

Seeds of Yesterday Study Guide

Seeds of Yesterday by Virginia C. Andrews

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Plot Summary

Seeds of Yesterday is the final book in a series about the troubled Foxworth family.

The series begins with *Flowers in the Attic*, when Chris and Catherine's horrible mother banishes them to a life of neglect and abuse and keeps them locked in the attic of Foxworth Hall. Their younger twin siblings are also locked away with them. Their mother hides them because if her father knows of their existence he will disinherit her. It turns out that their father was also their half-uncle.

Throughout the book, Catherine talks about their family secret — the fact that her "husband" is really her brother — with mixed emotions. She does not want others to find out for fear of being ostracized. However, she thinks proudly about the love they share as if it is a truly special relationship. Catherine has had other lovers and has even been married to someone else in her past, but she believes Chris needs her more than anyone else, a thought that will even prevail at her death.

The family secret traps Chris, Catherine and their children together, even though none of the children were born of their relationship. Bart has the hardest time dealing with the conflict. As a child, he has deep psychological issues due to his mother's relationship with his uncle. As an adult, he wants more than anything for his mother to abandon Chris to redeem herself in the eyes of God.

The family returns to Foxworth Hall to celebrate Bart's 25th birthday. He is to inherit the family fortune the day after when attorneys arrive for a final reading of his grandmother's will.

However, Jory's injury and recovery take time so it is actually a month later before the final will is read and Bart learns of extenuating circumstances in his inheritance. Instead of inheriting everything at 25, he simply begins to collect \$500,000 annually and Chris is still the trustee of the estate until Bart turns 35.

Jory, Chris and Catherine are all successful in their own rights. They can each certainly afford to move away from Foxworth Hall, but they choose not to do so. Instead, they remain under Bart's roof, dealing with his horrible temper and control issues.

Bart escapes his past when Chris dies in an auto accident. He realizes then that Chris really had tried to be a good father figure to him. When Bart becomes an evangelist, Jory remarries and Cindy's acting career is developing, Catherine decides that Chris needs her more and she goes to the attic to die. A servant finds her there, in an attic decorated with paper flowers.



Book One, Foxworth Hall, Joel Foxworth, and Memories

Book One, Foxworth Hall, Joel Foxworth, and Memories Summary

Seeds of Yesterday by V.C. Andrews is the final book in a series about the Foxworth family. Brother and sister Chris and Catherine are now adults living as husband and wife, breeding a life of co-dependency and incestuous secrets for their family.

In the chapter called "Foxworth Hall," Catherine, the narrator, explains where her family secret began. Their mother took Catherine and Chris along with their 5-year-old twin siblings, Cory and Carrie, to Foxworth Hall, promising them a life of riches. Instead, the mother locks the children in the attic where they remain for many years. In addition to the mental abuse and neglect, they are physically abused too. As Catherine and Chris become adolescents, they give in to their sexual curiosity with each other in the attic.

As adults, their family consists of Bart and Jory, Cathrine's sons from previous relationships, and a daughter that Chris and Catherine adopted together named Cindy. The family returns to Foxworth Hall to celebrate Bart's 25th birthday, at which time he is to inherit the old mansion and his evil grandmother's wealth. Bart has the mansion reconstructed to its original glory after the house burned down years prior, killing his grandmother who was in the house.

In the chapter called "Joel Foxworth," Catherine is surprised to learn she still has an uncle living. She thought both her mother's brothers had died many years ago, but Joel has been living as a monk in the Alps. Bart tracks him down and convinces him to return to Foxworth Hall to be part of the restoration process. Joel reminds Catherine far too much of her mean grandfather, though, and she is suspicious of him right away.

Catherine recalls the past in the chapter called "Memories." As the restored mansion floods her mind with the angst of her past, she also worries that Joel knows her secret — that Chris is her brother, living as her husband. Chris has simply dropped the name Foxworth from his legal name and is known as Dr. Chris Sheffield instead of Dr. Chris Sheffield Foxworth. Joel lives in the meager servant's quarters, which suit the lifestyle he became accustomed to in the monastery. He also acts as butler until Chris and Catherine hire a staff of servants.



Book One, Foxworth Hall, Joel Foxworth, and Memories Analysis

The first three chapters in Book One provide a lot of background for readers who have never read the previous books in the series. The author uses first person narrative to tell the story.

Told through the eyes of Catherine, the chapter called "Foxworth Hall" explains the terrors that took place in the old mansion. She also talks of the love she and Chris found together there, speaking of it as though it is special yet wrong at the same time.

In "Joel Foxworth," Catherine distrusts the old man — an uncle she thought had died many years before — from the moment she meets him.

In "Memories," Catherine and Chris deal with the fact that someone else in the house does indeed know their secret. Having the secret disturbs Catherine more than Chris. He realizes it is important for his career as a doctor for people not to know that his "wife" is really his sister, but he does not dwell on it as Catherine does. While she really does seem to love him, she is definitely dealing with guilt and shame for their relationship.



Book One, My Second Son, My First Son, and Cindy

Book One, My Second Son, My First Son, and Cindy Summary

"My Second Son" looks into Bart's character. He is jealous of his older brother Jory and detests his adopted sister Cindy. He is ashamed of his mother's relationship with her brother (his uncle) and wants his mother to stop living in sin. Bart is the child Catherine had by her step-father. She tells Bart that she truly loved his father and admits she also wanted revenge against her mother for the years of abuse she inflicted on her as a child. Bart announces that he has legally changed his last name to Foxworth. Bart talks to his mother and reveals that he is searching for success and has always been jealous of his brother Jory's dancing skill. He tells his mother that he's been told he has a nice singing voice. She makes no comment, showing the reader that she has not heard him sing. This is because he had a very troubled youth with little happiness or reason to sing. He admits to his mother that he has never been in love. He says he uses his good looks and money to have any woman he wants, then discards her. Instead of a fine arts talent, Bart is cultivating a knack for finances and plans to have a career as a successful lawyer. He fears that his shaky psychological past will stomp out his career if it is ever discovered. He blames his past problems on his mother's relationship with her brother.

Jory is the topic of "My First Son." Catherine and her husband Julius were members of a ballet troupe. He died in an auto accident years prior. Jory follows in his parents' footsteps and becomes a very successful ballet dancer. Along with his dancing wife, Melodie, they have fame and success in their careers. Jory and Melodie visit Foxworth Hall to attend Bart's birthday party and another reading of their grandmother's will. He also announces that Melodie is pregnant. The news surprises Catherine. While excited about becoming a grandmother, she knows her son wanted to wait until he was 40 and his dancing career was over before starting a family. She is concerned about how the pregnancy will change his career plans, but since he seems happy about the baby, she does not worry too much. What does worry Catherine, however, is that Melodie is not eating much and seems a little withdrawn at times. Melodie seems to be bothered by Bart, who is infatuated with her even though — or maybe because — she is his brother's wife.

The adopted daughter is the topic of the chapter called "Cindy." At 16 years old, she is full of energy and excitement. She and Bart do not get along. Bart is mean to her and tells her she is a tramp. Bart is mean to everyone and Cindy's presence is a delightful contrast for her family. She seems like an average teenage girl. She loves to have fun, be with friends, and talk about boys. Her mother believes she is an innocent angel while Bart tries to convince her that the girl is a whore.



Book One, My Second Son, My First Son, and Cindy Analysis

These three chapters discuss Catherine's children, beginning with Bart. Bart, her second son, has some typical middle child security and self-esteem issues that have been heightened by his frightening psychological past. Bart is searching for a way to deal with the shame his mother's relationship with her brother has caused him over the years.

In "My Second Son," Catherine tells of Bart's obsession with Jory —wanting to be better than his older brother, wanting to have more than him. Those desires are not particularly abnormal for a middle child, but the lengths Bart will go to in order to win is scary to all who know him.

In "My First Son," Catherine has nothing but love and admiration to express for Jory. Both she and Jory's father were ballet dancers, so Jory was "born to dance." This phrase is mentioned several times and helps develop the dancer's passion in the reader's mind to help realize just how devastating it is to Jory when he becomes paralyzed.

Catherine admits in the chapter called "Cindy" that her adopted daughter is living the life she had always hoped to live herself. Cindy was a pretty, popular girl who loved dating, shopping, hanging out with friends and enjoying life as a whole. Catherine, doomed during her teen years to the Foxworth Hall attic, missed out on an entire teenage life. She is determined for Cindy to enjoy it all and admits to spoiling her. Since Catherine and Chris could not have children, she is the child they adopted.



Book One, Preparations

Book One, Preparations Summary

The closer Bart's birthday gets, the more activity in Foxworth Hall. In "Preparations," there are many details to prepare the mansion for its first party. Bart asks Jory and Melody to perform a ballet at his birthday party. Melodie refuses due to the pregnancy, but sister Cindy steps in to take her place. Cindy has some ballet training but is certainly not the professional Melodie is. She stopped taking ballet lessons at age 12 because Bart always ridiculed her dancing. Cindy surprises her family by telling them she has resumed classes at her all-girl school, comfortable dancing there since Bart is no where around to criticize her.

Catherine is nervous about the dance Cindy and Jory plan to perform but convinces herself that the fear is not intuition, but instead anxiety from all the haunting memories she was experiencing in the reconstructed mansion.

Chris and Catherine talk about Bart's big party and the reading of their mother's will. The first reading was shortly after the woman's death. It outlined that Bart would inherit everything at age 25. Until then, Chris was to be his trustee. The family expects the second reading of the will to fully turn the estate over to Bart, relieving Chris of trustee duties. Since the party would go on so late, the reading would not occur at the party, but instead would take place the next day with all members of the family required to attend.

Chris tells Catherine that there is something the lawyers are not telling him. They only say he must not have understood the first reading. Bart has demanded they not discuss the estate with Chris, so they do not.

While Jory and Cindy practice their ballet, Melodie rejects Bart's advances. Joel condemns dancers for their skimpy costumes and condemns Bart's party as a show of wealth. He tells Bart that he should not throw his money away on parties, but instead should donate the money to worthwhile charities.

As the family prepares for Bart's party, Cindy and Bart get into a fight. Before guests arrive, Cindy descends the stairs wearing a tight red dress with a plunging neckline with no underwear underneath. She tells her family that since Bart thinks she is a tramp, she chose to dress like one in honor of his party. The girl tries to convince her mother and father that it's in style and creates a scene that Bart ends. Bart slaps her down and Cindy runs back upstairs to her room. She comes back down wearing a modest blue dress once the party has started and Bart tells her she had better dance well in the ballet and to act as though nothing had happened earlier.

Book One, Preparations Analysis

There are many preparations going on in this chapter.



Bart is preparing to make a move on Melodie. He actually already makes moves on her, but she rejects him. He is distraught that she refuses to dance in the ballet since she is pregnant. Her pregnancy does not mean anything to him because the baby is Jory's.

Bart has been preparing for the special ballet to be danced at his party for some time, however he waits until Melodie and Jory arrive to even ask them to perform. He already has plans for a stage to be constructed and has costumes in preparation.

Bart is also preparing to take over the Foxworth fortune. He hides behind the power that money is buying him to build his self-esteem while showing that deep down inside, he is still a troubled boy.

Joel is making preparations to save the sinful bunch. He scorns the party because it is an extravagance and the ballet because the costumes are so skimpy.

Cindy prepares to get on Bart's nerves as many little sisters do. Since he is always referring to her as a tramp, she dresses like one to attend his party. She gets the shocked reaction she wants, along with getting knocked down and slapped.

Catherine is preparing to deal with visitors at Foxworth Hall. She worries about who might know she and Chris are really brother and sister.



Book One, Samson and Delilah

Book One, Samson and Delilah Summary

The ballet Jory and Cindy dance for Bart's party is called "Samson and Delilah." The choreography of this ballet is what made Jory famous.

The party is in full swing and Bart coaxes Melodie into mingling with him while Jory dances. Joel disapproves of the party because of its extravagance and because of the skimpy costumes in the ballet. Jory's costume was a loin cloth and 16 year old Cindy wore a very seductive costume in keeping with the Samson and Delilah story. The legend is that Delilah seduced the strong Samson and cut off his hair — which he believed to be the source of his strength.

Melodie and Catherine are both surprised and pleased with Cindy's performance. Although she is not a professional dancer, she is doing well in the role. Catherine realizes that Cindy's costume reveals far more than her dress from earlier that evening and wonders why Bart approved of the costume but not the evening dress.

Jory's role becomes very violent when Samson is being tortured by other soldiers. Even though it is all just a staged production, Catherine and Melodie are getting very anxious about the performance. Just before the third act, Melodie tells Bart she hates this ballet because it seems all too real. "Fairy tales suit me better," she says. Bart eyes Melodie as Joel repositions himself so he can better see the family as they watch the dance.

Jory makes his performance even more believable by wearing contact lenses that make him appear to be blind. The blind Samson stumbles around the stage, looking for his lover who is winding her way around the stage just out of his reach.

In the grand finale of the ballet, Jory is supposed to push down two paper mache columns, showing Samson has regained his strength. Then, the entire paper and cardboard "temple" would crash down. However, one of the fake boulders falls on Jory and knocks him out. Realizing that sand had not poured out of the columns or stones, Chris and Catherine run to the stage to find real — not fake — blood spurting from Jory.

As Melodie rushes toward the stage, Bart tries to hold her back. While waiting for the ambulance, Catherine picks up some of the sand that spilled out of the pillars to discover it is wet sand. She immediately suspects Bart planned the accident.

As paramedics are loading Jory into the ambulance, Catherine asks if he will live. The doctor says yes, but he believes it will be quite some time before Jory can dance again. Catherine recalls that Jory has said he could never live without dancing.



Book One, Samson and Delilah Analysis

There is irony in the chapter "Samson and Delilah." In the story of Samson and Delilah, the hero is stricken powerless when his lover betrays him and cuts off his hair, what he believes to be the source of his power.

In real life, Jory believes his source of power is his legs. His legs enable him to be a famous dancer who earns big money. His legs enable him to dance and make love with his wife. He cannot imagine life without his legs. However, this ballet he danced for Bart's party strips him of his power when the falling columns cause a spinal cord injury, which leaves him paralyzed from the waste down. Already so many times in the book Jory has said he would not want to live if he couldn't dance. This sounds like foreshadowing, but it is not exactly. Later the reader will learn that Jory does have big problems dealing with his loss, but he does not die as the narrator continues to be concerned about it. Jory's lover will betray him later because of the accident.

In addition to the irony, this chapter causes the reader to consider what Bart might be capable of and willing to do in order to be the favorite child in the family. Since Bart never accepts responsibility for the accident, the reader is left wondering whether it was caused by Bart, by Joel, or was done by one of the construction workers who was mad at Bart for his supervision of the project. When Cindy appears in a very risque ballet costume featuring Foxworth jewels, it becomes very obvious that Bart has been very involved in some of the planning of the ballet. He designed the very sexy outfit with jewels strategically placed to be worn by Melodie, not his little sister. As the narrator points out, Bart had earlier slapped Cindy for wearing a dress that covered more than this ballet outfit did.



Book One, When the Party is Over and Cruel Fate

Book One, When the Party is Over and Cruel Fate Summary

Catherine and Chris jump with Melodie into the ambulance to ride with Jory to the hospital. Jory is unconscious. Catherine reveals that she learns Bart covers the accident by telling all the guests that Jory was just slightly injured and will be fully recovered in a few days and keeps the party going.

Chris stops Jory's bleeding in the ambulance, a good sign. Catherine wonders why she thought Foxworth Hall could ever bring any kind of happiness to her family. While Catherine is praying for his safety, Melodie gets hysterical. Jory opens his eyes and speaks. Chris injects him with a sedative and just before going to sleep asks his mother to tell Melodie everything will be fine. He also wants to know what his mother thought of the performance.

Catherine decides not to take Melodie back on her next trip to the hospital because Melodie needs her rest and because of her hysteria.

Upon returning to the hospital, Catherine sees that Jory is in a body cast, but his legs and feet are not included in it. Chris tells Catherine that Jory has a spinal cord injury and will never walk again. As Catherine cries, Chris reminds her that the family must be strong for Jory.

In "Cruel Fate," Jory wakes up as Catherine waits with him in his hospital room. Jory asks why he feels different and what happened. Catherine tells him about the columns falling and knocking him out. Jory tells her how well Cindy did in the role. He asks again why he feels different and why he cannot move his feet or legs. Chris levels with him. Jory takes the news very hard and stopped responding to his family.

At home, Chris tells Melodie of Jory's condition. They cannot convince Melodie that Jory has a future worth living for. Bart only visits his brother once in the hospital. Melodie refuses to go. Cindy, Catherine and Chris work hard to pull Jory out of his depression as he refuses to eat and is hooked up to IVs.

Cindy tells her parents she overheard Bart talking to an insurance agent on the phone. He had taken out special party insurance for his birthday party when Jory's accident occurred. The three also talk about the wet sand found on the stage during the accident. Chris asks Bart about the wet sand. Bart is offended and suggests a stagehand who was mad at him might have wet the sand.



Catherine overhears Bart and Melodie talking. Bart is compassionate to her and Catherine begins to realize Bart is making a move on Melodie.

Catherine talks to Melodie. Melodie is not interested in life with an invalid. Jory finally begins to talk again when Catherine tells him that Melodie might go live with her parents since he is rejecting them all. They begin to plan his return to Foxworth Hall.

Book One, When the Party is Over and Cruel Fate Analysis

In these two chapters, the narrator talks about her fears and concerns for Jory after his dancing accident. The chapters build further conflict the family must endure. Melodie believes there is something evil in the house that makes bad things happen. Catherine believes the same, but tries to calm her daughter-in-law.

Melodie faults herself for Jory's accident. She tells Catherine that she intentionally got pregnant against Jory's wishes. If she hadn't gotten pregnant, they would not have taken the vacation to Foxworth Hall and he would not have been in the accident.

Catherine sees Bart start to charm Melodie when Jory is in the hospital. Since previous chapters have built her reputation as an intuitive narrator, the reader also starts to believe her theory that the two are having an affair.

Through Jory's recovery, Catherine has many flashbacks about the death of his father, her deceased husband. Jory's father was in an auto accident and when he realized his dancing career would end, he gave up efforts to recover. He stopped eating and willed himself to die. Jory's actions are much the same, but Catherine is able to convince him to give life without ballet a try.



Book Two: The Reluctant Wife, Homecoming

Book Two: The Reluctant Wife, Homecoming Summary

In the first chapter of Book Two, "The Reluctant Wife," Chris outlines a new plan for the family given Jory's handicap. Chris tells Catherine he wants to work in research while Jory recovers at home and they wait for Melodie to have the baby.

Catherine forces Melodie to visit Jory in the hospital. She literally drags her to the shower and makes her put on makeup while she dries Melodie's hair. She tells Melodie to convince Jory that her love for him has not changed.

Catherine tells Melodie to enter the room smiling and to kiss him. She tells her to say that she has not been to see him because she's been feeling weak due to her pregnancy and tells her not to dare mention that she cannot feel like a wife to him anymore.

It is obvious to Jory that his mother made his wife come to visit. He lashes out and tells her she can leave, but Melodie breaks down and confesses that she has been scared and ashamed that she is not as strong as his mother. She tells Jory that they will make a life together despite his handicap.

Back at home, Melodie talks to Catherine, admitting her own inadequacies about how she is dealing with Jory's injuries. She also tells Catherine she thinks the mansion is jinxed and that's why the accident occurred. During their talk, Catherine realizes that Melodie knows a lot about Bart's finances and she realizes the two have become closer since Jory's injury. Melodie acts guilty and quickly ends the conversation when Catherine asks her how much time she is spending with Bart.

In "Homecoming," a suite in Foxworth Hall has been renovated to be handicapped accessible for Jory. Catherine sees more shared glances between Bart and Melodie and her concern about their relationship grows.

When Jory arrives home, his mother gives him a kit to make a ship to help him pass his time. Jory naps before the second reading of his grandmother's will, the one that will officially declare Bart the sole heir to the Foxworth fortune. The meeting has been delayed due to Jory's hospital stay.

Lawyers arrive to inform the family that Bart will receive \$500,000 a year from the estate until he reaches age 35. Chris is to remain as trustee until then. If he dies before Bart reaches 35, Catherine is to become trustee. The entire family is shocked. Bart is



outraged at having to wait 10 more years. He is also angry that Chris is still in charge of the estate.

Book Two: The Reluctant Wife, Homecoming Analysis

These two chapters demonstrate the narrator's determination to protect her children. Sometimes she must protect them from their own inner flaws, from environmental concerns, and from each other.

She protects Jory from himself by constantly reminding him of his obligations to his unborn child and wife. She makes sure he has the will to live and to work to overcome the obstacles his handicap will create. She also makes sure he has all the conveniences to lesson the inconvenience of his new physical disability.

She protects everyone from Bart, something she has been doing since he was a child. Especially when Bart gets the bad news that his full inheritance must wait 10 more years, Catherine tries to calm Bart so that his wrath will be less devastating to the family.

Since the narrator is the mother, she gives a glimpse into the common worries of a mother for her children. Couple those common concerns with the added conflict of the family's incestuous background and a very involved (yet easy to read) story evolves.



Book Two: Brotherly Love and Melodie's Betrayal

Book Two: Brotherly Love and Melodie's Betrayal Summary

Melodie has no interest in Jory's recovery. She doesn't help take care of him or visit him often. Catherine realizes Melodie is spending more time with Bart, but she convinces herself that Melodie is feeling sorry for Bart since he got the bad news about his inheritance.

Jory asks his mother what his wife does all day. More than three months have passed since Jory's accident and he is increasingly irritable that his wife is rarely present. He asks Catherine to go get her.

Melodie isn't in her room as Catherine had expected. Instinctively, she turns down Bart's hallway. Waiting inside one of the rooms in his suite, she sees Bart naked and catches a glimpse of Melodie in lingerie and Catherine realizes that she is just beginning to show her pregnancy. Bart is making cocktails for the two of them. She overhears a conversation between them in which Melodie says she needs to leave to visit Jory. Bart is angered at the idea he is just a physical substitute for his brother and tells Melodie to leave.

Catherine throws open Bart's door and confronts him about his actions. After some yelling, Bart tells his mother that he loves Melodie and that he believes she loves him. He admits that at first it was a conquest to have his brother's wife, but he quickly realizes she makes him feel truly special and she is not like any of the other women in his life.

The chapter ends with Catherine looking again for Melodie to have dinner with Jory.

At the beginning of "Melodie's Betrayal," Catherine learns that Melodie left for dinner with Bart. Catherine isn't sure what to tell Jory, but she assures him that Melodie will learn to cope with the change.

When Melodie and Bart arrive home at 3:30 a.m., Catherine confronts her. Melodie confesses her affair with Bart. She tells Catherine that the lovemaking she and Jory used to do kept them nourished. Since Jory cannot have sex now, she has no release. Catherine scolds her for turning from Jory when he needs her most. Melodie promises not to have sex with Bart anymore after Catherine points out it might cause harm to the baby. Despite her promise to Catherine, Melodie and Bart disappear quite often, leaving Catherine to assume they are still spending time together.



Jory completes his ship kit and confides to his mother that he plans to give it to Bart as a Christmas present. He says he hopes the gift will win back the younger brother who has been so changed by the presence of creepy Uncle Joel. In the meantime, Joel glares disapproval at Melodie for her affair with Bart. Catherine notices that Joel shows no outward disapproval for Bart.

Book Two: Brotherly Love and Melodie's Betrayal Analysis

Knowing that the narrator is an author herself, Catherine gains the credibility to make her story believable. In addition, the reader often sees that Catherine goes to great lengths to eavesdrop and investigate family matters.

Catherine does not shy away from confrontation. When discovering Bart and Melodie sharing intimate time, she does not hurry away. She chooses to stay and hear or see for herself what is happening. When she confronts Bart, the reader sees that Catherine is really torn. She wants Bart to find love and he thinks he has found that love with Melodie. While that warms her heart, it kills her to know that Bart's love for Melodie will crush her other son. She knows both her sons well. She knows Jory needs his wife more than ever during his recovery. She also knows that Bart needs to find true love. Given Bart's past, she worries that his "love" for Melodie is something he has convinced himself he feels simply because he wants to take something important to his older brother. Now that his dancing legs are gone, the only thing important left to take is his wife.

Catherine also confronts Melodie. Melodie needs her help and understanding as a mother figure herself. Catherine remains loyal to her sons, but does understand some of Melodie's concerns. Melodie talks of Catherine's strength. Catherine has never considered herself to be very strong, but it is true that she is a survivor or she would not have made it through her childhood locked away in the attic of Foxworth Hall.



Book Two: Holiday Joys, Christmas, The Traditional Foxworth Ball

Book Two: Holiday Joys, Christmas, The Traditional Foxworth Ball Summary

In "Holiday Joys," Bart tells his mother that what he does with Melodie is less sinful than what she does with her brother/husband. There was nothing Catherine could say.

Cindy surprises the family by bringing a guest home for Christmas. Her boyfriend, Lance, charms Bart into a tour of his offices. At the end of the evening, Bart tells Lance and Cindy not to be together anymore for the night.

Joel tells Catherine that Cindy has Lance in her room. She goes to Cindy's room to prove Joel wrong, only to find that he was right. Bart arrives, too, and beats up the boy then sends him to pack. Bart takes him to the airport and tells him he's never welcomed in his home again. Joel and Bart argue when Joel tells Catherine that she is just like her own mother.

It is Christmas Eve in the chapter called "Christmas." The family decorates a tree as decorators scurry throughout the rest of the house to prepare for the Christmas ball Bart has planned. Melodie was acting very irritable and Bart says he does not want her at his party. They all retire early since they'll have a full day of merriment on Christmas day and night.

Joel chastises Bart for planning such an extravagant party. The family proceeds with opening their Christmas presents. Jory's gift to Bart had been misplaced but was discovered. Bart opened it with childlike anticipation — he hoped it would be the ship and it was. Then, he realized the entire ship was broken. He lashed out, accusing Jory of breaking the ship to repay him for sleeping with Melodie.

No one shows up for "The Traditional Foxworth Ball." Only family members and hired staff are there. Cindy entertains the family by singing Christmas carols and surprising everyone with her voice.

Bart is very hurt that none of the invited guests came. Catherine goes into his office to discover that each and every invitation had returned a positive RSVP, something that never happens. She accuses Joel of not mailing the invitations and of faking the RSVP cards. She shares her suspicions with Bart who denies it could even be possible. He gets drunk and burns all the RSVP cards in the fireplace. Bart tells Catherine that his great-uncle Joel the best friend he has ever had. Bart tells his mother that none of the guests came because of her incestuous relationship with her brother, who was living with her as her husband. She began to question whether she was jumping to



conclusions about Joel and whether perhaps Bart was right about why his guests opted not to show after all.

Book Two: Holiday Joys, Christmas, The Traditional Foxworth Ball Analysis

Bart's struggle with the concept of sin continues in these three chapters. He chooses to prioritize sins. For example, he tells his mother that his affair with Melodie is less of a sin than the one she commits with her brother. Catherine remains quiet because she believes he is correct. According to the Bible, one sin is no greater than another.

All the while that Bart is trying to rid his mother and sister of sinning, he openly commits various sins himself. He even tells his Uncle Joel to be quiet and to let him live his own life and have the opportunity to sin while he is young before being totally redeemed. He reminds Joel that his own life was once full of sin and he wants the same opportunity for fun. Bart drinks, is abusive to others emotionally and physically, and visits the local brothel quite often.

Despite Bart blurting out to the entire family about his sexual affair with Melodie on Christmas day, Jory still attends the Foxworth Christmas ball that night. Only Melodie was absent, showing that the family remains stuck to some codependency, having become to having so much conflict in their lives. Is his family that loyal to helping him to find a normal, successful life? Are they afraid not to stay close to him? Maybe Bart breaks the boredom of isolation in Foxworth Hall. The narrator never outwardly addresses why the family actually stays. Catherine talks about her commitment to Bart's mental and physical success. However, later in the book when the family decides to leave, it is discussed almost as an "escape," leaving the reader to believe that there is some fear in staying any longer.



Book Two: Unto Us Is Born..., Shadows Fade Away

Book Two: Unto Us Is Born..., Shadows Fade Away Summary

Bart leaves the house drunk at 3 a.m. after his party flopped. The beginning of chapter "Unto Us Is Born..." begins with Catherine waiting for him in his room. Although he is drunk, he seems happy to see his mother. He tells her that he overheard Jory tell her he was going to give him the ship. He was so excited that Jory would give him a gift that he took so much time on, then was so upset it was smashed to pieces.

He also says he is a creep and a jerk, like Cindy often calls him. He pleads with his mother to send Chris away so he can feel good about himself and her. He says he wants her to purify her soul. He tells Catherine that Cindy wears see-through undergarments when he checks her room at night, wanting her to sin with her like Chris sins with Catherine. Catherine says she will discuss the matter with Cindy but cannot find words to justify her own relationship with her brother/husband.

Melodie goes into labor. There's no time to get her to a hospital so Chris delivers Melodie and Jory's son. As Catherine was cleaning the baby, she heard a second cry. No one expected twins. The second was a girl. They reminded Catherine of her younger siblings, Cory and Carrie. When Melodie awakes, she tells Catherine she is overwhelmed facing the task of caring for twins while having an invalid husband. Jory is happy to be a father and cannot wait to hold Melodie again.

Melodie and the babies are taken to the hospital for a check up. Melodie again tells Catherine she doesn't think she can take care of two babies plus a handicapped husband. Catherine, irritated, reminds her that she and Chris will help.

Jory announces that he and Melody have named the twins Darren and Deidre.

In "Shadows Fade Away," Cindy leaves Foxworth Hall for her last semester of private high school. Melodie was quiet and did not take care of her twins or her husband very often.

Bart announces he is building a chapel on the site of the mansion. Joel will be the minister.

Jory is buying gifts by mail for Melodie to try to win her over. She is not interested in his gifts. She only withdraws from the family even more. Catherine tries to talk with her, telling her it takes time to develop motherly instincts.



Melodie leaves Jory a note, tell him she is a coward and is leaving to return to the ballet. Catherine reminds Jory that he must be strong for the twins and help them develop his kind of determination and courage.

Book Two: Unto Us Is Born..., Shadows Fade Away Analysis

Bart enjoys having his mother's attention, even when he comes home drunk.

When Melodie gives birth to twins, everyone is surprised. No one knew she was expecting twins. Catherine immediately likens them to her younger siblings, Cory and Carrie, both of whom died due to the abuse and neglect they suffered in the Foxworth Hall attic. Chris tries to nip her obsession with comparing their siblings to Jory and Melodie's twins. However, throughout the book she often refers to them by the names Cory and Carrie.

Catherine exhibits great strength again when she learns that Melodie has left Jory. While understanding the devastation of losing his wife on top of losing his career and use of his legs, she cannot help believing it's for the best since Melodie's love was more like a fair-weather friend than a true, for-better-or-worse kind of deep love. Her strength encourages Jory to be strong for his own children.



Book Three: The Summer of Cindy

Book Three: The Summer of Cindy Summary

Bart learns of Melodie's leaving at the dinner table. He was gone all day and did not know she had left. He asked to read the letter, but his mother denies him the opportunity and says she hopes he had nothing to do with her decision to leave. Bart is angered and says he is glad she is gone.

Cindy returns home after graduating from high school. She helped Catherine take care of the twins. She bores without friends, however, and asks to take a walk in the gardens one night. Bart accuses her of running out to meet a boy. Cindy claims Bart is trying to run her off, just like he did to Melodie. Cindy does sneak out for her walk, during which she meets a boy named Victor. The two then drive to Charlottesville.

When they return to one of the roads leading back to Foxworth Hall, Victor pulls over and stops the car. He tells Cindy he is in love with her and begins foreplay. Cindy resists at first, but eventually gives in. They are totally naked when Bart arrives. Bart yanks Victor off of Cindy and beats him mercilessly. Cindy tells her mother that Bart grabbed her and threw her naked body over his shoulder and took her somewhere. She stammers when Catherine asks where she was taken and Cindy only replies, "Home." Catherine senses Cindy's fear and does not further push her to tell her exactly where Bart took her.

Catherine has a long talk with Cindy about the difference between sex and love. She and Chris agree to send Cindy to an acting school in New England for the rest of the summer. As they drop Cindy at the airport, Catherine silently vows to see her family united before she dies.

A new nurse has been hired to help with Jory and the twins. Toni was picked because they thought Jory might be interested in her. However, Toni is charmed by Bart and is spending more time with him than on her duties. Catherine reminds her that her job is to care for Jory and the twins. Embarrassed, Toni agrees and does adjust her schedule to include work and time with Bart.

Bart has work crews begin construction of a chapel.

The relationship between Bart and Toni grows. Bart spends time with Toni as she cares for the twins. Jory is bitter about the time his brother gets to spend with his children. Catherine tells Jory she is certain he will have another wife someday. Jory tells her he is too embarrassed to have a wife. He says his parents and his children are the only ways he can fill the void left by not being able to dance.



Book Three: The Summer of Cindy Analysis

"The Summer of Cindy" gives further glimpse into Bart's obsession with sin. Again, it is fine for him to sin, but not fine for his mother or sister to do so. This double standard is constantly challenged by his teenage sister Cindy, who is striving to discover her true self after being told for years by Bart that she is a tramp and a whore.

Perhaps Cindy is a typical teenager who was rebelling. Perhaps she is trying to fulfill the prophecy Bart set for her. Whatever the reason, Bart is determined to make her pure and save her soul. His methods of doing so are less than pure, or nice, as the reader will learn later in the book because Cindy is too upset to talk in detail about them now.

Bart softens again when he falls in love with Jory's new nurse Toni. This time he is sure he is in love and that Toni, likewise, loves him.



Book Three: The New Lovers

Book Three: The New Lovers Summary

Catherine is torn between emotions and her sons. She is happy that Bart has found someone to love; sad that Jory has no one. The love Bart felt with Toni gave him more confidence and took away all his peculiar obsessions of neatness. He allowed himself to relax. Bart tells his mother that he is excited because he is Toni's first lover and that makes him feel special. Joel overhears and tells Bart that Toni is only having sex with him because she is after his money. Bart shoos him away and tells Joel he must be jealous because he is not spending time with him any more. Bart tells Catherine he plans to marry Toni after he knows for sure she isn't just after his money. He has devised a plan to help with this. Catherine tries to talk him out of going through with a plan, telling him that he must have faith and trust in Toni.

Jory asks his mother if Bart and Toni are lovers. She says yes. He tells his mother that he does not like Joel. Jory has overheard Joel talking to Bart, convincing him to tell Toni about his psychological past and that if he is committed to an institution he will lose his inheritance.

Late one night, Toni knocks on Catherine's door and asks to talk. She says she loves Bart but believes he told her about his past so she would leave. She is confused but points out to Bart that she thinks he wants a wife who is just like his mother. The comment surprises Catherine as much as it surprised Bart. Toni says she isn't sure she can keep loving and sleeping with a man who doesn't trust her and who has so little faith in his own integrity.

Cathy asks her to give Bart another chance. Toni stays. When Cindy returns home for the holidays, she and Toni become fast friends. Bart and Toni flew with Cindy to celebrate New Year's Eve in New York. When Bart and Toni return, there is an obvious change in their relationship. Bart tells Catherine that Toni is just another woman after all and Toni tells her that Bart does not love her.

Catherine learns from Cindy that Bart scolded Toni for dancing with another man at the New Year's Eve party. Toni is now afraid of his jealousy. Toni begins spending more time with the twins, and inadvertently with Jory.

By spring, Toni starts seeing Jory for the man he truly is. She tells Catherine that she and Bart have not been lovers since their return from New York.

In June, Bart insists the entire family attend church at his chapel. After a sermon about "Devil's Spawn," Chris and Catherine refuse to attend Bart's church any more. They also refuse to allow the twins to attend.



Book Three: The New Lovers Analysis

Catherine becomes a mother figure to Toni, who comes to her for womanly advice. Using her psychology training, Toni believes Bart is looking for a woman like his mother. The news surprises Catherine. While Toni is convinced that Bart is trying to run her away, Catherine convinces her to stay to give their relationship a chance to develop further.

Toni learns more about Bart and begins to fear him after a jealous tirade at a New Year's Eve party. Their relationship ends, but Toni still stays as an employee in Foxworth Hall. Does she stay because of her own need to be needed? Nothing ties her to the family, especially when she and Bart stop dating.

The church sermon about "Devil's Spawn" was too upsetting for Chris and Catherine. Their horrible grandmother used to tell them when they were children that they were devil's spawn, born of a relationship between their mother and her half-uncle, therefore sinful and wrong. The reader realizes Chris has moved on with his life. He is happy with his husband-like relationship with his sister and is able to function quite well in a normal workplace. Catherine, however, worries that someone will know. Her return to Foxworth Hall is a return to isolation and misery for her. Her constant thoughts about how wonderful her relationship with her brother/husband is leaves the reader to question whether she really believe those statements and is pointing them out as fact or if she is trying to convince herself that she is fine with her life as her brother's wife.



Book Three: Comes a Morning Dark

Book Three: Comes a Morning Dark Summary

The chapter begins with dark clouds hovering over Foxworth Hall. Catherine overhears a conversation between Jory and Toni. Toni has discovered some of Jori's sketches of her. Jory is embarrassed because he says the drawings do not capture Toni's essence. Toni asks if she may keep them. Toni tells Jory that she thought at one time that Bart loved her but he does not. She tells him that he yells at her one minute, then calls her back and begs for forgiveness the next. Jory accuses her of enjoying the way Bart treats her. He then accuses her of trying to win him over since Bart won't have her any more and believes she thinks "the crippled one" couldn't resist her. Toni walks away.

Jory realizes his mother heard his conversation and he talks with her, telling Catherine he often fears for his life and the life of his twins. He tells her that the metal bars he uses for physical therapy have been scraped so that he gets splinters every time he does exercises on them. He has found bugs in his drinks, salt and sugar switched, tacks in his bed and chair, etc. He told her about a nail that was in his shoe. Since he couldn't feel the nail, it gave him a terrible infection. He also tells her that someone opened his windows when he fell asleep and cold rain blew in on him in his bed. His buzzer had been moved so he couldn't call for help. He pulled himself to the shelter of his closet where he dragged a coat down to cover himself. He awoke the next morning in his own bed — with dry sheets, windows closed. Since so many of the incidents seem childish, he believes Bart might be to blame. He says it's time to give up on Bart becoming normal. As Jory continues talking, Catherine sees Bart and Joel take the twins to the chapel. She follows them.

In the chapel, she hears Bart sing. He has a beautiful voice and seems to find meaning in the hymns he sings. Joel soon begins his sermon, talking about the sins of Catherine and Chris, brother and sister living together as husband and wife. He ends the sermon by having the twins recite "We are children born of evil seed....We have inherited all the evil genes that lead to incestuous relationships." Catherine comes out of hiding to have her say. She tells them that Jory's children are not contaminated. She also tells them she is not ashamed of her love for Chris — that they turned to each other when their mother abused and neglected them, locked for years in the attic. Bart cannot speak.

Book Three: Comes a Morning Dark Analysis

The "Devil's Spawn" sermon arises again. Catherine overhears her grandchildren reciting the same prayer of forgiveness that her own siblings were forced to pray when they were alive. Hearing this gives her the strength to stand up against Bart and Joel. Her strength apparently takes Bart by surprise. The fact that he doesn't explode in response to her means that he is actually hearing her words for a change. She reminds them both that the twins were Jory's children and that there was no incest in their family



line. At the end of Catherine's retort, she finally gives Bart the compliment for which he has been waiting. She remarks about his remarkable voice and tells him that he has found his talent and to use it. Seeing her strength in taking up for the grandchildren added power to her remarks about his singing ability. Instead of the weak, general encouragement she has given him all his life, this remark was forceful and meant just for him. It had power behind it. Perhaps part of the reason he is speechless is because he has finally found the encouragement and purpose he has sought all his life.

The strange incidents surrounding Jory's night in bed have added fuel to Catherine's already suspicious mind. At this point in the book, Joel's influence on Bart is so great that their personalities are hard to separate. Someone is trying to hurt Jory but someone is trying to help him. It could be that Joel is setting up the harmful situations and Bart is actually saving his brother when he makes his rounds to check on each room late at night. Joel is playing childish pranks on Jory, too, however to frame Bart. Joel knows that if Bart is institutionalized he will lose his inheritance. His motive could be that has a living brother to Bart's grandmother, he would have a claim to the fortune if Bart is out of the picture.



Book Three: Heaven Can't Wait

Book Three: Heaven Can't Wait Summary

The chapter begins with Jory very ill. The cold, rain-soaked bed sheets from the previous chapter had made him sick. Catherine fears pneumonia will set it. She hasn't heard from Chris since before the chapel incident with the twins. She's anxious to tell him about that and Jory's illness along with what caused it.

Toni tells Catherine she hears the twins talking about God and his wrath. Their talk alarms her. Catherine tells her not to let the children out of her sight, being certain to keep them away from Bart and Joel. Toni also confesses to Catherine that she has grown to love Jory. Catherine notices that Toni tends to the sick man with such tenderness.

As Catherine and the twins leave Toni alone to tend to Jory, she sees Toni take Jory's hand and kiss his fingers. She tells Jory she was a fool to see Bart and to overlook him. Jory understands and says he has been waiting and hoping. Catherine closes the door as they begin to kiss.

Catherine gets an anonymous phone call that tells her to get her family out of the neighborhood. The caller says the chapel is just a sham and that the family is indecent. Taken off guard, Catherine can't think of anything to say in reply.

The phone call sends Catherine to reminisce over some old photographs. There are some taken by her father of her and Chris before he died. She recalls many pleasant memories of her dad. Then, there was a photo Chris took of her in the attic. Catherine sat on the attic windowsill when they were held captive there. The 15-year-old girl wore a flimsy nightgown that allowed a little of her budding figure to show through. Since the attic was so dark, Chris used a time-lapse photo technique.

The phone rings again, but this time it's Chris calling to say he's had a flat and is delayed. When he arrives home, he checks Jory out and reports that it's just a cold, not pneumonia. Catherine and Chris talk about all the events he has missed and they decide to leave Foxworth Hall as soon as Jory is over his cold.

Cindy comes for a visit and, as usual, is antagonizing Bart. Cindy finally tells Catherine and Chris where it was that Bart took her the night he broke up her sexual encounter with Victor. Bart took his naked sister to Joel who looked at her a long time then spat on her, cursing her. This gave the family further reason to plan to leave Bart.



Book Three: Heaven Can't Wait Analysis

The title leads the reader to believe that an important character will die during this chapter. Since it starts off with Jory being ill after sleeping in a wet, cold, bed the reader assumes Jory will die. This does not happen.

An anonymous phone caller tells Catherine that the neighbors don't want her sinful family in their town. The caller threatens to remove them if necessary. The threat seems like it might be the cause for deaths in the family. Nothing ever comes of the call, however. Chris even questions whether the call was actually from a villager.

The title, instead, relates to the family leaving Foxworth Hall. As children locked away in the attic, they talked about "heaven" as being their escape from Foxworth Hall. The same applies to the adults and their family — minus Bart and sinister Uncle Joel. Fearing for their lives, they know they need to leave soon, giving meaning to the chapter title "Heaven Can't Wait."



Book Three: Garden in the Sky

Book Three: Garden in the Sky Summary

Chris finds a suitable home in Charlottesville for the family to move into once Jory is well. He also finds an apartment they can all rent while waiting for the house deal to close.

Chris leaves to return to work for the week and Catherine becomes anxious, realizing how much she depends on him. While making her way around Foxworth Hall, she sees Bart in his office and stops to talk. Catherine tells Bart that Chris has done his best to be a good father replacement. Bart disagrees, saying the best thing Chris could do is leave the incestuous relationship behind. He mentions that he sees a bond between the two of them that seems breakable only by death. Bart asks his mother to leave Chris and she refuses.

Later, Catherine finds the twins with Bart and Joel in the chapel again. Catherine barges in and tells Bart the rest of the family is leaving. She says that Chris will turn trusteeship of the estate over to Joel until Bart turns 35. Instead, Bart tells her to have it changed to his attorney. Joel looks angry, confirming Catherine's suspicions that he is hoping to cash in on part of his sister's inheritance.

After hours of waiting, Chris still has not arrived home. She begins to fear the worst — that her husband would die in an accident on the highway just like her father did.

Bart and Joel walk in to the room where Catherine, Jory and Toni wait for Chris. Bart tells Toni she is welcome to stay at Foxworth Hall, but she informs him she is going to marry Jory. Bart is angered and tells everyone to go to bed. When Catherine says they are waiting for Chris, Joel tells them there was an accident earlier with one man dead. She is reminded of the night her father was killed, when the state police officers drove up to notify the family. Just then, she sees flashing lights coming up the private road to the mansion. The policemen deliver the news.

Bart delivers the eulogy for Chris' funeral, saying all the loving things Catherine wishes he had said when Chris was alive.

Bart becomes a television evangelist. He and Cindy surprise their mother by singing Catherine's favorite hymn and dedicating it to her on one of Bart's TV shows.

Toni and Jory are married and expecting a child of their own. She recalls that Toni told her she thought Bart was looking for a woman just like his mother. She thinks that with a living model in the way, Bart might not ever find the woman he wants.

Cindy is on her way to a good movie career.



After so much giving, Catherine feels like she is no longer needed. The chapter ends with her making her way to the attic.

Book Three: Garden in the Sky Analysis

Bart mentions that he sees a bond between Chris and Catherine that is unbreakable only by death. The remark seems like foreshadowing, and perhaps it is. It depends on whether the reader believes Bart or Joel had anything to do with Chris' auto accident. The reader doesn't hear any news about why the wreck occurred, mainly because the narrator blocks it out and begins her disbelief and grieving. Since Chris loved gardening, the chapter title makes sense that he went to the "Garden in the Sky."

The title of the chapter actually means more. The reader learns the details of the title in the last chapter, the "Epilogue."

In the chapter called "The Summer of Cindy," Catherine vows to see her family reunited before she dies. In "Garden in the Sky," the reader learns that Bart is a successful evangelist. He even performs a song with Cindy on his weekly TV show and dedicates it to their mother. Jory and Toni have married and are expecting a baby of their own. The twins have a complete family unite. All is well; her family is indeed united now, meaning she has met the goal she set for herself the day she dropped Cindy off at the airport. As Catherine makes her way to the attic at the end of this chapter, the reader can assume she will die shortly. How she will die is the question.



Book Three: Epilogue

Book Three: Epilogue Summary

The "Epilogue" is written by Jory to finish out the story his mother began telling. Jory explains that Trevor, the main servant, finds Catherine dead in the attic. Trevor says she was staring into the sky.

Trevor says he noticed Catherine had not been feeling well, saying she had been so reflective as if trying to make sense of her life. Her eyes were full of sadness. He was concerned about her, so he searched the entire mansion to no avail before remembering the attic.

Trevor says the attic was decorated with paper flowers, even some glued to the walls. The news which makes Jory cry. He feels guilty for not making her feel more needed. He knows that Bart would have dropped his world missions tour to come home if he had only known how sad their mother had been and that she had not been feeling well.

Trevor tells Jory that Catherine was sitting in the windowsill, looking young, slender and frail. He said her face expressed such great joy and happiness. She had written a letter to her family. Trevor finds the note tightly clutched in Catherine's hand.

The note explains that Catherine and Chris once imagined a garden in the sky as they would lie on the roof to gaze at the sun and stars. Trapped and neglected in that attic for so long, getting out on the roof to daydream was their only escape. She believes Chris is now in the garden and needs her there. "No one needs me more than Chris," she writes. She says he has been whispering to her in the winds to let her know he is in the garden in the sky where the purple grass grows.

The letter goes on say she is just too tired to stay. She says she loves them all equally and wishes the twins and Jory's unborn child good luck. Catherine writes that she has lived long enough and has had a full life of both joy and sorrow.

She also lets her family know that her final manuscript is in her vault and gives them permission to do whatever they please with it.

She ends the letter by noting that she had achieved one major accomplishment in her life — showing Bart that he did have the right father all along. She also tells him it was not too late when he made that discovery for himself. "It is never too late," the letter (and the epilogue) ends.



Book Three: Epilogue Analysis

In "Epilogue," Catherine is found dead sitting in the attic. She has decorated it with paper flowers like she and Chris did as children trying to simulate the outdoors for their younger twin siblings.

Jory is narrator of the last chapter. He explains how a phone call from Trevor the main servant at Foxworth Hall found Catherine dead, sitting in the attic window sill. The letter she held in her hand explained the paper flowers were to create a garden in the sky, which was the title of the previous chapter.

At the end of the previous chapter, the reader senses her death will be soon, but how she will die is unknown. One could assume that she plans to jump from the attic or roof. However, she simply goes to the attic where she dies of loneliness. She has experienced a full life, including seeing her children reunited. Now that her goals have been accomplished, she does not feel needed anymore. She feels like it is time to go to Chris, whom she says "No one needs me more than Chris does."



Characters

Catherine Foxworth Sheffield

Catherine Foxworth is one of four children locked away by their mother and grandmother, banished to years of abuse and neglect in the attic of Foxworth Hall. Their mother hides them in the attic for fear that her father would discover she had children by her marriage to her half-uncle. Their grandfather would disinherit their mother if he knew she had children from the incestuous relationship. The mother promises her children riches if they will hide in the attic. However, out of sight means out of mind and the mother soon stops visiting her children or caring for them much.

Being locked in an attic with her brother Chris as teenagers creates troublesome sexual urges between them. Having no one else to talk to, they explore their sexual curiosity with each other. They also share their dreams. Catherine dreams of being a ballerina and practices daily in the attic.

Once they escaped Foxworth Hall, Catherine pursues her career in ballet and enjoys much success. She marries another famous dancer and has one son, Jory. This husband, Julian, dies due to injuries from an auto accident.

Catherine seduces her mother's husband Bartholomew and wants him to leave her mother to start a life with her. Bartholomew is indecisive about leaving his wife, so Catherine thinks she will snag him for sure if she gets pregnant. She gives birth to Bart, certain the baby's father will marry her. He does not, however. She marries a man named Paul, whom Bart says married her just to give him a name.

Catherine and Chris, although brother and sister, begin living together as husband and wife. Chris simply drops Foxworth from his name and uses his middle name of Sheffield as his last name. She worries constantly that someone will learn their family's secret.

When her career as a ballerina ends, Catherine enjoys a successful career as a writer.

While there are many times Catherine feels helpless, she is viewed as a very strong person by all of her children and by other characters in the story, such as Melodie and Toni.

Bart Foxworth

Bart, Catherine's second son, is the antagonist in the story. Whether screaming at his mother about her incestuous relationship with her brother or beating his little sister's boyfriends, Bart seems to stir up as much trouble as he tries to resolve.

Bart operates on a double standard. Loose sexual morals are okay for him, but not for his mother or little sister. As he lectures his mother about her relationship with her



brother, he is having an affair with his pregnant sister-in-law. While he slaps Cindy for wearing promiscuous clothing, he is frequenting the local prostitutes.

Bart had a very troubled youth, dealing with the lies and the truth of his mother's relationship with Chris. He holds Chris responsible, saying if he really loves Catherine he will leave to give her a chance for redemption.

Bart can be charming one minute, then snap into a sharp-tongued character the next. No one knows what to expect next from Bart.

His whole family stays in Foxworth Hall to be with him, even though he makes their lives miserable. It's as if they are all so accustomed to Bart making their lives miserable that they wouldn't know what to do if they left.

Once Chris dies, Bart suddenly finds himself and his true calling as an evangelist. His charm and charisma bring him much success in his career.

Dr. Chris Sheffield

Chris and Catherine live together as husband and wife although they are brother and sister. During their years in the attic, Chris dreams of becoming a doctor. While Catherine practices her ballet, Chris reads everything. He realizes his dream of becoming a doctor after they escape.

While the reader learns a lot about Catherine's past, the narrator does not delve too deeply into Chris' previous relationships. Catherine, as the narrator, explains that Chris has carried with him for years a photo he took of her when they were locked in the attic.

Chris does not seem too bothered by his relationship with his sister. It only concerns him when he applies for a job with a research team. He knows the lie he is living might keep him from being hired, but this is the only time he seems concerned about it.

Chris is a practical man, always telling Catherine that her imagination gets the better of her. He is rational and most of his family relies heavily on him. The only one who does not is Bart. Bart detests the incestuous relationship between his uncle and his mother.

Jory Marquet

Jory is Catherine's son from her marriage to ballet dancer Julian Marquet. Julian died in an auto accident many years prior.

Jory is a world famous dancer and choreographer. He gives in to Bart's request to perform at his birthday party and ends up paralyzed from an accident that happens on stage.



Jory has fame and some fortune, but Bart is quick to remind him that his own fortune as sole heir to the Foxworth trust is far greater than the money he has earned. Jory doesn't mind because he truly loves the ballet and his ballerina wife Melodie.

Jory plans to dance until turning 40. At that point, he will be ready to start a family. His wife, however, decides she wants to have a baby and intentionally gets pregnant. When the accident on stage at Bart's party paralyzes him, Jory believes his life is over. He can no longer dance or make love to his wife, both of which were his passions. He finds inner strength to overcome his disability with the encouragement of his mother and Chris.

Jory's recovery is not without struggle. He spends many days longing for his wife to be interested in him again. He suffers the anguish of learning that she cheated on him with his brother while he lay in the hospital. Despite these obstacles and the ghost pains associated with his injuries, Jory finds a positive outlook and new interests to replace ballet.

He falls in love with his nurse Toni and is on the way to becoming a critically acclaimed watercolor painter. He is a good father to the twins that Melodie left for him to rear.

Joel Foxworth

Joel's existence is a shock to Chris and Catherine who grew up believing both their uncles were dead. A much younger Joel was rescued on a ski trip in the Swiss Alps by monks. He stayed in their monastery and adopted their way of life. He was reintroduced to the secular world when a reporter who interview him recognized his last name of Foxworth. He and Bart begin contacting each other and he quickly becomes the father figure that Bart believes he needs.

Joel's character hides behind quotes from the Bible. He uses religion to hurt his family members rather than to help them. He says his goal is to help Bart purify his family, but he is actually destroying them.

When Joel begins preaching in the chapel Bart has built on the grounds, Joel preaches only the fire and brimstone sermons of the Old Testament. He never preaches the benevolence of a God who sent his Son to redeem sinners as told in the New Testament.

It seems as though Joel was only interested in receiving some of the Foxworth fortune, despite the years he chose to live the modest life of a monk. When Catherine tells Bart that Chris will give trusteeship of the estate to Joel, Bart instructs her to have him turn over control to his attorney. Joel is angered by the statement.



Cindy Sheffield

The teenage daughter adopted by Chris and Catherine gives them much joy. She is popular and very outgoing. She lives the life neither of them were allowed as teens and because of their past, they tend to spoil her.

Cindy antagonizes Bart like most little sisters do. Since he enforces modesty, she intentionally aggravates him by dressing very provocative. Most of their conflicts are started by her and end with Bart slapping her. The parents simply tell her not to provoke him or that she deserves a spanking.

When Cindy and Bart perform together on his TV show, Catherine sees that she has truly succeeded in reuniting her family. No one would have been harder to reconcile than those two!

Melodie

Melodie is Jory's first wife. She is his high school sweetheart and is also a ballet dancer.

Melodie knows Jory's commitment to his career and understands he wants to wait until his dance career is over to have children. Melodie, however, intentionally gets pregnant because she wants to start a family sooner. She does not confess to Jory about her deceit, but does confess to Catherine, narrator of the story.

Once Jory has his accident, Melodie shows that she is not a very strong person nor is she very devoted to Jory. She cannot bear life without the ballet and she knows he will never be able to dance or make love again. Marriage vows of "for better or for worse" don't mean much to her. She begins having sex with Bart when she realizes Jory cannot satisfy her sexually anymore.

Bart starts believing Melodie is just using him for sex at just the exact time she becomes large with her pregnancy. The reader must decide whether Bart was correct in his assumption or whether he was through with her just because she was gaining weight. Either way, Melodie feels lost because she has no man to turn to.

Melodie likes to wallow in self pity. When the twins were born, she began wondering how on earth she could possibly take care of a handicapped husband plus two children.

She left the children for Jory to raise and ran away, back to the ballet. She was not a committed wife or mother.

Toni

Toni is a nurse hired by Chris and Catherine to take care of Jory and help with the twins. Hiring Toni is supposed to free up Catherine for travel with Chris and for her own



interests. Instead, Toni is enamored with Bart and spends more time with him. Not wanting to deprive Bart of a potential new love, Catherine and Chris do not complain.

Toni took psychology classes as part of her nursing curriculum and her knowledge is put to use at Foxworth Hall. In talking with Bart, she is the first to realize he desperately searches for a mate who will be like his own mother. Toni's coursework also helps her understand more of Jory's mental healing time.

Toni begins to see Bart for his true self on New Year's Eve. In a jealous rage, he criticizes her dress and the fact that she dances with another man. They break up soon after but Toni stays on at Foxworth Hall in her nursing position.

No longer blinded by Bart's phony charm, Toni begins to see Jory for the man that he is. She falls in love with him. They marry and Toni gets pregnant with a child of their own.

Trevor Majors

Trevor, the butler, is significant to the story for several reasons. He is the one who finds Catherine dead in the attic decorated with paper flowers. Although he is rarely discussed in the book, when one of the main characters needs the help of someone trustworthy, Trevor is always the person they seek. He is trusted by Bart and by the rest of the family.

Chris and Catherine hire Trevor shortly after their return to Foxworth Hall. He is British and worked for another neighboring family called the Millersons. Trevor leaves the job with the Millersons because he is expected to execute too many tasks in too little time. The Millersons had children and they wanted Trevor to serve as taxi driver, care taker, and driver. Trevor quit the job because it was an impossible task.

Trevor, whose wife died before he ever met the Foxworth family, explains that he wants to continue working in Virginia so he can visit his two sons who live nearby in North Carolina on his days off.

At first, Catherine is reluctant to learn more about Trevor. Since he has worked for the Millerson family, she is afraid he knows about their family secret. However, when Trevor explains the situation at the Millerson household and that he did not work for that family very long, her suspicion eases.

Trevor is often referred to as a "perfect English gentleman." The compliment comes because he offers his services to each member of the family, maintains his confidences to each of them, and he minds his own business. No one hears from Trevor much until the end, when he phones Jory to tell him of Catherine's death. At that point, the reader learns just how observant Trevor is. He reports to Jory that he has noticed for several days prior to her death that Catherine had seemed so reflective, as if trying to make sense out of her life. He also reports to Jory that Catherine has seemed to have some deep yearning in her final days.



Deidre and Darren, the twins

Deidre and Darren are twins born to Melodie and Jory. Their birth the day after Christmas brings joy to Chris and Cindy, a reason for living to Jory, and cause for reflection about her twin siblings for Catherine.

Deidre and Darren remind Catherine of her younger twin siblings Carrie and Cory. Carrie and Cory were trapped with them in the attic. The twins were five when they were hidden in the attic with Chris and Catherine. Lack of exercise and fresh air began taking toll on their health. Cory developed pneumonia-like symptoms and died. Carrie escaped with her older brother and sister at age 8, but suffered health problems and eventually died.

Deidre and Darren look so much like Carrie and Cory that Catherine often slips and calls them by those names. As innocent as her mistake is, it adds fuel to the fire in the eyes of Bart and Joel. With the memory of Carrie and Cory, Bart and Joel begin preaching to the twins that they are evil seed born of the Devil's spawn. Bart and Joel teach the twins a prayer to recite, asking God to forgive them for their sins. While the young twins have no idea what they are actually repeating, they are proud of themselves for memorizing it and being able to recite it for their uncles Bart and Joel. Catherine overhears the recitation and gets very angry, reminding Bart and Joel that Deidre and Darren were not born of incest in any way.

Chris constantly reminds Catherine that Deidre and Darren are "not our twins." In their siblings, the daughter was born first with the son being the second twin born. In the twins born to Jory and Melodie, it was the son who was born first. Darren and Deidre do have the same blond hair as the first twins, but also reflect some of Melodie's features as well.

The twins are curious as most children are. Deidre asks a lot of questions and walks quickly. Darren lets his sister do most of the talking and is content to crawl longer. Since they spend so much time with adults, they have extensive vocabularies for children.



Objects/Places

Foxworth Hall

Foxworth Hall is the family home of Chris and Catherine's maternal grandparents. Their mother hides them in the attic when their father dies and they have no where else to go. Upon the death of their mother, she leaves her fortune, including the mansion, to Bart.

The Attic

The attic in Foxworth Hall is where Chris, Catherine and their twin siblings were hidden, abused and neglected for part of their childhood.

When moving back to the mansion, the attic holds many special and tormenting memories for Catherine.

Sins

Bart is obsessed with sins, primarily the sins of other people.

Bart believes the sin between his mother and uncle as they live together as husband and wife is contaminating the entire family. He categorizes sins, using their incest as a catalyst to gauge which ones are worse than incest. He says his adultery with his brother's wife is not as bad as his mother's relationship with her brother.

Garden in the Sky

The Garden in the Sky is an imaginary place dreamed up by Catherine and Chris as children locked in the dreary attic of Foxworth Hall. Just before her death, she decorated the attic with paper flowers like she and Chris had done for the twins, recreating the "garden" the children had imagined many years before.

The Chapel

Bart has The Chapel constructed on the grounds of Foxworth Hall to give the family a chance to redeem themselves from their sinful lives.

Devil's Spawn

Joel tries to scare Chris and Catherine into redemption by screaming a sermon about how children of incest are Devil's Spawn. They were offended since their mother was



married to her half-uncle. Instead of being scared into redemption, they both chose not to attend chapel services any more.

Evil Seed

Along with Devil's Spawn, Joel introduced the concept of Evil Seed. When two relatives have sex, they plant an Evil Seed. When that Evil Seed grows, it becomes Devil's Spawn.

Marriage

Catherine wants her children to have happy Marriages. When she gives advice about her own seemingly happy "Marriage" to Chris, she tells them to find a partner who will be with them through good and bad who loves them unconditionally. She talks with them as though she has found this relationship, even though she and Chris can never be officially married because of their kinship.

Love

Catherine lectures her children a lot about Love. Jory and Cindy see the caring relationship she has with her brother and listen to her advice. Bart, however, discards it since their Love is wrought with sin.

Sex

Catherine and Cindy have many talks about Sex. Catherine tries to stress how much more meaningful Sex will be when saved for a special, caring relationship. Cindy, however, is caught up with being popular so she "gives out" rather freely.



Themes

Incest is a Family Problem

The idea that Incest is a Family Problem began with Chris and Catherine's mother, who married her half-uncle. Their mother was shunned by her father for that relationship and would have been disinherited if he had ever known she had children from that marriage. That's what led to the children being banished to the attic for many years. While there, their grandmother who helped hide them, told them they were born of evil seed and that they were contaminated.

Growing into teens while locked in the attic, Chris and Catherine began exploring their sexual curiosity with each other, actually living up to the theory that Incest is a Family Problem.

None of Catherine's children were fathered by Chris, so none of them are "contaminated." However, incest continues to be a family problem because they confide their secret to their children and expect them to help hide it from the world. Incest is a family problem in the way that Bart tries desperately to break up the incest between his mother and uncle at any and all costs to other family members.

Whether Incest is a Family Problem or Chris and Catherine are simply living out the prophesy their grandmother spoke of is not known. Catherine seems to carry more shame regarding their relationship than her older brother does.

Redemption vs. Forgiveness

Bart and Joel talk about redemption of Chris and Catherine's incestuous sin. They never talk about forgiveness.

Redemption is based on Old Testament Bible teachings that required sinners to be redeemed of their sins by suffering or sacrificing. The New Testament, however, teaches that the birth of Christ as the Son of God was sent to be the Savior, redeeming each person of their sins and bearing all the suffering and sacrifice Himself. The New Testament offers forgiveness of sins through Christ's suffering.

Joel never preaches the New Testament topic of forgiveness. Perhaps it is because the monks in the monastery followed the Old Testament Redemption preachings. More likely it is because he was, like Bart, outraged by his sister's sexual relationship with their half uncle. Another possibility is that Joel knows the incest between Catherine and Chris is Bart's pet peeve. By picking at it and making it grow larger, Bart would be more likely to lash out in irrational methods that would end up getting him committed to a mental institution. If ever committed, Bart will automatically lose his inheritance. Since Joel is also a surviving relative, he would be due a portion of the Foxworth trust.



Both Joel and Bart are hiding behind the concept of religion, using its scriptures to justify hateful and sinister behavior against everyone.

Co-Dependency

Co-Dependency means that a person must have a problem, situation or concern in their lives at all times. It means someone needs to be needed.

The Sheffield/Foxworth family has Co-Dependency issues at various levels.

Because of the horrible past they shared as children, Catherine needs to be needed by her brother Chris. Isolated in the attic for a time, they only had each other. Chris, likewise, needs Catherine.

When they confide their incest to their children and expect them to help hide their relationship, they create a situation in which the entire family becomes co-dependent.

Even when times are good, the family members create problems for themselves. For instance, they know Bart is obsessed with ending their incest, but Chris and Catherine agree to stay with him in his new home, sleeping together as husband and wife. They know this irritates him, but choose to do it anyway. They are wealthy enough on their own to stay in a hotel and not dredge up their past in the horrible attic, but they chose to do so anyway. Whenever Bart throws one of his violent tantrums, the family members fear for their lives, but stay in the mansion. They have learned not only to deal with the conflict, but seem to die without it.

As a matter of fact, Catherine does indeed die once all the conflict ceases. She chooses to see that she has successfully reunited her family and that her work is done. However, another way to see the same situation is that once all the children reconcile their differences and there are no more problems for which she is needed, she wills herself to die and in her letter says she does so to be with Chris who will always need her more.



Style

Point of View

The story is told from the first person point of view. Catherine is a creditable narrator for several reasons. As one of the family members, she can successfully portray the family's story to the reader. As a mother, she is able to talk about each of her children and their problems with genuine compassion. As a woman, she shows how she acts on her intuition as it relates to the story. Catherine is also a famous writer. From this, the reader knows she can effectively relate a story which gives her added credibility.

Catherine writes honestly about her incestuous relationship with her brother, showing her own confusion about their choice to live together as husband and wife. She worries about the shame being brought to surface, yet talks about how true their love is. The reader knows that Catherine has had previous relationships, but no discussion is ever given to whether Chris did or not. Since Catherine is the younger of the two, the reader wonders whether Catherine is living with him by her choice or whether she thinks she is destined to live out the "seed of evil, Devil's spawn" theory.

The final chapter of the book is not written from Catherine's point of view. Since it tells of Catherine's desk, it is written by Jory.

Setting

The story is set in a reconstructed Foxworth Hall. The old mansion is the place where Chris, Catherine and their younger twin siblings were hidden and abused in the attic.

Bart rebuilds the old mansion, trying to make it true to its original building with the help of recollections from his old uncle Joel and stories his mother told him over the years. Bart spends a significant amount of time and money to reconstruct even furnishing to match the original Foxworth Hall.

While all the occupants of Foxworth Hall remark about its beauty and the beauty of the grounds, they all (except Bart and Joel) talk about feeling a force of evil at work in the mansion.

The setting itself is at the center of the family's conflict. It is the very location in which they suffer horrible neglect and abuse as children. As adults, they still suffer horrible loss and tragedy while living as guests in the old mansion. The tragedy also spills over onto their children. Jory becomes paralyzed and loses his career and his wife. Bart, no matter how hard he tries to control everything and everyone, cannot find love. Cindy keeps antagonizing Bart and getting physically and emotionally abused in return. Chris dies. The only person in the household who doesn't get hurt is Joel.



Language and Meaning

The language and meaning are quite straight forward. The narrator uses familiar terms and communicates the story well. The book is easy to read.

Since the language is easily understood, there is little chance for confusing the meaning of it. Occasionally, the author uses foreshadowing to build suspense. For instance, in the chapter called "Heaven Can't Wait," the title seems to foreshadow that a death will occur in that chapter. There is no death in the chapter, however. Instead, the "Heaven" from the chapter title refers to the "Heaven" the family members will find when they leave Foxworth Hall and Bart's control. The death of Chris, then, in the chapter called "Garden in the Sky" comes as a surprise.

The only language that is perplexing is the broken mutterings Joel often speaks. He quotes various sections of Biblical scripture and other common sayings. Sometimes he uses the quotes out of context. For instance, he will occasionally walk by Catherine and mutter "Like mother, like daughter." She cannot be certain if she is the mother or the daughter about which he is talking. His mutterings do add interest to the dialog and story, however. His utterances often provoke a disagreement between him and Catherine or him and Bart. Jory, Chris and Cindy rarely argue with the man or talk to him much at all.

Structure

Description



Quotes

"You're never alone because she loves you, and you love her."
My Second Son, p.44

"Pregnancy becomes you, Melodie."
My First Son, p. 52

"The Lord scorns ostentatious displays of wealth and vanity."
Preparations, p. 80

"As if I want to see you!"
Preparations, p. 90

"Yes, love, miracles can happen, even here."
Samson and Delilah, p. 93

"Only the weak depend on others for sustenance."
Brotherly Love, p.182

"I've never seen a man as uncertain about himself...and that's such a pity."
Melodie's Betrayal, p. 212

"Don't go before I make you understand!"
Melodie's Betrayal, p. 202

"I'm uglier than sin inside."
Unto Us is Born..., p. 274

"He loves you Cathy...loves you almost to the point of obsession."
The New Lovers, p. 340

"You were here all the time and I never saw you."
Heaven Can't Wait, p. 377

"I heard the news on the radio. A man killed."
Garden in the Sky, p. 400



Topics for Discussion

Would Bart have forgiven Chris if he had not died in an accident or was it Chris' death that finally relieved Bart of the shame? Explain why.

Melodie says she prefers the fairy tale world of the ballet to real life. If that is true, why did she intentionally get pregnant? Do you think she ran away simply because she could not cope with the Jory's handicap?

Who was more evil: Bart or Joel? Explain your answer.

Is one sin worse than another? For instance, Bart says his adultery is not as bad as the incest between his mother and uncle. Explain your answer.

Did Bart's family continue to stay with him because they truly wanted to help him become a good man or because they simply liked all the drama? Explain your answer.

Why did Bart have a double standard regarding morals for himself and for his mother and sister?

Why do you believe Joel left the monastery to move to Foxworth Hall?