

Whitney, My Love Study Guide

Whitney, My Love by Judith McNaught

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Plot Summary

WHITNEY, MY LOVE is the first novel by romance author Judith McNaught. Whitney is a wild young woman who has been sent to France to live with an aunt and uncle after her father has decided he can no longer deal with her scandalous behavior. There Whitney meets the Duke of Claymore, an attractive man with a reputation for making even the most socially elite women his mistresses. Whitney barely recalls these meetings, but they have made such an impact on the Duke that he arranges a betrothal contract with Whitney's father. The only stipulation is that Whitney not be told about it until the Duke feels the time is right. This leads to a comedy of errors as Whitney, who believes herself to be free, attempts to seduce her childhood crush and lure him into a betrothal. WHITNEY, MY LOVE is a romance of misdirection that will leave the reader breathless until the final pages.

Whitney is a wild child who often indulges in crazy stunts, like riding a horse standing up while wearing men's trousers. As a result, Whitney's father sends her to France to live with her aunt and uncle. Whitney is heartbroken, not because she will miss her selfish, unemotional father, but because she will be leaving her childhood crush, Paul Sevarin. In Paris, Whitney becomes a young woman, making her debut into society and garnering marriage proposals from men of all walks of life. However, Whitney refuses them all, determined to return to England and convince Paul to marry her. Eventually Whitney is called home but not for the reasons she believes.

When Whitney returns home, she discovers her father has come into some money. Whitney also learns they have a new neighbor, a man named Clayton Westland. Whitney is not interested in this new neighbor even though her father is clearly attempting to throw them together. Instead, Whitney pursues Paul. In the end, Paul does propose, overwhelmed by Whitney's new grace and sophistication. However, when Whitney announces this joyful news to her father, she learns she is already betrothed to Clayton Westland. Not only this, but Clayton Westland is not his real name. Clayton Westland is really the Duke of Claymore, Clayton Westmoreland. Whitney also learns that Clayton paid her father money for the betrothal and that if she refuses to marry him, her father will most likely go to debtor's prison.

Whitney decides she will elope with Paul. Whitney anxiously awaits Paul's return from a business trip. When he does return, Paul is outraged at the idea of an elopement and what it will mean to his family. Paul is also upset that Whitney will not have a dowry because he has just spent what he expected to receive in a dowry on horses while his home is in foreclosure. Whitney is shocked by Paul's behavior and calls off the engagement. Whitney then decides to go to London to surprise Clayton and to inform him that she is willing to marry him now.

Clayton is anxious to see Whitney so instead of going to London upon returning from a trip to his ancestral home, Claymore, he decides to go straight to Whitney's home. However, Clayton hears a rumor that Whitney is in London picking out her trousseau for her marriage to Paul. Clayton rushes to Whitney where he hears another rumor that



Whitney is not a virgin. Clayton snatches her from a party and drags her to Claymore. Once there, Clayton forces himself upon Whitney in order to humiliate her for playing him for a fool only to discover that she is indeed a virgin. Clayton is horrified by his own actions and decides the best thing to do is to remove himself from Whitney's life.

Whitney is also traumatized by Clayton's actions, but she still loves him and hopes they will marry. When Clayton fails to visit her in the weeks after his attack, she becomes disillusioned. Finally, when Clayton shows up at a wedding in which Whitney is a bridesmaid, she is so relieved to see him that she gives him the impression that she wants to make amends. However, before the reception, Whitney sees the legal documents Clayton signed releasing Whitney from their betrothal contract. Whitney becomes enraged, believing that Clayton was playing her for a fool. Whitney humiliates Clayton at the wedding reception and leaves him with little doubt that she no longer wants to marry him.

Weeks pass by and Whitney finds herself unable to stop thinking about Clayton. When Whitney confesses everything to her friend Emily, Emily helps her see that Clayton's actions were not that of a man trying to wound his love but expressing his regret. Whitney decides she must see Clayton. Whitney writes a note claiming to be pregnant but decides that note will not repair the rift between them but might make it worse. Instead, Whitney writes a note asking for permission to see Clayton at Claymore. When Whitney arrives the following day, she discovers that Clayton has not arrived, but his brother and mother are there. Aware of Clayton's feelings for Whitney, Clayton's brother Stephen encourages Whitney to stay. Stephen tells Whitney she should anger Clayton, force him to remove her from the room so they can speak alone. Whitney does just that and convinces Clayton that she loves him. Clayton asks her to marry him.

Clayton and Whitney are married two months later. They live in marital bliss for five months before Whitney finds she is pregnant. Whitney is reluctant to tell Clayton at first, concerned he will not be happy with the pregnancy. However, Whitney knows she cannot hide her condition for long. Whitney buys several baby outfits and embroiders a W into the collar of one. Whitney then leaves the tiny outfit in her stationary drawer and sends Clayton to find a letter for her. When Clayton opens the drawer, instead of finding the little outfit, he finds the letter claiming a pregnancy. Clayton believes the note was intended for another man and becomes enraged with jealousy. Clayton moves out of their bedroom and begins treating Whitney as though she is a stranger.

Whitney endures Clayton's anger after discovering the cause for it, hoping he will eventually come to see the truth. When Clayton's treatment of Whitney becomes unbearable, she leaves their home. Clayton slowly begins to realize that the note Whitney wrote could not have been meant for another man and he begins to see the error in his anger. Clayton looks for Whitney but fails to find her anywhere. Clayton finally learns that Whitney is staying with his mother. Clayton begs Whitney for forgiveness and finds that she forgave him the moment she learned the source of his anger. A short time later, Whitney suffers a fall and gives birth to a son prematurely. However, they both survive. Whitney is then given a chest that is filled with the love

stories of many generations of Claymore dukes and their duchesses, to which she adds her own story.



Part 1, England 1816: Chapters 1-2

Part 1, England 1816: Chapters 1-2 Summary

Lord and Lady Gilbert are traveling to England from France in 1816 to retrieve their niece, the daughter of Lady Gilbert's deceased sister. The girl, Whitney Stone, has been living with her father, but she has become so unruly that the father has requested that she be taken off his hands.

In chapter 1, Lord and Lady Gilbert arrive at the Stone Estate to discover Whitney riding her horse while wearing male trousers, standing on the horse's bare back. Whitney has done this in imitation of a show she once saw in hopes of impressing Paul Sevarin, a local young man on whom she has had a crush for many years. Paul is impressed, but it does not change his feelings for Whitney. Paul is deeply annoyed with the young woman because she spends much of her time following him around, causing him to curtail his normal activities in order to avoid observation. Whitney's feelings for Paul and her actions in response to those feelings have caused Whitney to be a source of gossip and ridicule among their neighbors, further increasing Paul's embarrassment to be the center of her attentions. Upon Lord and Lady Gilbert's arrival, Martin Stone yanks his daughter off the horse and forces her into the house. Whitney is not willing to give up, however, determined to make Paul fall in love with her, and she continues to scheme.

Whitney promises her friend, Emily, that she will do nothing to further embarrass herself while her aunt and uncle are at her home and that she will only spend time with them at meal times where she will refuse to speak. Whitney keeps this promise for several days, but when her Aunt Anne finds her reading a novel in Greek, Whitney finds it impossible to hide her intelligence. Later that night, Whitney learns she is to go to Paris with her aunt and uncle, leaving her devastated at the idea of leaving Paul. In chapter 2, many of the neighbors come to the Stone Estate to warn Lady Anne about the troubled child she is about to take on. At the same time, Paul comes to say goodbye to Whitney. Whitney steals a kiss and begs Paul to wait for her. Paul promises, keeping hope alive in Whitney although his promise is uttered in politeness. A short time later, Whitney crosses the channel with her aunt and uncle, vowing to herself that she will change, becoming the belle of Paris in order to convince Paul to marry her.

Part 1, England 1816: Chapters 1-2 Analysis

These first two chapters introduce the heroine and the situation that will propel the plot through the following forty chapters. Whitney Stone is a beautiful fifteen year old who was left to her widowed father after the tragic death of her mother. Whitney has grown up with little female influence, leaving her with no idea how to deal with her feelings toward a local boy. Whitney wants this boy to fall in love with her, but she goes about her seduction in such a way that she comes off as a demented stalker, leaving her a laughingstock in the local community and an embarrassment to her father. As a result,



Whitney is shipped off to France to live with her mother's sister and her husband. Before she leaves, Whitney is visited by the object of her obsession and he promises to wait for her. This leaves Whitney determined to become the belle of Paris, creating out of herself a woman Paul, the object of her affection, cannot help but fall in love with. It must be kept in mind that the setting is in early 19th century England and France, when proper young women did not wear men's trousers nor pursue men romantically.

Whitney's father is also introduced in this first chapter; he is a cold, unfeeling man who has raised his daughter the best way he knew how, but leaving her without the love and guidance of a mother figure, which all young women need. Also introduced are Whitney's aunt and uncle, Lady and Lord Gilbert. This couple appear to be the opposite of Martin Stone—kind, loving people who never had children of their own and who clearly are eager to adopt Whitney into their family. This new family, a theme of the novel, foreshadows a change in circumstances for Whitney that might just allow her to fulfill her desire to become someone Paul will want to marry.



Part 2, France 1816-1820: Chapters 3-8

Part 2, France 1816-1820: Chapters 3-8 Summary

In chapter 3, Whitney is pleased and touched by the warm room her aunt and uncle have designed for her. Whitney is restrained her first few weeks in the company of her aunt and uncle, but after a while she comes to realize that her aunt and uncle accept who she is and do not want for her to hide from them. Soon Whitney relaxes and discovers kindred spirits in her aunt and uncle. Time passes quickly and before Whitney knows it, time for her debutante ball approaches. Whitney befriends the daughter of one of her aunt and uncle's friends, Terese DuVille, who is completely opposite to Whitney, but kind and friendly, willing to help Whitney navigate the rocky road of the debutante. In chapter 4, Whitney meets Terese's brother when he comes to the Gilbert home on an errand for his sister. He expects Whitney to be a typical gold digger out to seduce him into marriage, but he instead finds a charismatic young woman whose charms cause him to do something he had never done before, attend a debutante ball. Whitney is nervous when she arrives at the debutante ball, convinced no one will ask her to dance because she is an outsider. However, when Nicolas DuVille arrives with a group of friends, Whitney finds not only does she have a great number of dance partners, but she has suddenly become the belle of the ball. Not only this, but the next morning, Whitney discovers that she has acquired an overwhelming number of male admirers.

In chapter 5, Whitney receives a letter from her good friend Emily informing her that Emily has married. Whitney is happy for Emily but concerned that Emily mentioned the possibility that Paul might ask for the hand of another young woman with whom they grew up. Whitney is determined to return home and remind Paul of his promise to wait for her, but all her letters to her father asking to come home have thus far been ignored. In chapter 6, Whitney and her aunt and uncle attend a masquerade party. Nicolas DuVille is at the party as well. Whitney and Nicolas have become close friends, but lately Nicolas has been spending a great deal of time with Whitney, causing her to fear that he might want to ask for her hand. Whitney does not want to hurt Nicolas, but she is still determined to marry Paul. Whitney spends much of the party avoiding being alone with Nicolas, only to find herself escorted out onto the balcony with a man dressed as a devil. Whitney flirts with this man, mocking him when he tells her he is a Duke. Later, Whitney asks her aunt who the man is; though Lady Anne recognizes the man as Clayton Westmoreland, the Duke of Claymore, a known womanizer, Lady Anne does not reveal this to Whitney.

In chapter 7, Clayton Westmoreland has a lawyer visit him in his home in France and discusses an investigation the lawyer conducted into Whitney Stone at the request of Westmoreland. Clayton learns that Miss Stone's father is moments from being thrown into debtor's prison due to some poor financial decisions regarding his estate. Clayton has the lawyer write up a betrothal contract between him and Miss Stone that will include Clayton paying Martin Stone one hundred thousand pounds for the right to marry his daughter. Clayton also has the lawyer instruct Martin Stone to call his



daughter back to England but not to tell her the reason. Clayton wants to court Whitney in England, away from her many beaux in Paris, and to court her properly so that when she marries him it will be of her own free will and not because of a contract between Clayton and her father. Clayton needs heirs and he feels Whitney would make the perfect mother to those heirs. In chapter 8, Edward Gilbert receives a letter from Whitney's father requesting the return of his daughter. The letter contains a substantial check for Whitney to buy new clothes before returning home. Lord Edward is angry about this request and the money after Martin Stone refused to provide any money for Whitney's care the entire time she has been in his home. However, when Lord Edward sees how happy Whitney is to go home, he not only allows it but also suggests that Lady Anne accompany her. Before she leaves, the DuVile household throws a going away party. Nicolas promises to come see Whitney in England, implying that he intends to ask her father for her hand in marriage at that time. However, Whitney intends to be betrothed to Paul by then.

Part 2, France 1816-1820: Chapters 3-8 Analysis

Whitney quickly settles in with the Gilberts, happy to be part of a family where she is loved and accepted for the intelligent creature she is. When it comes time for Whitney's debut into society, Whitney makes a splash thanks to the help of Nicolas DuVile, a single man from an important family in Paris. Nicolas is a playboy who prefers the company of many women to a single woman and is allergic to the idea of marriage. However, the moment Nicolas meets Whitney he is caught under her spell and is unable to shake the hold she has on him. Nicolas quickly falls in love with Whitney, unwilling to admit it even to himself until Whitney becomes such a sensation in society that she is overwhelmed with beaux. Nicolas then begins spending all his spare time with Whitney, escorting her to parties and the such, making society's gossips discuss how long it will be before he asks her uncle for her hand in marriage. Unfortunately, Whitney remains determined that the only man she will marry is Paul.

A new character is introduced as Whitney attends a masquerade party with her aunt and uncle. This man is dressed in a devil costume and becomes something of a distraction for Whitney. Whitney is attempting to avoid Nicolas' intentions in order to spare him from the realization that she does not return his attractions. The new character is dark and charming, overwhelming for the young woman who has little experience with men beyond harmless flirting. This man is clearly more experienced with women; therefore, it is no surprise when Lady Anne recognizes him as Clayton Westmoreland, a known womanizer. Not only this, but he is also a duke, something Whitney teased him about when he attempted to tell her. A short time later, Clayton arranges a betrothal contract for him and Whitney, believing Whitney would make the perfect mother for his unborn children. Clayton does not believe he is in love at this point, touching on a theme of the novel, but he does believe Whitney is a desirable woman. He wants to marry a woman worthy of his station in life, making Whitney a perfect candidate despite her lack of titles or money. However, Clayton does not want Whitney to know about his intentions, setting up a tense situation, especially since Whitney has one man ready to declare for her and another she intends to seduce into a

wedding ring. The reader now anticipates a great deal of drama as the plot continues to develop.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 9-11

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 9-11 Summary

In chapter 9, Whitney is thrilled to be back in England, even happy to see her father. Whitney notices some changes around her father's property, including new furnishings in the house that must have cost a great deal of money, suggesting her father has recently come into money. Whitney's father immediately tells her about a new neighbor he wants her to meet, perhaps at the party he is throwing in honor of her return. Lady Anne immediately becomes suspicious of Martin's enthusiasm about this man, especially when she notices the similarity in his name to that of Clayton Westmoreland. Martin admits to Lady Anne that Clayton Westland is Clayton Westmoreland, but that he wants to keep his identity secret to everyone else. Lady Anne agrees to keep the man's identity a secret but is fearful that Whitney could get her heartbroken if she were to fall for her new neighbor. In chapter 10, Whitney goes for a ride on her horse, Khan, the following morning. Whitney thinks about going to see Paul but decides to wait. Instead, Whitney visits Emily and then goes to a creek on her property where she once would go wading in the water. Whitney does this again but finds it has lost some of its charm. Clayton comes across Whitney and stops to speak to her, only to be accused of spying by the embarrassed young woman.

That night is the party for Whitney's homecoming. Whitney dresses in a beautiful green gown for which her father gives her an emerald to wear as well. Whitney makes an entrance into the ballroom and is pleased to see the surprise on many of her neighbor's faces. Clayton asks Whitney to dance, but she ignores him in favor of dancing with Paul. Later, Martin directs Whitney back to Clayton, but again she refuses to dance with him. Finally, Whitney is forced to dance with Clayton. Whitney is angry and embarrassed, emotions that are only intensified when Clayton claims to have met Whitney on several other occasions that she cannot recall. Later, Whitney is thrilled to discover that Paul is jealous while she danced with Clayton. The following day, Whitney and Emily encounter Paul while out riding. Paul pointedly ignores Whitney until he asks if she will be attending a party the following evening. Emily points out that Paul was acting jealous, causing Whitney's heart to soar with hope. In chapter 11, Whitney attends a party at the home of Lady Amelia Eubank. Once again, Clayton is in attendance. Lady Eubank knows who Clayton is and puts into action a scheme to throw Whitney and Clayton together. Clayton takes Whitney out onto the balcony where Paul has just escorted Elizabeth, the young woman rumor has it that Paul wants to marry. However, Clayton does not go out the same door the other couple used, but another that is out of sight of the other couple. Then Clayton kisses Whitney, causing her to become outraged. Whitney hits Clayton and accuses him of having a lack of morals. Once back inside, Paul asks Whitney to dance. Paul accuses Whitney of trying to make him jealous. At the same time, Clayton finds himself really enjoying his courtship of Whitney Stone.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 9-11 Analysis

Whitney learns about Clayton Westland, the new neighbor, but is not impressed by him or her father's apparent appreciation of their new neighbor's charms. Whitney meets with Clayton while on a ride and finds him intrusive and annoying. At her welcome home party, Whitney goes out of her way to ignore Clayton, only to find herself forced to dance with him at her father's insistence. The only good thing about Clayton that Whitney can see at this point is that he continuously makes Paul jealous. This gives Whitney hope that her dreams of convincing Paul to marry her have a chance at becoming reality. Despite changes the years have brought to them both, Whitney is still blindly in love with Paul and would like nothing more than to get him to propose. Not only will Whitney have the man she has wanted since childhood, but she will finally be able to prove to all the neighbors who made fun of her throughout her childhood that she is worthy of one of their own.

At the same time Whitney is determined to seduce Paul, Clayton is having fun getting to know her. Clayton finds Whitney to be not only a charming belle of society, but a hell cat who is proving to be a challenge to pursue. Most women throw themselves at Clayton, willing to do just about anything to get his attention; however, Whitney is different. Whitney will do almost anything to stay away from Clayton. This makes her intriguing to him, different and challenging. Clayton has never known a woman like Whitney before and is enjoying his unusual courtship. However, the reader is left wondering what will happen if Whitney is successful in her seduction of Paul, unaware that she is already engaged to marry Clayton.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 12-13

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 12-13 Summary

In chapter 12, Whitney wakes early to prepare for a picnic which she is to attend with Paul. Whitney devises a plan to have Paul ride to the picnic with her on horseback but is disappointed when Paul insists on picking up other, female guests in his buggy and leaving Whitney to ride to the picnic with Clayton. Whitney arranges for Clayton to ride to the picnic on one of her father's more spirited horses, Dangerous Crossing, a horse that is deathly afraid of riding crops. Clayton takes the challenge and manages to control the horse well. However, when Clayton makes a rude comment to Whitney, she goes to hit him with her riding crop, but accidentally hits the horse instead. The horse bolts with Clayton on its back. Whitney leaves on Khan, embarrassed by her own actions and afraid Clayton might have been injured. Clayton catches up to Whitney and threatens to spank her with the riding crop. Instead, they find themselves in a lover's embrace. Afterward, Clayton affectionately calls Whitney a hussy, leaving her ashamed of her own actions. Later, Clayton and Whitney join their friends for a picnic where they tell their story and Whitney suggests she would have done better on Dangerous Crossing than Clayton did. Clayton does not believe it, even after Whitney suggests they have a race. The following morning, Paul visits Whitney at her home, confessing his growing affections for her. At the same time, Martin Stone tells Lady Anne about Whitney's betrothal to Clayton Westmoreland and suggests she do all she can to help sway Whitney in Clayton's direction.

In chapter 13, Whitney is less than excited to learn Clayton Westland will be joining them for dinner. Whitney spends the evening attempting to ignore him even as both Martin and Lady Anne offer charming conversation. Over the next few weeks, Paul comes to see Whitney nearly every day as Clayton Westland becomes a regular visitor to her home as well. Whitney is puzzled by her aunt's odd behavior, sending hundreds of letters to every place her husband might be while at the same time attempting to downplay Paul's affections for Whitney. One night, Whitney, her aunt, and her father, go to have dinner at Clayton Westland's modest home. Whitney is impressed with Clayton's pretentious servants and expensive belongings, but not with the man himself. In fact, throughout dinner they engage in a battle of wits that is frequently interrupted by Martin Stone. After dinner, Clayton challenges Whitney to a game of chess. Whitney proves to be a strong opponent, causing she and Clayton to both become so absorbed in the game that Martin decides to take Lady Anne and return home. In their absence, Clayton offers Whitney a glass of whiskey that causes her to become talkative. Whitney tells Clayton a sad story of her childhood in which she was forced to embarrass herself at a local musicale. Clayton is filled with pity for the poor young girl who was an object of ridicule among her neighbors. When Clayton takes Whitney home, he tells her he needs to speak to her about something important. Whitney brushes him off, telling herself that the sooner Paul proposes, the better.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 12-13 Analysis

Whitney and Clayton find themselves alone together after Whitney's fit of anger nearly caused Clayton to be thrown from her father's most spirited horse. Whitney regrets her actions; therefore, she allows Clayton to pull her into a heated embrace that leads to more than just a few kisses. Whitney is drawn to Clayton, finding his kisses to be more enjoyable than the few she has experienced in the past. However, when it is over, Whitney is embarrassed by her actions. The setting of this novel comes into these feelings of embarrassment because what Whitney has done is scandalous in the society in which she lives. If anyone were to come across the two lovers or to learn of what has happened, Whitney's reputation would be ruined and she would never be able to make a decent marriage, let alone marry her childhood crush, Paul. Therefore, when Clayton calls her a hussy, Whitney is filled with shame and loathing for not only him, but for herself in allowing him to take advantage of her. These emotions will color every contact Whitney will have with Clayton from now on, making it difficult for her to understand her true feelings for him even as those feelings begin to turn from loathing to love.

At the same time Clayton is attempting to court Whitney in his own mysterious way, Paul is beginning to do the same. Paul's attentions are more polite, more in line with the expectations of the high moral standard of the time. However, Paul never once mentions marriage to Whitney. As Whitney finds herself spending more and more time with Clayton, getting to know Clayton and allowing him to get to know her, she finds herself anxious to encourage Paul to ask for her hand in order to take away the confusion that Clayton's nearness causes her. It is clear that there is affection developing between these two characters, leaving the reader curious why Clayton continues to allow Whitney to be close to Paul and avoids telling her the truth about their contractual connection to one another.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 14-16

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 14-16 Summary

In chapter 14, Whitney tells Paul that she will soon be returning to Paris with Lady Anne, forcing him to ask her to marry him. Whitney's father has left town, not due to return for several days, and Paul is to leave town the day after her father's return, placing a delay on when Paul can speak to her father about his intentions. Whitney decides she must keep Paul's proposal secret until it can be discussed with her father. At the same time, Martin visits Clayton to warn him that Paul could become a problem. Clayton dismisses Martin's fears, insisting that no one will interfere with his betrothal contract for Whitney. Clayton knows Whitney is pursuing Paul in order to redeem herself in the eyes of all the people who thought so poorly of her as a child; therefore, he is content to sit back and allow her to regain her pride. However, Clayton is anxious to see Whitney again, so he writes her a note inviting her to have a horse race with him. In chapter 15, Whitney and Clayton meet in the woods in front of a small audience for their race. Clayton is amused when Whitney offers to show him the way as the starter pistol sounds. Clayton allows Whitney to pull ahead and is just about to spur his horse into a canter when he sees Whitney's horse wandering the woods without its rider. Clayton finds Whitney lying on the ground below a low branch. Clayton rushes to her side, fearful for her safety. When Whitney awakes, she teases him, making Clayton wonder if Whitney fell off the horse intentionally as a way of winning the race. Clayton leaves Whitney in the woods without her horse where she is later rescued by Paul.

In chapter 16, the day of Martin's return has arrived. Whitney has arranged a surprise party for her father and many of the guests have already arrived by the time Martin returns home. Whitney is excited because she hopes Paul will be able to find a moment to speak to her father during the party and they will be able to announce their engagement. At the same time, Lady Anne is worried that one of the out-of-town guests will recognize Clayton and reveal his true identity to Whitney. When Lady Anne happens to catch Whitney and Paul in an intimate embrace, Whitney reveals their engagement. As a result, Lady Anne spends much of the remainder of the night drunk. Whitney is forced to play hostess alone, so Clayton comes to her rescue. At dinner, gossip turns to the Duke of Claymore who is rumored to be missing. Many of the partygoers discuss his reputation as a womanizer and bets are placed on the woman who will eventually become his bride. Clayton listens to the discussion with amusement, making comments himself about the Duke as those around him remain ignorant to the fact that he is the Duke. When the party is over, Whitney lies in bed and dreams of the moment she will become Mrs. Paul Sevarin. Too excited to sleep, Whitney rushes into her father's study with the ring Paul gave her just before he left. Whitney announces her engagement, unaware of Clayton sitting off to one side. Martin is outraged by Whitney's news and he announces to her that she is already betrothed to the Duke of Claymore. Not only this, but Martin tells her that the Duke paid him a large sum of money for the pleasure of her hand in marriage and that she will marry him whether she likes it or not. Clayton puts an



end to Martin's tirade and attempts to reassure Whitney. Later, Clayton threatens Martin with bodily harm if he ever treats Whitney in such a fashion again.

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 14-16 Analysis

Paul finally proposes to Whitney, fulfilling her childhood dream. However, once again a reflection of the novel's setting, they are forced to keep their betrothal secret until Paul can speak to Whitney's father. In the meantime, Whitney finds herself spending more time with Clayton. Clayton is aware of Whitney's affection for Paul but believes it is her attempt to soothe a wounded pride after a childhood of ridicule and that she will get over it when she discovers her true feelings for Clayton. In the meantime, Clayton finds himself developing quite an affection for Whitney. When Clayton and Whitney race their horses, Clayton reveals his deep affection for Whitney when he discovers she has fallen from her horse. It is clear to the reader that both these characters are falling deeply in love with one another, a theme of the novel, even though neither seems willing to admit it to themselves or each other.

Whitney throws a party for her father during which a rumor is discussed about the missing Duke of Claymore. People at the party discuss gossip and make wagers on the Duke, unaware that he is sitting among them. During this dinner, Clayton announces his intention of marrying Whitney but says it in such a way that no one knows about whom he is talking. As all this is going on, Whitney is bored and distracted, leaving Clayton convinced that she cares little about his title, endearing her further to his affections. After the party, Whitney can no longer wait to tell her father about Paul's proposal. However, by telling her father about her desire to marry Paul, she learns the truth about Clayton. Whitney is angry that this could be going on behind her back and outraged that her father would sell her like a piece of property. Whitney's reaction is exactly what Clayton had predicted and had hoped to avoid. This reaction is passionate and leaves the reader wondering if Whitney and Clayton will be able to overcome it in order to discover their true feelings for one another.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 17-20

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 17-20 Summary

In chapter 17, Whitney wakes more determined than ever to marry Paul, even if they have to elope. Whitney asks Lady Anne how long she knew and is reassured when Lady Anne swears she did not find out until the contract was already arranged. When Clayton comes to visit Whitney, she goes down to him wearing a servant's dress because she does not want to wear the clothes for which she now knows Clayton paid. Clayton is outraged and demands she never wear such a rag again. Clayton tries to convince Whitney he will make her a good husband, but Whitney is too angry to see past the lies and the money her father accepted for her. Clayton simply asks Whitney to see past her anger and get to know Clayton for the man he is. In chapter 18, Clayton and Whitney go for a ride on their horses. Clayton takes Whitney near the clearing where they found themselves in a lover's embrace before Paul's picnic and tells her where he first saw her, in a millinery shop in Paris. Clayton then teases Whitney about her many beaux in Paris and the two occasions in which they were introduced and Whitney ignored him. Whitney begs Clayton to release her from the betrothal contract, but he refuses. However, Clayton agrees to keep their betrothal a secret a little longer. Later, however, Whitney schemes to run off with Paul. The following day, Whitney refuses to see Clayton, claiming an injury to her knee.

In chapter 19, Clayton sends a doctor to Whitney's after she refuses to see him for a second time because of her knee. The doctor wants to examine Whitney's knee, but she refuses because it would require him looking at her bare leg. When the doctor refuses to leave without seeing her knee, having come from London specifically for her, Whitney relents. The doctor can clearly see that there is no injury to the knee and that Whitney is simply attempting to avoid Clayton, but he promises to tell Clayton that soft tissue injuries are often hard to diagnose. That night, Whitney goes down to dine with her guests since her secret has been exposed. A cousin corners Whitney alone in her father's study and attempts to propose. Clayton walks in on the scene and sends the cousin on his way. Clayton and Whitney then sit down to cards and Clayton teaches Whitney to play poker. Later at home, Clayton has a discussion with the doctor about Whitney. The doctor accuses Clayton of being in love, but he hotly denies it.

In chapter 20, Clayton takes Whitney to the village where he parades her in front of the town gossip in hopes that rumors about her betrothal with Paul will end. While there, Clayton and Whitney run into Elizabeth and Margaret. Margaret has never liked Whitney and has a crush on Clayton. Margaret asks Clayton if she left her parasol in his carriage, causing Whitney to wonder about their relationship. Later, Clayton tells Whitney that he only gave Margaret a ride home when she had some trouble with her own carriage. Clayton takes Whitney to his house and decides to teach her a lesson. Clayton promises to allow Whitney to go free if she will kiss him. This forces Whitney to act out a seduction scene that leaves both she and Clayton confused and aroused. Later, Clayton tells Whitney he meant he would free her to go home, not from their



betrothal, leaving her feeling used. The following day, Whitney insists to anyone who will listen that she refuses to marry Clayton. In response Clayton invites Whitney to attend a ball with him in London.

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 17-20 Analysis

Whitney feels betrayed by everyone around her, most especially Clayton and her father. Therefore, when Clayton tries to convince Whitney that their marriage would be a good one, she refuses to even consider it. Whitney wants nothing to do with Clayton and attempts to convince herself that she loves Paul while at the same time she finds herself drawn to Clayton. As a defensive gesture, Whitney lies to Clayton about an injury in order to avoid him. This backfires, however, when Clayton sends a doctor from London to check her injury. Now Whitney is exposed in a lie, causing she and Clayton to be on somewhat even ground. Clayton then embraces Whitney's unique character by going against the social standard and teaching her how to play poker.

Even as Whitney continues to refuse to accept her betrothal to Clayton, she finds herself enjoying their time together. Clayton enjoys Whitney, too, even though he denies his growing affection for her. When Clayton learns the village rumor mill is saying that Whitney is engaged to Paul, Clayton parades Whitney in the village, attempting to show that she is with him. At the same time Clayton is assuaging his own jealousy, Whitney becomes jealous when she gets the impression that Clayton has been spending time with a young woman in the village who despises Whitney. As a result, Clayton and Whitney find themselves enjoying another lover's embrace. Clayton then tricks Whitney into practicing her seduction skills on him, again showing the chemistry between these two characters and also exposing their feelings even though they are both still confused by what they feel for one another. Finally, Clayton invites Whitney to go to London to attend a party with him, suggesting a situation that will expose their betrothal and leave Whitney unable to go through with her plan to elope with Paul.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 21-24

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 21-24 Summary

In chapter 21, Clayton and Whitney ride to London alone together in one of Clayton's traveling chaises. In London, Clayton drops Whitney at Emily's house where Whitney announces her intention to marry Paul. However, at the party that night, Clayton announces their betrothal. Whitney is upset at first, but when she hears a couple of gossips discussing the match, she finds herself determined to prove she is worthy of the Duke of Claymore. Whitney and Clayton spend the entire night at one another's side, making it clear to everyone present that there is a great deal of emotion shared between the pair. As the night progresses, Whitney drinks a great deal of champagne, leaving her drunk by the time they arrive at Emily's home after the party. Clayton kisses Whitney, causing her to attempt a drunken slap that accidentally knocks a painting off the wall.

In chapter 22, Clayton tells Whitney he is going to return to London in order to give her time to deal with Paul. However, he gives her instructions on how to reach him should she want him to come home sooner. When Paul returns home, Whitney meets him in an abandoned cabin. Whitney tells Paul about her situation and suggests they elope. Paul is shocked, refusing to elope because of the shame it would bring his mother and sister. Paul then tells Whitney that he was planning on her dowry to pay for the horses he just returned from purchasing. Whitney suddenly realizes how immature and irresponsible Paul is and she calls off the engagement. In order to fix her mistakes, Whitney invites Elizabeth to visit her and promises the girl that she will help her make up with Paul. However, Elizabeth reveals that she is in love with another boy named Peter. Whitney helps Elizabeth convince Peter to ask for her hand, while at the same time planning to go to London to join Clayton.

In chapter 23, Whitney arrives at Emily's and immediately sends a note to Clayton to let him know she is in London. Whitney then helps Emily plan a party she intends to throw the following night. In chapter 24, Clayton rushes back to the country a day early in order to be with Whitney. Clayton had been at Claymore, so he is unaware of Whitney's note telling him she is in London. In the village, Clayton is told that Whitney has gone to London to prepare for her marriage to Paul. When Clayton discovers that Whitney is indeed in London, he rushes to Emily's house to confront her. When Clayton arrives, Margaret pulls him aside and tells him that Whitney is no longer a virgin. Outraged beyond reason, Clayton drags Whitney to his carriage and drives with her to Claymore. Once there, Clayton rips Whitney's dress from her body and forces her to undress the rest of the way. Clayton then takes Whitney into his bed and forces himself on her, only to discover she is a virgin. Clayton stops and apologizes. Whitney begins to cry and begs Clayton to hold her. The following morning, Whitney wakes to an empty bed. Whitney is shocked and demoralized by Clayton's actions. Whitney returns to Emily's in shame but refuses to tell her friend what happened.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 21-24 Analysis

Whitney goes to London with Clayton where she has a good time despite her determination not to do so. Not only this, but when Clayton announces their betrothal, Whitney is surprised by the pride she feels and the loyalty that causes her to refuse to deny the betrothal. This reveals to the reader the depth of Whitney's feelings for Clayton despite the fact she continues to refuse to admit those feelings to herself. Therefore it is no surprise to the reader when she agrees to end her engagement to Paul. Whitney goes to Paul, still thinking that she wants to elope with him despite the social stigma this will leave on her for the rest of her life. However, Paul quickly puts an end to this thought when she learns he was planning on her dowry to pay for the horses he just bought, revealing his lack of maturity and responsibility. Whitney realizes Paul is not the man she thought he was and that she does not love him, let alone want to marry him.

Whitney goes to London to join Clayton without ending the rumors about her and Paul's engagement that are raging in the village. Clayton hears these rumors and assumes they are true, causing him to become enraged. Clayton does not stop to question the validity of these rumors or to question why he is so enraged. Instead, Clayton believes everything he hears about Whitney and decides to punish her. This shows the reader two things—that Clayton loves Whitney and that he has a terrible temper. In his anger, Clayton attempts to rape Whitney to punish her only to discover that the rumors are not true and that Whitney is still a virgin. Clayton stops before finishing the act, something that proves to be important later in the novel, and holds Whitney while she cries out her shame and fear. Clayton later leaves the bed, believing Whitney will not want to see him again, and allows her to return to London a damaged woman. Due to the setting of the novel, Whitney now believes she will never be able to marry or have a family because of what Clayton has done to her.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 25-27

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 25-27 Summary

In chapter 25, Clayton has his lawyer send a legal form to Whitney at her father's estate releasing her from their betrothal contract and giving her a large sum of money for what he did to her. Over the next few weeks, Clayton spends time at his mother's estate, avoiding the many women his brother has brought there for their entertainment. One night Clayton becomes drunk and tells his brother, Stephen, all about his behavior toward Whitney. Stephen and his mother discuss Clayton the next morning, both convinced Clayton is in love with Whitney. In chapter 26, Whitney has settled in with the Archibalds, refusing to attend social events where she might run into Clayton. Whitney is emotionally damaged from Clayton's behavior and frightened that she will be socially damaged as well should anyone learn the truth. Eventually Whitney tells Emily the whole story. Emily realizes that Whitney is in love with Clayton, so without telling anyone, she invites Clayton to Elizabeth's wedding, inserting a note letting know Clayton that Whitney will be at the wedding. Clayton decides to attend.

In chapter 27, Whitney is saddened as she walks down the aisle as one of Elizabeth's bridesmaids, convinced she will never be a bride herself. However, when Whitney looks over the crowded church and sees Clayton, she finds herself no longer able to deny her love for him. Clayton sees this in her eyes and approaches her outside the church after the ceremony. Whitney allows Clayton to hold her for a brief moment before leaving with the wedding party. In the interim between the wedding and the reception, Whitney waits in her room excited to see Clayton. While waiting, Whitney decides to open the mail her father brought from home. Among the many letters, Whitney finds the legal document releasing her from her betrothal to Clayton. Whitney becomes enraged, convinced Clayton plans to use her as his mistress. As a result, Whitney avoids Clayton at the reception. When Clayton manages to trap her into a dance and confesses his love for her, she crushes him, convincing him she is a flirt who never had any love for him. Afterward, Whitney is devastated, spending the night sobbing.

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 25-27 Analysis

Now that Clayton has committed an act that he believes ends his relationship with Whitney, he realizes how deeply in love with her he is. Clayton admits this in a drunken confession to his brother, but decides he can do nothing but let Whitney have the freedom for which she continually begged. At the same time, Whitney is crushed by Clayton's absence and is confused by what caused his anger in the first place and his actions since that night. Emily recognizes that Whitney is still in love with Clayton and decides to play cupid. It all seems to work out with Whitney finally admitting to herself her love for Clayton, but then she learns of Clayton's decision to free her and believes he did it because he discovered he could have her without the inconvenience of marriage. As a result, Whitney convinces Clayton she never loved him, crushing them

both and leaving them both heartbroken. The reader is now wondering how these irrevocable actions can be repaired and bring this couple back together.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 28-29

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 28-29 Summary

In chapter 28, Whitney begins going out as often as possible. At times, Whitney runs into Clayton who ignores her as though there was never anything between them. Each time this happens, Whitney's heart breaks. Nicolas comes to town and spends every night escorting Whitney to various parties. Finally Nicolas asks Whitney to marry him, but she turns him down, effectively ending their friendship. Whitney tells Emily everything and Emily convinces Whitney that she misunderstood Clayton's intentions. Emily convinces Whitney that she needs to explain herself to Clayton and to do it quickly because it is rumored that Clayton is about to marry Vanessa Standfield. Whitney writes a note to Clayton claiming to be pregnant, hoping it will save her pride by forcing him to come to her. However, Emily talks her out of sending it and she buries it in her stationary box. Instead, Whitney sends a note to Clayton telling him that she intends to visit him at Claymore the following evening unless she hears from him first. In chapter 29, Stephen Westmoreland waits at Claymore for Clayton to arrive to announce his betrothal to Vanessa Standfield. Before Clayton arrives, Whitney arrives. Stephen hears her name and realizes she is the woman with whom Clayton is in love. Stephen insists Whitney stay and wait for Clayton.

When Clayton arrives, he is shocked and unhappy to see Whitney at his home, but his attempts to make her leave are curtailed by Stephen. Stephen pulls Whitney aside before escorting her in to dinner and advises her to anger Clayton, forcing him to remove her from the room so Clayton and Whitney can speak alone. Whitney baits Clayton while fending off petty comments from Vanessa and Clayton's anger. Finally Clayton becomes angry and drags Whitney out of the dining room and into his study. Once alone, Whitney tells Clayton what she thought when she saw the legal forms releasing her from the betrothal and why she spoke to him as she did at the wedding reception. When Whitney confesses her love and claims she intended to marry him willingly, Clayton accepts her apology. Clayton and Whitney decide to marry. Clayton takes Vanessa home and ends their betrothal before returning to Claymore to plan his wedding to Whitney. Whitney wants to wait at least eight months to get married in order to properly plan the wedding, but Clayton insists he will not wait longer than eight weeks. Later, Clayton thanks his brother for his help in bringing he and Whitney back together.

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 28-29 Analysis

Whitney begins going out in order to prove to Clayton that she is not missing him, but it backfires when she continuously runs into him out with other women. Whitney is clearly in love with Clayton and unable to get past their breakup. However, Clayton gives the impression that he has recovered. This behavior leads Whitney into giving Nicolas DuVille the false impression that she is available. Nicolas proposes, effectively ending



their friendship. Whitney then confesses her love for Clayton to Emily, who then counsels her to speak to Clayton. Now Whitney finds herself putting her pride on the back burner in order to get the man she loves, illustrating a theme of the novel. Whitney begs Clayton to listen to her and to allow her to explain her actions. Eventually Clayton does, but not before he once again shows his temper. Clayton accepts Whitney's explanations and plans to marry her. Important later in the novel, Whitney insists on waiting eight months to get married, but Clayton is the one who pushes the date up, wanting to marry Whitney as soon as possible.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 30-33

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 30-33 Summary

In chapter 30, Clayton takes Whitney on a tour of his home. Clayton attempts to seduce Whitney but finds her reluctant to share his embraces. At the same time, Clayton's mother is pleased her son is marrying something he loves, but is shocked at the rush for the wedding. In chapter 31, Clayton gives Whitney a diamond for their betrothal ring. That night, Stephen shares stories of Clayton as a child over dinner. Lord Edward Gilbert arrives at Claymore and announces that he knew all along about Clayton's intentions to marry Whitney, causing his wife to become angry with him. In chapter 32, Whitney becomes tense about the idea of the wedding night because she is afraid of the pain she felt the night Clayton took her virtue. When Whitney and Clayton have a few minutes alone together, she asks him if they could delay their coupling so that she might look forward to their wedding day. Clayton agrees. In chapter 33, Whitney wakes the morning of her wedding content. Whitney dresses in a medieval dress, leaving everyone around her breathless. When it is time for Whitney to arrive at the church, she is late because of the crowd attempting to witness the wedding of a duke. Clayton becomes concerned but is relieved when Whitney arrives. Martin walks Whitney down the aisle, promising her that he would not have entered a betrothal contract with Clayton if he did not believe he would make her a good husband.

After the wedding, Clayton and Whitney travel to Claymore in his chaise with Lady Anne and Lord Edward. Upon their arrival, Whitney is introduced to the servants at Claymore in the traditional fashion. Many people attend the reception, including many people from the village where Whitney grew up. Whitney dances frequently and is happier than she can ever recall being when it comes time to retire upstairs. Once alone in Clayton's rooms, Whitney and Clayton feel awkward, unsure what to do next. Whitney leaves to dress for bed. When she returns, Whitney tells Clayton that she has decided she wants to make love to him so that she will not live in fear of what it will be like. Clayton is very gentle with Whitney, showing her that it is not a painful act. Afterward, Clayton and Whitney exchange gifts. Clayton gives Whitney an emerald necklace. Whitney gives Clayton a quizzing glass as a joke referring to her comments when they first met. Whitney also gives Clayton a ruby ring engraved with the words My Lord.

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 30-33 Analysis

Even while planning their perfect wedding, Whitney begins exhibiting a fear of intimacy whenever Clayton attempts to take her in his arms, suggesting that Whitney is still traumatized from Clayton's angry attempt to punish Whitney for her perceived transgressions. Clayton is understanding and promises to wait for her, but Whitney decides she does not want to wait and she wants to face the inevitable. Whitney is surprised, when after their beautiful wedding she discovers that sex is not a thing to be feared but to be enjoyed. Clayton and Whitney appear to have found their happily ever

after, illustrating the themes of love as well as friends and family, leaving the reader curious what will fill the following nine chapters.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 34-35

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 34-35 Summary

In chapter 34, Clayton and Whitney live in wedded bliss, spending some time in France for their wedding trip before returning home and taking up their roles as the Duke and Duchess of Claymore. Whitney and Clayton go everywhere together, giving the social gossips a great deal about which to talk. After five months, Whitney realizes she is pregnant. Whitney is nervous about telling Clayton because they never really talked about having children. Whitney decides to tell Clayton by leaving a baby outfit she embroidered a W on in her stationary drawer and then to send him up there on a false errand. Clayton begins searching through the desk, searching for a half-written letter Whitney asked for, only to find a letter written to an unnamed man in which Whitney claims to be pregnant. Clayton becomes enraged, believing the letter was intended for a lover Whitney had before marrying him and that she married him in order to provide a father for her illegitimate child. Clayton tells Whitney he does not want her baby and then he has his things moved to a room in the east wing. The following day, Clayton makes it clear to Whitney that he no longer wants her to be a part of his life, threatening her should she ever come into his rooms again. Out of anger, Whitney goes out unescorted that night. The following day when Whitney attempts to ride her horse, the servants refuse to allow her on orders from Clayton. Whitney confronts Clayton only to be told she is not to ride the horse. Whitney rides anyway, so Clayton threatens to lock her in her rooms until the baby is born. In her room alone, Whitney discovers the note Clayton found and realizes what it is that has made him so angry. Rather than explain the note, Whitney decides to wait and allow Clayton to figure out the reason for the note on his own, to punish him for becoming so angry without talking to her.

That night, Whitney attends a party in an alluring gown against Clayton's wishes. When Clayton finds out, he confronts Whitney in her rooms. Whitney stands her ground, forcing Clayton to kiss her despite his anger. The following day, Whitney and Clayton are to attend an anniversary party for Emily's in-laws. When they arrive, Whitney learns that Marie St. Allermain, Clayton's ex-mistress, has been asked to sing. Whitney is embarrassed and ashamed when she sees the way Marie St. Allermain looks at Clayton. Whitney's shame increases when Clayton visits with Marie St. Allermain on the balcony, convinced he is to begin an affair with her again. Whitney leaves even though Clayton has chosen against renewing his relationship with Marie St. Allermain. In chapter 35, Clayton remains in London, still angry with Whitney and considering taking on a mistress. However, Clayton finally decides to return to Claymore only to find Whitney gone. Clayton waits a few days, but when Whitney does not return he goes looking for her. Clayton does not find Whitney at her father's home, nor does he find her at his modest estate next door. Worried, Clayton begins to realize he is still in love with Whitney and he can forgive her for almost anything. In fact, Clayton is beginning to believe Whitney could not have intended that note for another man. Clayton suddenly realizes that Whitney must have written the note to save her pride but could not have believed she were pregnant since she had wanted to wait eight months to have the



wedding. Emily confirms Clayton's beliefs; however, Clayton still has no idea where Whitney is until he runs into Stephen. Stephen tells Clayton that Whitney is at their mother's estate. Clayton goes to Whitney and apologizes for his temper, promising her he will never again indulge his anger without speaking to her first.

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 34-35 Analysis

Whitney discovers she is pregnant and is hesitant to tell Clayton. When she does tell Clayton, Whitney inadvertently allows him to find a note she wrote to him in a previous chapter claiming to be pregnant. Since she could have not become pregnant from their incomplete act together, Clayton automatically assumes the note was meant for another man Whitney was with. Clayton feels deceived and betrayed. Clayton throws Whitney out of his life without telling her why. While hurt and angry herself, Whitney fights for Clayton, playing his games along with him and waiting for him to realize she could not have done what he thinks she has done. This shows a great deal of depth in Whitney's character, a strength that allows her to trust her husband will soon see through the lies he so easily believes. Clayton is not a trusting man and seems to expect Whitney to hurt him, therefore believing lies he hears about her all too easily. It seems Clayton's love for Whitney, a theme of the novel, does not include absolute truth.

When Clayton has time to calm down, he realizes the note was not meant for another man and that it is a clear attempt on Whitney's part to save her pride. When this is confirmed, Clayton decides to forgive his wife. Clayton goes looking for Whitney, but she has disappeared. Clayton is frightened that once again his temper has caused him to lose the woman he loves. However, Stephen lets it slip that Whitney is with their mother, touching on the theme of family and friends, and allowing Clayton the opportunity to find his wife and apologize. Whitney accepts, but only after Clayton promises never to believe anything about her again until he asks her about it. Hopefully this will solve these temper problems and allow this marriage to continue on without further turmoil.



Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 36-42

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 36-42 Summary

In chapter 36, Clayton and Whitney discuss their fight once more, making promises to each other to never fight in that way again. Clayton also explains to Whitney that she could not have gotten pregnant their one night together, and he would not have responded well to the note had she sent it. They apologize once more and turn their attention to the future. In chapter 37, Clayton tells his mother about Whitney's pregnancy after listening to her apologize for her part in keeping Whitney from him. In chapter 38, The Earl of Langford, a cousin of Clayton's father, tells Clayton that he intends to leave his titles and estates to Stephen upon his death, rather than allow them to pass to Clayton. Clayton wholeheartedly agrees that Stephen would be an ideal candidate. Later that evening, Stephen is introduced to Emily Kendall, the daughter of the Duke of Lansberry. Everyone can see that Stephen is taken with young Emily. By the end of September, everyone believes Stephen will be asking for Emily's hand in marriage. In chapter 39, it is December and Emily has just returned from a trip overseas with her father. Stephen comes to visit her. Stephen tells Emily that he intends to offer for her hand when her father returns from a visit with a neighbor. However, Emily informs Stephen that she is already betrothed to the Marquess of Glengarmon, an elderly neighbor who holds certain lands Emily's father wishes to own. The Marquess has promised these lands to Lansberry in exchange for Emily. Before Stephen can decide what to do, he receives word that he is needed back home.

In chapter 40, Emily tells her father of Stephen's intentions. To avoid destroying his relationship with Stephen and the Duke of Claymore, Emily's father arranges for her to marry the Marquess before Stephen can speak to him. In chapter 41, Whitney has gone into labor two months early after taking a fall down some stairs. Everyone waits anxiously for word. Soon they learn that Whitney has given birth to a healthy son and is doing well. Clayton rushes to be with his wife while Stephen drowns his sorrows after receiving a note that Emily has been married. In chapter 42, Clayton's mother brings Whitney a wooden chest. In this chest there are letters and portraits of previous Duchesses of Claymore written upon the birth of their first born sons and heirs to their father's titles. Whitney reads through them, amused to find the path to love has not been smooth for any of them. Whitney then writes out hers and Clayton's story, adding it to the chest along with a portrait Clayton gives her of herself on her wedding night, inscribed with the words: Whitney, my wife and my love.

Part 3, England 1820: Chapters 36-42 Analysis

Whitney and Clayton make up and it seems that they will live happily ever after. Then the plot takes an unexpected turn, beginning a story about Clayton's brother that appears to come out of left field. Stephen is made heir to the Earl of Langford and then meets the woman of his dreams. Stephen falls deeply in love and pursues this girl only



to learn that her father has betrothed her to the Marquess of Glengarmon, an older man who owns lands the girl's father wants. Stephen is heartbroken but determined to make this girl his own, paralleling the story of Whitney and Paul. Then the plot returns to Clayton and Whitney without really finishing Stephen's story. In fact, the reader might suspect that this section about Stephen is intended to set up a book that has been written to tell Stephen's story.

Whitney falls down some stairs, causing her to give birth early. Due to the setting of this novel, the early arrival of this baby is dangerous and could lead to not only the death of the baby but Whitney's as well. Fortunately, everything turns out well and Clayton finds himself the father of a new baby boy. Since the baby is the expected heir of the Claymore titles, Whitney is introduced to a tradition in which all the previous Claymore brides tell their romance story and add a picture of their baby upon the birth of their husband's heir. Whitney reads all these letters and learns that most of the other brides rode the same rocky road to love. Whitney adds her own story, perpetuating the tradition.



Characters

Whitney Stone

Whitney Stone is a young girl, only fifteen at the beginning of the novel, who lost her mother as a small child. Whitney's father is a self-centered man who is void of emotion and finds it difficult to deal with single fatherhood. As a result, Whitney is often ridiculed and neglected by her father, left to face the disapproval of her many neighbors on her own. Whitney becomes rebellious, often participating in activities that cause more scandal and disapproval from the neighbors. Finally having had enough, Martin Stone contacts his wife's sister and arranges for Whitney to live with her and her husband in France.

Whitney leaves England determined to return a different person, someone with whom her childhood crush will fall madly in love. In France, Whitney is a social belle, attracting offers from many different men for her hand in marriage. However, Whitney continues to hold out for Paul, her childhood crush. Whitney writes to her father often, begging him to allow her to return home so she might see Paul again. Whitney's father refuses for a long time. However, Martin Stone suddenly changes his mind, sending Whitney money to buy herself a new wardrobe before returning home. Upon her return, Martin throws a party for Whitney, throwing her together with a new neighbor, Clayton Westmore, who has recently settled in a neighboring house. Whitney finds Clayton attractive, but overbearing and boring. Whitney instead spends the majority of the night attempting to get Paul's attention.

Whitney begins seeing Paul regularly, going on picnics and to parties with him. At the same time, Whitney finds herself running into Clayton on many occasions and seeing him at local parties where they are often thrown together. Eventually Whitney convinces Paul to offer for her hand, but he must leave town before he can speak to her father. Whitney cannot wait and tells her father herself. Martin is shocked, telling Whitney that she is already betrothed to Clayton Westmore, whose name is really Westmoreland, the Duke of Claymore. Whitney is mortified by this arrangement, especially when she learns Clayton paid her father a great deal of money for the pleasure of her hand in marriage. Whitney vows to run away with Paul, but when she tells Paul the truth, he admits he only wanted to marry her for the dowry their pairing would give him.

Whitney realizes she has no choice but to accept her fate. Whitney begins to spend more time with Clayton and soon realizes that she has feelings for him. On the night Whitney decides she will willingly marry Clayton, he hears a rumor that she is betrothed to Paul. Not only this, but Clayton also is told that Whitney is not a virgin. Outraged, Clayton forces himself on Whitney only to learn these rumors are untrue. Whitney is angry and unhappy, ending all communication with Clayton. However, when she sees him again she realizes she is in love with him and cannot continue being estranged from him. Unfortunately, at the same time Whitney discovers that Clayton has ended their betrothal. Whitney becomes angry and humiliates Clayton for the perceived injury.



Eventually Whitney comes to understand that Clayton ended the betrothal in order to free her from any sense of obligation to him after the terrible act he committed against her. Whitney goes to Clayton and forces him to admit his feelings for her. They decide to marry and live in marital bliss for several months. However, Clayton once again becomes angry with Whitney after finding a note that appears to be proof of her betrayal. Whitney sits back and allows Clayton to figure out how wrong he is. Eventually Clayton comes to Whitney, ending their feud shortly before the birth of their first child, a son.

Clayton Westmoreland, the Duke of Claymore

Clayton is a thirty-something bachelor who has created for himself a womanizer reputation. Clayton is known for taking as mistresses some very famous women, including a singing star as well as the daughters of important members of the social class. Clayton is not the type of man who wants a committed relationship, preferring his own company to anyone else. However, as a duke, Clayton has a responsibility to have children, especially a son to inherit his title. When Clayton meets Whitney, a beautiful debutante who has attracted some of the most important men in England and France, he is enchanted by her beauty. Clayton is also annoyed that Whitney has refused to acknowledge him several times when they were introduced. Clayton decides Whitney will make a good wife and an excellent mother. Clayton investigates Whitney's family and makes an offer to her father that her father cannot resist.

Clayton moves to a modest estate near Whitney's home and gives everyone a false name, leading them to believe he is just a regular guy. Clayton then begins to court Whitney despite the fact that Whitney is courting Paul. Clayton learns about Whitney's childhood and believes that it is pride that has caused her to be so obsessed with Paul. Clayton believes that Whitney simply wants to win Paul in order to prove to all her neighbors who scorned her as a child that she can. Clayton sits back and allows the courtship to continue. However, when Whitney learns that Clayton is her betrothed, she promises to end her relationship with Paul. Clayton goes to London with the intention of giving Whitney the space she needs to deal with Paul. However, Clayton finds that he misses Whitney and decides to return early. When he does, Clayton hears a rumor that Whitney and Paul are betrothed. Clayton becomes angry, especially when he learns that Whitney has gone to London, unaware that she has gone to London to see him.

When Clayton arrives at the home of Whitney's friend where she is attending a party, Clayton encounters a girl who is a rival of Whitney's and who tells Clayton that Whitney is not a virgin. This plays into Clayton's dark jealousy, causing him to grab Whitney out of the party and drag her to his country home. There, Clayton forces himself upon Whitney, believing she is soiled and therefore fair game. Unfortunately, Clayton was lied to and Whitney was a virgin before he forced himself on her. Overwhelmed with regret, Clayton leaves Whitney alone, sending her home without explanation or apology. Clayton is filled with grief over his actions, convinced he has ruined all chances with Whitney. Clayton frees Whitney from their betrothal contract and buries himself in work in an attempt to forget his broken heart. When Clayton is lured to the wedding of a



friend of Whitney's he believes Whitney has forgiven him and is willing to give their romance a try. Clayton discovers he is wrong, however, when Whitney convinces him that she does not want him any longer.

Clayton still has an obligation to marry and have an heir, so he rekindles a romance with another young socialite he dated long before meeting Whitney. Just before Clayton and his lady friend announce their engagement, Whitney shows up at Clayton's and forces him to listen to her apology and an explanation for her actions. Clayton and Whitney realize they love each other and decide to marry. The first few months of marriage are bliss. However, when Clayton discovers a note that implies that Whitney believed she was pregnant with another man's baby at the time she begged for his forgiveness, Clayton ends their relationship. Clayton moves into another part of the house and treats Whitney as though she is a house guest. Eventually, however, Clayton comes to realize the note was intended for him in a pride-saving gesture that Whitney decided not to indulge. Clayton and Whitney get back together.

Lady Anne Gilbert

Lady Anne Gilbert is Whitney's aunt on her mother's side. Lady Anne is a kind woman who never had children of her own; therefore, she treats Whitney as though she were her own daughter. Whitney comes to live with Lady Anne and her husband when she is fifteen, just in time for Lady Anne to stand beside her during her debut. Lady Anne does all she can to teach Whitney what she needs to know to be successful in society but to still remain true to herself.

When Whitney meets the Duke of Claymore, Lady Anne is worried because she knows Clayton has a reputation for using women, and she does not want to see her niece become another of his mistresses. When Lady Anne learns that Clayton wants to marry Whitney, her opinion changes slightly but not much. Lady Anne continues to be concerned for Whitney and aids her in her scheme to convince Paul to marry her. Later, when Clayton's scheme is revealed, Lady Anne helps Whitney keep Clayton at arm's length. However, Lady Anne soon comes to realize that Whitney is in love with Clayton and she does all she can to help ensure their betrothal despite her own misgivings. After all, Lady Anne only wants happiness for Whitney.

Lord Edward Gilbert

Lord Edward Gilbert is Lady Anne's husband. Lord Edward is a diplomat with the British Consulate in Paris which is where he brings Whitney after her father begs the couple to take the troubled child off his hands. Lord Edward is a mellow man who is relaxed around Whitney, making it possible for her to act as herself around him instead of putting on a facade as she always felt it necessary to do around her father. In this way, Lord Edward is the kind of father Whitney always wanted and needed.

Lord Edward is called away when Whitney is due to return to England, so he sends Lady Anne with Whitney. When Lady Anne learns of Clayton's intentions toward



Whitney, she tries desperately to find Lord Edward but has little success. Later, when Lord Edward returns to England, he reveals that he has known about Clayton and Whitney's betrothal all along and was all for it. Lord Edward knew that Clayton was the perfect man for his outspoken niece and that his absence was important to help Whitney discover the beauty of the match for herself.

Martin Stone

Martin Stone is Whitney's father. Martin finds himself deeply in debt and facing debtor's prison in the years his daughter is off in Paris. When Clayton Westmoreland offers to pay Martin for Whitney's hand in marriage rather than accepting a dowry, Martin is thrilled with the offer. It is a good marriage for Whitney and it means saving himself from debtor's prison. Martin agrees to the deal, also agreeing not to tell Whitney about it until Clayton is able to court Whitney and hopefully encourage her to fall in love with him. However, Martin finds himself telling Whitney unexpectedly when she announces her betrothal to Paul. Whitney is horrified and does not speak to her father for a long time as a result.

Paul Sevarin

Paul Sevarin is a good looking boy who lives in the same small village where Whitney lives. As a small girl, Whitney develops a crush on Paul and decides he is the boy she wants to marry. Whitney begins following Paul around, snooping on him even when he goes into town and spends time in the local pub. Whitney also does stunts to get Paul's attention, including standing up on the bare back of a horse. Paul is embarrassed by Whitney's attentions and often finds himself forced to monitor his own behavior to keep Whitney from seeing him do something inappropriate. Paul wants Whitney to leave him alone, and he proves this by showering another local girl, Elisabeth, with his attentions.

When Whitney returns from Paris, she is a different girl. Whitney is poised, beautiful, and surrounded by suitors. Paul finds Whitney irresistible and begins spending a great deal of time with her. Paul often becomes jealous when he sees Whitney with another man. Finally Paul asks Whitney to marry him. When Whitney agrees, Paul arranges to speak to her father, but cannot do it until a week after he has made his initial request. Whitney cannot wait and tells her father alone. Whitney learns that she is already betrothed to the Duke of Claymore. Whitney refuses to marry the duke, instead planning to elope with Paul. However, when Whitney informs Paul of their situation, he admits that he only wanted to marry her for her dowry. Whitney ends the engagement.

Nicolas Du Ville

Nicolas Du Ville is the brother of Terese Du Ville, a friend Whitney made in Paris. Nicolas is much like Clayton, a man who does not like the idea of commitment and who openly shuns any attempts at matchmaking. However, when Nicolas meets Whitney he is enchanted by her. Contrary to his normal actions, Nicolas decides to attend Whitney's



debutante ball and dances with her, making her the belle of the ball. Later, Nicolas and Whitney become good friends. Shortly before Whitney returns to England, Nicolas begins paying a great deal of attention to her, causing society gossips to believe he intends to ask for her hand in marriage. Whitney openly discourages this, however, because she thinks of Nicolas only as a friend. Later, when Whitney and Clayton have a falling out, Nicolas becomes her steady companion. Nicolas asks Whitney to marry him and is disappointed when she refuses.

Lady Emily Archibald

Lady Emily is one of Whitney's childhood friends, the only true friend she has. Whitney and Emily write to each other often while Whitney is in France. When Whitney returns to England, she quickly enlists Emily's help in seducing Paul. Later, after learning of her betrothal to Clayton, Whitney stays in Emily's home while visiting London to attend a ball with Clayton. Emily likes the idea of a marriage between Clayton and Whitney, believing they are well suited to each other, but not one else believes Clayton would choose a woman such as Whitney, who has no title and no money. They do not know that Whitney and Clayton are already betrothed.

When Clayton becomes jealous and steals Whitney away in the middle of the night to rob her of her virtue, it is from Emily's house that he does this. Emily is the only person Whitney confesses the truth to about this terrible night, and it is Emily who convinces Whitney that Clayton is still in love with her despite his decision to release her from their betrothal contract. If not for Emily, Whitney may never have made an attempt to communicate with Clayton, resulting in their reuniting and becoming married.

Stephen Westmoreland

Stephen Westmoreland is Clayton's younger brother. Stephen is a charismatic, fun loving man who is a lot like his older brother. When Stephen realizes Clayton is in love with Whitney, he does all he can to encourage them to come back together, going so far as to force Whitney to have dinner with the family on the same night Clayton had wanted to announce his engagement to another woman. Later, Stephen finds himself in a similar situation with a neighbor's daughter. Stephen falls in love with the young woman, causing the society gossips to believe he is about to become betrothed. However, before he can speak to the young woman's father, the love of his life is married off to another man who owns lands that the girl's father has wanted to possess for many years. This leaves Stephen depressed and anxious to drown his misery.

Marie St. Allermain

Marie St. Allermain is Clayton Westmoreland's ex-mistress. Marie St. Allermain is a singer who performs all over the world. Shortly after Clayton and Whitney are married and suffer an estrangement, Marie St. Allermain performs at a party they are attending. Marie St. Allermain senses the tension between the couple and suggests to Clayton that



she would be open to becoming his mistress once more. However, Clayton knows that this would mean social suicide for Whitney, so he refuses. Clayton is not in love with Marie St. Allermain and does not want to be with her for emotional reasons. However, Clayton enjoyed his time with Marie St. Allermain and thinks about an affair for that reason but ultimately refuses out of sentimentality for his wife.



Objects/Places

Dresses and jewelry

Clayton, as part of his betrothal agreement with Martin Stone, pays for Whitney to buy new dresses and jewelry before her return to England from France.

Emerald Necklace

Clayton provides Whitney with an emerald necklace the night of her coming home party to match her dress. Martin tells his daughter the necklace belonged to her mother, but Whitney knows it does not. However, Whitney does not question her father about this lie.

Opal Ring

Paul gives Whitney an opal ring as a betrothal ring before speaking to her father about their possible betrothal. Whitney rushes to show the ring to her father and learns about her betrothal to Clayton as a result.

Diamond Ring

Clayton gives Whitney a diamond ring for their betrothal ring. Whitney removes this ring after she and Clayton become estranged in reaction to his removal of the ring she gave him on their wedding night. This infuriates Clayton, forcing him to question his belief that Whitney betrayed him.

Note to Clayton

In an attempt to save her pride, Whitney writes a note to Clayton claiming she is pregnant in hopes that it will cause him to rush to her side. Whitney decides against sending the note, but Clayton later finds it and assumes it was meant for another man.

Ring

Whitney gives Clayton a ring on their wedding night that is engraved with the words, "my Lord." This ring is a symbol of their love, but Clayton refuses to wear it after finding a note that causes him to believe Whitney married him for reasons other than love.



Baby Clothes

Whitney embroiders a W into a baby outfit and leaves it in a drawer for Clayton to find. In this manner, Whitney hopes to announce the impending birth of their first child. However, Clayton finds a note that Whitney wrote many months before and becomes enraged, causing him to deny the child and to end his relationship with Whitney.

Khan

Khan is Whitney's horse. Clayton refuses to allow Whitney to ride Khan after learning of her pregnancy even though they have become estranged and he claims to not care about her safety any longer.

Wooden Chest

After the birth of her son, Noel, the future heir to Clayton's title, Whitney is presented with a wooden chest. This chest contains letters written by previous Duchesses of Claymore that contain the stories of their romances and the births of their sons. Whitney reads each one before adding her own story and a picture of herself that Clayton chose, as per tradition.

The Stone Estate

The Stone Estate is the home Whitney shares with her father, Martin. Martin becomes overwhelmed with debt and is close to losing his home when the Duke of Claymore offers him the sum of one-hundred-thousand pounds in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage.

Claymore

Claymore is the name of Clayton's large estate outside London. It is here that Clayton takes Whitney when he believes she has become betrothed to another man. It is also here where their wedding reception will take place and where Whitney and Clayton live after their wedding.

London, England

Lady Archibald has a home in London which is where Whitney stays when she travels to London to attend a ball with Clayton. Later, it is here that Whitney writes the note that will later threaten to end her marriage.

Paris, France

Whitney moves to Paris with her aunt and uncle, where her uncle is a diplomat attached to the British Consulate. It is in Paris that Whitney reaches maturity and has her debut. Later, Clayton meets Whitney in Paris and decides she is the perfect wife and mother for his unborn children even though she is unaware of him and his title.



Themes

Misdirection and Misunderstandings

Misdirection is a theme of this novel because it is the one thing that keeps Whitney and Clayton from coming together sooner than they do. Clayton begins this theme by refusing to allow Whitney to know either who he is or that they are betrothed. Clayton is fascinated by Whitney and believes she will make him a good wife and a wonderful mother to his future children. However, Clayton does not believe in love and does not fancy himself in love with Whitney. Clayton handles this engagement as a business arrangement, paying Whitney's father for the pleasure of becoming her husband. Clayton does not want Whitney to know about this arrangement or the truth about his title because he wants Whitney to come to the marriage willingly. Clayton believes that if Whitney knows the truth about their arrangement, she will refuse to marry him, bringing embarrassment to both Clayton and her own father.

Whitney eventually learns the truth, but by this time she has begun to have feelings for Clayton. Unfortunately, Clayton hears a rumor that causes him to misunderstand Whitney's actions and the emotions she claims to feel for him. Clayton believes not only that Whitney is engaged to another man but that she has given her virginity to several other men. Clayton has a dark temper, and while operating under this misunderstanding, he steals Whitney away to his private estate and robs her of her virtue. Whitney is humiliated, a humiliation that is deepened when she discovers belatedly that Clayton has decided to back out of their betrothal contract. At this point, Whitney begins to believe that Clayton has made a fool out of her and that this was his intention all along. It takes several weeks and the support of a good friend to help her see that Clayton's actions were those of a man in love who thought he had done an unforgivable thing (i.e., robbing her of her virtue) to his beloved.

Finally, Whitney and Clayton discuss all these misunderstandings and discover that they have both developed an affection for one another. Clayton and Whitney become engaged and are married quickly. After six months of blissful marriage, Whitney tries to surprise Clayton with the news that she is expecting their child. Unfortunately, Clayton discovers a note Whitney wrote to him, claiming to be with child. Since their one union before their marriage was not completed, Clayton comes to believe this note was meant for another man and that Whitney tricked him into marriage while convinced she was pregnant by another man. Clayton does not stop to consider the facts or to discuss this possibility with Whitney. Clayton ends his connections with Whitney, removing her from his life in every way except for their public appearances. In time, Whitney discovers the reason for her husband's anger and decides to allow him to work out the situation on his own, believing he will eventually see the truth without her help, which he finally does.



Love

Clayton does not believe in love, but Whitney does. In fact, Whitney has believed herself to be in love with a neighbor, Paul, since she was very young. Whitney wants to marry Paul which causes her to turn down every marriage proposal made to her from the moment of her public debut. Whitney wants nothing more than to return to England and to convince Paul that she has changed from the scandalous child she once was into a sophisticated beauty. When she does return to England, Whitney is already promised to Clayton Westmoreland, although she is unaware of this betrothal. Whitney turns her charms on Paul, quickly pulling him under her spell, causing him to propose within weeks of their reunion. However, Whitney soon learns that Paul's motivation for proposing was not love, but the money he imagined Whitney would provide through her dowry. Finally Whitney realizes the love she thought she felt for Paul was really only her desire to recover her pride after a childhood filled with tragedy and scandal.

At the same time, Clayton has gotten to know Whitney better, and the more he knows her, the more he admires her strength. Clayton becomes jealous at the thought of Whitney and Paul betrothed, causing him to act in ways that go against the honor that normally rules his behavior. Soon after, Clayton realizes his actions are the direct result of his feelings for Whitney. Clayton has fallen in love with Whitney, but now that he has hurt her, he believes it is too late for their budding relationship. Clayton does not realize that Whitney, too, has come to love him. The couple remain estranged for a while until Whitney is able to convince Clayton of her love for him. Their relationship is endangered once again when Clayton finds a note he believes Whitney has written to another man, claiming a pregnancy, but soon Clayton is able to look past his feelings of betrayal and see that Whitney would never betray him.

As the love blossoms between Whitney and Clayton, others declare their love for these two enigmatic people. Whitney is followed throughout Europe by Nicolas Du Ville, a young French man who has refused the affections of all the eligible ladies who have chased after him. Nicolas finds Whitney as irresistible as Clayton but cannot convince her of his honest intentions. Whitney refuses Nicolas' marriage proposal, ending their friendship and leaving Nicolas brokenhearted. At the same time, Clayton is chased after by several women, including his ex-mistress, the singer Marie St. Allermaine. Clayton entertains the thought of renewing his relationship with St. Allermaine when he believes that Whitney has betrayed him but decides against it in an effort to protect his wife's social reputation.

Friends and Family

Whitney's mother died when she was a small child and her father is an unemotional man who does not know what to do with his wild and impetuous daughter. Whitney is pushed off onto her aunt and uncle who become to her the parents she has never known. Whitney is spoiled with every luxury a young woman can enjoy and given a debut into Paris society that rivals that of the other privileged ladies of her day. When



the offers come for Whitney's hand in marriage, she refuses them all and her uncle supports her decision despite the social ramifications of her choosiness. Whitney also has friends who are of great support to her. Whitney's friendship with Nicolas Du Ville provides her with a lift in society that makes her one of the most desirable young women in Paris. Whitney also depends on her childhood friend, Emily, to console her through the turbulence of her relationship with Clayton.

Clayton, too, has friends and family who support him. Clayton's brother, Stephen, recognizes Clayton's feelings for Whitney even before Clayton realizes how deep his feelings are. Stephen helps Whitney convince Clayton to forgive her for a misunderstanding that threw Clayton into another woman's arms. Later, Stephen plays a minor role in bringing Whitney and Clayton back together. Without the support of his family, Clayton might have allowed Whitney to walk out of his life, not once but twice. For these reasons, friends and family is an important theme to this novel.

Style

Point of View

The point of view of the novel is third person omniscient. The narrating character is different from chapter to chapter, and often from scene to scene. The author uses both main characters, Clayton and Whitney, as narrators as well as other major and minor characters. The point of view in this novel often changes in mid paragraph, at times in mid sentence. The changes in point of view take place in order to allow the reader to see what is going through the mind of a particular character at an important moment, especially when it is an emotionally charged scene between Clayton and Whitney.

The point of view in this book works, despite difficulties in understanding which character is the narrator at a particular moment. The point of view shifts frequently, often in the middle of a scene, causing the reader to have to read certain passages more than once in order to understand in whose mind they currently reside. However, the shifting viewpoints allow the reader to understand what each character is feeling during a particular event or scene. The third person point of view allows the reader to see a character's thoughts and feelings without keeping the reader stuck with only one character's thoughts or feelings. This helps the reader to see everything from both Whitney and Clayton's point of views, giving insight into character motivations and actions.

Setting

The novel begins in the 19th century English countryside where Whitney's father has an estate. The novel then moves to Paris where Whitney goes to live with her aunt and uncle and where she has her debut into society. Whitney, who was a troubled child after the death of her mother, is a hit with Paris society and is soon overwhelmed with marriage proposals. However, Whitney turns them all down in hopes of marrying her childhood crush, Paul. The setting then returns to the English countryside where Whitney is unwittingly courted by Clayton Westmoreland while she attempts to seduce Paul into a betrothal. The novel then moves to London where Whitney and Clayton attend a ball and their relationship blossoms, only to fail, then blossom again.

The many settings of the novel work well with the story. By setting the novel in the 19th century, the writer has set up a situation in which her main characters must follow certain rules in their courting rituals. Not only this, but the timing of the novel allows the betrothal contract between Clayton Westmoreland and Martin Stone a sense of realism. The setting of England also gives the novel a sense of sophistication as well as giving weight to the title that Clayton holds. Finally, the setting of the novel plays well to the genre as the time period and location are both romantic settings that have played well in many novels of this genre.



Language and Meaning

The novel is written in simple English. The novel contains exposition that is simple and reflects the time in which the novel was written. However, the novel also contains dialogue that is stiff and grammatically correct, reflecting the time period in which the novel is set. There is little slang in the novel, but there are words in foreign languages, specifically French, reflecting the fact that one of the settings of the novel is Paris, France. These phrases are often spoken by characters living in France and are easily explained within the dialogue in which they appear; moreover, most educated English of that era spoke French fluently.

The language of the novel is appropriate to the setting and situation within the novel. The exposition is simple and easy to read, while the dialogue is often stiff and grammatically correct, reflecting the time period in which the novel is set. The difference between the dialogue and exposition can be jarring to the reader but is not overly distracting. The foreign words and phrases in the novel are not overwhelming and are often simple enough that the reader can find an explanation within the surrounding passages; therefore, the novel is simple to read and appropriate to its setting.

Structure

The novel is divided into forty-two chapters with three parts. The chapters have no title and tend to be long, some as long as thirty pages while others can be as short as ten pages. The first part only contains two chapters, the second six chapters, while the third contains the remaining thirty-four chapters. The novel is told in a linear fashion, beginning when Whitney is only fifteen and continuing through her twentieth birthday, her wedding, and the birth of her first child. The novel is told in both exposition and dialogue, creating full scenes that allow the reader to feel pulled into the story, watching events unfold alongside the main characters.

The novel contains one main plot and several subplots. The main plot follows the beginning of the relationship between Clayton and Whitney, their engagement, wedding, and the birth of their first child. One subplot involves the romance between Whitney and her good friend, Nicolas DuVille. Another subplot follows Whitney as she attempts to seduce into marriage her childhood crush, Paul. Another subplot follows the budding romance between Clayton's brother, Stephen and the daughter of one of Clayton's neighbors. This subplot has little to do with the main plot and is not resolved at the end of the novel, but the rest of the subplots are satisfactorily resolved by the end of the novel.



Quotes

"Whitney was so astonished to discover that she wasn't the only female in all of England who didn't devour the insipid things, that she instantly forgot her resolution to speak only in monosyllables." Part 1, England 1816: Chapter 1, pg. 14

"The Channel seemed to smooth out as she marched across the deck to stare in the direction of France. And her future." Part 1, England 1816: Chapter 2, pg. 22

"Whitney Stone, on the other hand, was a veritable treasure of contrasts, sparkling like rich, red burgundy with the promise of hidden and tantalizing things to come." Part 2, France 1816-1820: Chapter 4, pg. 35

"Without the cane, the gout, and the wheezing and snorting, you cannot possibly hope to convince anyone that you are a duke. Couldn't you choose some other title to which to aspire? You might be able to pass yourself off as an Earl if you had a bit of a squint and a club foot." Part 2, France 1816-1820: Chapter 6, pg. 57

"He wanted Whitney, and he wanted her immediately, but he'd be damned if he'd court her in France, standing in line, plying the fop and bowing like an ass. That he would not do for any woman, even Miss Stone." Part 2, France 1816-1820: Chapter 7, pg. 67

"Wading in the stream, Whitney quickly decided, was not quite as enjoyable as she remembered it. For one thing, the water was freezing cold, and beneath her feet the rocks were sharper and slipperly." Part 3, England 1820: Chapter 10, pg. 93

"Mentally she rehearsed her strategy as she walked downstairs to the drawing room where Paul was waiting for her. She would make him think she was returning to Paris with Aunt Anne when Uncle Edward came for her. If that didn't prod Paul into offering for her, then nothing ever would." Part 3, England 1820: Chapter 14, pg. 165

"So long as they could hear her footsteps in the hall, Whitney walked slowly, refusing to give them the satisfaction of hearing her flee like a terrified hare. At the end of the hall she turned, her pace quickening with every step until she was rushing headlong, tripping on a stair, then running down the hall toward the safety, the sanity, of her room. Once inside it, she leaned against the door in a cold, trembling paralysis...staring at the cheerful, cozy room she'd left so excitedly but a half hour ago, her mind unable to cope with the disaster that had just occurred." Part 3, England 1820: Chapter 16, pg. 206

"Poor Paul, she thought contritely. She'd been so caught up in this web of intrigue, trying to outmaneuver and second-guess Clayton Westmoreland, that she hadn't devoted any thought at all to the man she loved." Part 3, England 1820: Chapter 18, pg. 231



"Caught in the spell of those compelling gray eyes, Whitney yielded to the sudden temptation to let herself truly enjoy the evening, which already held the promise of enchantment."

Part 3, England 1820: Chapter 21, pg. 285

"For the first time since he had met her, Clayton didn't know what to say to her. He felt as if he were in a dream, and he was afraid to speak lest he say the wrong thing and break the spell. He thought of apologizing for ravaging her, but in view of the crime he had committed against her an apology was ludicrously inadequate. What he really wanted to see was, 'Marry me tomorrow,' but having already deprived her of her wedding night, Clayton was resolutely determined that she would have a spectacular wedding, complete with all the splendor and trappings, all the glittering pomp and circumstance, that she was entitled to enjoy as the bride of a duke." Part 3, England 1820: Chapter 27, pg. 389

"In answer, Clayton opened the top drawer of the night table and with a tender smile, he handed her a small portrait of herself on her wedding day. It was framed in solid gold. On the back of the frame was an inscription from him that read, 'Whitney—my wife and my love.'" Part 3, England 1820: Chapter 42, pg. 577

Topics for Discussion

Discuss Whitney Stone. Who is Whitney? Why is she introduced while riding on the back of a horse, standing up? What does this stunt tell the reader about Whitney? How is this introduction reinforced as the plot begins to unfold? Who is Paul? How does Whitney feel about Paul? How does this relationship interfere with Clayton's intentions toward Whitney?

Discuss Clayton Westmoreland. Who is Clayton? What title does he hold? Why does he become fascinated with Whitney? Why does Whitney ignore him the first few times they meet? How does this impact Clayton's later decision to marry her? Why does Clayton want to marry Whitney? What does Clayton hope to achieve from this match? Is Clayton in love with Whitney?

Discuss Nicolas DuVille. Who is Nicolas? Why is Nicolas reluctant to meet Whitney? Why does Nicolas change his mind about Whitney? What does Nicolas do to aid Whitney on the night of her debutante ball? How does this affect Whitney's social status? When do Nicolas' feelings toward Whitney change? Why? What does Nicolas want from Whitney? Does he get it?

Who is Paul? Why does Whitney want to marry him? Does Whitney love him? Why is Paul reluctant to spend time with Whitney when she is young? Why does this change? When does Paul propose? Why? How does Whitney feel when she learns the truth about Paul's proposal? What does this truth reveal about Whitney's feelings for Paul?

Who is Marie St. Allermaine? What was she to Clayton? How does this affect his public persona? How does this affect the way Lady Anne feels about Clayton's betrothal to Whitney? What happens when Clayton and Whitney encounter Ms. St. Allermaine after their wedding? How does it affect Whitney's feelings for Clayton? How does it affect Clayton's opinion of Whitney's feelings for him?

What note does Clayton find in Whitney's stationary? How does this note affect him? Why? Why does Clayton not go to Whitney about this note? Why does Clayton jump to the wrong conclusion? How does this note affect Whitney and Clayton's relationship? How could this situation have been avoided?

Discuss the theme of misdirection. What is misdirection? How does it affect the characters in this novel? List the number of misdirection or misunderstandings in the novel. List how each affects the plot development. How could each of these events been avoided or explained? Discuss why the author chose to utilize this theme. Discuss how often this theme appears in novels of this genre. Discuss other novels or television shows in which misdirection or misunderstandings play a major role or act as a main theme.