of the time period, as the men and women in the brothels do not communicate as equals, and the conversations can tend to be crude and fast moving.

In the expository passages of the novel, the author tends to be quite poetic in her descriptions, with the tone and mood of the place or person being described affecting the words used to describe it. This, too, makes for an enjoyable reading experience, as there are not lengthy factual descriptions of locations or people, but rather short sentences or paragraphs that say a lot.



## Structure

Redeeming Love is divided into 34 chapters, in addition to a prologue and epilogue, all within four books, titled "Child of Darkness," "Fear," "Defiance," and "Humility." These titles are based on the development of Angel's character. Most of the chapters are relatively short, usually around ten pages, but ranging between six and twenty-two pages. Each chapter usually takes place within a limited period, but the next chapter will often begin several days, or even months, later.

It is approximately half way through the book that the Altman family is introduced. This is significant as they create a turning point in the relationship between Michael and Angel. After the Altmans arrive, the Hoseas become accepted as a couple for the first time, instead of as simply two very different individuals. It is at this point in the novel that the marriage becomes real to Angel, and it is the first time she introduces herself as Mrs. Hosea. When looking at the plot of the novel, it is also structured by Angel's actions. After marrying Michael, Angel runs away from him four times, and each time is either brought back by Michael or returns on her own. The moves from the valley to the city create a natural structure in the story, offering variety in setting and a circular repetitiveness to the story.



## Quotes

"What's your name?... It doesn't matter. I think I'm going to call you Angel.' Straightening, he took her hand. 'Come on now, Angel. I have things to teach you.' He lifted her and sat her on the big bed. 'You can call me Duke, when you get your tongue back.'" (prologue, p. 44)

"And by morning, Sarah knew that Cleo had told her God's truth about everything." (prologue, p. 44)

"Michael Hosea was a quiet man, but there wasn't anything soft about him. There was something in his look that made men treat him with respect. It wasn't just his height or the strength of his body, which were both impressive enough. It was the clear steadiness of his gaze. He knew what he was about even if the rest of the world didn't."(chapter 2, p.55)

"It came to her with sudden finality that there was no way out, not for her. There never had been; there never would be. Everywhere she turned, every time she tried, she was trapped again, worse off than before." (chapter 5, p. 93)

"Men had called her by other names than Angel. Some nice. Some not so nice. But she didn't want this man calling her anything but Angel. That's who he had married. Angel. And Angel was all he was going to get." (chapter 7, p. 105)

"She studied him. Sooner or later, she would figure him out. He was a man, wasn't he? He couldn't be that complex. She would take him apart piece by piece." (chapter 8, p. 115)

"Mama had believed in God. Mama had had faith. She had opened herself up wide. Our Father who art in heaven was in the same realm as Alex Stafford. Angel wasn't fool enough to open herself up for anyone, least of all him. And if this man figured he could make her...She had learned early that what you don't believe in can't hurt you." (chapter 8, p. 119)

"She was guilty of being born... No, not a hundred dawns like this, not even a thousand, would change what was. The truth was there forever, just like Duke said in the dream. You can't get away from it. No matter how hard you try, you can't escape the truth." (chapter 12, p. 140)

"Things had changed between them. It wasn't that he had finally had sex with her. It was something else, something deeper and more elemental, something beyond her understanding. She wasn't sure what it was, but she knew if she was ever going to call her life her own, she had to get away from him. Now." (chapter 13, p. 159)



"Paul headed for Angel. He looked her up and down again, and this time there was no mistake. She was wearing Tessie's clothes. He felt hot fury all over. How could Michael give them to her?" (chapter 14, p. 173)

"I want to be free Michael. Just once in my whole life. Free!"...Michael's face softened. The anger vanished, but not the hurt, no the sorrow. "You are free. You just don't know it yet." (chapter 16, p.198)

"Joseph didn't argue but he remembered well the beautiful soiled dove who walked Main Street like every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday...Michael was just seeing her through the eyes of a man who loved her far more deeply than a woman like her deserved. But then, maybe it was Michael's kind of living that was changing her." (chapter 17, p. 223)

"Angel hadn't known many good girls... Miriam was neither dull nor critical. She had poked good-humored fun at her father all evening while seeing to her ailing mother. Her sisters and brothers clearly adored her." (chapter 18, p. 239)

"The Altman's fascinated Angel. They all liked each other. John Altman was clearly in charge and would tolerate no disrespect or rebellion, but it was clear he was not held in fear by his wife and children." (chapter 18, p. 240)

"Angel pulled his head down and kissed him, loving his response, loving the way she felt when he took over. 'I don't think I'll ever get enough of you, Michael Hosea. Never as long as I live.' 'Nor I of you.'" (Chapter 24, p 330)

"Until this moment he'd thought it was because he'd loved Miriam too much, but he saw clearly now that he had loved himself more. Angel had understood a higher quality of love: sacrifice." (chapter 33, p. 448)

"All her carefully planned words fled. So many words to say a simple, heartfelt thing: I love you, and I'm sorry." (chapter 34, p. 461)

"Love the Lord your God, and love one another. Love one another as he loves. Love with strength and purpose and passion and no matter what comes against you. Don't weaken Stand against the darkness, and love. That's the way back into Eden. That's the way back to life." (chapter 34, p. 462)



## Topics for Discussion

Discuss Angel's names throughout the novel. Why do you think it is important to the story and to the characters that she be called by so many names? Why is it so important to Angel that she keep her own name a secret for such a long time? In what way are Angel's various names more like titles?

Redeeming Love is told from an obvious Christian perspective. Does this hinder the story in any way, or is it necessary to it? Is this novel valuable to a person who does not believe in God, or who is of a religion other than Christianity?

Discuss the character of Paul and his influence on Angel. Would she have left Michael for the final time if Paul had not encouraged her to do so? To what extent was he motivated by good intentions, or was he merely acting on his guilt and hate?

Is Michael a realistic character, or is he too obedient, loving, gentle and forgiving to actually exist? Discuss the idea of Michael as caricature, representing Christ to Angel and the novel.

Is it presumptuous of Michael to marry Angel when she is too unconscious to know what she is doing? Do you think she should be more angry about it than she is when she finds out? Is she not angry as she wants to be married to him, or is it because she doesn't value marriage enough for it to even matter to her?

How does Angel's obvious physical beauty affect her life? Would her life have been easier if she had been less attractive, or would it have been more difficult?

How did you feel about the arrival of the Altman family into the valley and the novel? Did they disrupt the development of Michael and Angel's relationship, or did they add a new element to it? Do you think Michael would have married Miriam if Angel had not been in the picture?

Duke claims to be like Michael because he, too, took Angel back in after she tried to leave him, and he offers her protection, clothing and food, just as Michael does. Angel even admits that she once was in love with Duke. Compare and contrast these two men and their relationships with Angel. Do they both control her at some point in time? Does she depend on them as she has no better alternative, or because she wants to be with them?

How did you feel about the epilogue? Did it add anything of value to the story or the characters, or was it simply intended to answer questions and provide the "perfect" ending? Was it perhaps too perfect an ending?