

Secrets of the Morning Study Guide

Secrets of the Morning by Virginia C. Andrews

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Plot Summary

The novel "Secrets of the Morning" by V.C. Andrews tells the story of Dawn Cutler, a lonely and abused teenager sent out to make a future for herself at a prestigious school for the arts in New York City. Even in New York, Dawn's abusive, revengeful grandmother causes problems for her by spreading lies. When Dawn gets pregnant by an opera star, her grandmother forces her to live in seclusion with an equally cruel aunt, and then arranges for the baby to be adopted. In a twist at the conclusion of the novel, Dawn inherits the controlling portion of her grandparents' estate after her grandmother dies of a stroke.

Revenge, family secrets, friendship, and the power that lies can hold over people are all themes in this novel. Although she does not realize it, Dawn is the result of a family secret that has caused a rift between her mother and grandmother. This discord caused her grandmother to "get rid" of Dawn by arranging to have another family "abduct" her. Dawn believed this family was her real family for years, a belief that leads to many of the problems that Dawn faces in the course of this novel. She has been reunited with her "real" family, the Cutlers, only to be shipped off to a boarding school so that her grandmother will not have to be around her. Dawn learns too late that her grandmother's hatred of her is because Dawn was born as a result of an affair between Dawn's mother and her grandmother's husband.

When Dawn's trust in a celebrity who promises to marry her and make her a big singing star leaves her pregnant and abandoned, Grandmother Cutler sends Dawn to The Meadows, the home of Dawn's aunt where Grandmother Cutler knows that the girl will be abused. Emily, who still struggles with the guilt that her mentally retarded sister got pregnant out of wedlock, treats Dawn as a prisoner and sinner. She tries to make Dawn have a miscarriage through rough treatment and medication. When the baby is born, Emily takes it away from Dawn because Grandmother Cutler has already arranged to have the child adopted.

Dawn's friend, Jimmy, arrives just in time to rescue her from her aunt at The Meadows and agrees to help Dawn locate her baby. Their search leads them to Cutler's Cove where Dawn's grandmother has just had a stroke. Grandmother Cutler's dying words to Dawn are: "You're my curse." Dawn learns when the will is read that she is the daughter of her grandfather, whom Dawn assumes was seduced by her mother. Dawn is also left the controlling portion of Cutler's Cove by her step-grandfather.



Prologue

Prologue Summary

The novel "Secrets of the Morning" by V.C. Andrews tells the story of Dawn Cutler, a lonely and abused teenager sent out to make a future for herself at a prestigious school for the arts in New York City. Even in New York, Dawn's abusive, revengeful grandmother causes problems for her by spreading lies. When Dawn gets pregnant by an opera star, her grandmother forces her to live in seclusion with an equally cruel aunt, and then arranges for the baby to be adopted. In a twist at the conclusion of the novel, Dawn inherits the controlling portion of her grandparents' estate after her grandmother dies of a stroke.

Dawn Cutler is in a plane headed to New York City. She has agreed to go to school at the Bernhardt School for Performing Arts in New York in exchange for her grandmother helping to get the man she had believed was her father paroled quickly from jail. She has just learned the truth about her abduction and confronted her grandmother about the lies that she had been told. Her grandmother still refuses to admit that Dawn is a Cutler. At the hotel, her half-brother Phillip raped her and half-sister, Clara Sue treated her with spite and had Jimmy, whom Dawn had believed was her real brother, taken off by the police. Now, Dawn is on her way to train to be a singer.

Prologue Analysis

Although Dawn's life has been highly traumatic up to this point, she is relieved and happy that she is on her way to New York and away from all of her problems. This prologue reveals how Dawn comes to be traveling alone to her school. She has made a bargain with her grandmother, who doesn't like her, to get the man whom she believed for years was her father out of jail quickly. This example quickly demonstrates where Dawn's real allegiance lies. She is closer to the family with whom she lived for many years without realizing that they were not blood relatives than she is to her "real" family.

Much of Dawn's life has been a lie. She has only recently learned the truth about herself. It can be gathered from this portion of the novel that it was some fake abduction scheme that caused Dawn to be separated from her family. Although she's learned who her father isn't, Dawn still does not know the identity of her real father. Her mother will only tell her that she had an affair with a singer.

It is also learned in this section how unsupportive and how unloving Dawn's family really is. Her grandmother denies that Dawn is a Cutler and wants nothing to do with her. Her mother refuses to be supportive of Dawn because of the power that her mother-in-law has over her. Even Grandmother Cutler's son is afraid of her and will not do anything to cross her. Dawn's half-brother rapes her, an instance of incest, while her half-sister is hateful and has the only person Dawn cared for taken off by the police.



Chapter 1 - A New Adventure, A New Friend

Chapter 1 - A New Adventure, A New Friend Summary

Dawn meets a soldier who reminds her of Jimmy who helps her retrieve her baggage from the luggage carousel. A taxi driver takes Dawn to a brownstone belonging to Agnes Morris or the lady with whom Dawn will board. In the sitting room of the house, Agnes tells Dawn that she has gotten a letter from her grandmother describing all of Dawn's former problems. Agnes will not let Dawn see the letter, but tells her that she is under probation from the beginning of her stay. She also describes the chores that each resident is expected to do and tells her about the other residents of the house. She will share a room with Trisha Kramer. Agnes tells Dawn that if she even needs to talk, she is welcome to come to her room, and demonstrates the way she should knock and enter. There is a curtain in the room as if it is a stage. She then shows Dawn the bathrooms and the room in which she will stay.

Trisha returns from a dance class and begs Dawn to tell her all about herself. As Trisha questions Dawn, Dawn starts to cry. She realizes how different her abusive family and tumultuous life has been. She admits to Trisha that Agnes gave her the impression Trisha was a horrible person. The two change clothes and go out for ice cream.

Chapter 1 - A New Adventure, A New Friend Analysis

While Dawn has arrived in New York with high hopes, she soon learns that her Grandmother Cutler is not content to leave Dawn alone since she is out of sight. She has sent Agnes, the woman with whom Dawn will be living, a letter about Dawn. Although Dawn gets the feeling that the content of the letter is not positive, Agnes will not allow Dawn to see the letter. Dawn only knows that whatever is in the letter has caused Agnes to put her on probation.

On a positive note, Dawn and her roommate Trisha meet and immediately form an instant bond with one another. With the tumultuous life that Dawn has had so far, she has been in desperate need of a friend like Trisha. Besides Trisha, it appears that the only person who has been a friend to Dawn has been Jimmy, the boy who she believed was her brother.

More information is also given in this section about Dawn's life before she came to be in the school in New York. Apparently she had known Phillip before she realized he was her half-brother. At that time, Dawn had a crush on Phillip and thought he would be her first boyfriend. In reality, it turns out that it is Jimmy, the boy whom she believed was her brother, turns into her first boyfriend. It is amid this confusing web of family that Dawn struggles with issues of incest.



Another important aspect to not in this chapter is the mention that Dawn does not understand why her grandmother does not like her. It seems that there must be some reason for Grandmother Cutler's strong dislike of her granddaughter. One possible answer to her dislike for Dawn may be the fact that Dawn is not the offspring of her son but of a man with whom Dawn's mother had an affair.



Chapter 2 - Exploring the Bernhardt School

Chapter 2 - Exploring the Bernhardt School Summary

In Chapter 2, Trisha takes Dawn through the busy sidewalks and streets of New York to a luncheonette two blocks from Agnes' home. Trisha continues to ask Dawn about her past but Dawn tells her she's not really comfortable talking about it yet. Dawn learns that Trisha is an only child whose father spoils her. Dawn is saddened because she thinks of how she may never know her father.

After they finish their ice cream sodas, Trisha takes Dawn to the school. Dawn is surprised how beautiful the school and its grounds are. Trisha introduces Dawn to one of the teachers. She finishes the quick tour, leaving Dawn feeling more comfortable about her next day's classes. As soon as they return to the brownstone, Agnes demands to know where they have been and informs them that she is instituting a new rule requiring them to sign out when they leave the house. Agnes is upset because she had wanted to introduce Arthur to them but they were not at home. She takes Dawn upstairs and introduces them right away. Although Agnes tells Dawn that Arthur is a very gifted musician, Arthur denies the claim.

Trisha gets ready to shower for dinner and tells Dawn that she can use the boys' bathroom because Arthur never showers. However, Arthur walks in on Dawn just as she steps into the shower. The encounter reminds her of Phillip raping her. Back in their room after dinner, Trisha wonders what has caused Agnes to decide they need to check in and out of the house. Dawn blames the action on the letter that her grandmother sent. A knock on the door interrupts their conversation to tell Dawn that she has a phone call. It is Jimmy telling Dawn that he has enlisted in the Army. When they hang up, Dawn hears a second click and wonders if Agnes was listening to their conversation.

When she returns to the room Dawn knows she has to tell Trisha some of story explaining why she and Jimmy had once thought they were brother and sister. She tells Trisha about the kidnapping, the family she thought was her real family, then her reunion with her real family who was hateful to her. While Trisha is excited because Dawn's life has been so eventful, Dawn wants only a family that she can love and cherish. Later when she gets up to go to the bathroom, Dawn hears Arthur crying in his room. She calls to him but he will not answer.

Chapter 2 - Exploring the Bernhardt School Analysis

As Dawn gets to know Trisha better, she is pained because she sees how much Trisha loves her father and how much he loves her. Her sadness comes from her fear that she may never convince her mother to tell her who her father really is. By the end of their



first day together, and because of her reaction to Arthur walking in on her in the shower, Dawn tells Trisha some of what has happened to her in her past. While Trisha wishes she had an exciting life, Dawn wishes that she had a family that she could love.

Dawn's insecurity about being a part of the fine arts school surfaces as the reader learns that Dawn did not have to go through the audition process to get into the school as all of the other students did. Trisha tries to convince Dawn that she must have some talent if she made it through the audition, but Dawn knows that her grandmother pulled strings to get her enrolled in the school. She is afraid that the teachers and other students there will realize that she is a fraud and has not musical talent. This could be why there is some sort of attraction between Dawn and Arthur. Although Agnes pours over Arthur's musical ability, he denies that he has talent.



Chapter 3 - The Letter

Chapter 3 - The Letter Summary

Madame Steichen, Dawn's piano teacher, keeps Dawn from losing her mind during her first several months in the Bernhardt School. Although she had taken piano lessons before, Madame Steichen tells her to forget anything she thought she knew about piano because she considers Dawn's playing so bad. By the end of the summer, Madame Steichen tells Dawn she has the talent to be a concert pianist.

Although Dawn's mother never comes to visit her as she promised, she does call Dawn one day. She makes excuses that she hasn't felt well. When Dawn tries to talk to her mother about the lies and how they have affected her, her mother suddenly becomes tired and has to get off the phone. Dawn begs for the name of her father, but her mother hangs up the phone. Dawn, again, hears the second click. When Dawn tells Trisha that she believes Agnes is spying on her because of her grandmother's letter, Trisha tells her they must find the letter and find out exactly what it said.

The following night when Agnes is at the theater with her friends, the two girls sneak into her room and find the letter. In it Dawn's grandmother calls Dawn a "bad seed in the family" accuses her of being a juvenile delinquent and sexually promiscuous. Although Dawn expected the letter to contain this type of information, she is surprised when she actually reads it. Trisha advises her to do well so she can prove her grandmother wrong. As the two leave the room, Dawn feels as if she is being watched. Behind them in the hallway, a shadow moves. She sees that it is Arthur. She tells Trisha about seeing him when they get back into their room. The encounter with Arthur as well as her grandmother's letter disturbs Dawn and she doesn't sleep well because her mind is running over her past confrontations with her grandmother. She knows the woman is still doling out revenge for the times that Dawn has defeated her.

At the end of the summer session, Dawn meets Arthur's parents. Dawn notes that Arthur's parents look nothing like him and wonders if the boy is adopted. During the break, Dawn helps Mrs. Liddy thoroughly clean the house. One day, Agnes walks in on Dawn as she is playing the piano in the sitting room. Dawn talks to Agnes about her personal life and learns that Agnes never got married because she was afraid being married would cause her to lose her freedom and independence. After they finish talking, Agnes tells Dawn there is a letter for her. It is from Daddy Longchamp. It had taken the letter three weeks to get to her. He apologizes to her for the pain he must have caused. She writes back to tell him that she forgives him and to update him on her school.

Dawn also gets a surprise when Madame Steichen calls to tell her she has time for private lessons in the remainder of the summer. Dawn promises to attend. She feels as if Madame Steichen has begun to treat her differently during these sessions. She also



senses a change in the attitude from the other members of the teaching staff toward her.

When Trisha returns, the two have much to talk about. Their reunion includes a trip to George's. When they return to the house, Agnes tells Dawn that she has a gentleman visitor waiting to see her. It is Phillip. Instead of being polite, Dawn tells him that she did not ask him come and requests that he leave. Dawn runs to her room and Trisha follows her. Dawn explains to her that it was her brother who raped her.

Chapter 3 - The Letter Analysis

The friendship between Dawn and Trisha grows as Trisha helps Dawn to locate the letter that her grandmother wrote to Agnes about her. Dawn does not seem to doubt that the things that Grandmother Cutler tells about Dawn are lies and advises Dawn that the best way to get revenge is to succeed in school. While Trisha could have fallen for the lies that Grandmother Cutler told about Dawn as easily as Agnes does, she chooses to be a true friend and judge Dawn on what she knows of her. Agnes opinion of Dawn, however, has been strongly molded by the negative things that Grandmother Cutler has had to say about her. Agnes does not give Dawn a chance to prove herself, she only takes Grandmother Cutler's lies at face value.

The fact that Dawn's family does not visit her at school and she does not go home for vacations speaks volumes about their relationship. Her mother calls her once on the phone but hangs up when Dawn tries to press her about the identity of her father. Although she has not known her real mother very long, she already realizes that her illnesses are only hoaxes that she uses to keep people from being unpleasant to her. Although Dawn knows that if she brings any unpleasant topics up to try to discuss with her mother that the woman will quickly get off the phone with her. So it is when Dawn tries to push for the name of her father.

In this section of the novel, Dawn's half-brother, Phillip does come to see her. Agnes believes it is shocking the way that Dawn treats the boy. She sees only that Phillip is attractive and appears to be a gentleman. She does not attempt to ask Dawn why she treats Phillip as she does. She only assumes that Dawn is being unreasonable.

Also in the section, Dawn gets a letter from Daddy Longchamp, the man whom she believed was her father for 14 years before she learned about her alleged "abduction." He is out of jail and is upset about destroying his family. While the family was poor, they loved each other deeply. He assumes that Dawn as well as Fern, another child in the family, are happy now that they are with people who have money. It appears, however, that Dawn would rather have her loving family back than have money and the hateful family that has come along with it.



Chapter 4 - A Visit With Jimmy

Chapter 4 - A Visit With Jimmy Summary

The remaining students return to Bernhardt for the fall classes. Donald Rossi and Arthur fuss and fight continually until Agnes makes them come to peace. One day Dawn meets Arthur in the hall and advises him not to take Donald too seriously. About a month later Arthur comes to Dawn's room to share his poetry. Dawn cries when she reads the poetry. Arthur tells her that he knows about the lies that her grandmother told about her. Arthur admits that he does not like his parents. They want him to be a professional musician while he knows that he is only mediocre. He tells Dawn that he plans to write a poem about her.

Meanwhile, Jimmy comes to visit Dawn. She is a little taken back by the way his uniform makes him look more mature. They go to dinner at a fancy, expensive restaurant. They talk about Daddy Longchamp, whom Jimmy said has a lady friend in his apartment building. Jimmy also tells Dawn he is being shipped to Europe.

After dinner, the two walk to Dawn's school, then go to Jimmy's hotel. They enjoy the view from his room on the twenty-eighth floor. They kiss, but Jimmy tells Dawn that he still fights with the thoughts about Dawn being his sister. They undress and explore one another. When he feels Dawn stiffen, he tells her they should stop because he is afraid if they go further, it will hurt their love for one another. They lie and hold one another. They fall asleep and wake at 2 a.m. When Dawn arrives at the house, Agnes tells her that she is restricted to the dorm for six months.

Chapter 4 - A Visit With Jimmy Analysis

Dawn finally gets to see Jimmy, the boy whom she thought was her brother. Since they know that they are not related by blood, they have developed sexual feelings for one another but neither seem to be able to get past the idea that they once believed they were brother and sister. Jimmy seems to have more of a problem with this idea than Dawn as she begs him to make love to her. His inability to do so and fear that their making love might hurt their relationship shows that he is a gentleman and that he respects Dawn and her feelings. He also puts a priority on maintaining their relationship with one another.

Once again in this section, Grandmother Cutler gets a job at Dawn as she manages to get her grounded by Agnes. The punishment of dorm restriction does not bother Dawn as much as Agnes' threat that she will not be allowed to see Jimmy again. Agnes does not give Dawn a chance to explain the circumstances or what caused them to be late. As in other situations, Agnes takes Grandmother Cutler's lies about Dawn and Jimmy at face value. She assumes that Jimmy is bad just because Grandmother Cutler says that he is. She does not take the time to get to know him and realize that he is a good

person, while Phillip, whom she liked because he was handsome, is evil. Dawn is beginning to learn that Agnes will believe lies more quickly than she will believe the truth.



Chapter 5 - Family Affairs

Chapter 5 - Family Affairs Summary

Arthur learns of Dawn's punishment and offers to play checkers with her. He tells her he's talked to his parents about his oboe playing but they keep convincing him to continue practicing. He asks Dawn for her opinion of his playing and she answers him truthfully. Although Dawn tries to tell him that his parents might eventually accept his decision to do what he wants, he admits to her that he is adopted but that it is a secret they've never told anyone. Arthur offers to stay with Dawn at the house as a form of self-punishment so he can keep Dawn company.

Dawn is uncomfortable because she doesn't want Arthur to think that she can be his girlfriend. Things get worse when Arthur gives her the poem that he has written for her. Dawn is surprised by the depth of feeling that is in the poem. She decides again to be honest with Arthur and tell him that she already has a boyfriend. Arthur thanks her for her honesty.

Agnes soon tells Dawn she is impressed with the way she has behaved and ends her restriction. The next day she learns she has been released because the Cutlers will be coming to New York and want to take Dawn out for dinner. The dinner goes well until Dawn asks about Sissy, one of the workers at the hotel. Clara Sue is happy to tell her that Sissy was fired. When Dawn demands to know why, her mother feigns illness and her sister blames the ruined dinner on Dawn.

The rest of the school year goes quickly as Dawn looks forward to letters from Jimmy. One day a letter from Daddy Longchamp saying he plans to marry Edwina Freemont upsets her. She can't get used to the idea of Momma being gone. Dawn is invited to go along with Trisha and her parents during her seventeenth birthday celebration. She feels a little jealousy towards her friend as she watches her interact with her parents.

Arthur becomes more and more agitated as Performance Weekend grows closer. Finally one morning he doesn't come down for breakfast. Agnes checks his room and finds that he has run away. When Arthur's parents come, Dawn notes that the two of them look angry. Dawn tells them of Arthur's concerns about his performance and says he's probably hiding somewhere. She tells them she doesn't know where Arthur was but if she did, she wouldn't tell his parents. A week after Performance Weekend Dawn gets a letter from Arthur. He tells her that he plans to try to become a writer. Dawn gives the letter to Agnes as Trisha suggests that she should.

Near the end of the school year, Madame Steichen tells Dawn she plans for her to be her featured student during Performance Weekend. She also learns from Trisha that Michael Sutton, an opera star, is coming to be a guest teacher at the school. Dawn hopes to be included in the class.



Chapter 5 - Family Affairs Analysis

In this section, the lonely Arthur reaches out to Dawn. Because he followed Trisha and Dawn on the night that they located Grandmother Cutler's letter and eavesdropped on them, he realizes that he and Dawn share a similar situation. In the same way, Dawn connects with Arthur because she feels there is some secret in his family that causes him to be the way that he is. During her time on dorm restriction, Dawn learns that Arthur has talent as a writer where he is not particularly gifted as a musician. Because his parents are both professional musicians, they expect him to exhibit musical talent as well so that no one will know that he is adopted. His parents have chosen to lie about his status because they don't want anyone to know that they do not have a sex life. Arthur is becoming tired of being punished as a result of the life that his parents have chosen to live. Although Dawn could have lied to the boy, she realizes how much lies hurt and instead is truthful with him concerning his musical ability. She encourages him to try to help his parents understand why he cannot be the musician that his parents want him to be but gives up and runs away. It is suspected that Dawn encouraged his disappearance until she shares with Agnes a letter that she gets from Arthur.

Dawn's family finally comes to visit her, but it is obvious that the visit is only made to keep up appearances. They are coming to New York because they plan to take a luxurious vacation on a cruise ship for the holidays. They "assume" Dawn is not interested in coming. During dinner, Clara Sue is hateful to her. When Dawn asks about a particular maid at the hotel with whom she was friends, Clara Sue is happy to tell her the maid was fired because she knows it will upset Dawn and make the remainder of dinner uncomfortable. Dawn believes that Sissy being fired is another of Grandmother Cutler's attempts to get even with her for learning the truth of her abduction. Sissy had pointed her to a lady who was able to tell Dawn the truth about what had happened to her, a truth that Grandmother Cutler did not want surfacing as it would prove that she had a hand in Dawn being kidnapped.



Chapter 6 - Getting to Know Michael

Chapter 6 - Getting to Know Michael Summary

Dawn is excited when she is chosen to be one of the six students in Michael Sutton's class. When she tells Madame Steichen about being chosen to work with Michael, she is not impressed. She says that Michael is not an artist, but only a performer. As she walks home after her lesson, Dawn is surprised to hear Michael speak to her. He invites her for a cup of coffee. He tells Dawn that he is intrigued by her and that he believes that she will be his star pupil. He invites her to a recital that evening at the Museum of Modern Art.

Trisha and Agnes help Dawn get ready for the recital. When she arrives at the museum, Dawn is surprised that she does not see Michael. He comes in later with a red headed lady on his arm. He has very little to do with Dawn, only introduces her as his prize student. Embarrassed by the way she is treated, Dawn runs away. She realizes that she is still holding the wine glass, then a man accosts her on the street and asks if she is slumming. She runs back to Agnes' home where Trisha helps her feel better about the ruined evening.

Chapter 6 - Getting to Know Michael Analysis

An experienced person would very quickly realize that Michael Sutton is a player. He is buttering Dawn up and building her up in an attempt to seduce her. Although Dawn has had much excitement and trouble in her life, she has very little experience with men and suitors. At this point, she is still only sixteen. She has had one man who has forced himself upon her. Most recently, she has been around Jimmy who has treated her as a gentleman should treat a lady. It is obvious that Michael Sutton has a way with women and is very accustomed to getting what he wants out of the opposite sex. Dawn is awed by his status as an opera star as well as his perhaps only feigned interest in her and her talent. Although Dawn believes the night at the recital is to be a date, she is hurt when Michael shows up with another woman on his arm. She is even more hurt when he barely acknowledges her. This may have been a test on Michael's part to see how Dawn would react to seeing him and another woman in public, or to see if she would continue to admire him even after he had treated her so coolly.

Note immediately the differences between Madame Steichen and Michael. When Madame Steichen learns that Dawn will be in Michael's class, she warns her not to be drawn in by his aura because he is only a performer. Madame Steichen seems to draw a distinct line between a performer and an artist. She believes very strongly that artists are preferable to performers. One of the things that Madame Steichen tries to teach Dawn is that she should not rely heavily on the praise of others, but should know when her work is good. Michael tells Dawn that just the opposite is true. He tells her that it is important to stroke the egos of musicians whether they are performers or artists. This

idea encourages Dawn to put emphasis on Michael's opinion of her and her talent instead of trusting her own instinct.



Chapter 7 - Private Lessons

Chapter 7 - Private Lessons Summary

When Dawn's mother calls her to congratulate her on her success at school Dawn asks again about her father but her mother avoids the question. In her first lesson with Michael he teaches her about the proper way to breathe when she sings by wrapping his arms around her from behind. At the conclusion of the lesson, he sings one of his famous love songs and invites Dawn to join him. He kisses her at the end of the song. He tells her it is only because he felt like he was performing the song on stage. Dawn feels as if he really loves her. He asks her to come to his apartment that evening but warns her not to tell anyone.

When Dawn gets home, Trisha knows that something has happened so Dawn concocts a story. At his apartment, Michael encourages Dawn to talk about her family. He tells Dawn he is attracted to her and says they will make a wonderful singing team. He takes her to the bedroom where he makes love to her.

Chapter 7 - Private Lessons Analysis

Although Dawn doesn't realize it, she could learn something from her conversation with her mother. Although Dawn's mother doesn't tell her the identity of her father, she does suggest a very powerful truth about Michael. She tells Dawn that good looks and charm don't always mean that a person is good. She suggests that these things can cover up an evil nature. Dawn does not realize the truth in her mother's words. Instead of comparing her situation with her mother's, and realizing that Michael may not be the good and charming person that he appears to be on the outside, she instead focuses on the idea that her father was an evil person. She wonders if this evil nature has been passed on to her. While she feels that everyone whom she meets is being deceitful to her, she doesn't consider that Michael may be deceitful. One clue to Michael's true nature may be the secrecy to which Michael makes her promise. He notes that the other teachers would not like his relationship with her. What Dawn doesn't understand is her teachers, as well as many others, would not like the relationship because it is basically statutory rape since Dawn is younger than 18 and Michael is probably significantly older than 21. Again, if Dawn were versed in the way of men, she would realize this secrecy is Michael's attempt to keep his intentions about Dawn a secret.



Chapter 8 - Vows of Love

Chapter 8 - Vows of Love Summary

Michael asks Dawn about her father and she admits that she doesn't know who he is. He offers to help her find her father. In the weeks after their affair, Dawn feels as if Michael treats her in a very cold and impersonal manner. One day after their lesson, Michael explains to her that the dean had mentioned to him that he shouldn't be too familiar with his students. He asks her to come back to his apartment that evening. During her piano lesson Madame Steichen becomes so upset with Dawn's lack of attention that she breaks her wooden pointer over the piano. She tells Dawn she does not like what she sees in her eyes.

When Dawn gets home after class, she has a package from Jimmy. She feels guilty for the way she has treated Jimmy, but still goes to Michael. At his apartment Michael has a filmy gown for Dawn that she is embarrassed to wear. He has her take vows of love, somewhat like marriage vows with him. He then declares it is time for the honeymoon and takes her to his bedroom.

When she arrives home with a hickey on her neck, Trisha demands to be told what happened. While Trisha is happy for her, she also tells Dawn she is scared for her. After that, Dawn goes to Michael's apartment nearly once a week. He promises to get her auditions for a singing part in a play. Dawn plans to stay with Michael during the Thanksgiving holiday.

Chapter 8 - Vows of Love Analysis

In this section of the novel, Dawn continues her affair with Michael. At his request, she has made up a lie about having an affair with an older man who has just lost his wife. She does not tell Trisha that she is sneaking off to see Michael. Although it saddens her not to be able to tell Trisha the truth, Dawn protects Michael. Had Dawn told Trisha what was happening, Trisha might have been able to see the danger in which Dawn was putting herself.

Also in this chapter, Michael makes two different promises to Dawn that indicate to her that he intends for their relationship to be long term. First, he has the two of them go through a fake wedding ceremony. He also finds out about Dawn's family life and background and makes a promise to her to help her find her father. Since finding her father is a priority to Dawn, it impresses her that Michael says that he is willing to help her. She takes this as a sign that he is interested in her happiness and is willing to have a vested interest in her future.

Madame Steichen, however, does sense something different in Dawn on the day that Dawn knows she has plans to see Michael that evening. The lady becomes so frustrated with Dawn's disconnection from her music that she breaks her wooden

pointed over the piano. Madame Steichen tells Dawn that she does not like what she sees in Dawn's eyes. This is an indication that she senses a change in Dawn's focus.



Chapter 9 - Secret Lovers

Chapter 9 - Secret Lovers Summary

During their holiday together, Michael and Dawn spend most of the first few days in bed. Dawn does prepare dinner for the two. The morning after Thanksgiving Michael leaves Dawn alone saying he has a meeting with a producer. He brings a tree and decorations later on, but has to leave again. Dawn decorates the tree alone. It is past midnight when Michael finally appears, drunk. Dawn sees lipstick on his chin and red hairs on his jacket. He smells of whiskey and passes out on the couch. The next morning he explains to Dawn that he was celebrating because he has been chosen for a part in a Broadway play. He takes Dawn to a small restaurant that evening to celebrate. He leaves again and returns in the afternoon with his arms full of packages which he says are for Dawn. He gives her one gift, a small gold locket, that day. During their dinner, he tells her that he may be able to get her a spot in a show as well. Dawn's joy is shattered when she realizes that she is pregnant. Trisha tells her that she has to tell Michael, whom she still knows as Allen.

Chapter 9 - Secret Lovers Analysis

Had Dawn had more experience with men, she would have quickly realized that even though Michael has her spending the night in his apartment, he is messing around on her. He comes home drunk with evidence he has been with another woman. Dawn seems to be offended by Michael's drunkenness, but quickly accepts his explanations at face value.

One of the first things that Trisha asks Dawn is if her mother did not tell her about the possibility of getting pregnant when spending time with a man. Dawn quickly reminds Trisha that she did not have much of a mother figure growing up. Momma Longchamp had always thought Dawn was too young to talk about sex, then when Dawn was old enough, Momma was too sick and worried. Dawn doesn't think that her biological mother would have been able to handle talking about the topic without fainting.



Chapter 10 - Bitter Fruit

Chapter 10 - Bitter Fruit Summary

In Chapter 10, Dawn calls Michael and insists on seeing him. He says it is a bad time but finally agrees. When she says she is pregnant, Michael remarks that his teaching term will be over by the time she starts showing. He tells her they will go to Florida where she will have the baby. Two days before the Christmas holidays, Trisha runs into their room announcing to Dawn that Michael is gone. She says a notice was posted saying that he had been accepted for a major London production. As Trisha continues to talk, Dawn gets more and more upset. She finally manages to tell Trisha that there was no Allen, that Michael is the father of her baby. She tells Trisha to tell Agnes that she has eloped, then goes to Michael's apartment despite the coming snow.

When she rings Michael's bell, a strange man opens the door. He tries to explain that Michael had only subletted the apartment but Dawn does not believe him. It is only when Dawn sees that Michael's clothes are gone from the closet that she realizes he has really left. Dawn believes that she hears the sound of Michael's voice, and follows where she believes the voice is coming. She is singing as she walks down the street in the snow, believing she will soon find Michael. Just as she believes she is about to reach Michael, Dawn is hit by a car.

Chapter 10 - Bitter Fruit Analysis

It is in this section that Dawn learns the truth about Michael. Although it is very clear that he has abandoned her, Dawn refuses to accept the truth. He has told her nothing but lies all of their time together. Dawn's grief causes her to walk out into traffic believing that she is following the sound of Michael's voice. The title of the chapter "Bitter Fruit" refers to the hurtful end result of Dawn's affair with Michael. She will bear the pain of this fruit in the form of Michael's child. Notice also that when Dawn first tells Michael she is pregnant, his question for her is whether or not she is sure. After all, he has manipulated her with lies, why should he not suspect that she might try to do the same thing with him.



Chapter 11 - Nowhere to Turn

Chapter 11 - Nowhere to Turn Summary

Dawn wakes up in the hospital. She has been in a coma four days. The doctor tells her the baby is fine. Trisha has been coming to visit Dawn each day. That day Trisha asks Dawn what she plans to do about the baby since Michael has deserted her. Dawn tells her that she still plans to have the baby. During Trisha's next visit, Dawn tells her that she plans to finish school. Trisha also brings Dawn a letter from Jimmy. Jimmy tells her that he has gotten a promotion, and also that Daddy Longchamp and his new wife are expecting a baby. Dawn asks for paper to write a return letter but never gets to do so because Grandmother Cutler enters her room. She tells Dawn she is not surprised that she has gotten pregnant, but is surprised how quickly Dawn got herself into trouble. She informs Dawn that they will use the accident as an excuse to take her out of school. Dawn will actually be sent to live with Grandmother Cutler's sisters, Emily and Charlotte Booth, until the baby is born. The next morning before Trisha has left for class, Dawn tries to get in touch with her at Agnes' house. Agnes claims not to recognize Dawn and tells her that Trisha has already left for class. The nurse promises to give Trisha a note from Dawn.

Chapter 11 - Nowhere to Turn Analysis

Note in this section that the first thing that Grandmother Cutler says to Dawn when she goes to the hospital room is that Dawn and her mother are cut out of the same mold. It could be agreed this is true since both have gotten pregnant by a man not their husband. She accuses Dawn of being selfish and giving to lusts, just the way her mother did. Grandmother Cutler's words are almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy. It seems that she has never given Dawn the chance to do anything but fail. At the same time, however, Dawn has been in charge of the actions that have led to her pregnancy. In her defense, Dawn was manipulated by a smooth talking, older man, but Grandmother Cutler will never be convinced to take this into consideration.

Also in this section, Dawn is surprised at how quickly Grandmother Cutler is able to take over her life. Legally, it should be Dawn's mother who takes charge of her daughter, but it seems that Dawn's mother leaves her mother-in-law to take care of Dawn. Instead of asking Dawn what she wants for her own life, Grandmother Cutler takes advantage of circumstances to tuck Dawn away and save herself from embarrassment.



Chapter 12 - The Meadows

Chapter 12 - The Meadows Summary

In Chapter 12, Dawn waits more than an hour before Luther comes to pick her up to take her to The Meadows. Dawn asks what her aunts are like and Luther tells her it would be best for her to discover that on her own. Dawn expects a rich country plantation but what she gets is a huge house that is only a shell of what it was at one time. Dawn sees the same iciness in Emily's eyes as in her grandmother's eyes. She takes Dawn to a closet-sized room with no windows in which she is to stay. Once in the room, Emily demands that Dawn take off her clothes so that Emily can see how far along she is. She is told to dress in a gray cotton dress and her clothes are taken away from her. Before she leaves for the night, Emily warns Dawn to stay away from Charlotte. Emily tells Dawn that Charlotte is simple because she was born out of wedlock. Emily believes Dawn's child will be the same way.

Chapter 12 - The Meadows Analysis

Dawn is once again struck blindsided by her Grandmother's cruelty. Although Dawn had believed she would be staying in a nice home where she could rest and enjoy fresh air until the baby was born, Dawn quickly learns the reality is quite different. The Meadows turns out to be a run down old plantation house in which her miserly aunt, Emily, will not even use the electricity for fear it will cost too much. She begins to torture Dawn right away by giving her a room with no windows and forcing her to undergo an exam to check out Dawn's condition.

Emily tells Dawn she is evil because she has gotten pregnant out of wedlock. She wastes no time in telling Dawn that she believes that Charlotte is simple minded because she was born out of wedlock. She explains to Dawn that she believes that Dawn's baby is in danger of having the same decreased mental capacity because of the circumstances under which it was conceived.



Chapter 13 - Ugly Realities

Chapter 13 - Ugly Realities Summary

In Chapter 13, Charlotte wakes Dawn up the following morning. She goes to the bathroom but finds there is no tub or shower. There is also no hot water. She is provided only with a hard lump of soap, a washcloth and a towel. She has no comb or brush. On the way to the kitchen, Dawn notices how run down and dirty the inside of the house is. Breakfast is a bowl of oatmeal, a piece of toast and an orange. Dawn is also given a list of rules including the parts of the house to which she is restricted. She is also given a list of chores including building the fire and setting the table each morning for breakfast, then cleaning up the kitchen afterward including scrubbing the floor. She is to wash laundry by hand and is also in charge of cleaning her wing of the house.

When Dawn goes out back to dump the wash water from the floor, she notices a cauldron with her clothes boiling in it. Emily finds her and orders her back in the house as Dawn is trying to rescue her things. Dawn throws her pail of dirty water on the flames and plans to come back to get her clothes. When she returns, however, the cauldron is gone. She sees Luther coming out of the woods and learns from Emily that her clothes have been buried, the second step in the purification process. She tells Dawn to be clean when she comes downstairs for dinner despite Dawn's few hygienic supplies. Emily tells her that they bathe only once a week and then it is in a tub in the pantry. She is disdainful of anything that might seem like vanity. Dawn thinks to herself later that Emily has already been defeated by the devil because of the way that she lives. After they have finished dinner and Dawn has cleaned the kitchen, Charlotte has waited for her in the hallway. She tells her that she has left a gift for her on her bed, and then runs to her room. The gift Charlotte has left for Dawn is a baby's toy rattle. As she thinks, Dawn realizes that it is Christmas Eve. She thinks of the promises that Michael made to her.

Chapter 13 - Ugly Realities Analysis

In this section, Dawn learns how fanatical Emily is about her own strange brand of religion and the things she believes must be done in order to defeat the devil. Although Emily sees herself as being holy and sinless because of the way that she lives, Dawn believes that the devil has already defeated Emily because she is so unhappy. Dawn also dislikes Emily because of the way that she treats Charlotte. Dawn believes that Emily is unnecessarily cruel to Charlotte. Emily, however, tells Dawn that she has been burdened with the care of her sister all of her life while Lillian, Dawn's grandmother, had done nothing to help out.



Chapter 14 - A Letter to Trisha

Chapter 14 - A Letter to Trisha Summary

Dawn settles into her routine of work. Every day is like the others except on Sundays, the ladies have prayer in a makeshift chapel in the house. Even Luther attends the service. Sunday breakfast is a reward for proper behavior at the church service. Eggs, grits and butter, and blueberry muffins are the menu for that day's breakfast. On Sundays, the three also take their baths. Emily bathes first and Charlotte is next. Dawn bathes last, horrified by the idea that she has to bathe in the same water in which the others washed. The water is heated over a fire and hauled in by Luther. During one of Dawn's baths, Emily decides the water is not hot enough and has Luther bring in a couple more pails, while Dawn is still naked in the bath.

Dawn talks to Luther every chance that she gets. Dawn senses that Emily knows something about Luther that she could use for black mail. Dawn tries to get the man to help her mail a letter, but he does not do so. Emily throws one letter that Dawn leaves for Luther to mail in the trash. Although Dawn tries to talk to and make friends with Charlotte, she soon realizes Emily has her brainwashed.

Dawn writes another letter to Trisha telling her exactly the way that Emily has been treating her. She takes her blanket to use as a coat. She tiptoes out of the house. When she reaches the end of the driveway, snow begins to fall and soon Dawn cannot see where she is going. As she stumbles over a rock, Dawn realizes she has made things worse rather than better. Dawn tries to run but her boot gets stuck and she loses it. She hears the sound of a truck and screams when Luther stops just a few feet from her. When Luther backs the truck up only a few feet to pull into the driveway, she realizes she was running in circles. After Emily scolds her, Luther puts Dawn in the tub in the pantry. Luther fills the tub with warm water. She is ordered up to her room where she goes to sleep while Emily chastises her. When Dawn wakes, Emily is still there demanding that she pray for release from the devil.

Chapter 14 - A Letter to Trisha Analysis

In this section, Dawn tries every avenue possible to get a letter to Trisha. Emily intercepts every try, however. Dawn even tries walking to Upland Station but unfortunately sets out the same time as a snowstorm is approaching. She gets no further than the end of the driveway before she begins running in circles because she cannot see where she is going. Emily uses this escape attempt as a way to berate Dawn even more than she has in the past.

Also in this section, Emily's strange religious notions are explored even further. Although she is more than happy to point out the failures of others, Emily considers herself less sinful than those around her. She makes this clear when she tells Dawn that she will be

first to take a bath because she is less dirty than the others. Emily also refuses to attend church in a church because she believes these houses of worship have become places that people attend only to show off to others.



Chapter 15 - Never Ending Nightmares

Chapter 15 - Never Ending Nightmares Summary

During the next days and weeks, Dawn does her chores and puts up with Emily's abuse with no attempts to fight back. Her only comfort is the idea of the beautiful child to whom she will give birth. By this time, Dawn is in her seventh month of pregnancy. Although she has started getting short of breath and is very large, Emily does not reduce her chores. One morning she makes Dawn rescrub most of the kitchen floor claiming that it wasn't clean enough. One day after Dawn has finally finished her chores and made it up the stairs to her room, Emily meets Dawn in the hallway, telling her it is time to take stock. She holds a large paper bag in her hands. She makes Dawn take off her gown and presses her hands against Dawn's abdomen. She claims Dawn is constipated. Since Dawn has no experience, she can do nothing but take Emily's word. Emily makes her drink two glasses of castor oil. Soon after Emily leaves, Dawn begins to have cramps. She calls for Emily again and again but she does not come. Dawn's bowels empty until she is weak and lying on the bathroom floor. She is still there when Emily comes in the morning.

In the morning, Emily's smile when Dawn says that she almost lost the baby lets Dawn know that Emily intentionally gave her too much medicine in an attempt to make her have a miscarriage. Emily sends Charlotte with a fresh towel and washcloth, and clean dress for Dawn. Charlotte tells Dawn that the same thing happened to her. Dawn wonders if Charlotte might really have had a baby. She asks Charlotte about the baby and Charlotte tells her the baby was born yesterday.

When she reaches her eighth month, Emily decides Dawn is too heavy and cuts back on her food ratio. Even so, Emily still asks Dawn to air out the rugs as well as the sofa and couch cushions. Emily allows Charlotte to help with the job. During their work, Dawn questions Charlotte about the baby. She decides that night that she will try to find a nursery in Charlotte and Emily's wing of the house. Being outside that day also reminds being with Jimmy as a young child. Since Jimmy has not heard from her in so long, she wonders if he thinks that she has forgotten him.

After dinner Emily allows Dawn the evening off. Dawn looks through photo albums and wonders how the family became so cold and hateful. Although she plans to explore the house that night, Dawn falls deeply asleep. It is nearly morning before she wakes. When she enters the hallway, she first enters Father and Mother Booth's room. The room looks as if the inhabitants just suddenly disappeared one day as the pillows and blankets are still on the bed and personal items are scattered about. The door to the next room is open and Dawn sees it is Emily's room. She sleeps with the light on. The next room is Charlotte's. The final room that Dawn looks into is a nursery. The walls are decorated with Charlotte's needlework. There is also what looks like a baby in the crib. As Dawn lifts her lantern and discovers it is a doll in the crib, Emily comes into the room behind her and screams at her. When Dawn tells her she wanted to find out about the



baby that Charlotte kept talking about. Emily tells her that what is in the room is none of her business.

When Dawn tries to explain that she just wanted to know about the baby, Emily tells her to look around her at the place where she kept Emily's baby until it died and went to hell. Emily claims the baby was the Devil's because Charlotte just turned up pregnant one day. Before she can stop herself Dawn tells Emily she believes that she is crazy for believing that Dawn's baby is evil and trying to abuse Dawn to the point the baby will be killed. Emily screams at her again and Dawn begins to run. When she looks back, she trips and falls. She feels immediate pain in her abdomen and realizes her water has broken. Emily commands Charlotte to help Dawn up and walk with her to her room. As Dawn complains of the pain, Emily tells her it is worse for those who are more sinful.

Chapter 15 - Never Ending Nightmares Analysis

It is in this section of the novel that Dawn finally learns the secret of Charlotte and the baby. Charlotte has been talking to Dawn about a baby and had given her a baby's rattle but Dawn never completely understood what Charlotte was talking about. She sneaks into Charlotte and Emily's wing of the house to see what she can find out about these strange things that she has learned from Charlotte.

Emily is angry when she wakes and finds Dawn in the nursery. Charlotte's baby has been a point of contention for the fanatically religious lady since Charlotte became pregnant while she was under Emily's watch. It is at this point that Dawn finally understands that Charlotte really was pregnant and really did give birth to a baby. It is never clarified what happened to the child. Charlotte tells Dawn that the baby died and went to hell, but this fact is never confirmed by Emily.

It is also in this section of the novel that Dawn realizes that Emily has been trying to make her lose the baby. When Charlotte tells Dawn that the same thing happened to her, Dawn realizes that Emily also tried to kill Charlotte's baby. Although the topic is never explored in the novel, it can be wondered if Charlotte's baby died of natural causes or if Emily did something to the child.



Chapter 16 - My Knight in Shining Armor

Chapter 16 - My Knight in Shining Armor Summary

In Chapter 16, Emily orders Dawn to push. The baby comes out feet first and Emily has to guide it with her hands. Dawn is worried because the baby doesn't cry at first. She asks Emily if it is a girl. Though Emily doesn't answer, Charlotte nods that it is. The baby cries as Emily washes it. She then lays it beside Dawn. Dawn believes her baby is perfect by Emily tells her it is too small. She takes the baby away from Dawn, claiming that she is taking it to the nursery. Dawn tries to resist but is too weak. She goes to sleep. It is raining when she wakes. The sound of the rain puts her back to sleep. When she wakes again, Charlotte is next to her. She is holding a glass with a liquid that Emily has said will help Dawn regain her strength. She tells Charlotte that she saw the nursery and knows that she really did have a baby. Charlotte continues to repeat that the baby's ears were pointed. She begs Charlotte to tell her the name of the baby's father. She asks Charlotte if she knows how she got pregnant. Charlotte tells her that it happens when the man does the wiggles on a woman. Luther showed her how it was done between pigs, then did it to her.

Charlotte stops talking when she hears Emily approaching. Emily makes sure Dawn has drunk all of the liquid. She will only tell Dawn the baby was too small, leaving her with the idea that it has died. She also tells Dawn that arrangements are being made for her to leave in the morning. When Emily leaves, Dawn tries to follow her but feels so heavy and sleepy that she cannot do so. She sleeps most of the day. Emily comes a forces her to drink another glass of the liquid. Dawn tries to fight off sleep, but soon realizes the liquid must have contained some sort of sedative because she goes to sleep again.

When Dawn wakes again it is morning. Charlotte brings a tray with hot cereal, toast and an orange. She tells her that she is to get dressed so Luther can take her to the train station. The clothes she was wearing when she first came to The Meadows have finally been returned to her. She is still unable to brush her hair because the comb she has in her purse melted when Emily boiled her belongings. She asks Charlotte about the baby. All that Charlotte can tell her is that the baby was taken because it was too small.

Dawn walks down the hall to the stairs, hoping to find out what happened to her baby. She hears Jimmy's familiar voice talking to Emily. Emily tells him that Dawn has already left. Just as the front door closes behind him, Dawn screams out for Jimmy. The door opens and Jimmy rushes back in. He tells Dawn he had become worried when all of his letters began being returned to him. Dawn explains how she was not allowed to write letters or call anyone. Dawn tells Jimmy quickly what has happened to her and how she is looking for her baby. She is still weak and dizzy so Jimmy takes her back to her room to lie down. He is aghast at the place where she was kept saying that this is the worst place he has ever seen.



After a short rest, Dawn and Jimmy walk down to the library to confront Emily. This time, Emily doesn't seem as intimidating to Dawn since she has Jimmy with her. When Jimmy threatens Emily with the police and kidnapping charges, Emily tells them she does not know who has the baby as her sister made all the arrangements before Dawn ever arrived. Dawn is finally able to tell Emily the way that she feels about her and her fanatical ways just before they walk out the door. Charlotte catches them before they get away. She has made Dawn a needlework picture of Dawn and her baby. As they drive away, Dawn begins to cry so hard that Jimmy stops and holds her.

When she regains control, Dawn wants to go directly to Cutler's Cove but Jimmy insists that they first get Dawn some clean clothes and check into a hotel where she can clean herself up and rest. Jimmy wants Dawn looking her best when she faces Grandmother Cutler.

Chapter 16 - My Knight in Shining Armor Analysis

The most important aspect of this chapter is Jimmy's rescue of Dawn from The Meadows. Although Dawn has had an affair and has given birth to another man's baby, Jimmy still loves Dawn. Jimmy proves his care for Dawn by going up against her aunt to locate a baby that belongs to another man just because he knows that it is important to Dawn. Jimmy is also careful to have Dawn looking and feeling her best when she goes up against her grandmother because he realizes how important it is for Dawn to make a strong stand against the woman who has been so cruel to her.

Also in this section, Dawn finally learns that Luther is the father of Charlotte's baby. Charlotte tells Dawn how the man showed her how the pigs procreated, then did the same thing with her. All the time, Emily has been using her knowledge that it was Luther who got Charlotte in trouble against the man.



Chapter 17 - An Unexpected Twist of Fate

Chapter 17 - An Unexpected Twist of Fate Summary

After Dawn has a chance to get new clothes, bathe, eat and rest, he drives Dawn to Cutler's Cove. When they arrive, they realize something is wrong. They learn that Grandmother Cutler has suffered a stroke and is in the hospital. They go to the hospital and Dawn asks her grandmother about her baby. Her grandmother only tells Dawn "you're my curse," before she dies.

Back at the hotel, Dawn goes to talk to her mother. She expects her to be in bed as usual but instead her mother is sitting at her vanity brushing her hair. Dawn tries to talk to her mother about her time with Emily and asks why her mother didn't try to do anything. Her mother tells Dawn she did it to herself by getting pregnant. She tells Dawn that she knows nothing of where Grandmother Cutler sent the baby. Dawn's mother seems to be preoccupied with the idea of looking beautiful for all of the people who will be attending the funeral. She is excited because she believes she is queen of the manor. When Dawn meets Jimmy again, he suggests that they need to search Grandmother Cutler's office to find information about Dawn's baby.

Chapter 17 - An Unexpected Twist of Fate Analysis

Once they arrive at Cutler's Cove, they learn that Grandmother Cutler has suffered a life-threatening stroke. At the hospital, Grandmother Cutler will not tell Dawn the location of her baby, she will only tell Dawn that she is her curse. Neither Dawn nor Jimmy understand why the old lady might consider Dawn to be her curse. Grandmother Cutler dies before she can explain herself.

Dawn is frustrated by her family members when she learns how many of them knew the abuse that Grandmother Cutler had in store for Dawn as well as the plans she had to have Dawn's baby adopted, but did nothing to stop the lady. They seem to all agree that Dawn brought her punishment on herself by her actions. Although Dawn does take responsibility for her actions, she does not think that her grandmother had the right to have her treated so badly, or to have her baby placed for adoption without her permission.



Chapter 18 - Startling Revelations

Chapter 18 - Startling Revelations Summary

In this final chapter, Jimmy and Dawn find Randolph sitting in the Grandmother Cutler's office. Randolph admits that he knew what his mother did to Dawn and suggests that they get in touch with her attorney to see if he knows anything. After Randolph talks to the attorney, Dawn asks to be allowed to talk to him. When the lawyer learns who Dawn is, he first tells her that he needs to be present at the reading of the wills. When she asks about her baby, the lawyer is surprised to learn that Dawn did not agree to the adoption.

Later that evening at dinner, Jimmy is embarrassed by Laura Sue's flirtatious attitude. Dawn wonders if her mother has no shame. Laura Sue tells Dawn that she will arrange for Grandmother Cutler's room to be cleaned out so that she can move in there. Dawn tells her that she has no intention of staying at the hotel.

At breakfast the next morning, Laura Sue tells the family the plans that she has for the funeral. She has taken charge and has everything planned. The day of the funeral, Dawn thinks that her mother looks more beautiful than she ever has. As the mourners are leaving the hotel, Jimmy and Dawn are approached by a tall man who introduces himself as Mr. Updike. He gives them the address of the people who believe they have adopted Dawn's baby.

At the reading of the wills, the entire group is surprised to learn that William Cutler has left a letter of instructions to be read only after his wife has passed away so that he will not bring any embarrassment to her. Dawn's mother bolts from the room, claiming that she needs to lie down. Randolph starts to follow her but Mr. Updike tells him to stay. In his letter, William Cutler confesses to being Dawn's father. On Dawn's eighteenth birthday, she is deeded sixty percent of Cutler Cove. Dawn finally understands why her grandmother hated her so much. When she touches Randolph on the shoulder as she leaves the room, Randolph tells Dawn he wishes that she were his real daughter.

Before she leaves, Dawn goes to confront her mother. She finds her crying in her bedroom. Dawn's mother admits that it was because her father-in-law was also Dawn's father that she allowed Grandmother Cutler to arrange for Dawn's abduction. She says that the woman despised both her and Dawn. She wanted to get revenge on Laura Sue and did so by getting rid of Dawn. Dawn guesses aloud that her mother had allowed Grandmother Cutler to do everything that she did because she was always afraid that Grandmother Cutler would tell her secret, that she had seduced her father-in-law. Laura Sue suggests to Dawn that they work on their relationship so they can run the hotel together. She tells her mother that she doesn't care about the hotel, she only wants her baby back. She meets Jimmy downstairs and they go to get Christie.



Chapter 18 - Startling Revelations Analysis

In this section, Dawn finally learns the identity of her father. Although most people would have been shocked to learn that their step-grandfather was also their father, Dawn does not seem to be terribly disturbed by this news. She also doesn't seem to be terribly interested in the fact that she has been left a controlling portion of Cutler's Cove. It seems that Dawn is most relieved to finally understand why her grandmother hated her so much. She feels pity for the woman because she understands why her hatred was so severe. Because her mother could have stood up to Dawn's grandmother, taken responsibility for her own actions and kept Dawn from being abused so severely, Dawn's mother does nothing but sit aside and watch Dawn be punished for her own sin. Instead of being happy that she is an heiress, Dawn is more pleased that she finally has an idea where to look for her baby. She and Jimmy leave together to find the infant.



Characters

Dawn Cutler

Dawn Cutler is the main character and heroine of this novel. At the beginning of the novel, Dawn travels to New York where she plans to study music at the Bernhardt School. She quickly becomes close friends with Trisha, her roommate at the boarding house. Agnes Morris, the woman who owns the house, has already been turned against Dawn by a letter of lies sent to Agnes by Dawn's grandmother. On the first day that Dawn moves into the house, Agnes tells her that she is on probation. She is later put on full dorm restriction when she later accidentally stays out past curfew with Jimmy.

Dawn does well in school and soon impresses her teachers although she did not have to audition in order to get into the school. Madame Steichen, her piano teacher, at first tells Dawn to forget everything that she ever learned about piano because she is so bad. At the end of the semester, however, she tells Dawn that she has the talent and ability to be a concert pianist if she so wishes. Dawn also shows promise in her career as a singer. She is overjoyed when she is chosen as one of six students to participate in a class with Michael Sutton, a famous opera star. Michael soon begins to hit on and flirt with Dawn. He invites her to his apartment where he makes love to her. Dawn is convinced that Michael is serious about their relationship. When Dawn gets pregnant and tells Michael, she believes that he plans to help with the baby but is crushed when Michael leaves town without telling her.

In her efforts to find Michael, Dawn is hit by a car and spends several days in a coma in the hospital. Because of this accident, Grandmother Cutler learns that Dawn is pregnant. Dawn is sent to live with her aunts, Emily and Charlotte Booth, at an old plantation called The Meadows until she gives birth to the baby. Although Dawn is abused and worked hard by Emily, she perseveres. She is not allowed to have any contact with the outside world. The only person who shows Dawn any friendship is Charlotte who is simple minded. Dawn learns through exploration and through piecing together what Charlotte can tell her about her experience, that Charlotte got pregnant by Luther but Emily told her the baby was the offspring of the devil and had pointed ears. Emily becomes angry with Dawn when she explores a forbidden wing of the house where she finds the nursery where Charlotte's baby once lived. Dawn runs from Emily and falls, causing herself to go into premature labor.

After Dawn has given birth to a baby girl, Grandmother Cutler has arranged for the baby to be adopted. Emily drugs Dawn to make her cooperative until it is time for her to leave The Meadows but Dawn is able to drag herself from her room just in time to hear Jimmy asking about her. She screams out Jimmy's name and he rescues her from the house. Dawn tells Jimmy that Emily has taken her baby and he agrees to help her locate her daughter. Their search takes them back to Cutler's Cove where Dawn's grandmother is in the hospital suffering from a stroke. Dawn begs her grandmother to tell her where her baby is but will only say to her that Dawn has been "her curse." After her grandmother



dies, Dawn learns from her grandmother's attorney the name and address of the people who have her baby. In a letter of instructions left by her Grandfather Cutler, Dawn learns that Grandfather Cutler was actually her father. Dawn is let a controlling portion of Cutler's Cove by this man.

Grandmother Lillian Cutler

Grandmother Lillian Cutler could be considered the villain of the novel as she takes out her anger at her husband and daughter-in-law for the affair that resulted in Dawn's birth on Dawn. Dawn does not realize until after her grandmother's death why her grandmother hated her so much. Even so, Grandmother Cutler's plan for revenge is misplaced, as Dawn had no part in the affair.

Dawn is enrolled in the Bernhardt School because she makes a deal with her grandmother that she will go away if her grandmother will arrange for Daddy Longchamp to be released from prison early. Even though Dawn goes away, Grandmother Cutler still causes problems for her by writing a letter of lies to Agnes Morris, the woman with whom Grandmother Cutler has arranged for Dawn to live. She fills Agnes with suspicion and doubt about Dawn before Dawn even has a chance to make her own way. When Grandmother Cutler learns that Dawn has gotten pregnant, she again takes charge of Dawn's life by sending her to The Meadows to live until the baby is born. Grandmother Cutler knows that her sister will be cruel to Dawn and that there will be a good chance that Dawn will lose the baby as a result of the rough treatment that she will have to endure. Even so, Grandmother Cutler arranges for Dawn's baby to be taken away from her as soon as it is born and given to another couple for adoption.

When Dawn and Jimmy travel to Cutler's Cove to find out what has happened to the baby, they discover that Grandmother Cutler has suffered a stroke. They go to the hospital where Dawn confronts her grandmother. The only thing that Grandmother Cutler will tell Dawn is that the girl is "her curse."

Emily Booth

Emily Booth is the aunt with whom Dawn is sent to live while she is pregnant with her baby. Emily claims to be a midwife, but seems to go about treating Dawn in a way so that she will lose her baby. Emily works Dawn like a slave and feeds her only minimal amounts of food. The food that Emily does serve to Dawn is made with vinegar and generally does not taste good. Dawn is made to scrub floors and clean furniture even when her condition does not allow her to do so easily. At one point Emily gives Dawn an enormous dose of castor oil in the hopes that it will cause a miscarriage.

Emily is a religious fanatic who believes any form of outward beauty is of the devil. She believes that her job is to force the devil out of Dawn. She hopes to achieve this goal by praying over the girl, forcing her to work hard, submitting her to church services, feeding her bad tasting food and lecturing her. When Dawn finds the nursery where Charlotte's



baby was housed, Emily tells her that Charlotte just became pregnant one day and assumed the child was the offspring of the devil. Dawn later realizes that Emily knew all along that it was Luther who got Charlotte pregnant.

Although the plantation home in which Emily and Charlotte live was once a beautiful home, Emily refuses to allow any money to be spent on it. She will not let Luther paint or repair the exterior. She will also not use the electricity in the house or allow the house to be heated. She spends all of her time managing money and keeping her accounts in her office. She is openly resentful of her sister, Lillian, whom she considers rich. She resents Lillian because she is stuck running the plantation and taking care of Charlotte while her sister does not share any money with her or give her any help.

Agnes Morris

Agnes Morris the woman who owns the boarding house in which Dawn stays while she is attending the Bernhardt School. Agnes was once an actress who appears to still be living in the memories of her time in the theater. She is eccentric to say the least. She names the things in her house. The hall clock, for instance, is named Mr. Fairbanks. Her house is decorated with theater artifacts and things that have sentimental value to Agnes. Her bedroom is decorated with things she has salvaged from real theaters. The makeup table was taken from a theater as well as the stage curtain that is hung between her bedroom door and the rest of her bedroom. Agnes acts as if she is an actor on a stage all of the time. Trisha tells Dawn that she believes the woman goes through her life acting as her situation deems proper. Trisha also tells Dawn that Agnes has a trunk full of costumes that she goes through so that she can wear something appropriate for her circumstances.

Because Grandmother Cutler has written Agnes a letter of lies about Dawn's prior behavior, Agnes does not completely trust Dawn. She tells Dawn that as a result of her prior bad behavior, Dawn will be on probation from the beginning of her time there. Twice, Dawn gets the feeling that Agnes has been listening to her phone conversations because she hears a second click after the person with whom she has been talking hangs up. After Dawn is injured by a car, and learns that her grandmother has plans to send her to The Meadows, Dawn tries to contact Trisha at the boarding house. Agnes answers the phone but pretends that she does not know who Dawn is.

Michael Sutton

Michael Sutton is the opera star who teaches for a semester at the Bernhardt School in New York. Only six students are chosen to be part of Michael's class. Michael tells Dawn that she is an excellent singer and has potential to be on Broadway. When one considers the affair that Michael has with Dawn and the lies that he tells her during their time together, one must also wonder if Michael chose his students based on their ability or their appearance. Apparently Michael had at least one other student whom he had promised that he could get a Broadway role. It is also known that Michael was probably



messing around with other women when he and Dawn were having their affair as he came home to the apartment one day while Dawn was staying there with makeup on his clothes.

Michael makes Dawn go through a sort of pretend wedding ceremony and promises to help her find her father. When Michael learns that Dawn is pregnant, he tells her that the baby will not hamper her career as a Broadway singer and that they will be able to afford the best nannies to take care of the baby. These are actions that make Dawn believe that Michael will stay with her. During the affair, Michael makes Dawn promise that she will not tell anyone that they are seeing one another. It is just after Dawn tells Michael that she is expecting that Michael leaves town. Although he had told Dawn that he would be going to Florida, he actually goes to London.

Jimmy Longchamp

Jimmy Longchamp is the boy whom Dawn believed was her brother as they grew up together in the same family. It is only when Dawn learns of her grandmother's abduction plot that Dawn realizes that she and Jimmy are not related at all. Jimmy runs away from the foster family with whom he has been placed to visit Dawn at Cutler's Cove but the police are called on him. While Dawn is living with Agnes, Jimmy calls her and lets her know that he is enlisting with the Army. He visits her in New York one day before he is sent to Europe. They go to his hotel room where they cuddle. They both struggle with the idea that they once thought they were brother and sister. They don't have sex, but do fall asleep in each other's arms causing Dawn to miss curfew. Agnes tells Dawn that she will no longer be allowed to see Jimmy. The next time Dawn sees Jimmy is when he rescues her from The Mansion. He agrees to help her try to find her baby even though he knows of Dawn's affair. Jimmy takes Dawn to help her get cleaned up, then goes with her to Cutler Cove to face her grandmother.

Luther

Luther is the farm hand who works at The Meadows. Dawn learns that it is this man who was the father of Charlotte's baby. Luther raped Charlotte by showing her as pigs did "the wiggles" then getting her to let him do the wiggles on her. Luther is the one who picks Dawn up from the airport and takes her to The Meadows. It is also Luther who comes to rescue Dawn when she tries to walk to Upland Station in the snow to send a letter to Trisha. Although she tries to make a friend out of Luther, Dawn is not successful in doing so. At some times when Emily is abusing Dawn verbally because her of sins, Dawn believes that she sees a glimmer of sympathy in the man's eyes. She realizes that Emily has a hold over Luther because he got Charlotte pregnant. Luther is in charge of doing the farm work and taking care of what few animals are left on the plantation. He also hauls water and cuts wood for the fire. He tells Dawn that he continues to work there because he feels a sort of ownership in the property. Luther tells Dawn that he would like to paint the house and make it look better but Emily will not let him do so.



Trisha Kramer

Trisha Kramer is Dawn's roommate at Agnes' house. The two form an instant bond although they have drastically different lives. Trisha is studying to be a dancer. She is the first true friend that Dawn feels like she has had in her entire life. On Agnes' first day in New York, Trisha shows her the school and makes her feel more comfortable about her classes.

When Trisha learns that Dawn is dating an older man, she is scared for Dawn, but helps her trick Agnes so she can spend time with the man. Trisha is also excited about Dawn's pregnancy and interested in the changes in her body as the baby develops. It is Trisha who tells Dawn that Michael has left town to go to London. After Dawn is hit by the car and hospitalized, Trisha visits her every day. She shows Jimmy the note that Dawn left her before Dawn was taken from the hospital and Jimmy uses this information to locate Dawn.

Arthur Garwood

Arthur Garwood is one of the boys who lives at Agnes' home with Dawn. He is always dark and brooding. When Dawn is put on dorm restriction after she breaks curfew with Jimmy, Arthur offers to play checkers with her and be her companion. Dawn learns from Arthur that he was adopted, but his parents want to keep the adoption a secret. Arthur knows that he does not have any musical talent even though his parents keep pushing him to practice his oboe. He is scheduled to perform during Performance Weekend and knows that he will make a fool of himself. Dawn tries to convince Arthur to continue talking to his parents to convince them that he does not want to play the oboe. Because his parents won't listen, Arthur runs away just before Performance Weekend. He had written a poem to Dawn describing what she means to him. Dawn is honest and tells Arthur that she already has a boy friend. After he runs away, Arthur writes another letter to Dawn telling her that he has decided to try a career writing.

Laura Sue Cutler

Laura Sue Cutler is Dawn's mother. She is the wife of Randolph, who is Lillian Cutler's son. Laura Sue has an affair with her father-in-law which results in Dawn's birth. Laura Sue allows her mother to arrange for Dawn to be "abducted" and placed with another family so that she did not have to be around the child that was the product of the result of her husband's affair. Laura Sue is beautiful but spends her time pretending to sick so that people will not be mean or cruel to her. Although Dawn begs her mother to tell her who her father is, Laura will not do so. After Grandmother Cutler dies, Laura Sue makes a miraculous recovery from her sicknesses and prepares to be the queen of Cutler's Cove. She tells Dawn that she does not plan to let anyone push her around any more. When William Cutler's letter of instructions is read after Lillian Cutler death and the fact that Laura Sue had an affair with her father-in-law is made public, Laura Sue takes to her bed again.



Daddy Longchamp

Daddy Longchamp is the man who ultimately takes the fall for Grandmother Cutler's plan to get rid of Dawn. She arranges for Daddy Longchamp to "abduct" Dawn, and raise her as his own. Although the Longchamps did not have much money, Dawn remembers that there was always love in the home. He is the biological father of Fern and Jimmy. When Dawn learns that it was Grandmother Cutler's plan for Daddy Longchamp to take her, she makes a deal with her grandmother to get Daddy Longchamp out of jail early. Daddy Longchamp never learns in this novel that it was Dawn who was responsible for his early release. Although he knows he has caused Dawn much pain, he tells her in his letters that he still considers himself as her father. During the course of this novel, Daddy Longchamp meets a woman in his apartment complex with whom he falls in love and gets married. The two are expecting a baby at the end of the novel.

Charlotte Booth

Charlotte Booth is Emily and Lillian's mentally retarded sister. She is the closest thing that Dawn has to a friend at The Meadows. Charlotte has no concept of time and believes that each day is her birthday. Anything that happened to her happened yesterday. Because of her confusion, Dawn has trouble understanding at first Charlotte's talk about a baby. It is not until Dawn explores the wing of the house in which Charlotte and Emily live that she sees the nursery and understands that Charlotte really did have a baby. Charlotte has been brainwashed by Emily to believe that her baby had pointed ears because it was the offspring of the devil. She tells Dawn that the baby died and went to hell, but still comes back to visit sometimes. Although Charlotte is simple-minded, Dawn is surprised to learn that she creates her own patterns for her intricate needlework.

Randolph

Randolph is Laura Sue's husband and Lillian Cutler's son. He is also Dawn's step-father. Randolph does not really play a big role in the novel until after the death of his mother. He appears to be in shock as a result of her death and does not appear to know how he is going to handle Cutler's Cove. He has always done as his mother told him to. When Dawn confronts him about his mother sending her to The Meadows, he does admit that he had knowledge of what she was doing, but tells Dawn that she brought the punishment on herself by getting pregnant. Randolph does put Dawn in touch with Grandmother Cutler's lawyer so she can find out who has adopted her baby. After the will is read, Randolph tells Dawn that he wishes that she were his real daughter.



Madame Steichen

Madame Steichen is the concert pianist who teaches piano to Dawn at the Bernhardt School. Although the lady is frustrated with Dawn when she first begins teaching her, she soon tells Dawn that she has the talent and ability to be a concert pianist. Before Dawn's senior year, Madame Steichen tells her that she plans for Dawn to perform during the next year's Performance Weekend. While Dawn is having her affair with Michael, Madame Steichen seems to be able to sense a difference in Dawn. She warns the girl to be careful of the new influence over her. She also tells Dawn there is a difference between an artist and a performer. Madame Steichen tells Dawn that Michael Sutton is a performer, not an artist.

Richard Taylor

Richard Taylor is a senior at the Bernhardt School who chooses to be Michael Sutton's teaching assistant. He is described as being talented, but arrogant. Early on in the class, Richard seems to be irritated with Michael because he has the habit of arriving at class very late, a different attitude from Madame Steichen who demands punctuality from herself and her students. When Michael leaves the country without telling anyone his plans, Richard is outright angry with Michael because he is left with all of the explaining to do to all of Michael's students.

Mrs. Liddy

Mrs. Liddy is the cook and housekeeper at Agnes' home. Trisha tells Dawn that Mrs. Liddy has been working for Agnes for years and years. During summer break, Dawn stays at Agnes' house and helps Mrs. Liddy clean the house. She is impressed with the way that Dawn cleans. Mrs. Liddy and Dawn become special friends because their backgrounds are similar. Mrs. Liddy's parents died when she was eight, leaving her an orphan. Her family was separated and she has brothers and sisters she has not seen in years.

Phillip Cutler

Phillip Cutler is Dawn's half-brother. When she first met Phillip, Dawn was attracted to Phillip sexually. Since she has learned that Phillip is related to her, Dawn has tried to stay away from him, especially after he forced himself upon her. Phillip is the first person from her family who visits Dawn in New York. Because he looks so good, Agnes believes that Dawn is being hateful to him because she refuses to see him. Even though Phillip knows he is related to Dawn, he still appears to try to pursue her sexually.



Christie

Christie is the baby girl that is the result of the affair between Dawn Cutler and Michael Sutton. When Christie is born at The Meadows, Emily takes the baby away from Dawn just after she is born. Grandmother Cutler has already arranged for Christie to be adopted although Dawn never agreed to this adoption. Jimmy agrees to help Dawn locate her baby.

William Cutler

William Cutler is the father and grandfather-in-law of Dawn Cutler. He has already died before the time period in which the novel is set. In a letter that William Cutler has left to be opened the same day as his wife's will is read, he admits to being Dawn's father. He admits that he gave in to lusts and desires. In his letter he leaves a controlling portion of the estate to Dawn.

Clara Sue Cutler

Clara Sue Cutler is Dawn's half-sister. She is hateful and spoiled. It is her spite that causes the police to be called on Jimmy. At the end of the novel when Lillian and William's will is read, Clara Sue is outwardly angry that so much of their property was given to Dawn and not to her father.

Donald Rossi

Donald Rossi is one of the boys who stays in Agnes' boarding house with Dawn and attends the Bernhardt School. He is smart aleck and hateful to Arthur. Donald is the son of a comedian and always cracking jokes about whatever situation in which he finds himself.

Fern Longchamp

Fern Longchamp is the youngest member of the Longchamp family. When Daddy Longchamp is sent to prison for "kidnapping" Dawn, he loses custody of Fern. Dawn misses Fern, whom she watched grow up. She hopes that one day she will be able to find Fern again.

Sissy

Sissy is the maid at Cutler's Cove who is fired by Grandmother Cutler. Although Sissy is not aware, she helps Dawn learn the secret of her abduction when she introduces the girl to Mrs. Dalton. Dawn believes that it is for this that Sissy is later fired. Despite being fired, Sissy attends Grandmother Cutler's funeral.



Edwina Freemont

Edwina Freemont lives in the apartment complex into which Daddy Longchamp moves after he gets out of prison. The two become friends. Jimmy reports to Dawn that Edwina is cooking for and taking care of Daddy Longchamp. The two soon get married and announce they are expecting a child.

Mr. Updike

Mr. Updike is the lawyer for William and Lillian Cutler. He is the one who arranged for the adoption of Dawn's baby. He is also the one who presents William's letter of instructions at the death of Lillian as well as Lillian's will. He also gives Dawn and Jimmy the name and address of the people who adopted Dawn's baby.

Bedlock Twins - Samantha and Beneatha

These twins live in Agnes' boarding house. They are in their second year at the Bernhardt School. Dawn is intrigued by how small the twins are and they way they finish each other's sentences.

Johnny Wilson

Johnny Wilson is the young military man whom Dawn meets at the airport. He reminds Dawn of Jimmy.

Miriam Levy

Miriam Levy is the older woman that Dawn meets on the plane to New York.

Nussbaum

Nussbaum is the chef at Cutler's Cove.



Objects/Places

New York

New York is the city that Dawn travels to in order to attend the Bernhardt School for Performing Arts. She believes that her dreams will come true in New York.

Bernhardt School for Performing Arts

Dawn is sent away from Cutler's Cove to the Bernhardt School for Performing Arts in exchange for Grandmother Cutler's promise to get Daddy Longchamp out of prison quickly.

Cutler's Cove

Cutler's Cove is the name of the resort at which Dawn lived for a short while with her real mother, grandmother, stepfather, and half-brother and half-sister.

Mr. Fairbanks

Mr. Fairbanks is the name that Agnes has given to her grandfather clock.

Cutler Cove Hotel Stationary

Dawn recognizes the Cutler Cover Hotel stationary and realizes that her Grandmother Cutler has written to Agnes about her.

The Curtain

In Agnes' room, there is a curtain just like the curtain on the stage in a theater.

George's Luncheonette

George's Luncheonette is to where Dawn and Trisha go on Dawn's first day in New York for ice cream sodas.

A Second Click

It is this noise on the telephone that lets Dawn know that Agnes has been listening in on her phone calls.



The Letter

Trisha and Dawn sneak into Agnes' room while she is away so they can see for themselves what sort of lies Grandmother Cutler has told Agnes about Dawn.

Ashes of Sanford Littleton

Agnes tells Dawn that it is the ashes of this man that she keeps in a vase under lock and key. She claims the man was so in love with her that he committed suicide and left instructions his cremated remains were to be given to her.

Checkers

Checkers is the game that Arthur offers to play with Dawn during her house arrest.

Performance Weekend

Performance Weekend is the weekend when some of the best of the senior students at Bernhardt are selected to perform for parents.

Arthur's Poem

It is when Dawn reads Arthur's poem that she realizes how deeply he feels for her.

Museum of Modern Art

The Museum of Modern Art is where the recital to which Michael invites Dawn takes place.

Parker House

The Parker House is the name of the apartment house where Michael is staying.

Allan Higgins

Allan Higgins is the name that Dawn tells Trisha belongs to the man with whom she is having an affair.



Tchaikovsky's

Tchaikovsky's "Sleeping Beauty" is playing in Michael's apartment when Dawn first visits.

Wooden Pointer

Madame Steichen breaks this pointer over the piano during one of Dawn's lessons because she believes the girl is not concentrating fully on her music and that she is being corrupted by something.

A Beautiful Gold Locket

Michael gives Dawn this locket, engraved with the notes of his song during their Thanksgiving holiday together.

Mom's

Mom's is the name of the restaurant to which Michael takes Dawn for them to celebrate his newest play.

Eugenia

Eugenia is the name by which Emily tries to call Dawn when she first comes to The Meadows. Grandmother Cutler also tried to make Dawn go by this name, saying it was the name she was given at her birth, the name of her grandmother's deceased sisters.

London

London is where Dawn learns that Michael has actually headed for his newest Broadway play.

Florida

Florida is where Michael tells Dawn that he is going for his next show.

Virginia

Virginia is the state where The Meadows is located.



The Meadows

The Meadows is the old plantation on which Grandmother Cutler's sisters Emily and Charlotte live. It is here that Dawn is sent to stay during her pregnancy until she gives birth.

Upland Station

Upland Station is the closest town to The Meadows. It is this town to which Luther has to drive to pick up and send off mail.

Hot Water Bottle

Dawn is given a hot water bottle as her only source of heat at night while she is staying at The Meadows.

Vinegar

Emily tells Dawn that she puts vinegar in everything that she cooks to remind them of the bitterness of their sins.

A Baby's Toy Rattle

On Dawn's first full day at The Meadows, Charlotte gives Dawn the gift of a baby's toy rattle.

Cauldron

Dawn notices her belongings being boiled in this cauldron outside the plantation house.

Dawn's Clothes

When Dawn goes to The Meadows, her clothes are taken from her by Emily and put in a boiling pot, then buried in order to purify them. Dawn does not get them back until the day she is to leave.

An Apple

An apple is what Dawn is given for lunch by Emily.



A Make-shift Chapel

A make-shift chapel in the plantation house is where Emily holds weekly church services which Dawn is required to attend.

Castor Oil

Emily gives Dawn an overdose of castor oil in the hopes that the medicine and stress on her body will cause her to have a miscarriage.

A Nursery

When Dawn gets the courage to explore Emily and Charlotte's wing of the house, she discovers a nursery decorated with Charlotte's needlework.

Pointed Ears

Pointed ears are what Emily told Charlotte that her baby would be born with.

Milk with a Brown Tint

Charlotte is sent to give Dawn this milk with a brown tint and flakes floating in it after she gives birth to Christie. Although Dawn at first believes the drink will make her stronger she soon realizes that it has a sedative in it.

The Wiggles

The wiggles is what Charlotte tells Dawn that Luther did to her to make her get pregnant.

Grandmother Cutler's Office

It is in Grandmother Cutler's office that Dawn and Jimmy go to try to find information about where Dawn's baby might be.



Themes

Revenge

Revenge is a major theme in the novel as Grandmother Cutler tries to make Dawn pay for the actions of her father and mother. Both Grandmother Cutler and Laura Sue, Dawn's mother, know that Dawn is the daughter of Grandmother Cutler's husband. Grandmother Cutler tries to abuse Laura Sue for her actions, but Laura Sue feigns illness and spends most of her time in bed eliciting pity. It is in this way that she saves herself from Grandmother Cutler's revenge. Even though Laura Sue knows that the affair was her fault and has nothing to do with Dawn, she does not attempt to keep her mother-in-law from abusing Dawn, but instead sits back and allows the abuse to happen.

It is not until the end of the book that Dawn realizes why her grandmother hated her so much. When she learns the reason behind her grandmother's dislike, Dawn has a certain amount of understanding for the lady. However, she does not have any sympathy for her mother because her mother did not try to protect her in any way from Grandmother Cutler's hatefulness.

In her attempt to get revenge on Laura Sue for the affair, Grandmother Cutler first has it arranged for Dawn to be "abducted" by a poor family with whom Dawn lives for nearly 14 years of her life. Once the secret to Dawn's abduction is out, Grandmother Cutler cannot stand to be around Dawn, so she arranges for her to go away to a boarding school. Even at school, Grandmother Cutler manipulates Dawn's life by spreading lies about the girl's personality and morality. Dawn believes that Grandmother Cutler is trying to get revenge on her for revealing her as the one who arranged for Dawn's abduction as a baby. When it is discovered that Dawn is pregnant, Grandmother Cutler again punishes Dawn by sending her away to The Meadows. At this house, the unfortunate Dawn is placed in the midst of three people whose lives were turned upside down by a surprise pregnancy. It seems that Emily is still taking revenge on Luther for getting her sister pregnant. She also turns her wrath on Dawn whom she accuses of being a sinner and the vessel of the devil for being in the condition that she is in.

Religion

Religion, or fanatical religion, is a theme that is addressed while Dawn is staying at The Meadows with Emily. Emily believes that it is because Dawn is in the grips of the devil that she has become pregnant. Dawn learns that Emily told Charlotte, her sister, the same thing when Charlotte "mysteriously" became pregnant. Emily told Charlotte the baby was the spawn of the devil and that it had pointed ears. In reality, the baby was Luther's baby. He convinced the retarded Charlotte that it was acceptable for him to do "the wiggles" on her, just as the farm animals did.



While Dawn is living with Emily, she is subject to Emily's strange form of religion. Emily does not allow those with whom she lives to attend church services because she believes that religious gatherings have become a time for people to dress up and impress one another instead of serving God. They instead have a service of Bible reading and prayer in a makeshift chapel where they sit on uncomfortable benches. In addition to her strange ideas about corporate worship, Emily also believes that any form of outward beauty including the use of makeup, hair styling or pretty clothes is a sign of sinful vanity. Emily also believes that wastefulness is a sin, making those under her roof scrimp and save so that they are not only not wasteful, but also not comfortable. Her religious fanaticism even spreads to the food that she feeds those with whom she lives. Emily tells Dawn that she uses vinegar in everything that she cooks as a way to remind them of the bitterness of their sins.

Friendship

Friendship is another important theme in this novel as it is Trisha and Jimmy's love for Dawn that ultimately lead them to discover where she is being kept so that Jimmy can rescue her. Dawn also admits in the book that Trisha is the first true friend, outside those she believed to be her family members, that she has had. Through her friendship, Trisha helps Dawn adjust to life at Bernhardt School and also helps Dawn as she tries to deal with her grandmother's continuous efforts to get revenge on the girl.

Another aspect of friendship is Dawn's friendship with Arthur. Arthur, like Dawn, has had a hard family life and longs for someone to accept him for who he is. His parents need for him to be a talented musician because they believe this will help them keep alive the farce that the boy is not adopted. Arthur knows that he is not a talented musician. When Arthur approaches Dawn about what is going on in his life, instead of lying to Arthur, which might have been easier, Dawn chooses to tell Arthur the truth. She encourages him to do what he wants to do, not what his parents want him to do. Although these actions do not endear Dawn to Arthur's parents, Arthur is grateful to Dawn for her truthfulness and her support of his dreams.

The Power of the Truth/Lies

The power of both the truth and of lies is also an important theme in this novel. The power of lies can be seen both in Dawn's relationship with her grandmother as well as her relationship with Michael. Dawn believes she will be able to make a fresh start for herself in New York. She doesn't count on her grandmother having already sent a letter to Agnes Morris, with whom she will stay in New York, a letter of lies describing Dawn as a troublemaker and a disturbed teenager. These lies have power over Dawn's life as Agnes treats Dawn as a troublemaker beginning on the very first day without even bothering to get to know the girl. In much the same way, Michael's lies hold a powerful spell over Dawn as she believes that the man will take care of her. Instead, she is devastated when she learns that all of his promises were lies and he has left the country to pursue his own career.



The truth is just as powerful as lies as Dawn's willingness to be truthful with Arthur about his musical ability frees him from trying to be something he is not. By telling him the truth, she allows him to break free of the lies with which he has been raised and seek his own interests. When Dawn learns the truth about the secret of Charlotte's baby at The Meadows, she is able to understand better the workings of the relationships of the three people who live there. Luther is subservient to Emily because she knows that he raped her sister. Emily, meanwhile, is embarrassed that her mentally retarded sister got pregnant by the farm hand while under her watch so she makes up a story about Charlotte's baby being the spawn of the devil. The truth about Dawn's father holds power over a variety of people in the novel. It is this truth about her father that makes Grandmother Cutler cruel and abusive to Dawn her entire life, it is also this truth that keeps Dawn's mother ill until Grandmother Cutler dies. It is this same truth that sends Dawn's mother back to bed when she realizes that her secret is about to be exposed.

Incest

Although there is never any direct incest, this novel plays with and pushes the lines of sexual relationships between blood relatives. The closest incident of incest is the relationship between Phillip and Dawn. Dawn remembers that before she knew that Phillip was her brother, she had a crush on him. After she learned he was her half-brother, Phillip forces himself upon her. From this point on, Dawn avoids Phillip. Jimmy is a different story as Dawn thought for years that Jimmy was her brother. Although they have realized they are not related, the two still struggle with the feeling that a sexual relationship between them is wrong because they once considered one another brother and sister. Although they are not related by blood, the relationship between Dawn's mother and her father-in-law can be considered incestuous as the two are closely related by marriage. The relationship also creates an unusual situation for Dawn as her father is also her step-grandfather. She is also an aunt to her half-brother and half-sister.



Style

Point of View

The novel is told from the first-person point of view of Dawn Cutler, the heroine of the novel. This point of view is appropriate as Dawn makes her way through the various aspects and challenges of her life. The plot of the novel deals with the way that Grandmother Cutler is cruel to Dawn all through her life, then Dawn comes out with the upper hand as she is given the majority of interest in Cutler's Cove by her father at the end of the novel. The dramatic impact of this abuse could not have been as startling if it were told by another character.

The story is recounted through both dialogue and exposition with about as much emphasis given to both of these two forms of writing. In the dialogue sections, Dawn interacts with the characters around her. It is in these sections that the reader learns what other characters know and what they bring to the plot of the novel. The expository sections are used for Dawn to describe what is going on around her, and react to what she learns through the dialogue with others.

Setting

There are several different settings visited during the course of the novel as Dawn arrives in New York to attend school at Bernhardt is sent to The Meadows during her pregnancy, then returns to Cutler's Cove to confront her biological family about the whereabouts of her baby.

In the beginning of the novel, Dawn is on an airplane headed to New York. For the next several chapters, New York is the setting of the actions of the novel. Important places include Agnes Morris' house where Dawn lives during her schooling. Specific places of importance are the room that is shared by Dawn and Trisha, the sitting room, the dining room, and Agnes' bedroom, which is set up like the backstage of a theater.

The Bernhardt School, where Dawn takes her classes is another important setting in the novel though not as much time is spent here as is spent at the boarding house and at Michael's apartment. Michael's apartment is another important setting as it is here that Michael promises his love to Dawn, making her believe that he intends to marry her and make her a Broadway star. It is in Michael's apartment that Christie is conceived.

Later, The Meadows, a run down southern plantation house where Emily and Charlotte Booth live is a major setting in the story. It is here that Dawn is sent while she is pregnant until she gives birth her baby. Important places here are the kitchen where meals are eaten and where Dawn is forced to scrub the pots and pans, and floor each day; the pantry, where the three ladies take a weekly bath and the isolated unused wing of the house where Dawn's room is. Dawn's room, which has no window and is about the size of a closet, is a major setting in the novel as this is where Emily carries out her



"examinations" of Dawn and the baby, and where Dawn is taken when it is time for her to give birth.

Cutler's Cove is the final important setting in this novel. Dawn's mother's bedroom is one important setting where Dawn confronts her mother about what has happened to her as well as her mother's inability and seeming unwillingness to do anything to help her daughter. It is to this room that Laura Sue retreats when she realizes that her father-in-law has left a letter naming himself as Dawn's father. Grandmother Cutler's office is another important setting in the novel as it is here that Dawn learns the identity of her father and also learns that he has left her a controlling portion of Cutler's Cove.

Language and Meaning

The language used in this novel is informal, though proper English. The author does not attempt to individualize characters by their dialogue; more emphasis is placed on actions and intent of these actions. One should also consider that this is a romance, so more emphasis is put on describing characters, particularly Jimmy, in a favorable light. While Dawn is naïve and falls prey to the pretty phrases and promises of love that Michael offers, it is ultimately Jimmy's stable, solid words and promises that will remain firm to the end of the story.

Structure

The novel "Secrets of the Morning" is comprised of eighteen chapters plus a prologue. Each chapter is titled with a number as well as a brief title that gives some idea what will be happening in the chapter. Each chapter is approximately twenty-one pages long. Although the novel is part of a series, it is easy to read as a stand-alone novel because much of the important facts and details that have affected Dawn in prior novels are given in this book. Only one issue, Dawn's search for her baby, is left unresolved. This unresolved issue leaves the author a thread with which to start the next book in the series.

The plot of the novel is fairly simple with no subplots. The main idea of the book is Dawn's journey to the discovery of why her step-grandmother hates her so much. Dawn is the product of an affair between her mother and her step-grandfather. Dawn is not aware of this until the end of the novel when her grandmother dies and a letter of instruction left by her step-grandfather is read to the family. Because of the abuse she has suffered at the hands of her step-grandmother, Dawn is rewarded by her step-grandfather who leaves her a controlling portion of Cutler's Cove, an ocean side resort.

The pace of the novel is comfortable with enough time given to each of Dawn's situations to fully describe its importance, but not so much time that the novel seems to drag. Descriptive passages give the reader information about Dawn's past when necessary to explain current situations. These passages, however, are not long or drawn out, giving only what needs to be told when it needs to be told. There are no flashbacks and the story line is linear.



Quotes

"Now I was caught between two worlds - the ugly world back at the hotel where there was no one I could turn to or depend upon, and the frightening prospect of New York City where there was no one I knew" (Prologue, p. 2).

"For a few moments, I had felt secure, safe, even in this huge place with crowds and crowds of strangers. It was almost as if I had been with Jimmy again, with someone strong to look after me" (Chapter 1, p. 8).

"Oh yes, and she still is. I don't mean on the stage or screen, but in real life. And she has all these old actor friends who come over for tea on Sundays" (Chapter 2, p. 30).

"I needed a friend like Trisha desperately, perhaps too desperately. I hoped and prayed she wouldn't be like so many others and eventually betray me. But sometimes, we have no choice but to trust someone, I thought" (Chapter 2, p. 40).

"But, if I opened my secret heart and looked inside I knew I'd see my strongest hope. I wanted to have a family and love and cherish my children so they would never feel the way I did now. I couldn't wish that on anyone" (Chapter 2, p. 48-49).

"I wanted to shout back at her, to cry out and tell her she didn't know what she was talking about; she had no idea what sort of terrible things had happened to me and if there was anyone who had to have her manners improved, it wasn't me; it was Grandmother Cutler who lorded it over everyone as if her hotel was her plantation and we were all her slaves" (Chapter 4, p. 73).

"When I lived with Momma and Daddy Longchamp, we had love in our home, but the strain of making enough to feed, clothe and shelter us kept Daddy Longchamp grouchy and sad most of the time, and all I could remember about Momma was her being sick or tired and defeated" (Chapter 4, p. 75).

"Laura Sue was still my real mother and regret it as much as I did, I couldn't deny the fact that Clara Sue was at least my half-sister" (Chapter 5, p. 107).

"Toward the end of the school year, Madame Steichen informed me that she had selected me to be her featured student during next year's Performance Weekend."
Chapter 5, pg. 120

"My name was the last to be called out, but when I heard it, I felt my heart burst with joy. I had been chosen, selected out of all these other talented students to work with someone famous" (Chapter 6, p. 127-128).

"When you sang for me today, you became your own person, your own special person living in your music. It pumps your blood around. I know; I have the same feelings when I sing, and the moment I saw you, saw someone who reminded me of myself, I knew I had discovered my star pupil" (Chapter 6, p. 133).



"'Sometimes,' she said, dropping her voice and speaking slowly, speaking like someone in a daze, 'good looks and charm are only thin, surface deceptions hiding a stream of evil and cruelty. Intelligence, talent, whatever people think are blessings, don't always mean the person is a good person, Dawn. I'm sorry I can't give you anything more than that'" (Chapter 7, p. 147).

"'I don't like what I see in your eyes,' she said. 'Something is corrupting you from within and it is affecting your music'" (Chapter 8, pg. 178).

"'I am happy,' I said, 'but every time I've been happy in my life, something has come along to destroy it'" (Chapter 8, p. 184).

"Out of all the good things that had happened to me in New York City, my work with Madame Steichen, my being chosen for Michael's class, the compliments I received from the other teachers, the shows and trips and all the excitement, nothing was more important than my friendship with Trisha. I realized that now and hoped and prayed we would always stay close" (Chapter 11, p. 245).

"Tomorrow, I would be whisked out of the city of my dreams. I would disappear as if I never existed" (Chapter 11, p. 254).

"Evil is a disease; it clings to us and to everything associated with us. You brought it with you into this house and I have to make sure it doesn't stay. Now eat and stop asking so many questions" (Chapter 13, p. 285).

"What an unhappy family, distrustful and afraid of the devil's presence in anyone and everything. It was easy now to understand why Grandmother Cutler was the way she was, I thought. In fact, one of the sour looking women looked just like her" (Chapter 13, p. 295).

"I might as well be in some jail, I thought. I couldn't have a warden more cruel than Miss Emily and why? Because I had fallen in love too quickly and had been too trusting" (Chapter 14, p. 314).

"Despite her iron face and steel cold eyes, she lived with fears that made her afraid of the darkness" (Chapter 15, p. 338).

"Even the waves that came up approached the shore softly, tenderly, as if the ocean were afraid of attracting the wrath of the powerful matron who ruled this kingdom by the sea. I could almost hear her voice and see her face when I read the sign declaring this beach was RESERVED FOR CUTLER COVE HOTEL GUESTS ONLY" (Chapter 17, p. 370).

"With a joy and a pleasure she had trouble disguising, Mother had taken complete control of Cutler's Cove. Randolph sat by nodding in silent agreement with everything she said and did. It was almost as if he were a puppet and Mother had her hand behind him, manipulating him" (Chapter 18, p. 394).



"I prayed that Grandmother Cutler, wherever she was, would finally realize the cruelty and harshness of her ways. I prayed she would repent and beg God to forgive her" (Chapter 18, p. 396).

"Accordingly, I hereby confess to having fathered the second child of my son's wife" (Chapter 18, p. 399).

"There was no question in my mind now that Grandmother Cutler always knew. Now I understood why she called me her curse on her deathbed and why she hated me so. Despite my hardened heart, a small part of myself even felt sorry for her" (Chapter 18, p. 401).

"God couldn't have wanted all this to happen, I thought. He didn't write the scripts for the puny little players down here. We wrote them ourselves— with our lusts and our greed and our selfish ways" (Chapter 18, p. 404).



Topics for Discussion

Under what circumstances does Dawn Cutler attend the Bernhardt School?

What is the significance of Dawn's relationship with Arthur Garwood?

Discuss the theme of revenge as it relates to the novel.

Discuss the theme of religion as it relates to the novel.

Compare and contrast Trisha and Dawn's personalities.

When Madame Steichen learns that Dawn has been chosen to be in Michael Sutton's class, she is not impressed because she says that Michael is not an artist, but only a performer. What is the difference between an artist and a performer?

Compare and contrast the personalities of Jimmy and Michael. How are the two men similar? In what ways are they different?

In what ways does Dawn leave her life open to control by her grandmother? What, if anything, could she have done differently to keep her grandmother from taking over?