

The Wind Done Gone Study Guide

The Wind Done Gone by Alice Randall

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Plot Summary

The Wind Done Gone by Alice Randall is a parody of the classic novel, *Gone with the Wind*. In this novel, Randall takes a look at the unaddressed question in the original novel of mulatto slaves on Tara. The main character is Cynara, the daughter of the O'Hara family mammy and Gerald O'Hara, master of Tara. Cynara was sold away from the family at a very young age, but managed to make her way back into the life of half-sister, Scarlett O'Hara, through their mutual lover, Rhett Butler. *The Wind Done Gone* is the story of one woman who must make peace in her own heart with the question of slavery and the resulting treatment that she received from both her white parent and her black parent.

Cynara lives in Atlanta not far from the home that her lover, R., once shared with his wife and Cynara's half-sister, Other. R.'s child with Other has recently died and the resulting fallout of the child's death coupled with the death of a close family friend has caused a split in R.'s marriage to Other. Not long after this split, Cynara learns that her mother, the O'Hara family mammy, is dying. Cynara struggles with her decision to return home to see her mother one last time because her last departure from the home plantation, Tara, or as Cynara calls it, Tata, was not a pleasant one.

Cynara recalls being sold by her biological father as a child because, as the letter she still carries explains, he was concerned about her becoming a distraction to her mother in the care of the family's eldest child, Scarlett, or as Cynara calls her, Other. Cynara recalls her mother appearing ambivalent to the decision. Despite this, Cynara returns home, but arrives too late to see her mother. Cynara is told that Mammy tried to wait for her, watching the road for her return. However, Cynara finds herself wondering if perhaps Mammy was more concerned over Other than herself.

After the funeral, Cynara speaks with some of the people who worked closely with her mother for many years, including Garlic, her father's former valet. Cynara learns how her mother came to be a member of the O'Hara household after the lady she worked for married Mr. O'Hara in the aftermath of the death of her one true love. Cynara also learns that her mother was heartbroken when Mr. O'Hara sold Cynara away. When Cynara returns to Atlanta, she begins to remember many things from her childhood and see them in a different way. While her mother had always seemed very close to Other, Cynara remembers how she bonded with Mrs. O'Hara.

R. takes Cynara to Washington, D.C. where they live openly together. When Other dies in a fall, R. leaves Cynara in the city alone to deal with Other's eldest two children. Cynara is introduced to many people, including Frederick Douglass and a black congressman whom she finds very attractive. Cynara finds herself wondering what it would be like to have a man such as the congressman, but then R. returns and she finds herself struggling not only with her own sense of self, but with the idea that she belongs to R. in some way.



R. brings Cynara some letters that once belonged to Lady, Mrs. O'Hara. In these letters, Cynara learns of the affair Lady once had with her cousin. Cynara also learns that Lady and her lover had black ancestry, but wanted to marry anyway. This leaves Cynara filled with the realization that love can conquer all.

After returning to Atlanta with R., Cynara becomes unhappy. Cynara returns to Washington alone and has a brief affair with the congressman. However, Cynara knows that because of her relationship with R., even though it has ended, will make it impossible for the congressman to continue his career with any amount of success, she encourages him to marry another. When she gives birth to his son, Cynara gives the child to the congressman and his new wife.



Chapters 1-12

Chapters 1-12 Summary

This novel is written as though it is a journal discovered recently after being written in the years after the Civil War and lost for many decades. The novel is presented as being fact. The novel is a parody of the Margaret Mitchell novel, *Gone with the Wind*.

In Chapter 1, Cynara begins her journal on her twenty-eighth birthday by looking back on the circumstances of her birth. Cynara tells the journal how she was born into slavery, the daughter of Planter, Gerald O'Hara owner of Tara, and the O'Hara family mammy.

In Chapter 2, Cynara recalls the humiliation of the slave market and how it contrasts starkly with her current situation, living in her own home in Atlanta. Cynara laments the fact that slavery is no longer legal, but she remains a concubine.

In Chapter 3, Cynara recalls how she was called Cinnamon as a child and how her father would often say she was his cinnamon, but her mother was his coffee. Cynara also remembers how her father sold her away and her mother did nothing to stop it. Cynara believes her mother loved Other, her half-sister Scarlett, better than she loved Cynara.

In Chapter 4, when Cynara recalls the Cotton Farm where she was born, and its house Tara, or as she calls it Tata, she wishes Sherman's army had burned it to the ground.

In Chapter 5, Cynara laments the fact that Garlic, her father's valet, got his gold watch when it should have rightfully gone to her mother or to Cynara herself.

In Chapter 6, Cynara says she is writing this journal so that she is not simply forgotten. Cynara thinks of her house, how beautiful it is, and how it sits in the center of the black section of the city.

In Chapter 7, Cynara has gotten a letter from Cotton Farm informing her that her mother is dying. Cynara is ambivalent about this fact.

In Chapter 8, Cynara dreams of serving at Cotton Farm as Other sits at the table enjoying the rich food.

In Chapter 9, as Cynara struggles with the decision of whether to go see her mother or not, she recalls seeing Other nurse at her mother's breast when they were both toddlers. Cynara recalls the joy Planter got from the sight, but the injury she saw in Lady's, Mrs. O'Hara, eyes.



In Chapter 10, Cynara recalls being sent to Lady with a glass of milk and a glass of water. Cynara remembers how Lady allowed her to drink the milk and then offered her breast to Cynara much the way Mammy had nursed Other.

In Chapter 11, Cynara tells her journal about the death of R.'s daughter, whom she calls Precious. Cynara recalls how the night of Precious's death, she sat with R. and he made love to her. Cynara hopes she might be pregnant with R.'s child.

In Chapter 12, while walking in the cemetery together, Cynara makes a comment that causes R. to slap her. Cynara cannot help but compare her relationship with R. to his relationship with Other. R. left Other only a month ago. Other ran home to Cynara's own mother in her despair.

Chapters 1-12 Analysis

In these early chapters, the reader begins to see the picture of Cynara's life. Born into slavery as the child of a slave, Cynara is part of a world that is inherently unfair and difficult. To make Cynara's life even more difficult, she is the daughter of a white man. Cynara's father must hide from public knowledge his relationship to her, including from his own wife. This further complicates Cynara's life as she struggles to understand her father and to receive from him the affection all children deserve. At the same time, Cynara's mother is the mammy therefore it is her job to care for the white child of the Planter and his wife. Cynara sees her mother nurse this child and care for her and it leaves her feeling as though her mother loves this other child more than she loves Cynara.

As a child, Cynara lacked affection from both of her parents because of the difficult circumstances of her birth. This situation was further complicated when Lady, the Planter's wife, began treating Cynara as her own child, but only in private. This leaves Cynara with the impression that she is either unworthy of love or that love can only be shown to her in secret. Then, when Cynara's father sells her away from the plantation, Cynara is left feeling as though no one cared for her at all. Cynara is angry and deeply jealous of her half-sister, Other. This jealousy leads to Cynara finding herself involved in a relationship with Other's husband, R.

The novel should feel familiar to most readers as the author begins introducing characters. Even though the author never uses the names of the characters as they were presented in Margaret Mitchell's classic, they are clearly the same. Other is clearly Scarlett O'Hara, eldest daughter of Gerald O'Hara and wife to Rhett Butler. Mammy is the same Mammy who appears in the Mitchell classic, nanny, confidant, and friend to Scarlett. Planter is Scarlett's father, Gerald O'Hara, and Lady is Gerald's beloved wife. R. is the one and only Rhett Butler, while Precious is Rhett's daughter with Scarlett, Bonnie Blue. It is the appearance of these characters in this novel that makes this novel a parody of *Gone with the Wind*. It also presents a version of these characters that is less honorable, and perhaps a little less cookie cutter, than the original.



Chapters 13-24

Chapters 13-24 Summary

In Chapter 13, Cynara decides to visit Beauty, Belle, in whose business she was once a slave. It was at Beauty's that Cynara first met R. when she was only fourteen. Cynara recalls how her previous owner, the man to whom Planter sent her, died and everyone was too busy to inform him of the death so that he might take her back into his home. Instead, Cynara was placed on the auction block in Charleston and purchased by Beauty.

In Chapter 14, Cynara has breakfast with Beauty, surprised as always how Beauty serves her coffee. Cynara cannot imagine Other ever pouring her a cup of coffee. They talk a little about R. as Cynara continues to struggle with her decision to go to Cotton Farm.

In Chapter 15, R. is a successful businessman who still cultivates his business acquaintances despite the fact that the reasons he had for becoming respectable have gone. R. and Cynara often host dinners in Cynara's house, where she has a cook even though she often does most of the cooking herself. Cynara asks the cook to make dinner for that night while she and R. spend a few romantic moments alone together. R. gives Cynara a string of pearls. Later, R. slips out to sleep in his own apartment in town.

In Chapter 16, as Cynara continues to struggle with the decision to return to Cotton Farm, she dreams of being on the Cotton Farm and failing to perform a task asked of her. When she wakes, Cynara again visits Beauty. Beauty gives her a ring, but will not tell her where it came from.

In Chapter 17, Cynara recalls being in Venice and kissing a strange girl with dark skin.

In Chapter 18, Cynara has decided to go to Cotton Farm in a carriage hired for her by R.

In Chapter 19, on the journey to Cotton Farm, Cynara tells the journal about the letter Planter sent with her when he sold her to a friend. The letter sets a price for Cynara and explains that his relationship to Cynara makes it difficult for him to watch her grow up as a slave and that her mere presence is causing too much of a distraction for Mammy in the care of Other. Cynara carries the letter with her at all times.

In Chapter 20, Cynara has reached Cotton Farm.

In Chapter 21, Mammy has already died, but everyone tells Cynara that she sat at the window watching for her arrival.

In Chapter 22, Garlic, Planter's former valet, walks Cynara to her mother's room. Mammy was living in Other's former room. Cynara stares at her mother's body and



wonders how she felt when she was inside her mother's womb. Cynara sits in a high back chair that faces a window, imagining her mother sitting there watching the road. Other comes in and begins to cry over Mammy's body. Cynara calls out to her and Other runs away.

In Chapter 23, Cynara stays with Garlic and his family in the old overseer's house. Cynara struggles with her feelings for her mother, continuing to feel certain that her mother loved Scarlett more than she ever loved Cynara.

In Chapter 24, Cynara recalls how R. met Other. However, Cynara does not believe it was her strength of character that drew him to Other, but Cynara's stories of her half-sister. Cynara wanted R. to have them both, but to love Cynara best in a way neither of her parents could ever do. Cynara also thinks of how everyone always thought Priss was stupid, but Cynara knows that Priss is very clever and that she killed Mealy Mouth, Melanie Wilkes, during her labor with her second child in revenge for Mealy Mouth's treatment of Priss's younger brother.

Chapters 13-24 Analysis

Cynara struggles with her memories of being a slave and of being sold away from her family and then again on the auction block in Charleston. These memories are humiliating to Cynara and they cause her a great deal of anger to the people she blames for these situations, her mother and father. Therefore, Cynara continues to struggle with the decision of whether or not she should return to Cotton Farm in order to say goodbye to her mother before she dies. When Cynara finally decides to return home, she is too late to speak to her mother.

Cynara is clearly very angry with her mother and feels that her mother loved Other more than she ever loved Cynara. This makes Cynara angry, but it also confuses her. Cynara acknowledges that she was born out of passion while Other was conceived out of necessity. It seems to Cynara that her birth was the more desired and therefore she should have been the child who received more love. However, Cynara only received love from a woman who was betrayed by her very existence, Planter's wife.

Cynara has a complicated relationship with her sister. On the one hand, Cynara is deeply envious of Other for everything she had that Cynara will never have. On the other hand, Cynara dislikes Other for the same things, the love and the possessions she will always have that Cynara will not. It comes from these conflicting feelings that Cynara introduced R. to the idea of Other, pushing him to meet and fall in love with Other. Cynara wants R. to love them both, but to love Cynara more in the way that her mother should have. However, the reader wonders if perhaps this plan might have backfired on Cynara, placing her in a situation that has made her more unhappy than happy.

In these chapters, Cynara also begins to give the reader some insight into the power of the slaves during their time of servitude. Cynara suggests to the reader that Priss



attempted to kill and then killed Melanie Wilkes, or Mealy Mouth, during childbirth. Priss had a grudge against Melanie's entire family due to the death of a younger brother who suffered in favor of the survival of one of Melanie's siblings. The reader might recall that Melanie had great difficulty with her first pregnancy and nearly died after giving birth, leading to advice from doctors not to get pregnant again. Later, Melanie did become pregnant again and died of complications to the pregnancy.



Chapters 25-36

Chapters 25-36 Summary

In Chapter 25, Cynara attends a private ceremony in the family cemetery for her mother. Other has ordered Mammy buried beside Lady, but Cynara and the other former slaves know that Mammy is really being buried beside Planter because the graves were switched in secret for this exact reason. Afterward, Garlic tells Cynara how he drugged his first owner in order to allow Planter to win him in a card game and later did the same thing so that Planter could win the land Cotton Farm sits on. The design of the house was all Garlic's idea. Garlic even arranged for Planter to meet and marry Lady so that Mammy might come to live on Cotton Farm and help Garlic run it.

Another ceremony is held in the cemetery for Mammy for Other and the others to attend. Dreamy Gentleman, Ashley Wilkes, reads from the Book of Common Prayer. During the ceremony, Cynara thinks of how all of this seems to be Mammy's revenge on those who tried to oppress her. Afterward, Other is given the place of honor in the line of mourners and she accuses Cynara of neglecting Mammy.

In Chapter 26, after the funeral, Other and Dreamy Gentleman take a drive to Twelve Slaves Strong as Trees, or Twelve Oaks.

In Chapter 27, after dinner, Cynara asks Garlic about the deaths of Lady's three sons.

In Chapter 28, Garlic admits that he was once in love with Mammy and wanted Cynara to be his child. It is in the telling of this story that Cynara hears her mother's true name for the first time: Pallas. Garlic tells Cynara how Lady's lover, Philipe, died in a duel in New Orleans. Garlic pushed Planter to marry Lady. On the honeymoon, Lady was so depressed that she drank too much. Planter spent his honeymoon night with Pallas who later used the product of their love making to help impregnate Lady.

In Chapter 29, Garlic tells Cynara that her mother did not know Planter had decided to sell her until she had already gone. Then Garlic says that Mammy killed Lady's male children to prevent a sober man from taking charge of Cotton Farm.

In Chapter 30, Cynara struggles with all she has learned from Garlic.

In Chapter 31, as Cynara prepares to leave, she recalls how Priss told her of the soldier Other and Mealy Mouth killed toward the end of the war. Cynara is awed of Other's strength, but continues to be jealous of all she has.

In Chapter 32, Jeems, the former slave to the twins, gives Cynara a ride back to Atlanta on his horse. As they travel, Jeems asks Cynara if she would consider marrying him. Cynara insists she will never marry.



In Chapter 33, when Cynara returns home, R. questions her about Jeems. Then R. tells Cynara they are having a dinner guest and she must be present. Cynara lies down and has a nightmare that she dug up one of Lady's boys and he was smiling.

In Chapter 34, Cynara is running late for supper, but learns their guest, a black congressman, is running late as well. R. tells Cynara that he is thinking of marrying her. Cynara thinks it is a joke.

In Chapter 35, Cynara finds the congressman very charming, but he seems to find her lacking. R. seems oblivious to how critical the congressman is of her.

In Chapter 36, Cynara recalls sailing to Europe on the Baltic, a ship that once carried supplies for the relief of Fort Sumter. Cynara also recalls how hurt she was to see R. wearing a Confederate uniform.

Chapters 25-36 Analysis

Cynara returns to Cotton Farm to see her mother as she is dying, but arrives too late. There are two funerals, one for the blacks and one for everyone. Cynara finds it amusing that Other remains oblivious to Mammy's relationship to Planter or to the fact that Mammy is being buried next to Planter at his request. Cynara finds both funerals difficult because she does not know how she feels about her mother. However, Cynara does know that she is upset when Other is given the place of honor in the mourning line for her mother and then has the nerve to criticize Cynara for neglecting her mother.

Cynara learns a great many things about her mother that she never knew. Cynara is surprised to find out that her mother was unaware that Planter had decided to sell her until after she was gone. Cynara is also surprised to realize her mother and Garlic are more the owners of Cotton Farm than Planter and Lady ever were. Finally, Cynara learns that her mother killed all of Lady's male children to prevent Cotton Farm from falling into the hands of a responsible male heir.

The more Cynara learns about her mother, the more she realizes that neither she nor Other knew much about her. It does not change Cynara's anger at her mother or her ambivalence toward her. However, it does begin to change the way in which Cynara views her half-sister, beginning to make it clear to her that she and Other were both victims of their circumstances.

Cynara returns to R. and she should feel smug that R. is with her while all he offers Other is a few kind letters. However, Cynara feels used by R. and is especially annoyed when he tells her that he is thinking of marrying her because Cynara feels as though R. is playing with her emotions.



Chapters 37-48

Chapters 37-48 Summary

In Chapter 37, Cynara thinks about her own mortality as she walks through Atlanta. Cynara also thinks that R. is something of a hypocrite in the fact that he still calls Charleston his home despite how the people there treated him before the war.

In Chapter 38, Cynara sends a message to Jeems to come get a cake for Garlic and then spends most of the day baking a special cake. However, Cynara learns that Jeems has already left Atlanta.

In Chapter 39, Jeems surprises Cynara by stopping by her house. Jeems tells Cynara he is going to Tennessee to work on a horse farm. Jeems also tells Cynara how he once was beaten because he allowed her to ride a horse like a man. Jeems also tells Cynara how the twins' mother took him from his own mother as an infant so that he would not display any black characteristics around her children. Cynara thinks of how little each of them truly know about their past.

In Chapter 40, Cynara gets a response from a letter she wrote telling her not to come back to Cotton Farm because she no longer belongs there. Cynara thinks Other is behind the letter.

In Chapter 41, Cynara wants to travel abroad with R. Cynara has grown bored with her life, even her small business of lending money to freemen. Cynara worries that R. might be growing tired of her.

In Chapter 42, R. has given Cynara a ring that is a possible engagement ring. Cynara tries to imagine what it would be like to be married to R., if they could find a preacher to perform the ceremony.

In Chapter 43, Cynara and R. are preparing to travel to Washington, D.C.

In Chapter 44, Cynara is fascinated with Washington and the rich black families that live there. Cynara is also aware that Other has been writing to R.

In Chapter 45, Cynara sees the President's house and wonders if she would be welcome to visit there.

In Chapter 46, Cynara and R. stay in for a few days because R. is not feeling well. They play cards all day in their hotel. Cynara is good at cards, but she lets R. win.

Chapter 47. Cynara and R. have gotten word that Other has died. R. rushes to Cotton Farm for the funeral and to deal with Other's two children.



Chapter 48. Cynara is invited to the home of Frederick Douglass and wonders if she should go even though R. is not there to escort her. Cynara recalls a time when Lady admitted to her that she knew about the circumstances of her conception and birth. This made it seem less real to Cynara at the time.

Chapters 37-48 Analysis

Cynara begins to reveal, through her fascination with Jeems, her deep unhappiness in her current situation. Although Cynara still tells herself that she loves R. and even though R. gives her a ring and talks about marriage, it is clear that Cynara is not happy in her relationship with R. The relationship remains too much like a master-slave relationship to make Cynara truly happy. For this reason, Cynara allows herself to wonder what it would be like to be with a man like Jeems, to live a life of poverty and honesty rather than wealth and secrets.

Cynara and R. travel to Washington where Cynara sees blacks living a good life, giving her hope that perhaps her life will not always be one of servitude. However, a darkness settles over Cynara's brief happiness when her half-sister, Other, dies. R. quickly leaves Cynara alone, abandoning her one last time to be with Other. It is a difficult time that leaves Cynara feeling abandoned and second. Cynara has always felt second to Other and this is no different, but that does not keep the hurt from being just as intense.



Chapters 49-60

Chapters 49-60 Summary

In Chapter 49, Cynara thinks about the time in her childhood when Other began to get older and her friends began to treat Mammy like a servant rather than a companion or mother-figure. Cynara recalls how conflicted this caused Other to be, causing her to end friendships rather than place her beloved Mammy in a position of hurt. About this same time, Other began to grow closer to Lady. At the same time, Planter began to take an unnatural interest in Cynara. Not long after this, Cynara would find herself shipped off to another household.

In Chapter 50, Cynara has had some new dresses made for her with the idea that she might attend the Douglass tea despite R.'s absence.

In Chapter 51, Cynara tours the city and wonders about its history and what the future might hold for it.

In Chapter 52, Cynara attends the Douglass' tea. Cynara is amazed by the guests at the Douglass', by their servants, and by their belongings. Cynara also meets a black congressman by whom she is charmed. For the first time Cynara wonders what it would like to have a man like the congressman for herself.

In Chapter 53, Cynara again tours the city and sees a painting that makes her think of how much has changed since before the war. Cynara is beginning to see that things could be different for her, too.

In Chapter 54, R. has returned, but he looks older and different to Cynara.

In Chapter 55, Cynara shares a breakfast of oysters with R. they share a few intimate moments before R. gives Cynara a packet of letters given to him by Garlic. The letters once belonged to Lady.

In Chapter 56, Cynara begins to read through them and is surprised to learn that Lady had black ancestry and was aware of it. Cynara is also surprised that Lady's lover, Philippe, knew about their shared ancestry and was willing to marry her anyway.

In Chapter 57, Cynara knows that Other never knew the truth about her own mother. Cynara finds herself beginning to wonder if Mammy killed Lady's sons because they showed evidence of their black ancestry. Cynara also recalls finding evidence of someone trying to hide black ancestry in Precious, Other's beloved daughter with R.

In Chapter 58, the congressman sends Cynara flowers and a note.



In Chapter 59, Cynara is ill. Cynara hopes briefly that it is a pregnancy causing her illness. Cynara believes R. wants a baby with her, but she worries that he could not love a child of hers as he loved Other's daughter.

In Chapter 60, Cynara learns that she is not pregnant. Cynara becomes depressed, thinking that Other was just as black as she and was still loved better than she.

Chapters 49-60 Analysis

Cynara thinks back on her childhood some more and begins to see Other in a light that she had not previously seen. Cynara thinks that Other must have truly loved Mammy because she ended friendships in order to protect Mammy from the rudeness of her friends. Cynara also realizes that Other must have eventually realized that Mammy was forced to care for her, where Lady was never forced to care for Cynara. Cynara begins to see that while Other had everything she could want, she could not have known for sure that the love she took from granted was offered freely and not because it was expected.

Cynara begins to see the world differently the longer she is in Washington, D.C. In Washington, blacks live a different life from the life Cynara has lived on Cotton Farm and in Atlanta. Cynara begins to see the opportunities that might be out there for her beyond R. and her life with him. This, and R.'s grief over Other's death, cause Cynara to begin to see R. and herself differently.

Cynara learns that Lady, Other's mother, was a mulatto like herself. Lady's grandmother was black. This causes Cynara to see both Lady and Other in a different light and makes her wonder what the motivations were of her own mother in killing Lady's male children and trying to hide certain physical aspects of R.'s daughter with Other. This news also makes Cynara see Other once again in a new light, adding to her anger and feelings of envy, but also giving her a little more understanding of Lady and her behaviors toward her.



Chapters 61-72

Chapters 61-72 Summary

In Chapter 61, Cynara begins to recall how Lady treated her with great kindness, making her the herb finder so that she would be out of the house when unpleasant things took place on Cotton Farm despite the discord it created in Lady's relationship with Planter. Cynara recalls how one night Lady took her to the delivery of a baby. Cynara cried and told Lady she wished she was white. Lady cheered her and then gave to her a ring that Philippe had given to Lady years ago. Cynara returned the ring the day she was sold away from Cotton Farm.

In Chapter 62, Cynara and R. are invited to a ball. Cynara is largely accepted at the ball. Cynara dances with the congressman and he again charms her. R. comes at the end of the dance and takes possession of Cynara again.

In Chapter 63, Cynara feels as though R. expects her to treat him like a god. Cynara unhappily watches the congressman walk away.

In Chapter 64, Cynara is suddenly confused about all she once thought she knew. Cynara thought her mother never loved her, but now she wonders if she did. Cynara also thinks of how R. bought her, freed her, taught her how to read and write. Cynara wonders how things can suddenly be falling apart.

In Chapter 65, for the first time, Cynara finds it difficult to make love with R.

In Chapter 66, the congressman comes to visit R. R. is having the house in Washington packed because he is planning a trip to London.

In Chapter 67, Cynara learns that the congressman has never been married. However, there is a woman that the congressman's sister has been trying to encourage him to marry.

In Chapter 68, Cynara admits to the journal that she is still angry with R. for joining the Confederate Army.

In Chapter 69, the political tide is changing and R. predicts that the congressman will not be reelected. Cynara has been reading about the Klan in the newspapers and begins to wonder if Reconstruction is just an illusion. Cynara recalls how Lady told her Mammy made her write the day and time of Cynara's birth in the Bible.

In Chapter 70, R. has postponed the trip to London in favor of a trip to Tennessee. Cynara tries to convince him to take her along. Cynara hopes that she will be able to see Jeems.



In Chapter 71, R. tells Cynara that the trip to Tennessee is off and they will be going to London after all. Cynara worries about her fear of water, but is anxious to see London.

In Chapter 72, R. asks Cynara to marry him. Cynara laughs. It seems to Cynara that R. learning Other had black blood has blurred the line between Cynara and Other in his mind.

Chapters 61-72 Analysis

Cynara thinks a lot about the past and about her relationship with Lady. It seems that Lady was clearly a good person who adopted Cynara as her own despite the circumstances of her birth. This has allowed Cynara to know the love of a mother despite her own mother's reluctance to show her own child affection. However, with knowledge, Cynara begins to rethink her mother's behavior toward her.

Cynara's feelings toward R. are beginning to change. When Cynara first knew R., she wanted him to love her. Cynara then told him about Other and encouraged them to meet because she wanted R. to love Cynara more than Other, to be the one person who would choose Cynara above Other. However, Cynara is coming to realize that R. is only with her because of his love for Other. Not only this, but Cynara is beginning to see that her relationship with R. is not much different than her relationship with the men who owned her in the name of slavery.

Cynara continues to fantasize about a life with a good black man. Cynara thinks of Jeems and is excited at the thought of maybe seeing him again. Cynara is also fascinated with a black congressman who taken a great interest in her. However, Cynara has developed a reputation in Washington as a white man's mistress and this will more than likely have an impact on any relationship Cynara might attempt to have with another man.



Chapters 73-90

Chapters 73-90 Summary

In Chapter 73, R. shows Cynara a letter Mammy dictated and gave to him before her death asking him to marry Cynara.

In Chapter 74, Cynara cries because the letter refers to her as Mammy's little girl, the one and only time she has heard her mother refer to her in that way.

In Chapter 75, Cynara thinks R. only wants to marry her because of his great affection for Mammy.

In Chapter 76, Cynara feels that R. does not really understand what it means to be black and to marry a black woman. Cynara feels that R. does not truly know her, but that he knows her better than anyone else. Cynara thinks she will marry R.

In Chapter 77, R. wants Cynara to pretend to be white when they go to London. When Cynara refuses, R. cancels the trip.

In Chapter 78, Cynara is ill. R. announces they will marry before returning to Atlanta and Cynara is too sick to argue.

In Chapter 79, Cynara and R. are married in a simple, private ceremony.

In Chapter 80, R. and Cynara travel to Cotton Farm.

In Chapter 81, R. gives Cynara the keys to Tata.

In Chapter 82, R. is unhappy at dinner and begins to plan renovations of the house.

In Chapter 83, Cynara visits the family cemetery and speaks with Garlic. Garlic says if it had been his to give, he would have given Cotton Farm to her.

In Chapter 84, Christmas is coming. Cynara thinks of what it was like to the slaves when Christmas came.

In Chapter 85, the holidays have come and gone. Cynara thinks Tata feels like a tomb and she is anxious to return to Atlanta.

In Chapter 86, as Cynara and R. prepare to leave Tata, Cynara recalls the day Planter sent her away. Cynara recalls how Planter told her he felt the devil when he looked at her, but that he could not set her free because he wanted to make Mammy feel the loss of a child.

On the road back to Atlanta, Cynara thinks of her past and how it is all divided by when she could read and when she could not. Cynara also realizes that she has always



measured herself against Other, but that the congressman did not do that and she liked how that felt.

In Chapter 87, Cynara and R. are back in Atlanta.

In Chapter 88, Cynara has breakfast with Beauty. Cynara is grateful to be back among friends.

In Chapter 89, the congressman comes to visit, but not until evening when R. can receive him.

In Chapter 90, Cynara sees the congressman while shopping with Beauty and she feels a longing for him.

Chapters 73-90 Analysis

R. shows Cynara a letter that Mammy had dictated and Cynara is surprised at the affection and concern for her own welfare the letter shows. Mammy never showed such concern to Cynara in person. However, the letter and R.'s words seem to say that he is only marrying her because of a promise to Mammy and because of his deep affection for Mammy. This upsets Cynara. However, Cynara can see that R. is ignorant to the chaos he is causing her emotions and she decides to marry him anyway.

After Cynara and R. are married, R. presents Cynara with Cotton Farm. However, R. is angry and distracted. It seems clear to the reader that R. is unhappy in his current situation and that his affection for Other is much deeper than he might have been able to admit to himself previously. Cynara's fear that R. has always compared her to Other and that he loved Other more seems to be true.

Cynara returns to Atlanta and despite her proximity to all of her friends, she finds that she misses the freedoms and progress of Washington. When the congressman comes for a visit, Cynara becomes even more restless, wishing she had made different choices in her life. This suggests to the reader that things might soon change for Cynara.



Chapters 91-114 and Postscript

Chapters 91-114 and Postscript Summary

In Chapter 91, Cynara continues to feel ill.

In Chapter 92, R. arranges for the congressman to accompany Cynara back to Washington where she will see a doctor.

In Chapter 93, on the train, the congressman is very concerned with Cynara's comfort. When she asks him, the congressman tells her that he would have asked her to marry him if she had not married R. In fact, the congressman tells her that he is now engaged to another woman.

In Chapter 94, they arrive in Washington.

In Chapter 95, the congressman has found Cynara's journal and read it. Cynara feels betrayed and violated. The congressman tells Cynara that R. has never respected her based on some things he read in the journal.

In Chapter 96, the congressman takes Cynara to his sister's house where she is to stay while in Washington.

In Chapter 97, the house is empty. When the congressman takes Cynara to the guest bedroom, she kisses him.

In Chapter 98, Cynara and the congressman become lovers.

In Chapter 99, Cynara and the congressman go for a walk. Many people recognize the congressman and stop to talk to him, making Cynara see the difference between fame and power.

In Chapter 100, the congressman asks about Other, but Cynara is done dwelling on that story.

In Chapter 101, when Cynara goes to the doctor, he diagnoses her illness and tells her it is a chronic illness, but hers is mild. The doctor then tells Cynara that he knows she is having an affair with the congressman and that if she continues, it will ruin his reputation.

In Chapter 102, Cynara returns to Atlanta.

In Chapter 103, R. has moved back into Other's house in Atlanta. Cynara decides to leave Atlanta.



In Chapter 104, Cynara has taken some of Other's things, some of her jewelry and her clothing.

In Chapter 105, R. asks Cynara to come back to him, but she tells him she is not Other and never can be.

In Chapter 106, R. tells Cynara she can stay in his house in Washington and the kindness makes her cry.

In Chapter 107, Cynara goes to the congressman's sister.

In Chapter 108, the congressman has been defeated in the new elections. Cynara is going to a ball where she hopes to tell him a few things.

In Chapter 109, Cynara has met the congressman's fiancé and told her that she must marry him even after learning that the girl cannot have children.

In Chapter 110, at the ball, Cynara watches everyone have a good time, but knows that Reconstruction has ended and hard times are looming ahead.

In Chapter 111, the congressman marries the doctor's daughter.

In Chapter 112, the congressman has a son and he is named Cyrus for Cynara. Cynara is his godmother.

In Chapter 113, Cynara spends the day caring for her godson, whom she calls Moses. Cynara tells Moses stories of slavery and what she knows about Priss's revenge on Mealy Mouth and the Dreamy Gentleman.

In Chapter 114, Cynara writes directly to the congressman and tells him how she loves him. Cynara tells the congressman that she is glad that he is the father of her child and that he will tell the child about her when he is old enough. Cynara also expresses gratitude that her child will never know the shackles of slavery.

In Postscript, Cynara died years after writing this journal of lupus. She left her money to Garlic and her journal to Priss, who left it to her own daughter, Prissy Cynara Brown. The congressman's son did not go to congress, but his son did. When R. passed, he left Cotton Farm to Garlic, who in turn left half of it to Cyrus and the other half to Priss.

Chapters 91-114 and Postscript Analysis

Cynara continues to be ill with symptoms modern readers will recognize as lupus. Cynara goes to Washington with the congressman to see a doctor, only to become the congressman's lover. Cynara indulges in this relationship for a while, but then she begins to realize how her reputation as a white man's mistress will make the congressman's political aspirations difficult. For this reason, when Cynara realizes she is pregnant, she makes the congressman marry another woman. Cynara gives up her



own happiness in order to protect the man she loves, an act that is very selfless and kind.

Cynara's relationship with R. has begun to deteriorate even before they are married. When Cynara returns to Atlanta, she discovers that R. has returned to the home he shared with Other. Cynara sees this as the final evidence that R. loved Other more than Cynara and she leaves him. However, in an ironic twist, Cynara embraces her dead sister, taking her things and dressing in them when she returns to Washington. In this way, Cynara acknowledges that her rivalry with Other was not so much a racial thing or a sister thing, but that they were both victims of circumstances that were out of their control.

Cynara gives birth to a son and in an ironic twist on Lady's own experiences, waits anxiously to see if her child will display white or black characteristics. In the end, it is clear that the child belongs to the congressman, so Cynara gives the child to him and his new wife. They remain a family for the rest of their lives. In the end, Cynara lives a happy life and gives to Garlic all that she feels he deserves, the farm that he built and cared for most of his life.



Characters

Cynara, 'Cindy', Cinnamon

Cynara or Cindy, is the daughter of Planter, Gerald O'Hara, and his children's mammy. Cynara was born and raised on Cotton Farm outside of Atlanta. As a child, Cynara had to share her mother with Other, her half-sister. Cynara always felt that her mother gave more attention to Other and that she loved Other better. At the same time, Other's mother paid a great deal of attention to Cynara, giving her the love and affection she was not getting from her own mother and father.

Cynara was sold away from Cotton Farm as a teen. A letter Cynara has since learned how to read tells a friend of Planter's to take Cynara and make her a part of his household and his son's household. Planter has sent Cynara away because she is turning into a beautiful young woman and he is afraid of not only the interest of other men in her, but his own interest as well. Planter also feels that Cynara is a distraction to her mother and her mother's duties to Planter's other children. Later Cynara would be sold again on the slave auction block in Charleston, a situation that leaves Cynara humiliated and angry.

As a slave in the home of Beauty, Cynara meets R. R. and Cynara become lovers. Then Cynara tells R. about her half sister and sends him to meet her. Cynara wants R. to love them both, but wants him to love her more. However, R. not only falls in love with Other, but he marries her and has a child with her. R. and Cynara continue their love affair, but over time Cynara comes to realize that even though R. has already done right by her, he will never love her more than Other. Eventually Cynara also realizes that she never really loved R. either.

Cynara eventually finds herself pregnant with another man's child. Cynara arranges for the man to marry and she gives him her child. Cynara lives on the outside of the family, but somehow becomes a part of the family and the love she has always wanted.

R.

R. is Cynara's lover. In the Margaret Mitchell novel, R. was known as Rhett Butler. R. is married to Cynara's sister, but the death of their child, Precious, and a long standing crush on his wife's part has ended R.'s marriage. Although still legally married, R. spends most of his time with Cynara in a home he built for her. R. talks to Cynara about marrying her one day, but Cynara never takes his words very seriously.

When Other dies, R. rushes to her in order to take care of the funeral and to care for her other two children. When he returns, Cynara can see the toll her death has taken on him. R. is suddenly older and tired, grieving. However, R. still proposes to Cynara, finally convincing her of his seriousness by showing her a letter written on behalf of her



mother. Cynara cries when she hears this because it is the first evidence of love from her mother she has ever had.

After they are married, R. moves back into the house that he once shared with Other in order to better care for her kids. However, Cynara sees this as R. choosing Other over her and she leaves him.

Other

Other is what Cynara calls her half-sister, known as Scarlett O'Hara in the Mitchell novel. Other is not a huge part of the novel to begin with as she is living outside of Atlanta on her family farm as the novel begins. However, as Cynara writes entries in her journal, she begins to recall what it was like to grow up with Other. Other was always close to Cynara's mother, Mammy. As an infant, Other was given Mammy as a nurse maid and Cynara has a distinct memory of Other nursing at Mammy's breast. At the same time, Cynara can remember doing the same herself at Lady's breast.

As Cynara struggles with the new world after the Civil War and the changes that have taken place, she begins to learn more about Other, Lady, and Mammy. As time passes, Cynara eventually comes to the realization that Other is as much a victim of their childhoods as she is. This helps Cynara move past her resentment of Other and get on with her life.

Pallas 'Mammy'

Mammy is Cynara's mother. At the beginning of her story, Mammy is a slave who belongs to Lady and goes with her to Cotton Farm when Lady marries Planter. Mammy is put in charge of Lady's children as they are born. As the oldest, Mammy forms a special bond with Other. As Other grows and becomes a woman, Mammy goes with her from place to place to care for Other's children.

As Cynara tells her story, it is revealed that Mammy and Planter have been lovers since Planter's wedding to Lady. Mammy gave birth to Planter's daughter, Cynara, about the same time Other was born. Due to this, Mammy was able to be a wet nurse for Other. Mammy and Other became quite close and Cynara is jealous that her mother clearly loves Other, but does not seem to have time for Cynara herself. However, as Cynara grows older and learns more truths about her mother, she begins to realize her mother loved her but was unable to show her much affection because of her place on Cotton Farm.

Planter

In Mitchell's novel, *Gone with the Wind*, Gerald O'Hara was a strong, if a little unwise, man who won the land where Tara stands in a card game and teaches his eldest daughter to treasure the land above all else. In this novel, Planter is a drunk who was



manipulated by his valet into first winning the valet and then the land where Tara stands. Planter is also a man with loose morals who has an affair with his wife's mammy when his frightened wife is too drunk or drugged to provide him with sexual satisfaction. Later, Planter will father four daughters, one with Mammy and three with his wife, and three sons. Planter will become sexually attracted to his child with Mammy and send her away in order to protect her from his own and other men's attractions. Planter is a dark, cruel man in this novel who cares more for the next drink than for the people in his life.

Lady

Lady is Planter's wife. Lady is a young, southern woman when Planter meets her who has just lost the love of her life. Lady marries Planter because she feels she has little choice. They make a good life together and have three beautiful children. However, they also lose three sons, sons that Cynara later learns her mother killed either because they were male, heirs to the farm, or because they demonstrated the black ancestry of their mother.

Lady was a woman who was aware that her husband was having an affair with the mammy and was unable to do anything about it. However, Lady got her revenge on her mammy, who was very close to Lady's own child, by making Mammy's child her own. Lady treated Cynara like she were her own child, the child of the lover she once had. This gives Cynara some of the affection all children crave, but it also leaves her feeling the absence of her own mother's love.

Congressman

The congressman is a charming black man Cynara meets first at dinner with R. and later when she is in Washington, D.C. The congressman finds nothing but fault with Cynara at first, but when they meet again in Washington, he is clearly attracted to her. For the first time, Cynara begins to wonder what it would be like to be with a man of her own choosing, to make him her man instead of belonging to him like some sort of possession. Cynara and the congressman have a brief affair, but Cynara recognizes that she has a bad reputation due to her relationship with R. and decides to encourage the congressman to marry someone else so that their child might have a good life.

Garlic

Garlic was Planter's valet. Now Garlic lives in the old overseer's cabin with his wife and children. Garlic tells Cynara that winning the land for Tara was his doing and that he designed the entire house and grounds himself. Garlic also tells Cynara some truths about her mother that Cynara never knew, changing the way Cynara views her mother and her own past. In the end, R. leaves Cotton Farm to Garlic, to whom most everyone feels should have had the land.



Priss

Priss is a woman who was once a slave on Cotton Farm and now lives with her family in the overseer's cabin. Priss is thought to be an unintelligent person, but Cynara believes her to be quite intelligent. In fact, Cynara believes that Priss caused the near death and the death of Mealy Mouth during each of her episodes of childbirth in revenge for the beating death of her younger brother at the hands of the Wilkeses.

Beauty

Beauty is Cynara's former owner. Beauty runs a brothel in Atlanta. Beauty becomes one of Cynara's closest friends after the war and she continues to go visit Beauty, from whom she finds equality and acceptance. It is through Beauty and her brother that Cynara first met R.



Objects/Places

Cynara's Ring

R. gives Cynara a ring when he asks her to marry him.

Lady's Ring

Lady wears a ring around her neck that was meant to be her wedding ring to Philippe. Lady gives this ring to Cynara for a time when she is young. When R. gives Cynara Lady's love letters to and from Philippe, he also returns this ring to her.

Journal

Cynara keeps a journal in which she writes about her thoughts and feelings for the people in her life.

Lady's Letters

Cynara is given a collection of letters that once belonged to Lady. In these letters, Cynara learns that Lady was in love with her cousin and that both Lady and her cousin had a grandmother who was black. Cynara is surprised to learn that the cousin was willing to marry Lady despite their shared black ancestry.

Mammy's Letter

R. shows Cynara a letter written for Mammy in her own words that asks R. to marry Cynara. This letter is precious to Cynara because it is the only time she has heard her mother refer to her in loving terms.

Beauty's Business

Beauty runs a brothel in Atlanta. Cynara once belonged to Beauty as a slave and continues to visit Beauty's as they have developed a friendship.

Tata

Tata is the name Cynara calls the house on the home plantation. In the Mitchell classic, the name of the house was Tara.



Cotton Farm

Cotton Farm is what Cynara calls the plantation where she was born.

Atlanta

Atlanta, Georgia is where Cynara lives in a house built for her by R.

Washington, D.C.

Cynara and R. travel to Washington, D.C. Cynara sees a world that is much different from the one she grew up in when she visits the capital city. Cynara meets the congressman and begins an affair with him in Washington.

Tennessee

Jeems moves to Tennessee where he gets a job working on a horse farm. Cynara longs to see him again, but a scheduled trip to Tennessee with R. is cancelled.

London

R. promises to take Cynara to London where he must travel for business. However, when Cynara refuses to pass as white in London, R. cancels the trip.



Themes

Slavery

There are many themes in this novel that deal with the institution of slavery. Although the book begins several years after the Civil War that led to the abolishment of slavery in the United States, the main character continues to deal with issues, both personal and socially, that stem from her experiences with slavery.

Cynara was born into slavery because her mother was a slave. Although Cynara's father was a white man, she was still considered a slave. Hence, not only did Cynara belong to her father in the sense that he was her care giver, her provider, she also belonged to him as a piece of property. Cynara's father sold her when she was still a child in order to protect her and himself from her beauty. Cynara's father also wanted to take away the distraction he felt she created for her mother. Cynara's father actually meant well in selling her, in the fact that he gave her to a friend with the expressed desire that she be returned to him should the family choose not to keep her. However, when illness spread through the family, no one took the time to contact Cynara's father and instead she was sold on the auction block in Charleston.

Cynara still carries with her the letter her father wrote to his friend, giving a price to Cynara and expressing his reasons for selling her. Cynara is humiliated and ashamed each time she reads the letter, feeling that it is horrible to have a price given to her worth as a human being. Cynara also carries with her the humiliation of being placed on the slave auction block, naked, so that stranger might assess her worth. Cynara cannot move past these humiliations and she blames her parents for it, telling the reader that this is the only way she can continue to love herself despite these humiliations.

Cynara lives in a world where the black man has been given his freedom. Cynara meets black politicians and black families who live in wealth. However, as Cynara continues to travel in this new world and meet new people, she begins to realize that many things have not changed. Cynara is treated differently because she has a white man as a lover. Cynara's lover treats her differently than he would a white woman, even though he agrees to marry her and give her his name. Cynara finds that she cannot be with the one man she has chosen for herself because her reputation will make it impossible for him to make a difference in this new world. In this way, Cynara continues to live as though still a slave despite the freedoms given to her by law.

Parent-Child Relationships

Cynara was born to a slave and a plantation owner. Cynara lives in the plantation house with the family, but she is relegated to the back rooms while her half-sister has the run of the house. Cynara shares her mother with her half-sister, and finds herself convinced that her mother loves her half-sister more because of the affection she witnesses her



mother showering on this other girl. Cynara's father treats her with indifference, telling her that she is his cinnamon, an indulgence he can survive without.

Cynara develops a close relationship with Lady, the wife of her father. They become very close when Lady realizes that her own child loves Mammy more. Lady treats Cynara kindly and gives her the affection that Cynara feels she is missing from her own mother. When Cynara is older, however, even Lady cannot save her when Planter decides he must remove Cynara from the plantation because of her distraction caused to men and her distraction to her own mother.

As Cynara grows, apart from her family, she is filled with resentment. Cynara recalls her mother's affection for her half-sister and apparent lack of affection for herself and she begins to blame her mother for all the hurt and suffering in her life. Therefore, when Cynara gets word that her mother is dying, she stalls her return until it is too late. Cynara never gets the chance to speak to her mother one last time. However, in the aftermath of the funeral, Cynara learns from others things about her mother she never knew before.

As Cynara begins to understand the woman that her mother was and the impossible situation she was in, she begins to realize that her mother did love her. Cynara begins to view her childhood differently in light of the new things she has learned. This allows Cynara to give up the anger and resentment she has harbored against her mother and embrace a new future for herself and her own child.

Freedom

Freedom is a theme of the novel because Cynara begins to discover what freedom means for her as she grows and matures. Cynara lives in a world where slavery once existed and has been abolished, a world where the black people are just beginning to learn what it means to live a life without slavery. However, Cynara finds herself in a situation that is not unlike the life she lived as a slave. Cynara continues to be the mistress of her sister's husband, continues to hide her relationship with him from others, continues to depend on him for her every need.

As the novel progresses, Cynara deals with emotional issues that continue to exist from her childhood. Cynara is the daughter of a woman who was a slave and a man who was white and wealthy, a land owner who legally owned his mistress. This situation, and the fact that her mother was a nurse maid to her lover's other child, created a situation in which Cynara often found herself pushed aside. This led to a great deal of anger and resentment on Cynara's part. Only as an adult can she finally begin to see the impossible situation her mother was in and understand why she did the things she did.

As Cynara moves past her shame and anger with her mother, she begins to reevaluate her life. Cynara finally sees that her lover does not love her as much as he loved her sister. Cynara can also see that he cannot move past the color of her skin. However, Cynara meets a successful black man who charms her, making her wonder what it

would be like to choose a man freely, to give herself freely to him. In the end, Cynara chooses her life, choosing to leave her lover and give life to a child she knows she cannot raise herself. Cynara makes some of the same choices her mother made, her intentions the same. However, Cynara makes her choices freely in a new world where things are different in many ways, but remain the same in others.



Style

Point of View

The novel is written in the first-person point of view. The novel is written as though it is a journal written by the main character, Cynara. In this novel, Cynara tells her story, beginning shortly after the end of the classic novel, *Gone with the Wind*. Cynara is the lover of R., who was Rhett Butler in the classic novel, and her half-sister is the heroine of the classic novel, Scarlett O'Hara.

The point of view of this novel works well because of the structure of the novel. The novel is written as though it is a journal written by a woman who is trying to work through the baggage of her past and embrace the new world in which she finds herself. Cynara struggles throughout the novel with the impact of slavery on her life and its after effects. Cynara feels she has never been loved by anyone who did not love her half-sister more. However, Cynara eventually discovers that she and her sister suffered from the same legacy of slavery and that she could now make choices that did not have anything to do with her sister. It is a difficult revelation for Cynara, but it eventually takes her to a life that is not unlike her mother's, with the added benefit of freedom.

Setting

The novel is a parody of *Gone with the Wind* and is set a month after the final pages of that classic novel. The novel takes place mostly in and around Atlanta, Georgia, with several chapters taking place in Washington, D.C. The time period is sometime in the 1870s, a time of great upheaval in the United States as the country made the transition from war to Reconstruction to something like normalcy.

The setting of the novel is important because this novel is a parody of another classic novel therefore it is important that the setting be similar to that of the original novel. The author of this novel has set her story in Atlanta, the same city where the classic novel ended. The author also utilizes another setting of the classic novel, the plantation, Tara, where Scarlett O'Hara grew up, where she returned during the siege of Atlanta, and where she runs to when her husband, Rhett, leaves her. In this novel, the author shows the reader a different, darker, side of Tara and the family who lived there. Hence, the setting of the novel works perfectly with the plot of the novel.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is primarily simple English. The author tries to stay true to her character by using a language that reflects an education the main character received from the southern gentleman who is her lover. The author also inserts some dialogue in her story that reflects the dialect of the southern black man, changing the grammar and spelling of the words to reflect this dialect. However, these bits of dialogue



are few and far between, leaving the majority of the language in the novel a simple, proper English.

The language of this novel works with the plot because it reflects the limited education the main character has received. However, the language tends to be a little too educated at times, making it appear the main character is more educated than what it implied. The language also reflects the education level of other characters in the novel, the author using unique grammar and spelling to reflect a lack of education. However, the language of the novel is simple English that is easy for a reader of any education level to comprehend, making it appropriate to the intended audience as well as the characters in the novel.

Structure

The novel is written like it is a journal, divided into one-hundred fourteen chapters. Each chapter is fairly short, some of them no longer than a paragraph or two. The novel begins a month after the end of the classic Margaret Mitchell novel, *Gone with the Wind*, and progresses over several months. The narrator also takes the reader back in time, describing her childhood before the war and her life of slavery during the war. The novel is recounted mostly as narration with little dialogue.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows Cynara, a mulatto woman born into slavery. One subplot follows Cynara as she tries to make peace with her childhood and her anger and resentment toward her mother. Another subplot follows Cynara's difficult relationship with her half-sister. Cynara also tells the story of her love affair with R., a romance that has lasted more than fourteen years. Finally, Cynara relates the story of her meeting and falling in love with a free black man who represents to her a life she has never aspired to dream of. All the plots come to a satisfactory conclusion at the end of the novel.



Quotes

"Today is the anniversary of my birth. I have twenty-eight years. This diary and the pen I am writing with are the best gifts I got - except maybe my cake" (Chapter 1, p. 1).

"Now I am grown, I wonder what Lady saw. She was just the oldest child on the porch, seventeen, with a three-year-old daughter" (Chapter 10, p. 15).

"I have never forgiven Mammy for the hours I stood bare-breasted in the market in Charleston" (Chapter 16, p. 31).

"It's a long road from where I live to Cotton Farm. And every one I have driven it with is dead. Dead, with one remaining to be buried" (Chapter 21, p. 39).

"Dreamy Gentleman was a particular friend of Mealy Mouth's brother (not the young one Other would marry; an older brother nobody really talked about). This brother played Cupid for Mealy Mouth and Dreamy Gentleman; Dreamy Gentleman could not but be slain by Mealy Mouth's brother's golden arrow. Mealy Mouth was grateful to her brother for forming the attachment" (Chapter 24, p. 45).

"The house, Garlic's house, is cold, silent, dark. It feels so different to know this was Garlic's dream and not Planter's. Not my father's" (Chapter 30, p. 63).

"The Congressman was colored. And I could not have been more charmed. I wish I could have changed gowns. Unfortunately, all he did was find fault with me, too many faults for a different dress to have helped" (Chapter 35, p. 74).

"I come to see what I ain't seen before. Me on the place might taint it. Soon she'll come back to 'lanta, and I'll see what Garlic say then" (Chapter 40, p. 86).

"I could see in Other's face the first moment it came to her the possibility that Mammy did for her not because she wanted to, but because she had to" (Chapter 50, p. 103).

"The butterfly sleeps softly crimson on my brown face, and I will sleep well tonight" (Chapter 58, p. 130).

"I cried enough to ride back to Africa on a slide of tears. 'Mah little gal'—what I wouldn't give to hear her speak those words I see on the paper; what I would not give does not exist" (Chapter 74, p. 160).

"The Congressman commended R.'s virtue, and I contradicted him. He possessed not virtue in surfeit, but curiosity in deficit" (Chapter 89, p. 178).



Topics for Discussion

Who is Cynara? What is her relationship to the white family on Tata? How does Cynara feel about her mother? Why? How does Cynara feel about her father? Why? Who taught Cynara to read? How has reading changed Cynara's life? How has reading allowed Cynara to understand her father's intentions toward her when he sold her?

Who is R.? What is his intentions toward Cynara? Does Cynara love him? Does R. love Cynara? How did R. and Cynara meet? How did R. come to fall in love with Cynara's sister? Why did Cynara tell R. about her sister? What was Cynara's intention in telling R. about Cynara? Why has R.'s marriage failed? How does R. feel about his wife? What does Cynara think is the reasons for R.'s failed marriage?

Who is Other? How does Cynara feel about Other? Why does Cynara believe her mother loved Other more than she loved Cynara? Is this true? Why does Cynara want someone to love her more than Other? Why does Cynara think people love Other more than her? How does this reflect Cynara's opinion of herself? How does this reflect Cynara's opinions of slavery?

Who is the congressman? What impact does he have on Cynara's outlook on life? How do they come to have a relationship? Why does Cynara choose the congressman over R.? Why does Cynara not marry the congressman? Why does Cynara encourage the congressman to marry another woman? What does this say about Cynara? What does this say about Cynara's hopes for the future?

What is meant by the term mulatto? Why does the author of this book choose to make several of her characters mulatto? How has being a mulatto impacted Cynara's life? What might be different about Cynara's life if she had been born to two black parents? How might Cynara's life have been different if her parents had both been white? What impact did having a black grandmother have on the life of Lady? What impact did it have on her lover, Philippe? How did having black ancestry impact Other and her children?

Why does the author of this book use characters from Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*? Why does the author choose to change the names of these characters? How does this author's version of these characters change the way the reader might view the original classic novel? Is this author's view of the characters of the classic novel a more realistic look at life in the south before, during, and after the Civil War? Explain.

Compare and contrast Mammy's relationship to Planter and Lady to Cynara's relationship to the congressman and his wife. How are these relationships similar? How are they different? How does Cynara's life compare to that of her mother's? What impact did Cynara's childhood have on the choices she makes as an adult? In what ways is Cynara's life better than her mother's was?