

# Gone with the Wind



## INTRODUCTION

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF MARGARET MITCHELL

Margaret Mitchell was the daughter of the wealthy attorney Eugene Mitchell and the Irish immigrant and avid suffragette Maybelle Stephens. She grew up in Jackson Hill in Atlanta nearby her crude and explosive grandmother, from whom she heard firsthand stories about the Civil War. However, she did not learn that the South lost the war until she was 10 years old. Growing up, Mitchell preferred riding her pony to playing with dolls. She was an avid reader and writer of stories that often focused on the themes of honor and love. Two things that greatly influenced Mitchell when she was a child were the Atlanta Race Riot, as well as accompanying her mother to suffragette meetings (the 19th amendment, which gave women the right to vote, passed when Mitchell was 19). Although Margaret's brother believed that education ruined girls, her mother believed education was a girl's tool for survival. With her mother's encouragement, Mitchell attended Washington Seminary and then Smith College. Mitchell was engaged twice and eventually married Kinnard Upshaw, an alcoholic who later physically and emotionally abused her. Their marriage ended in divorce. Mitchell then married John Marsh when she was 29. Between her marriages, she wrote for the *Atlanta Journal* and continued to publish articles for four years until an ankle injury kept her home. Bored and needing something to do, she wrote *Gone with the Wind*, her only novel, which won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. In 1949, she was hit by a drunk driver when she was crossing Peachtree Street. She died from her injuries a few days later.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The American Civil War and Reconstruction are the driving forces of *Gone with the Wind*. The Civil War was fought between April 1861 and May 1865 over the institution of slavery in the Southern United States. Just after President Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated, seven states—including Georgia, where the novel takes place—seceded from the Union. Over its four years, the war resulted in at least a million casualties of soldiers and civilians, most caused by disease. As Union troops took each Southern state, they freed enslaved people and began the process of Reconstruction. Reconstruction lasted until 1877, and its main goal was to permanently end slavery and bring the Southern states back into the Union. During this time, three “Reconstruction Amendments” were passed, including the 13th which outlawed slavery, and the 14th and 15th, which guaranteed citizenship and voting rights for formerly enslaved Black people.

Reconstruction ended when Democrats gained control of the House of Representatives and withdrew federal troops from the South. It quickly gave way to Jim Crow laws which upheld segregation and took rights away from the Black people Reconstruction sought to help. During Reconstruction, the Ku Klux Klan came to power, and the idea of the “Lost Cause” (which features prominently in the novel) was developed. The Lost Cause cast the Confederate cause as heroic and just, and it refused to acknowledge that slavery was the primary reason for the Civil War—a common criticism of *Gone with the Wind*. In addition, Margaret Mitchell was also influenced by the passing of the 19th amendment, which gave women the right to vote and contributed to her exploration of feminism and sexual freedom in *Gone with the Wind*.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

*Gone with the Wind* has at times been proposed a contender for the Great American novel. Other contenders with similar themes of racism and Reconstruction are *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, and Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* can be the most closely compared with *Gone with the Wind* because it also depicts slavery firsthand—though unlike *Gone with the Wind*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is overtly against slavery. *Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier is another American novel that tells of love and loss during the Civil War, while the Australian novel *The Thorn Birds* by Colleen McCullough is often heralded as the Australian *Gone with the Wind*. Another epic tale about slavery—but one that focuses on American slavery's horrors, rather than glorifying it—is Alex Haley's novel *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. It tells the story of seven generations of the author's family, beginning with the author's 18th-century ancestor who was abducted from the Gambia and sold into slavery into America.

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Gone with the Wind*
- **When Written:** 1926
- **Where Written:** Atlanta, Georgia
- **When Published:** 1936
- **Literary Period:** Modernism
- **Genre:** Novel, Historical Fiction, Bildungsroman
- **Setting:** American South before, during, and after the Civil War
- **Climax:** The Siege of Atlanta
- **Antagonist:** Yankees, Reconstruction

- **Point of View:** Third Person

## EXTRA CREDIT

**Tomboy.** When Margaret Mitchell was three years old, her dress caught fire at the stove. Her mother was so afraid it would happen again that she dressed her in pants from then on. Her brother—who refused to play with girls—played with her as long as she called herself Jimmy and pretended to be a boy, which she did until she was 14.

**Controversy.** *Gone with the Wind* has been banned in classrooms for its portrayal of race relations and for painting slavery and the pre-Civil War South in a favorable light. The famous movie adaptation of the book has been removed from viewing platforms countless times for the same reason.



## PLOT SUMMARY

One day in northern Georgia, 1861, Scarlett O'Hara is sitting at her family's plantation, **Tara**, with twins Brent and Stuart Tarleton, talking about the prospect of the Civil War. Scarlett maintains that the war won't happen, and that the subject bores her. The twins also share that Ashley Wilkes and Melanie Hamilton will be announcing their engagement at the Wilkes' barbecue the next day. Scarlett is upset—she loves Ashley. After the twins leave, Scarlett goes to meet her father, Gerald O'Hara, who tells her she shouldn't love Ashley because he is too different from her.

Ignoring her father's advice, Scarlett flirts with everyone at the barbecue to make Ashley jealous, then corners him and confesses she loves him. Ashley admits that he loves her too but says that he and Scarlett are too different to be happy together. After he leaves, Scarlett is humiliated to discover that Rhett Butler—a strange man who'd been staring at her all day and who'd said the North would beat the South if there was a war—overheard her and Ashley's conversation. Scarlett wants to run away but encounters Charles Hamilton, Honey Wilke's beau. He asks her to marry him and she says yes, wanting to spite everyone. Meanwhile, news arrives that the Civil War has started.

Two weeks later, Scarlett marries Charles and Ashley marries Melanie. Both men leave for the war and Charles dies from pneumonia two months later. Meanwhile, Scarlett gives birth to Charles's son, Wade Hampton, and becomes depressed: she has to pretend she's mourning a husband she didn't love, and she misses Ashley. To cheer her, Ellen sends her to **Atlanta** to stay with Melanie and Miss Pittypat. In Atlanta, life is difficult: Melanie annoys Scarlett and the wounded soldiers in the war hospital where she volunteers nauseate her, but she reconnects with Rhett Butler. He's now a blockader who sneaks in goods from England for the Confederate army. Although she

is repulsed by Rhett's bad manners, she secretly agrees with him that the war is foolish. Their relationship scandalizes Atlanta, but Scarlett doesn't care. She wants Rhett to say he loves her so she can control him, but he refuses; instead, he asks her to be his mistress.

Ashley comes to Atlanta on furlough. Before he leaves, he makes Scarlett promise to take care of Melanie, whose health is weak. Scarlett tells Ashley she still loves him and they kiss, but a few weeks later, Melanie learns she's pregnant. As the war gets closer to Atlanta, Scarlett receives word that Ellen and her sisters have typhoid fever. Though Miss Pittypat evacuates, Scarlett and Melanie can't leave, as Melanie is due to give birth any day. As the fighting reaches Atlanta, Melanie goes into labor. Dr. Meade is too busy tending wounded soldiers to help, so Scarlett and Prissy deliver the baby themselves. Meanwhile, the Confederates evacuate Atlanta. Feeling alone and scared, Scarlett finds Rhett and asks him to take them all to Tara. He drives them out of Atlanta as it burns, but before they get to Tara, Rhett decides to join the Confederates. He kisses Scarlett and tells her he loves her, then leaves her alone. Scarlett makes the harrowing journey to Tara with her the sickly Melanie and her newborn baby, passing burned plantations and hiding from Yankee soldiers.

When they get to Tara, Scarlett discovers that Ellen died the day before and Gerald is mad with grief. Mammy and Pork are there, but the Yankees stole all Tara's food. Although things at Tara are bleak, Scarlett persists, telling herself she'll think about it all tomorrow. She feels as though she grew up on her journey from Atlanta to Tara, and she vows to never be hungry again. When a Yankee soldier comes to Tara and tries to rob them, Scarlett shoots him with Charles's pistol. Melanie also grabs a weapon to kill the intruder, leading Scarlett to admire her even though she's jealous of her. The war drags on. An uneducated injured soldier named Will Benteen recuperates at Tara and then stays on to help rehabilitate the plantation, while Frank Kennedy—Suellen's beau—visits on leave and proposes to Suellen.

To Scarlett's relief, the South loses Civil War; it brought her nothing but grief. Ashley returns to Tara and to Melanie. In the spring, Scarlett plants and tends a cotton crop, and everything is looking up at Tara until Scarlett hears that Jonas Wilkerson—Tara's old overseer—is raising the taxes on Tara, hoping to evict Scarlett and buy the place himself. When Scarlett asks Ashley for advice, Ashley says he isn't brave enough to cope with his new reality. When Scarlett says she has nothing without Ashley, he gives her a handful of dirt and tells her that she still has the land. Determined to save Tara at whatever cost, Scarlett decides to get money from Rhett Butler, even if she has to be his mistress to do it. She makes a **dress** out of Ellen's velvet curtains and goes to Atlanta with Mammy.

When Scarlett arrives in Atlanta, Rhett is in jail for killing a

Black man. Scarlett goes to visit him, hoping to convince him to marry her so she can have all his money if he's hanged. Rhett quickly realizes her intentions and so refuses to give her the money. Humiliated, Scarlett leaves the jail and runs into Frank Kennedy. Hearing that he made a small fortune after starting a store, Scarlett lies to him that Suellen has married someone else and promptly marries him herself.

Scarlett sends money to Tara, runs Frank's store, and once Rhett gets out of jail, she gets a loan from him to buy a sawmill. She shocks Atlanta with her "unwomanly" behavior; that is, running businesses like a man. Scarlett thinks it's foolish that the old Southerners endure their poverty proudly and pretend they are still ladies and gentlemen; her only goal is to earn money. When she gets pregnant, she's angry as this means she'll have to stop working soon.

When Gerald dies suddenly, Scarlett goes to Tara for his funeral. She learns that Suellen tried to convince Gerald to sign an oath to cooperate with the Yankees, which would've gotten the family government money. He'd gotten so upset that he jumped his horse and broke his neck. Meanwhile, Carreen joins a convent, and Suellen and Will get engaged. Ashley prepares to leave for a job in New York, but Scarlett persuades him to manage her mill in Atlanta, ignoring him when he says he'll lose all self-respect if he doesn't do things for himself. Rhett later calls Scarlett a cheat since he'd asked her not to put his loan towards helping Ashley.

Back in Atlanta, Scarlett gives birth to Ella Lorena and promptly goes back to work. Frustrated by the cost of hiring free Black workers, she hires a convict gang and a cruel man—Johnnie Gallegher—to oversee them. In Atlanta, tensions between free Blacks and the Ku Klux Klan run high. The Democrats resist Reconstruction and refuse to ratify the Republican amendment that gives Blacks the right to vote. One night, when Scarlett is driving alone, a Black man and a white man attack her. Big Sam—one of Tara's old field hands—saves her. When Scarlett gets home, Frank sends her to Melanie's while he sets out with Ashley and the Ku Klux Klan to kill the men who attacked her. Yankee officers come to Melanie's and wait to arrest Frank and Ashley. Frank is killed, but Rhett saves Ashley by bringing him home, pretending to be drunk, and saying they'd spent the whole night in Belle Watling's saloon.

Although Scarlett feels guilty for indirectly causing Frank's death, she accepts Rhett Butler's marriage proposal the night after his funeral. She doesn't love Rhett, but she wants his money. They go on a lavish honeymoon in New Orleans, where Scarlett befriends rich Carpetbaggers and Scallawags. When they get home, Scarlett builds an extravagant house with Rhett's money and hosts parties for her new friends. She even invites Republican Governor Bullock to some parties, causing all her friends in the Old Guard—except Melanie—to shun her. Soon, she gives birth to a daughter, Bonnie Blue. Rhett loves being a father, but since Scarlett doesn't want more children,

she demands separate bedrooms. Secretly, she also still loves Ashley and wants to be physically faithful to him. Hurt by her decision, Rhett becomes increasingly attached to Bonnie. He decides to charm the Old Guard and to join the Democratic party in order to ensure that Bonnie has a good reputation when she grows up.

One day, Scarlett visits Ashley at the mill and someone discovers them crying in each other's arms about the past and the old days. Melanie refuses to believe the rumors that Scarlett and Ashley are romantically involved, and she breaks ties with everyone who turns against Scarlett. However, Rhett explodes at Scarlett for being emotionally unfaithful to him. He yells at her, but they spend a passionate night together. After this night, Scarlett is happy to find out she is pregnant, but she and Rhett don't trust each other enough to share their true feelings. In a shouting match with him, Scarlett slips on the steps, falls, and miscarries. She goes to Tara to recover.

When she returns, Rhett and Scarlett are at an icy impasse. Bonnie turns four soon after, and Rhett buys her a pony and teaches her how to jump. After begging for a higher jump, Bonnie falls and breaks her neck. Rhett is so devastated that he almost loses his mind, but Melanie is able to soothe him.

Scarlett wants to reconnect with her old Democrat friends, but none of them—except Melanie—like her anymore. And not long after, Melanie has a miscarriage and falls ill. As Melanie dies, Scarlett realizes how much she depends on her friend. Melanie makes Scarlett promise to take care of Ashley, who becomes even more useless and despondent after Melanie dies. Scarlett realizes she didn't really love Ashley; loving him was just an old habit. She runs to Rhett, realizing that she loves him. But by the time she confesses her love for him, Rhett no longer loves her. He is worn out by her obsession with Ashley, and he wants to go back to his childhood home. Scarlett is distraught; she has lost absolutely everything. Finally, she decides she will go home to Tara, to Mamma and the old days, and pushes her sadness off—as she always does—to another day.



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Scarlett O'Hara** –Scarlett O'Hara is the protagonist of *Gone with the Wind*. She is not beautiful, but she is very charming, with dark hair, strong eyebrows, pale skin, and green eyes. She is the oldest daughter of Gerald and Ellen O'Hara, and lives at **Tara** when the story begins. Although she wants to be a great lady like her mother one day, she is more like Gerald: willful, passionate, and "earthy." Before the Civil War starts, Scarlett is used to having everything she wants and to being the center of attention. She finds the prospect of the war boring and cannot cope with the fact that the man she thinks she loves—Ashley Wilkes—is going to marry Melanie Hamilton instead of her. She

is often selfish and stops at nothing to get what she wants. Throughout the story, she has three husbands, Charles Hamilton, Frank Kennedy, and Rhett Butler and three children, Wade Hampton, Ella Lorena, and Bonnie Blue Butler, one with each husband. She marries Charles just to spite Ashley, even though Charles is engaged to Honey Wilkes. When the war starts, Scarlett quickly becomes a widow and goes to **Atlanta** where she only wants to ignore the war and have fun. When Ellen dies and Gerald loses his mind, Scarlett becomes determined to do whatever it takes to rise up out of poverty and resume her luxurious lifestyle. To get through hardship, she only thinks about the present moment, pushing off sorrow and consequences to tomorrow. Although she believes many of her actions are justified, she is often simply selfish or callous. For instance, after the war, she deceives Frank Kennedy, her sister Suellen's beau, into marrying her so she can have his money. She usurps Frank's sawmill business and befriends rich Carpetbaggers and Scallawags so she can rise up in society. After Frank is killed, she marries Rhett for his immense fortune. In the end, Scarlett has survived everything—poverty, danger, her daughter Bonnie's death—but her tenacity to get what she wants costs her true love and friendship. She also finally realizes that she loves Rhett, but by this point, he insists he can't love her.

**Rhett Butler** — Rhett Butler is the mysterious stranger who captures Scarlett's attention at the Wilkes' barbecue; he later becomes her third husband. He is swarthy and handsome, with a powerful figure, pirate-like features, and a mocking smile. Before the war, he has a bad reputation because he is rumored to have stayed out all night with a girl and then refused to marry her. He also horrifies Southerners because he thinks the South is only "cotton and arrogance," and that they have no chance against the North in the war. When the war begins, Rhett resides in **Atlanta** and becomes a rich blockader who runs supplies and luxuries in from England for the South and the Confederate army. Although this makes him exciting, he is still despised for being only a "speculator," and for constantly insisting the South is conceited and blind to support the Cause. He takes an interest in Scarlett because they are both "rascals," by which he means they're unsophisticated, practical, and opportunistic. After the Confederacy falls, Rhett becomes rich with Confederate gold. He is accused of being a Scallawag and of being friends with Governor Bullock. Rhett likes to pretend that he doesn't care very deeply about anything, spending his money lavishly and making light of the Cause and his feelings for Scarlett. However, he is devotedly respectful to Melanie Hamilton, and he loves children. Furthermore, he has moments of patriotism and sentimentality. Eight months before the war ends, he joins the Confederate army. Also, his love for his and Scarlett's daughter Bonnie Blue is so strong that he is willing to charm the Old Guard and become a Democrat because he thinks it'll help her future prospects, even though he ruthlessly made fun of them for years. At the end of the novel, he also

refuses to work things out with Scarlett, defeated after years of trying to make her realize she loves him. Throughout the novel, Rhett represents the new South, but in the end he only looks nostalgically back to his youth in Charleston.

**Melanie Wilkes (Hamilton)** — Melanie Hamilton is Ashley Wilkes's cousin and wife, and Charles Hamilton's sister. She has a small, childlike figure with large eyes "like candles." Her delicate health is severely weakened after she has her first child, and throughout the story she never fully recovers. At first, she seems merely sweet, ardent, and naïve—very different from Scarlett who is bold, practical, and selfish. However, when she rushes like Scarlett to kill the Yankee who is trying to rob **Tara**, Scarlett sees that Melanie contains tremendous courage. Through Melanie's fiercely loyal and selfless eyes, some of the worst characters are better than their true selves. Scarlett is brave and good in Melanie's eyes, even though all that Scarlett ever does for Melanie is for selfish reasons. Also, she sees good in Rhett Butler even when he acts unpatriotically or violently. Melanie, like Ellen O'Hara, is a feminine ideal throughout the story whose unconditional love and loyalty contrast with Scarlett's practicality and selfishness. Every character depends on Melanie so that, when she dies of a miscarriage at the end, it seems that everything falls apart without her.

**Ashley Wilkes** — Ashley Wilkes is the object of Scarlett O'Hara's love throughout the story. He has blonde hair and a dreamy, remote expression in his eyes. He is the son of John Wilkes of Twelve Oaks and marries his cousin Melanie Hamilton early on in the story; they have one son, Beau. Before the war, Ashley likes to read poetry and discuss lofty ideas. But the war makes life unbearably real to Ashley, and he struggles to cope after serving in the Confederate army. He can't find the courage to survive in the post-war world, and, although he despises himself for it, relies on Scarlett and others' charity to survive—for instance, Scarlett appoints Ashley to work in one of her mills, which she frames as a favor he's doing for her but which is actually charity. Scarlett believes that Ashley loves her and that he is only married to Melanie out of honor, but in the end she realizes that while Ashley was attracted to her, he genuinely loved Melanie. Upon her death, Melanie asks Scarlett to continue caring for Ashley, something that highlights Ashley's inability to care for himself and means that Scarlett will never fully be able to let Ashley go.

**Mammy** — Mammy is initially enslaved by the O'Haras; after the Civil War, she continues to work for them. She is large and old, with small shrewd eyes, and came with Ellen to **Tara** from Charleston. She feels as though *she* owns the O'Haras, and she always knows all their secrets. She shows her love and pride for the family through scolding each of its members and holding herself above free Blacks and poor white families like the Slatterys. After Ellen dies, Mammy follows Scarlett closely. Although she disapproves of Scarlett offering to be the "scoundrel" Rhett Butler's mistress for money, she is fine with

Scarlett marrying the gentleman Frank Kennedy for practical reasons. When Scarlett first marries Rhett, Mammy hates him, and criticizes both him and Scarlett for thinking they can better themselves by earning lots of money. However, when she sees how wonderful Rhett is with children, her feelings change. After Bonnie dies, Mammy goes back to Tara, insisting she heard Ellen's voice tell her to do so. At the end of the story, Scarlett feels that Mammy is "the last link to the old days."

**Gerald O'Hara** – Gerald O'Hara is Scarlett's father and the master of **Tara**. He is a short, stocky man with a loud voice and a raucous lifestyle. Although he had a rough exterior—he's always gambling, drinking, shouting, and jumping horses—he has a soft heart. He immigrated from Ireland after his family lost their fortune there, hoping to make his own wealth in America. He won Tara—a wide expanse of wilderness in rural northern Georgia—in a poker game. He slowly transformed Tara into a sprawling plantation, and married Ellen O'Hara of Charleston. Throughout the story, Scarlett confides in her father more than in her mother because she and Gerald understand each other; they are both "passionate and earthy." Gerald is deeply devoted to Ellen, but he goes behind her back, getting drunk and dangerously jumping his horse whenever he has the chance. After Ellen dies, Gerald loses his mind and is unable to cope without her. However, he maintains a fierce streak of patriotism until the end, refusing to comply with Suellen who wants him to sign an oath of Yankee cooperation. He dies when he rides home drunk, falls off his horse, and breaks his neck.

**Ellen O'Hara** – Ellen O'Hara, originally Ellen Robillard, is Scarlett's mother and Gerald's wife. Before marrying Gerald, Ellen lived in Charleston and was in love with her cousin, Phillippe Robillard. When Phillippe died in a bar brawl, Ellen married Gerald and became the mistress of **Tara**. She is elegant, strong, and compassionate, tending to the poor white Slattery family when they are ill and giving her family her whole attention. Though Gerald is the owner of Tara, it's well known that Ellen is the one who actually makes the rules—enslaved people on the plantation only began to obey when she married Gerald. During the war she catches typhoid fever from Emmie Slattery and dies, calling Phillippe's name on her deathbed. As far as Scarlett is concerned, Ellen is the picture of a great lady. However, during the war, Scarlett realizes that the things her mother taught her were most important, such as manners, compassion, and dignity, are useless when one is hungry and poor. Throughout the story, Scarlett strays from the example Ellen sets, marrying men for money and running a business in an unladylike manner. But Scarlett continues to idolize her mother, and still imagines that she'll be a great lady like Ellen when she isn't poor anymore.

**Suellen O'Hara** – Suellen is the second oldest O'Hara sister; like Scarlett, she's selfish and only interested in money. After the war, Suellen resists Scarlett's efforts to make her pick cotton in the fields at **Tara**, insisting such a task is beneath her.

In the beginning of the story, her beau is Frank Kennedy; they become engaged during the war. However, Scarlett later marries Frank for his money so she can save Tara, reasoning that Suellen would selfishly keep Frank's money for herself if she married him. Suellen wants money so she can have pretty clothes and go to parties, and she later tries to convince Gerald to sign an oath of Yankee cooperation so he can get a government grant. This sends Gerald into a reckless rage that leads to his death. Will Benteen eventually marries Suellen so that he can keep living at Tara.

**Carreen O'Hara** – Carreen is Scarlett's youngest sister. She is sweet-tempered, timid, and religious. While Scarlett is in **Atlanta**, Carreen gets engaged to Brent Tarleton who is later killed in the war. Carreen never forgets him, believing that future young men will never replace the strong young men the South lost in the war. She ultimately decides to join a convent in Charleston.

**Charles Hamilton** – Charles Hamilton is Scarlett's first husband and Melanie Hamilton's brother. He is shy with curly hair and blushing cheeks. Scarlett thinks that he looks like a calf. Before the Wilkes's barbecue, Charles is unofficially engaged to his cousin Honey Wilkes. At the barbecue, he falls in love with Scarlett, and she marries him to make Ashley Wilkes jealous. They are married for two weeks before he goes away to the war and dies soon after of pneumonia. Although Scarlett never thinks highly of him and tries not to remember him much, their son Wade Hampton grows up idolizing his father's weapons and thinking of him as a hero.

**Frank Kennedy** – Frank Kennedy is one of the County bachelors, though he's older than most. When the story begins, he is Suellen's beau. After a long courtship, he finally proposes to Suellen during the war. Before marrying her, he starts a store in **Atlanta** that sells surplus army goods that have become useless to the Confederate army after the war ends. When Scarlett hears of his small fortune, she lies to him that Suellen has married someone else. Frank is deceived by Scarlett's charms and marries her. Even though they have one child together, Ella Lorena, Scarlett makes Frank unhappy. She takes over his store and operates it better than he did, making him feel emasculated and embarrassed. In Scarlett's opinion, Frank is timid, cowardly, and so generous that he'd rather starve than take money from his neighbors (whom he allowed to buy things on credit). However, she doesn't know that he is an avid member of the Ku Klux Klan. After Scarlett gets attacked, Frank sets out with the Klan to avenge her. He is shot and killed.

**Wade Hampton Hamilton** – Wade Hampton Hamilton is Scarlett and Charles Hamilton's son. When he's young, Scarlett resents him for taking away her youth, and is annoyed by his presence. He was traumatized the night they fled **Atlanta** with Rhett while it burned, and lives in constant fear that the Yankees are coming for him. Scarlett doesn't realize this, and yells at him for nagging her. Wade grows distant from Scarlett

and comes to fear her because of the cold and callous way she treats him, preferring the company of Melanie who is kind to him. Rhett is also kind to Wade, understanding that Scarlett has neglected him. Rhett assures Wade that he cares about him and encourages him to cherish Charles, the father he never met, as a hero.

**Bonnie Blue Butler** — Bonnie Blue Butler is Rhett and Scarlett's daughter. She was originally named Eugene Victoria, but Rhett christens her Bonnie when Melanie says her eyes are as blue as the Bonnie Blue Flag. She is charming and vivacious, except at night in the dark when she wakes from terrible nightmares and only Rhett can comfort her. She idolizes Rhett, and she rides around with him on his horse. Rhett dedicates himself to securing Bonnie's future, which he does by switching political parties. As Bonnie grows, she comes to love riding, so Rhett gets her a pony and teaches her how to jump. At the end of the novel when Bonnie is four years old, she tries to jump too high and falls, breaking her neck and painfully reiterating Gerald's death. Rhett later tells Scarlett that he loved Bonnie because she reminded him of what Scarlett might be like if Scarlett were to love him back.

**Belle Watling** — Belle Watling is a sex worker who owns a brothel in **Atlanta**. She has bright red hair and wears colorful clothes. She has a long-standing relationship with Rhett Butler, who pays for her new brothel after the war. Despite everyone's dislike of her profession, Belle proves herself to be compassionate and generous throughout the novel. She donates money to the war hospital, and she saves the members of the Old Guard by saying they were in her brothel instead of at a Ku Klux Klan meeting. Although Scarlett despises Belle and looks down on her, Rhett ultimately thinks that Belle is Scarlett's superior: while they both have intelligence and business sense, Belle is warm-hearted and Scarlett is not.

**Pork** — Pork is Gerald O'Hara's enslaved valet. He is married to Dilcey and Prissy is their daughter. Throughout the novel, he demonstrates fierce loyalty to the O'Hara family. When there is no food at **Tara**, Pork sneaks into a neighbor's chicken coop to steal some chickens and gets shot in the leg. Instead of scolding him for his robbery, Scarlett praises his loyalty and promises him a watch. After Gerald dies, Scarlett gives Pork Gerald's fine gold watch.

**Prissy** — Prissy is Dilcey and Pork's daughter; she's about 10 years old when the novel starts. She becomes Wade Hamilton's nursemaid when Scarlett goes to **Atlanta** after Charles dies. Scarlett thinks that Prissy is a lazy and a liar, particularly after Prissy tells Scarlett she knows all about midwifery—but when Melanie goes into labor, Prissy is scared and admits that she knows nothing. She also takes her time when Scarlett tells her to hurry on errands and fails to chase the sow into the swamp when the Yankees come to **Tara**. She is the first enslaved girl that Scarlett ever hits.

**Dilcey** — Dilcey is Pork's wife and Prissy's mother. Early on, Gerald buys Dilcey and Prissy from the Wilkes so that the family can be together. Dilcey is diligent and faithful, staying on at **Tara** even after the war. She is the only person who doesn't complain about picking cotton with Scarlett in the fields.

**Miss Pittypat Hamilton** — Miss Pittypat Hamilton is the elderly single aunt who raised Melanie and Charles Hamilton. She owns a brick house on Peachtree Street in **Atlanta**. She is prone to fainting spells which she often brings on purposefully, and she loves to gossip although she often gets the facts wrong. Miss Pittypat is happy to take Scarlett and Wade in after Scarlett is widowed, though Scarlett finds her ridiculous and difficult to live with. She's very involved in Atlanta's high society, working for the hospitals during the war and helping to organize various charity events as well.

**Uncle Henry Hamilton** — Uncle Henry Hamilton is Miss Pittypat's brother. Although he lives around the corner from her in **Atlanta**, the two had a falling out over money and how Pitty was raising Charles, so they don't speak. Uncle Henry often gives Scarlett advice about how to protect her and Wade Hampton's assets. He is dispatched along with the Home Guard and seems invigorated by his time in combat.

**India Wilkes** — India Wilkes is Ashley Wilkes's sister. She is "pale and rabbit-like," traits that Scarlett considers weak—she believes they came from the Wilkes' history of marrying their cousins. India holds a grudge against Scarlett for stealing Stuart Tarleton from her before the war. India disappears from the story during the war, but she reenters Scarlett's circle near the end of the novel, when she moves to **Atlanta** and lives with Miss Pittypat. After Scarlett is attacked, India accuses her of asking for it, and of endangering Frank and Ashley. When India sees Scarlett and Ashley in each other's arms, she tells Melanie—who sides with Scarlett, forcing India to break ties with her brother.

**Stuart Tarleton** — Stuart Tarleton and his twin Brent are two of Scarlett's potential beaux at the beginning of the novel. They live with their mother, Beatrice Tarleton. The twins are the epitome of Southern masculinity; they are athletic, chivalrous, and proud. They love to have fun and despise boring activities like reading—they've been expelled from college several times. Stuart was once attached to India Wilkes, but Brent convinced him that India was boring, and they both set off in pursuit of Scarlett instead. However, at the Wilkes' barbecue, Stuart and India show signs that they still have feelings for one another. When the war begins, Brent and Stuart are two of the most avid participants. Stuart is killed early on in the war.

**Brent Tarleton** — Brent Tarleton is Stuart Tarleton's twin; they're two of Scarlett's potential beaux at the beginning of the novel. They live with their mother, Beatrice Tarleton. The twins are the epitome of Southern masculinity; they are athletic, chivalrous, and proud. They love to have fun and despise boring

activities like reading—they've been expelled from college several times. Brent and Stuart are equally charmed by Scarlett, but after Scarlett goes to **Atlanta**, Brent gets engaged to her sister Carreen. However, Brent dies before they can be married, and his death inspires Carreen to join a convent after the war is over.

**Beatrice Tarleton** —Beatrice Tarleton is the headstrong, red-haired mother of Brent Tarleton, Stuart Tarleton, and Hetty, Camilla, Randa, and Betsy Tarleton. She runs a huge plantation and is admired by all, especially Gerald O'Hara, for her exceptional horsemanship and skill at breeding horses. Gerald persuades her to donate her fine mares and colts to the Confederate Cause. After the war, many people feel that she is heartbroken more over the death of her horses than the death of her sons. However, she has two elaborate tombstones made in Brent and Stuart's honor, something Scarlett feels is a foolish expense during a time of such poverty.

**Jonas Wilkerson** —Jonas Wilkerson is the O'Haras' former overseer and head of the Freedman's Bureau. Ellen O'Hara dismisses Jonas after he impregnated Emmie Slattery, and most wealthy Southerners in Ellen's circle look down on Jonas for being poor. Jonas later marries Emmie and, in his capacity as his head of the Freedman's Bureau, raises the taxes on **Tara** in hopes of getting Scarlett evicted so he and Emmie can live there. Scarlett surmises that Jonas wants to get even for being dismissed by taking Tara from her. As head of the Freedman's Bureau, Jonas Wilkerson supports the rights of Black people. He is ultimately killed by Tony Fontaine for encouraging a culture in which Black people have rights.

**Emmie Slattery** —Emmie Slattery is the daughter of the Slatterys, a poor white family that live nearby to the O'Haras'. The Slatterys are disliked by everyone in the County because they are thought of as being lazy, having too many children, and are always asking their neighbors for handouts. Early in the novel, Ellen O'Hara helps Emmie give birth to Jonas Wilkerson's illegitimate child. Emmie later infects Ellen with the typhoid fever that kills her. Emmie then marries Jonas Wilkerson, who as the head of the Freedman's Bureau can afford to buy Emmie garish clothes. When Emmie and Jonas come to **Tara** to try to buy it, Scarlett calls her a "trashy wench" and a "slut."

**Uncle Peter**—Uncle Peter is Miss Pittypat's personal enslaved man; he continues to work for her after the Civil War ends. He raised Melanie and Charles like they were his own children and takes care of Miss Pitty faithfully through her constant fainting spells. Like Mammy, Uncle Peter always knows everything that everyone is up to and is critical of his enslavers' conduct. Uncle Peter claims to be proud of his position.

**Dr. Meade** —Dr. Meade is the most prominent doctor in **Atlanta**. He runs one of the war hospitals, and he tends tirelessly to the countless wounded soldiers that stream into

Atlanta. During the war, he often goes on and on about "the glorious Cause" and the invincibility of the South, causing Rhett Butler to say he looks like a "pompous goat." Even after the Confederates lose, Dr. Meade carries on about the Cause, unable to look ahead to the future. Throughout the novel, Dr. Meade assesses Melanie's health, giving the orders that Scarlett stay in Atlanta when Melanie gives birth, and that Melanie not risk having another baby.

**Mrs. Meade** —Mrs. Meade is Dr. Meade's wife. Her first son Darcy is killed early in the war, and she is very protective of her younger son, Phil Meade, who is eager to go off to war as soon as he's old enough. When Phil is killed, Mrs. Meade travels to Jonesboro to retrieve his body and buries him in **Atlanta** during the Yankee siege.

**Phil Meade** —Phil Meade is Dr. Meade and Mrs. Meade's youngest son. While he is too young to join the war, he looks forward excitedly to the day when he'll be old enough to join. Mrs. Meade tries to stifle his enthusiasm, not wanting to lose another son to the war. He is dispatched along with the Home Guard and the elderly and is soon killed.

**Mrs. Merriwether** —Mrs. Merriwether is one of **Atlanta's** prominent gossipy ladies, along with Mrs. Elsing and Mrs. Whiting. She runs one of the war hospital committees at which Scarlett volunteers. Mrs. Merriwether disapproves of Scarlett for disregarding the rules of mourning. She even writes to Ellen O'Hara to tell her of Scarlett's shameful conduct at the bazaar, when Scarlett danced with Rhett Butler. Mrs. Merriwether is particularly critical of Scarlett's association with Rhett, thinking him a "speculator." After the war, she starts selling pies to make money, and Rhett wins her favor by loaning her money to improve her business.

**Mrs. Elsing**—Mrs. Elsing is **Atlanta's** second prominent lady and the wife of Hugh Elsing. Like Mrs. Merriwether, Mrs. Elsing disapproves of Scarlett's association with the "traitor" Rhett Butler. After the war, Mr. and Mrs. Elsing turn their house into a boarding house where the Meades and the Whittings pay to stay when their houses burn down. After Scarlett marries Rhett, Mrs. Elsing refuses to call on them even though Rhett saved Hugh's life during the Klu Klux Klan escapade that took Frank Kennedy's life. This causes Mrs. Elsing to fall out with Melanie Wilkes, whom she'd known since Melanie was a little girl. Much later, Rhett charms Mrs. Elsing into liking him.

**Cathleen Calvert** —Cathleen Calvert is a pretty County girl whom Scarlett gossips with about Rhett Butler at the Wilkes's barbecue. After the war Cathleen's mother, Mrs. Calvert, moves back north, and Cathleen has no other choice but to marry her family's Yankee overseer, Hilton. After marrying Hilton, Cathleen becomes ashamed of herself, and she ultimately has to mortgage her house. Later, Scarlett finds out her house was bought by a Black family.

**Hilton** —Hilton is the Calverts' Yankee overseer. He behaves

like an equal with the Calverts after his Yankee accent helps save their house from being burned by the Yankees during the war. Along with **Tara's** old overseer Jonas Wilkerson, Hilton is head of the Freedman's Bureau, and tells Black people that they have the right to vote and marry white women. He conspires with Suellen to get Gerald to sign the oath of Yankee cooperation to receive government money, and he later marries Cathleen Calvert.

**Archie**—Archie is a veteran and ex-convict who lives for a while at Melanie's house in **Atlanta**. He has a long, grizzled beard, a mountain accent, and a wooden leg. He killed his wife after finding her in bed with his brother and was sentenced to life in prison. During the war, he was released on the condition that he fight for the Confederate Army. For a while, he's Scarlett's bodyguard while she does business around Atlanta, but he quits after she hires a convict gang at her mill. Having been in prison himself, he finds abusing convicts immoral. He hangs around at Melanie's, developing a deep respect and devotion towards her. Melanie turns him out when he accuses Scarlett of having an affair with Ashley.

**Big Sam**—Big Sam is one of **Tara's** enslaved field hands. During the war, Scarlett sees him in **Atlanta** on a crew of enslaved men digging trenches in case the war makes its way to Atlanta. After the war, Big Sam goes north with a colonel who pays him to be his personal servant. When Big Sam later returns to Atlanta, he claims that he didn't like the North where everyone treated him like an equal and asked him questions about the cruelty of Southern enslavers. Scarlett runs into him again in Atlanta when he's hiding after killing a white man for insulting him. Later that day, Big Sam saves Scarlett from the two men who attack her on the road. Frank Kennedy then helps Big Sam flee to Tara.

**Will Benteen**—Will Benteen is an uneducated Confederate soldier with a peg leg who recuperates at **Tara** after the war. After he recovers, he stays at Tara to help out and repay Scarlett for her hospitality. Will listens to everyone's problems and seems to know everyone's secrets even though he isn't one of the family. Scarlett is immensely grateful to him, as Will turns Tara from an overgrown wilderness into a humble working farm. Although he cares for Carreen, she is too brokenhearted over Brent Tarleton to entertain marrying Will. Will marries Suellen instead, having grown attached to Tara and wanting to become its new master.

**Johnnie Gallegher**—Scarlett hires Johnnie Gallegher to manage her second mill in **Atlanta** and oversee the convict gang that she employs. Scarlett soon discovers that Johnnie starves and whips the convicts, and everyone says he's a cruel man. This troubles her, but she overlooks these character faults and like him because he makes her a lot of money at the mill.

**Mrs. Calvert**—Mrs. Calvert is the Yankee mother of Cathleen Calvert and Cade and Raiford Calvert who has never really fit

in in the South. When the Yankees move through the South burning plantations after the war, the Calverts' house is saved because of Mrs. Calvert's Yankee accent. This embarrasses her, and she decides to move back North to be with her native people.

**Sally Munroe**—Sally Munroe is the widow of one of the Fontaine brothers. After the war, one of the Fontaine's former enslaved men propositions her, causing Tony Fontaine to kill him and Jonas Wilkerson, head of the Freedman's Bureau, who'd said there was nothing wrong with Black men being with white women. Sally later marries Alex Fontaine.

**Tony Fontaine**—Tony Fontaine is one of the sole caretakers of the Fontaine plantation after the war. After a former enslaved man approaches his brother's widow Sally, Tony kills Jonas Wilkerson because he'd been leading the Freedman's Bureau. Tony then flees to Texas, stopping at Scarlett and Frank Kennedy's in **Atlanta** on his way.

**Grandma Fontaine**—Grandma Fontaine is Tony and Alex Fontaine's crotchety, opinionated grandmother. She often intimidates Scarlett, but when Scarlett borrows food from the Fontaines after the war, Grandma Fontaine guesses that Scarlett has experienced more hardship than she is letting on. She tells Scarlett never to think she can lay down her burdens. At Gerald's funeral, Grandma Fontaine takes Scarlett inside and praises her tenacity through hard times, saying she is much different from Ashley. Scarlett thinks Grandma Fontaine is annoying but recognizes that she's only trying to help.

**John Wilkes**—John Wilkes is Ashley Wilkes's father and the master of the plantation Twelve Oaks. He joins the war when the Home Guard is dispatched from **Atlanta**, riding Mrs. Tarleton's finest mare. Later, Uncle Henry Hamilton tells Scarlett that John was killed, and he gives her John's gold watch to give to Melanie.

**Honey Wilkes**—Honey Wilkes is Ashley and India Wilkes's unattractive sister, who is desperate for male attention. She is unofficially engaged to her cousin Charles Hamilton before Scarlett marries him. At the Wilkes' barbecue, Honey accuses Scarlett of stealing everyone's boyfriends and of being secretly in love with Ashley. Later, Honey marries a wealthy man, but her India disapproves.

**Tommy Wellburn**—Tommy Wellburn marries Mrs. Elsing's daughter after her fiancé is killed during the war. He sustained a leg injury that gives him a limp, but he is hardworking and honest. A member of the Ku Klux Klan, Tommy is killed along with Frank Kennedy in an attempt to murder a Black man.

**Governor Bullock**—Governor Bullock is elected governor after the South loses the war—the first Republican in the history of Georgia's government. He tells the North that Southerners are in a state of rebellion, and so he controls the South through Reconstruction. He is friends with Rhett Butler and Scarlett. He even makes an appearance at one of Scarlett's



parties, causing all of their old friends to think of Rhett and Scarlett as Scallawags.

**Pauline Robillard** —Pauline is Ellen O’Hara’s sister. Scarlett finds her boring and overly scrupulous when she visits and learns that she and her other sister, Eulalie, disapprove of Ellen and Gerald’s marriage. After Scarlett starts earning money at the sawmills, she sends money to Pauline, but she and Eulalie later write to her and express their disapproval that she’s become a businesswoman. They insist that Ellen would be ashamed.

**Eulalie Robillard** —Eulalie is Ellen O’Hara’s sister. Scarlett finds her boring and overly scrupulous when she visits them in Charleston and learns that she and her other sister, Pauline, disapprove of Ellen and Gerald’s marriage. After Scarlett starts earning money at the sawmills, she sends money to Eulalie and Pauline, but they later write to her and express their disapproval that she’s become a businesswoman and that Ellen would be ashamed.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

**Ella Lorena** —Ella Lorena is Scarlett O’Hara and Frank Kennedy’s daughter; she’s Scarlett’s second child. She is ugly and looks like Frank. When she is older, she annoys Scarlett with her short attention span.

**Beau Wilkes** —Beau is Melanie and Ashley’s only son. Scarlett helps Melanie deliver him during the siege of **Atlanta**.

**Mrs. Whiting** —Mrs. Whiting is **Atlanta**’s third prominent lady. Her family’s house is burned during the war, and so they live as paying boarders at the Elsing’s boarding house.

**Alex Fontaine**— Alex Fontaine is Tony Fontaine’s brother. He manages the Fontaine plantation by himself when Tony flees for Texas after killing Jonas Wilkerson.

**Hetty Tarleton** —Hetty is one of Beatrice Tarleton’s red-headed daughters. At the Wilkes’ barbecue, she, Camilla, Randa, and Betsy gossip disapprovingly along with the other County girls that Scarlett is stealing all the boys and that she’s in love with Ashley.

**Camilla Tarleton** —Camilla is one of Beatrice Tarleton’s red-headed daughters. At the Wilkes’ barbecue, she, Hetty, Randa, and Betsy gossip disapprovingly along with the other County girls that Scarlett is stealing all the boys and that she’s in love with Ashley.

**Randa Tarleton** —Randa is one of Beatrice Tarleton’s red-headed daughters. At the Wilkes’ barbecue, she, Camilla, Hetty, and Betsy gossip disapprovingly along with the other County girls that Scarlett is stealing all the boys and that she’s in love with Ashley.

**Betsy Tarleton** —Betsy is one of Beatrice Tarleton’s red-headed daughters. At the Wilkes’ barbecue, she, Camilla, Randa, and Hetty gossip disapprovingly along with the other

County girls that Scarlett is stealing all the boys and that she’s in love with Ashley.

**Hugh Elsing** — Hugh Elsing is Mrs. Elsing’s husband. Scarlett hires him to work on her second mill, but then replaces him with Johnnie Gallagher because he has no “gumption” or business sense.

**Rene Picard** —Rene Picard is a French officer who marries Mrs. Merriwether’s daughter and makes money driving a pie wagon for Mrs. Merriwether after the war.

**Old Man McRae** —Mr. McRae is a citizen of the County. During the Wilkes’ barbecue, he joins in on the talk of the war, saying that he’s seen war firsthand and that the young Southern men shouldn’t glorify it.

**Jeems** – Jeems is Brent and Stuart Tarleton’s once playmate and now personal enslaved man. In the beginning of the novel, he rides home with them after Scarlett didn’t invite them to supper and complains that they decide to eat at Able Wynder’s—the Confederate Lieutenant—because he is “po’ w’ite trash.”

**James O’Hara** James is Andrew and Gerald O’Hara’s brother. He and Andrew immigrated from Ireland before Gerald, and they made their living running a store in Charleston.

**Andrew O’Hara** Andrew is James and Gerald O’Hara’s brother. He and James immigrated from Ireland before Gerald, and they made their living running a store in Charleston.

**Phillippe Robillard** —Phillippe is Ellen O’Hara’s cousin and the man she’d hoped to marry. Her family disapproved of the match and sent Phillippe away. He died in a bar fight, but Ellen never forgets him, calling his name twice while on her deathbed.

## TERMS

**Carpetbagger** – Carpetbaggers are Northerners who move South during Reconstruction and profit off the fall of Southern society.

**Scallawag** — Scallawags are Southerners who cooperate with or turn to the North and its Republican government during the Civil War and Reconstruction. **Rhett** and **Scarlett** are considered Scallawags because they befriend Yankees and the Republican Governor, **Bullock**.

**Yankee** – Yankee is the Southern term for the Union soldiers during the Civil War, and for Northerners in general.



## THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don’t have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in

black and white.



## THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

*Gone with the Wind* portrays how the Civil War and Reconstruction transform the South. Before the war, wealthy Southerners led lives of luxury, leisure, and beauty on sprawling plantations such as **Tara**. The war, however, brings this way of life to an end, though most Southerners refuse to admit that this is happening. Rather, throughout the war, Southerners display pride in the Confederacy that at times seems willfully ignorant. The Union army steadily corners the Confederates and takes Southern cities, but the Southerners don't consider the possibility that they could lose until they have no other choice but to accept the truth that they've lost. The war sweeps across this landscape, burning plantations, impoverishing the Southerners, and ultimately depriving plantation owners of their labor forces by freeing enslaved Black people. The poverty that many formerly wealthy Southerners find themselves in leaves many with nothing but their willpower to survive; the ones who manage to adapt to a new lifestyle prevail by creatively making money in **Atlanta**, while the ones too attached the old life struggle or, in some cases, fail entirely. In this way, the Civil War materially decimates the South and forces it to start anew.

While the war physically destroys the South, Reconstruction attempts to force Southerners to entirely change their morals and their views. Reconstruction directly follows the Civil War; it refers to the government policy that sought to rehabilitate the South by putting Northerners, or Union sympathizers, in power to transform the South's values and bring the South back into the Union. *Gone with the Wind* shows how the Freedman's Bureau, led by Carpetbaggers, Scallawags, and previously low-class white Southerners, overturns the racial and hierarchical structure that guided life in the prewar South—something the formerly wealthy white Southerners find abhorrent. Many of Reconstruction's changes to the South have to do with money: for instance, the Republican government in postwar Georgia encourages Northerners and freed Blacks to participate in a society in which gentility is no longer a matter of birth but a matter of ingenuity and a person's willingness and ability to make money. Ashley and other former plantation owners resent this new system, as they consider making one's own money as unseemly and beneath them. And yet, they can't escape that in the Reconstruction-era South, their deeply held views about what makes a person gentile are no longer in favor. However, at the end of the novel, this Yankee government crumbles under its own corruption, allowing the Democrats to retake Georgia and reinstate the Old South's racist and classist values. In this way, *Gone with the Wind* portrays both the Civil War and Reconstruction as ultimately unsuccessful at meaningfully changing white Southern life and values.



## LOOKING FORWARD VS. LOOKING BACK

In *Gone with the Wind*, the Civil War destroys the South as the characters know it. In the midst of this destruction, some of the characters look back longingly to the past, while others look forward only to the future. When Scarlett returns to **Tara** and finds her mother dead and her father insane, she is nearly overcome with grief and desperation. However, as she lies in the spoiled garden at the burn site of Twelve Oaks, she decides that the past is the past, and that she will never look back. This decision not only helps her cope with hardship, but it changes who she is: she is no longer the soft, youthful Scarlett O'Hara but a woman willing to do whatever she needs to be successful in the future. The future is, for Scarlett, the only thing that matters—it's only by looking forward that she'll be able to rebuild her life to resemble the lavish life she lived as a girl before the war. Other characters who are willing to look to the future and adapt to the changing times, like Rhett Butler, are also able to succeed in the quickly changing postwar South.

In contrast, Ashley is unable to look anywhere but to the past, and therefore he can't cope with the harsh demands of the poverty he experiences after his family's plantation is burned during the war. Similarly, the whole South struggles to look forward. The Old Guard continues to revere the Confederate Cause even after the South loses the war, and they would rather be poor than resort to moneymaking practices that they consider undignified. To Scarlett, these people are foolish for loving the past even though it is gone. She even tires of Ashley and begins to think of herself as somewhat foolish when she realizes her love for him is only a habit from her past. Looking back, however, is something the novel suggests can also be a form of self-preservation, or a way to deal with grief, as when even Rhett begins to look to the past after the death of his and Scarlett's daughter.

Ultimately, though, the novel suggests that striking a balance between looking forward and looking back is the most effective way for a person to move forward. Ashley represents the dangers of looking only to the past when he's left an unsuccessful widower after Melanie's death. Scarlett, on the other hand, looks only to the future and befriends Carpetbaggers and Scallawags in the years after the war—but because of her unwillingness to look back, she finds herself with neither friends nor love at the end of the novel. The Democrats, however, stand as the novel's most successful example of looking to the past to inform their future. They ultimately gain control of Georgia's legislature, which allows them to impose a new version of the old South, which the North sought to banish with Reconstruction.



## CLASSISM AND RACISM

Classism and racism are apparent throughout *Gone with the Wind*, before and after the Civil War.

Before the war, high-class white enslavers believe that a “well-bred” Black person would not desire freedom. To white Southerners, free Blacks are unintelligent, low-class, and greedy. This opinion is also supported by Black characters like Mammy who, as an enslaved woman at **Tara**, believes she is superior to both other enslaved Black people and poor white families like the Slatterys, even though she isn’t free. After the war, Mammy continues to think of herself as superior to Black people who welcome their freedom and, in her reading, take advantage of it. White and formerly wealthy Southerners, such as the O’Haras, agree with her: many claim that Black people are harmless when in the hands of white, genteel families, and are dangerous if they’re free. These racist views ultimately lead to the formation of the Ku Klux Klan, a group that hunts down and kills Black people for acting like they’re equal to whites. And one way Black people can escape the threat of the Ku Klux Klan is by aligning themselves with white families like Scarlett’s—which in Mammy’s case effectively keeps her enslaved, but also keeps her safe from racially motivated violence.

After the Civil War, classism and racism also affect the social politics of white people. Prior to the war, white society in the South is highly stratified, with wealthy plantation owners like the O’Haras at the top, and poor white people like the Slatterys at the bottom. So after the war, when Carpetbaggers and Scallawags stream south, most formerly wealthy Southerners are enraged: they see making money, as the Carpetbaggers and Scallawags do, as beneath them, and they look down on people who become wealthy and powerful by making money. However, Scarlett views befriending the opportunistic Carpetbaggers and Scallawags as a way for her to amass wealth and rise in class herself. She desires to be a great lady like her mother was, and she thinks that wealth is the only way to achieve this. But while the Northerners help lift the South out of poverty by normalizing work, the Republican government (which is sympathetic to the North) ultimately collapses under its own corruption, making way for Democrats to begin to reassert the racist and classist hierarchies the war sought to abolish. In this way, although the Civil War changes the South’s structures of racism and classism, it ultimately only drives classist and racist roots deeper into Southern society.



## PRACTICALITY, TENACITY, AND SELFISHNESS

*Gone with the Wind*’s protagonist, Scarlett O’Hara, acts mostly out of selfishness. Even before the war, Scarlett marries Charles Hamilton just to spite Honey Wilkes for being mean to her, and she willfully strays from the ladylike example her mother Ellen O’Hara sets. Even though she hopes

to one day be a great lady like Ellen, Scarlett feels that her mother’s selflessness and dignity are not enough to get her the things she wants. This belief causes Scarlett to detest Melanie, Ashley’s fiancé and eventually his wife, because Scarlett sees Melanie as selfless, dignified, and wholly ineffective at doing anything, and it makes Scarlett double down on her selfishness. When the war begins, Scarlett justifies her selfishness by telling herself it’s the only way to weather and overcome the scarcity and hardship she encounters. When she fears she will lose **Tara** because she can’t afford the taxes, she goes to **Atlanta** and marries Frank Kennedy, her sister Suellen’s wealthy fiancé, lying to him that Suellen has married another man. Scarlett also decides that there is no possibility of her being a good person if she’s not also wealthy. To this end, she takes over Frank’s lumber business, deals with Yankees, and hires convicts to work at the mill, allowing them to be starved and mistreated because it saves her money. At times, these things weigh on her conscience, but she constantly tells herself that she’ll think about it tomorrow when she has money and can afford to be a great lady like her mother.

However, wealth ultimately doesn’t make Scarlett happy and as time goes on, she’s less able to justify the consequences of her selfishness. Although she marries Rhett Butler for his money and befriends rich Carpetbaggers and Scallawags to rise in class, she realizes she misses her Southern friends, that she needs Melanie, and that she loves Rhett. However, by the time she realizes this, it is too late; Melanie is dead and no one—not even Rhett—loves her anymore. This tragic ending shows that Scarlett’s selfishness and tenacity, although sometimes useful as they help her survive during and after the Civil War, also come with irreparable consequences.



## WOMEN AND POWER

In *Gone with the Wind*, the Civil War puts women in a position where they must fend for themselves while the men are away in combat. When Scarlett arrives at **Tara** during the war, the plantation is on the brink of either being taken by Yankees or falling into ruin and disrepair and being swallowed up again by the wilderness. Scarlett’s love for the land emboldens her to save it at whatever cost. At Tara, Scarlett toils like a man would’ve done in the pre-war society. She realizes that the feminine virtues her mother taught her are useless in a world where one has to fight to survive. For this reason, she comes to value the fight she sees in other women around her: it is only after she sees that Melanie make motions to kill the Yankee intruder, for instance, that Scarlett can move past her petty jealousies and admire Melanie.

Over the course of the war, Scarlett uses her femininity as a tool to help her gain power so she can survive poverty and hardship. In order to charm Rhett Butler and convince him to give her money, for instance, she makes a **dress** out of curtains—and then uses her sexuality to lure Frank Kennedy

into marrying her. Beyond her sexuality, however, Scarlett also discovers that she has a knack for business. She takes over the management of Frank's sawmill and because of her business sense and willingness to act in an "unwomanly" way, she ultimately becomes richer than most Atlantan men do. In this way, the novel shows how the war upends traditional gender roles in Southern society: Ashley Wilkes, although the picture of a perfect man before the war, struggles to do anything for himself and relies on Scarlett's charity after the war. Scarlett discovers that there's nothing she can't do—she can save Tara, make money, and kill Yankees.

However, the novel also shows how Scarlett's fierce desire to survive keeps her from understanding human nature and, in turn, keeps her from finding happiness and love. She doesn't realize she doesn't love Ashley, or that Rhett loves her, until the very end of the novel—up to that point she'd only used her femininity to manipulate men, not to genuinely engage in romance. So while Scarlett experiences monetary success over the course of the novel, her focus on amassing power by exploiting others means that she's never able to achieve real happiness in her romantic relationships or friendships.



## SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



### ATLANTA

Throughout *Gone with the Wind*, Atlanta represents the South's resilience during and after the Civil War. In the years before the war breaks out and in the first few years of the war, Atlanta expands dramatically. Despite being such a new city, its strength becomes quickly clear: while other cities still thrive on agriculture, Atlanta rapidly modernizes and supports the Confederate war effort by becoming the manufacturing hub of the South. In this way, Atlanta represents the South's ability to adapt and find new ways to preserve its prewar culture.

Near the end of the Civil War, as the Yankees surround Atlanta and eventually take the city, Atlanta again demonstrates its resilience. During Reconstruction, Atlanta recovers from the destruction wrought by the Yankees and briefly becomes an entirely new city where free Blacks live and work, and where formerly upper-class white Southerners, like Scarlett and Mrs. Merriweather, can reinvent themselves and even thrive in the changed postwar world. Mrs. Merriweather's son-in-law, for instance, begins selling pies out of a pie wagon for her, while Scarlett becomes a wildly successful businesswoman who runs two lumber mills. But while Atlanta adapts in some ways, the Old South ultimately regains its ground in Atlanta. Although the town is by this time flooded with Carpetbaggers, Scallawags,

free Blacks, and Republicans, all of whom change the city to more resemble the North, the Old Guard never relinquishes the city completely. Democratic groups and the Ku Klux Klan resist Reconstruction and, by the end of the story, a Democratic governor replaces Republican Governor Bullock. So though Atlanta has changed and adapted to the new world in many ways, the city's eventual shift to favor the Democrats highlights the South's resiliency and its unwillingness to change entirely.



### TARA

The O'Haras' plantation, Tara, represents survival. Before the war, in an attempt to comfort a heartsick Scarlett, Gerald tells Scarlett that land (rather than love) is the only thing that lasts. At that point, she's too upset that Ashley is going to marry Melanie to believe him—but when she returns to Tara near the end of the Civil War, she realizes he's right. By this point, Ellen has died, Gerald has gone mad with grief, and Ashley is married to Melanie and they have a child together. When Scarlett is at her lowest point and Ashley hands her a lump of Tara's red clay, Scarlett is inspired to keep going: the plantation is all she has left, and if she means to survive, she must revive it and make it into a moneymaking enterprise once again.

Scarlett ultimately does just that. Returning Tara to a functional state both helps Scarlett survive (by enabling the property to make money through farming) and gives Scarlett a reason to keep trying to do more to ensure her family's continued ownership of the land. Some of what Scarlett must do to support Tara, such as run Frank's mills and use her sexuality to try to manipulate men into helping her, aren't considered ladylike in post-Civil War Southern society—but to Scarlett, stepping outside the confines of traditional gender roles in service of her family's plantation is necessary. Tara, Scarlett believes, is the only thing she has in the world that will always be there for her—if she loses it, she'll lose the one thing, aside from money, that makes her feel powerful.



### THE CURTAIN DRESS

The dress Scarlett makes out of Ellen's green velvet curtains represents her willingness to do whatever it takes to get ahead. From the beginning of the novel, Scarlett dreams of being a great lady like her mother, Ellen. But when she makes a dress out of Ellen's curtains so she can manipulate Rhett Butler into giving her money, she leaves behind her dream of being like her mother for good. The dress is intended to make Scarlett look wealthy when she isn't, and Scarlett's choice to make it and wear it symbolizes Scarlett's choice to abandon her morals and focus on wealth at the expense of everything else. The dress, then, marks the turning point in Scarlett's moral collapse. After making the dress and going to

Atlanta to seduce Rhett, she stops at nothing to survive and find new ways to make money. Whenever Scarlett has qualms about the morality of her actions, she thinks of the day when she turned her mother's curtains into a dress and decides that she has strayed too far from the dignified lady Ellen wanted her to be to go back.





## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Scribner edition of *Gone with the Wind* published in 2011.

### Chapter 2 Quotes

“Only when like marries like can there be happiness.”

**Related Characters:** Gerald O'Hara (speaker), Scarlett O'Hara, Rhett Butler, Ashley Wilkes, Melanie Wilkes (Hamilton)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 53

#### Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears in the conversation between Gerald and Scarlett as they discuss Ashley's engagement to Melanie. Gerald warns Scarlett that she'll never be happy with Ashley because he's too different from her. The Wilkeses are dreamy and cerebral, whereas Scarlett is earthy and practical. For this reason, Gerald suggests she marry an athletic, enthusiastic County boy instead. Scarlett insists that she loves Ashley even though he proves to indeed be very different from her. After the war ends, Ashley thinks only of the past whereas Scarlett looks only to the future. Also, Ashley is too conscientious to be a good businessman whereas Scarlett will stop at nothing to make money. Whenever Ashley and Scarlett converse, they seem to be speaking different languages, and Scarlett never understands what Ashley's thinking. This mystery keeps her obsession with Ashley alive through the whole novel. However, when Scarlett finally understands what Ashley is thinking, she sees that they are different, and she doesn't love him anymore.

However, Scarlett meets Rhett Butler and finds her equal. Neither Rhett nor Scarlett are sentimental about the Cause, they think realistically, and they love money. At first, Scarlett tries to pretend she's different from Rhett, but she eventually realizes he's the only person she can tell everything to. However, she doesn't recognize their ease and comfort together as love, even when they get married.

By the time she realizes that she loves Rhett because he is “passionate and earthy” just like herself, he has become different from her—sentimental about the past, just like Ashley. Their divergence emotionally ends their marriage, showing that, as Gerald had forewarned, love only succeeds between like minds. The lack of successful love for Scarlett suggests that, in the end, there is no one like her, for everyone except her has turned back towards the old days.

“Land is the only thing in the world that amounts to anything, for 'tis the only thing in the world that lasts.”

**Related Characters:** Gerald O'Hara (speaker), Scarlett O'Hara, Ashley Wilkes

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:**  

**Page Number:** 55



#### Explanation and Analysis


Gerald is reminding a heartbroken Scarlett that she still has Tara. This is an attempt to make her feel better after she discovers Ashley Wilkes has gotten engaged to Melanie. At this point in the novel, Scarlett believes that love is more valuable and lasting than land, but Gerald asserts the opposite. Scarlett loves Tara but, before the war, the narration insists that she loves it without realizing that she does. This is why, throughout the 12 years the novel covers, Scarlett continues to return to Tara when things get rough in Atlanta. Tara makes her feel better—and shows her what her priorities are—as she pines for Ashley, struggles to love her children, and later argues with Rhett. So even as the objects of her affection change, Scarlett remains steadfast in her reliance on Tara to keep her grounded. This implies that while Scarlett never fully realizes it herself, Gerald is right here: land lasts, while nothing else—not love, not wealth, not popularity—does.

### Chapter 3 Quotes

“It was a man's world, and she accepted it as such. The man owned the property, and the woman managed it. The man took the credit for the management, and the woman praised his cleverness.”

**Related Characters:** Ellen O'Hara, Gerald O'Hara, Scarlett O'Hara, Frank Kennedy

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 75

### Explanation and Analysis

The novel is describing Gerald and Ellen's early years of marriage and the state of gender roles during the Civil War era. This passage shows that women in this time period are indeed powerful—but their power is subtle. Rather than being straightforward and blunt about running a plantation, like a man is able to do, women instead work behind the scenes to run things. Essentially, this passage suggests that women are the ones who actually run the show—but the strict gender roles of the time make it so it's inappropriate for a woman to acknowledge this and take credit for her work. In Gerald and Ellen's case, Gerald won Tara's land during a poker game, built the house, and started growing cotton all before marrying Ellen. When he married Ellen and she moved to Tara from Charleston, she brought a large crew of enslaved persons for the management of the house. In this way, the Gerald gets credit for starting and now owning a successful plantation, while it's implied that Ellen has done most of the hard work of "managing" that plantation.

Laying out these gender roles now sets Scarlett up to subvert these gender roles throughout the novel. From the outset, she is willful and spirited, and often feels superior to men. Ultimately, she marries what this passage suggests are masculine and feminine traits by taking over Frank Kennedy's lumber business and not hiding that she's running it—so she does much the same work that Ellen does on the plantation, but she's open about it.

### Chapter 6 Quotes

☝☝ "I have seen many things that you all have not seen. The thousands of immigrants who'd be glad to fight for the Yankees for food and a few dollars, the factories, the foundries, the shipyards, the iron and coal mines—all the things we haven't got. Why all we have is cotton and slaves and arrogance. They'd lick us in a month."

**Related Characters:** Rhett Butler (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 123

### Explanation and Analysis



This passage appears at the Wilkeses' barbecue when the men are talking about the prospect of the Civil War. Everyone is enthusiastic for the war and can't wait to show the Yankees just how powerful the South is. Rhett Butler, however, thinks the North will beat the South in a month because the North is an industrial power with a substantial immigrant population, whereas the South is only an agricultural power. For this reason, Rhett thinks that the South's confidence that they'd win a conflict is only arrogance, and people feel this way because they know so little about the North.

With this, Rhett implies that the Southern way of life (and the Southern economy) are, perhaps, not as great or as infallible as wealthy white Southerners think it is. Rhett implies that unlike the "thousands of immigrants" he believes would happily fight for the Yankees, enslaved Black people in the South wouldn't be useful. Indeed, the way he frames what the South has ("cotton and slaves and arrogance") suggests that he sees the enslaved Black people who currently keep the South's economy going as wholly unhelpful when one considers a dangerous conflict with a well-equipped North. This also suggests that the Southern lifestyle is not sustainable—the war is coming, and the South does lose because it doesn't have the materials it needs or the men to fight in it. All it has, as Rhett says here, is arrogance—which doesn't win the war.

### Chapter 8 Quotes

☝☝ There was something exciting about this town with its narrow muddy streets, lying among rolling red hills, something raw and crude that appealed to the rawness and crudeness underlying the fine veneer that Ellen and Mammy had given her. She suddenly felt that this was where she belonged, not in serene and quiet old cities, flat beside yellow waters.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara , Ellen O'Hara , Mammy

**Related Themes:**   

**Related Symbols:**  

**Page Number:** 159

### Explanation and Analysis


This quote appears after Scarlett has been widowed and she goes to Atlanta to escape Tara and the oppressive memories she associates with the plantation. While at Tara,

Scarlett always admired the example her mother set for her. However, she could never attain to it. She was always reckless and willful. When she arrives in Atlanta, however, Scarlett feels free to embrace her true nature. She feels that Atlanta is “raw and crude” just as she is. The lifestyle of Atlanta—modern, full of variety, always changing—allows her to abandon Ellen’s old-fashioned standards of femininity and gentility. Femininity and gentility are the “thin veneer” that Ellen and Mammy tried to apply over the top of Scarlett’s natural crudeness, and they’re also what Scarlett references when she describes “quiet old cities” that are “flat beside yellow waters.” This gives the impression that Scarlett sees Ellen and Mammy’s focus on making Scarlett as feminine as possible as outdated and stale—it sets her up to reject Mammy and Ellen’s dreams for her future and embrace her own.

In this sense, the fact that Scarlett feels so at home in Atlanta foreshadows the transformation that occurs as she embraces her “raw and crude” nature. She goes on to scandalize everyone with her “unwomanly” behavior during and after the war, but she is ultimately accepted in Atlanta by the Carpetbaggers and Yankees that move to Atlanta. Atlanta, as a modern city that adapts to meet the challenges of the changed South, allows Scarlett to become a modern woman. Scarlett ultimately leaves Ellen’s example behind completely, and becomes a bold, practical, and tenacious woman whom Ellen wouldn’t recognize.

## Chapter 14 Quotes

☛☛ Even now the Southern ranks might be falling like grain before a hailstorm, but the Cause for which they fought could never fall. They might be dying in thousands but, like the fruit of the dragon’s teeth, thousands of fresh men in gray and butternut with the Rebel yell on their lips would spring up from the earth and take their places. Where the men would come from, no one knew. They only knew, as surely as they knew there was a just and jealous God in heaven.

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 252

### Explanation and Analysis



This quote appears halfway through the Civil War when the Confederate Army is starting to suffer major losses, but Southerners remain hopeful. This passage draws a huge difference, though, between what’s *actually* happening (the Union army is wiping out Confederate soldiers en masse, in much the same way that a hailstorm can destroy crops in

moments) and what the Southerners *think* is going to happen (they’re going to magically come up with thousands of new soldiers to fight for the Cause). Likening these nonexistent new soldiers to “the fruit of the dragon’s teeth” is a reference to a Greek legend where a hero was told to plant a slain dragon’s teeth—and from those teeth sprung warriors who, later in the story, go on to help found a major Greek city. Importantly, though, this story is a myth—which makes it clear that the Southerners don’t have access to anything resembling mythical dragons’ teeth or the great warriors that came from dragon’s teeth. Put simply, it’s a fantasy that the Confederates have more soldiers, which foreshadows their eventual failure in the war. Further, noting that “Where the men would come from, no one knew” suggests that nobody is really trying to solve the problem of where the South can get more soldiers. Instead, they’re trusting in myth and religion, hence noting that the Southerners believe they’ll come up with more soldiers for the same reason they believe God exists. As they see it, there’s simply no alternative. However, Southerners remain unwilling to believe they’ll lose. Their irrational hope in the indomitability of the Cause is compared to religion in which people believe in a powerful God that they can’t see.

## Chapter 23 Quotes

☛☛ Why had he gone, stepping off into the dark, into the war, into a Cause that was lost, into a world that was mad? Why had he gone, Rhett who loved the pleasures of women and liquor, the comfort of good food and soft beds [...] who hated the South and jeered at the fools who fought for it? Now he had set his varnished boots upon a bitter road [...] and the end of the road was death.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O’Hara , Rhett Butler

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 375

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears during the siege of Atlanta when Rhett Butler leaves Scarlett to get to Tara herself while he joins the war. Until this moment, Rhett was cynical about the Confederate Cause and those who fought for it. His common sense told him that the South wouldn’t win the war, and so he saw no reason to risk his life for the Cause. He spent his time making lots of money off the Confederate Cause and laughing at the arrogance and pride of the Southern soldiers. However, as he and Scarlett are fleeing Atlanta for Tara, he catches sight of an elderly evacuating



soldier picking up a teenaged soldier who'd just collapsed. This sight moved Rhett, and shortly after he leaves Scarlett alone on the road to Tara while he walks into the lost Cause. This is the first moment when Scarlett and Rhett's characters start to diverge. Until this moment, Scarlett and Rhett had shared the opinion that the Cause was foolish, and Scarlett had always privately thought that Rhett's observations about the South's inability to win made sense. Therefore, when Rhett joins the war last minute, Scarlett is absolutely bewildered. She can't understand the sentimentality and love of the "bitter road" that ends in death that every other Southerner seems to feel. Similarly, she doesn't understand Southerners' fixation with the past, and sees their looking back as something that only brings bitterness and death. Indeed, as she describes all the things Rhett normally loves, like alcohol, women, and creature comforts like feather beds, she's describing things that make one's present exciting and comfortable. It makes no sense to Scarlett why he'd give these things up just to die—and this is in part because Scarlett prioritizes her life more than the cause, and in part because Scarlett still values creature comforts more than anything else.



## Chapter 24 Quotes

☛☛ What a little while since she and everyone else had thought that Atlanta could never fall, that Georgia could never be invaded. But the small cloud that appeared in the northwest four months ago had blown up into a mighty storm and then into a screaming tornado, sweeping away her world, whirling her out of her sheltered life, and dropping her down in the midst of this still, haunted desolation.

Was Tara still standing? Or was Tara also gone with the wind that had swept through Georgia?

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:**  

**Page Number:** 380

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears during Scarlett's flight from Atlanta back to Tara during the siege of Atlanta. As the war escalated while Scarlett was in Atlanta, she longed for Tara, thinking of it as a safe haven that hadn't been changed by the war. As she gets closer to Tara, however, she realizes that the County too has been devastated by the war, and

that nothing is the same. Scarlett compares the Civil War to a massive storm that broke out, picking her up like a hurricane, and dropping her down in a new world. Even she has changed; she has now experienced things that her old self, sheltered and pampered, would never have experienced. And further, this passage highlights how unpredictable everything feels for Scarlett and all other Southerners right now—nobody, after all, thought that Atlanta would fall. Now that the Yankees have taken it, though, Scarlett has no choice but to accept that things are changing, and she can't blindly believe that anything is going to be the same as it once was. Everything is, as the novel's title suggests, "gone with the wind."


However, as she drives past burned plantations, she wonders if Tara is still standing. Ultimately, Scarlett discovers that Tara isn't in fact "gone with the wind" as everything else is. Throughout the novel, Tara remains the one thing in Scarlett's life that is not lost due to the war or to the shell of hardness she develops. This suggests that the great wind—war—sweeps away everything in Scarlett and other Southerners' lives, aside from their land itself.

## Chapter 25 Quotes

☛☛ Something that was youth and beauty and potential tenderness had gone out of her face forever. What was past was past. Those who were dead were dead. The lazy luxury of the old days was gone, never to return. [...] There was no going back and she was going forward.

Throughout the South for fifty years there would be bitter-eyed women who looked backward, to dead times, to dead men, evoking memories that hurt and were futile, bearing poverty with bitter pride because they had those memories. But Scarlett was never to look back.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara , Ellen O'Hara , Ashley Wilkes

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 407

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears when Scarlett is hunting for food at Twelve Oaks just after she has made it to Tara and found Ellen dead, Gerald having lost his mind, and all Tara's food stolen. In the face of so much loss and change, Scarlett decides that everything of her old life—not just her parents—is dead in the past. She firmly decides never to



look back and only to look forward. Going forward, this helps her adapt to the demands of the post-war world. She sacrifices all the characteristics her mother taught her to value—kindness, generosity, and subservience to men—and becomes ruthless, independent, and practical. She transforms herself this dramatically because she sees that the world she was raised to inhabit is gone. The “lazy luxury” of days past is replaced by a new, cutthroat reality.

By contrast, many other Southerners are incapable of looking forward. Scarlett looks down on the Southerners who still support the Cause. Scarlett sees everything she loves and values disappear with the war; others, though, cling to the values and traditions of the pre-war world. Likewise, other Southerners look down on Scarlett for sacrificing morals and conventions so she can survive and thrive in the new, Yankee world.

Many of these Southerners who look down on Scarlett, as the second part of this quote suggests, become bitter with the pain of their memories. Ashley, for instance, fades away as he clings to his nostalgia for a world that no longer exists. However, the South’s nostalgia ultimately allows them to move forward while maintaining the spirit of the past. In the end, the Democrats regain power in Georgia and reinstate old Southern values. Scarlett is ultimately abandoned as the new world she embraced crumbles back into the old ways. This shows that both living in the past and doing away with the past have consequences.

☛ Nothing her mother had taught her was of any value whatsoever now and Scarlett’s heart was sore and puzzled. It did not occur to her that Ellen had could not have foreseen the collapse of the civilization in which she raised her daughters, [...] that Ellen looked down a vista of placid future years, all like the uneventful years of her own life, when she had taught her to be gentle and gracious, honorable and kind, modest and truthful.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O’Hara , Ellen O’Hara

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 413

### Explanation and Analysis


Scarlett is trying to get Tara working again after Yankees burned it during the war. Her mother is dead, Gerald is mentally unwell, and her sisters refuse to help Scarlett work in the cotton fields. So Scarlett faces with circumstances that require her to abandon how her mother taught her to

behave. Suddenly, she has to raise money, feed a family, and protect her loved ones from robbers and Yankees. Ellen didn’t bother teaching Scarlett to do any of these things because when Scarlett was under her mother’s care, the world didn’t require girls to take on those responsibilities. Instead, Ellen raised her daughters to be “gentle and gracious, honorable and kind, modest and truthful.” Some of these are uniquely feminine virtues, while some, the novel suggests, apply to all people. Scarlett sees both feminine and human virtues as obsolete in the post-war world of cutthroat survival. At Tara, she has to perform manual labor to get a cotton crop going, something that would’ve been unthinkable before the war. She also kills the Yankees who invades Tara—an action that’s not gracious, honorable, or kind. In both these things, she realizes that the feminine virtues of grace and subservience don’t serve her, and that she has to step into a more masculine role in order to survive and keep Tara running.

## Chapter 26 Quotes

☛ Now, struggling against hatred for Ashley’s wife, there surged a feeling of admiration and comradeship. She saw in a flash of clarity untouched by any petty emotion that beneath the gentle voice and dovelike eyes of Melanie there was a thin flashing blade of unbreakable steel, felt too that there were banners and bugles of courage in Melanie’s quiet blood.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O’Hara , Melanie Wilkes (Hamilton)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 420

### Explanation and Analysis

Scarlett has just shot the Yankee who invades Tara. Just after she kills the Yankee, she looks up to see that Melanie had rushed to kill the Yankee too, and Scarlett feels a rush of admiration. Before this, Scarlett feels nothing but disdain for Melanie. She thinks that Melanie is as frail and timid in spirit as she is in appearance, and therefore is unable to respect her. Her disdain is accentuated by the fact that Ashley chose Melanie over Scarlett. Scarlett looks down on Melanie so that she can feel that Ashley should have picked her instead. In this moment, Scarlett realizes that Melanie is more than what she appears, and more than just Ashley’s wife.

However, Scarlett only admires Melanie when Melanie proves that she’s more than just a pretty face, that she actually possesses the instinct to protect at all costs, and



the bravery to face great danger. In other words, Scarlett admires Melanie when she shows she's as untraditional a woman as she herself is.

This is also a moment when another feeling is able to overcome Scarlett's anger over being denied something she wanted (in this case, Ashley). Scarlett loves to be the center of attention and can't stand to be second to anyone else. However, the admiration Scarlett feels for Melanie in this moment cuts through Scarlett's jealousy so that she can see the strength Melanie possesses. She also feels a comradeship with Melanie. This is rare for Scarlett, who often feels that she can't understand people, and that she's always on the outside of a group. However, it takes Scarlett the entire novel to fully accept and appreciate the admiration and closeness she feels for Melanie in this moment.

### Chapter 31 Quotes

☝☝ "[before the war] there was a real beauty to living. [...] And now it is gone and I am out of place in this new life, and I am afraid. Now, I know that in the old days, it was a shadow show I watched. I avoided everything which was not shadowy, people and situations which were too real, too vital. [...] I tried to avoid you too, Scarlett. You were too full of living and too real and I was cowardly enough to prefer shadows and dreams."

**Related Characters:** Ashley Wilkes (speaker), Scarlett O'Hara, Melanie Wilkes (Hamilton)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 498

#### Explanation and Analysis

Ashley Wilkes says this to Scarlett in the orchard at Twelve Oaks when she goes to him to ask him how they'll save Tara from Hilton and Jonas Wilkerson. Ashley explains that he feels incapable of facing the world now that it has been made real by the war. Scarlett understands the world in very simple terms: when Ashley says he's afraid of reality, she thinks he means he's afraid of physical hardship such as hunger or homelessness. Scarlett has this interpretation because she is a realist whereas Ashley is a romantic: he mourns the loss of the old world's (that is, the pre-Civil War South) dreamy beauty and is afraid of the new world's real ugliness. Further, the old world allowed Ashley to sit back and just observe the lovely world, like it was a "shadow show" (which refers to shadow puppetry or other forms of storytelling using shadows). In doing this, Ashley avoids all the real things that populate his world—all the things that

are creating the shadows. He'd rather live in his own head and sit back and watch everyone else, something that perplexes Scarlett, who's "living" and "real."

Later, Rhett Butler later points out that Ashley resists Scarlett so hard because she presents a real, physical temptation to him. He's terrified of Scarlett's vitality and strength because it is as real and physical as the new world he finds around him. In this way, he does not love Scarlett in a dreamy, ethereal way but in a physical, lustful way. This misunderstanding between Ashley and Scarlett leads her to cling to him even though she later comes to see him as a coward who can't forget the past, and realizes that he always loved Melanie but wasn't brave enough to tell Scarlett this plainly.

### Chapter 32 Quotes

☝☝ She came to the end of the long road which had begun the night Atlanta fell. She had set her feet upon that road a spoiled, selfish and untried girl, full of youth, warm of emotion, easily bewildered by life. Now, at the end of the road, there was nothing left of that girl. Hunger and hard labor, fear and constant strain, the terrors of war and the terrors of Reconstruction had taken away all warmth and youth and softness.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara

**Related Themes:**    

**Related Symbols:**  

**Page Number:** 511

#### Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears when Scarlett decides to go to Atlanta to offer to be Rhett Butler's mistress in exchange for money so she can save Tara. She makes a dress out of Ellen's old curtains which represents her complete betrayal of Ellen's teachings to become a woman willing to do anything to survive. This passage closely resembles the passage when Scarlett wonders why Rhett joined the war, setting out on the "bitter road" that ends in death. In the above passage, Scarlett set out on a road during the siege of Atlanta that ends here when she makes the dress out of curtains—the death of her old self. Scarlett and Rhett's figurative roads and their ends, although death in both cases, are different.

While in Atlanta before the siege, Rhett lived in the present with no thought of the past. He scorned those southerners who were sentimental about the Cause and who were

determined to save the ways of the Old South. He moved shamelessly forward into the freedom and indecency of the modern world before the war was even over. However, at the last minute, he was gripped with sentimentality and joined the war. In suddenly looking back and wanting to rescue the Old South, Scarlett believed he was going to die. Scarlett herself took an opposite path. While she was in Atlanta, she lived under the delusion that the old world would never disappear, that no danger would ever befall her, that her own concerns were still the center of the universe. As she fled to Tara and found her old life destroyed, she started, unlike Rhett, on a road that took her into the future away from the past: she abandoned morals, scruples, and her old self. In this way, both Rhett and Scarlett changed on the flight from Atlanta, Rhett becoming the image of the sentimental old Southerner, Scarlett becoming a ruthless woman with no thought for the past. In both passages, the end of the road is death of one's former self.

wealthy, luxurious lifestyle that Southerners enjoyed before the war. But for the Atlantans that Scarlett scorns in this passage, holding onto those virtues and concerns is how they differentiate themselves from the Yankees and keep the Old South alive. They have no interest in moving forward, something that differentiates them from Scarlett (who refuses to look back).



Scarlett then decides that a person can't be a lady or a gentleman unless they are rich. Essentially, Scarlett goes on to sacrifice all her manners and morals in order to make money, planning to resume acting like the lady she was raised to be once she's rich. However, this belief is goes against Ellen and the old South's teachings. Ellen taught Scarlett to be well-mannered in all situations, even poverty; only Yankees believe that any person can make themselves great through money. Therefore, Scarlett's pursuit of money before gentility shows that she doesn't have it in her to be like Ellen or the old Southerners; she's more like the Yankees in this regard.

## Chapter 35 Quotes

☹️ No matter what sights they had seen, what menial tasks they had done and would have to do, they remained ladies and gentlemen, royalty in exile—bitter, aloof, incurious, kind to one another, diamond hard. [...] The old days had gone but these people would go their ways as if the old days still existed, charming, leisurely, determined not to rush and scramble for pennies as the Yankees did, determined to part with none of the old ways.

[...] It took money to be a lady. She knew Ellen would have fainted had she ever heard such words from her daughter.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara , Ellen O'Hara

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 569

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears when Scarlett attends Fanny Elsing's wedding after she returns to Atlanta after the war to pursue Frank Kennedy. Scarlett looks around at all the Atlantans and wonders how they can act as though nothing has changed. They act like "royalty in exile" as though they are still wealthy, landowning Southern plantation owners, when really they're being oppressed and impoverished by the Yankee presence in Georgia. In Scarlett's opinion, her royalty disappeared along with her material wealth. She views the values and concerns of the old South—leisure, kindness, incuriosity—as only useful in the context of the

## Chapter 36 Quotes

☹️ A woman could handle business matters as well as or better than a man, a revolutionary thought to Scarlett. [...] She had been brought up to believe that a woman alone could accomplish nothing, yet she had managed [Tara] without men to help her until Will came. Why, why, her mind stuttered, I believe women could manage everything in the world without men's help!

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara , Frank Kennedy

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 580



### Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears after Scarlett has married Frank Kennedy and starts to take over his lumber business. In this passage, Scarlett is surprised to find herself thinking that a woman can do anything, showing that Scarlett has been raised to think that her only role in life is to marry, give birth to children, and support her husband in whatever he wants to do. However, neither marrying nor having children has yet fulfilled Scarlett, and she feels bored of and stifled by traditional expectations of what women should be like. Here, she gets a taste of what things could be like—if she steps outside of those strict gender roles. She's already been acting well outside how a woman should at Tara, as she notes that she's been running the plantation pretty much on her own for some time. Seeing Frank's books, though, is

different: it shows Scarlett that she's smarter than Frank, better than business than he is, and better at math. At Tara, she was only in charge out of necessity; things change here because she realizes she's more qualified than Frank to be in charge, despite her sex. So while Scarlett has always looked down on men to some degree, this realization gives her more reason to continue doing so, and it makes her feel more secure as she takes power from Frank and even Ashley going forward.

## Chapter 37 Quotes

☝☝ The former slaves were now the lords of creation and, with the aid of the Yankees, the lowest and most ignorant ones were on top. [...] Many loyal field hands refused to avail themselves of the new freedom, but the hordes of "trashy free issue niggers," who were causing most of the trouble, were drawn largely from the field-hand class.

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 611

### Explanation and Analysis

Reconstruction is currently changing the South; this passage expresses the white Southerners' opinion that the hierarchy of whites and Blacks has been wrongly reversed. It shows that class has a lot to do with the racist notions that prevailed during Civil War times. Yankees and anyone who associate with them, such as Scallawags and Carpetbaggers, are considered low-class by formerly wealthy white Southerners. It is mostly poor whites who were low-class in southern society before the war, such as Jonas Wilkerson and the Slatterys, that decide to aid the Yankees and the Freedmen's Bureau after the war, as they're excited by the prospect of redistributing wealth and power. Therefore, to Southerners who were high-class before the war, the freeing of the enslaved persons is a revenge of the white lower class that reverses the class order, making those who they deem the most inferior the "lords of creation."

Before the war, Black people were enslaved within a hierarchy as well. The field-hand class of enslaved persons were lower than the class of house enslaved persons, such as Mammy and Peter. In much the same the way that the O'Hara's feel superior to the Slatterys, Mammy and Peter feel superior to the field-hand class of enslaved persons. Therefore, during and after the war, Mammy and Peter scorn the notion of freedom because they view it as something only a low-class enslaved person seeks. Mammy even kicks a free Black person out of her way in Atlanta, as

she finds his freedom disgraceful. In this way, Mammy chooses to remain effectively enslaved so as to maintain her status as high-class. Similarly, many white southerners hold onto their gentility through poverty because they don't want to sink to the level of Yankees, whom they see as offensively money hungry. In this way, Southern notions of class sustain racial and social hierarchies long after the war ends.

## Chapter 44 Quotes

☝☝ Her conscience battled with her desire for money. She knew she had no business exposing human lives to the hard little man's mercies. If he should cause the death of one of them she would be as guilty as he was.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara , Johnnie Gallegher

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 732

### Explanation and Analysis



This quote appears after Scarlett leases the convicts and hires Johnnie Gallegher at her mill. Everyone has warned Scarlett not to do this, and now she finally sees for herself that Johnnie abuses and starves the convicts. However, although she battles with her conscience, she ultimately decides that she can't pass up the money that Johnnie makes her. This battle of her conscience therefore shows that Scarlett will do anything for money, even if it requires acting against her better judgment. She doesn't make an unethical choice unconsciously; she knows that Johnnie's management might lead to the death of a human being, and she knows that this would make her a murderer just as it would make Johnnie a murderer. Therefore, she acts knowingly unethically all because she wants this money. Her desire for money has become so great that she's willing to essentially commit murder for it.

After her conscience loses the battle against money, Scarlett goes on to openly support abusing convicts. She even instructs Ashley to whip the convicts at his mill and asserts that it's all worth it, since she's no longer poor. After the war, Scarlett justified all her actions by believing that, once she had money, she'd be nice and virtuous again—but at least at this point, she's not making choices that will enable her to do that.

## Chapter 47 Quotes

☛☛ Already many other Southern states had illiterate negroes in high public office and legislatures dominated by negroes and Carpetbaggers. But Georgia, by its stubborn resistance, had so far escaped this final degradation. For the greater part of three years, the state's capital had remained in the control of white men and Democrats.

**Related Characters:** Governor Bullock , Scarlett O'Hara

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 781

**Explanation and Analysis**

Governor Bullock has just been elected—the first Republican in Georgia's history. Even though the North beat the South in the Civil War, Southerners do not feel that they've been fully defeated until they suffer the “final degradation:” when Black people get the right to vote and take positions in public office and the legislature. This is because most Southerners view political defeat and the oppression of Southern values as a truer defeat than the material defeat that the war dealt. The war left Southerners poor and homeless, and it took away their loved ones, but this passage suggests the South isn't truly dead until Southerners' political power is taken away. Once Republicans and Black people are in office, they have the power to change the South's values by writing new laws and choosing to enforce the kinds of laws they prefer—those that favor people who used to be low-class in old Southern society.

Holding tight to their political views is later how the South makes its comeback after they lose the war. At the time this quote takes place, Scarlett wishes that the Southern Democrats would be silent and endure Republican rule. This is because she only understands physical hardship and loss, and she doesn't necessarily miss the Old South's traditions and values. She only wants to regain her material wealth and believes that complying with the new regime is the way to do so. Eventually, the Democrats retake public office in Georgia and reinstate many traditional Southern values that the Republicans tried to do away with. In this way, although the South suffers material defeat from the Civil War, they are politically victorious in the end.

## Chapter 49 Quotes

☛☛ The hate that enveloped the Bullock regime enveloped her too [...] Scarlett had cast her lot with the enemy and, whatever her birth and family connections, she was now in the category of a turncoat, a nigger lover, a traitor, a Republican—and a Scallawag.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara , Governor Bullock , Jonas Wilkerson , Hilton

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 812

**Explanation and Analysis**



Scarlett has just married Rhett Butler; soon after, she befriends Yankees, Carpetbaggers, Republicans, and Scallawags. Rhett Butler is friends with Governor Bullock, and Scarlett, through marriage, becomes friends with him too. Scarlett then grows to like Rhett's Scallawag and Carpetbagger friends even more than he does and cuts ties to her old Democratic friends. Scarlett's association with Yankees, Republicans, and Carpetbaggers is an attempt to be high class on her part, but actually draws her further away from being a “great lady” like Ellen—something she's always wanted to be. Scarlett hangs out with this class of people because they are rich, and she believes that her own wealth makes her high class too. However, in so doing she makes herself a Scallawag—the most looked down upon people in the eyes of traditional Southerners. Supporting the people who took away the South's enslaved labor force is, to those Southerners, unforgivable.

In befriending Yankees, Republicans, and Carpetbaggers, Scarlett also shows how determined she is to forget the past. At one time, she suffered due to Yankees and Scallawags, and she hated them as much as every other Southerner for destroying the South's way of life. Yankee cavalrymen invaded Tara several times and stole Scarlett's food and valuables. Also, Jonas Wilkerson, a Scallawag and Freedmen's Bureau member; and Hilton, a Yankee, threatened to evict her from Tara. At one point, Melanie asks Scarlett how she can forget what the Yankees did to her and befriend them. Scarlett responds that the past is the past. She purposefully forgets that she once hated Yankees and joins their crowd because she's desperate to move forward and become rich again.

## Chapter 53 Quotes

☝☝ Where did she want to get? That was a silly question. Money and security, of course. And yet—Her mind fumbled. She had money and as much security as one could hope for in an insecure world. But [...] now that she thought about it, they hadn't made her particularly happy, though they had made her less harried, less fearful of the morrow.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara (speaker), Ashley Wilkes

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 855

### Explanation and Analysis

Scarlett is reminiscing with Ashley about the old days, and he asks her where she hopes to get to in life. Scarlett gets confused thinking about her answer. Ever since she lay hungry in the garden at Twelve Oaks, Scarlett decided to always look forward and never look back. This decision led her to think only of money as the key to building her future. She felt that she'd lost material things—food, home, and finery—and so she set about making money to buy these things back. When she sits talking to Ashley, however, she realizes that she has all these things in abundance, but that she still feels unsatisfied.

Scarlett feels that money and security have made her “less fearful of the morrow.” As her fear for the future goes away as she gets more money, she also finds she has less to live for. Making money made sense to her while she was starving and on the brink of homelessness, but now that she isn't, she feels she's only moving forward to nowhere. She maintains that her new, rich life is exciting and glamorous (and secure; she won't find herself hungry and without a place to sleep any time soon), but she realizes that something is missing. In separating herself from the past so completely, she left behind what made life worth living and money worth having. Like other Southerners, she misses the past; she pretends to love the present because she doesn't want to be trapped by nostalgia and regret the way Ashley is.

## Chapter 60 Quotes

☝☝ She had never before known this type of fear. All her life her feet had been firmly planted in common sense and the only things she had ever feared had been the things she could see, injury, hunger, poverty, loss of Ashley's love. [...] Those fears had never weighed her down as this feeling of wrongness was doing.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara (speaker), Bonnie Blue Butler, Rhett Butler

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 925

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote appears after Scarlett and Rhett's daughter Bonnie dies in a riding accident. Scarlett is overcome by a sadness that she can't name or move on from. In the past, when Scarlett has experienced loss, she has been able to move forward without being crushed by grief. Her hardships to date have been mostly physical, such as hunger and homelessness. She lost her mother and father as well, but she found she could ignore her grief by focusing on providing for herself. In this way, Scarlett showed her common sense. She never let herself get bogged down in abstract or cerebral fears and didn't spend time mourning what she could never get back.

After Bonnie dies, however, she feels that everything is wrong. The word “wrongness” suggests that what Scarlett is feeling is not just sadness over loss of her daughter—sadness she can overcome, as she overcame Gerald and Ellen's deaths. Rather, her feeling of “wrongness” suggests that her life no longer makes sense to her. She has moved forward from so many hardships and become so unlike her old self that she feels lost. Furthermore, she is unable to analyze this feeling of wrongness that weighs on her. She is so practical and literal that she finds such an ambiguous feeling incomprehensible. This is similar to how she's been unable to understand patriotism, honor, or other people's feelings throughout the story.

## Chapter 61 Quotes

☝☝ [Scarlett] could see so clearly now that he was only a childish fancy, no more important really than her spoiled desire for the aquamarine earbobs she had coaxed out of Gerald. For, once she owned the earbobs, they had lost their value, as everything except money lost its value once it was hers. And so he, too, would have become cheap if, in those first far-away days, she had ever had the satisfaction of refusing to marry him.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara (speaker), Ashley Wilkes, Melanie Wilkes (Hamilton), Rhett Butler

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 940

**Explanation and Analysis**

Melanie has just died, and Scarlett suddenly realizes that she doesn't love Ashley anymore. On her deathbed, Melanie makes Scarlett promise to take care of Ashley. With Melanie dead and her last wish for Scarlett to care for Ashley, Scarlett has what she's always wanted: Ashley. However, now that she has him, she doesn't want him anymore. She compares her love for Ashley to her love of jewelry and clothes—a love that fades as soon as she gets what she wants. Throughout the novel, Scarlett has always wanted what she didn't have. Not used to being thwarted in getting what she wants, her desire for something intensifies the more it eludes her. When she first realized that she wouldn't be able to prevent Ashley from marrying Melanie, she felt she never loved him more than in that moment as she was losing him. Her feeling of love for Ashley was really a feeling of wounded pride, but it turned into an obsession that she couldn't shake until Ashley finally became hers. This also helps explain why Scarlett has such a hard time relating to her love interests: she sees them as objects to win, rather than as people.

By contrast, when Rhett Butler proposes to Scarlett, she accepts his proposal without knowing why. Significantly, she doesn't feel in control in that moment, and says yes as if by divine intervention. This suggests that Rhett is *not* like a pair of aquamarine earbobs to Scarlett. Rather, he is someone she can't control or plan her feelings for. She never had a "childish fancy" for someone like Rhett—and she ultimately comes to see him as a fellow person as well.

second time in the novel, Scarlett defines the course of her future while she's experiencing some great loss. Just as when she laid in the garden at Twelve Oaks after returning to Tara to find it mostly destroyed, she now finds all her friends and family having slipped away from her or died. That day in the garden, she decided to think only of the future, and to focus all her energy on procuring food and money. Here, she focuses all her energy on Rhett. Although Scarlett's love for Rhett might be true, it is also possible that she is running to him as the next thing in the line that *hasn't* been lost, escaping the past by running to the future as she's done many times before.

Scarlett also seems to be finally discovering her true nature. She puts aside her childhood dream of being like Ellen and her childhood crush on Ashley, and she now realizes that Rhett is her future because he is "passionate and earthy" just like her. In the beginning of the novel, Scarlett was described as "passionate and earthy," like Gerald, but she didn't know it yet. After 12 years, she finally knows it. This solves one of the novel's central questions, as it shows that per the novel's logic, like should marry like—a marriage between two people who aren't alike won't be successful in this framework.

Notably, Scarlett makes an exception for money in the list of things she's lost. Moments before, when she realized she no longer loved Ashley, she had observed that everything, except money, lost its value once it was hers. This suggests that Scarlett still values money more than anything, calling into question whether she'll take it seriously that she now believes she loves Rhett—or whether she'll continue to sacrifice his love to earn money.

**Chapter 62 Quotes**

☝️ She had thought, half an hour ago, that she had lost everything in the world, except money, everything that made life desirable, Ellen, Gerald, Bonnie, Mammy, Melanie and Ashley. She had to lose them all to realize that she loved Rhett—loved him because he was strong and unscrupulous, passionate and earthy, like herself.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara (speaker), Rhett Butler

**Related Themes:**   

**Page Number:** 946



**Explanation and Analysis**

Melanie has just died and Scarlett has realized she doesn't love Ashley. She is walking home through the fog, feeling utterly lost, when she realizes she loves Rhett. For the

**Chapter 63 Quotes**

☝️ "I want the outer semblance of the things I used to know, the utter boredom of respectability [...] the calm dignity life can have when it's lived by gentle folks, the genial grace of days that are gone. When I lived those days I didn't realize the slow charm of them..."

**Related Characters:** Rhett Butler (speaker), Scarlett O'Hara, Ashley Wilkes

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 956

**Explanation and Analysis**



This quote appears near the end of the story when Rhett

Butler rejects Scarlett's confession of love. This passage shows that Rhett has undergone a transformation since Scarlett first met him. When Scarlett and Rhett danced at the bazaar early in the novel, Rhett told Scarlett how much he loved money. Before the war had even started, Rhett abandoned the Old South and its values. In fact, he saw the imminent fall of Southern civilization as an opportunity to make lots of money. In this way, he had a very realistic and unsentimental opinion about the South and the Civil War. In this passage, however, Rhett uses words such as "respectability," "dignity," "grace," and "charm" to describe his pre-war life, indicating that he is now longing for something money can't buy. He is reminiscing about old days and wants to move forward with his life by returning to old traditions, traditions that he can only appreciate now that they're gone.

This passage also bears a strong resemblance to Ashley's reminiscences about the Old South when he and Scarlett were talking in the orchard at Tara. In fact, Rhett's words make Scarlett think viscerally of Ashley's wistfulness and preoccupation with the past. This recognition is devastating for her because moments before she had decided she loved Rhett because he is unlike Ashley and because he is practical and forward thinking, just like she is. However, by the time she has realized this, he's turned sentimentally back to the past. This shows that Scarlett and Rhett changed in opposite directions over the course of the novel, making their relationship continuously untimely. Furthermore, their divergence suggests that nearly everyone in the novel is nostalgic for the past—except Scarlett, a fact that ultimately estranges her.

☹️ She had never understood either of the men she had loved and so she had lost them both. Now she had a fumbling knowledge that, had she ever understood Ashley, she would never have loved him; had she ever understood Rhett, she would never have lost him.

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara (speaker), Ashley Wilkes, Rhett Butler

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 958

### Explanation and Analysis



Rhett has just rejected Scarlett and plans to go to Charleston; Scarlett is thinking back on her experiences with love. Throughout the novel, Scarlett demonstrates that

she's incapable of understanding people. She doesn't sympathize with the wounded soldiers in the hospital because she can't see anything but her own needs and desires, for instance, she can't understand why Rhett asked her to marry him, and she can't understand what Ashley's great burden is. Here, though, Scarlett realizes that her inability to understand people prevents her from finding love. She believed she loved Ashley because she couldn't understand him at all. If she had understood him, she would have seen that they were very different people: Ashley always looks to the past, and Scarlett only looks to the future. If she had understood Rhett, she would have seen how much he loved her all along.

Scarlett's inability to understand people shows that her tenacity and strength for survival might come at a price. Throughout the novel she demonstrates that she can survive any physical hardship, from poverty to physical threats. She is intelligent and crafty when it comes to solving problems pertaining to physical survival, as when she goes to Atlanta to seduce a Frank Kennedy for his money—and then takes over his sawmill and grows her fortune. However, these powerful feats come at the cost of her sensitivity and ability to care for others. She uses people to satisfy her needs and is so practical that she ultimately can't see anything of value beyond money. Therefore, her power seems to require that she sacrifice her ability to understand and love others.

☹️ "I'll think of it all tomorrow, at Tara. I can stand it then. [...] After all, tomorrow is another day."

**Related Characters:** Scarlett O'Hara (speaker), Rhett Butler, Ellen O'Hara, Johnnie Gallegher, Ashley Wilkes

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 959

### Explanation and Analysis

This quote, spoken by Scarlett, is the last line of *Gone with the Wind*. Throughout the novel, Scarlett tells herself she'll "think of it tomorrow" whenever she encounters something too hard to face. This phrase gets her through both emotional and moral hardships. She first says it to herself when she gets to Tara after fleeing Atlanta and she finds that Ellen has died. Instead of being overcome by grief, she pushes her grief off till tomorrow. She turns this coping



mechanism into an outlook for her life: she decides she'll never look back and will only look towards the future. In this way, pushing grief off "until tomorrow" helps Scarlett endure and move forward in a world that has been destroyed by the war.

Scarlett also applies the phrase "I'll think of it tomorrow" when she compromises her morals in order to get something she needs or wants. For instance, when she finds out that Johnnie Gallegher abuses the convicts she leased on her mills, she decides she'll think of the miserable faces of the convicts later because she wants to keep making money off of their abuse. In general, Scarlett avoids confronting her immoral behavior by promising herself she'll worry about it later. In this way, Scarlett always drives

forward with what she wants without pausing to consider an action's consequences.

In the novel's final line, Scarlett pushes her pain over losing Rhett off until tomorrow. Her incessant future-thinking causes her not to recognize the things she has until it is too late: by the time she realizes she loves Melanie and Rhett, Melanie is dying and Rhett is leaving her. This leaves her with less to focus her attention on in the present as she pushes all her losses off till tomorrow. In this way, what was a coping mechanism for loss ends up causing Scarlett even *more* loss. She is left alone thinking obsessively of the future, but everything around her is dead or receding back to the past.



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

## CHAPTER 1

Scarlett O'Hara is sitting with twins Brent and Stuart Tarleton outside at **Tara**, the O'Hara's plantation, in April 1861. Scarlett isn't beautiful, but she charms everyone, including the twins. She is pale, with dark eyebrows and green eyes. Her elegance and poise are mature for a girl of 16, but her eyes are "her own" and are full of willful passion. The Tarleton twins are identical—red-haired, athletic, and cheerful. Scarlett and the twins lead easy, upper-class lives, but they have the vigor of people who've grown up outdoors. Like all north Georgians, they take pride in growing cotton, riding, shooting, and dancing rather than in reading and dull activities.

Brent and Stuart have just been expelled from the University of Georgia. Their brothers, Tom and Boyd, left too, refusing to stay without them. Scarlett isn't studious herself, so she's amused by the story. The twins claim they would've come home anyway to fight in the war. Scarlett scoffs, saying vaguely that Abraham Lincoln will make an "amicable agreement" about the Confederacy. The twins exclaim excitedly that the war is inevitable. Scarlett is bored; she likes to be the center of every conversation. She playfully threatens to leave if she hears the words "Abe Lincoln," "secession," or "war" again.

Charmed by Scarlett, Brent and Stuart give up the subject of war. Scarlett asks how Beatrice Tarleton, the twins' mother, reacted to their expulsion from college this time (they've been expelled before from a different school). The twins explain that they avoided a confrontation with her by sneaking out to visit Scarlett before their mother was awake. Beatrice never whips her horses or her enslaved persons, but she occasionally whips her sons to discipline them. She runs a big plantation and has little patience for their mischief.

The sun starts to set, giving the red clay a bloody hue. The house is like a white island in a red sea. North Georgia is a "land of contrasts," divided into bright sun and deep shade, placid cotton fields and sinister forests. Scarlett, Brent, and Stuart hear the enslaved people coming in from the fields and setting the table. The twins linger, hoping to be invited to supper.

*The opening lines of Gone with the Wind paint a picture of the South just before the Civil War begins. The Civil War officially starts on April 12, 1861, revealing that the War is mere days away from starting when the story begins at an unspecified date in April. Scarlett O'Hara and the twins lounge with no real worries. They embody the quintessential Southern teenager—wealthy, relaxed, lively, and proud. The description of Scarlett's eyes as "her own" suggests that she's perhaps more independent than is considered proper for a Southern lady at this time.*



*Scarlett and the twins are not very "school smart." The twins were expelled from college because they care more about the war than they do about their studies. Their attitude shows that the South is enthusiastic and confident rather than cautious and rational when it comes to the war. On the other hand, Scarlett is bored by anything that is not about her; she yawns at some of the most significant words of the time period, suggesting that she's naïve and perhaps lacks Southern pride.*



*In saying that Beatrice would sooner discipline her sons than her enslaved persons, they novel tries to claim that Southern enslavers were not cruel to their enslaved persons. This is not historically true and establishes the perspective from which the novel is told: from wealthy Southerners who enslave other people and see no problem with this.*



*This image of the Southern landscape is foreboding, as bright and beautiful natural elements conceal dark and disturbing ones. This foreshadows that the South's wealth and leisure are soon to be destroyed by the war. It also suggests that the South's beauty is only surface level, and dependent on something awful—namely, slavery. The "bloody" hue of the clay references the enslaved Black people whose labor supports wealthy white Southerners' idyllic way of life.*



Brent and Stuart bring up a barbecue at the Wilkeses' the next day. They tease Scarlett, saying that if she promises to dance with them there, they'll tell her a secret. Then Stuart spills the secret that Ashley Wilkes and Melanie Hamilton are announcing their engagement at the barbecue. Scarlett's lips turn white. She agrees vaguely to dance with the twins, and then grows quiet. The twins eventually realize she's stopped talking to them. They reluctantly see themselves out.

Brent and Stuart call for Jeems, their once playmate and now personal enslaved man, and mount their horses. Once out of sight, they stop and puzzle over why Scarlett didn't invite them to supper. They can't figure out what upset her. Jeems points out that she got quiet after they told her of Ashley and Melanie's engagement. This still puzzles them, since Scarlett and Ashley have always been close friends. The twins try to think of somewhere they can have dinner, not wanting to go home to their mother. The twins are fearless when it comes to horses and guns, but their mother's temper frightens them.

Brent suggests they go to the Wilkeses', but Stuart doesn't want to see India Wilkes. He'd once been her beau, but Brent thought she was boring. The twins didn't want to fight over a girl. Then, they'd noticed Scarlett at a political event. They find her irresistible and charming because they never know where they stand with her. Stuart still feels guilty because he'd made India love him. Though he liked her, he also thought she was too dependable. Besides, the twins are happy to both love Scarlett. They haven't considered what might happen if she chooses one of them.

Brent then suggests they go to the Cade Calvert's. Stuart, however, doesn't want to see his Yankee stepmother; she still hasn't gotten over the time Stuart shot her stepson Cade in the leg. Brent points out that Beatrice had made jokes when Tony Fontaine shot him in the leg. The twins consider going home again. Stuart realizes gloomily that their expulsion probably cost them the trip to Europe their parents promised them. Brent says he doesn't care; he'd rather be around to fight in the war anyway.

Stuart says they should go see Able Wynder, the elected lieutenant of the "Troop" (the Confederates). Jeems pipes up that Able is "po' w'ite trash" and won't have suitable food for them. Stuart admonishes him for his frank disdain of the lieutenant, explaining that Able is a small farmer, but that he isn't "trash."

*After a very lighthearted, flirtatious conversation, the name Ashley Wilkes suddenly sobers Scarlett. Scarlett doesn't care about school or war, but she cares immensely that Ashley Wilkes is marrying Melanie Hamilton. This establishes that one of her main concerns in life is relations with men, and with this man in particular.*



*The Southern culture of slavery is perverse and cruel: Southern children play with Black people as they would with someone they considered an equal, and yet their Black playmates grow up and are forced to serve them. Jeems astutely recognizes exactly what upset Scarlett, but the twins are perhaps too naïve to read the signs. They may also take anything Jeems says less seriously, as they don't view enslaved people like him as being intelligent or knowledgeable.*



*Scarlett's appeal to the twins is that she is always playing a game. She is attractive because she isn't dependable or serious. This portrays Scarlett as someone who isn't very serious about anyone or anything. Even if she is serious about Ashley, she is willing to play with the feelings of others anyway. This suggests that she's selfish and doesn't take romance seriously, as it's just a game to her.*



*The twins do not want to go to the Calverts' because Mrs. Calvert is a Yankee. This shows that, even before the war has officially started, Southerners dislike people from the North. The novel also drives home how much the twins welcome the war and hope it will happen. They are happy to have missed out on worldly opportunities so they can fight for the South.*



*Jeems looks down on poor white people even more than the twins do. This shows that Jeems—as an enslaved man with no rights—holds himself above white people of a lower class than his enslavers. He may gain more power by sticking close to the twins.*



The “Troop” was organized three months before when Georgia seceded from the Union. Ashley Wilkes was elected captain and Able Wynder lieutenant. Able is kind and honorable, although the women and enslaved persons resent him because he isn’t a gentleman. Since there aren’t many wealthy planters, the Troop recruited many small farmers instead. All were eager to fight, but the small farmers couldn’t afford to outfit and arm themselves. To solve this, a few of the wealthiest planters donated fancy, antique weapons. The Troop met twice a week to practice drills, tell stories, and pray for the war to begin. The meetings often ended in the saloons where fights would break out. At one of these fights, Tony Fontaine shot Brent, and Stuart shot Cade Calvert. Their mother then sent them to school, where they had missed the excitement of the meetings.

Brent and Stuart decide to go to Able’s. When Jeems complains, Stuart tells him to go to Beatrice and tell her they won’t be home for supper. Jeems says he’d rather stay out all night and be caught by patrollers than deal with Beatrice when she’s angry. The twins agree to bring him to Able’s as long as he behaves. While cutting through Mr. O’Hara’s plantation, the twins wonder again why Scarlett didn’t invite them to supper.

## CHAPTER 2

Back at **Tara**, Scarlett is miserable. For the first time in her life, she isn’t getting her way. She can’t believe that Ashley Wilkes is going to marry the ugly, boring Melanie Hamilton when she knows that he really loves her. She hears Mammy, the O’Hara’s enslaved woman, approaching, and she quickly dries her eyes. If Mammy sees she’s upset, she will go to Ellen O’Hara who’ll get the secret out of Scarlett. Mammy is deeply devoted to the O’Haras and shows her love by chastening them. Mammy scolds Scarlett for not inviting Brent and Stuart to supper and asks why her voice sounds hoarse. Scarlett changes the subject and says she wants to watch the sunset.

While Mammy gets Scarlett’s shawl, Scarlett decides to go down the drive to meet her father, Gerald O’Hara, on his way home. He’s been at the Wilkeses’ on business, and she wonders if he’s heard about the engagement. She sneaks down the drive, sits on a stump, and waits. She thinks of Ashley, feeling anxious and upset. Growing up, she’d never thought of Ashley as anything more than a friend. However, when he came back from Europe three years ago, she wanted him “simply and unreasoningly.” Ever since, they’ve seen each other weekly. Although he’s never said so, she knows he loves her.

*Life feels easy and wonderful for Scarlett, Brent, and Stuart, all of whom are from wealthy, prominent planter families. But really, class struggles are roiling the South. Wealth is concentrated among a few extremely wealthy planters, leaving many more poor farmers. Although many poor farmers have great character, they are looked down upon as less than “gentlemen” because they don’t have money. The war reveals this divide, as some Southerners are able to contribute monetarily to the Confederate Cause while others are not. The war has already started to destabilize the South’s hierarchical class structure.*



*It’s extremely infantilizing of the twins to agree to bring Jeems with them if he behaves—this reads as something one might say to a misbehaving child, which speaks to how wealthy white Southerners see enslaved Black people. Some, like Jeems, might be able to express their opinions, but white Southerners see them as naïve and in need of white guidance, not freedom.*



*Mammy is introduced as an omniscient presence at Tara who act like she has more ownership over the O’Haras than they do over her. As an enslaved woman, Mammy isn’t free to be proud of any of her own possessions or devoted to any of her own pursuits the way she is to the O’Haras. Although Mammy is portrayed as genuinely devoted to the O’Haras, it must be acknowledged that all the things that make a person proud of themselves have been taken away from her in her enslavement.*



*Although Scarlett feels very strongly that Ashley loves her, there is a vagueness to their relationship. Scarlett grew up with Ashley as a playmate, and only decided he loved him when he returned from a long absence. Also, she loves him “unreasoningly,” meaning that she can’t put her finger on why she loves him. This vagueness is part of what draws her to him; because he is not obvious about his love, she is convinced that he loves her.*



Ashley is courteous, but remote. He is good at riding and shooting like other men, but unlike them he's interested in books and music. These things don't interest Scarlett, but that doesn't matter. She loves him, wants him, and doesn't understand him. With Ashley, she's up against a "complex nature" for the first time in her life. He lives in a dreamy world of the mind, and his mystery excites her. It can't be true that he's going to marry Melanie. Just the other day he said he had something important to tell her. His words seem tragic now. The sun sets over the land Scarlett loves, though she doesn't know she loves it.

Suddenly, Gerald comes up the drive at a gallop. Scarlett admires his riding as Gerald jumps his horse gracefully over the fence then comes to a halt. Scarlett laughs. Gerald notices her and scolds her affectionately for spying on him. He smells pleasantly of bourbon and tobacco. He's a short man, but so muscular that he appears large. Although his hair is white, his face is youthful because he's never worried about much besides poker. His gruff exterior poorly conceals his soft heart. Everyone on the plantation knows that Ellen is actually in charge—except for Gerald.

Scarlett and Gerald have a special bond because they keep secrets for each other from Mammy and Ellen. Gerald, for instance, isn't supposed to be jumping his horse after injuring his knee, but Scarlett won't tell anyone. Similarly, Gerald doesn't say anything when he catches Scarlett climbing fences instead of using gates. Scarlett is comforted by Gerald's "earthy" nature, not knowing that she possesses the same qualities. She teases Gerald for jumping the fence and fixing his cravat to conceal the evidence from Ellen.

Gerald explains that he bought Dilcey, the wife of their enslaved man Pork, from the Wilkeses where she'd been enslaved. He then starts to talk about the war, but Scarlett impatiently changes the subject to tomorrow's barbecue. Gerald mentions that Melanie Hamilton, that "sweet little thing," is visiting from **Atlanta**. Crestfallen, Scarlett asks about Ashley.

Suspicious, Gerald asks Scarlett why she's asking after Ashley; has he proposed to her? Scarlett answers no. Then, Gerald confirms that Ashley and Melanie are engaged and will announce it at the barbecue. Scarlett is visibly upset, and Gerald becomes angry. He accuses her of running after Ashley and tells her there'll be plenty of other men. Scarlett despairs that he's trying to placate her like a child. Gerald admits that he doesn't think Ashley would make her happy anyway; marriages are only happy when like marries like.

*Essentially, Scarlett wants what's unfamiliar and therefore feels exciting to her. Ashley is attractive because he's not like other men, whom Scarlett seems to think she understands on some level. On the other hand, the novel presents it as fact that Scarlett loves the South but doesn't know it. Taken together, this suggests that when it comes to love—whether of a place or a person—Scarlett is naïve and still figuring out how romance works.*



*Like Scarlett, Gerald has an interior and an exterior self that don't fully match. While Scarlett appears soft and youthful on the outside, she is strong and willful on the inside (per the novel's opening lines). On the other hand, Gerald is masculine and gruff on the outside but has a soft heart. Scarlett admires this about her father, but it's important to note that the novel implies that Gerald's soft heart is what keeps him from actually controlling things at Tara.*



*Significantly, Scarlett seeks Gerald in her distress, and avoided confrontation with Mammy and Ellen, both women. She is drawn to Gerald's "earthy" nature (by which the novel means he's down-to-earth and practical) because she is the same way. Indeed, the novel implies that Scarlett is much more like her father than her mother in terms of her personality, though the novel makes it clear that Scarlett isn't yet aware of this.*



*This passage reveals that slavery cruelly separated enslaved persons from their families. Then, the novel questions what Melanie Hamilton is really like. Scarlett, whose opinion is biased because of her feeling for Ashley, thinks Melanie is ugly and boring, but Gerald seems to of her.*



*Before, it was made clear that Scarlett loves Ashley because he is different from her, and she can't understand him. Here, Gerald states that love only makes sense between two like people who do understand each other. This raises the question of whether Scarlett's opinion is childish and naïve as Gerald suggests, or if Gerald's opinion is old-fashioned.*



Gerald goes on to say that the Wilkeses are “queer folk.” Scarlett starts to protest but Gerald insists that even a cheater or a drunk would make Scarlett happier than Ashley because he’s impossible to understand. She wouldn’t be able to change him, and he’d always be reading and thinking. He’s “moonstruck,” like all the Wilkeses. Gerald suggests Scarlett marry Cade Calvert and live at **Tara** after Gerald passes away. Scarlett says that she doesn’t want Cade or any plantation—she secretly believes that no land amounts to anything without the right man. Offended, Gerald insists that land is everything.

Gerald says that women shouldn’t be allowed to choose their own husbands. All that matters is that the husband is Southern, prideful, and like-minded. For a woman, “love comes after marriage.” Scarlett says this is a tired idea. Gerald commands Scarlett to be prideful, and not reveal her misery to anyone. She dries her eyes and they head toward the house.

Mrs. O’Hara and Mammy are standing on the porch. They’re headed to the Slatterys to baptize a newborn baby who’s on the verge of death. Mammy grumbles that they shouldn’t be giving so much help to “po’ w’ite trash” like the Slatterys. Gerald grumbles something similar. He heads into the house, having completely forgotten Scarlett’s heartbreak. As she follows, Scarlett wonders how a match between her and Ashley could be stranger than the match between her parents, who aren’t at all alike.

## CHAPTER 3

Scarlett’s mother, Ellen O’Hara, is 32 years old. She is of French descent, with black hair and eyelashes, and stands much taller than her husband. She’s proud and serious and oversees matters at **Tara** with grace. Next to Gerald’s chaotic presence, she’s a calm “pillar of strength.” When her three sons died in infancy, she grieved stoically. She always keeps busy. Scarlett remembers how, as a child, she’d listen to the enslaved persons tiptoe to her mother’s room at night to tell her about a birth or death among them. Her mother would get up quietly and go tend to the matter. Scarlett can’t picture her mother laughing. Everyone looks to Ellen for wisdom and strength.

What Scarlett doesn’t know is that Ellen used to be very vivacious. In her hometown of Savannah, she’d been in love with her cousin Philippe. But when Philippe left Savannah, Ellen transformed into only a “gentle shell” of her former self, and then she married Gerald O’Hara.

*Gerald thinks the Wilkeses aren’t normal. Ashley is “moonstruck,” or is out of touch with reality. Because Gerald believes land is so important and wants to leave Tara to Scarlett when he dies, he doesn’t want her to marry someone who isn’t down to earth and only dreams all the time. But Scarlett feels that land is nothing without love. Their debate raises the question of whether love or land is more important to happiness.*



*Gerald’s idea that love comes after marriage highlights one way that Southern society keeps women powerless: women, Gerald insists, shouldn’t have control over major aspects of their lives and should just learn to live with the decisions other people (presumably, men) make for them. Because she’s so independent, Scarlett finds this absurd.*



*Mammy feels the same superiority over poor people that Jeems did, showing that she too is oppressed by the notion that her enslavement by the O’Haras dignifies her. Gerald’s classist disgust of the Slatterys contrasts with Ellen’s kindness towards them, leading Scarlett to believe more strongly that marriages between unlike people are actually the successful ones.*



*Ellen O’Hara is portrayed as a feminine ideal. She is strong and compassionate, and everyone relies on her. Unlike Scarlett, Ellen is refuses to indulge herself with grief when she loses something she loves. Scarlett is described as someone who can’t bear when she’s not the center of attention, but Ellen always puts others’ needs before her own. In this way, Scarlett and Ellen, although mother and daughter, are two very different women.*



*Ellen’s past love for Phillippe suggests that she’s not as happy in her marriage to Gerald as it seems. Also, it suggests she truly loved a man very like her—her cousin—instead of Gerald, who’s very unlike her.*



Gerald immigrated from Ireland to America when he was 21. He arrived with nothing after leaving Ireland in a hurry. He was involved in a fatal dispute with a land agent whom Gerald had insulted by calling an Orangeman, a reference to the Battle of the Boyne in which the O'Haras and their neighbors had lost their wealth to William of Orange and his troops. The O'Haras left Ireland because of Gerald, as the government began to suspect the family was conspiring against the English. He was too outspoken and fiery to live undercover.

Gerald had very little education and only knew how to read and write. He went to live with his brothers, James and Andrew, who'd already settled in Savannah. He helped them run the store they'd opened. Gerald fell in love with the South and took a liking to poker, racing, and politics. Like native Southerners, he hated Yankees and was avid about slavery and cotton.

Although he admired the Southern lifestyle, Gerald could never be as elegant as it required. He was too coarse and rugged. However, he desperately wanted to be an enslaver and own his own plantation. He won his first enslaved person, his valet Pork, in a poker game. Then, he gambled with another man for the man's large plantation in northern Georgia and won. The plantation—which at the time was unkempt and uncultivated—immediately felt like home. Gerald slowly built his plantation with enslaved labor and borrowed money. He's extremely proud of his work.

Gerald gets along with all his neighbors except the MacIntoshes and the Slatterys. The MacIntoshes are Irish Orangemen, which offends Gerald; however, no one likes them much. They're also rumored to be Abolitionists, although the rumors are still unfounded. The Slatterys are a poor white family who tend three acres of cotton. They had no enslaved labor force, have lots of children, and never prosper.

*Gerald's background shows that he's someone who understand poverty and hardship. Although he is one of the wealthiest planters in northern Georgia now, he was once an immigrant who had no money or home. The Battle of the Boyne, in which the O'Hara fortune was stolen, foreshadows the Civil War which is about to impoverish the South and reduce it to nothing.*



*Gerald's history shows that a person's education isn't what makes them wealthy. Gerald wasn't educated and didn't want to be moderately wealthy like his brothers were, and he didn't want to achieve success by using his intelligence. Rather, he loved the Southern lifestyle of unearned luxury, and wanted to be powerful in an economy based on slavery.*



*Gerald became a plantation owner without working for it. He wanted to be wealthy in the leisurely manner of Southerners: he wanted a plantation operated for him by enslaved persons. However, unlike most other wealthy Southerners, he's a self-made man who turned a wilderness into a well-kept plantation. His rags to riches story shows that people can become wealthy even if they're not born into wealth—at least in some cases.*



*In the South, a person's class depends on whether they are an enslaver. Gerald considers the MacIntoshes and Slatterys low class because the former are supposedly Abolitionists, and the latter are poor and have no enslaved labor. He associates the Abolitionist stance with poverty as if it is a low-class opinion to want to free enslaved persons. In reality, it is that a high-class person in the South would never be an Abolitionist because their wealth depends solely on enslaved labor.*



When Gerald turned 43, he wanted a wife. He recognized how disorganized his plantation was, in part because his enslaved staff knew he was too kind to be commanding, so they took advantage of that. Gerald envied other households where wives managed everything, but he couldn't find an appropriate woman to marry. Gerald took Pork to Savannah to see if James and Andrew could help. At a party, Gerald met the most unattainable girl, Ellen Robillard. She was young enough to be his daughter and in love with her cousin. It seemed hopeless. But she agreed to marry Gerald after learning Philippe died in a bar brawl. It would allow her to leave her memories of Savannah behind. She left for his country plantation with Mammy and 20 enslaved house staff.

The next year, their first daughter, Scarlett, was born. Gerald was disappointed that she wasn't a boy. No one could tell if Ellen regretted marrying Gerald or not. She had left Savannah's constant sunshine and a gracious home for the County, the rural landscape in northern Georgia. The people in the north came from all different places, and this gave the County a lively informality. Also, the fever for cotton was sweeping the north, making it prosperous. Ellen never fully became one of the County people, but she was respected for her devotion to her family and household.

After Scarlett, Susan Elinor (Suellen) and Caroline Irene (Carreen) were born. Ellen transformed **Tara**, bringing to it dignity, order, and grace. She planted wisteria around the house, which added to the house's charm. She would sit an enslaved boy on the front stoop with a towel to swat away the fowl that came in the yard to pick at the plants. She had all enslaved boys do this for 10 years before they could rise to a higher position on the plantation. Ellen accepted that she lived in a man's world. Men could own things, take credit for everything, and express their feelings, while women managed everything while keeping their feelings inside. She had been taught to be a great lady and carry her burdens with grace.

Ellen had a hard time teaching Scarlett to be ladylike. Scarlett preferred to play with boys and the enslaved children rather than her sisters. Ellen and Mammy joined together in trying to get Scarlett to behave like a girl. She learned to appeal to men by concealing her intelligence with sweetness and innocence. She also learned to act ladylike, but it's only for show. On the inside she is willful, self-centered, and obstinate.

*Marrying Ellen helped Gerald rise in class. Unlike Gerald, who immigrated from Ireland and had nothing, Ellen was a multi-generational Southerner of a high-class family. Although Gerald won Tara and had a few enslaved men, Ellen's wealth provided him with a full enslaved labor force and turned Tara into the plantation that it is in the present. Although the novel claims Gerald loved Ellen, it is undeniable that marrying her had material benefit. Marriage, the novel shows, isn't just about love: it's about improving one's position as well.*



*While southern Georgia is beautiful and comfortable, northern Georgia is rougher and the people more hardscrabble. South Georgia is traditional, inhabited by people who've been Georgians for generations. In contrast, the north is full of immigrants, making it more modern. In this way, Savannah represents an older version of the Old South, whereas the County represents a newer Old South.*



*Ellen's strategy of training enslaved persons to climb a hierarchical structure shows that she holds extremely traditional Southern values that come from a long history of slavery. Her femininity and her idea of the female role is also traditional. As a "great lady," she complies with her husband's decisions and fits herself into his world. And while the narration makes it pretty clear that Ellen singlehandedly makes Tara great, because she's female, she never gets to take any credit. Women, this shows, are accomplished—but nobody sees them as accomplished.*



*Right away, Scarlett shows signs of not fitting the perfect female example her mother tries to set. She only embraces traditional female qualities like sweetness and naivete when she wants to manipulate a boy or get something she wants—a sign of her more masculine selfishness.*





Mammy and Ellen admire Scarlett's charm and spirit, but they fear that her headstrong nature will make her undesirable to suitors. Scarlett wants to marry and is willing to appear gentle in order to achieve this, but she's never stopped to think of why she plays this game. People's minds, including her own, are too complicated for her to understand. She approaches courting like a mathematical formula.

Scarlett understands the female mind even less than the male mind. She views all women as her enemies in the pursuit of men. However, Scarlett regards her mother as something entirely separate; she's holy, dependable, and loving. Scarlett wants to be like her mother, but she isn't ready to give up the fun of courting in order to be more like Ellen. Perhaps she will when she marries Ashley.

*Scarlett is driven by the desire to get the thing she wants rather than by empathy or love of another person. Flirting is satisfying for her because it can get her a predictable result, like a math formula, but she doesn't understand what it is that she wants.*



*That Scarlett feels estranged from other women suggests that she doesn't understand the feminine side of her own self. Scarlett wants to be like Ellen—compassionate and gentle—but she has no idea what it actually means to be these things. And for now, she's too selfish and interested in flirting to try and figure out how a woman becomes more like Ellen.*



## CHAPTER 4

Scarlett sits in Ellen's place at the dinner table, preoccupied by thoughts about Ashley. She needs her mother and is upset that she is with the Slatterys. She won't even consider telling her mother what's wrong, but her mother's presence would be comforting. Gerald talks about the war even though no one is interested.

Scarlett hears a carriage and rises in excitement, but the carriage goes around to the back. She hears Black voices. Pork comes into the dining room to introduce his wife Dilcey, who's just arrived. Dilcey enters with her daughter Prissy, whom Gerald had also purchased. Dilcey thanks Gerald for his kindness in purchasing both her and her daughter, then offers Prissy to Scarlett as her personal maid. Scarlett declines, saying that Mammy has always been her maid. With dignity that surpasses even Mammy's, Dilcey says that Mammy is getting old, and Scarlett should have a young maid. Scarlett says she'll discuss it with Ellen when she returns.

Gerald resumes ranting about the war while the Scarlett, Carreen, and Suellen daydream. Scarlett can't understand why her father keeps talking about the war when she's so upset. She wants to go to Ellen's office—her favorite room in the house—and cry on the sofa. Finally, though, Scarlett hears her mother's carriage. Ellen enters soon after with Mammy close behind her. Ellen explains that the Slattery baby was both baptized and dead. Gerald starts to say it is a blessing that the "fatherless brat" is dead, but Ellen interrupts him. Scarlett wonders if Jonas Wilkerson, a Yankee bachelor and the O'Haras' plantation overseer, fathered Emmie Slattery's baby. She's often seen the two walking at twilight.

*Scarlett is thinking only of herself even when there are larger problems going on. Her mother is selflessly helping the poor Slatterys, and the war is on the verge of breaking out. But Scarlett believes that losing Ashley is the only thing of any importance.*



*Gerald O'Hara is portrayed as a uniquely kind enslaver. Although he didn't have to, he purchased Prissy as well as Dilcey, thereby allowing Pork to be with his whole family. This unprecedented kindness of Gerald's leads many of the O'Haras' enslaved persons to feel particularly devoted to the family, as evidenced by Dilcey offering Prissy to Scarlett as a maid. In this way, the novel pushes the image of the kind enslaver as if all that's wrong about slavery is superfluous cruelty.*



*Scarlett is incredibly self-centered and ignorant; she doesn't think that something as momentous as a war amounts to anything compared to her anguish over Ashley. Jonas Wilkerson is a Yankee and has now likely fathered a child out of wedlock with a girl from a low-class family, making him extra unlikeable to the O'Haras. Gerald also exposes his own classist ideas when he refers to Emmie's baby as a "fatherless brat," the implication being that the baby—and Emmie's grief—don't matter because the parents are poor and unwed.*



Ellen goes to the mantle and takes out her rosary beads. Mammy insists on fixing Ellen a plate of food before she prays. She lumbers off to the kitchen growling audibly about the “po’ w’ite trash” Slatterys. Mammy always speaks her mind, knowing that her white enslavers won’t listen anyway. Pork enters with a plate for Ellen. An enslaved boy, Jack, waves a fly-brusher behind her as she eats. As soon as Ellen sits, Scarlett, Suellen, and Carreen ask her questions about a ball, and Gerald starts to talk about the war.

After patiently answering the questions about the ball, Ellen asks Gerald more about the war. Scarlett knows Ellen isn’t interested in the war—it is man’s business—but it makes Gerald happy to talk about it. Ellen is too tired to eat, but Mammy insists Ellen eat anyway. When Ellen is finished, the lamp is lit above the table for prayers. The family gets on their knees around the table, and the enslaved staff kneel by the doorway. Although they understand little of the white family’s prayers, they are spiritually moved by them. Ellen prays for those at **Tara**, her family far and wide, and those in Purgatory. Despite her anguish, Scarlett is soothed. Scarlett only acts like she’s religious, but she is impressed with her mother’s spirituality.

Ellen always tells Scarlett to examine her conscience during prayer, but Scarlett is thinking about Ashley. How could he marry Melanie when he and Scarlett love each other? Suddenly, it occurs to her that Ashley might have no idea she loves him. She’s always acted aloof, and she flirts with others. Perhaps this discouraged him and led him to Melanie. She decides she must tell him before it’s too late. If Ashley knew that Scarlett loved him, surely he’d marry her instead.

Ellen begins a litany for the Virgin Mary. Scarlett has always pictured her mother’s face in place of the Virgin Mary’s during this litany. They say “amen,” and rise. Pork escorts them upstairs with candles. Soon after, Scarlett starts to enter her parents’ room with a dress she wants her mother to mend for tomorrow when she hears Ellen ask Gerald to dismiss Jonas Wilkerson. Scarlett deduces that it was Jonas who got Emmie Slattery pregnant. She waits for them to finish talking and then drops off the dress.

*Ellen stands out from family; she is religious, unlike Gerald and Scarlett. Also, everyone, including Mammy, despises that Ellen interacts with the Slatterys. Ellen’s kindness to the low-class white family contrasts with the image of the enslaved boy brushing the flies away. Ellen is kind and generous to poor white people, but she’s also doesn’t have a problem enslaving Black people.*



*Scarlett deeply admires and depends on her mother but can’t identify with her: she is soothed by her mother’s religiosity but has no spiritual feelings herself. Similarly, she is comforted by her mother’s selflessness even when she is having selfish feelings herself. Although Scarlett always claims that she wants to be a great lady like her mother, she is very far from achieving this goal. In fact, it seems as though it is not in Scarlett’s nature to have any of the qualities that her mother has.*



*Not only is Scarlett not examining her conscience as Ellen has instructed, but she isn’t conscientious about her emotions concerning Ashley. She can’t comprehend that Ashley might not love her—and she also shows how entitled she is when she assumes that if only he knew she loved him, he’d choose her. What Ashley wants doesn’t concern her.*



*That Scarlett pictures Ellen’s face in place of the Virgin Mary’s highlights how much Scarlett admires her mother: Ellen is almost a religious figure in Scarlett’s mind. Then, Scarlett continues to show how selfish she is as she focuses on getting her dress mended and treats her parents’ conversation as gossip. At the very least, Scarlett offers no judgment on firing Jonas Wilkerson, suggesting she believes it doesn’t really concern her.*



Once in bed, Scarlett decides how to tell Ashley she loves him. At the ball tomorrow, she'll flirt with everyone to make him jealous. Then when they're alone, she'll confess that she likes him more than anyone else. She doesn't know how to say this, but things usually work out. Perhaps they'll run off to be married that very afternoon. Tomorrow she might be Mrs. Ashley Wilkes! For a moment she considers that it might not happen this way, but she brushes this aside. Her life has been so pleasant that she doesn't understand that desire and attainment are two different things.

*Scarlett has always gotten whatever she wants. As a result, she can't conceive of a scenario in which things don't go her way. Scarlett's plan, meanwhile, shows that she's still thinking about love and romance as a game: she's going to make Ashley think one thing, and then tell him the truth—and she believes that of course she'll emerge victorious. Again, she ignores that Ashley may have other plans or emotions, a sign of her selfishness and entitlement.*



## CHAPTER 5

The next morning, the sun streams into Scarlett's bedroom. Summer is on its way. Scarlett leans out the window and thanks God that it isn't raining. Her apple-green ball dress is lying on the bed, but if all goes to plan and she elopes with Ashley, she won't even wear it. First, though, she has to decide what to wear to the barbecue. None of her dresses are quite right—she's worn them too recently, they're stained, or they don't quite suit her. Scarlett finally decides to wear a cotton afternoon dress. It's low-necked and she likes the way her bosom looks in it. Having made her choice, she stands in front of the mirror admiring her figure.

*Scarlett knows she is very beautiful and uses her beauty to get what she wants. She has tons of dresses to choose from, and she picks the one that best shows off her body. She believes that the more beautiful she looks, the more likely Ashley will be to confess his love and marry her, not understanding that there is perhaps more to love than attraction. Again, she sees Ashley as simple and easy to manipulate, when the novel has already said this isn't the case.*



Scarlett calls for Mammy to come lace her waist, which is only 17 inches around. Mammy lumbers into the room carrying a plate of food. She always makes Scarlett eat before parties so that she won't eat too much in public, an attempt to make Scarlett more ladylike. But Scarlett refuses to eat so she can eat at the party. Mammy tells her she could eat in public once she's married, but eating in public now won't appeal to suitors. Scarlett retorts that Ashley Wilkes once said he liked her appetite, but Mammy reminds her that what men say and what men think are different things. Then Mammy comments that Melanie Hamilton never eats in public. Irritated, Scarlett agrees to eat after she's been laced in her dress.

*Even though Scarlett is very concerned with her looks, she disregards the rules about how women are supposed to behave. However, Scarlett's society encourages women to conceal their true selves—how much they eat, and their true opinions—to get husbands. For the most part, Scarlett doesn't understand this law, and only obeys it when she thinks it'll get her what she wants. Therefore, when she hears that Melanie never eats at barbecues, she decides not to eat because apparently, Ashley finds women who don't eat in public attractive.*



When Mammy sees what Scarlett plans to wear, she says it's inappropriate. Scarlett protests that if she changes what she's wearing now, she won't have time to eat. Mammy reluctantly laces Scarlett into her dress while Scarlett holds onto the bedpost. Out of breath, Scarlett says proudly that she's never fainted from a tight corset. Mammy says it would be ladylike for her to faint more at snakes and spiders. Scarlett starts to force down some food. She says she wishes she was married so she can do the things she wants to do, like eat and run. She wonders why girls have to act silly to get husbands. Mammy says it's because men don't want girls who have more sense than they do. Yankee girls don't have to act like fools to get married, but that's only because they have money.

*In Scarlett's society, women are supposed to act frail, sweet, and silly. As Mammy says, it would be attractive—a opposed to pathetic—for Scarlett to faint on occasion and subsequently look weak and frail. Yankee girls, according to Mammy, rely on money and class to win over men, showing that Yankee women gain power in different ways than proper Southern women do. This also suggests that Scarlett is not altogether Southern, as she isn't as weak and frail as a proper Southern girl should be.*



Scarlett eats and muses over why all mothers taught their daughters they have to be silly to get husbands. It's actually hard work to act this way. Scarlett wonders if Ashley is turned off by her outspokenness. If he feels that way about women, she doesn't think she could respect him. But now that time is running out, she's ready to look as silly as necessary to win Ashley. In truth, Scarlett's personality is more attractive than any masquerade, but no one has ever told her this. Her society doesn't encourage women to behave naturally.

The carriage departs for the Wilkeses' house, Twelve Oaks, carrying Scarlett, Suellen, Carreen, and Gerald. Scarlett is glad neither Mammy nor Ellen are with them; she'll have the freedom to do what she wants. Gerald dismissed Jonas Wilkerson earlier, so Ellen and Mammy are staying home to manage matters. It's a beautiful day, and Gerald sings Irish ditties. He's proud of his beautiful daughters and is looking forward to talking about the war at the barbecue. Scarlett looks at him with motherly affection, knowing he'll come home drunk, jumping his horse and nearly breaking his neck, as usual. But she's just as happy as he is.

The roses and blackberries conceal the "savage" red earth and there are blossoms everywhere. Perhaps this beautiful day will be Scarlett's wedding day. Her elopement will upset her parents, but they'll eventually see how happy she is and all would be well. Suellen, jealous of Scarlett's dress, says she doesn't know why Scarlett is so happy; doesn't she know Ashley Wilkes is engaged? Scarlett brushes this off. Gerald hears the Tarletons' carriage coming and his face lights up. He likes Mrs. Tarleton almost as much as his own wife; he admires how well she handles her horses.

The O'Haras' carriage stops at a crossroads as Beatrice Tarleton drives up, the reins in her hands and her four daughters squeezed into the back. Mrs. Tarleton is small, with flaming red hair and tireless energy. She raised eight children with the same love and discipline she shows her colts. All she talks about is horses. She understands them better than anyone in the County. She's an excellent breeder and horsewoman, and always wears her riding habit in case she has a moment to ride her red mare Nellie.

*Deep down, Scarlett believes she can only love and respect a man who embraces women for who they are and treats them as equals—and yet, she moves forward with her plan to woo Ashley. So on some level, she acknowledges that perhaps Ashley won't make her happy (if he actually likes silly girls), but she's too selfish to back down now.*



*Even though Scarlett says she wants to be a great lady like her mother, all her actions so far have been ones her mother would disapprove of. She doesn't want Ellen to come to the barbecue, and instead of taking this as a sign that her plans for Ashley are misguided, she just feels excited and free. Gerald sets this example for her, because he also does things behind Ellen's back that she wouldn't approve of.*



*The blossoms conceal the "savage" earth, suggesting that something bad lurks beneath everyone's excitement and happiness. Scarlett is so deep in her fantasy about her marriage to Ashley that she ignores all potential problems that might get in the way. When Mrs. Tarleton appears, she seems to be Gerald's equal, despite being female—she loves horses, and she's very outspoken.*



*Mrs. Tarleton is very unlike Ellen O'Hara; she is a spirited, independent woman who does all the things Ellen would tell Scarlett are unladylike. In this way, Mrs. Tarleton merges Old Southern values and modern female standards. She is outspoken and athletic but also deeply in tune with the Southern lifestyle, loving horses and running a plantation.*



The Tareltons greet the O'Haras as if they hadn't seen them in years. Gerald says to Beatrice that her daughters, fine as they are, have nothing on their mother. The four Tarleton daughters, Hetty, Camilla, Randa, and Betsy, joke that they have no chance next to their mother when a handsome man like Gerald is around. Scarlett feels a guilty pang of jealousy that these girls can joke with their mother as if she were one of them. Although she idolizes Ellen, Scarlett wishes she could be candid and playful with her like these "true Southerners"—the Tarletons—can. It's the same internal conflict she experiences when she wants to be both decent and playful with boys.

Gerald asks Beatrice why she isn't riding Nellie. After several playful remarks, Beatrice says Nellie foaled this morning. The Tarleton girls joke that the foal is red-haired like Hetty. Beatrice explains that her girls are giddy because of the news of Ashley and Melanie's engagement. It's painful for Scarlett to hear it brought up so casually. But she brightens again when she remembers her plan, confusing Hetty who'd been scrutinizing her reaction to the news.

Beatrice insists it's wrong to marry one's cousins. She explains that human breeding is like horse breeding; new blood keeps the family strong. Even a great family like the Wilkeses needs new blood. They've become weak from inbreeding and overbreeding, she says. Gerald becomes uncomfortable, knowing that Ellen would disapprove of this subject. He politely interrupts and everyone agrees they must be going.

Before parting, Gerald asks Beatrice if she'll donate horses to the Troop. She can't pay so little attention to the Confederacy, he says teasingly. Beatrice feistily explains that she doesn't want her fine horses ridden by poor farmers who won't take care of them. As she drives away, Gerald proclaims her a "fine woman" and decides to persuade her about the horses. They continue to the barbecue, Scarlett composing her face into "attractive lines."

## CHAPTER 6

Scarlett can smell the barbecue even before they arrive. She knows the meats will be turning on spits above the fire pits and the picnic tables will be laid with fine linen. A dozen "darkies" will be carrying laden trays for the guests. Scarlett hopes she'll be able to eat without belching from her tight corset. Twelve Oaks, which Scarlett loves even more than Tara for its stately beauty, comes into view. The driveway is full of carriages, and the hall is full of girls in bright dresses.

*Scarlett struggles between two ways of being: honest, like the Tarletons, or modest, like her mother. She suspects that even relationships with boys can be open and playful, but she lives in a world where the rules of decency are strict, and where she can't confide in her mother. Then, it's interesting that she refers to the Tarletons as "true Southerners." This implies that Scarlett doesn't see herself as a true Southerner, and she doesn't feel like she fits in with old Southern society.*



*Based on Hetty and Suellen's comments, everyone seems to know that Scarlett likes Ashley and must be upset about the news of his engagement. This proves both that Scarlett has been obvious in her pursuit of Ashley, and also that she has a reputation for getting every boy she wants.*



*Beatrice Tarleton challenges Gerald's idea that like should marry like by insisting it's inappropriate for cousins to marry. Mrs. Tarleton believes that when unlike minds marry, a family's lineage is strengthened. This raises the question of whether it would be better for Ashley to marry someone like him—his cousin Melanie—or someone unlike him, such as Scarlett.*



*Gerald and Beatrice tease each other flirtatiously—a relationship that Gerald and Ellen don't have. The fact that it seems as though Beatrice, like Scarlett, hasn't been paying attention to the war shows that Scarlett isn't the only woman more concerned with her own affairs than with the impending war. Scarlett continues to show how focused on herself she is when she works on arranging her face to look as attractive as possible.*



*This passage paints the picture of Southern life in the pre-war days. There is endless food and enslaved persons to tend to the white guests so they can have fun. In this passage, Scarlett says she loves Twelve Oaks—Ashley's house—even more than Tara, showing that she doesn't value her home: she values Ashley.*



The whole County seems to be at Twelve Oaks. John Wilkes stands on the steps beside his daughter, Honey. Where John Wilkes is poised and dignified, Honey is clearly desperate to get every man in attendance to notice her. Scarlett wonders if Mrs. Tarleton is right that inbreeding weakened the family. John and Ashley Wilkes are handsome, but Honey and India Wilkes are pale and rabbit-like. John helps Scarlett from the carriage while Frank Kennedy, Suellen's 40-year-old beau, rushes to help Suellen. Stuart and Brent Tarleton rush to greet Scarlett, who wonders where Ashley and Melanie are.

Scarlett joins the party. Suddenly, her eyes fall on a stranger who's staring at her in a cool, almost rude way. He's muscular and pirate-like, with "animal-white" teeth and a black mustache. He looks to have good blood. She feels she should be insulted by the way he looks at her but isn't. She hears him called "Rhett Butler," a name she doesn't recognize.

Scarlett starts up the stairs to fix her hair, briefly runs into India, and is distracted when a shy voice calls her name. It's Charles Hamilton, a timid boy with brown curls and pink cheeks. Scarlett usually ignores him, but since she's determined to flirt with everyone, she greets him warmly and teases him about breaking her heart. Charles goes into a flutter. Although he's expected to marry Honey, he's always wanted a vivacious and romantic girl. Scarlett playfully asks him not to flirt with anyone else. He promises. Secretly, Scarlett thinks he looks like a calf waiting for the butcher.

Scarlett's eyes fall on Rhett Butler again. He looks at her in a way that seems as if he knows what she looks like without clothes. Indignant, Scarlett tries to pull her bodice higher. She asks Cathleen Calvert—a pretty girl Scarlett's age—who Rhett Butler is. Cathleen says he came with Frank Kennedy. He was expelled from West Point and wasn't "received"—he wasn't formally invited to any social events. This excites Scarlett, who'd never met someone not received. Cathleen says that Rhett once spent the night out with a girl in Charleston and then refused to marry her, saying he hadn't done anything with her. Secretly, Scarlett admires him for refusing to marry a "fool."

Later, Scarlett sits in the shade surrounded by boys. The barbecue is at its peak and the air is full of laughter, waving fans, and good smells. The married women sit together engrossed in discussions about babies and their family trees. Scarlett thinks they look like old crows and doesn't consider that she might be like that when she's married.

*Although Scarlett thinks Ashley is perfect, she dislikes his sisters, Honey and India, because they are frail and needy. It doesn't occur to Scarlett that Ashley might have these traits too, even though both Gerald and Mrs. Tarleton suggested it in their own way to Scarlett before. Although the other boys flock to Scarlett, Frank Kennedy—who becomes a significant character later—is Suellen's beau.*



*Rhett Butler is different from the other Southern gentlemen at the barbecue. Unlike Brent and Stuart Tarleton who rush forward to escort Scarlett, Rhett looks at her with lust. He doesn't put on a show of being polite and instead shows his true feelings. Also, he has good blood which sets him apart from the Wilkeses, whose blood both Mrs. Tarleton and Scarlett have questioned.*



*Scarlett is very good at faking her feelings. When she flirts with Charles, she doesn't care that Honey is expected to marry him, or that Charles actually disgusts her. She cares only about making Ashley jealous and ignores the other consequences of her actions. Charles is taken in by her charms as most boys are, showing that Scarlett has more power in these situations than the men do.*



*Rhett Butler is seen as scandalous in Southern society. He doesn't lead a life of traditional southern values. Rhett offends Scarlett, but intellectually, she is excited by him. She finds his lack of formal invitation exciting because it indicates someone willful and adventurous, like herself. She also secretly commends him for not marrying a foolish girl simply on principle. In this way, Scarlett privately shares Rhett's "scandalous" beliefs, ones that are more modern than the South's old-fashioned laws of decency.*



*For two days, Scarlett has fantasized about marrying Ashley this very night. However, she hasn't really considered what marriage means; she looks down on the supposedly boring married women as if her own marriage won't do the same thing to her.*



Although she's surrounded by boys, Scarlett is miserable. Her plan is failing, as Ashley hasn't joined her circle. He greeted her initially, but Melanie had been with him. Melanie is pale and childlike with a plain face, but Scarlett also recognizes that Melanie is mature and dignified. Since exchanging pleasant greetings, Ashley has been on a stool at Melanie's feet. Melanie is clearly in love.

Outwardly, Scarlett is the "belle of the barbecue." Charles Hamilton, emboldened by Scarlett's attention, sits right beside her, fanning her. Honey looks ready to cry. All the girls share looks of disapproval that Scarlett was so "fast." Hetty Tarleton and the Munroe girls finally drag three men away to the rose garden. Scarlett again catches sight of Rhett Butler, who's staring at her and laughing aloud. She feels he can see right through her. She's angry at both Rhett and Ashley. Then she decides that between the barbecue and the ball, when the ladies are napping, she'll sneak down to talk to Ashley. This gives her new hope. She continues flirting with Charles, making the other boys jealous.

After everyone is done eating, they idle in the shade. Suddenly, Gerald's voice shouts over the crowd that compromise with the Yankees is impossible, since they insulted the South. All the men jump up, joining in that the Yankees asked for war and the South will give them a real war. Scarlett is bored by this talk; it interrupts her plans with Ashley. There won't be a war—the men just want to hear themselves talk.

Charles stays by Scarlett. He tells her that he plans to join a troop in South Carolina, and timidly asks if she'd be sorry when he left. Not understanding why men think women cared, Scarlett says sarcastically that she'd cry every night. Missing her sarcasm, Charles confesses that he loves her. Scarlett, looking over at Ashley and Melanie, doesn't answer. Then Charles asks Scarlett if she will marry him.

Scarlett is annoyed that this "calf-like creature" is intruding on her thoughts of Ashley. Used to marriage proposals, Scarlett gives the practiced response that it all seems a little fast. Charles is filled with hope, mistaking Scarlett's annoyance over Ashley as shy love for him. Scarlett wants Charles to be quiet so she can hear what Melanie and Ashley are talking about. She finally hears that they are discussing authors. This strikes Scarlett as silly. She's relieved and beams, leading Charles to think she's in love with him.

*Scarlett admits that Melanie has a kind of regal beauty. Her beauty isn't like the kind Scarlett goes for; Melanie is plain on the outside, whereas Scarlett is attractive. Melanie's beauty—her maturity and dignity—are qualities that come from within.*



*Scarlett is used to everything going her way, but this time, her plan is not bringing the desired result. By flirting with everyone, she wanted to make Ashley jealous, but instead, she just makes every girl despise her. Also, Rhett Butler infuriates her because he seems to know exactly what she's doing and is amused by it. Scarlett only feels better when she comes up with a new plan. Instead of enduring her feelings of loss and failure, she looks ahead to the future where she's sure she'll succeed.*



*Gerald's outburst is a reminder that the South is on the verge of war with the North. Scarlett's distress over Ashley is a small, personal concern compared to the national concern of the impending Civil War. However, Scarlett does not recognize this, and only resents the war for taking away from her own goals.*



*Scarlett manipulates Charles on purpose, and he responds just how she wants him to. However, his gullibility only makes her detest him more. Her opinion of men is that they are ridiculous and easy to manipulate, but that this is useful. However, she can't manipulate Ashley as she can other boys.*



*Charles proposes to Scarlett, an extreme consequence of her flirting with him deceptively. However, even something as serious as a marriage proposal doesn't sober Scarlett. She continues to play with Charles's feelings. Also, she thinks that Melanie and Ashley's intellectual conversation is silly, showing that she doesn't think love should be a meeting of the minds.*



Someone asks Ashley to give his opinion on the war. Ashley rises and says he hopes there'll be peace but that if Georgia fights, he'll fight. Scarlett rolls her eyes, and many others start to argue. An old man interjects that war shouldn't be glorified—he saw war back in his day, and it was horrible. Someone leads the old man away, embarrassed. Rhett Butler suddenly asks everyone to consider that the North has cannon factories, immigrants, and shipyards, while the South only has “cotton, slaves, and arrogance.” The North will beat the South in a month, he says.

There is silence. Then an angry murmur starts. Deep down, Scarlett feels what Rhett said makes sense. Brent and Stuart confront Rhett, who explains that he'd only meant what Napoleon meant when he said God is on the side of the strongest army. Then Rhett bows and excuses himself. The crowd continues murmuring. Scarlett sees India placating Stuart and feels guilty for breaking them up. Finally, the barbecue ends. Ashley strolls over to Scarlett and Charles and proclaims Rhett an “arrogant devil,” comparing him to the Borgias whom Scarlett doesn't know. Ashley pities Charles because he is clearly ashamed of Scarlett's naivete, but adores her too much to say anything.

Scarlett stands on the landing, looking down over the banister. The girls in the bedrooms gossip as they settle down for the customary afternoon nap between a barbecue and a ball. Scarlett made sure that Melanie, Honey, and Hetty were all lying down before she slipped out. The men are outside drinking, but Ashley is in the drive bidding farewell to guests. Scarlett starts down the stairs, her heart beating at the thought of getting caught. She goes into the library, hoping to intercept Ashley as he comes inside. The serious atmosphere of the library is not where Scarlett had hoped to have this conversation. She leaves the door cracked and waits. She doesn't remember what she planned to say to Ashley. She starts to pray.

Suddenly, Ashley says Scarlett's name. He stands in the hall, peering through the crack of the door. He asks her teasingly who she's hiding from. Unable to speak, Scarlett pulls him into the room by the wrist. He asks her what secret she has to tell him. Finally finding her voice, Scarlett confesses that she loves him. Ashley looks troubled. He says it should be enough that she has every other man's heart. Scarlett knows something is wrong; things aren't going to plan.

*Unlike most Southerners who are avid about the war, Ashley doesn't believe in war, but believes in Georgia. Rhett believes that there's nothing glorious about the South. While every Southerner is too blinded by pride to talk realistically about the war, Rhett gives an actual assessment of how the odds stand. In this instance, neither Rhett nor Ashley believe in the war, but Ashley will stand behind Georgia anyway while Rhett won't.*



*Scarlett privately agrees with Rhett, revealing that she's also too realistic to have much Southern pride. Ashley compares Rhett to the Borgias—a Spanish noble family of the Renaissance infamous for theft, adultery, murder, and incest. This is a strong indictment of Rhett's character based on his honest opinion about the outcome of the war. This shows that lack of unconditional Southern pride is considered a sin in the pre-war South.*



*Scarlett does whatever it takes to make her plans play out, refusing to accept defeat. However, her plan is not looking much like the fantasy she imagined. When she enters the library, the serious atmosphere is not at all what she wants her love story to look like, and her plan slips away. This suggests that her idea of love is imaginary rather than serious, and that she doesn't know what to do when it comes to real moments she hasn't planned for. She prays, showing she's lost control of the situation.*



*Scarlett confesses her love for Ashley even though she has a bad feeling that something is wrong. In a bull-headed way, she ignores all bad signs simply to make her plan play out. Although Ashley teases Scarlett affectionately, her confession worries him, making it unclear how he feels.*





Scarlett stammers, asking if she has Ashley's heart. He puts his hand to her lips and tells her not to say these things; she'll hate herself and him for saying them. Angry, Scarlett snaps that she'd never hate him; she loves him. Ashley admits he cares for her too, then asks if they can forget this happened. Scarlett sinks onto a stool and Ashley stands over her, talking like a father. He says love isn't enough to make a successful marriage when two people are so different. Scarlett would want more than he can give her.

Ashley says he shouldn't have said he cares for Scarlett. Scarlett calls him a "cad" for saying it. Turning white, Ashley admits that he was a "cad" to say it, since he is going to marry Melanie. He can't help caring for Scarlett since she's so passionate, like "fire and wind." Scarlett pictures Melanie's placid demeanor, then accuses Ashley of being a coward to choose a "flimsy" girl like Melanie; he's a coward for making Scarlett believe he'd marry her. He denies that he ever gave her this idea.

Suddenly, Scarlett remembers Mammy and Ellen's warnings and wishes she'd never confessed her love for Ashley. She springs to her feet and shouts that she hates him. He reaches out to her, but she slaps him across the face. He quietly leaves the library, closing the door behind him. Scarlett laments that she's as deplorable as Honey, brazenly pursuing men. She mostly wanted Ashley to make herself look better, but now that she can't have him, she hates him and herself. Had she made a scene? She hurls a china figurine at the mantelpiece, and it smashes to pieces.

Suddenly, a voice says, "this is too much." Frightened, Scarlett grips a chair. Rhett Butler rises from the sofa. He heard everything. Trying to pull herself together, Scarlett scolds him for not making his presence known. Laughing, Rhett says he'd hidden in the library where he thought he'd be in peace. Scarlett says he's no gentleman. He says she's right and observes that she's no lady. He says ladies are boring and easy to see through, but Scarlett has an "admirable spirit." She feels she could kill him, but instead turns and leaves the library with as much dignity as she can muster.

Scarlett runs upstairs, feeling ready to faint for the first time in her life. Her heart is beating against her tight corset. What would everyone think of her? Slowly, she feels better. She decides to go quietly into the napping room and pretend nothing happened. She watches the men outside, wishing she could be a man so she could have no cares in the world. As she watches, a man on a horse gallops up to the house. The men swarm around him and one of them lets out "the Rebel yell." There's an uproar. Scarlett assumes someone's house is on fire.

*Ashley's explanation is contradictory. On the one hand, he says he loves Scarlett, but on the other, he asks her to forget the whole situation as if it means nothing. This leaves it ambiguous whether Ashley really loves Scarlett or not. He talks to her "like a father," warning the same thing Gerald warned: that love is only happy when the two people are alike.*



*Although Ashley denies that he led Scarlett on, he tells her he loves her passion, making it seem as though he's only marrying Melanie because he's expected to, and because she is less high-maintenance than Scarlett. The exact nature of Ashley's feelings towards Melanie and Scarlett is unclear. While Ashley thinks he is making the honorable choice, Scarlett thinks he is just a coward.*



*Scarlett's feeling after Ashley refuses her is one of wounded pride. She doesn't understand any of his reasoning and is frustrated that he didn't give her what she expected to receive after telling him she loved him. Scarlett reasons that winning Ashley would make her past bad behavior cease to matter, because then she'd have Ashley. Now, however, she must face the consequences of her actions.*



*Rhett Butler observes that Scarlett isn't a lady in the same way that he isn't a gentleman. Scarlett is furious, likely because she feels that he's right; moments before he appeared, she rebuked herself for disregarding her mother's ladylike precepts and making a shameful scene. Scarlett tries to pretend she's above Rhett, but she seems to know that she's really not a lady as he says.*



*Scarlett feeling powerless coincides with feeling faint—something the novel has associated with femininity. Scarlett's opinion of men is that, compared to her, they have no cares. This is why she assumes that "the Rebel yell" is just about a house fire—it's inconceivable to her that the men might have anything more to worry about than that.*



Scarlett starts to enter the napping room when she hears Honey saying that Scarlett acted “fast” at the barbecue. Melanie urges Honey to be kind, saying she found Scarlett charming. Scarlett hates to hear Melanie, that “mealy-mouthed little mess” defend her. Then Honey insinuates that she is engaged to Charles. Hetty chimes in that Scarlett is as good as engaged to Stuart, but Honey says Scarlett only cares for Ashley. Scarlett is humiliated. The girls continue to gossip about all the men Scarlett stole today.

Scarlett wishes she could be magically back at **Tara**. She quietly backs away from the napping room, runs downstairs, and goes onto the porch. She pounds the white pillars with her fist, realizing she can’t run away and must deal with this heartbreak and humiliation. She hates everyone and is determined to hurt them worse than they hurt her. Suddenly, Charles hurries towards her. He tells her the news: Mr. Lincoln had called for soldiers. Scarlett is too caught up in her own troubles; how can “this fool” expect her to care about Lincoln when her heart is broken?

Charles leads Scarlett to a bench, and they sit. Scarlett is beautiful when she’s upset, and her emotional state makes Charles feel masculine—but too shy to speak. Scarlett realizes that if she marries Charles, Ashley will think she didn’t care about him. Charles has money, and she’ll have everything she wants. Charles says that the war is scary, but it will be over soon.

Charles asks if Scarlett will wait for him. Scarlett says she doesn’t want to wait. Stammering, Charles asks if Scarlett can love him. She doesn’t answer, but Charles takes her silence for shyness. Charles asks if she will marry him, and suggests they have a double wedding with Melanie and Ashley. Scarlett exclaims “no!” Realizing that Scarlett wants her own wedding, Charles asks when he should speak to Gerald. When Scarlett asks him to do so quickly, Charles runs to find Gerald.

Scarlett waits on the bench. Men stream past her on horseback, giving the “Rebel yell.” The stately white house will never be Scarlett’s now. An “adult emotion” is developing in her: she loves Ashley and had never loved him more than she does now, as she’s losing him.

*Melanie’s loyalty to Scarlett and her faith in Scarlett’s good motives is remarkable in the scene because nothing calls for it; what Honey and Hetty say about Scarlett is true—Scarlett had stolen many girls’ beaux, and she secretly does care for Ashley, Melanie’s fiancé. Melanie’s loyalty to Scarlett is as unfounded as Scarlett’s hatred of Melanie; neither know the other. It’s also humiliating for Scarlett to realize the other girls see exactly what she’s doing. She’s not as smart as she thinks she is.*



*Although this morning she was ready to leave Tara and elope with Ashley, now, in her anguish, Scarlett longs to be back at Tara—it’s a constant comfort to her. When she hears the war has started, she is indignant that anyone cares when her heart is broken. The juxtaposition of Scarlett’s first heartbreak with what is about to be the biggest event in the South’s history highlights how self-absorbed Scarlett is.*



*Deciding to marry Charles is Scarlett’s attempt to avoid losing her dignity. Instead of enduring her suffering, she decides to hide it. Here, marriage is a way for Scarlett to improve her social standing and preserve her dignity—it’s not about love.*



*Scarlett has made a split-second decision to marry Charles, and she hurries to make it official before she has time to think about it. This reveals how much not getting what she wants has shaken Scarlett. Her distress is so intense that she can’t see clearly, and she wants to do something, anything to reestablish her control.*



*The whole South is in turmoil over the war, and, internally, Scarlett is in turmoil too. Her “adult emotion” arises because she has lost Ashley, but she realizes that she loves him all the more as he slips away.*



## CHAPTER 7

Scarlett becomes a wife two weeks later and a widow two months after that. The weeks before her marriage are a blur. When she hears Ashley's wedding will be in May, she schedules her own for the day before his. Ellen tries to persuade her to wait, but Scarlett insists on marrying at once. Powerful forces are sweeping the County. Everyone is intoxicated with excitement over the war. There are fast weddings and preparations for war; the troops are half-armed and half-outfitted in homespun uniforms.

Before she knows it, Scarlett is wearing a wedding dress and walking down the steps on Gerald's arm into a crowd of guests. She remembers Ellen's bewildered face and Ashley standing with Melanie on his arm. It feels like a nightmare. She remembers Charles's stammering voice and her own responses. After the wedding, Ashley kisses her cheek and Melanie says she was glad they were sisters. Her trance shatters later that night when Charles approaches their bed in his nightshirt. Realizing she just married a man she doesn't want to share a bed with, she screams. Charles spends the night in an armchair.

Ashley's wedding is more nightmarish than Scarlett's own. Ashley had said he loved Scarlett, so why isn't he hers? Now Scarlett is married to a man she hates. She regrets her choice and wishes she'd listened to Ellen. That night, Charles again approaches the bed. This time, Scarlett breaks down and cries in his arms. A week later, he leaves to fight. When Scarlett sees Ashley, Melanie makes him kiss her and invites Scarlett to visit in **Atlanta**. Then, Ashley leaves as well. For five weeks, letters come from Charles and then a letter from Charles' colonel, Wade Hampton, arrives. It says Charles is dead.

Months later, Scarlett gives birth to Charles's son and names him Wade Hampton. The birth is surprisingly easy on her, but Scarlett still feels low and depressed. Everyone assumes she's grieving, but she's actually just bored. She doesn't want to be a mother, she still longs for Ashley, and the County is no fun with all the young men gone to war. Because she's now a widow, Scarlett is expected to act like her heart is "in the grave." Ellen stresses the importance of behaving like a widow whenever she catches Scarlett having fun. This means wearing ugly black dresses and veils, and never laughing or acting happy. Scarlett also can't act interested in men. Most people say that Wade should be a comfort to her, but Scarlett doesn't care about Wade. She just wants Ashley.

*The start of the Civil War has a huge effect on society. Everyone tries to squeeze all of life in before the men leave to fight. Significantly, the emotion everyone feels is excitement rather than dread or fear, even though the South isn't fully prepared; the troops are only half-equipped for battle, suggesting that Rhett Butler was right when he said the South is arrogant but unprepared.*



*Scarlett got married for the same reason she flirted with all the boys at the Wilkeses' barbecue: she wanted to make Ashley jealous. However, her wedding feels like a nightmare—the opposite of the fantasies she'd had about marrying Ashley. After her wedding, the full force of what she's done hits her. In all her fantasies about marriage, she never stopped to consider what it would really entail.*



*After the Wilkeses' barbecue when Scarlett says yes to Charles's proposal, rapid changes take place. The world is quickly changing around Scarlett; first, she loses Ashley to Melanie, then she marries a man she hates, then all the men leave to war, and suddenly, she is a widow. This sequence of events is unlike the slow, leisurely life Scarlett led before she heard Ashley was engaged, and before the war began.*



*In Southern society, widows are supposed to act like they are buried with their dead husbands. Scarlett finds this horribly oppressive; she is still young, and she barely knew Charles, so she's not actually sad he's gone. However, she is particularly unchanged by marriage, motherhood, and bereavement. In fact, she is the same as she always was; she likes excitement, only cares about herself, and still pines after Ashley. Her lack of interest in the monumental things that have happened to her shows that she's still young and selfish.*



Ellen and Mammy worry about Scarlett's state and send her to visit family. But James and Andrew are boring and Ellen's sister Pauline and her husband live in isolation. Eulalie, Ellen's other sister, subtly looks down on Scarlett because she doesn't approve of Ellen and Gerald's marriage. Scarlett hates their accents and the constant talk of war. When Scarlett comes home from these visits thin and snappy, Ellen decided to send her and Wade to **Atlanta**. There, Melanie has been staying with her and Charles's aunt, Miss Pittypat Hamilton. Scarlett hates the thought of staying with Ashley's wife, but the County and the memories it holds are now unbearable.

*Scarlett is bored by all the places familiar to her because they hold nothing new. She has nothing to engage in when all the men are gone, and everyone talking of nothing but war. It is surprising that she agrees to go to Atlanta even though she detests Melanie so much. Melanie may be as close to Ashley as Scarlett can get—but also, Scarlett has been known to take pleasure in spiting those she dislikes.*



## CHAPTER 8

The train takes Scarlett north in May of 1862. Scarlett hopes that **Atlanta** will be less boring than Charleston or Savannah. Gerald has always told Scarlett that she and Atlanta are the same age. Atlanta is actually nine years older than Scarlett, but it was officially christened Atlanta the year she was born. Atlanta is like her: crude, young, impetuous, and headstrong. It began as a railroad terminus. As the railroads expanded, Atlanta grew. During Scarlett's life, Atlanta has developed into a bustling city.

*Atlanta and Scarlett are comparable to one another. Unlike Charleston, Savannah, or even the County, Atlanta is an extremely new city, as young as Scarlett is. Instead of beginning in the old traditions of the South, it began as a place of commerce and visitors brought in by the railroad. Scarlett is attracted to Atlanta because it has the same modern, willful energy that makes her feel out of place in the traditional South.*



When Scarlett arrives in **Atlanta**, rain has turned the streets into rivers of red mud. The traffic sends mud splashing everywhere. Scarlett stands on the train in her black veil, looking for Miss Pittypat. A thin Black man with grizzled hair approaches her, holding his hat. He introduces himself as Peter, Pittypat's coachman. Despite his frailty, he picks her up and carries her to the carriage. He voices his disapproval when he sees that Scarlett has put young Prissy in charge of Wade. Scarlett recalls that Charles said Peter practically raised him and Melanie after their parents died. He is "the smartest old darky" Charles had ever known and he, Melanie and Miss Pittypat love and depend on him.

*Peter is much like Mammy. He is described as having the same devotion to and ownership over Pittypat's family that Mammy has over the O'Haras. Atlanta is a modern city, but it is still the South, and white families still depend on enslaved persons. Although Charles's family loved Peter, thinking that he's particularly smart for a Black person suggests that they view Black people as unintelligent in general. Believing Black people aren't intelligent helps them justify why slavery should persist.*



Peter settles Scarlett in the carriage and tells her to make sure Prissy doesn't drop Wade. He's right to worry; Prissy is indeed a poor nurse. But she's the only person available to take care of Wade, since Ellen needs all the other enslaved women to labor at **Tara**. Prissy has never left Tara, and so she's shocked by the bustling city and lets the baby cry. Scarlett misses Mammy. Even in Scarlett's arms the baby cries. Irritated, Scarlett instructs Prissy to silence the baby with a sugar pacifier.

*Scarlett arrives in Atlanta with Prissy—Dilcey's young daughter—instead of Mammy, who'd been the O'Haras' enslaved nursemaid for generations. While in Atlanta, Scarlett will have to do without Mammy, who represents the old ways and traditional values Scarlett grew up with. She has no one with her who will enforce Ellen's teachings.*



Scarlett's spirits rise as she looks around **Atlanta**. The town had grown rapidly into a "sprawling giant" in the last year since she visited. Atlanta is the link between the Virginia and Tennessee Confederate armies, so it buzzes with activity. It has also transformed from an agricultural power into an industrial power to meet wartime demands by bringing in Europeans to operate machinery. The streets bustle with Yankee prisoners, Confederate soldiers, and sick people. Peter points out the different factories and war offices as he drives. Mrs. Merriwether, Mrs. Elsing, and Mrs. Whiting—the infamous "pillars of Atlanta" who'd heard Scarlett was coming—wave to her as she passes. They each run a church and know all the gossip. They're inseparable, though they don't trust one another.

As Peter and Scarlett pass, Mrs. Merriwether makes Scarlett promise to work in her hospital instead of anyone else's. As they continue, Scarlett spots a woman dressed in colorful skirts and with hair so red Scarlett knows it's not natural. When she asks Peter who this is, he tells her it's Belle Watling, and to mind her own business. Noticing the absence of a Miss or Mrs. before Belle Watling, Scarlett assumes she must be a "bad woman" and looks at her excitedly.

Everyone seems to know Scarlett was coming. Dr. Meade appears from a house with his wife and son Phil to greet her. Dr. Meade says Miss Pittypat promised Scarlett will work at Mrs. Meade's hospital. Scarlett confesses she's already promised to work at other people's hospitals and asks what hospital committees are. They explain that the hospitals take care of widows and wounded soldiers. Phil chatters about joining the army next year, but Mrs. Meade says no and pulls him close. She already has one son in the army.

Peter and Scarlett say goodbye to the Meades and continue on. Scarlett already feels that **Atlanta** is less boring and lonely than **Tara**. Atlanta excites her because it isn't covered by the thin veneer of politeness that Ellen and Mammy maintained. As they approach the end of town, Scarlett sees Miss Pittypat's red-brick house. Plump Miss Pittypat and Melanie, both dressed in black, stand on the porch. Scarlett realizes that Melanie, with her face of loving welcome, will be the "fly in the ointment" of Atlanta.

*Modern already, Atlanta is further modernized by the war. At the Wilkeses' barbecue, Rhett Butler warned that the South would lose the war because it is an agricultural rather than an industrial power. However, Atlanta is unlike the rest of the South in that it isn't booming with cotton; instead, it is booming with industry. Where the rest of the South is stuck in its ways, Atlanta is prepared to adapt to meet the needs of the changing world. However, Atlanta also has its own "pillars." The fact that these "pillars" are women highlights how powerful women can be in Southern society.*



*Peter implies that Belle Watling is a sex worker. In Atlanta, there is a greater variety of people, and a greater variety of female figures, than in the County where Scarlett would never see a sex worker. Scarlett is excited by Belle rather than appalled, just as she was excited to hear about Rhett Butler's bad reputation.*



*Scarlett has continued to pay no attention to the war effort, as evidenced by her not knowing what a hospital committee is. Mrs. Meade is one of the few characters who dreads the war. Young Southerners like Brent and Stuart boast of their enthusiasm for war, but Mrs. Meade stifles this impulse in her son Phil, having the foresight and sense to know that war means death.*



*This passage implies that Atlanta will allow Scarlett to make a clean break from her mother's oppressive rules and values. However, the novel has also made it clear that Scarlett loves Tara without knowing it, and that she wants to be a great lady like Ellen one day. Therefore, Atlanta and Tara contrast and stand as two places Scarlett is drawn to. Tara represents the old days and values, while Atlanta represents freedom and modernity.*



When Southerners visit each other, they rarely stay less than a month. Often, their visits extend indefinitely. This wasn't a problem before the war, when people had large houses and endless food. Melanie and Miss Pittypat urge Scarlett to stay for good because they love her, and they insist her place is with her dead husband's family. Peter also expects Scarlett to stay, wanting to raise Charles's son himself. Scarlett evades these invites until she's sure she likes **Atlanta**.

Charles's Uncle Henry Hamilton also urges Scarlett to stay. He points out that Wade should grow up on the property he'll one day inherit, which will eventually be extremely valuable. Uncle Henry likes Scarlett because she's one of the few women he's met who has sense. He and Miss Pittypat no longer speak because he once insulted her for wanting to invest money in a non-existent goldmine. He also believes she raised Charles to be a "sissy."

Living with Charles's family helps Scarlett understand why Charles was so shy and delicate. His only role models had been Miss Pittypat and Melanie, who are both sweet and childlike. Miss Pittypat is always swooning due to her constantly fluttering heart. She loves gossip but never gets stories right; and although everyone loved her, no one listens to what she says. Melanie is kind and loving because she has never seen anything harsh or evil. She follows the Southern ideal that a woman's life is more pleasant when she makes men feel good about themselves. Scarlett and Melanie both please men, but Melanie does this to make people happy whereas Scarlett does this to get her way.

Scarlett misses the masculinity, fighting, and rowdiness of **Tara**. Here, everyone is polite and deferential. Scarlett soon discovers that Peter's expectations about Scarlett's behavior are even stricter than Mammy's. Scarlett slowly regains her youthful energy. She's jealous of Melanie and dislikes Miss Pittypat, but she's happy. The enslaved staff even take Wade Hamilton off her hands. She's only sad when Melanie mentions Ashley's name or reads his letters aloud. All she wants is Ashley—or some beaux.

Scarlett loathes working at the hospital. She is on both Mrs. Merriwether and Mrs. Meade's committees. The war bores her and she has no "patriotic fervor." The hospitals stink of gangrene and open wounds, and there are swarming mosquitoes. Melanie acts like this doesn't bother her, though Scarlett finds her in a closet vomiting into a towel once. Melanie is called an "angel of mercy." But Scarlett can't stand touching the lice-ridden and diseased men. She can't even flirt with them because she's a widow. No one knows that her heart isn't dead; it's just with Ashley in Virginia.

*Scarlett's one reservation about Atlanta is that Melanie is there. By contrast, Melanie loves Scarlett unconditionally. Without knowing her at all, she already loves her and considers her more than just a sister by marriage. At this point in the story, Melanie's love for Scarlett seems as shortsighted as Scarlett's hatred of Melanie is biased.*



*Uncle Henry Hamilton is business-minded, conscience of money matters, assets, and inheritance. He likes Scarlett because she is also practical-minded when most women aren't encouraged to be that way. Scarlett has never had to worry about money before, but the war is starting to affect the affluence of the South, and Scarlett's practical mind might come in handy.*



*Unlike Scarlett, Melanie fits to the Southern ideal that Ellen also embodies. In Scarlett's relationships, she only pleases other people when it benefits her. Melanie, however, always tries to please everyone before she pleases herself, just like Ellen. Scarlett supposedly wants to be like Ellen one day, but her dislike of Melanie only makes this seem more unlikely. Scarlett thinks Melanie is kind because she hasn't seen hardship, but Scarlett also hasn't seen hardship. This suggests that Melanie's selflessness is natural, just like Scarlett's selfishness.*



*Scarlett feels out of place in Miss Pittypat's house because only women live there. Scarlett has always felt that she doesn't get along with women and is better suited to masculine company. She misses the manly, outdoor lifestyle at Tara, but Atlanta allows her to regain her youthfulness and shirk the oppressive responsibilities of motherhood.*



*The fact that Scarlett hates working at the hospital shows how little she's able to empathize with others and with tragedies bigger than her own personal ones. The tragic sight of the wounded soldiers doesn't make her take the war seriously or forget her selfish misery over losing her youth and Ashley. She wishes she could be called an angel like Melanie, but she is incapable of being merciful and selfless.*



## CHAPTER 9

Scarlett leans out her window and sorrowfully watches people head out to gather woodland decorations for a bazaar later. The wagons are laden with picnic baskets, girls in flowery bonnets, young men, enslaved persons, and soldiers. Two Black men play banjo and sing. The caravan waves to Scarlett as it passes. She, Melly (Melanie's nickname) and Pittypat can't go because they are in mourning. Scarlett worked so hard for the bazaar, embroidering linens with the Confederate star and decorating the hall, and now she had to sit alone while everyone else has fun. She's only 17. It isn't fair.

Pittypat comes in and pulls Scarlett from the window. She scolds Scarlett for waving at boys from her bedroom, saying everyone will think she's "fast." Scarlett says Mrs. Merriwether, the "old cat," will say that. Pitty starts to cry and Scarlett apologizes for leaning out the window. When Pitty says Scarlett must be careful to mourn more, Scarlett bursts into tears. Melly runs in, wondering what's the matter. Pittypat says Scarlett is upset about Charles. As Scarlett sobs hysterically on the bed, Melly and Pittypat tell her to think of her baby. Furious at being misunderstood, Scarlett shouts at them to leave her alone.

Scarlett wonders how Melanie can stand that her life and youth are disappearing. Melanie is less miserable than Scarlett, and she has Ashley while Scarlett had no one. Scarlett stays in bed all day. After dinner, Mrs. Merriwether and Mrs. Elsing stop in. The women share that the McLure girls have left for Virginia to bring their wounded brother Dallas McLure home, leaving no one to man their booth at the bazaar. They ask if Melanie and Pittypat would take over the booth. The two start to refuse, saying they are in mourning. Scarlett suggests that she and Melanie should do it; it's a good cause and Charles would've wanted them to. At last, Melanie consents.

That evening, Scarlett can't believe her luck as she stands behind the booth at the bazaar. She is at a real party! The hall is decorated with flowers and candles, and ivy hangs from the chandelier. The Confederate flag hangs behind the dance floor, which is packed with girls in lovely frocks that a famous blockade runner snuck in from England. At the other end of the hall hang portraits of President Davis and the Vice-President of the Confederacy, "Little Alec" Stephens.

*Even though the war is happening, there are tons of festivities going on in Atlanta. This particular party—a picnic to gather decorations for a Confederate bazaar—is a cheerful rather than serious event. The South is still so confident that they'll beat the North that the war is thing to celebrate. Scarlett is much happier in Atlanta, but she still has to follow strict rules of mourning.*



*Scarlett is already under scrutiny by the Atlantan ladies for being "fast" (that is, inappropriately interested in men), the same thing Honey accused her of at the Wilkeses' barbecue. Melanie and Pittypat both believe that Scarlett is a better person than she appears; they completely misunderstand why she is acting out, and why she starts crying, believing that she's distraught over her late husband. Most people don't see how selfish Scarlett is.*



*Again, Scarlett wants to be a "great lady" one day who has qualities like Melanie or Ellen. However, she finds Melanie's maturity and endurance incomprehensible; she decides that Melanie can only endure her fading youth because she has Ashley, and that, if she had Ashley, she would likely be just as mature as Melanie. In this way, Scarlett justifies her unhappiness and her bad traits, but in reality, she is very different from Melanie.*



*Although the war is going on, everyone at home still enjoys luxury because of there is a blockade runner who smuggles goods in from England. This allows, for now, the people at home to remain distant from the tragedies of war, and to continue celebrating it. The hardships of the war have not yet reached home.*



The elderly women who organized the bazaar glide around importantly, Pittypat at their heels. The Black musicians, led by Mrs. Merriwether's coachman, Old Levi, take the stage and break into a slow song. Scarlett sways to the waltz. More guests arrive and suddenly, the hall floods with life: girls in extravagant dresses with enormous hoops, bare shoulders and heavy hairdos; soldiers in colorful uniforms waving, bowing, and dancing. Scarlett is proud of how handsome all the men are. Soldiers from the Home Guard join the party as well, though they're uneasy—people wonder why they're not out fighting.

As everyone sings along with "Bonnie Blue Flag," Scarlett hears Melanie's soprano and turns to see her face glowing with fanaticism. Every woman's face is similar to Melanie's. The women love the soldiers, and they love the "Cause." They'd sacrifice anything, even the men they love, for the Cause. Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee's victories make everyone hopeful: one more triumph and the Yankees will be on their knees. There are missing men and babies who will never know their fathers, but that's all worth it. Besides, blockade runners are bringing in all the luxuries the ladies had to sacrifice for the war. And the English are coming to help because they want cotton. So, everyone is joyful.

As Scarlett looks around, she feels less joyful. Every person seems to feel emotions she can't feel. Shocked, Scarlett realizes she shares none of these people's fierce pride. The Cause means nothing to her, and the war is a boring nuisance, just like the hospital. She wonders what would happen if she stood up and declared that she thought the war should stop so everyone could have fun again. She pretends to look proud to try to conceal these thoughts, but she wonders why she is different from these "loving women." Melanie notices her gloominess but thinks Scarlett misses Charles. Really, though, Scarlett is only 17 and wants to dance, but she can't. She doesn't fit in with the young girls or the wives—and she can't brag that Charles died glamorously, since he died of measles.

*The Home Guard is the group of soldiers who are stationed in Atlanta to protect the city in the event of an invasion. These soldiers get to act like war heroes even though they haven't done anything heroic. This further distances the people at home from the reality of war: young girls get to dance with cheerful "soldiers" who aren't wounded, thereby encouraging them to believe that all soldiers must be having this easy a time. Still, though, some people seem to resent the Home Guard for getting the easy job—they seem to think these men aren't being properly patriotic if they're not on the front lines.*



*Southerners, this passage shows, believe that no sacrifice is too great for the Confederate Cause. Also, Southerners have unchecked hope when it comes to the war. Although they've lost men already, they take consolation in the fact that their economy is still booming. England wants the South's cotton, and so the great blockader is still able to exchange cotton for all the luxuries they need. The war hasn't deeply affected Southern life yet, and everyone is still too hopeful to consider the possibility that things could get worse.*



*Scarlett feels out of place among the people at the bazaar, all of whom have almost religious feelings towards the Cause. Usually, when Scarlett feels different from someone, she looks down on them, but in this instance she wonders what's wrong with her. She only wants to have fun and can only wallow in her own misery. She doesn't love the Cause because she can't seem to love anything greater than herself.*





Scarlett leans her elbows on the counter. Maybelle Merriwether swishes by in her apple-green dress with her beau. Scarlett thinks enviously of how good she'd look in that dress. She thinks how unfair life is when youth is so short and codes of conduct are so strict. She recalls what Mammy and Ellen taught her about being a young girl. With old ladies, she was supposed to be sweet. With old men she could be saucy to flatter them, and she was also supposed to flatter girls and married women. With young men, she could flirt and even kiss if it convinced the boy to propose. What use was it to learn all these tricks when she only got to use them for a few years? Scarlett decides she was an idiot to get married and end her life at 16.

The captain of the home militia mounts the platform and calls orders. The militia falls into line and everyone applauds. Trying to seem engaged, Scarlett turns to Melanie and praises the militia. Melanie says in a loud voice that they'd look better in grey uniforms fighting in Virginia. Noticing shocked looks from people around them, Scarlett reminds Melanie that the Home Guard protected the state from invasion. Melanie says coolly that the best way to prevent invasion would be to go help beat the Yankees in Virginia. She points out that her and Scarlett's husbands weren't afraid to go. Scarlett wonders what would happen if Ashley died.

Dr. Meade approaches Scarlett and Melanie and thanks them for coming. Then, he says he has a scandalous idea that will raise even more money for the hospital, but he walks away without telling them what it is. The other booths are crowded, but Melanie and Scarlett have only a few customers because they aren't very lively.

The music suddenly breaks into a rollicking tune, and Scarlett desperately wants to dance. A newcomer recognizes her blazing eyes as an invitation and grins. He is a towering man with broad shoulders and a dark, rebellious face. He looks lustful and unashamed. Scarlett meets his gaze, smiles, and curtsies. He starts towards her and suddenly, she recognizes him. She tries to escape into another room, but her skirt catches on a nail. Rhett Butler comes up to her and untangles her skirt. Her face goes red with shame as she remembers their last meeting. Why is he here?

*Scarlett thinks that by marrying, she ended her life. Now that she is a widow, she can't use any of the strategies taught to young girls for the purpose of getting husbands and friends. Further, it seems that most of what Scarlett learned as a girl was how to snag a husband—suggesting that this was the end goal, and she wasn't taught how to be a good wife or widow. Scarlett is an exceptional flirt, but since she's a widow, she can't use this skill to do anything, as it's not appropriate for a widow to flirt. She must find a new way forward.*



*Melanie despises the Home Guard and doesn't consider them heroes as some people do. Scarlett is surprised to see Melanie go against the grain of common opinion; usually Melanie seems to praise and please everyone, but, in this instance, she has a very strong opinion that the Home Guard are cowards for not going to fight in Virginia. This challenges Scarlett's opinion of Melanie that she is only sweet and obedient.*



*Dr. Meade hopes to raise even more money for the hospital. So far, people are only donating to the hospital when they get something exciting in return, so Dr. Meade comes up with a scandalous strategy.*



*When Rhett Butler appears at the bazaar, he looks at Scarlett the same way he looked at her at the barbecue. When Scarlett realizes who he is, she wants to escape. He saw her in her most humiliating moment, when she told Ashley she loved him. She is embarrassed that Rhett knows this because it was the only time in her life that she'd failed to get what she wanted.*



Melanie turns and recognizes Rhett Butler. She greets him warmly and asks what brings him to **Atlanta**. Rhett says he's here on business. Melanie then realizes that he's the famous Captain Butler, the blockade runner who brought all the dresses the ladies are wearing tonight. Scarlett sinks onto a stool, feeling faint. Rhett starts fanning her and offers to open a window. Scarlett's rude "no" startles Melanie, who explains that Scarlett is no longer Miss O'Hara but Mrs. Hamilton. Rhett asks where their husbands are. Melanie explains that her husband is in Virginia, and Scarlett bluntly says that hers is dead.

Scarlett is enraged. Rhett is just pretending to look sorry for her, and Melanie is foolish and can't see through it. Even worse, Rhett knows Scarlett didn't love Charles. Will he tell everyone? Scarlett tells Rhett to leave her alone. Melanie apologizes for Scarlett's behavior—she's grieving, and they shouldn't even be here tonight because they're mourning. Rhett comments on Melanie's bravery and Scarlett is indignant that he says nothing about her. Melanie thanks him and then is distracted by customers.

Rhett asks Scarlett how long she'd been married before Charles died, and smirks when she says only two months. Scarlett can't even pretend she's mourning because Rhett knew she loved Ashley, not Charles. Scarlett starts to say that this first social appearance of hers seems odd, but Rhett sarcastically finishes her sentence with "no sacrifice is too great for the Cause." Rhett says he thinks this system of mourning in which the South "buries widows alive" is as harsh as the tradition in India that forces the widow to burn with her husband on the funeral pyre. Scarlett is angered by this comment, but she's confused because deep down she thinks he's right.

Scarlett stammers that she wouldn't have come if it wasn't for the cause; she wouldn't want to appear as if she hadn't loved... but she trails off. Rhett knows the truth, so it's no use lying. Smirking, Rhett leans down and says Scarlett's secret is safe with him. Scarlett calls him horrid. Rhett asks if he should have threatened to tell the truth unless she said she'd be with him. Suddenly, Scarlett laughs at how ridiculous this is. To those around her, it looks as though Charles's widow is having too much fun with a handsome stranger.

*It turns out that Rhett is the famous blockade runner that everyone's been talking about—the man who's been smuggling cotton to England and bringing luxuries back to the South. In this occupation, Rhett has avoided actually joining the war by helping the Confederate Cause another way. At the barbecue, he'd said the South would never win the war; he doesn't believe in the war and doesn't pretend that he does by going to fight anyway.*



*Although he's not sorry Scarlett was widowed (he knows she loves Ashley, not Charles), Rhett feigns courtesy. Similarly, Scarlett pretends that she cares for the Confederate Cause even though she doesn't. Rhett seems to pretend because he finds the South's social rules ridiculous, whereas Scarlett pretends so as not to reveal her lack of patriotic fervor.*



*Scarlett can't hide around Rhett. He can see right through her: he knows that she doesn't care about the Cause even though she tries her best to seem like she does. He also guesses her true feelings about the system of mourning. Scarlett is uncomfortable in Rhett's presence because she agrees with everything he says but doesn't want to. Her true self (who hates mourning and the Cause) battles against her desired self (the "great lady" like Ellen) whenever Rhett is around.*



*Scarlett and Rhett talk to each other in a different way than other men and women do. Instead of courting politely and saying appropriate things about the Cause, they insult each other easily. Rhett even insinuates that he feels lust for her. In this way, they talk candidly and ignore society's codes of conduct. Conversing with him makes Scarlett uncomfortable because it brings out her true, unladylike self.*



Dr. Meade mounts the platform and calls for quiet. He thanks the ladies who patriotically organized the bazaar. Rhett whispers to Scarlett that Dr. Meade is a “pompous goat.” Scarlett is shocked, but she also agrees. She laughs. Dr. Meade continues that although the hospital raised a lot of money tonight, they need more. He introduces Rhett as the “intrepid captain” who has been running the blockade to bring them supplies. Rhett bows in a way that suggests he looks down on everyone. Dr. Meade says they need more gold, and he asks the ladies to sacrifice their jewelry for the Cause. Baskets are passed around and ladies toss their jewelry into them. Scarlett is thankful she is in mourning and has no jewelry to sacrifice.

The man with the basket for jewelry approaches Scarlett. Rhett carelessly tosses a gold cigar case into the basket. Scarlett shakes her head that she has nothing to give but then notices her gold wedding ring. She sees Charles’s face, but then is annoyed that it’s his fault that she’s miserable. She grabs her ring and tosses it into the basket. Melanie looks proud of Scarlett’s supposed bravery and hesitantly places her own ring in the basket. Melanie said she couldn’t have done it if Scarlett hadn’t, and Scarlett is annoyed that Melanie always misunderstands her actions.

Rhett congratulates Scarlett sarcastically for her sacrifice, making Scarlett angry. To try to get the better of him, Scarlett thanks him sweetly for his compliment. Rhett laughs loudly and demands that she say what she really thinks. Again, Scarlett pretends to be silly and sweet. Rhett says he is disappointed in her because when he first met her, he thought she was not only beautiful, but also courageous. Now he realizes she is a coward, not the girl who knew what she wanted, spoke her mind, and even threw vases. Furious, Scarlett tells Rhett he’s nasty and ill-bred for mocking all these people so devoted to the Cause.

Rhett says he’s tired of hearing about the Cause and expects that Scarlett is too. Caught off guard, Scarlett asks how he knows that. Rhett says that when he arrived, every girl looked proud of the Cause—but Scarlett clearly wanted to dance. Scarlett accuses him of being pompous because he’s the “great blockader.” Rhett laughs and says his position doesn’t make him a supporter of the Confederate Cause. Really, it’s all business. He sails into Yankee ports, buys goods, and resells them to the Confederate army. Aghast, Scarlett asks why he hasn’t been shot in the Yankee ports. Rhett explains that many Yankees sell to Confederates because they know it won’t make a difference: the Confederates will be beaten all the same.

*Before Rhett comments on him, Dr. Meade is considered a respectable man for operating the war hospitals and organizing the fundraiser for them. However, Rhett calls him a “pompous goat,” suggesting that Dr. Meade is someone who does all this for his own glory. In order to further mock Dr. Meade, Rhett bows exaggeratedly when he’s introduced for his own respectable exploits. This shows that Rhett views the entire war effort as showy and narcissistic.*



*Scarlett and Melanie donate their wedding rings to the Cause for different reasons. Scarlett feels no respect for Charles’s memory, so she donates her ring so as to be rid of her ties to him. By contrast, Melanie values her wedding ring and what it represents (her marriage to Ashley), and she donates it because she wants to sacrifice something she loves for a Cause more important than herself. But to an outsider, Melanie and Scarlett appear to have made the same great sacrifice.*



*Rhett can see right away that Scarlett’s sacrifice was not a true sacrifice. Scarlett tries to best Rhett the way she always bests men—by simpering and acting sweet. However, Rhett sees right through this act. None of her usual tricks work on him—she can’t pretend that she’s dignified, nor can she woo him with her charms. She also can’t hurt him; when she loses her temper and insults him, Rhett is only amused and pleased that she’s speaking her mind.*



*Rhett explains that being the Confederate blockader is not a sign of his Confederate pride. Essentially, he is making lots of money off the knowledge that the South will lose the war. He explains that the Yankees aren’t afraid of the South; they give Rhett whatever he wants because they know the North will win in the end. Rhett has no problem affiliating with Yankees as long as it benefits him, showing that he really has no special love of the Cause the way other Southerners do—and like Scarlett, he’s selfish.*



Scarlett is appalled and asks Rhett to leave her be. He calls her “a red-hot little Rebel” and walks off. Scarlett is a bit disappointed now that she knows Rhett isn’t really a great blockader and that the Confederacy isn’t as strong as she thought. Melanie warns Scarlett to be careful talking to strangers—Mrs. Merriwether was staring. Scarlett brushes her off, saying Rhett is an “ill-bred boor.” Dr. Meade reveals his scheme for raising more money. The dancing will begin, and the gentlemen must bargain for the lady they want to dance with, like at an auction. Many of the older ladies clearly disapprove. Melanie whispers that it seems a little like an enslaved persons auction.

The men start bargaining for the ladies. Scarlett wishes she wasn’t a widow. She would be the most bargained for lady in her apple-green dress. She watches the bargaining over Maybelle Merriwether jealously. But suddenly, she hears her own name called, with an offer of 150 dollars in gold. The room falls quiet. The doctor starts to say Scarlett would not dance, but Scarlett hears herself say “Yes I will!” She jumps up, “sweet madness” sweeping over her as she realizes she doesn’t care what anyone thinks. She and Rhett approach each other on the dance floor.

While dancing, Scarlett chastises Rhett for making a scene by calling her name. Rhett insists that she doesn’t really care what people think, since she accepted. Rhett says that only once a person loses their reputation do they realize how free they are without it. With money and courage, no one needs reputation. Scarlett says money can’t buy all things, especially not happiness or love. Rhett says it can buy good substitutes for these. Rhett explains that he is rich, but not rich like everyone else here who got their money from civilizing wilderness. Instead, he’s profiting from the wreckage of an empire—the South.

Scarlett asks if Rhett really believes the South will lose the war, and then asks to stop talking about the war—it’s boring. So, Rhett compliments her eyes, comparing them to green fishbowls dancing with fish. Scarlett says he must not hold her so close, since everyone is watching. Rhett says he will bid on Scarlett for the next song and the next. Scarlett fears her reputation will be ruined, but Rhett points out that it already is. She tells him again not to hold her so tightly, or she’ll get mad. He says she’s beautiful when she’s mad, as she was when she threw the vase at Twelve Oaks, a precious memory he will never forget. The music ends as Scarlett sees Miss Pittypat across the room, her eyes wide with horror.

*Scarlett gets angry and asks Rhett to leave her alone, seemingly because she knows he’s right about the doomed Cause and can’t think of a way to refute him. Scarlett is also shocked that Rhett affiliates with Yankees, not considering that she might do the same thing if she had the opportunity. Already, talking to Rhett for so long has been a scandal; her society is one that disapproves of anything but polite interaction between men and women. However, Dr. Meade’s scandalous dance auction is more or less acceptable, potentially because a powerful white man suggested it.*



*This is a defining moment for Scarlett because it is the first time she reveals that she doesn’t care about the system of mourning. Until now, she tried to conceal her boredom and her inappropriate desires from the public, but here, she makes a public display of her true self. “Sweet madness” makes her not care what people think, suggesting that anything that goes against the grain of this society is considered mad.*



*From this conversation, Scarlett seems to have more heart than Rhett. He believes that money is everything; it can buy a person things that pass for love and happiness, and it is worth ruining one’s reputation for. However, Scarlett asserts that money can’t buy happiness or love. Much later in the story, both Scarlett and Rhett’s opinions on this matter change, raising the question of whether love or money is of greater importance.*



*Rhett clearly likes Scarlett, but it is unclear how much or how serious he is. Rhett mocks everything around him, such as the Cause, Dr. Meade, rules of etiquette, the system of mourning, Scarlett’s anger, and her love for Ashley. This creates the impression that there is very little that Rhett takes seriously. Scarlett, on the other hand, is entertained by Rhett against her better judgement. For the present, she enjoys him because he allows her to escape her oppressive position as a widow.*



## CHAPTER 10

The next morning over breakfast, Miss Pittypat wails over how “conspicuous” Rhett Butler made Scarlett. Melanie says Rhett must be a brave gentleman for running the blockade. Scarlett repeats what Rhett said about doing business with Yankees and the South losing the war. Scarlett then says that she’s bored and will do what she likes. Pittypat laments that Ellen will think she’s a terrible chaperone. The thought of Ellen makes Scarlett guilty, but she decides her mother probably won’t hear of the scandal. Melanie hugs Scarlett and says she understands; times are hard and they know she loved Charles. Scarlett hates being defended by someone she dislikes. She doesn’t care what anyone thinks and is happy about getting so much attention last night.

Prissy comes in with a letter for Melanie. Melanie opens it and lets out a cry, and Pittypat screams “Ashley’s dead!” Scarlett, who had not been paying attention, feels her blood go cold. Melanie revives Pittypat with smelling salts and assures her Ashley is not dead. She opens her fist to reveal her wedding ring. Rhett Butler returned the ring with a letter saying how brave her sacrifice was. Melanie says she knew he was a gentleman. She and Pittypat agree to invite him to dinner Sunday to thank him. Scarlett observes that Rhett did not return her ring. She realizes he sent Melanie’s just so he could see Scarlett.

Scarlett receives a letter from Ellen scolding her for her conduct at the bazaar. Ellen must have heard from Mrs. Merriwether. Ellen is heartbroken that Scarlett would forget her upbringing and flirt so soon after her husband’s death with a man of ill-repute like Rhett Butler. Ellen says that Gerald will come to **Atlanta** the next day, speak to Rhett, and escort Scarlett back to **Tara**. Scarlett is frightened of her parents’ anger, and she doesn’t want to leave Atlanta.

Scarlett tells Melanie and Pittypat about her letter. She asks them to stand by her when Gerald arrives the following day. Pittypat says she feels too faint and will spend the whole next day in bed. Melanie promises to defend Scarlett as best she can. No one wants Scarlett to go back to **Tara**; they love having her too much.

The next day, Pittypat stays in bed while Scarlett and Melanie greet Gerald. Gerald kisses Scarlett and pinches Melanie’s cheek, too shy to reprimand Scarlett while Melanie is present. Gerald tells them news from the County and cracks a few jokes. He tells them of Brent and Stuart’s “dispatches of bravery,” and Scarlett feels proud as if they still belonged to her.

*Scarlett and Rhett’s dancing together at the bazaar is universally recognized as scandalous. Significantly, Melanie defends Rhett’s character. She grants him the same unconditional trust that she gives to Scarlett, though she barely knows either of them. According to proper Southern society, both Rhett and Scarlett have scandalously disregarded conventions and their reputations. But even when Scarlett is reminded of Ellen—a woman who would agree with Southern society—Scarlett refuses to change her behavior, calling into question whether she’ll ever become a great lady like Ellen.*



*Rhett’s gesture of returning Melanie’s ring seems genuine. Scarlett thinks his kindness is only a ruse to get himself invited to dinner so he can see her, but she also reasons that the gesture is specifically for Melanie, or else Rhett would’ve returned Scarlett’s ring too. While he mocks Scarlett’s pretense at love for the Cause, he seems to truly admire Melanie’s patriotism—one of the only things he doesn’t mock.*



*At the moment, Tara represents confinement for Scarlett whereas Atlanta represents freedom and the chance to reclaim her youth. At Tara, Scarlett has to obey her mother’s strict rules, but in Atlanta, she has no parental figure to stifle her. Although she loves her parents and Tara, she longs for independence.*



*So far, neither Melanie nor Miss Pittypat have proven to be strong or commanding. Their weak disciplinary skills have allowed Scarlett the freedom to have excitement again, but they aren’t brave enough to confidently stand up to Gerald.*



*Gerald is notorious for having a soft heart inside a rough exterior. Scarlett has always been able to convince him not to punish her, or to tell on her to Ellen. In this instance, Gerald might be shy enough around Melanie not to punish Scarlett as harshly as he’d promised to.*



Then Gerald shares that Stuart is courting India at Twelve Oaks again. They'd always adored each other till Scarlett stole him. And Brent is courting Carreen at **Tara**. Scarlett, upset to lose two beaux who had been obsessed with her, protests that Carreen is too young. Gerald reminds her that she's only a year younger than Scarlett was when she married. Then, Gerald rants about the war. After dinner is over, he asks to see Scarlett alone. He harshly lectures her and tells her not to cry, that her crying will not soften him this time. He leaves to confront Rhett Butler.

Scarlett lies awake that night, dreading facing Ellen at **Tara**. Then, she hears the familiar sound of Gerald coming home drunk, singing raucously as he comes up the path. Hearing another voice, Scarlett realizes he's with Rhett Butler. Afraid that he'll wake the house, Scarlett puts on her robe, takes a candle, and goes quietly downstairs. She opens the door to find Rhett supporting Gerald, who's clearly drunk. Rhett gives her a look that seems to see through her robe. Scarlett instructs him to bring Gerald in and lay him down on the settee. Rhett arranges Gerald on the settee then leaves, saying he'll see her Sunday at dinner.

Scarlett rises early the next morning and finds Gerald awake on the sofa. Scarlett scolds him for his embarrassing behavior the night before. She tells him that if he tells Ellen that Scarlett's misdeeds were nothing but rumors, then she won't tell Ellen of his drinking and gambling. Gerald reluctantly agrees. Scarlett is triumphant. Now she can do whatever she wants. She sees nothing but picnics, dances, and adventures in her future. Suddenly, it occurs to her that Gerald can usually hold his liquor just fine. Is Rhett responsible for getting her father so drunk?

## CHAPTER 11

A week later, Scarlett comes home from a shift at the hospital tired and annoyed. She excuses herself from paying calls with Melanie and Pittypat, and when the sound of their carriage dies away, she sneaks quietly into Melanie's room. It is neat and spare, with an altar for Charles in the corner. Scarlett goes right to Melanie's letterbox and takes out the letters from Ashley. She's been doing this for a while now. She knows it would upset Ellen, but the temptation to read the letters and find out if Ashley really loves Melanie is too strong.

*While Scarlett has been away from Tara, a lot has changed. Both Brent and Stuart have found new love interests since Scarlett married. She takes this as a personal loss. She doesn't understand that Carreen could have feelings at such a young age, or that India and Stuart might be glad to be reunited; she only feels jealousy at having lost what she believes was rightfully hers. She sees the men as objects to possess, not people.*



*Gerald often comes home drunk, but not so drunk that he can't support himself. So this creates some tension, as Gerald's drunkenness is unusual. Rhett continues to treat Scarlett in a way that she believes is improper, but he's also surprisingly generous and caring to bring Gerald home like this. At this point, though, it's unclear why he's doing such a thing for Scarlett's family.*



*The implication here is that Rhett Butler has intentionally gotten Gerald drunker than usual so he couldn't reprimand Rhett as he planned to. This suggests that Rhett feels no guilt for helping to ruin Scarlett's reputation. It also suggests that Rhett doesn't want Scarlett to leave Atlanta and go back to Tara; he wants to keep seeing her. And now that Scarlett has gotten around Ellen, there's nothing stopping her from ruining her reputation.*



*The difference between Scarlett and Melanie is made clear by the appearance of Melanie's room. For one thing, it is spare; this is not a word that would describe Scarlett who loves clothes and luxuries. Also, she has an altar for Charles in the corner. Not only does Scarlett not mourn Charles, but she doesn't even respect his memory. Melanie's modesty and reverence distance her from Scarlett.*



Scarlett opens a letter, addressed “My dear wife.” She’s relieved that Ashley doesn’t use a more passionate term of endearment. She panics when she reads that Ashley wants to reveal his true feelings to Melanie—is Ashley going to tell Melanie about Scarlett? But as she reads on, Ashley reveals that he’s been questioning what he’s fighting for. The catch phrases of the South—Slavery, Damn Yankees, King Cotton—don’t resonate with him. He thinks only of Twelve Oaks and the beloved old days. He isn’t afraid to die but is afraid of losing the past. Whether they win or lose, the old days will never return because everything will be different. He recalls what Rhett Butler said at the barbecue about the South’s weakness and confesses that that was true.

Scarlett stops reading, bored by the war talk. She has no interest in Ashley’s ideas; she just wants to know if he loves Melanie. Judging from the brotherly affectionate tone of his letters, Ashley only loves Melanie as a friend. How does Melanie not see this? It seems like Ashley is trying to ignore the war and draw a magic circle around him and Melanie by recalling the old days.

Scarlett wonders what Ashley fears, if he’s not afraid of death. He’s afraid of things that disturb him, like he was afraid of marrying her because her passion disturbed his calm. Maybe if she’d understood this before he would’ve married her. She loves Ashley as much as ever; she still doesn’t understand him, but she deeply admires him. She still feels as if she’s never been married; Charles’s timid passion hadn’t touched her deeply. To her, marriage was only servitude. She is done with marriage but still loves Ashley—an emotion that grows every day.

Scarlett replaces the letters, still trying to understand what she’s missing about Ashley. Then she thinks how strange it is that Ashley mentioned Rhett Butler and his ridiculous words at the barbecue. She looks in the mirror and her reflection makes her happy—Ashley always loved her dimples. Reassured of Ashley’s love, she leaves the room singing “When This Cruel War Is Over.”

## CHAPTER 12

The war goes on. The South does pretty well, though people stop expecting the war to end any day. The hospitals in **Atlanta** are overflowing with sick and wounded soldiers. Confederate funds are low, which means food and clothing are scarce. Everyone eats simply and wears homespun cloth. The hospitals worry about medical supplies. For Scarlett, however, the war means excitement. Now that her mourning period is over, the war means extra parties and more boys anxious to propose.

*Ashley’s letters reveal that he is now disillusioned with the war. Not only does he fear that the war will change Southern life for good, but he doesn’t believe in the Cause that he’s fighting for. In this way, he is similar to Rhett Butler; neither believe that the South is invincible, as Rhett had said at the barbecue. However, Rhett’s outlook about the South losing is practical; he doesn’t have Ashley’s sentimentality about the past and is willing to move on to a new future. Neither believe in the Cause, but Ashley decided to fight in the war whereas Rhett didn’t.*



*Ashley confides in Melanie all his fears, but he doesn’t write flirtatiously; also, he doesn’t seem to be living in the present, but is rather living in the past. In Scarlett’s opinion, these are signs that Ashley doesn’t love Melanie.*



*What Ashley fears isn’t death, and Scarlett can’t understand what else a person could fear if it isn’t death. Again, she confesses how unable she is to understand Ashley. However, she views this distance as a sign of the depth and complexity of her love for him. She has always gotten what she wants; but since she can’t have Ashley, she wants him more than anything she’s ever wanted.*



*The similarity between Ashley and Rhett Butler’s feelings about the Cause briefly occurs to Scarlett. As things stand now, Scarlett doesn’t understand Ashley, but she loves him. On the other hand, she thinks Rhett makes a lot of sense about many things—and he entertains her—but she hates him.*



*Realistically, the South is faring worse and worse by the day; supplies are slowly running out, and the fighting drags on. To Southerners, however, the Confederacy is still invincible; they expect everything to be alright and they seem to party accordingly. This is good news for Scarlett, as it means she can finally take advantage of the freedom she enjoys in Atlanta, now that she’s finished mourning.*



During these war times, men call on girls without any of the proper conventions. Mrs. Merriwether fears the South is heading towards moral collapse when she finds her daughter Maybelle kissing her fiancée. But the men, afraid of dying, can't wait. Scarlett loves this new informality. Childbirth and marriage haven't affected her, and she's back to who she was before marriage. She flirts and parties, though she continues to wear her mourning dress. Even though Ashley is married, he's so far away that he belongs to her as well as to Melanie.

Scarlett pays brief and disappointing visits to **Tara**. Ellen and Gerald are so busy running the war commissary that Scarlett has no time to talk to them, and Suellen and Carreen are caught up in their romances. Scarlett is always relieved to go back to **Atlanta** to have fun again. Ellen thinks Scarlett goes back to help the war effort, which makes Scarlett feel guilty.

After the bazaar, Rhett Butler regularly takes Scarlett riding or dancing. Scarlett is still humiliated that he knows her deepest secret, and he frustrates her because nothing ever surprises or hurts him. Sometimes she threatens to end their relationship, but he wins her over with presents. She grows to look forward to seeing him. He's handsome and his personality challenges her. Confusingly, she feels like she loves him—though she knows she doesn't. Pittypat doesn't approve of Rhett; she thinks he's improper and disrespects women. However, Rhett wins her over by bringing her gifts from the blockade.

Melanie insists that Rhett is a gentleman. She secretly feels sorry for Rhett, believing that some heartbreak has made him bitter. She believes people speak poorly of him because they don't understand him. Scarlett agrees with Pittypat that Rhett is disrespectful and looks at women as though they're his property. But around Melanie, Rhett is respectful and kind. Scarlett tells Rhett she doesn't know why he's nicer to Melanie when Scarlett is prettier. Rhett laughs and says that Melanie is the only sincere and selfless "great lady" he's ever met. Scarlett, on the other hand, is no lady. Scarlett tries to insult him, but this is impossible because Rhett admits to everything calmly.

Scarlett wants to think she's charmed Rhett, but unlike all her other beaux, Rhett remains aloof. When he comes to town, he stirs excitement. No one has ever seen him do anything improper, but people say he's "loose" with women, that he killed a man, has been disowned, and was a professional gambler. He wouldn't be received anywhere if it weren't for the war. But he's also rumored to be recklessly brave in the blockade, which makes many people overlook his reputation. He is dashing and stylish.

*Because the war disrupts normalcy, many Southern conventions are dropped. Marriage, mourning, childbirth, and courtship—which usually have strict rules—are now casual institutions. Scarlett even applies this new informality to Ashley and Melanie; because Ashley is away at war, she decides that his marriage to Melanie is less binding, and so fantasizes that he's still hers.*



*While Scarlett is enjoying her freedom and her morals are becoming "loose," she doesn't have her mother's guidance to limit her. Ellen—like Melanie—is avid about the war effort and has no time for her daughter. Scarlett's hope of being like her mother one day slips further away.*



*Scarlett claims she doesn't like Rhett Butler, but she can't resist him. She sometimes feels that she's in love with him, but knows she isn't because her feeling around him is much different than her feeling for Ashley. Scarlett and Rhett have many of the same opinions, they engage in lively banter, and he showers her in presents. However, Scarlett believes that this isn't love because she loves Ashley.*



*Every respectable person except Melanie disapproves of Rhett, so the respectable side of Scarlett disapproves of him too. This suggests that Rhett is a bad influence on Scarlett. However, Melanie—who resembles Ellen, the epitome of respectability in many ways—defends Rhett. This suggests that there's good in Rhett. Further, the fact that Melanie likes Scarlett and Rhett despite their bad reputations suggests that she unifies the respectable and unrespectable people of society.*



*Rhett is a mystery; no one seems to know his family is or what his history is. This is unusual in a society in which gentility is based on family. His obscure origins make him exciting and give him a self-made character. The fact that he's made his own money from the blockade is unusual as well because most other wealthy Southerners are wealthy by birth.*





Even Mrs. Merriwether caves and invites Rhett to dinner after he finds a bolt of satin from England for Maybelle's wedding dress. He presents it as a gift and tells Maybelle about the current fashions in Paris. He's so masculine that he can get away with knowing this sort of thing. All the ladies turn to him for the latest fashion tips from his travels.

Rhett Butler is popular for many months despite the rumors about him. After a few months, however, he starts to antagonize everyone in **Atlanta** by mocking their patriotism. He looks down on everyone and likes to make himself look bad. He casually admits that he would blockade for Yankee women, and that he'd sell spoiled and compromised goods if money were involved. Scarlett knows he's insincere.

At Mrs. Elsing's musical for convalescents, Rhett ruins his reputation for good. Melanie and Scarlett sing a duet and perform a skit about the Confederate victory. Afterwards, Rhett makes Willie Guinan fume by saying the Cause is not sacred. Rhett then comments on Willie's bravery. Willie blushes because he's one of the Home Guard under question for not being at the front. Dr. Meade jumps in to defend the sacredness of the South and States' Rights. Every Cause is sacred to whoever's fighting, Rhett says, and wars are always about money. He bows ostentatiously and walks out. Scarlett starts after him, but Mrs. Elsing grabs her skirt and shouts "traitor!" after Rhett. Rhett shoots Mrs. Elsing a look, grins, and exits.

In the carriage on the way home, Mrs. Merriwether scolds Pittypat, Melanie, and Scarlett for their association with Rhett, "the traitor," and demands that they cut contact with him. He should be in jail for speaking ill of the Confederacy. Scarlett is upset, but she keeps quiet out of fear that Mrs. Merriwether will write another letter to Ellen.

Melanie, pale and wide-eyed, said she *will* continue to speak to Rhett Butler. Scarlett admires and envies Melanie's outspokenness. Shaking, Melanie says that what Rhett said was rude, but it's how her husband, Ashley, feels about the war. Ashley is no coward, but he thinks there's nothing glorious about war. According to Ashley, Melanie says, the South is deceived into believing in the war by the government, but the war will change them for the worse. Mrs. Merriwether says Melanie must have misunderstood the letter; it was horrible to compare Ashley with the traitor Rhett. Melanie insists that she never misunderstands Ashley.

*Many people like Rhett against their better judgment. Although he mocks most Atlantans, and only does things for his own benefit, he has moments of generosity that baffle people. As the blockader, he's made himself indispensable to society.*



*Among his many questionable attributes, Rhett's disdain for the Cause is unforgivable to Atlantans. When he says that he would consort with Yankees, Carpetbaggers, and Scallawags—the enemies of the Confederacy—he is viewed as a traitor. All Southerners, this suggests, are expected to be faithful to the South.*



*Rhett picks on Willie Guinan because he represents one of the hypocrisies of pride in the Confederacy. Willie acts like a heroic soldier, but he is only part of the Home Guard, and therefore hasn't actually endangered himself for the Cause. Rhett also suggests that everyone feels pride in one's country during a war, as both sides in any war believe that their Cause is sacred. In this way, Rhett suggests that viewing a Cause as sacred is near-sighted and self-centered.*



*Mrs. Merriwether believes that Rhett's opinion about the war is a crime. This depicts Southern society during the Civil War as a place where freedom of opinion isn't valued. The war only seems to exacerbate the South's strict social conventions.*



*Melanie reveals that she is not merely sweet and obedient. Defending Rhett Butler goes against what society deems proper, which is surprising coming from a "perfect" member of society like Melanie. Over her loyalty to society, Melanie prizes her loyalty to Ashley. She is willing to shock society to stand with him and his opinions. Scarlett rebels for petty reasons, but Melanie rebels with her convictions; Scarlett envies her this.*



Mrs. Merriwether gets out at her house, threatening that they'll be sorry. Miss Pittypat, strangely calm, says she's grateful that Melanie stood up to Mrs. Merriwether. But should she have said that about Ashley? Melanie cries and says it's true. Scarlett is shocked that Ashley has anything in common with Rhett Butler. Neither believe in the war, and yet Rhett Butler had the sense not to fight while Ashley can't accept the truth. It's bewildering.

*Scarlett is surprised by the connection Melanie draws between Ashley and Rhett. She catches herself thinking it was sensible of Rhett not to fight when he didn't believe in the war, suggesting that she thinks Ashley's compliance is foolish. She doesn't consider what these thoughts mean about her feelings towards both men, and only feels confused.*



## CHAPTER 13

Dr. Meade puts a letter in the paper that calls out Rhett Butler and those who profit from government contracts. The Yankees are sealing up the ports, so profitters are buying loads of goods and holding them to drive up prices. As Confederate money runs out, people anxiously buy luxuries. Suddenly, the boats ship in large amounts of luxuries and no necessities. It's revealed that Rhett Butler does this with many ships. He's also holding goods in warehouses in other cities. In the letter, Dr. Meade emphasizes the brave blockaders and compares them to the "human vultures" who offensively bring luxuries while the soldiers are suffering on the front.

*Dr. Meade's letter reveals that Rhett Butler's profession is actually dishonest. Rhett and other profitters buy goods but hold them so that the goods become high-demand and they can then sell them for more. Since Confederate money is running out, this method embezzles the remaining money at a higher rate, leaving the soldiers with fewer and fewer supplies. Rhett's business model is highly profitable for himself at the expense of all Southern people.*



Now, Miss Pittypat's home is the only one in **Atlanta** to receive Rhett Butler. Pittypat knows it is a disgrace, but she doesn't have the courage to turn him away. Melanie defends Rhett and his patriotism, while Scarlett knows Rhett isn't patriotic but doesn't care. As long as Melanie defends him, Rhett can still visit with some respectability, because everyone in Atlanta loves and respects Melanie.

*Neither Scarlett nor anyone else can see that Rhett has any patriotism at all—in fact, he is personally profiting at the expense of the Confederacy. However, perhaps Melanie can see something in Rhett that no one else can. The fact that Melanie's support essentially keeps Rhett somewhat in the Southerners' good graces speaks to how much power Melanie holds in Atlantan society.*



Scarlett asks Rhett why he must say the things he feels and ruin his reputation. She's bored of the Cause too, but she'd never admit it. Rhett says there's no use in being patriotic because it will only leave one poor at the end of the war. England won't help the Confederacy as everyone hopes; the Dutch queen of England would never defend an enslaver population. Scarlett knows she should be shocked, but it makes sense.

*Scarlett and Rhett are both drawn to things that make practical sense. Most Southerners are so passionate about the Cause, the novel seems to imply, that they can't examine the reality of the situation. Rhett, with his realistic point of view, can even foresee that the South has no allies, and that the war will leave everyone poor.*



Rhett says he will never fight for a system that rejected him. The system of the South would've had him marry a foolish girl because of an accident, and it would rather he die than defend himself. The South is as antiquated as the feudal system, he says. Scarlett secretly agrees, remembering how confining her mourning was. Rhett says the system is just farsighted. He's holding cotton in England, waiting for the price to rise. He plans to profit off the fall of the South.

*Rhett's opinion of the South suggests that it is stuck in time and hasn't moved forward as a society as the rest of the world has. It still sticks to archaic notions of mourning, marriage, and slavery. He views the inevitable collapse of the South as an opportunity for him to build his own future in a new society.*



Rhett points out that it is inconsistent of Scarlett to still wear her mourning clothes when in all other ways, she's back in society. But Scarlett clings to her mourning clothes to protect her reputation. Rhett insists he'll have her out of mourning clothes in two months. A few weeks later, he brings her a big box with an ostentatious bonnet in it. Scarlett is delighted.

Scarlett tries on the bonnet. She is giddy at how beautiful it makes her look, but she's sad when she realizes she'll have to cover it with dark fabric. Rhett takes the bonnet back and says he won't let her destroy it. She begs for it back. He finally gives it back, making her promise not to alter it. Then he refuses to let her pay for it. Scarlett recalls Ellen's warning that anything that could be worn was an inappropriate gift from a man. She decides to say she paid Rhett for the materials. Rhett says he's tempting Scarlett with beautiful gifts to lead her into a trap—he never does anything without getting something in return.

Rhett's dark eyes fall on Scarlett's lips. Scarlett feels excited; he's going to try to kiss her. Should she let him? She decides to let him; he might buy her more pretty things to get her to kiss him again. However, he doesn't kiss her. Scarlett asks how Rhett expects her to pay him—she won't marry him. Rhett laughs and says he's not the marrying type. He also doesn't intend to kiss her and asks why her lips are puckered in the pose for a kiss. Humiliated, Scarlett says she never wants to see him again. He dares her to stamp on the bonnet. She shields it instead.

Rhett says Scarlett's youth makes him sad. Looking amused, he kisses her cheek. Scarlett is angry—she doesn't know what he wants if it's not marriage or a kiss. Rhett observes that he's a bad influence on Scarlett; she'd still be a brokenhearted widow if it wasn't for him. Scarlett too busy looking at herself in the mirror to hear what he's really saying; that thanks to him, she's no longer following Ellen's advice about how a lady should act. She believes Rhett is in love with her and wants him to admit it.

Sometime later, Scarlett is trying to do her hair in a new style because Rhett is coming to dinner. Suddenly, Melanie runs up the stairs and bursts into Scarlett's room, looking guilty. Melanie says she might faint because Uncle Peter is threatening to tell Miss Pitty that Melanie was talking to Belle Watling. Scarlett is shocked, as Belle Watling is the red-haired sex worker all respectable women avoid. Melanie says she'll die if Pitty finds out.

*Rhett slowly wears away Scarlett's good reputation by tempting her with excitement and gifts. Her black dress is the last symbol of her respect for mourning rules, but it is only superficial; in all other ways, Scarlett has escaped the rules for widows.*



*Rhett insinuates that he gives Scarlett gifts because he wants something from her, but he doesn't say what. In some ways, it seems that he's only trying to ruin her reputation. Since she's started spending time with him, she has strayed farther and farther from Ellen's ideal. Scarlett sees this and knows she's making choices that would hurt Ellen, but she's so selfish and enjoys Rhett's company (and gifts) too much to stop.*



*The only thing Scarlett can imagine that Rhett wants is to either kiss her or marry her. She decides that there's no other logical reason for his attention besides that he loves her, like most boys do. However, Rhett never gives Scarlett what she is expecting. She used to pursue boys like a mathematical formula, sure of getting the predictable result, but this method fails on Rhett.*



*Scarlett wants Rhett to admit that he loves her not because she loves him, but because it would make her feel triumphant. She likes to have control over people and situations, and if Rhett said that he loved her, she could control him with the knowledge. However, Rhett maintains control over Scarlett by never giving her what she expects.*



*Melanie and Belle Watling are opposites of each other. Belle is a sex worker—uneducated, sexual, and universally disliked. Melanie, on the other hand, is universally respected, modest, and moral—the ideal picture of a lady. At this point, it's unclear why Melanie would speak to someone at the bottom of society, as Belle is.*



Curious, Scarlett asks what Belle is like. Melanie says she's sad and wears all black. Belle wanted to donate to the hospital but everyone else has refused her money. She was a "Confedrut" like the rest, and would Melanie let her help? Melanie holds out a heavily perfumed handkerchief and wails that at that point, Peter yelled at her. There's \$10 in gold in the handkerchief. Melanie wonders if it's okay to use "dirty" money for a good cause.

Scarlett isn't listening. The letters R.K.B. are embroidered on Belle's handkerchief. Rhett gave Scarlett an identical handkerchief a few days before. She's horrified that Rhett knew that "vile Watling creature." She knows men visit sex workers, but it hasn't occurred to her that anyone she knows would do something like that. Rhett Butler is vile! She can't tell him that she knows, because a lady can't mention those things. She goes to tell Peter not to tell on Melanie and throws the handkerchief in the fire on her way.

## CHAPTER 14

By the summer of 1863, everyone still says the South needs one more victory to win the war. That spring, the Confederacy scores several victories, though they lose Stonewall Jackson and General T.R.R. Cobb. The Yankees are now hanging on by a thread as Robert E. Lee marches towards Pennsylvania. In Missouri and Kentucky, the Yankees raid and burn homes, causing refugees to flee to **Atlanta**. The refugees want revenge in the form of Robert E. Lee burning Pennsylvania, but Lee refuses to damage property. The South feels less warmly toward Lee after this. However, everyone in the South expects the battle in Pennsylvania to be the last one. By July, they get news of fights in Pennsylvania—and people begin to fear the worst.

At Miss Pitty's house, Pitty, Scarlett, and Melanie are afraid for Ashley. Rumors fly about Lee possibly dying in Pennsylvania, and crowds gather at train stations to wait for news. Though people fear their loved ones are dead, they never imagine the Cause collapsing. They believe in it as unquestionably as they believe in God.

*From Melanie's meeting with her, Belle seems to be more than what everyone assumes. She wears black clothes as if she's mourning someone who died, and she cares deeply about donating to the hospital. In both these respects, Belle is more of a proper Southern lady than Scarlett, who neither mourns nor cares about the hospital.*



*When Scarlett notices Rhett's initials on the handkerchief, she knows that Rhett affiliates with Belle Watling. Instead of considering that Belle might not be as bad as everyone says—she donated to the hospital, after all—Scarlett feels that it is positively disgusting that Rhett associates with her. She once again decides that she wants nothing to do with Rhett.*



*The war has been going on for two years now, and the South is still very confident that it has the upper hand. They continue to believe that the war will end any day now, that the next battle will be the last. However, when the refugees flee to Atlanta, Southerners get their first sight of the damage the war is really inflicting. They become more eager for the Confederates to get revenge in Pennsylvania, and, when they hear no news, they start to be afraid. The war is steadily becoming more of a reality to them.*



*For the most part, everyone fears what they will lose personally from the war, but nobody fears that the entire Cause could be lost. The South becomes more realistic in their personal lives but remain unrealistic when they think of the South as a whole.*



Scarlett, Melanie, and Miss Pittypat sit in their carriage in front of the newspaper office, where they hope to find out if Ashley is dead. All the women are gathered, even the pregnant Maybelle Merriwether, whose husband Rene Picard hadn't even gone to Pennsylvania. Rhett Butler approaches. Scarlett can't believe he has the nerve to appear. Mrs. Merriwether screams "speculator!" as he passes. Rhett jokes with Scarlett and shares that the casualty list will be printed in a few minutes. Soon after, the newspaper window opens and the crowd fights for the papers. Rhett grabs a paper for Melanie and Scarlett. Ashley isn't on it, and Miss Pitty collapses. Scarlett is overjoyed; Ashley wasn't even wounded! The McClure girls lost their brother Dallas and Fanny Elsing lost some beau, but Maybelle shrieks that Rene is alive.

Mrs. Meade is looking down at her lap. She says nothing but everyone knows. Phil Meade, who is 15, tries to comfort her, saying he'll go kill all the Yankees. Mrs. Meade grabs his arm and cries "no!" Melanie throws Miss Pitty onto Scarlett's shoulder and climbs into Mrs. Meade's carriage to escort her home. She tells Scarlett to put Miss Pitty to bed then come to the Meades'. They drive off.

Scarlett scans the list to see who else has died. Raiford Calvert, her old beau! Joe Fontaine, a new husband and father! Lafayette Munroe, who'd been engaged to Cathleen Calvert! Brent, Stuart, Thomas, and Boyd Tarleton! She can't read on. Rhett looks sympathetic and says there'll be a longer list tomorrow. Ashley still isn't safe. Scarlett wishes the South had sold the "darkies," or just given them up for free. Rhett says the enslaved persons are just an excuse for the war. He says that women hate war, but men love it. He smiles mockingly and goes to tell Dr. Meade his son is dead.

Scarlett puts Miss Pitty to bed then goes to the Meades'. Mrs. Meade is upstairs, and Melanie is helping some neighbors turn her dresses black. Scarlett decides not to tell Melanie that another casualty list is coming out tomorrow because she doesn't want to let on how anxious she is about Ashley. Dr. Meade comes home, hanging his head, and goes upstairs. Shortly after, Phil comes down and sits on the stoop, depressed that his parents won't let him join the war.

*Rhett Butler's presence at the newspaper office is particularly conspicuous because he's one of the only men there. All the women are gathered to find out if their men are dead; meanwhile, Rhett is riding around making fun of everyone. Mrs. Merriwether calls him a "speculator," accusing him of sitting around in comfort watching everyone else fight and die. However, Rhett seems to care about something—perhaps Scarlett or Melanie's reaction to the news they might get—enough to come to the newspaper office on this day at all.*



*This is the first moment in the story when the war touches the personal lives of the characters, as Dr. and Mrs. Meade's son has been killed. This tragedy makes Phil even more eager to fight, wanting to avenge his brother, which upsets Mrs. Meade; she's lost one son, and doesn't want to lose another.*



*For the first time, some of the story's major characters have died. Brent and Stuart Tarleton, both of whom were visiting Scarlett when the story opened, are on the casualty list. Before the war started, Brent and Stuart represented the quintessential Southern teenager—athletic, fun-loving, and eager for war. The two were both extremely excited for war, and confident that they'd win, and now they are two of the first personal casualties. As the war claims Scarlett's old beaus, it fundamentally changes the South as Scarlett sees it.*



*Although Ashley isn't her husband, Scarlett is just as anxious about him as Melanie. In fact, Ashley is all Scarlett can think about whereas Melanie is thinking only of Mrs. Meade's suffering, and puts her own worries aside to help her. This highlights how selfless Melanie is.*



Melanie says she'd love to have a son like Phil. She confesses that she's jealous of Scarlett because she has Wade. She could bear Ashley's death only if she had his baby to comfort her. Scarlett tells her to go comfort Phil. The idea of Melanie having a baby disgusts her. Melanie having Ashley's baby would be like Melanie taking something that belonged to Scarlett.

*Melanie wants a son who's passionate about his homeland. This is another way in which Melanie is very different from Scarlett, who barely wants the child she has. Scarlett hates the idea of Melanie having a baby with Ashley for the same reason she hates that Carreen was dating Brent: she feels like the men, and the babies they could father, are rightfully hers.*



## CHAPTER 15

At Christmas, Ashley comes back on furlough. Scarlett thought her feelings for him couldn't get stronger, but seeing him now after two years, her feelings are intense. Ashley looks like a true soldier in a faded uniform with a long mustache and tanned skin. His once relaxed face is now alert as a cat's. The Wilkeses come from Twelve Oaks, and Ashley brings Cade Calvert, two of the Munroe boys, and Alex and Tony Fontaine.

*After two years, Ashley has changed. Before the war, he lived a comfortable life at Twelve Oaks and his face was relaxed; now, having been fighting for two years, his face is tense. Scarlett is too focused on how handsome he looks to think of how he's changed and what the changes might mean. Distance has only made her like him even more.*



Scarlett is so happy to be in the same room with Ashley again. She thinks he is more attractive than ever. He sits between Melanie and India, and Scarlett wishes she could sit beside him. After hugging everyone, he'd finally kissed Scarlett. She touches her cheek where he kissed her and imagines how much more passionately he would've kissed her if they'd been alone. She wants to get him alone so they can reminisce about the days before he married Melanie. After all, what does Melanie know of love?

*Although Scarlett is mostly a future thinking person (she hates the system of mourning because it forces her to live in the past), she is nostalgic when it comes to Ashley. She wants to reminisce with him about the old days, even though she's been living free of the past in Atlanta. She decides that Melanie must not know about love because Melanie is so different from her.*



Melanie worries about Ashley's ragged appearance, but Ashley says he's lucky. His boots had been wearing out, but he took a pair from a Yankee scout he shot. The Fontaine boys argue over their tattered boots. Ashley leaves to bring the boys to the train, and Melanie says she can't wait to give Ashley her present. It is a coat made of grey wool. Wool is scarce these days, but Melanie had been given some from a bereaved mother at the hospital. Scarlett has made Ashley a sewing kit full of materials Rhett had gotten for her, but she wishes she could give him something personal. She decides to ask Rhett for one of his hats to give to Ashley.

*Scarlett has repurposed gifts that Rhett has gotten her into gifts for Ashley. She doesn't consider the possibility that it might upset Rhett that she gives his gifts to her to another man. Since Rhett doesn't do the obvious things most men do when they like a girl—like kiss her or propose—she assumes he has no feelings about her. Rhett's generosity seems gratuitous to Scarlett right now, but only because she can't figure him out and doesn't know the reason behind his actions.*



Scarlett doesn't see Ashley alone that day because he is visiting with everyone. At supper, he chats on and on, trying to keep everyone from asking him questions he doesn't want to answer. Scarlett is so happy to see him that she doesn't think much about the sadness that he's hiding. Her happiness disappears later when Ashley goes into the bedroom with Melanie, shutting the door on Scarlett.

*Ashley tries keep up a cheerful front so as not to worry anyone, but Scarlett knows he is hiding sadness. It likely has something to do with the war, but Scarlett only cares about her personal concerns, such as her despair when Ashley goes to bed with Melanie at the end of the day.*



A week later, Ashley prepares to return to Virginia. Scarlett sits holding her goodbye present for him, waiting for him to come downstairs after saying goodbye to Melanie. She thinks of everything she wants to say to Ashley. She wants to know he loves her. She's had no time alone with him, and every night he's closed himself in the bedroom with Melanie.

At last, Scarlett hears Ashley's steps on the stairs. She is happy he's alone and decides that Melanie must be too upset to leave her room. He appears in his mismatched uniform, but Scarlett thinks he looks like a "shining knight." She hands him her present shyly. Over the week, she's made him a sash out of a silk scarf from Rhett. She says it's a token for him to remember her by. He says she shouldn't have, and she says she'd do anything for him.

Ashley asks Scarlett to take care of Melanie. Scarlett is angry that Ashley asks her this in their last moment together. Ashley says Melanie is frail, and he worries that there'll be no one to care for her when he dies. Scarlett trembles and her mind fills with images of Ashley's dead body. Ashley says when the war ends, he'll be far away, whether he's alive or dead. He says he lied all week, not wanting to scare Melanie, but the truth is that the Yankees have basically won. They are recruiting foreigners, and the South can't fight the whole world.

Scarlett promises to take care of Melanie, willing to do anything for Ashley. He kisses her forehead, saying she is strong and good in body, mind, and soul. Scarlett waits breathlessly for him to say he loves her, but he doesn't. She sits down and cries. Ashley looks conflicted, then says goodbye. She calls after him to kiss her. They kiss passionately before he pulls away. Scarlett says she loves him over and over. He looks at her with love in his eyes but also shame and despair. He says goodbye and leaves.

## CHAPTER 16

January and February of 1864 are gloomy. The Yankees break through the Southern line and take control of Tennessee. However, the South is still hopeful. Thanks to **Atlanta's** railroads, the South celebrates one victory—but still, it's impossible to ignore that the Yankees are good fighters. They also have great generals, though none as good as Lee.

*Scarlett wants to get another confession of love out of Ashley. More than she wants to tell him her own feelings, she wants him to admit his. With both Ashley and Rhett, she desires that they confess their love to her—it makes her feel triumphant.*



*Scarlett's feelings for Ashley transform him into something he's not. Even though he looks like the war has been hard on him, she thinks he looks like a "shining knight." When he returns to the war, he wears a jacket from Melanie and a sash from Scarlett, sustaining connections with both women.*



*Ashley foreshadows the same end to the war that Rhett has been foreshadowing. The women at home all believe that the Confederates are doing well because the men lie and tell them so, but the truth, according to Ashley, is that the South is losing. Ashley is willing to tell Scarlett this because he thinks she can handle the news—unlike with Melanie, he doesn't feel like he has to protect Scarlett. He also has a vague fear about what will happen after the war, but it doesn't involve his death.*



*It is strange that Ashley binds Scarlett to Melanie with a promise since he knows that Scarlett has feelings for him and is likely jealous of Melanie. Ashley clearly still returns Scarlett's feelings, but his feelings aren't as straightforward as hers; his look of love is also a look of shame and despair which suggests that his feelings are not as "beautiful" as Scarlett feels hers are.*



*Atlanta is a huge part of why the South has hung on this long in the Civil War. Atlanta has both railroads and industry—two very Northern, modern, and therefore anti-Southern attributes—which keep the Yankees out of Georgia for a while.*



The war drags on, killing, wounding, and leaving many widows. The South starts to distrust President Davis. Army supplies and soldiers are dangerously short, but the governors refuse to send the home militia troops. At home, prices for food and warm clothing are high. People wear cardboard shoes and pants made from old scarves. The North holds the South in a virtual state of siege and blocks up ports. The South lived on selling cotton, and now, with no passage open to England, the richest planters—such as Gerald—become poor. Everyone hates speculators like Rhett Butler. Despite all this, **Atlanta's** population increases, and it's still the hub of the South.

Scarlett doesn't care about these hardships because she only cares about Ashley, and he isn't here. She's happy because she knows he loves her. She decides that when the war is over, Ashley will get divorced, and although her parents will disown her, she'll marry him. Ashley said the Yankees had won, but Scarlett doesn't believe him. She thinks everything will be alright somehow.

One day, Melanie comes into Scarlett's room and announces shyly that she is pregnant. The news pains Scarlett. She pictures those nights when Ashley shut the bedroom door behind him and Melanie. She felt as though Ashley has been unfaithful to *her*. Melanie babbles on about how wonderful the news is. Scarlett shouts at her to hush. Upset with herself, Melanie apologizes for forgetting that Charles is dead and reminds herself that Scarlett is grieving. Scarlett asks Melanie to leave her alone.

Scarlett decides she can't live in a house where another woman is having Ashley's baby. The next morning, she decides to go back to **Tara**. But, at breakfast, a telegram comes from Ashley's servant Mose saying that Ashley is missing. A note from Ashley's colonel confirms Mose's report. Scarlett tries to pray. Melanie says that Scarlett is all she has now, and they cry together in bed. Melanie whispers that at least she has Ashley's baby. Scarlett is too distraught to be jealous. All she has is the look Ashley gave her when he left.

The next day, Ashley's name appears in the casualty list as "Missing—believed killed" and then "Missing—believed captured." Melanie hangs around the telegraph office, waiting for news. Because she's pregnant, she tires more easily. One afternoon, Rhett Butler witnesses her faint and brings her home. He settles her into bed and asks if she's going to have a baby. She nods, and he says she needs to take care of herself. He offers to go to Washington and find out where Ashley is. Melanie is grateful but also ashamed for discussing her pregnancy with him. She cries, and Rhett pats her hand.

*The South's economy crashes during the Civil War but, by contrast, Atlanta flourishes. This is because Atlanta is a modern city whose economy is not based on agriculture. The South's plantation economy goes stagnant during the war because there's no use for cotton to the war effort, especially without machines to work it into clothing. The South usually flourishes solely from selling cotton, but the war demands industry. Therefore, only Atlanta flourishes.*



*In the midst of the nationwide hardship and suffering, Scarlett is still caught up with her own personal concerns. The war has still not dealt her any personal blows (since she wasn't sad that Charles died), and so she still knows no other fear besides losing Ashley.*



*This is a very painful moment for Scarlett. She covets Melanie and Ashley's baby, knowing that, if she had a baby with a man she loved, she would love that baby. She hardly cares for Wade Hampton because she didn't care at all for Charles. She sees the motherly pride she's never felt in Melanie and wishes that she could feel it herself.*



*Scarlett almost leaves Melanie because her jealousy is too hard to bear. But when the war gets worse and Ashley goes missing, she feels she must stay and fulfill her promise to take care of Melanie in Ashley's place. Because Scarlett is sworn to protect a woman she hates, she will have to painfully confront her jealousy again and again throughout the story.*



*Rhett Butler is particularly attentive to Melanie's needs. Although Ashley is the kind of man Rhett disdains—dreamy, impractical, and determined to fight even though he thinks it's foolish—he is very important to both Scarlett and Melanie. Therefore, Rhett's offer to go to Washington to find out if Ashley is alive suggests that he cares for these two women even though there is little that he seems to care about seriously.*





Rhett finds out that Ashley is a prisoner at Rock Island, in Illinois. Melanie and Scarlett are relieved, but then afraid—Rock Island is an infamous prison where the Union is starving Confederate prisoners to pay back the South for treating Union prisoners badly. Most of the prisoners at Rock Island don't survive. Has Ashley died from neglect? Rhett says Ashley had a chance to escape—he could've sworn an oath to fight with the Union against the Indians, but he refused. Scarlett is upset that he refused, but Melanie is glad. She couldn't respect him if he betrayed the Confederate army. Scarlett says she knows Rhett would've saved himself. Rhett smirks. He would've agreed to fight for the Union, but he isn't a "gentleman" like Ashley.

*Scarlett's feeling that it's foolish of Ashley to refuse a chance to escape is similar to her feeling about him enlisting in the war. She doesn't understand why he can't do the practical thing, and why he is so concerned with the Southern honor that is only getting everyone killed. Ashley himself confessed that he didn't believe in the war, so his loyalty in the Cause seems, to Scarlett and Rhett, like a lack of conviction. In this instance, Scarlett and Rhett are of the same opinion.*



## CHAPTER 17

By May 1864, the Yankees under General Sherman are in Dalton, Georgia, 100 miles north-west of **Atlanta** preparing for an attack on the Western and Atlantic railroad. However, Atlanta isn't afraid of the Yankees, since they've beat them back once already. The Confederate General Joe Johnston knows that Georgia—home to many factories and granaries—is too important to the Confederacy to let the Yankees invade it. But Dalton seems so far away.

*The South still can't view the war realistically. Even as the Yankees come closer and closer to Georgia, they maintain that the distance is still too far to mean danger. Also, they believe that, just because Georgia is valuable to the South, General Joe won't let it be captured, as if Georgia's sacredness alone is enough to protect it.*



On Miss Pittypat's veranda, Dr. Meade explains that General Johnston is standing guard like an "iron rampart." Mrs. Meade hopes her husband is right—if the Yankees invade Georgia, Phil will join the fight. Scarlett and Melanie think of Ashley while Rhett Butler holds Wade Hamilton and plays with him. That morning, Miss Pittypat decided to kill the old rooster. Chicken is now a rarity, so she invited guests to share it. Earlier that day, Rhett came to the house with presents, and she'd been forced to invite him too. However, he's on his best behavior. They had a nice meal creatively made out of odds and ends.

*Dr. Meade's description of General Johnston as an "iron rampart" seems like an exaggeration, or wishful thinking: General Johnston is only human. While Dr. Meade talks, everyone is absorbed in their personal concerns. Melanie and Scarlett are both thinking about Ashley, and Mrs. Meade is worried about her son. She discourages his patriotism even more. Rhett displays a surprising appreciation for children by playing with Wade Hampton.*



After supper, they all gather on the porch and talk about the war. Captain Ashburn, a wounded soldier, announces that he'd been granted transfer from **Atlanta** to Dalton. All the women look at him appreciatively. Dr. Meade says Sherman will never get past "Old Joe." Everyone nods, comforted. But then Rhett asks if Sherman has 100,000 men and Johnston only 40,000, including the returned deserters. Mrs. Meade says there are no deserters in the Confederate army. Rhett corrects himself; by "deserters" he means the wounded soldiers who healed but remained at home. Most of these soldiers didn't intend to desert permanently, and only came home to plow their fields, trying to feed their hungry families.

*Rhett puts Dr. Meade's explanation of how things stand with the war in realistic terms involving actual numbers. These numbers—100,000 Yankees against 40,000 Confederates—make the South's situation in the war seem dire. He also explains how many Confederate soldiers "deserted" because their families were so poor at home that they stayed to help plow the fields. This shows how poverty and the war are both enemies to the South during this time.*



Dr. Meade says the numbers don't matter; one Confederate is worth a dozen Yankees. Rhett asks if this is still the case when the Confederates have no shoes or food. Captain Ashburn looks guilty, knowing that men are at the front with worse injuries than his. Furious, Dr. Meade shouts that the mountains will provide refuge for the Confederates, just like in Thermopylae. Rhett notes that every man died in Thermopylae. Backed into a corner, Dr. Meade says that, if they must, every man will die to keep the Yankees out of Georgia. Everyone is angry that Rhett can't do the "sacred duty" of believing in the Cause.

To ease the tension, Pittypat asks Scarlett to play piano for everyone. Scarlett starts a sad song about a dead soldier. Fanny Elsing asks her to play something else. Scarlett starts another but stops because it is sad too. To her relief, Rhett suggests a song and joins her in singing, even though it is also a sad song.

Over the next few weeks, Johnston holds off the Yankees. The Yankees can't assault the Confederates directly, and so they pull back and attack them from behind. Johnston retreats, marching south to meet the Yankees for another attack. This action irritates everyone in **Atlanta**. Why didn't Johnston hold off the Yankees instead of yielding more and more of Georgia? Refugees crowd into Atlanta as Johnston continues to fall back, and the Yankees come closer. Atlanta is flooded with the wounded. Every hotel, hospital, and home is filled, including Miss Pitty's.

Everyone has faith in the troop and the Cause, but they are losing faith in General Johnston. Why didn't he hold the Yankees instead of retreating? The Home Guard, safely in **Atlanta**, boasts that they could do a better job and draw up their own strategies. The same fighting pattern persists for 25 days. No matter how many Yankees the Confederates kill, more come. Finally, the Confederates retreat to Kennesaw Mountain; no one believes the Yankees will cross it, but still, it is only 22 miles away from Atlanta.

One day, wounded soldiers start pouring in from Kennesaw Mountain. Mrs. Merriwether wakes Scarlett early and drives her to the hospital. Scarlett is so tired of nursing that she tells Mrs. Merriwether that Ellen wants her to go home to **Tara**, but Mrs. Merriwether says she'll write to Ellen and say that Scarlett is needed. Scarlett is sick of the foul smells, the flies, and the soldiers' constant questions about Old Joe. She follows Dr. Meade around with a basin while he amputates diseased flesh. All the chloroform and iodine has run out, and the screams of pain are unbearable. Scarlett can hardly stand it and feels nauseous.

*Dr. Meade believes that numbers actually detract from the real odds. He says, illogically and vaguely, that one Southerner is worth a dozen Yankees—something Rhett sees as wishful thinking. Rhett recalls historical events to show that the South is not likely to win. This suggests that a Southerner's hope of victory at this point in the Civil War is dependent on ignoring statistics, history, and common sense. But Rhett's common sense is seen as him failing his "sacred duty."*



*Scarlett can only think of sad songs to play which suggests that, try as they might, the South can't ignore the tragedy that is creeping ever closer as the war progresses. The war is no longer an exciting event.*



*From the perspective of the people at home, General Johnston's retreating strategy is cowardly and nonsensical. For the longest time, everyone thought it out of the question that Georgia would be taken, and now that the Yankees are advancing into it, Southerners don't know what else to do but admit that their leadership is faulty. They refuse to admit that the Yankees are stronger than the Confederates, no matter the evidence.*



*The Southerners continue to believe in their Cause, though there doesn't seem to be much reason to continue believing. Although their confidence seems foolish where the war is concerned, their patriotism is remarkable. They are determined to protect Georgia from the Yankees at all costs. Every distance the Yankees are from Atlanta is an impassable distance in their eyes.*



*The hospital fills with more and more wounded soldiers, and Scarlett is running out of patience. It is not that she can't stand the pity and grief she feels for the dying men, but that she finds them physically disgusting. The wounds are certainly horrifying, but she can't find it in herself to sympathize. She approaches work at the hospital as she would arduous field work: it is beneath her. She views Tara as a place where she'd be free from this horror.*



At noon, Scarlett sneaks away from the hospital. She runs up the street, breathing clean air. Rhett Butler drives by and comments on her disheveled appearance. She tells him to hush and he helps her gallantly into his carriage. It's nice to see an unwounded man, and one so well-dressed. She notices his graceful strength and powerful muscles.

Rhett calls Scarlett a fraud for betraying the "great Cause" and running away from the hospital. She says she's sick of the hospital, and that it's all General Johnston's fault for bungling the fight. Rhett says Johnston's strategy saved the railroad, and that everyone in **Atlanta** is mad at him for not doing the impossible. He says the Home Guard will be called in to help soon and suggests it'll be a wake-up call for people who haven't had to do anything yet. Scarlett points out that Rhett also hasn't done anything. Rhett isn't offended by this, and he wishes Old Joe luck.

Scarlett notices a group of Black men coming towards them. Rhett stops the carriage and Scarlett looks curiously at the group. She recognizes Big Sam, the foreman at **Tara**. Recognizing her as well, Big Sam smiles and greets her. The white officer, Captain Randall, orders the men back into formation. Scarlett shakes hands with them all and asks what they're doing so far from Tara. Big Sam says they were called in to dig ditches in case the soldiers retreat to **Atlanta**. Scarlett turns to Randall to ask why the army needs reinforcements in Atlanta. He starts to imply that the fighting might reach Atlanta, but seeing Scarlett's fear, he says the Confederates won't retreat. Scarlett remembers what Rhett said: once the Yankees push them onto flat land, the Confederates won't stand a chance. Scarlett gives the enslaved men some money for tobacco.

Scarlett wonders aloud why all men try to protect women from the truth. She wonders if the army is so short of men they have to resort to using "darkies." Rhett says the army is preparing for a siege of **Atlanta**. Scarlett gasps. Wishing she hadn't revealed she was afraid, she asks why Rhett's here when he doesn't care about the war. Rhett jokes that he wants the experience of rescuing a maiden in distress. Scarlett says she can take care of herself, and Rhett says that is what a Yankee would say.

*Scarlett is attracted to Rhett in this moment because he is untouched by the war. Instead of being weak and dirty and beaten, Rhett is in perfect condition. His strength and vigor have not been expended on the war effort.*



*Rhett is perfectly comfortable criticizing the Home Guard for their unearned pride even though he is a speculator in the war. However, although he isn't fighting in the war, he also isn't pretending he's a hero. He believes that the South's Cause is impossible, so his joining the fight would mean nothing but one more wasted life. Rhett's attitude suggests that he sees his outlook as realistic rather than cowardly.*



*Scarlett is on friendly terms with the Black men, many of whom were enslaved at Tara. Her kindness towards them and their joy at seeing her is one way the novel implies that white Southern enslavers like the O'Haras are so nice to their enslaved persons that none of them should want freedom. Also, when Scarlett sees her former enslaved staff digging ditches in Atlanta in preparation for war, she realizes for the first time how real the war is. It also implies that Tara is already not the place it was when she left it; the war has drawn out the enslaved persons from the plantations, undoubtedly affecting Tara's prosperity and comfortability.*



*Scarlett also realizes that the war effort is dire because the Confederates are enlisting Black men, whom they usually wouldn't trust away from their enslavers. For the second time, Scarlett is compared to a Yankee for saying she can take care of herself. Although acting like a Yankee is framed an insult to a Southerner, in this instance it seems like a compliment because it indicates Scarlett is tenacious.*



Scarlett says the Yankees will never get to **Atlanta**. Rhett bets her they will; bonbons if she wins, a kiss if she loses. Scarlett forgets her fear in her excitement over the word “kiss.” She teases that she’d sooner kiss a pig. Rhett says that Scarlett’s beaux have respected her too much, and that she needs to be kissed. He says that all nice girls wish that men would kiss them, even if they pretend they don’t. Someday, he says, he’ll kiss her and she’ll like it. Scarlett hates how right Rhett always is, so she asks him to take her back to the hospital.

As he drives her back, Rhett explains that he hasn’t made further advances because he’s been waiting for Scarlett to grow up and forget Ashley. Scarlett’s eyes fill with tears because she knows she’ll never forget Ashley. She hates Rhett for teasing while Ashley is dying in prison. Rhett says he’s been watching her “schoolgirl” passion for Ashley, and how she has hidden it from Melanie. He asks if Ashley has ever been unfaithful to Melanie and kissed Scarlett, and he takes her angry silence as a yes. He starts to say what he’ll do when Ashley dies and Scarlett forgets him, but Scarlett furiously climbs out of the carriage before he can finish.

## CHAPTER 18

The fighting is so close that people in **Atlanta** can hear gunshots. People try to ignore it and pretend not to be afraid. They relieve their anxiety by criticizing General Johnston. When the Home Guard is dispatched to join the battle, Scarlett and Melanie leave the hospital to watch them depart. Old Grandpa Merriwether and Uncle Henry Hamilton are with the Home Guard. The rest of the group are young boys, such as Phil Meade, who left school to join the army. Most of the men are unarmed.

As they pass, Scarlett recognizes Mose, Ashley’s old bodyguard. She fights through the crowd asks what he’s doing there. Mose explains that he’s going to the war with John Wilkes. Scarlett is shocked. John Wilkes is nearly 70. Then she sees John on Mrs. Tarleton’s mare, Nellie. Scarlett clasps his hand, telling him not to go. John says that Gerald almost came with him today, but his horse was refusing to jump fences as if conspiring with Ellen to keep Gerald home. John sent India and Honey to Macon and left Gerald to oversee Twelve Oaks. He kisses Scarlett and departs, saying wistfully that he would have liked to see his grandchild. As she returns to the hospital, Scarlett realizes he just hinted at his death, like Ashley had. She prays the war will not take John too.

*In Scarlett’s world, it is usually the woman who teases the man with her coyness. In Scarlett and Rhett’s relationship, however, Rhett is the one who teases Scarlett with his affection. Rhett also implies that Southern girls are just pretending to be proper: they want romance just as much as men do, but the South’s focus on policing women’s conduct means women can’t be straightforward about their desires.*



*Rhett associates Scarlett’s feelings for Ashley with her youth, believing that he’s only a childish crush of hers. Whether or not he’s right, Scarlett does associate Ashley with her youth and the pre-war days at Tara. Scarlett is furious at Rhett for speaking this way about Ashley, and she usually gets angry with Rhett when she knows he’s right. But having Rhett essentially call her childish and silly is insulting too because Scarlett wants to be mature and practical in how she faces the war.*



*Now that Atlanta can hear gunshots, everyone gets afraid. The Home Guard finally leave Atlanta, which is a sign that the Confederates are desperate. Along with them go the people previously deemed too young or old to fight. What Mrs. Meade has been fearing ever since her first son went off to fight—that Phil will go too—is now coming to pass.*



*It shocks Scarlett to see John Wilkes join the war because he lives so close by to Tara and is a part of her world. He is riding Mrs. Tarleton’s mare, another reminder of Scarlett’s old neighbors, and he mentions that Gerald almost came with him. These details make Scarlett afraid; the war is finally touching her personal existence and the things closest to her. John hints at his own death with the same ominous wistfulness that Ashley did. Saying he wishes he could see his grandchild also suggests he’s living in the past, and will never get to experience the future (symbolized by a new life and future generations).*



The Confederates hold the Yankees at Kennesaw Mountain, making people in **Atlanta** hopeful. Refugees and wounded soldiers crowd the city, and young ladies from nearby towns come to flirt with them. The busyness of the war times often makes Scarlett forget she has a son at all. There are endless parties and weddings. Everyone celebrates while Johnston holds the Yankees 22 miles away—though soon after, an attack by General Sherman makes the Confederates retreat to Atlanta. A General Hood is appointed to take Sherman's place, but the soldiers are still loyal to Johnston. Soon after, the Yankees capture the railroad that connects Atlanta, Virginia, and Charleston.

General Hood assaults the Yankees at Peachtree Creek. **Atlanta** listens to the cannons. By late afternoon, Confederate soldiers stumble into town, wounded and exhausted. Miss Pitty, Scarlett, and Melanie tend tirelessly to the wounded in their house. Little Wade hangs frightened in the background as wagons bring wounded and dying men into town. Melanie, Scarlett, and Pittypat pour water into their dry mouths. They question the soldiers about who won, but they all say it is too soon to tell. By the end of the day, Scarlett is filthy, and the whole thing seems like a nightmare. Scarlett's former beaux are completely transfigured or dead. As the night wears on, the women learn that the soldiers retreated. The Yankees are coming.

The defeated army pours into **Atlanta**. Grandpa Merriwether and Uncle Henry return to Atlanta with the Home Guard, but Scarlett sees no sign of John Wilkes. The soldiers are cheerful, as they believe that Old that Old Joe will never let the Yankees take Atlanta. General Hood holds back the circling Yankees, but they keep coming back for more. Sherman takes control of the railroad between Tennessee and Atlanta, and the Confederates fight to hold the railroad to Jonesboro. Scarlett realizes with terror that **Tara**—which seemed like a safe haven compared to Atlanta—is only 5 miles from Jonesboro.

The ladies in **Atlanta** sit on the roofs watching the nearby fighting, but when bullets start to fall in the streets, they hide in their basements. Many of them consider leaving Atlanta. Miss Pitty wants to go to Macon to stay with Old Mrs. Burr, but Scarlett refuses; Mrs. Burr is too uptight. Melanie refuses to go anywhere without Scarlett. Scarlett can't believe how much Melanie loves her, seeing as Scarlett hates Melanie so much. She thinks Melanie is stupid not to pick up on Scarlett and Ashley's secret. But Scarlett doesn't want to break her promise to Ashley, so she says Melanie can come with her to **Tara**. However, Dr. Meade insists that Melanie must stay in Atlanta due to her pregnancy. He insists she's too small to have children. So Miss Pitty leaves for Macon while Scarlett, Melanie, Wade, and Prissy stay in Atlanta.

*Even though the war is a mere 22 miles away, Atlanta parties as though nothing is happening. This shows the persistence of the Southern lifestyle. Although luxuries are running out and danger looms, no one is willing to accept it or change their way of living. The Yankees capturing the first section of railroad is a bad sign, for the railroad is one of the South's major advantages in the war.*



*When the wounded soldiers pour in, Scarlett feels like it's a nightmare. In comparison, she had also described her wedding and Ashley's wedding as seeming like nightmares too. Those two events had been moments right before Scarlett's life changed, and she had to accept that things weren't going to work out the way she wanted them to. This suggests that Scarlett is finally realizing how much the war is going to change her—and life as she knows it.*



*As the war has been getting closer to Atlanta, Scarlett has continued to think Tara is untouchable. However, the Yankees are now attempting to capture the railroad that connects Atlanta and Tara. All of a sudden, Scarlett is very afraid of the affect the war will have on the things that are important to her. Tara, the one thing that Gerald warned her would always be there for her, is possibly in danger.*



*Because Scarlett has promised Ashley that she would take care of Melanie, her whole life is now centered around Melanie and Melanie's pregnancy. Outwardly, Scarlett appears to be acting selflessly towards Melanie. In actuality, she is being kind to Melanie only because she loves Melanie's husband. However, Melanie's role in Scarlett's life forces Scarlett to think of others besides herself, suggesting this may still be an opportunity for Scarlett to grow.*



## CHAPTER 19

The siege comes closer and closer to **Atlanta**. Wade and Prissy hide in the basement, but Melanie was told to stay in bed, so she and Scarlett cower upstairs as bullets fall around them. Scarlett fears Melanie's water breaking more than she fears death. She worries about potentially having to deliver the baby. But Prissy says she's seen her mother deliver many babies. Scarlett wants the birth over with so she can go home to **Tara**. Ellen wants Wade to go to Tara too. Happy to be rid of him, Scarlett plans to send him.

When news comes that the Yankees and the Confederates are fighting along the southern train line, Scarlett cancels Wade's trip. The siege continues, but Hood holds the Yankees out of the **Atlanta**. Slowly, Scarlett gets used to the gunfire and she becomes less afraid. Still, life feels like a dream. Blue skies are hazy with smoke, and bullets blow up animals and people in the streets. The nights are eerily quiet. Often, Scarlett wakes to a knock on the door, and goes downstairs to let in a wounded soldier.

One night, Uncle Henry Hamilton knocks on the door. He is barefoot and has lice but seems to be having a good time in the army. He visits briefly and soaks his feet in a tub of water. He tells Scarlett and Melanie he'll be marching towards Jonesboro the next morning. The girls are scared, but he assures them the Yankees won't win. But he notes he'll be gone a while and wants to say goodbye.

Before Henry leaves, Scarlett fixes him a lunch downstairs. She asks him if the fighting is serious. Henry says it is. Scarlett asks if the fighting will get to **Tara**. Ignoring how selfish this question is, Henry says that Tara is safe. But he has some bad news he wants Scarlett to give to Melanie: John Wilkes is dead. Henry pulls a gold watch from his pocket. Scarlett is shocked and sad to see John's beautiful watch. Why did he have to go to war and die? He didn't even believe in the war. Henry says that John Wilkes was brave and asks Scarlett to also tell Mrs. Tarleton that her mare is dead. Scarlett nods and kisses Henry goodbye.

By the end of July, the Yankees are nearly at Jonesboro. Gerald sends a letter reassuring Scarlett that the Yankees haven't gotten to **Tara**. Gerald boasts about the bravery of the Confederates and mentions that Carreen has typhoid fever. Ellen asks Scarlett to pray for her. Feeling guilty, Scarlett tries to pray, but her heart isn't in it. That night, she sits on the porch feeling lonely. There are no visitors. She closes her eyes, imagining Tara and the Tarleton boys and all her old beaux. She cries out Ashley's name, knowing she'll never get used to him being gone.

*During this time in Southern society, wealthy women did not know anything about childbirth. Usually, a woman on their enslaved staff would be trained in midwifery and would assist during births in the household. Even though Scarlett has had a baby of her own, she doesn't know anything about the process, and therefore fears Melanie's upcoming birth.*



*Scarlett continues to feel that life is a scary dream. She is no longer in control of what is happening to her, and she lives in a state of fear. She is also trapped in Atlanta because the Yankees and the Confederates are fighting over the Southern trainline. The thought of going to Tara was unbearable to Scarlett a few months ago, but now that she can't get there, she misses it.*



*Even Uncle Henry Hamilton, who has seen the war firsthand, is confident that the South will win. However, he may just be saying that to protect Melanie and Scarlett from the truth. Scarlett has slowly realized that men don't like to tell women bad news because they don't think they can handle it.*



*Henry protects Melanie from the truth, but he doesn't feel the need to protect Scarlett from it too. Similarly, Ashley had been honest with Scarlett about the war, but he lied to Melanie. This suggests that Scarlett, although incredibly selfish, has strength and practicality that most women don't have during this time—and this is something some men respect and understand. She cannot see the glory in John Wilkes's death; all she sees is that someone who didn't believe in the war wasted their life on it.*



*All of Scarlett's role models are falsely confident in the Cause. Gerald brags about the Confederate soldiers even though they are defending the last stretch of railroad they control. Scarlett is starting to feel like her old life is falling apart before her eyes. She dreams of the old days, and she to channel all her feelings into Ashley. In Scarlett's mind, Ashley begins to symbolize her old life.*



The front gate opens and Rhett Butler comes up the path. Scarlett is so happy to see another person that she forgets how angry Rhett made her last time she saw him. Rhett says he's surprised that Melanie and Scarlett haven't gone to Macon, especially since Melanie is pregnant. He laughs, thinking of Melanie and Scarlett alone together. It's strange, he explains, given that Scarlett thinks Melanie is silly and stupid. He says he knows Scarlett stayed only because she promised Ashley. Angry, Scarlett says she only let him on the porch because she was feeling sad. When Scarlett admits she misses **Tara**, Rhett warns her that the typhoid fever there is more dangerous than the Yankees—the Yankees won't rape her. It's awful, Scarlett thinks, that Rhett knows what women are thinking and is willing to speak so openly about rape.

When Rhett says that he's surprised but happy to find Scarlett on her own, Scarlett's heart beats faster. Is he about to say he loves her? If so, she can have fun torturing him with the knowledge. Rhett kisses her hand and wrist, exciting Scarlett—though she doesn't know why since she doesn't love him. Scarlett says Rhett is a “varmint,” and he says that's why she likes him. Scarlett insists she actually likes nice men. They argue about whether they love each other. Rhett insists he likes, but doesn't love, Scarlett. He likes how selfish and practical she is, and he's liked her since he first saw her at Twelve Oaks.

Scarlett thinks Rhett loves her but just won't say it. She asks if he is proposing. Rhett says he's asking her to be his mistress. Scarlett is too angry to realize how insulting the word “mistress” is. She asks what she'd get out of being his mistress besides a “passel of brats.” Rhett laughs, but Scarlett is ashamed of herself. She screams at him to get out or Gerald will kill him. Rhett is amused rather than ashamed. He bows, smiling. She tries to slam the door, but the latch is stuck. She storms away and Rhett slams the door for her.

## CHAPTER 20

In August, the siege of **Atlanta** stops suddenly. A sinister quiet falls over the town. News arrives by word of mouth, since there isn't enough paper for sending letters or printing newspapers. Although it felt like forever, the siege only lasted 30 days. The Yankees have moved south, turning towns into graveyards as they go. Scarlett is terrified when she learns that Sherman plans to attack Jonesboro for the fourth time, since Jonesboro is so close to **Tara**. As she receives news of the battle's progress, she also receives letters from Gerald informing her that first Carreen, and then Ellen and Suellen, are very ill. Scarlett prays for her mother.

*Many times, Rhett has insinuated that Yankees aren't as horrible as Southerners believe they are. While most Southerners consider Yankees despicable monsters without question, Rhett suggests that they are just human beings with the same morals as Southerners have. Scarlett is appalled that Rhett mentions the word “rape,” because men usually never talk about such things to ladies. Rhett is progressive in that he doesn't feel the need to shelter women (or at least Scarlett) from unpleasant topics. His frankness with Scarlett shows he considers her an equal.*



*Scarlett doesn't understand the excitement she feels around Rhett because she doesn't think she loves him. She doesn't think she loves him because she believes she loves nice men. However, Rhett says he's attracted to Scarlett because she isn't nice—she's selfish and practical. In other words, Rhett likes Scarlett because she's similar to him, whereas Scarlett thinks that she's a better person than Rhett says she is.*



*It has never occurred to Scarlett that Rhett would want anything other than to propose or kiss her, because in her experience that's always what boys want. However, she is not so modest that she won't talk openly about what it would mean to be a mistress (that is, to have sex with Rhett and to possibly bear his children). That Scarlett is willing to say this reveals how supposedly immodest she is, per Southern society—but also how practical and down to earth she is.*



*The war moves steadily south, getting progressively worse by the day. At this point, the war has impoverished and stranded Southerners all around Georgia. Scarlett is separated from her family and trapped in Atlanta because of the fighting along the railroad. Also, there is not enough paper even for news to circulate. The South has fallen from a land of abundance to a land of poverty, and the powerful families have been split up.*



Scarlett grows increasingly frightened when a week passes with no news; a lot can change in a week with typhoid fever. It's unthinkable that Ellen is sick or might even be dead. If she dies, Scarlett will be stuck with Wade and Melanie. Scarlett daydreams about the miles of white cotton at **Tara**, and the enslaved boys running around. If it weren't for Melanie, she'd ride the train home immediately. She hates how still and quiet **Atlanta** is now. No one jokes about the war anymore because they knew that if the Macon railroad is captured, the Yankees will get Atlanta.

On September 1st, Scarlett wakes up afraid and goes to the window. **Atlanta** is deathly quiet. Suddenly, she hears distant cannons. She realizes the cannons are coming from the south, which means they might be the signal that Atlanta has fallen. All Scarlett can think of is the Yankees invading **Tara**. Scarlett longs to be home and shushes Prissy when Prissy starts singing a sad song.

Scarlett looks in Melanie's room. Melanie lies in bed. There are black circles around her eyes and her face is swollen. Scarlett wishes meanly that Ashley could see how ugly Melanie looked. Melanie's cheeks up when she sees Scarlett, who sits down on the bed. Melanie holds her hand and says she's sorry about the cannons in the south. Scarlett has been so good to her, and Melanie loves her. Melanie asks Scarlett to take her baby if she dies in childbirth. If it's a boy, Scarlett should raise him like Ashley; and if it's a girl, Melanie would like her to be raised like Scarlett. Scarlett promises reluctantly, thinking of how silly Melanie is for not realizing Scarlett loves Ashley. Then, Melanie says she's been having pains; she'll give birth today. She asks Scarlett to fetch Mrs. Meade, not Dr. Meade.

## CHAPTER 21

Scarlett sends Prissy to get Mrs. Meade and then sits down for breakfast. Her heart beats so fast that she can't eat. Her sugarless coffee tasted even worse than usual. Wade is scared, but Scarlett tells him to play outside. Then she sits on the stairs to compose her emotions. Why does Melanie have to have her baby today? The town is so quiet—there are no ambulances, soldiers, or neighbors. Where is Prissy with Mrs. Meade? Finally, Prissy comes home alone: Mrs. Meade is bringing Phil home, so she can't come. Scarlett hates how enslaved persons are always happy to bring bad news. Prissy shares that she tried to bring Mrs. Merriweather, but she's busy at the hospital. Scarlett sends Prissy to get Mrs. Elsing, and to do so quickly.

*Although Scarlett has strayed completely from her mother's path, and the two of them have become distant, Scarlett is very afraid of losing her. Like Tara, Ellen represents safety and perfection. Scarlett would like to be like Ellen one day, and she yearns for the old ways of Tara. But it now seems likely that both her mother and the prosperous pre-war Tara might perish in the war.*



*If Atlanta has fallen, it suggests that the whole South will fall with it—a terrifying prospect for Scarlett, Prissy, and Melanie. Atlanta is Georgia's sole source of power, and, without it and its intersection of railroads, it seems that the South has no chance against the North.*



*Scarlett's hatred for Melanie contrasts sharply against Melanie's unconditional love for Scarlett. The fact that Melanie wants Scarlett to raise her baby to be like Scarlett if she dies shows that Melanie admires Scarlett and views her as an example of the ideal woman. This is surprising because Melanie has often been likened to Ellen—who has in turn been likened to the ideal "great lady." This raises the question of whether Melanie or Scarlett—two opposite examples of femininity—represents the true ideal.*



*The day that Melanie's water breaks coincides with the day Atlanta falls. Slowly but steadily, things get worse and worse for Scarlett: she realizes that Atlanta is deserted and that she's alone. She takes her frustration out on Wade and Prissy—two young innocents. And Scarlett's selfishness shines through when she blames everyone else for how badly things are going. It's not Prissy or Melanie's fault that nobody can help Melanie through childbirth.*





Scarlett goes into Melanie's room and says cheerfully that Wade's birth was over in no time. Melanie hopes hers will be that fast. Scarlett sponges Melanie's forehead and watches Prissy return, swaying her skirt and taking her time. Swearing to whip Prissy one day, Scarlett goes down to meet her. Prissy says Mrs. Elsing is at the hospital. Scarlett says she'll give Prissy a note to bring to Dr. Meade at the hospital and tells her to get news of the fighting in Jonesboro. Thinking of **Tara** and Dilcey, Prissy starts to cry. Scarlett sends her to the hospital with a note written in the margins of Gerald's last letter.

Scarlett sits with Melanie and talks about meaningless things. Melanie's face is screwed up in pain, but she lies and says it isn't bad. Scarlett doesn't sympathize because she's worried about Ellen and the Yankees. Scarlett would be happy if Melanie died. Ashamed of this thought, she prays that Melanie survives. She tries to keep talking, but Melanie says not to worry. The hours pass and Prissy doesn't return. What will happen if the baby comes before the doctor arrives? Scarlett suddenly realizes the cannons have stopped.

Scarlett sees Prissy returning and goes downstairs to meet her. Prissy says the Confederates are losing in Jonesboro, and she's scared for Dilcey and Pork. Scarlett asks where Dr. Meade is. Prissy says he's at the train depot tending the wounded soldiers coming in. The doctors yelled at her because they were so busy. Scarlett decides to go to the depot herself to get Dr. Meade and tells Prissy to stay with Melanie. If Prissy says anything about the fighting to Melanie, Scarlett will "sell her south." She grabs a bonnet, and without pausing to look at her reflection, runs out.

By the time Scarlett gets downtown, she is panting in the heat. Downtown swarms with people. Carriages filled with wounded soldiers drive by, children cry on stoops, and men on horses gallop by. An enslaved man asks Scarlett why she hasn't left **Atlanta** yet. She stops an officer who says General Hood lost the fight. The Confederates are evacuating Atlanta, leaving it to the Yankees. The officer rides off. Scarlett wonders where to go to escape the Yankees, but she can't go anywhere when Melanie is about to have her baby.

Scarlett runs down a street full of ambulances, her feet beating the rhythm "the Yankees are coming!" Then she sees women and children rushing down the street carrying crates of food. Mrs. Elsing drives by, her carriage piled high with food. Scarlett hasn't seen so much food in months. She decides that people must be grabbing as much food as they can from the commissary warehouses before the Yankees came. She keeps running.

*Although Scarlett is distraught and angry with Melanie for being a burden on her, she tries to conceal it. She acts cheerful around Melanie in order to distract her from pain and stress almost as if she does care about Melanie. However, she doesn't sympathize with Prissy's fear, even though Prissy is afraid for Tara and her family members at Tara, just like Scarlett is. Scarlett doesn't consider Prissy's fears as valid as her own or as Melanie's.*



*Scarlett wishes Melanie would die so she'd be free of her responsibility to her. Things start to change, though, when Scarlett feels ashamed and prays. This situation, in which Melanie might be dying before Scarlett's eyes, forces Scarlett to confront her selfishness. Praying is something that Scarlett associates with Ellen, so as Scarlett prays for Melanie, she also feels closer to her mother.*



*Scarlett, in a moment of kind thoughtfulness, wants to make sure that Melanie doesn't become even more stressed by learning about the fighting at Jonesboro. She threatens to "sell Prissy south" if she tells Melanie, meaning that she'll sell Prissy to another enslaver and separate Prissy from her from her family. It's unclear if this is a serious threat or not, but either way, Scarlett uses it to hurt Prissy and frighten her into compliance.*



*Two calamities are happening at once: Melanie is having her baby and Scarlett needs to find Dr. Meade; meanwhile, the South has lost Atlanta and the Yankees are coming. War and personal life are colliding, sending Scarlett headfirst into total catastrophe—something she's never experienced in her luxurious life.*



*Now that the Yankees have Atlanta, the Confederates are thinking about food. As soon as the Yankees get to Atlanta, they will take everything. So, everything is suddenly lawless. Even Mrs. Elsing, one of the "genteel dowagers" of Atlanta, is out for herself, grabbing as much food as she can.*



Scarlett gets to the depot. She stops, horrified by the sight of thousands of wounded soldiers lying across the train tracks. Flies swarm over the bodies, which are so closely packed that there's no place to step. Scarlett has seen wounded men in the hospital, but that was nothing compared to this. She braces herself and steps around the bodies, looking for Dr. Meade. Finally, Scarlett finds him. He's happy to see her since they need help. But when Scarlett says she needs his help to deliver Melanie's baby, Dr. Meade angrily says he can't leave the soldiers for "a damned baby." He tells her to find women to help. Scarlett reminds herself that Prissy knows about childbirth. But she's afraid—this is the first time Scarlett has had to do anything on her own. She wishes Ellen were here.

Scarlett arrives back at the house. She tells Wade, who's crying, to go make mud pies in the yard. Once inside, Scarlett tells Prissy that the two of them will help birth Melanie's baby. Prissy stammers, and says she knows nothing about childbirth. Scarlett shakes her and calls her a "black liar." For the first time in her life, Scarlett strikes Prissy as hard as she can across the face. Melanie cries for Scarlett. Scarlett tries to remember everything Ellen and Mammy did when she was having Wade. Remembering a few things, she sends Prissy for supplies. Then she goes to tell Melanie that the doctor isn't coming.

## CHAPTER 22

That afternoon is the longest of Scarlett's life. Melanie and Scarlett are drenched in sweat, and Scarlett waves flies from Melanie while Prissy crouches in the corner. Prissy smells bad, but Scarlett doesn't want to dismiss her for fear she would run away. Melanie tries to be brave, but, as the day wears on, she starts to scream. Scarlett knows Melanie won't survive two days of this, and she can't stop thinking of the approaching Yankees. What if Ashley is alive and hears that Scarlett let Melanie die? As Scarlett tends to Melanie over the next several hours, she wonders if Sherman has reached **Atlanta** yet. Scarlett sends Prissy to get Mrs. Meade. Prissy returns alone: Phil is dead and Mrs. Meade is trying to bury him before the Yankees arrive. Melanie tells Scarlett to take Wade and go, since she's going to die. Scarlett refuses to leave.

*Up until this point, the sight of wounded soldiers in the hospital hasn't moved Scarlett, except to make her feel disgust. Now, the war seems horrifyingly real, and Scarlett can't ignore the consequences of it. In comparison to Dr. Meade's task tending to thousands of dying soldiers, Scarlett's predicament seems insignificant. Dr. Meade also seems to consider the birth of a baby an annoyingly feminine concern in the midst of a very male concern: war, and its tragedies. Scarlett, as a woman, is on her own.*



*Scarlett is further deserted because even Prissy—her enslaved girl—doesn't know anything about childbirth, and Scarlett has always been able to depend on her enslaved staff. She strikes an enslaved person for the first time in her life, suggesting that the war and her isolation have led her to violence. She is realizing, instant by instant, that she is alone and that she is the only person who can handle the situation at hand.*



*As the day progresses, Scarlett seems to develop a real sense of responsibility for Melanie. Although she mostly thinks of what Ashley would think if she let Melanie die, Scarlett is also disinclined to leave on her own. She realizes how alone she is. In this isolation, she starts to cling to Melanie without realizing it. Even when Melanie tries to release her, Scarlett won't leave; she either relies on Melanie herself, or feels genuine loyalty to Melanie. Melanie, meanwhile, tries to show Scarlett her loyalty by giving her permission to go.*



Hours later, Scarlett stumbles outside and slumps on the front stoop. She unbuttons her bodice and hoists up her skirt to feel the air on her hot skin. It's over: Melanie is alive and her little boy is getting his first bath. Why isn't Melanie dead after such a hard birth and no doctor? Exhausted, Scarlett starts to cry and soon falls asleep. Prissy wakes Scarlett later and says they both did a good job delivering the baby. Scarlett is angry: Prissy did nothing to help, and now she's boasting. Scarlett thinks the Yankees can have all the enslaved persons. Scarlett leans back and asks some passing soldiers if they're evacuating. They tell her they're running from the Yankees. Scarlett is suddenly terrified. She'd forgotten about the Yankees.

Suddenly, Scarlett thinks of Rhett Butler. He insulted her, but he's in **Atlanta** and he has a carriage. Scarlett tells Prissy to look for him, but Prissy is scared to go downtown when the Yankees might be there. She doesn't want to look for Rhett in a barroom or warehouse. Scarlett threatens to sell her if she doesn't go. Prissy runs to find him.

## CHAPTER 23

Scarlett goes into the kitchen and eats. She should go check on Melanie, but she doesn't want to go into the room where she spent so many hellish hours. She waits on the porch, anxious for Rhett to come. The glow of fire appears on the horizon. It grows brighter and brighter until a huge tongue of flame bursts above the trees. The Yankees must be burning the town. Scarlett runs upstairs to her room as explosions sound outside. She is so scared she can't think and just wants to be home.

Scarlett hears Prissy's feet on the steps. Prissy yells that the explosions are Confederate soldiers burning the foundries before leaving town. Scarlett is thrilled; they still have time to get away. Prissy says she found Rhett in a barroom, but the army took his horse. He's looking for another horse and will come for them then. Scarlett is relieved. She tells Prissy to pack some clothes and wrap the baby in towels. Scarlett tries to pack some china and silver, but her hands shake so badly that she breaks two plates. She runs out to the porch to wait. Finally, Rhett pulls up in a small wagon. He has two pistols and looks both fierce and amused.

*Scarlett is physically exhausted, which is unusual for a well-off woman in this society—but Scarlett also doesn't see the point in pretending things are fine and continuing to cover her hot skin. Scarlett has never had to lift a finger before, and now she has used all her energy. She also works harder than Prissy, reversing the roles of enslaver and enslaved person. Usually, the enslaved persons do all the heavy lifting, but Scarlett has had to realize that she can't rely on anyone but herself. The hierarchical structure of society has been upended by the war.*



*Rhett Butler is the only person who can rescue Scarlett in this situation. He is only able to rescue her because he hasn't joined the war. Women have been abandoned by the men who joined the war, but men like Rhett are still their protectors.*



*While Atlanta is burning, Scarlett imagines that if she can just get to Tara, all her burdens will be lifted, and she will be safe and comfortable again. She hasn't considered that Tara, like Atlanta, has undoubtedly been changed by the war, that it might even have become a battle site and graveyard like so many other places in the South.*



*The fact that Prissy finds Rhett lounging in a barroom suggests that he isn't at all afraid of a Yankee invasion. Many times, Rhett has insinuated that the Yankees aren't bad people, and that he even does business with them. This suggests that Rhett is on good terms with the Yankees and has nothing to fear from them. Because Rhett has befriended Yankees, he has safeguarded himself in the Yankee invasion of Atlanta.*



Rhett jokes about Scarlett's upcoming trip. She tells him not to joke; she's scared and wants to go home to **Tara** immediately. Rhett calls her a fool. There are deserters and soldiers everywhere between here and Tara, and Tara could be swarming with Yankees. Scarlett beats on his chest, saying she'll kill him if he stops her from going home. She falls into his arms. He caresses her hair gently and says "there, there, darling." He kisses her hair and tells her she will get home. She wants to stay in his arms forever. He wipes her eyes with his handkerchief and suggests that Melanie stay with Mrs. Meade. When Scarlett refuses to leave her, Rhett suggests they put a feather bed in the wagon for Melanie.

Rhett asks Scarlett if she is afraid. Scarlett is upset that he is mocking her again. She tells Prissy to get Wade's feather bed, then she and Rhett go upstairs to Melanie's room. Scarlett explains what is happening to Melanie. Rhett picks Melanie up gently. As they start downstairs, Melanie gestures at her altar, telling Scarlett to take Charles's photo, pistol, and sword. Scarlett obeys. She looks at Charles's photo. He'd been her husband, but she can't even remember him. She looks at Melanie's baby. This is Ashley's baby, and she wishes it was hers too.

Outside, everyone gets into the rickety wagon. Melanie lies on the featherbed with Wade, Prissy, and the baby. The horse is thin and unwell, but Rhett says it was the best he could find. He lifts Scarlett onto the narrow bench and climbs up beside her. Scarlett realizes she hasn't locked the door. Rhett laughs that Scarlett thinks she can lock out the Yankees and drives into downtown. Melanie moans as the wagon bounces and as flames shoot into the sky. As they pass a dangerous street, Rhett whips the horse to go faster. Scarlett is terrified, but Rhett seems exhilarated.

Rhett starts to give Scarlett a pistol, but Scarlett says she already has Charles's. Rhett teases her for not ever having had a husband, but Scarlett tells him to hurry. As the wagon moves down Marietta Street, Rhett tells Scarlett to take a good look at the Confederate soldiers. He says she can tell her kids one day about seeing the Confederates retreat. Though Scarlett knows her life depends on Rhett, she hates him for mocking the soldiers. She shouts at him again when he stops to watch a soldier rescue one of his fellows. Finally, they reach the quiet side streets. Scarlett is thankful for Rhett's presence and his protection.

*When Rhett realizes how distressed Scarlett is and how much she wants to go home, his mocking attitude disappears, and he becomes sincerely kind and gentle. He comforts Scarlett and promises to help her, even though there is no simple way of getting her to Tara. Without really thinking about why she feels this way, Scarlett is very comforted by his embrace. But she also continues to see him as a tool to help her get what she wants, not as a potential love interest.*



*Even though she is barely conscious, Melanie is mindful of Charles's memory, and refuses to leave behind the mementos she has of him. This reinforces how selfless Melanie is; she cares deeply for others, even when she's suffering. Scarlett, on the other hand, feels nothing when she sees Charles's photo, but she covets Melanie's baby. Scarlett wants what she doesn't have: a baby with a man she loves.*



*At this point, no semblance of normal life exists. Scarlett wants to lock the door out of habit, but Rhett points out that this will do nothing; when one loses a war, there's no more private property. Rhett is excited to be saving them from the falling city. Although he isn't a hero of war, he doesn't shy away from heroism. In this moment, he seems to be discovering his heroic side.*



*Although he says it in a mocking tone, Rhett senses the sentimentality of the moment in history: the Confederates have just surrendered Atlanta after a long, hard fight. Rhett is also moved by the sight of a soldier helping one of his comrades in this tragic moment of retreat. He doesn't find this sight amusing, and instead considers it silently. This isn't moving for Scarlett, though; she's too focused on survival and getting out.*



Clutching Rhett's arm, Scarlett says she's glad he's not in the army. He responds with an angry look that makes Scarlett shrink away. As the wagon turns south and enters the deep woods, Rhett asks if Scarlett still wants to go to **Tara**. Scarlett says she does and mentions a horse trail they can take. Rhett says Scarlett can take it—alone. Scarlett is horrified, but Rhett says she's not helpless. And he's going to join the army. Scarlett is shocked and begins to cry, but Rhett calls her selfish. Rhett suggests he might be sentimental or ashamed as he drags Scarlett out of the wagon and into the trees.

Laughing, Rhett quotes a speech and says he couldn't love Scarlett if he didn't love honor more. He says he loves Scarlett, no matter what he said earlier—they're both alike in that they're selfish "rascals." Embracing her, Rhett asks if she's changed her mind about being his mistress. He kisses Scarlett's neck and chest like Charles never kissed her, making Scarlett feel hot and then cold. Scarlett comes back to herself when she hears Wade calling her. She slaps Rhett across the face and calls him a "nasty, low-down cad." He's no gentleman. Rhett just laughs and says he hopes Scarlett feels guilty when he's dead. He returns to the wagon to find that Melanie has fainted, so he gives Prissy a pistol and walks away. Scarlett hates him. Why is he walking into a lost Cause when he's safe and rich?

## CHAPTER 24

The sun wakes Scarlett the next morning. Wade is asleep on her lap, and Melanie, Prissy, and the baby are curled up in the back of the wagon. Scarlett thinks about the horrible night they had. They'd had to pull the wagon out of a ditch, avoid passing soldiers, and they got lost. When Scarlett finally found the right path, the horse refused to move. So Scarlett crawled in the back of the wagon to rest. She'd had to tell Melanie there wasn't any water.

Scarlett is amazed she slept so well when usually she can only sleep in featherbeds. She gasps when she sees that Melanie looks dead, but Melanie is breathing. Scarlett realizes they're stopped at the Mallorys' place. It's deserted, and the house is just a pile of burned rubble. Will Scarlett find **Tara** like this? They have to keep going, but first, they need food and water. Scarlett tries to smooth her dress and then remembers the horse. Jumping out of the wagon, she's relieved to find the horse still alive, breathing weakly. Scarlett wakes Prissy and they go to the Mallorys' well. When Scarlett asks if Melanie should nurse the baby, Prissy says that Melanie doesn't have milk. As Scarlett picks up fallen apples, she thinks of Rhett. She thought he'd take care of them—and she let him kiss her!

*Scarlett finds Rhett heroic and dependable because he isn't in the army, but Rhett is undergoing a change of feeling. In this moment, Rhett shocks Scarlett by turning out to be just like every other Southern man: filled with the same irrational, sentimental pride in the Cause, even though it is close to being lost. However, unlike other men, he continues to see Scarlett as capable and self-sufficient, which is why he insists she keep going without him.*



*Rhett says he loves Scarlett because they are alike—they are both "rascals." This is reminiscent of what Gerald once told Scarlett: that love only makes sense between two people who are alike. This sets Ashley and Rhett up against each other, since Scarlett insisted to Gerald that she loved Ashley because he was different from her and couldn't understand him. Scarlett also can't understand why Rhett is joining a lost Cause. He becomes a mystery to her. This raises the question again of who Scarlett's proper partner is, Ashley or Rhett.*



*Scarlett starts to realize that no one can help her but herself. While Rhett was with her, she'd had a man taking care of her, which is what she's used to. But now that he has abandoned her to join the war, she has to rescue her companions herself. She starts to take on dangerous and dirty tasks that women normally wouldn't.*



*As the sun rises and Scarlett looks around her, she realizes that her familiar landscape has been transfigured. For weeks now, she's wanted to get home to Tara, imagining it to be a safe haven from the tragedies of the war where nothing has changed. However, she now sees her first burned plantation. It starts to occur to her that she might not find Tara the way she left it. She decides not to think of it, and to focus on moving on. This starts her intense forward-thinking mindset, which is her way of coping with tragedy and loss.*



Back at the wagon, Scarlett hands out the apples. She harnesses the weak horse and gets him moving with a tree branch. If she were alone, she could run the 15 miles home in an instant. She puts her bonnet over Melanie's bare face. Scarlett has never been in the sun without a bonnet. She'll get freckly! She's never experienced any hardship, and suddenly she's in this horrible wagon in a deserted land. It's like the war is a storm that's swept away her whole life. Is **Tara** also "gone with the wind?" She whips the horse to make him go faster. They pass burned houses and dead men, and Scarlett feels like the woods are haunted. She wishes she was home, resting in Ellen's arms. The four people in the wagon depend on her, but Scarlett doesn't feel strong enough to take care of them.

By twilight, **Tara** is a mile away. Scarlett recognizes the hedges that surround the neighbors' property. She can see the two tall chimneys standing above the ruined house. Scarlett shouts a hello, but Prissy shushes her. Scarlett urges the horse forward quietly. They pass more burned plantations. Tara could be burned, and everyone gone. Why did she even come here? It would've been better to die in **Atlanta**. But she promised Ashley she's take care of Melanie. Where is Ashley now? Is he dead?

Suddenly, there is a sound in the underbrush. Scarlett jumps, but it's only a cow. Prissy shrieks that it's a ghost, and Scarlett turns and whips her with the tree branch, unable to tolerate Prissy's weakness. The cow's udder is full of milk. Scarlett decides to bring the cow so they can have milk for Melanie's baby. She tears up her petticoat—the last pretty thing she owns—and tells Prissy to tie the cow to the wagon. When Prissy says she's afraid, Scarlett calls her a "fool nigger." Ellen wouldn't like Scarlett saying something like that.

As Scarlett stumbles to the wagon after tying up the cow, Melanie asks if they're home, her voice a croak. The word home brings tears to Scarlett's eyes. Scarlett says they're not home, but soon they'll have milk for the baby. Scarlett climbs back into the wagon and whips the horse. She feels guilty for beating the poor, tired animal. The cow slows them down, but Scarlett feels the cow is all she has in the world.

*The war is not simply an event in Scarlett's life but a completely life-changing experience. The war is the wind after which the book is named that has taken away everything of the South. Nothing looks the same now, not even Scarlett. She is used to being pampered and pretty, but now she is neither. Not only has hardship befallen her, but necessity and responsibility for others has changed her character. She puts her bonnet over Melanie's face in a moment of unusual selflessness. She wants someone to protect her but is suddenly maturing enough to realize she has to be the protector.*



*Every plantation that they pass has been burned to the ground, making it seem more and more unlikely that Tara is still standing. Scarlett had longed for Tara for weeks, but now she wishes she hadn't come to this deathly landscape. Not only is she separated from all her loved ones—who might be dead—but she likely has no home left.*



*Scarlett lashes out at Prissy because Prissy is voicing Scarlett's own fears. She insults Prissy, unable to keep up the pretenses of being kind to an enslaved girl. Scarlett's petticoat represents the last pretty and ladylike thing that she possesses. Necessity has driven her to further abandon Ellen's teachings; her appearance is indecent, and she curses at an enslaved person.*



*The cow is the first food source and material possession that Scarlett takes for herself. Finding herself with nothing, she starts to think drastically and creatively of ways to obtain necessities. Her selfishness starts to pay off in this context: it doesn't matter to her if the cow belongs to someone else. It'll ensure her survival.*



Scarlett's eyes fill with tears when they reach the edge of **Tara**. Then she realizes the horse won't make it up the hill. She gets out, takes the horse's bridle, and tells Prissy to get out and walk with Wade. Prissy and Wade complain, and Scarlett scolds them. Scarlett wonders why God invented children; Wade is nothing but a burden and a reminder of her stupid marriage with Charles. Prissy wonders if anyone is at Tara. Scarlett fears the same thing but hushes her. She thinks of a line from the song she sang with Rhett at Pitty's party, "just a few more steps for to tote the weary load."

Scarlett looks for **Tara's** lights, but everything is dark. Her heart sinks. But as they get closer, the white brick house slowly appears. Why did the war, which destroyed everything, leave Tara? A figure appears on the veranda, but the person is still. Is something wrong? In a whisper, Scarlett calls for her father. Gerald walks toward her as if sleepwalking. He is an old man; his shoulders sag, and the vitality is gone from his eyes. Scarlett is scared. The baby cries and Gerald looks into the wagon. Scarlett knows she needs to get Melanie inside.

Pork runs from the house, calling for Scarlett. Scarlett clutches his arms and Prissy bursts into tears. Getting down to business, Scarlett directs Pork to carry Melanie into one of the rooms, and Prissy to get Wade a drink of water. With bleeding fingers, Scarlett holds Gerald's hand and asks if Carreen, Suellen, and Ellen are well. Gerald says the girls are recovering, but Ellen died yesterday. He clings to Scarlett as they enter **Tara**. Scarlett is drawn by instinct to the office where Ellen always sat. Ellen can't be dead. Strangely, Scarlett feels nothing. She asks Pork for light, but he says "they" took all the candles. They enter Ellen's office, and Pork comes in with a makeshift candle made of a rag and bacon fat. Ellen's office is exactly the same, except that Ellen isn't there.

Pork attends to Scarlett like a "dutiful dog." She asks him who else is here. He says only Mammy and Dilcey are here; all the "trashy niggers" left with the Yankees. Scarlett asks if there's anything to eat. Pork says the Yankees took everything, from the chickens to the wine. When Scarlett asks if they took the sweet potato hills, or the whiskey barrel in the scuppernong arbor, Pork praises Scarlett for remembering. Scarlett thinks "negroes" are all unintelligent—to think the Yankees want to free them!

*Scarlett thinks of the song she sang with Rhett about putting down the weary load, suggesting that she still believes she'll be able to lay down her burdens when she reaches Tara. She starts to view everyone who isn't as strong as she is as a burden. She doesn't sympathize with Wade's youth and the trauma he must have experienced in the last few hours but views him simply as stupid and burdensome.*



*It seems like a miracle that Tara is standing. However, everything seems wrong. There is the sense that years and years have passed when Gerald walks out the front door as an old man who barely recognizes his daughter. This is another way that the war sweeps away Scarlett's old life: it has aged the people who she used to look to for comfort, support, and wisdom.*



*For weeks, all Scarlett has wanted is to fall into Ellen's protective arms so she can lay down her burdens. Ellen's death represents Scarlett's first real loss. However, she realizes that there are people who need her—like her father, Melanie, and Wade—and so she pushes aside her grief and gets down to business. Focusing on what she must do to survive is a way for Scarlett to ignore her pain.*



*Pork calls the enslaved persons who left with the Yankees "trashy," suggesting that he believes it is a sign of ill-breeding in a Black person to want to leave their enslavers and be free. In this light, Pork, Mammy, and Dilcey think of themselves as well-bred because they chose to stay with the O'Haras even though, technically, they are no longer enslaved (Union armies freed enslaved people as they took control of the South).*



Scarlett tells Pork to bring two glasses of the whiskey with sugar and mint, but Pork shares that the Yankees smashed the glasses and took the sugar. Scarlett is ready to scream, but she mentions that the cow needs to be milked. Though it's improper to speak of pregnancy, she says Melanie doesn't have milk for the baby. Pork shares that Dilcey just had a baby boy and has milk to spare. Again, Scarlett muses that unintelligent people keep having babies. Pork leaves the room.

Scarlett asks Gerald why the Yankees didn't burn **Tara**, unwilling to talk about Ellen. He responds the Yankees used the house for headquarters. Scarlett is appalled that the Yankees were in Ellen's house. When the Yankees came after burning Twelve Oaks, Gerald says, he stood on the porch and said there were three sick women inside—they'd have to burn the house over them. The officer was a Yankee gentleman, and he brought a surgeon who tended to Carreen, Suellen, and Ellen. The soldiers camped around the house, tore up the yard, and stole everything. Scarlett asks if Ellen knew the Yankees were in the house. She's relieved when Gerald says she didn't.

Gerald had stayed upstairs while they were there, talking only to the nice surgeon. The surgeon said Suellen and Carreen would recover but Ellen wouldn't. Then, the Yankees all left. Gerald says he's glad Scarlett's home. Pork enters carrying two gourds filled with whiskey. Pork and Gerald disapprove of her drinking whiskey, but Scarlett snaps that she's no lady and drinks deeply. Gerald says she'll get tipsy. She laughs and says she hopes she'll get drunk. In a motherly tone, Scarlett says she'll put Gerald to bed. Pork takes the gourd and Scarlett escorts Gerald to bed.

After Scarlett puts Gerald to bed, she goes to the sick room. It smells bad because of the bacon fat candle. She opens a window, not caring if it's doctor's orders to keep fresh air out of the sick room. Suellen and Carreen, thin and white, toss restlessly in a large bed. There is a narrow bed in the corner where Ellen had lain. Scarlett sits by the girls. Her vision becomes blurry from the whiskey. She wants to sleep and be woken tomorrow by someone older and wiser than her, like Ellen.

*In these times, Scarlett realizes that there's no use for manners or discretion—they are only a waste of time. It is more efficient and productive to speak openly about Melanie's pregnancy because Pork will then understand Melanie's needs. Ever since Prissy turned out to be uneducated about childbirth, Scarlett has openly admitted that she thinks Black people are unintelligent—they don't know the things she thinks they should.*



*The story of how Tara was saved reveals that not all Yankees are monstrous people. The Yankee officer who came to Tara was a "gentleman," who took pity on the O'Haras and the three women sick with typhoid fever. This comes as a shock to Scarlett who views all Yankees as unforgivable people. She is aghast that Yankees set foot in Ellen's precious house, suggesting that she considers the mere presence of a Yankee horrible.*



*Pork and Gerald see Scarlett's desire to get drunk as unladylike. However, Scarlett is now in the position of the man of the house. She orders Pork around and coddles Gerald, who relies on her instructions like a child. Scarlett is discovering that, even as a woman, she can and should take control of Tara.*



*Scarlett can't process the fact that Ellen is gone. She can still sense her presence everywhere she goes. She imagined that when she got to Tara, she would be like a child again, and that she'd have a mother to protect and comfort her. However, there is no one stronger and wiser than her at Tara; everyone is either a child, or sick.*





Dilcey enters, holding Melanie's baby and the whiskey gourd. Her dress is open, and the baby clings to her large breast with his mouth. Scarlett thanks Dilcey for staying, but Dilcey says she won't leave after the O'Haras were so good to her. Then, Dilcey assures Scarlett that Melanie and the baby will both live. When the women hear a clunk outside, Dilcey explains that it's just Mammy getting water. Scarlett knows what the well sounds like, but her nerves are so tense that it scared her anyway.

The hall shakes as Mammy comes up the stairs. Mammy enters and smiles when she sees Scarlett. Scarlett runs to her, burying her head in the big, sagging body. Mammy makes Scarlett feel stable and remember the old days. Mammy says life is just "weery loads" without Ellen. Scarlett remembers another line of the song she'd sung with Rhett: "No matter, 'twill never be light." Does coming home to **Tara** only mean more burdens? Mammy despairs over Scarlett's blisters and sunburn. Scarlett smiles, thinking that any moment Mammy will threaten that she'd never catch a husband!

Scarlett asks Mammy about Ellen. Tears fall from Mammy's eyes as she starts to sponge down Carreen and Suellen. Mammy says it was those "low-down po'-w'ite" Slatterys." Emmie Slattery came down with typhoid and Ellen insisted on nursing her. When the war started, provisions were low, and Ellen got weak from working too hard. Then Carreen got typhoid, and Ellen nursed her too. Mammy explains that Ellen died quickly. When Scarlett asks if Ellen mentioned her on her deathbed, Mammy says Ellen didn't mention anyone—but Dilcey says that on the night the cotton burned, Ellen called for Philippe. Scarlett has no idea who Philippe is.

Scarlett has made it to **Tara**, but not to Ellen's arms. Scarlett's not a protected child anymore; she's just Scarlett O'Hara Hamilton, a widow with a child. No one can take her burdens: Gerald is old, and Carreen, Suellen, and Melanie are weak. She looks out the window at the desolate land. She could leave and live with family. Scarlett looks at her sisters and realizes they are her family. They're weak and she doesn't love them, but Scarlett couldn't send them to distant family. She drinks the rest of the whiskey.

*Scarlett thanks Dilcey for staying with the O'Haras because, after the invasion of Tara, Dilcey's place with the family is no longer a given. Dilcey has a legal right to leave and seek her freedom in the North. And while Dilcey insists she's staying because the O'Hara's were particularly kind to their enslaved persons, this also suggests that slavery is so normalized in the South that she can't conceive of freedom.*



*To Scarlett, Mammy represents the institution of slavery which has benefited the South's economy and lifestyle for generations. Mammy reminds Scarlett of the old days because she chooses to stay with the O'Haras instead of accepting freedom. Mammy's choice to stick with the O'Haras, though, means that practically speaking, her enslavement will persist.*



*According to Mammy, Ellen got sick from her selflessness. She threw herself into the war effort and into helping the Slatterys. This is normal for Ellen—she always thought of others before she thought of herself. However, the fact that she calls Philippe's name at the end of her life mystifies everyone, suggesting few people if anyone knew about her love for Philippe. Essentially, Ellen subsumed her own wants and eventually, sacrificed her health to keep others comfortable.*



*Scarlett faces a turning point in her life; having realized that she is no longer a child and that no one can protect her, she has to decide whether she can carry the burden of Tara herself. The narration implies that many single women in Scarlett's situation would have left Tara to stay with family, but Scarlett is determined to hold on to Tara and provide for her family—a traditionally masculine role.*



Scarlett finds herself alone in her moonlit room. Mammy and Dilcey undress her and bathe her feet. She is drunk and tired. She knows she left girlhood behind on the road to **Tara**; she's a woman now. Scarlett realizes she belongs to Tara and vows to keep the plantation and take care of her family. She'll search the burned plantations for food and pawn Ellen's jewelry. She thinks of Gerald and his ancestors. They all suffered misfortune and rose above it. These ancestors seem to be in the room with her. Tara is Scarlett's fate and her challenge to conquer. She thanks her ancestors for their encouragement and falls asleep.

*Scarlett gets drunk, wanting to drown out her grief and desperation. Instead of wallowing in how much she has lost, she thinks only of how determined she is to save Tara. The choice to pawn Ellen's jewelry suggests that Scarlett has realized that there's no use holding sentimentally onto Ellen's memory—or the past. Instead of thinking what Ellen would do in this situation, she thinks of what Gerald and his ancestors would do. Ellen's ladylike virtues don't help her in this situation.*



## CHAPTER 25

The next morning, Scarlett is achy and sunburned. At breakfast, Gerald tells everyone to wait until Mrs. O'Hara comes. Scarlett wonders if he lost his mind. She can't think about it though; there's too much to do. She leaves breakfast and finds Pork shelling peanuts on the porch. He tells her the horse died and that the cow was about to have a calf. She tells Pork to take Prissy to hunt down the one hog that's left. Pork says that's field hand work, and he's a "house nigger." Scarlett tells him to catch the sow or get out. Tears come to Pork's eyes. Ellen wouldn't have said that.

*Even though Scarlett has gotten to Tara, her problems are far from over. She realizes that in order to survive, everyone is going to have to pull their weight. The way things were before the war started—with certain tasks designated to certain enslaved persons—is only a structure that works when times are prosperous. During hardship, everyone must work as hard as they can. This is painful for Pork, who seems to take pride in believing that he's better than an enslaved field hand.*



Scarlett says anyone at **Tara** who won't work can join the Yankees. She asks Pork about the corn and cotton. He says the Yankees spoiled everything, except a few acres of cotton, three bales' worth. Three bales is no more than the Slatterys raised! Scarlett asks if anyone found food at the other plantations. Pork explains that no one has left Tara. Scarlett decides to go to Twelve Oaks and send Dilcey to the McIntoshes, ignoring Pork's warning that it's too dangerous with the Yankees around.

*Scarlett is aghast to find that they only have as much cotton as the Slatterys. In times past, everyone in the County looked down on the Slatterys for growing hardly any cotton and for accepting charity. Now, the war has left the wealthy plantations as poor and needy as the Slatterys: even Scarlett is now planning to look for food from the neighbors. The war has dissolved divisions between the rich and poor.*



Scarlett grabs Mammy's bonnet and thinks of the pretty green bonnet Rhett gave her. The road to Twelve Oaks is strewn with litter from soldiers. Scarlett wonders why she's tripping on pebbles when her feet are meant for dancing. She's been pampered her whole life, and now she's hungry and hunting food like an animal. Scarlett passes the cemetery where Ellen is buried and then the ruins of the Slatterys' house, where that "nasty Emmie" who killed Ellen lived.

*Before the war, Scarlett loved beautiful clothes. Even during the war, all she cared about was getting out of her black mourning clothes. Now, it's degrading for her to be wearing a faded bonnet and tearing her slippers on rocks. She is experiencing real poverty and hunger for the first time, and nothing else matters. Her anger covers up the difficult fact that the war has changed everything.*



At the bottom of the hill, Scarlett takes off her slippers and bathes her feet in the river. Then she trudges across the river towards Twelve Oaks. Within the circle of twelve oaks are the ruins of John Wilkes's house. Scarlett sits down on a fallen pillar. She once hoped to be the mistress of this house. She watched Ashley marry Melanie here, and Charles proposed here. Scarlett hopes Ashley is dead so he'll never see this awful sight. Ashley's children will never know Twelve Oaks. Putting these thoughts aside, Scarlett checks the garden and then the small gardens by the enslaved persons' houses. She finds cabbages, turnips, beans, and peas, enough for a proper meal tonight. Starving, she takes a bite of a bitter radish. She lies down in the grass and throws it up.

Scarlett has never had to do so much as pick up her own stockings and now, she's too weak to move. Nobody knows or cares. She thinks of Gerald, Ellen, Ashley, and the old houses. The past is gone, and a harsh future lies ahead. Scarlett stands up, her head held high. She decides the past is past; she must go forward. Scarlett heads back to **Tara** with a basket of vegetables, vowing to never go hungry again. The next few days are quiet at Tara. Tara feels like a desolate island separate from the war and the rest of the world.

Scarlett focuses on getting food. Everyone at **Tara** complains of hunger except Melanie, who tells Scarlett to give her portion to Dilcey. Her selflessness irritates Scarlett. Wade acts very strange, but Scarlett doesn't realize he's constantly terrified. His life has vanished, and he thinks the Yankees are after him. Whenever Scarlett yells at him, he remembers the time she spanked him when **Atlanta** was burning. Wade now avoids Scarlett and spends all his time with Melanie. Scarlett is troubled by Wade's behavior but doesn't have the energy to coddle him. She's jealous when Melanie is kind to him. Once, she finds Wade jumping on Melanie and slaps him. Wade bawls and Melanie tries to comfort him, but Scarlett is firm. Mammy looks on disapprovingly.

Scarlett is in charge at **Tara**. She's afraid, and so she didn't allow anyone to show fear or weakness. She's often mean, but she feels that if she's too nice, no one will pull their weight. With Ellen dead and the enslaved persons gone, Scarlett insists that everyone work. Suellen and Carreen argue that they can't do manual labor because it's against how they were raised, and Ellen would never make them. They think Scarlett is mean—and Scarlett does enjoy bullying everyone. It helps her forget how bitter she is that everything Ellen taught her is useless. Instead of teaching her to be kind, Ellen should've taught her to pick cotton and plow a field like an enslaved person. It helps that Ellen had not foreseen the collapse of the civilization she'd raised her children to be a part of.

*The burn site of Twelve Oaks represents everything that is gone. Scarlett's dreams for her life were centered at Twelve Oaks, and several of her most defining moments occurred here. Now that it is gone, Scarlett must fully confront the fact that nothing of her past exists anymore. Now that the war has swept through and changed the world, life will never proceed in the same way that it had, and Scarlett won't be the same person. Scarlett realizes that life is different now—it will require new rules, new strategies, and new dreams. This is a bitter, difficult thought—it's as difficult to accept as the bitter radish is to eat.*



*When Scarlett rises from the garden, she decides once and for all that she will never look back. This decision becomes a coping mechanism for her. Further, it represents Scarlett's tenacity and her will to survive—she believes the only way to survive is to look forward and take action rather than dwell on the past.*



*Scarlett becomes so focused on the practical task of getting food that she ignores everyone's emotional problems, particularly Wade's. She can't sympathize with him. And yet, Scarlett seems to wish that she felt close to him and is jealous of how close he is with Melanie, suggesting that she wants to feel the love between mother and child but that she simply can't achieve it. Similarly, she wants to be just like Ellen—a great lady—but has never accomplished it.*



*Now that the war has changed everything, no one has the same role that they had in the old society. Before the war, women in Scarlett's wealthy class never had to work for anything they needed; the men managed all business affairs, and the enslaved persons did all the manual labor. Now that they are poor, however, these roles no longer make sense; everyone must work if they want to survive. As Scarlett realizes that what Ellen taught her was useless, and questions whether Ellen was the role model Scarlett always thought she was. Her sisters, though, cling to the past and refuse to work.*



Scarlett's feelings for **Tara** don't change. Even after a hard day of work, she returns to Tara with joy. She loves the red earth and the sprawling trees. Unlike Rhett, she thinks wars are fought for land, not money. Land is the only thing worth fighting for. Now that Ellen is dead, Ashley is gone, and Gerald has lost his mind, Tara is all that matters to her. Gerald had said this once, but she'd been too young to understand. Now, she'll do anything to hold on to Tara.

*The only thing that hasn't been changed by the war is Tara itself—or at least, the shape of the property. Scarlett used to focus more on love, but now, she only cares about saving Tara. She is empowered by her determination to hold on to her land—a traditionally masculine focus. Her coming of age is linked to her taking on this more masculine role.*



## CHAPTER 26

Two weeks later, a huge blister swells on Scarlett's foot. She worries about who will look after **Tara** if she gets gangrene and dies. She'd hoped Gerald would return to normal after a week or so, but he still doesn't remember that Ellen is dead. Ellen had been Gerald's whole reason for living.

*Although Gerald was the master of Tara, his helplessness after Ellen's death reveals how much the plantation's success relied on Ellen. This suggests that despite Ellen's focus on turning Scarlett into a proper, ineffective lady, she was herself a major force—the exact opposite of what she wanted Scarlett to be.*



The house is quiet that day. Everyone except Scarlett, Wade, and the three sick women are out looking for the hog. Scarlett can't bear the silence because it reminds her of the dead people she passed on the road to **Tara**. She sits looking out the window, her skirt pulled above her knees. She soaks her swollen foot in a bucket. If it wasn't for her foot, she could go hunt the hog herself. The others are so lazy. But once they eat the sow, then what will they eat? They have no money, and the horse is dead. Scarlett decides that when her foot is healed, she'll walk to Jonesboro and find a neighbor who can help.

*Ever since arriving at Tara to find her old life gone, Scarlett has kept herself busy with constant plans for acquiring food and securing the future. She doesn't like silence because it forces her to think about death and all the horrors she has seen. They have so little to eat that she thinks always of the next day, never feeling secure in the present. This keeps her mind racing forward, never settling on any deeper sorrows. She also continues to look down on other people she perceives as weak, which means she never has to empathize with them.*



Scarlett tries not to cry; crying is only useful if there's a man around to take pity on her. Suddenly, she hears hooves. She looks up and sees a Yankee cavalryman dismount, a long pistol on his hip. The awful things Yankees are rumored to do to women and children race through Scarlett's mind. The Yankee enters the house and goes towards the kitchen. Scarlett thinks of their precious food and decides she can't let him steal it. She gets Charles's pistol and slips off her shoes. She tiptoes into the hall and down the stairs, hiding the pistol in her skirt. The Yankee asks who's there in a shout, but he puts his pistol away when he sees Scarlett is female. Scarlett shoots him in the face, killing him. She can't believe she murdered someone—but she's glad she did. It feels like revenge.

*Scarlett's fear for her own safety in the hands of a Yankee battles against her fear of hunger and the Yankee stealing Tara's food. She ultimately decides that hunger is the only thing to fear and decides to confront the Yankee herself. In one way, her sex makes her more vulnerable—the Yankee considers her weak and easy to take advantage of. However, this becomes her advantage: the Yankee doesn't consider Scarlett a threat, and this gives her the opportunity to kill him. Scarlett is realizing how to use her sex to gain power.*



Scarlett hears dragging footsteps and a clanking upstairs. She looks up to see Melanie in a tattered nightgown, dragging Charles's sword to the landing with pride in her eyes. Scarlett realizes that Melanie is just like her—and suddenly, Scarlett doesn't hate Melanie. She admires her for being willing to kill the Yankee too. Underneath Melanie's gentleness, Scarlett sees courage. Carreen, Suellen, and Wade call out, scared. Melanie sticks her head in their room and tells them Scarlett was cleaning Charles's pistol and it went off. Scarlett is thankful Melanie is such a good liar.

Melanie drags herself downstairs. Scarlett tells her to go back to bed, but Melanie says they must hide the body. If the enslaved persons find out, they might turn on Scarlett and run away. Scarlett decides to drag the body outside and bury it where they dug up the whiskey. Melanie offers to help but Scarlett tells her to go back to bed. Melanie kisses Scarlett's cheek and says she'll clean up the blood. Melanie asks if it would be dishonest to search the Yankee's backpack, and Scarlett says no, feeling jealous and in awe of Melanie.

Scarlett finds a wallet full of money in the Yankee's pocket. She imagines all that she'll buy with the money. Melanie finds a huge pile of gold trinkets in the backpack. Scarlett grabs the Yankee's boots and starts to drag the heavy body. She asks Melanie for her nightgown to wrap round his head so he doesn't bleed in the yard. Melanie blushes, but Scarlett promises not to look. Melanie undresses, hiding her body with her arms.

Limping, Scarlett drags the body down the porch. Melanie sits hugging her knees to her breasts. It irritates Scarlett that Melanie is thinking of modesty in a time like this. Then she feels ashamed. Melanie is weak, but she was so brave. She had, like all the Wilkeses, that "intangible, unspectacular courage" that Scarlett doesn't understand and can only admire. Scarlett shouts at Melanie to go back to bed. Melanie says she'll clean up the blood, so Scarlett shouts that she won't care if Melanie kills herself.

Scarlett collapses the arbor on top of where she buries the body. Afterwards, everyone assumes the Yankee's horse is a stray. Surprisingly, Scarlett doesn't feel haunted by the man's ghost. She grins, wondering what everyone would think of her if they knew what she'd done. Scarlett feels strong—she's developing a shell of hardness.

*In a turning point in her feelings towards Melanie, Scarlett realizes that Melanie—although sweet and obedient—has the same fierce pride and courage she has. Her admiration for Melanie is momentarily stronger than her jealousy of her; it is enough to make Scarlett feel camaraderie with Melanie rather than division. This suggests that Scarlett admires women who are brave, and also that she might be able to love Melanie independently of her promise to Ashley.*



*Scarlett's admiration for Melanie's bravery increases so that she actually feels jealous of Melanie. Not only was Melanie willing to kill the Yankee, but she's willing to steal and lie in order to protect Scarlett and help everyone at Tara survive. Scarlett wonders if Melanie is even more tenacious than she is.*



*Scarlett and Melanie have gained power in this moment. They ruthlessly kill a man who threatened them, take his money, and conceal the evidence. Again, their femininity is helpful in this situation, rather than something that makes them weak: it makes it less likely that anyone will suspect them of murdering a Yankee.*



*Melanie's courage is subtle, and that is why Scarlett hasn't noticed it before. On the outside, Melanie is frail and timid, but she has a strong sense of pride and loyalty to those she loves. For a while, Scarlett only tolerated Melanie because she'd promised Ashley she would take care of her; now, Scarlett is actually concerned with Melanie's health.*



*Far from feeling bad about killing the Yankee, Scarlett uses the act as a reminder that she can do anything. She knows now that she will never let others take from her what is hers, and that she is capable of defending herself and providing for herself no matter the threats she faces.*



When her foot heals, Scarlett takes the horse to see if the Fontaines are still in the County. She plans to ask Dr. Fontaine about Melanie, who still isn't better after her baby's birth. The sight of the Fontaines' yellow house makes Scarlett happy. Grandma Fontaine, Young Miss, and Sally step out to greet her. The Yankees hadn't reached them because their house is far off the road. They still have food, but all their enslaved persons ran away. Dr. Fontaine and Joe are dead, and old Dr. Fontaine, Tony, and Alex are still in the army.

Inside, Scarlett asks the Fontaine women for news from **Atlanta**. All they know is that Sherman captured it. They haven't seen a newspaper in weeks, but rumor is the Yankees are resting their men in Atlanta. The Fontaines apologize for not visiting **Tara** sooner, but they'd assumed it burned since they'd seen fire. Scarlett explains that their cotton burned; all they have now is a few acres, and nobody to pick it. Grandma Fontaine suggests Scarlett pick it. Scarlett says that would make her a "white trash" field hand. Grandma says she's ashamed that Ellen taught Scarlett that manual labor makes a person "white trash."

Changing the subject from Ellen, Scarlett asks about the Calverts and the Tarletons. She learns that the Yankees didn't raid the Tarletons', but they did raid the Calverts' and convinced all their enslaved persons to run off with them by promising them silk clothes. The Yankees and the enslaved persons also had sex, resulting in "yellow babies." The Calverts' house was saved because Mrs. Calvert has a Yankee accent. Grandma Fontaine says Cathleen Calvert has no pride and was embarrassed, just like a Yankee.

The Fontaines ask Scarlett why **Tara** wasn't burned. Scarlett knows they'll ask about Ellen soon, and she doesn't want to talk about her since she knows she'll cry. Scarlett tells the story of the Yankees making Tara their headquarters. The women say it's the first time they've heard of a Yankee doing a good thing. Scarlett asks them if they could spare some food. They say they'll give her half. Scarlett insists that's too much, but they say that's what are neighbors for.

As Scarlett leaves, Grandma Fontaine steps out with her and asks what's wrong at **Tara**. Scarlett decides she can tell the truth without crying. She explains that Ellen died of typhoid, that Gerald has lost his mind, and that Melanie is sick and needs a doctor. Grandma Fontaine presses her further, and Scarlett tells the story of her escape from **Atlanta**, and how she'd thought if she could just get home, she could rest. But Ellen is dead, and there's so much work to do.

*There are only women home at the Fontaines. With the men away at war, women are left to manage the home and defend their families. This necessitates a role reversal. Before the war, men would manage the plantations and protect the women. Now, with the men protecting the South on the larger scale, women have to protect themselves.*



*Scarlett still holds on to the pre-war notion that only certain classes of people do certain kinds of work. At Tara before the war, the enslaved persons picked the cotton. Only white people who were poor, like the Slatterys, picked their own cotton. Even though the O'Haras are now on the Slatterys' level—having three acres of cotton—Scarlett still maintains that picking her own cotton reduces her to the class of "white trash."*



*The Fontaines disdain the Calverts for escaping the Yankees' wrath with Mrs. Calvert's Yankee accent. Although this affiliation with the Yankees helped the Calverts survive, the Fontaines think that it meant a much greater loss: the loss of pride and of Southern identity.*



*Scarlett is still avoiding the subject of Ellen's death, both with others and in her own private thoughts. In order not to succumb to grief, she has pushed thoughts that are too sad out of her mind. This allows her to focus on the task of survival. This coping mechanism is slowly making her more and more incapable of emotion.*



*Scarlett empties her bottled up feelings to Grandma Fontaine. Ever since she got back to Tara, she's been the head of the household, taking care of everyone. With no one alive who's stronger and wiser than her, she has no one to tell her hardships to. It's a relief to be able to share her emotions with someone, suggesting that Scarlett doesn't entirely want to bottle up her emotions: she's doing it out of perceived necessity.*



Grandma Fontaine says after a woman has faced the worst, she doesn't fear anything anymore. When she was a child, the Indians invaded her home, killing her family in front of her. She warns Scarlett to keep something to fear and something to love, because a woman who doesn't feel fear or love is unnatural. Scarlett becomes impatient; old people always talk about irrelevant things. Grandma Fontaine tells her she'll never have no burdens.

After Scarlett's visit to the Fontaines, **Tara** had fried eggs and ham for breakfast. They catch the sow which means pork for winter, and Pork plans to go to Jonesboro on the horse and buy clothes. The cotton flourishes in the warm weather, growing to be four bales' worth. The Fontaines' kindness helps Scarlett feel better. She vows to repay them in the spring.

Scarlett doesn't intend to pick any cotton herself, as it would put her on the same level as the Slattery's. However, no one else wants to pick it. Mammy and Pork declare they aren't "yard niggers." Scarlett sends them to pick anyway, but they are so slow that she has them do other tasks. Next, she has Suellen, Carreen, and Melanie pick. Melanie faints and Suellen refuses, saying Ellen would never make her pick cotton. Carreen picks Suellen's share, but she's frail and picks slowly. She's sad because Brent died, but Scarlett doesn't know this.

So, Dilcey, Prissy and Scarlett pick the cotton. Dilcey works hard and whips Prissy when she is lazy. Scarlett tells Dilcey she won't forget how helpful she is. Dilcey says it's the Indian in her, but that Prissy is flighty because she's all "nigger" like her Pa. Scarlett feels more cheerful as they pick the cotton. She's sure **Tara** and the South will get rich again. With the money from the cotton, she'll buy back her enslaved field hands, or she'll hire them. And maybe next spring the war will be over. Then they can prosper.

## CHAPTER 27

On a day in mid-November, everyone is grouped around the table finishing supper. Pork suggests they kill the sow that day. Suddenly, Melanie hears someone coming and everyone rushes to the door. Sally Fontaine gallops up on a horse and shouts that the Yankees are coming. Gerald says the Yankees have already been here. Scarlett, though, knows she has to hide their food, their sow, and their horse. She instructs the enslaved persons to run the pigs into the swamp and drop the silver in the well. When Melanie asks what she can do to help, Scarlett tells her to drive the cow and calf into the swamp. Melanie screams for her baby as she rides away, but Scarlett promises to not let anything happen to Ashley's baby.

*Grandma Fontaine's advice is essentially that a person needs to hold onto what makes them human: their emotions. Scarlett has been so focused on survival, pushing all her emotions aside and always looking ahead, she does seem to be developing the "unnatural" hardness that Grandma Fontaine is talking about.*



*Scarlett's spirits rise over the simple pleasure of growing her own food and forging a small community with her neighbors. She feels now that not only can Tara survive, but that they might be able to slowly pull themselves up into a state of prosperity.*



*Scarlett tries to hold on to the archaic notions of class that dictate who does what on a plantation by insisting that she, as the mistress of the plantation, not do it herself. Mammy and Pork are even more insistent than she is that they are too high class to pick cotton, even as enslaved persons—being above the field hand class is how they feel good about themselves.*



*Dilcey thinks Black people are too ill-bred to work hard outside of the enforced system of slavery. She believes black people will only work hard when they're forced to, in other words. Since she is part Indian, she believes she understands the meaning of hard work and survival. In this way, Dilcey asserts the inferiority of Black people and the need for the institution of slavery to discipline them.*



*The first thing Scarlett thinks about when she hears that the Yankees are coming is their hard-earned food. Through acquiring livestock, she has been able to secure the plantation's future more and more: the horse gives them the mobility to go to town and seek help from the neighbors, and the sow assures them of a large source of food. Therefore, even more than her beloved house, Scarlett feels the need to safeguard their food, especially since winter is coming.*



Scarlett runs into the house, Wade sobbing at her heels. She goes to her bureau and grabs the Yankee man's wallet. Where should she hide it? If she hides it in her bodice, the Yankees will strip her naked to get it. She wishes Melanie was with her. She picks up the baby from his cradle. Out the window she sees her sisters running to the woods with baskets of food, and Pork running with Gerald and two pigs under his arms. Dilcey complains that the sow bit Prissy and has trapped her under the house. Scarlett gathers up the trinkets from the Yankee man's backpack.

Scarlett decides to hide the wallet in the baby's diaper. She runs downstairs, wondering if she's alone. Then she sees Wade cowering by the stairs. He runs to her and grabs her dress. She tells him she can't carry him. She looks around the house and whispers goodbye. The Yankees will burn it all. Then she stops. She can't leave **Tara**. She stays in the hall, feeling brave. She hears marching hooves and clanking sabers, and the command "dismount!" She whispers gently to Wade to run towards the swamp, but Wade looks at her like a baby rabbit. He clings to her and they walk down the steps to meet the Yankees.

By now Sherman is burning and looting all of Georgia, but, for Scarlett, when the Yankees enter **Tara**, it's a personal rather than national insult. She clutches Wade and the baby while the Yankees slash feather beds looking for treasures. The tobacco-chewing sergeant asks Scarlett for the trinkets in her hands. She flings them to the floor. He asks her to hand him—not throw—Ellen's garnet earrings. He asks what else she has, looking at her bodice. Scarlett insists she has nothing.

Scarlett hears the Yankees take the ducks. Then she hears squealing and a gunshot. Prissy must've abandoned the sow. Scarlett stands in the hall as the Yankees run around breaking things and stealing. A man appears holding Charles's sword. Scarlett had given that sword to Wade on his birthday as a token of his father. Scarlett says they can't take that sword; it's from the Mexican War. They examine it and see that she's right. The sergeant decides to give the sword to Scarlett, angering the Yankee who found it. The angry man vows to give the Rebels something to remember him by and disappears into the house. As the men set fire to the cotton, a Yankee sneers at Scarlett that she doesn't have much. Scarlett reminds him that the Yankees have been here before.

Scarlett notices that one of the Yankees holds Ellen's gold thimble. Once it had been on Ellen's beautiful finger, and now it will end up on some Yankee woman's finger. Scarlett drops her head so the Yankees can't see her cry. The Yankees depart with the stolen goods. Scarlett smells smoke and sees the cotton burning through the window.

*Scarlett fills the role at Tara that a man would traditionally fill: she gives the orders and manages the money. However, she also is taking care of Wade and Melanie's baby. In this way, she takes on both masculine and feminine roles. She still isn't sympathetic, though, as when she ignores Wade's anguish.*



*Scarlett's pride in Tara is enough to overcome her fear of being an unprotected woman in an empty house. She walks proudly down the steps to meet the huge army of Yankees just as Gerald had stood on the front steps to greet the Yankees the first time they came to Tara. She channels her father, not Ellen—again calling into question whether Scarlett will ever achieve her goal of being like her mother.*



*The war is happening on a large scale all over the South, but it is also happening on a personal level. Gone with the Wind mostly explores the personal tragedies that the war causes. In this way, the novel is told from the female perspective, because women were the ones at home experiencing the war's personal tragedies.*



*Although Scarlett didn't care about Charles, she understands the value to Wade of his sword. Also, Charles's weapons have come in handy to both Scarlett and Melanie throughout the story as they have defended themselves. Scarlett's boldness in asking the Yankees to spare her the sword seems to wound the pride of the man who found it, and he sets out to get revenge. In this way, Scarlett's sentimentality over the sword is a weak moment that perhaps puts her at greater risk, even as it brings her closer to Wade.*



*Scarlett realizes she can't ask for Ellen's thimble the way she asked for Charles's sword, in part because it's seen as a luxury and not a necessary tool, like the sword. Ellen's sanctity as a great lady is spoiled by the fact that a Yankee woman will use her thimble.*





Scarlett sees smoke coming from the kitchen as well. She lays down the baby and runs into the kitchen, where she discovers that the Yankee who'd been upset about the sword threw lit branches on the floor. She rushes to the dining room for a rag rug. Wade lies in the hall with a peaceful expression on his face. Scarlett believes he's dead, but she races to the kitchen anyway. In the kitchen, she soaks the rug in water and beats the flames. The flames climb higher. Then the door swings open and Melanie rushes in. They beat the flames together. Melanie shrieks and hits Scarlett across the shoulders. Scarlett collapses.

Scarlett wakes on the porch, her head in Melanie's lap. Her body hurts from burns, but Melanie assures her the fire is out. Scarlett hears Wade hiccupping—he isn't dead. She looks at Melanie's sooty face, and says she looks like a "nigger." Melanie laughs and says she hit Scarlett because her back was on fire. Scarlett explains that the men didn't hurt or rape her. Melanie smiles happily. Then she finds the wallet in the baby's diaper. She hugs and kisses Scarlett. Scarlett felt a new respect for Melanie, who is always there when she needs her.

## CHAPTER 28

Winter arrives suddenly, and everyone at Tara is hungry again. Scarlett thinks how wrong she'd been when she told Grandma Fontaine she'd already known the worst. Life gets worse every day. The cotton is gone, most of the food is gone, and there is nothing to buy with their money. The Tarletons' and Munroes' houses were burned in the recent invasion. No one has food. Neighbors share with one another, but soon there's nothing to share. At Tara, they eat catfish Pork catches in the stream. They kill the calf and eat the veal, but they wait to kill the baby pigs until they get bigger.

Pork forages for food. One night, he comes to Scarlett's room late and shows her that he's been shot in the leg. She bandages him while he explains that he'd been stealing from a chicken coop. Ellen once told Scarlett she must make sure the enslaved persons had good morals, but Scarlett loves Pork's loyalty. Instead of chastising him, she tells him to be more careful about being caught. She praises him and promises to buy him a gold watch when she has the money.

*Scarlett is so frantic to put out the fire burning in the kitchen that she runs right past Wade, even though she believes he is dead. She has become very adept at putting aside tragedies in order to do what she needs to do. Melanie again proves to Scarlett that she's not just silly and useless when she helps put out the fire.*



*For the second time, Melanie impresses Scarlett with her bravery and her willingness to take action, rather than just sit idly and watch. Before, Scarlett found Melanie's constant presence irritating, but now she has started to rely on it—Melanie is different from Scarlett, but the women are similar in that they are both willing to do what needs to be done.*



*Tara had slowly been starting to prosper, but now it is back at square one. Most painfully, the Yankees burned the cotton they had grown and picked. Cotton, as the staple of the South's economy, was how Scarlett had planned to regain prosperity. Without a crop Scarlett has nothing to sell, and they must live from day to day on whatever they can find.*



*Before the war, Ellen would have scolded the immoral act of thievery from one of her enslaved persons. However, Scarlett now thinks it's silly to be so moral—morality doesn't help them eat. This shows that the war has rendered many morals and manners useless and has driven Scarlett even farther from becoming a "great lady" like her mother.*



During this time, Scarlett has a nightmare that haunts her for years. The first time she has it, the house is damp from rain. There is nothing to eat but milk, and everyone looks at Scarlett with hunger in their eyes. She lies down and worries. What can she do? Why isn't there anyone to help her? She falls asleep and dreams she's in a foggy wilderness. Icy fingers try to drag her down. She knows there's a safe haven in the fog somewhere. She runs, trying to find it, but she's too weak from hunger. From then on, she has this dream when she goes to sleep with an empty stomach. She starts sleeping with Melanie and begins to get thin and gaunt.

At Christmas, Frank Kennedy and a small troop of soldiers stay at **Tara**. They are overjoyed to sleep with a roof over their heads, and to be in the company of pretty women. They joke about the war and are festive. Suellen is happy to see Frank—her beau—again. Carreen talks with one of the soldiers who knew Brent Tarleton. Melanie, usually shy around men, flirts with a soldier. She's still weak but wants the soldiers to enjoy their Christmas.

Scarlett doesn't enjoy the company. The troop eats a lot of **Tara's** food, and she resents every bite they take. She is afraid they'd discover the newly dead pig in the kitchen and eat it all. She tries a "ramrod roll," an army staple—corn meal paste wrapped around a ramrod and burned tasteless in a fire. She wonders how the soldiers can fight when they eat like this. Scarlett turns to ask Frank for news of Miss Pittypat, but she catches him looking sorry for them about their poverty. Frank loves Suellen, so the sight of Tara in this state is one of the most horrible sights he's seen in the war. He wishes he could help them. Scarlett meets his eyes with a look of fierce pride, and he drops his head in shame.

Frank tells the room that Sherman has taken **Atlanta** and had housed his men there. Many of the Atlanta residents have died because Sherman drove them out of their homes in the pouring rain. He later burned the city down. Scarlett can't believe that the Atlanta is gone. Frank doesn't want to share the other horrible things he's seen, so he tells them that Miss Pitty's brick house still stands. He saw her in Macon and she plans to return to Atlanta.

*In her nightmare, Scarlett is looking for safety, though it's unclear whether she's seeking a place, a person, or a sense of security. However, what she's seeking is something that she's missing currently from her life, suggesting that returning to Tara did not satisfy her longing. Hunger keeps her from finding whatever it is she seeks, another reminder that she's no longer a wealthy, proper Southern lady. Although Scarlett acts confident and brave in order to survive, she feels lost and afraid on the inside.*



*Melanie, Suellen, and Carreen are invigorated to have company, especially the company of soldiers. But the fact that Melanie flirts with a soldier despite her discomfort suggests there's more to this: the women are trying to bolster the soldiers and support the Cause by giving the soldiers a happy Christmas.*



*Unlike Melanie, Suellen, and Carreen, Scarlett takes no pleasure in the Cause, and therefore feels nothing but irritation that the soldiers are visiting. Even though the soldiers are clearly just as hungry as they are, Scarlett resents them for eating Tara's food. In her own desperation and hunger, she is out for herself, thinking only of Tara and her family. She doesn't have the love of the Cause which causes everyone else to be generous in times of need.*



*Although Scarlett loves Tara and has put all her energies into saving it, Atlanta still represents the other side of her nature: the side that is contemporary and carefree. By contrast, Tara represents the part of Scarlett that is connected to the past and her love of the South.*



Frank says that many **Atlanta** residents such as Mrs. Merriwether and Mrs. Meade are returning to Atlanta, living in tents while they rebuild their homes. Frank insists that Atlanta can't be beaten. Melanie and Scarlett are proud of Atlanta. Melanie says that if Aunt Pitty is going back, they'd better go back too. Scarlett snaps that she won't leave **Tara**, but Melanie can go. Melanie says she'd never leave Scarlett. Scarlett is sure Sherman will burn Atlanta again, but Frank says Sherman went to South Carolina.

Frank explains that Savannah fell because there were no men left to defend it. The Confederates even pulled convicts out of the prisons to join the war. Scarlett says that with the Yankees around, there are enough thieves. Scarlett is angry that Sherman went to Tennessee, leaving the Yankees to pilfer Georgia. Gerald says Ellen won't like the way Scarlett is talking. Melanie asks if Frank has heard of Ashley. Frank hasn't, so Melanie starts to say she knows Ashley is dead. Scarlett stops Melanie before Melanie can finish her sentence.

Frank says the Yankee prisons are comfortable, unlike the Confederate prisons. Melanie jokes that he must be lying and offers to go play piano for the men. As they go into the parlor, Frank asks Scarlett for a private word. Scarlett is afraid he'll ask her for the livestock, but instead he says he's sorry about Ellen. Scarlett says they shouldn't talk about it. Frank says he was planning to ask Gerald for Suellen's hand, but it seems like Scarlett is the head of the house. He says he lost his money in the war, but he can give Suellen true love.

Scarlett says Gerald always expected Suellen to marry Frank. Frank says happily that he'll ask Suellen tonight. Scarlett says she'll send Suellen to him so they can have some privacy, and she asks Frank what he meant earlier when he said it was the end of the world. Frank says the end of the war is coming and the Confederates will lose. They have no money and no men. Scarlett doesn't care about the Confederacy, but she cares about the lack of food. Scarlett wishes Frank could marry Suellen now—she'd have one less mouth to feed.

## CHAPTER 29

In April, General Johnston (who'd been reappointed General) surrenders in North Carolina and the war ends. **Tara** hears the news two weeks later, after Pork rides to Macon for three weeks and returns with seeds, food, and most of the money he left with—he likely stole most of what he brought back. Everyone at Tara is busy rebuilding sheds, seeding cotton, checking traps, and milking the cow. Soon after Pork gets back, Tony and Alex Fontaine stop at Tara on their way home from the army and share that the South lost.

*Atlanta is a resilient, modern city. Although it was burned by the Yankees, its residents are undaunted. This highlights the resiliency of the South as a whole; Even if the South loses, the Southern spirit persists. Interestingly, though, Scarlett refuses to look to the future by refusing to return to Atlanta. In this way, she ties herself to her past and to her family by insisting on staying at Tara.*



*This passage highlights how desperate the Confederates are to win—enlisting convicts is, in Scarlett's mind, absurd and inappropriate. Because she lacks pride in the Cause, she wishes the war would end so that everyone can focus on getting back on their feet. It's also essential that she not let Melanie say that Ashley might be dead—saying this would be extremely painful.*



*In the pre-war days when everyone in Scarlett's circle was wealthy, men proposed based on love. However, now that even the wealthiest Southerners are poor, Frank's profession of true love doesn't seem useful if Frank doesn't have a fortune. However, Frank does acknowledge how powerful Scarlett is right now, despite her being female.*



*Frank, like most men, feels comfortable telling Scarlett the truth about the war. Because she is so practical and isn't overly sentimental about the cause, he believes that she's reasonable enough to accept unpleasant truths. Scarlett's practical mindset has even led her to believe in marriage as a practical rather than romantic act; if it saves money or obtains money, she sees virtue in it.*



*The South officially loses the Civil War. While Scarlett has been so focused on saving Tara and procuring food, the war has fallen into the background. The South's defeat feels anticlimactic coming at this time when Scarlett and her family have already been trying to pull themselves out of the poverty and the mess caused by the war.*



While Scarlett has this conversation, Suellen, Melanie, and Carreen cry over the lost Cause. Scarlett is relieved the Cause was lost. Now she doesn't have to lie awake at night thinking she hears the Yankees coming back to burn **Tara**. The war has always seemed foolish to her; she's never felt patriotic love for the Cause the way others did. The war has cut her life in two. She will never again be Scarlett O'Hara, the rich belle of the County. The war has made her a practical woman. As the girls cry, Scarlett plans her cotton crop. But then she realizes that with the war over, Ashley will come home if he's still alive. Days pass, but Scarlett hears nothing from Ashley.

During this time, Suellen asks to use the horse to visit neighbors, but Scarlett argues that the horse is only for work. Truthfully, Scarlett doesn't want to visit the neighbors; their hardships depress her. At the Fontaines', Dr. Fontaine is recovering slowly from a lost arm, and Tony and Alex are trying to work in the fields. Money is tight, and Sally Fontaine looks particularly hopeless. At the Calverts', Cade is home, but he's dying. Cade and Cathleen live with Mrs. Calvert and their overseer, Hilton, who's been acting like an equal ever since his Yankee accent helped save the house from being burned. Mrs. Calvert doesn't know how to be a Southerner after all this time and wants to go North to be with her people.

After these visits, Scarlett doesn't want to see the Tarletons. But Suellen insists, so one day, Scarlett, Melanie, Suellen, and Carreen go to the ruins of the Tarleton house. Beatrice Tarleton sits on the fence staring moodily into space. The stables, usually full of horses, are empty. She says she doesn't know what to do without her darlings, and she means her horses. Jim Tarleton greets them, trying to be cheerful. They stay for supper, eating a little of the Tarletons' scant food. Everyone tries to be merry, but the house feels empty without the Tarleton boys.

After the meal, Carreen whispers something to Mrs. Tarleton. Mrs. Tarleton puts her arm around Carreen and they walk outside together. Scarlett follows. They walk over to two tombstones, one engraved for Brent and the other for Stuart. Scarlett's sympathy for the Tarletons disappears—they must have spent a fortune on the tombstones. Scarlett thinks this was a foolish investment, but Carreen says the tombstones are lovely.

*Unlike everyone else, Scarlett resents the war because it ruined her life and changed who she is. When she visited the burn site of Twelve Oaks, she decided to leave the past behind her. In this way, she has already mourned the loss of the Cause and of the South. Melanie, Suellen, and Carreen cry about the lost Cause, suggesting that they will have trouble moving on to the future. On the other hand, all Scarlett thinks of is the future, and building a new life.*



*Although Scarlett isn't sad about the lost Cause, she is depressed by the lost dignity of her neighbors. Everyone is reduced to what she considers an embarrassing level of poverty; the Calvert's are even on equal with their low-class overseer, Hilton. In this way, Scarlett doesn't believe that her neighbors' dignity has survived the war. Instead, she starts to realize that they could only be dignified if they were wealthy. She is starting to view money as the only thing that endows a person with dignity.*



*Everyone except Scarlett seems to take comfort in the company of their neighbors. Everyone at this supper has lost people in the war, but sharing this grief isn't cathartic for Scarlett: it just makes her aware of how miserable and how poor everyone is now. This makes her more convinced that money is important for a person's dignity.*



*Scarlett views the tombstones as an extravagant expense because there are solely sentimental and not useful. Naturally unsentimental, the war has led Scarlett to be even more practical, unable to value anything that doesn't help a person meet their basic needs.*



On the way back, Scarlett thinks of all the sad neighbors' homes she's seen. Weeds are taking over the cotton fields. How can everyone plant enough cotton to live? The South has lost all its enslaved persons, but worse yet, they've lost their young men. Scarlett realizes that if she wants to marry, there isn't anyone to marry. She says out loud that Southern girls will all die with no husbands or children. Suellen starts to cry; she hasn't heard from Frank since Christmas. Scarlett shushes Suellen and Melanie says they must raise their boys to be like the men they lost. Thinking of Brent, Carreen says the men can't be replaced.

One night, Cathleen Calvert rides up to **Tara**. She looks unhappy, very different from the Cathleen Scarlett used to gossip with at parties. Cathleen says she's getting married but no one at Tara is invited. She is marrying Hilton, the Calverts' Yankee overseer. Cade is dying and Mrs. Calvert is moving north. As Cathleen rides away, Scarlett thinks that she can't be in love with that "white trash." Melanie says Cathleen doesn't have to marry; there's nothing wrong with being a "spinster." She suggests they invite Cathleen to live at Tara. Scarlett is tired enough with Melanie as a burden and doesn't want to take on Cathleen too.

## CHAPTER 30

The summer after the war ends, **Tara** has lots of visitors, as Confederate soldiers ride the railroad to **Atlanta** and make their way south on foot. For the most part, they aren't bitter, and are happy to be going home after a hard fight. Old and young, rich and poor, half-starving and lice-ridden, many missing limbs or bearing scars, they stop at Tara for rest and food.

Mammy boils blackberry roots for the soldiers' indigestion, saying it wasn't the Yankees who beat them but their bowels. She has the lice-ridden soldiers strip and wash with lye soap while she boils their clothes, and she doesn't let them in the beds. They sleep in the parlor, destroying the velvet rug with their boots. The girls ask the soldiers for news of Ashley, but there is none. The soldiers try to comfort Melanie by saying it's a long walk from Rock Island, and maybe Ashley had no boots. Scarlett hates to think of Ashley without boots, reduced to the level of these other dirty soldiers.

*The pre-war South was characterized by chivalry and happy, athletic young men like Brent and Stuart Tarleton, but the war has taken most Southern men and disfigured many others. Melanie wants to build the future in the image of the past, but Carreen suggests that there are some things about the South that won't come back.*



*To everyone, including Cathleen, marrying a Yankee is the lowest a person can fall. It is even worse than remaining an unmarried old woman (a spinster), something that the narration characterizes as a disgrace. Scarlett also feels that this is low of Cathleen, but she doesn't care enough to help her out. More than Melanie, Scarlett understands that marriage has a practical purpose now.*



*Even after the South loses the war, the soldiers are still cheerful. This suggests that, although the South was materially defeated, they weren't defeated spiritually. Their cheer also implies that the North hasn't entirely conquered the South.*



*All this time, Melanie and Scarlett haven't known if Ashley is alive or dead. Scarlett likes to think of Ashley as he was before the war—relaxed, clean, and high-class. This suggests that her feelings for Ashley are like the sentimental feelings many Southerners have about the old days. It is possible that Scarlett romanticizes Ashley the way the South romanticized the Cause.*



One afternoon Scarlett, Melanie, Mammy, and Prissy are about to cut into a watermelon when they hear a horse coming. They argue over whether to hide the melon or share it. Scarlett takes charge and hides it. Prissy cries that it's Uncle Peter. They all run to greet him. Peter starts scolding Melanie and Scarlett for not returning to **Atlanta** to keep Miss Pitty company. He says they should be ashamed. Melanie and Scarlett burst out laughing that Peter rode all this way just to scold them. Mammy and Peter argue as Melanie and Scarlett laugh. Finally, Melanie asks if Miss Pitty asked Peter to bring the girls back with him. Peter then remembers his real reason for coming: he has a letter for Melanie. Ashley is alive and walking home.

Melanie faints and Mammy catches her, telling Peter not to touch her. Everyone swarms around Melanie, but Scarlett looks at the letter Peter waves. She snatches it, tears it open and reads the words addressed to Melanie: "Beloved, I am coming home to you." Tears pour down Scarlett's face. She runs to Ellen's office and collapses on the sofa, kissing the letter, and repeating its words

It could be months before Ashley reaches **Tara**, but everyone hangs around in the house because they don't want to miss him when he arrives. The weeks drag on, and Scarlett fears something happened to Ashley. When she first read his letter, she felt his words were for her. But as time goes on, she knows they were really for Melanie. She wishes Melanie had died in childbirth so that Scarlett and Ashley could marry and raise Beau—Melanie's son—together. Soldier after soldier comes through Tara. Scarlett resents that they eat Tara's food and waste her time.

Scarlett set the table sparely when soldiers came. Once, she catches Melanie giving her food to the soldiers. Scarlett tells her to stop; Melanie is too weak not to eat. Melanie says being generous with the soldiers gives her hope that someone is being a kind hostess to Ashley on his journey home. Scarlett is ashamed and puts more food on the table after this. Once, a young soldier dies on their porch. As they bury him, Melanie cries and wonders if somewhere, someone is burying Ashley.

*Uncle Peter's visit is a reminder of Atlanta—the second main setting of Gone with the Wind. Peter and Mammy—the two head enslaved persons of Tara and Atlanta—meet, which symbolizes a conflict between the country way of life and the city way of life. Atlanta, as a bustling city, and Tara, as a fertile landscape, both offer different versions of the South's resiliency and rebirth after the Civil War. And with the news that Ashley is on his way, Melanie and Scarlett won't have lost everything in the war.*



*Scarlett still loves Ashley so much that she believes everything he does is for her rather than Melanie. Although she has recently warmed to Melanie and sees her as more than a pretty face, her feelings for Ashley still lead Scarlett to betray her.*



*Before Ashley's letter, it seemed that Scarlett was growing out of her petty jealousy towards Melanie and developing real care for her. It almost seemed that friendship might overcome Scarlett's obsession with Ashley. However, now that Ashley's return is imminent, Scarlett's cruelty and selfishness returns.*



*Melanie's actions shame Scarlett and make her act less selfishly. However, she only manages to be selfless when Ashley is somehow involved: she is more generous with the soldiers when Melanie reminds her that Ashley is a soldier relying on hosts' kindness. Scarlett is only selfless when there's something in it for her—in this case, Ashley.*



A soldier named Will Benteen arrives with pneumonia and has to be put to bed. He has a wooden leg, and Scarlett and Melanie can tell he's of a lower class. When he recovers, he wakes to Carreen praying beside him. Carreen sits with him throughout his recovery, praying constantly. This annoys Scarlett, who believes praying is useless—God only gave her hardship and feels she owes God nothing. Once, when Scarlett complains to Will about this, he explains that Carreen finds comfort in praying for Ellen and for Brent, whom she got engaged to while Scarlett was in **Atlanta**. Scarlett had no idea. She insists Carreen will get over it, just like Scarlett got over Charles, but Will disagrees. Will stays at **Tara** after he recovers to pay the women back for caring for him. Scarlett hopes he'll marry Carreen, but Carreen is too heartbroken to marry.

One day, Will, Scarlett, and Melanie sit on the veranda. Melanie has been happier since she heard from Ashley, but she's still weak and sickly. Dr. Meade has said that another baby would kill her. Will pulls shows them a Confederate bill he found in town. Confederate money is worth nothing now; Mammy is using it to seal cracks in the attic. But Will brought the bill because of a poem written on the back that told of "a storm-cradled nation that fell," meaning "nothing on God's earth now." Melanie is touched and wants to save it forever. Scarlett scoffs, saying she hopes she has lots of Greenbacks to give Wade when he grows up.

Looking up, Will sees a soldier coming. Scarlett grouses that hopefully this one isn't hungry, but Melanie rises and turns white. Scarlett grabs her but Melanie throws off her hands and runs down the drive. Scarlett's heart stops as she sees Ashley with his blonde beard. She takes a step forward, but Will restrains her. Will reminds Scarlett that Ashley is Melanie's husband, looking at Scarlett with pity.

## CHAPTER 31

On a day in January 1866, Scarlett is in Ellen's office writing a letter to Miss Pitty explaining again why she and Melanie can't join her in **Atlanta**. It's bitterly cold. Scarlett hears Will return from Jonesboro and calls him in. Inside, he asks how much money she has. She says she has \$10 in gold. Will says that won't be enough to pay the taxes. Scarlett argues that she already paid taxes, but Will explains that Jonesboro is full of Republicans and Carpetbaggers—Northerners who'd moved South—who are raising the taxes on **Tara**. Someone, perhaps Hilton, wants to buy Tara cheap when Scarlett inevitably can't pay the taxes.

*Near the beginning of Gone with the Wind, Scarlett had struggled with her spirituality. She had deeply admired Ellen's religiosity and viewed her mother as the Virgin Mary. She'd hoped to be as religious as her mother one day. However, just like Ellen's teaching, Ellen's religiosity has also ceased to be useful during these trying times. Scarlett has lost so much and suffered so many hardships that she can't believe in God. This leads her still farther away from being like Ellen one day and makes her even less able to sympathize with Carreen's need for religion.*



*The fact that Scarlett feels no sentimentality about the outdated Confederate bill shows that she's ready to move on to the future. She wants to make money, and she doesn't care if that means acquiring Greenbacks (the Yankee currency) instead of Confederate bills. This suggests that Scarlett is willing to comply with the North in order to reestablish her wealth. Just as she sees no value in the outdated Confederate bill, she sees no value in prideful poverty.*



*Although Scarlett has transformed since she last saw Ashley, her feelings for him are as intense as ever. This suggests that Ashley represents the last part of Scarlett that hasn't changed, and that he is her link to the old days and her old self.*



*Now that the Civil War is over, Reconstruction begins in the South. Instead of leaving the South alone to get back on its feet after losing, the North sets up camp in the South and tries to rule it. Northerners and Republicans move South, looking to usurp land and claim power. The higher taxes threaten all the hard work Scarlett has done to rebuild Tara—she'll have to adapt to the Northerners' way of doing things if she means to keep going.*



It's unthinkable that **Tara** could belong to someone else. Scarlett has been so focused on operating Tara that she hasn't paid attention to Reconstruction, the North's attempt to rectify the South and integrate it into the Union. She knows about Carpetbaggers, Scallawags (Southerners who cooperated with the North) and the Freedmen's Bureau; she knows that freedmen are becoming "insolent." She's heard Ashley say that the South is being treated like a conquered province, but she hasn't paid much mind.

Scarlett has no idea that all the rules have changed, and that Georgia is practically under martial law. The Freedmen's Bureau is luring formerly enslaved persons from plantations and feeding them, promising them land, and telling them they're just as good as white people. They rile them up with tales of white cruelty. Jonas Wilkerson, **Tara's** old overseer, and Hilton, Cathleen's husband, are head of the Bureau. They're backed by the military and have the power to do whatever they want. Scarlett has been able to avoid them until now.

Scarlett asks if it's not enough that the North has won and turned Southerners into beggars. She thought her troubles would end with the war. Will says their troubles are just getting started. Scarlett is shocked to hear the taxes on Tara are \$300. Will explains how no one who was a colonel in the Confederate army—in other words, every Southerner—is allowed to vote. "White trash" like Hilton and Wilkerson can vote, and they are running things. Now, a Black man can kill a white man and not get hung. Will could vote if he took the Yankee oath, but he didn't agree to Reconstruction.

Scarlett doesn't understand what voting has to do with taxes and cries that they must borrow money from someone. Will, though, says nobody has money to lend. After a pause, he asks what they're going to do. She asks where Ashley is. He's in the orchard splitting logs. Will notes that Ashley doesn't have money either, but Scarlett hurries to find him. Hopefully he's alone; Scarlett has been very jealous since Ashley is always with Melanie these days. She wishes he were her husband. As Scarlett catches sight of Ashley, who's wearing tattered pants and an old and too-small shirt of Gerald's, she thinks that she hates to see him in dingy clothes doing manual labor. Ashley is too fine to be reduced to this.

*The South, although a part of the Union, still thinks of itself as an individual society. The North views the South as uncooperative to the Union, and therefore tries to integrate it by force. Tara, though, is pretty insular, so Scarlett hasn't had to pay attention to what's going on. The news about higher taxes, though, means that she has to pay attention and figure out how to navigate this new world.*



*Scarlett and many white Southerners believe that white cruelty towards enslaved Black people is a myth. In this way, they attempt to defend themselves and the institution of slavery, and they firmly believe that Black people are not equals. Because of this, these white Southerners resist Reconstruction because it goes against their beliefs. Their resistance only reveals how deep their racism is.*



*The Yankees take away Southerners' right to vote so that they can't vote to reinstate the South's racist and classist policies. They also raise the taxes on the huge plantations so as to get them out of the hands of wealthy planter-aristocrats. Reconstruction severely limits the South's desire to rebuild itself and return to its old way of life, where wealthy white people were at the top and enslaved Black people were at the bottom of the social order.*



*Scarlett seeks Ashley's help, hoping that he'll be someone stronger and wiser than her—like a husband. She wants to have man in her life to handle these things that have traditionally been a man's business, such as money and property. Scarlett sees Ashley as someone who should never work, even though she herself values work as a means to survive. She isn't attracted to what Ashley has to be now, but to what he was in the past.*





When he sees Scarlett, Ashley makes a joke about Abe Lincoln starting out splitting rails. Scarlett frowns at his making light of serious matters and tells him about the taxes. Ashley puts his coat around her and says the only person with any money is Rhett Butler. Scarlett had heard from Miss Pitty that Rhett is back in **Atlanta** and richer than ever. Scarlett calls Rhett a skunk and asks Ashley what will happen to them all. Ashley says he wonders what will become of the South and mentions other fallen civilizations. Scarlett says not to talk about the whole South and other nonsense when they are the ones suffering.

Ashley takes Scarlett's hands and kisses her calloused palms, saying they are the most beautiful hands he'd ever seen because they are strong. To her dismay, he drops her hands and tells her he can't help her. His home and his money are gone; all he can do is try to farm. Every day, he feels more helpless. She doesn't know what he means but loves that he is speaking his mind. Ashley says he's only good at looking at dreams, and not at reality. He says he's a coward.

Scarlett disagrees, reminding him of his bravery in the war. Ashley says that fighting isn't about courage; even cowards are soldiers. Scarlett asks what he's afraid of. He says he's afraid of reality. He loved the beauty of the old life at Twelve Oaks, but that life is a shadow. Real things—like Scarlett—have always scared him. Scarlett asks about Melanie, and Ashley says she's a dreamer too. Ashley continues that he thought he'd be content with a life of dreams, but he's seen his friends die and saw what people were really like in the war. He realizes he can no longer be a spectator. His inner world of dreams has been destroyed, and there's no going back to the old life.

Scarlett tells Ashley to not to be afraid they'll starve. He looks at her admiringly, then his eyes get a "remote" look in them—he and Scarlett are always speaking different languages. He says he's not afraid of starving, but of facing life without beauty of the old days. Scarlett is confused and thinks grumpily that Melanie would probably understand him. In her opinion, the only things to fear are starvation and homelessness.

*Rhett Butler is rich because he made his own money before the South lost the war. Anyone with a generational fortune, like Ashley and Scarlett, lost all their money when the Yankees burned their homes and took their food and enslaved persons. Therefore, Rhett's scandalous modernity and practicality actually saved him from ruin. Scarlett remains unwilling to look at the big picture—everyone who was wealthy before the war is in a similar position. But she's only focused on herself and on saving Tara.*



*Ashley admires Scarlett's strength but can't find the same strength in himself. Scarlett's calloused hands represent her ingenuity during hard times; she is willing to sacrifice the beauty and softness of her pampered hands in order to survive. Ashley, on the other hand, is caught up in the beauty of the past and can't face the harsh reality of the present.*



*Ashley says that the way life used to be was a dream, suggesting that there was an unreal quality to how perfect life was before the war. The Old South wasn't reality; instead, the post-war world of hardship and every man for himself is reality. Gerald had once warned Scarlett that the Wilkeses were dreamy people. They could afford to be dreamy before the war, but now, Ashley's inability to be practical is a major disadvantage.*



*Scarlett and Ashley are so different that they can't even have a conversation. Scarlett is so practical that she can't imagine what there is to fear besides physical suffering. Ashley, on the other hand, is so afraid of reality that even financial security won't make up for the dream world he lost. The fact that they speak different languages is either a sign that they are made for each other, or a sign that they aren't.*



Ashley says he envies that Scarlett can face reality without wanting to escape it. Scarlett cries that she *does* want to escape. Grabbing Ashley's arm, she says the South is dead and they should run away together. She's tired of taking care of everyone and wants to go away with him. Scarlett says Ashley doesn't love Melanie, and Melanie can't give him more children—but Scarlett can. He grabs her roughly and says he doesn't love her. They argue, but Ashley says he'll never leave Melanie and Beau, and Scarlett will never leave her father and sisters.

Scarlett says she's tired of her family, but Ashley offers to help her bear the load. She says there's nothing to keep them here, but Ashley argues that honor will keep them here. Scarlett feels defeated. Heartbroken, she starts to cry, and Ashley holds her head against his chest. She changes at his touch, "magic and madness" filling her. He kisses her. Scarlett's body melts into his, and she cries that he does love her.

Ashley says he wants to have sex with Scarlett. But he then shakes her so violently that her hair tumbles down and she feels her neck will snap. Ashley cries that they won't do this again; he'll leave with Melanie and the baby. Scarlett cries that he can't leave, and Ashley's expression turns savage. He admits he loves her courage and fire so much that he almost disgraced himself and had sex with her in the mud. She says that if he felt that way and resisted it than he doesn't love her. He says she'll never understand.

Scarlett becomes aware that it's winter. Ashley's expression is distant. She'll never get close to him again. Scarlett says she has nothing left to fight for or love with him gone. Ashley picks up a handful of red mud and presses it into her hand. He says the land is left, and she loves the land more than she loves him. Looking at the clay, Scarlett thinks how much she loves Tara's red earth, and how hard she'd fight for it. Looking at Ashley, she feels no emotion. She says he doesn't have to go because she won't throw herself at him again. As she walks away, she squares her shoulders. Ashley notices, and he's touched.

## CHAPTER 32

As Scarlett walks back to Tara, she clutches the red clay and tells herself she'll be okay. She loves Tara and can't believe she'd been ready to throw it away—not even Ashley can replace Tara. As she enters the hall, she hears hooves. Jonas Wilkerson, well-dressed, steps from a fancy carriage. How could he have become so rich in these hard times? A girl in a gaudy dress steps down beside him. Her clothes are fashionable—and the girl is Emmie Slattery, the "nasty slut" who killed Ellen.

*Scarlett has put the old days so far behind her that she's ready to run away and start a new life. She doesn't care about honor, or any of the old manners of the past. Ashley maintains that he will never leave Melanie and Beau. It is unclear whether Ashley only denies Scarlett because he wants to do the honorable thing and be faithful to Melanie, or if he actually doesn't love Scarlett.*



*Even though Ashley has claimed that he doesn't love Scarlett, he obviously desires her sexually and isn't worried about resisting his desire. This leads Scarlett to think that Ashley loves her, even though it is possible that Ashley only feels lust towards Scarlett. But Scarlett has never separated the two; recall how she's always equated men wanting to kiss her with love.*



*Ashley speaks in a language that makes everything sound beautiful—he honors Melanie, and he loves Scarlett's fire and courage. However, when translated, it sounds as though Ashley lusts after Scarlett and loves Melanie purely. Scarlett, a much more straightforward thinker, believes that if Ashley can resist her, it means he doesn't love her.*



*When Ashley hands Scarlett the dirt, she realizes again that land is more important and lasting than love, as Gerald had once told her. Scarlett has now gone back and forth between land and love, unsure which is more valuable to her. When she doesn't have love, she turns to the land, but some part her keeps pursuing Ashley. In this moment, the thought of Tara empowers Scarlett to realize she doesn't need Ashley to feel powerful.*



*Jonas Wilkerson and Emmie Slattery, who were poor and low-class before the war, are now wealthy. By impoverishing the wealthiest people in the South, the war empowered the lower-class to citizens to take money and prestige for themselves. As far as Scarlett is concerned, this is an atrocity: it enables people she once scorned to become seemingly more powerful than Scarlett.*



Scarlett screams at Emmie to get off the steps. Jonas says not to speak to his wife like that. Scarlett laughs, asking if they baptized their “brats.” Jonas says they come as friends, but Scarlett says they’ve never been friends and demands he leave. Jonas sneers that he knows Scarlett is poor. He wanted to buy **Tara** at a fair price, but now he’ll wait till she can’t pay the taxes then take it. Wishing she could kill Jonas like she killed the Yankee, Scarlett screams at him to get out. She’s scared those “white trash nigger lovers” are going to take Tara, and there’s nothing she can do about it. Perhaps they’d even bring Black people to live as equals in Ellen’s home.

Scarlett tries to think of a way to stop Jonas from taking **Tara**. Ashley had said Rhett Butler was the only person with money. She could borrow money from Rhett, pay the taxes, and laugh in Jonas’s face—but she’d need the money every year, and the taxes will probably keep increasing. Scarlett realizes if she marries Rhett, she’ll never have to worry about money again. Now that Scarlett is more mature and practical, she realizes Rhett can’t know she’s poor, or he won’t marry her. After they’re married, he’ll help with anything. The thought of being his wife is repulsive, especially when she remembers her honeymoon with Charles. Scarlett recalls that Rhett said he’d never marry—but he also said he wanted her. Marrying him would feel like prostitution and like she’s betraying Ellen, but Scarlett is desperate and knows she can never have Ashley now.

This evening, Scarlett comes to the end of the journey she’d begun the night **Atlanta** fell. She’s a hard woman now, not a youthful girl. Scarlett knows the old days won’t return, and now she’s only afraid of hunger. Since she has nothing to lose, she’s sure of her decision to marry Rhett. Scarlett vows to get money from him, even if he won’t marry her—she’s not sure how prostitution works, but she’ll worry about that later. She wants to make herself look like a queen doing a favor for Rhett, but when Scarlett looks at herself in the mirror, she sees she’s thin, haunted, and not pretty. She’ll never woo Rhett looking like this.

Scarlett goes to the window and leans her head against the green velvet curtains. Then, she pulls over a table and climbs up to take down the curtains. Mammy comes in and asks what Scarlett is doing with the curtains. They argue for a moment, but then Scarlett tells Mammy to get the dress patterns. She’s making a **dress** from the curtains, since she’s going to **Atlanta** to borrow money and needs a nice dress. Scarlett and Mammy argue again—Mammy insists an O’Hara doesn’t need a dress to be respected—but she gives in when Scarlett explains what’s going on with the taxes. Mammy yells for Prissy to get the dress patterns.

*Before the war, Emmie Slattery and Jonas Wilkerson were low-class citizens. After the war, they support the freedmen. Instead of considering why anyone would view a Black person as an equal, Scarlett only views this as a mark of someone’s low class. She sees that Jonas is trying to take power away from her, and from other formerly wealthy white people like her, by giving plantations lower class white people and free Black people.*



*Scarlett’s determination to save Tara from bankruptcy has reached a new level. She is now willing to marry a man she doesn’t love in order to get money. Scarlett seems to think this is extreme, but it isn’t out of character for her; Scarlett married Charles Hamilton simply because her feelings were hurt that Ashley rejected her. Whether it’s revenge or money, Scarlett has always viewed marriage as a means for getting what she wants and gaining power. And as she thinks of marriage like this, she moves further away from the image of the ideal woman that Ellen represented.*



*There is no longer anything that Scarlett fears besides hunger, not even disgrace. She has always shrewdly viewed relationships with men as games where she must win the outcome she wants, but when she decides to win money from Rhett, she has grown up completely. This suggests that Scarlett has a more complete understanding now of her sexual power as a woman. But she also implies that her sexuality is her only weapon now, since she has no money.*



*Scarlett’s plan to make a dress to attract Rhett out of Ellen’s curtains represents her complete departure from Ellen’s teachings. Ellen would never approve of Scarlett’s plan to essentially sell herself to get money, but Scarlett knows that times are more desperate than Ellen thought they’d ever get. Ellen’s curtains represent gentility and the Old South, and Scarlett plans to use them to get what she wants: money.*



After supper, everyone helps make **the dress**. It feels as if they're preparing for a ball. Scarlett says she's going to "mortgage the house," but no one knows what that means. Melanie teases that it must have something to do with Captain Butler. The girls donate their nicest accessories, and Melanie suggests they trim a bonnet with the rooster's feathers. Scarlett looks at their joy with contempt. None of them had any idea what's happening because they never change to meet bad circumstances. They believe God will solve things, but Scarlett knows only Rhett Butler can fix things.

Mammy sends Ashley and Will out so that the women can fit Scarlett in **the dress**. Will and Ashley look at each other; they both have the same suspicion. Everything feels ominous. Ashley is worried, but he can't do anything to help Scarlett after what happened in the orchard. He thinks he's driven her to this, but he remembers how she'd squared her shoulders. She was so brave, always taking life as it comes. He thinks she is "gallant," heading to **Atlanta** in velvet curtains and rooster feathers.

## CHAPTER 33

The next afternoon, Scarlett and Mammy step from the train in **Atlanta**. The depot is a pile of ruins. Instinctively, Scarlett looks for Uncle Peter, but of course he isn't here; Aunt Pitty doesn't know Scarlett is coming. The quietness of the depot is so unlike the hustle and bustle of Atlanta when Scarlett arrived in 1862. A Black man drives by, offering them a ride for money. Mammy glares at him hatefully; doesn't this "hired black" know that upstanding women don't ride in hired carriages? The Black man says he's not a "free issue nigger"; his mistress, Miss Talbot, sent him to earn money for the family. Since Scarlett doesn't know Miss Talbot, Mammy insists they walk.

Scarlett is dismayed to see how devastated **Atlanta** is. The warehouses and hotels are gone. The warehouse Charles left her must also be destroyed; someday she'll have to repay Uncle Henry for the taxes he covered on it. As they continue, Scarlett is sad to see Peachtree Street devoid of its old landmarks. However, she is cheered to see new buildings going up—some of them three stories high. They could burn Atlanta, but they can never beat it.

*No one else can imagine what Scarlett is planning to do. They think she is going on some vaguely romantic journey to Atlanta, and they prepare excitedly as if she's going ball such as the kind they'd attend before the war. This shows that, for everyone except Scarlett, life still feels beautiful and romantic. To her, however, life has become a harsh, practical reality where only money can help her.*



*Ashley feels powerless to stop Scarlett. He thinks she looks "gallant," a word that would usually describe a man. She is embarking for Atlanta to save her land and family—something a man would traditionally do. That he admires her for being "gallant" casts him in a less powerful—and more traditionally feminine—position.*



*Atlanta has undergone a transformation since its pre-war days. Most notably, free Black people are out and about, and some are even offering services for pay. This scandalizes Mammy because she thinks of herself as of a higher class than the Black people who are, in her mind, taking advantage of their freedom. Mammy has always built up her own self-worth by thinking her enslavement makes her a better person, and now she continues to do this by looking down on free Blacks.*



*Although Atlanta was burned to the ground, it is already being rebuilt. Atlanta, as one of the South's most modern cities, is able to adapt easily to the changing times, but also holds onto its spirit. This will come to represent the South as a whole; although the war has devastated and changed it for good, its spirit is undefeated.*



Peachtree Street is as crowded and energetic as ever. However, the people Scarlett sees aren't familiar. They are Black people who stare at them "insolently." Mammy kicks "black trash" out of her way and declares she doesn't like this town full of Yankees and "free issue country niggers." They come to the place Scarlett had sat to catch her breath after looking for Dr. Meade while Melanie was having her baby. She'd thought she'd hit rock bottom that day. Now, Scarlett wonders how could she have been so silly as to be afraid of the siege when poverty is so much scarier?

A carriage approaches and Scarlett looks to see if it's a friend. The red-haired head of Belle Watling appears at the window. She looks at Scarlett with dislike. Mammy asks who she is. Scarlett replies that she is the town's "bad woman." Mammy's jaw drops. It upsets Scarlett to think that, if her plan goes well, she will be like Belle. They pass the Elsings' house and where the Meades' and the Whitings' houses had been. Scarlett is happy when she sees Aunt Pitty's house. Uncle Peter runs out, smiling; Scarlett tells him to get Miss Pitty.

Miss Pitty serves "hominny" and dried peas for supper. Scarlett swears she'll never eat these foods again once she has money and asks Pitty about her finances. Pitty explains that everything except the house is gone, and she's living off Uncle Henry's generosity. Scarlett knows Henry is struggling to save this property that belongs to Wade at his own expense. Scarlett changes the subject cheerfully to news of old friends. Pitty tells how Mrs. Merriwether and Maybelle were selling pies to Yankees to make ends meet. Pitty understands, but she'd rather starve than deal with Yankees.

Miss Pitty says the Meades don't want another home now that they have no children, so they are staying at the Elsings'; The Whitings are staying there too. Pitty says it's a boarding house, which is so dreadful. Scarlett wishes everyone staying at Tara would pay her, but Pitty says Ellen would be horrified to hear that. Then, scandalized, she says everyone has resorted to manual labor to earn money. Scarlett pictures herself in the cotton fields and thinks Pitty is an ignorant fool. Pitty says Fanny Elsing is getting married tomorrow to a man of good birth, but with an ugly limp. Scarlett says women must marry someone. Pitty says she doesn't know why Fanny must marry a man she doesn't love when she is loyal to her dead beau the way Scarlett is loyal to Charles.

*Mammy thinks that Atlanta is nothing but a town full of all the enslaved persons who left plantations, people she sees as lesser. Scarlett also notices that Atlanta has changed. But more so, she recognizes that she has changed. When she was last in Atlanta, she feared taking care of herself alone and the Yankees. Now, she has confronted and killed a Yankee, only fears hunger, and is brave enough to survive on her own.*



*Belle seems to think she's better than Scarlett, and Scarlett thinks she's better than Belle. However, the two are very similar at this point in the story. Scarlett tries to look down on Belle as a "bad woman" and a sex worker, but she also believes that she'll need to turn to sex work herself to get money from Rhett. But because class divisions are so important to Scarlett, she continues to feel superior to Belle.*



*Miss Pitty thinks it despicable to earn money selling things to Yankees. From the perspective of the Old South, engaging in business and trade, especially with people who are considered traitors, is a disgrace. Scarlett doesn't comment, but this is potentially because she thinks money is the most important thing and is willing to do anything to get it.*



*Miss Pitty reads as ignorant and ridiculous to Scarlett: Scarlett believes now that getting money and making sacrifices (such as settling for a man with a limp) are just what must happen now that the war has changed the South. So Miss Pitty represents the Old South's perspective: she's unwilling to change and thinks, for instance, that families should be able to host people generously and without taking money from guests, just like they used to in the old days.*



Scarlett asks Pitty about everyone except Rhett. Pitty says the Republicans are putting ideas in the “poor darkies” heads. They want to let Black men vote! Uncle Peter, she says, is too “well-bred” to vote. Then, she says Rhett Butler is in jail for killing a Black man and he might be hanged. They haven’t proved his guilt, but the Yankees are upset the Ku Klux Klan has been riding around dressed like ghosts and killing so many Black people and Carpetbaggers. The Yankees want to set an example by hanging Rhett. Pitty goes on about how nobody knows where Rhett’s money is; he amassed a fortune blockading for the Confederacy and supposedly has money in overseas banks. Noticing that Scarlett looks faint, Pitty asks if she’s upset to hear about a former beau.

Scarlett says Rhett wasn’t her beau, then asks where he is. Pitty says he’s being held in the firehouse. While Pitty talks about Rhett’s bravery and his pride in being a Southerner, Scarlett thinks how wonderful it is that Rhett is richer than ever and in jail. If she can marry him while he’s in jail, she’ll get all his money after he’s hanged and will never have to deal with him. Mammy walks in, suspicious, and suggests Scarlett go to bed. Scarlett says she feels a cold coming on and asks to be excused from paying visits with Pitty tomorrow. Pitty says Mammy can come instead. Mammy escorts Scarlett to bed, where Scarlett thinks she hears cannons. It’s only thunder.

## CHAPTER 34

The next morning, Scarlett stays in bed faking sickness until Pitty, Mammy, and Uncle Peter leave. Then she jumps up and puts on her new **dress**. She is excited for “a struggle of the wits” with a man. Her gown makes her look dignified and rich. She hides her calloused hands in Miss Pitty’s muff, not wanting Rhett to be able to guess she’s poor. She tiptoes out and waits for a carriage. It’s cold, and she wraps Miss Pitty’s shawl closer. Finally, an old woman gives her a ride, raising her eyebrows at Scarlett’s fancy clothes. Scarlett knows the woman thinks she’s a “hussy.”

When Scarlett gets off in the town square, she pinches her cheeks and bites her lips to make them red. The square is crowded with army tents, and the door of the firehouse is guarded by two Yankee sentries. Scarlett has killed a Yankee, so she isn’t afraid. She goes up to the sentries and says she wants to see a prisoner. The man thinks she might cry, so he leads her to the headquarters, talking gently, and she warms to his friendliness. Yankees can, apparently, be nice. Scarlett walks up the broken steps into a bare room filled with a group of officers in blue coats.

*After the South loses the war, they continue to fight for their beliefs by organizing the Ku Klux Klan, a group known for brutally killed Black people and Northern supporters. This group defends the South’s racism and their fundamental belief in slavery. The fact that Rhett Butler murders a Black man in the fashion of the KKK shows that, although he has many anti-Southern qualities (such as being willing to make his own money), he is fundamentally Southern in that he does not consider Black people equals.*



*All Scarlett wants is Rhett Butler’s money, so much so that she hopes he dies and leaves her with it all. This shows how hard and practical she has become. Mammy seems to know what Scarlett is planning and disapproves. Like most Southerners, Mammy believes that Rhett is a “speculator” and a bad man. He goes against the whole world that Ellen had built, and so naturally Mammy thinks Scarlett shouldn’t marry him.*



*Scarlett doesn’t want Rhett to know that she’s poor because she thinks poverty isn’t attractive. She has become so frantic about getting money to prevent starvation and homelessness that she has come to view wealth as the only thing that’s respectable about a person. She doesn’t want Rhett to take pity on her but rather to be overcome by her power, which she thinks comes from wealth.*



*Before Scarlett killed the Yankee who invaded Tara, she was terrified of Yankees and thought they would do horrible things to her. Now, however, she can face them bravely. She discovers that some Yankees are actually nice, such as the man guarding the prison and the man who brought a doctor for Ellen and her sisters. Scarlett is starting to think Yankees might not be so bad.*



Scarlett tells the captain of the group she's Rhett Butler's sister and she wants to see him. The captain says Rhett has lots of "sisters." Offended, Scarlett starts to leave, but the captain asks her name and goes to get Rhett. Rhett appears, unshaven and disheveled. He cries for Scarlett, grasps her hands, and calls her his sister while he kisses her cheek. The guards let Rhett and Scarlett talk in a side room while they wait outside.

Rhett stands close to Scarlett and asks if he can kiss her. She says he may kiss her on the forehead, like a brother. He says he'll wait for a better kiss, looking at her lips. Rhett continues that he can't believe she's here; he thought she'd never forgive him for deserting her the night of the siege. He doesn't sound mocking like he usually did. Scarlett teases that she never forgave him; why did he do such a silly thing as enlist in a lost Cause? Rhett says he's not ashamed of leaving Scarlett, but he is ashamed he joined the war—but Southerners, he insists, can't resist a lost cause. They continue to banter, and Scarlett shows off her **dress**. Rhett says she's beautiful, but he won't take advantage of her.

Rhett had seemed happy to see Scarlett a moment before, but now something feels wrong. He asks what she's been up to. Scarlett lies and says that they got a good cotton crop at **Tara** and that Gerald has everything under control. She says she came to **Atlanta** because she's bored and wants to have some dresses made. Rhett says she must have gone through all the country boys and is here for the city ones. She thinks of the "country boys" like the poor, helpless Fontaines, but she giggles at his joke.

Rhett says he's tried to understand what's so charming about Scarlett. Even though he's been in Europe with prettier and smarter girls, he hasn't forgotten her. Scarlett feels triumphant; now all she has to do is make him believe she feels the same. She says she's so upset he's in jail. Her distress is appropriate, he says, seeing as he is going to be hanged. He laughs and says he'll mention her in his will. To hide her excitement, Scarlett looks down. Rhett mentions that the Yankees think he has Confederate money, and Scarlett asks if it's true. Trying hard to act sweet and upset, Scarlett says Rhett is too smart to be hanged. She says she feels bad for what she did to him the night he joined the army, and she'll die if he's hanged.

By "sisters," the Yankee captain means that Rhett has a lot of female visitors who claim they are his sisters to disguise the real reason for their visit. Scarlett is humiliated because the captain is implying that she's one of many women whom Rhett employs as a sex worker. She's particularly humiliated because if she achieves her goal of tricking him into giving her money, he might be right.



Rhett seems overjoyed to see Scarlett, but it is still difficult to discern his true feelings about her because he jokes about everything. Rhett is usually able to see through Scarlett to her true feelings—something that infuriates her. It is unclear whether he sees immediately that she's only pretending to flirt with him because she wants his money and is playing along, or if he really thinks she cares about him. After Rhett looks at her dress, his mood changes as if he senses that she's being insincere and is hurt.



Scarlett pretends that she's carefree, rich, and only interested in boys. She thinks that these charming pretenses are what makes her attractive because they are the attributes she possessed when she was young, before the war hardened her. Her true nature—willful, brave, and realistic—might be more attractive as the novel hinted early on, but Scarlett still doesn't know this.



Scarlett has a hard time not revealing how interested she is in Rhett's money. At this point, Rhett seems to know that she's after his money, because he leads the conversation around to his hanging, and to the rumors about the Confederate money he has stashed overseas. Scarlett only pretends she's distraught that Rhett might be killed, just as she always pretended to love the Cause even though she didn't care for it. Rhett saw through that pretense, so it is likely he sees through this one too.



Scarlett looks up at Rhett, expecting a kiss. Instead, he kisses her hand and puts her palm on his cheek, like a lover would. Scarlett is sure that Rhett is about to ask her to marry him or say he loves her. But instead, he turns her hand over and sees her calloused palm. She clenches her fist, afraid. He opens her hand and tells Scarlett to look at him. Rhett asks if she's been plowing and says her hands aren't a lady's hands as Scarlett tries to pull away. She's sure Rhett had been about to confess his love when he saw her hands.

Scarlett lies that she ruined her hands riding a horse without gloves. Rhett says she's been working with her hands like a "nigger"; why did she lie that everything is good at Tara? He asks what the real purpose of her visit is, since he can tell she doesn't care if he is hanged. He asks if she expected him to propose and asks why she wants to force him into marriage. Scarlett is so afraid of Rhett that she's glad he's not proposing, but maybe she can still borrow money. She asks for \$300 for the taxes on Tara and offers a mortgage on Tara in return, but Rhett doesn't want a farm. Scarlett says things at Tara are bad; she's hungry. Her dress is made from curtains, Ellen is dead, Gerald has lost his mind, and she can't let the Carpetbaggers take Tara.

Rhett says his feelings are hurt that she wanted his money and not him. Scarlett wonders if his feelings are actually hurt. Does he really care for her? Had he been about to propose when he saw her hands? She offers to be his mistress in return for the money and reminds him of when he said he wanted her more than he ever wanted anyone. He asks what makes her think she's worth \$300. Scarlett is humiliated. Rhett asks why she doesn't live at Miss Pittypat's instead of Tara. She cries that she can't let Tara go. He shakes his head at her stubbornness.

Rhett clarifies that she wants \$300 in exchange for being his mistress. He says it is ironic that he'd made the same offer, but she'd gotten mad at him. This proves that virtue is a matter of price, he says. Scarlett imagines it's summer, and she's lying in the grass at Tara under a blue sky. Tara is worth all this. She asks if he'll give her the money. Rhett refuses; if he tries to withdraw money, the Yankees will seize it. Scarlett angrily jumps up. Rhett grabs her waist and covers her mouth with his hand. He holds her writhing in his lap, telling her to hush or the Yankees will hear. She doesn't care. She goes dizzy, and then faints.

*Scarlett hid her rough hands because she is embarrassed of her poverty and thought it would degrade her in Rhett's eyes. Though Ashley found her calluses a sign of her determination and strength, Scarlett thinks her hands ruin Rhett's love for her and make her seem less desirable. Scarlett also assumes she knows what Rhett is thinking, but it's impossible to know if she's right.*



*Rhett seems to insult Scarlett for her poverty when he accuses her of working in the fields with such cruel language—he thinks only a low-class enslaved person is fit for agricultural work. However, Rhett once claimed to love Scarlett's selfishness and practicality, so the fact that she's been working at Tara might not disgust him the way she thinks it does. It seems that Rhett is more upset that Scarlett lied than anything else. Scarlett still doesn't understand how men feel, whether the man in question is Ashley or Rhett.*



*Although it is possible that Rhett might be joking, he essentially says he's upset that Scarlett cares more about money than about him. Rhett and Scarlett have previously connected over their love of money and their practicality. However, this is a double-edged sword when it comes to Scarlett: her practicality is attractive to Rhett, but it also makes her shallow and selfish.*



*Saying that virtue is a matter of price suggests that Scarlett is only willing to sacrifice her morals when she knows she'll get something in return. When Scarlett faints (even though she used to boast she never fainted), it implies that she feels truly humiliated. She was willing to gamble her morals only if it gave her power. Now powerless, she recognizes that she's disgraced herself.*





Scarlett slowly wakes up. The captain is pouring her whiskey, and Rhett is slapping her wrist. She gulps the whiskey and it revives her. The guards step out again. Scarlett starts to leave, but Rhett holds her back. Scarlett tells Rhett she hates him. She feels too tired to be angry, but her anger returns. Rhett smiles and says she must be feeling better, but Scarlett calls him a hateful for letting her humiliate herself. Mockingly, Rhett says it was fun. When Scarlett leaps up, Rhett asks if she's made offers like this to other men. Scarlett says she hasn't, so Rhett tells her to be more subtle in the future—men don't like blunt women. He insists his hanging will cheer her up, and he'll mention her in his will. Scarlett snaps that it'll be too late to pay the taxes by then.

*Rhett mocks everything again, covering up any indication he may have given that she hurt his feelings with her deception. However, he makes a point of asking Scarlett if she's gone to any other men besides him. This suggests that he does care something for Scarlett, and believes she cares something for him. He then covers this up by telling her to be more submissive and ladylike next time—an instruction Ellen would've given her to get a man to propose. Note too that Scarlett accuses Rhett of allowing her to humiliate herself—she's unwilling to accept responsibility for her own actions, another sign of her self-centeredness.*



## CHAPTER 35

When Scarlett leaves the firehouse, it's raining. There are no carriages anywhere, and she's soaked and muddy. How can she face everyone after she'd been so confident she could save **Tara**? She hates Rhett, and she feels it serves him right to be hanged. She passes Black men who grin at her. How dare they! When a buggy comes up behind Scarlett, Frank Kennedy's familiar voice cries out in greeting. He helps Scarlett into the carriage and wraps a blanket around her. She notices that his carriage and clothes are nice, even though he looks older than ever. He asks if everyone at Tara is well, thinking of Suellen.

*Scarlett's trek home from the prison is a walk of shame. She feels that the lowest class of people—Black people and Rhett Butler—are looking down on her when she believes she should be treated like a lady. As always, she doesn't know how to endure situations in which she is not in a position of power. And as Frank swoops in to rescue her, she mostly pays attention to signs that he's wealthy. She's still scheming, even if she's experiencing a setback.*



Scarlett doesn't want to talk about **Tara**. She's surprised to see Frank in **Atlanta**, but he explains that he lives in Atlanta and has a new store in Marietta; Suellen should've shared the news. To Scarlett's relief, he starts a long story about his success as a merchant. After visiting Tara, he fought in the cavalry and was wounded. While he was in the hospital, Yankee raiders came. Frank helped load army supplies on trains before the raiders could burn them. When the war ended, those supplies sat around. So Frank, after some struggle with his conscience that Scarlett doesn't understand, moved the supplies into an old building and started selling them. He's made a lot of money.

*Like Rhett, Frank made a small fortune off the fall of the Confederacy. Although the unused supplies belonged to the Confederacy, the Confederacy no longer exists. The practice of seizing the goods and selling them is dishonest because it exploits the people who originally helped buy the supplies. Frank acts on what Rhett Butler once observed: that one can profit hugely off the fall of a civilization. That Scarlett doesn't understand the moral struggle Frank went through points to her own immorality.*



Scarlett perks up at the mention of money. She cuddles closer to Mr. Kennedy and asks him questions about his finances. He explains that he made a thousand dollars and he plans to buy a sawmill in **Atlanta**. The town is rebuilding rapidly and needs lumber. By this time next year, Frank shouldn't have to worry about money anymore. He implies that he wants to make money so he can marry Suellen soon. Scarlett almost asks him for a loan but decides this would embarrass him. She thinks that Suellen doesn't deserve Mr. Kennedy's fortune. She'll misuse it and never do anything for **Tara**, and it's so unfair. Maybe Scarlett can get Frank to propose, even if he is old and shy. He might be Suellen's fiancé, but Scarlett hasn't had a conscience since she decided to pursue Rhett.

*Scarlett isn't thinking about Frank or Suellen's feelings, but only about money and the fact that she needs it. She justifies her malicious action with practical reasoning: if Suellen married Frank, she wouldn't put any of his money towards Tara, but she, Scarlett, would. Scarlett has stolen girls' fiancés before, such as when she stole Charles from Honey, but it's a step further to consider stealing Frank from her own sister. This shows Scarlett resorting to increasingly immoral means to get what she wants.*



Scarlett bats her eyes shyly, remembering what Rhett said about men disliking bold women. She asks to put her hands in Frank's pocket. Franks asks what Scarlett is doing downtown. Not thinking, she says she was at the Yankee headquarters. He's shocked, so she lies that she was selling embroidery to the Yankees to earn money for her and Wade. She starts to cry on his shoulder. He comforts her, saying he won't tell Pitty, but that Scarlett should stop doing business with Yankees. Frank says he'll find a way to help her. Scarlett calls Frank by his first name, which pleases him. He calls Scarlett brave and says she'll always be welcome in his home when he marries Suellen. Scarlett lies that Suellen is marrying Tony Fontaine next week.

When Frank and Scarlett get to Miss Pitty's house, Mammy is standing outside looking angry. But when she sees Frank, she smiles. She goes to make Scarlett a cup of tea. Scarlett begs Frank to escort her to Fanny Elsing's wedding that evening, and he agrees. She squeezes his hand and goes into the house. Upstairs, Mammy strips off Scarlett's wet clothes and tucks her into bed. Mammy says she knows Scarlett is planning to marry Frank, and Mammy will help her do it; at least Frank is a gentleman. Scarlett realizes that Mammy is just as practical as she is. Mammy wants to help Scarlett because she's Ellen's oldest child. Scarlett feels hopeful again.

Scarlett looks at her messy hair and pale face in a mirror. She tells Mammy to get the five-dollar gold piece from her purse and buy her some rouge and cologne. Mammy is scandalized that Scarlett wants to use makeup. Scarlett reminds her that Grandma Robillard used makeup. Mammy says times were different back then, and Scarlett can't make her go because Mammy is free. When Scarlett says she'll go herself, Mammy insists on going so Scarlett won't be seen buying makeup in public.

That night, Scarlett enters the Elsing's on Frank's arm, and everyone rushes to greet her. It is fun to be at a real party again. After the ceremony, a band plays and the guests dance. Scarlett feels uneasy about her dress because it's still dirty. However, it looks better than most of the frocks there. Knowing the Elsing's are in financial trouble, Scarlett wonders where the money for the wedding came from. Like the Tarletons' tombstones, she thinks a wedding is a foolish extravagance.

*Scarlett shows Frank how poor she is by telling him she sells goods to Yankees. Like most Southerners, Frank finds this disgraceful. Although he is profiting off the fall of the Confederacy, he sees this as very different from profiting from the Yankees' triumph. Frank wants to do something to protect Scarlett from unladylike business matters and Yankees. In this way, Scarlett woos Frank by leading him to believe she's helpless and naive even though she isn't either. She gains power, in other words, by acting powerless.*



*Mammy disapproved of Scarlett's trip to Atlanta not because of her practical plan to seduce a husband, but because of her plan to seduce Rhett specifically. Mammy thinks Frank is a gentleman and Rhett Butler is not, even though Rhett and Frank have both made their fortunes through very similar means. Mammy still cares about traditional Southern ideals that Scarlett thinks don't matter anymore, such as breeding and reputation. Mammy's willingness to help also highlights her loyalty to the O'Haras and her commitment to the family's success.*



*Scarlett plans to seduce Frank with her appearance and charms rather than her character and virtue. Scarlett's scandalous use of makeup draws a connection between her and Belle Watling, who is described as wearing cologne and makeup. Although Scarlett thinks she's better than Belle, her tactics are similar, suggesting that there's not actually much difference between the two women.*



*In Scarlett's opinion, a wedding is something that only makes sense when one has money and can pull it off extravagantly. Otherwise, she sees no point. She doesn't understand the sentimental value of the Tarletons' tombstones or the Elsing's wedding celebration, believing that these people shouldn't try to show off wealth they don't have. But Scarlett, of course, is doing the exact same thing with her curtain dress: she's trying to look wealthier than she is.*



Scarlett had tended the groom—Tommy Wellburn—in the hospital. He limps due to a wound on his hip, and she can't imagine how he's able to work on a labor crew. She converses with other guests about their new jobs, and Scarlett lies that her "darkies" perform manual labor at **Tara**. The group also discusses baby names. When Tommy asks Scarlett to dance, she declines and asks Frank to meet her in the alcove with refreshments.

Scarlett goes to the alcove and waits for Frank. She pushes her embarrassing meeting with Rhett from her mind and focuses on the party. The room was beautiful before the war. It was full of soft sofas and laden buffet tables, and a chandelier threw prisms of light. Now, the chandelier is dark; the Yankees smashed it. The walls are cracked and the tables are scratched. Instead of a sofa, she sits on a hard bench.

Scarlett likes hearing music again after so long. But, looking around at the dancers, they seem like ghosts. She feels like she's seeing something she doesn't understand. The people are bitter now that the Cause is lost. The conventions of the old world—manners, courtesy, leisure—are all that remain. Scarlett notices how these people still pretend to be ladies and gentlemen as though nothing has changed. Her hardness is different from theirs. Unlike them, she'll do anything to survive. Scarlett finds that she hates these people for pretending to be proud ladies. She knows she won't feel like a lady again until **Tara** is rich and Black hands are picking cotton. These people think gentility is about breeding, but Scarlett knows that it's about wealth. Poverty never would've humiliated Ellen, but it humiliates Scarlett.

Maybe everyone else is right and Scarlett is wrong. But Scarlett looks to the future, whereas they look to the past. They look down on trying to make money, but Scarlett will do anything not to be poor and to keep **Tara**. Right now, Frank is her future because he has money and she needs it. She recalls that Rhett once said a person could make money from the wreck of a civilization. She will make her money out of the South's wreck. Just then, Frank approaches. Scarlett hasn't considered whether it's worth marrying Frank to keep Tara, and she wishes he was gallant and confident. But he's gullible, which will get Scarlett his money—but he won't earn her respect.

*Scarlett is very embarrassed of her poverty and won't admit to anyone that she works like a field hand at Tara. In this way, although she accuses everyone around her of pretending nothing has changed, she does the same, pretending she still owns enslaved people (or now employs free Black people) and lives like a lady.*



*All Scarlett can notice at the party is how different everything is after the war, especially how less opulent everything looks. She notices the decrepitude of the Elsing's house. Her focus is on her friends' poverty, not on the fact that she's at a joyous wedding celebration.*



*Scarlett believes that when the war took away the South's wealth, everything else went with it. She connects gentility with wealth, believing that no one should pretend to have manners, dignity, or pride unless they have money too. Other Southerners believe the South has lost its wealth but not its character or dignity. Consequently, as she faces poverty, Scarlett veers toward moral collapse, as she's willing to do anything for money. Scarlett still wants to be a "great lady" like Ellen, but thinks she, and not Ellen, knows the right way to get there.*



*The narration implies that Southerners associate making money with modernity. Making money means the formerly wealthy Southerners must forget the past and what they've lost and then start fresh. Many are unwilling to do this because they don't want their society to change; they are loyal to the way things were. It is left ambiguous as to who makes the right sacrifice—Scarlett, or everyone else.*



## CHAPTER 36

Two weeks later, Scarlett marries Frank. During these two weeks, she worries over his slowness, afraid a letter will come from Suellen and ruin things. Thankfully, Suellen is a poor correspondent. Scarlett hides her motive well, treating Frank with helpless admiration. It soothes his hurt feelings over Suellen to have a woman appreciate him. He calls on Scarlett every night, enjoying how she listens to him and asks foolish questions about his business. They get married without any family, “like an elopement.” Frank feels he’s done the first romantic thing in his life and doesn’t really know how it all happened.

Frank gives Scarlett \$300, so Scarlett sends Mammy to **Tara** to deliver the money and bring Wade back. Scarlett wonders what Ashley thinks of her. She’s homesick when she realizes she estranged herself from Tara in order to save it. There is suspicious gossip over why Frank married Scarlett when he was engaged to Suellen and Suellen sends an angry letter to Scarlett, but Scarlett doesn’t care. All she cared about is that Tara is safe.

Scarlett realizes Frank needs to make more money so she can pay next year’s taxes. When she starts making business suggestions, Frank is upset: he’d been charmed by her naïve curiosity in business before they married, but he resents that she’s genuinely interested in business. He feels it’s unladylike for a woman to have a brain. Soon, he realizes that Scarlett deceived him when Tony Fontaine visits **Atlanta** and isn’t married to Suellen. Frank is too ashamed to write to Suellen and explain things. He pridefully believes Scarlett fell in love with him, and she’s sweet and loving if she gets her way.

Two weeks after marrying Scarlett, Frank gets sick and has to stay in bed. Pretending to want to ease his worries about the store, Scarlett goes to check on it. She wants to see how Frank’s finances really stand. The store is dark and dingy with a dirt floor. The front is organized, but in the back, goods are piled chaotically and covered in grime. If Frank’s goods are this disorganized, what will his finances be like? The counter boy doesn’t think women should be involved in business, so he doesn’t want to show Scarlett the account book. But Scarlett dismisses him and studies the book.

*Scarlett deceives Frank in much the same way she deceived Charles. Both men are timid and ingratiating. Neither really knows what is happening or what they are getting themselves into. They both feel that marrying Scarlett is romantic and wild, which flatters their timid natures. In this way, Scarlett takes advantage of men who are gullible and impractical because they easily allow her to hold power over them.*



*It is ironic that in order to save Tara, Scarlett has to move permanently to Atlanta. This suggests that Tara is mostly a symbol for Scarlett: it represents her ownership of something and her success. Although she does miss it, she doesn’t need to live there to feel this way. She also feels no remorse after taking Frank from Suellen, illustrating her lack of morals.*



*Although Scarlett pretended to be sweet and naïve before she married Frank, it was only a power move in order to seduce him. Now that she’s married to him, she exercises her power by wielding her good business sense. Frank is very old-fashioned in that he believes women aren’t as smart as men, and that they should be submissive and sweet. He does not like that Scarlett acts like she’s a man’s equal—but the only way to get her to act “sweet” is to let Scarlett do whatever she wants.*



*It isn’t common at this time for women to be interested in business, let alone good at it—recall that women are taught how to woo men and little else. Scarlett, though, isn’t like most women in the novel because she’s so practical and power-hungry. As she’s done before, Scarlett manipulates Frank into thinking she’s being a sweet, loving wife—and then does what she wants and takes power for herself.*



Scarlett discovers that many people owe Frank money, and if he hadn't let people buy on credit, he'd have enough money for taxes *and* the sawmill. It's startling to realize that Scarlett might be a better businessperson than Frank, especially since she was raised to think women are useless without men. But Scarlett ran **Tara** all by herself—clearly, she realizes, women can do anything. Scarlett copies down the names of the people who owe Frank and vows to make him collect the money.

As Scarlett pores over the numbers, Rhett Butler walks in the store, extravagantly dressed in new clothes. He laughs merrily, calling Scarlett “Dear Mrs. Kennedy.” He says he stopped at Pittypat’s and heard of her marriage. She asks how he can face her after their last meeting, and he asks how *she* can face *him*. Scarlett says she’s sad he wasn’t hanged. Rhett says he knows Scarlett has forgiven him, and that she’s faking dignity. He asks if Frank is more alluring than him, and remarks that she’s now married two men for convenience. Scarlett wants to yell at him, but he is right. Rhett then explains that he got out of jail that morning with the help of blackmail and a friend in the federal government. He admits he’s guilty, and his nonchalance scares Scarlett. Rhett also says he now has access to his half a million dollars.

Scarlett thinks it is unfair that an awful man like Rhett Butler is so rich while everyone else is poor. She says it’s dishonest of him to hold the Confederate gold, but privately, she knows he did the same thing as Frank. Rhett briefly explains how he ended up getting to keep money that initially belonged to the Confederacy—since the Confederacy doesn’t exist now, it’s his. Scarlett points out that there might not be a Confederacy, but there are starving Confederates. Rhett mocks Scarlett and says she must want his money. He asks what Suellen said when Scarlett married Frank. Scarlett lies that Suellen said nothing.

Rhett asks bluntly if Frank has as much money as Scarlett hoped. Scarlett considers asking Rhett to leave, but he’s the only person she can tell the truth to because he knows what she did and doesn’t judge her for it. Rhett asks if she paid the taxes and if **Tara** is safe. The look in his eyes makes her wonder if he really cares about her. She smiles and says Tara is safe. Scarlett says a lot of people owe Frank money and he is too shy to ask them to pay up. She paid Tara’s taxes, but she wants more money. Rhett says he’ll give her a loan without the “collateral” she offered last time.

*Rhett had once said Scarlett was perfectly capable of protecting herself and getting to Tara on her own, but she didn't believe him. But now that she has the time to look through Frank's books and figure out what must be done to remedy his finances, she realizes Rhett was right. She realizes what's held her back is traditional Southern society, not her intelligence.*



*When Rhett finds out that Scarlett married Frank, he admires her practicality and tenacity. However, he exposes her selfishness and mocks her for being selfish, but at the same time he confidently admits how selfish he is with the Confederate money. This sets Scarlett and Rhett on an even playing field whether Scarlett likes it or not. Then, though Rhett doesn't fit the Southern image of a gentleman in many ways, he suggests he shares white Southern gentlemen's racism by admitting he killed a Black man.*



*Rhett and Frank's money-making strategy is essentially the same, but Scarlett only tries to shame Rhett for being dishonest and predatory—Frank's money benefits her, while Rhett's doesn't if they're not married. In much the same way she uses romance and her sexuality to manipulate men, Scarlett tries to now use morality as a tool to gain the upper hand in this conversation.*



*Because Rhett and Scarlett are both selfish and practical, they can talk about even the things that aren't considered polite or appropriate subjects. Scarlett keeps trying to look down on Rhett, but she can't deny that she finds their similarities comforting. Rhett also asks Scarlett about Tara, seeming to actually care if she was able to save it—and by extension, he perhaps cares about her as well.*



Rhett says that Scarlett must promise not to buy anything for Ashley Wilkes with his loan. Furious, Scarlett says Ashley never took any money from her. Rhett says he knows Ashley's been at **Tara**, abusing Scarlett's generosity. Mockingly, he says he knows Ashley is "sublime," but it's unmanly of him to live on Scarlett's charity and not make his own living.

Scarlett says Ashley's been working as a field hand. Rhett says the Wilkeses aren't cut out to be field hands, so Ashley must not be much help. He asks what she needs the money for. Rhett laughs as he watches her struggle with her anger and her desire for the money. Scarlett says she wants to buy a sawmill and explains how lucrative the lumber business will be. She says she'll tell Frank she sold Rhett her diamond earrings to buy the sawmill.

Scarlett says money is the most important thing in the world. She plans to earn lots of money, so she'll always have food, pretty clothes, and **Tara**. She says Rhett doesn't understand because he's never been hungry. Rhett reminds her of his stint in the army, but Scarlett says he's never had to pick cotton. Rhett laughs that Scarlett's mind used to be consumed with Ashley, but Scarlett cuts him off and tells him to stop talking about Ashley. He says that if she wants his loan, she'll let him talk about Ashley.

Rhett insists it's obvious Scarlett still loves Ashley. Does Ashley still love her, or has he learned to love Melanie? Scarlett doesn't want to talk about it; Rhett doesn't understand how pure Ashley's love for her is because Rhett only understands love like the kind he has for Belle Watling. Scarlett insists that Ashley would never do anything inappropriate with her. Rhett asks if Ashley loves her mind. He asks if she's saying that her physical beauty doesn't move Ashley, and that, if she were ugly, Ashley would still love her.

Scarlett remembers how Ashley kissed her in the orchard and blushes. Her love for Ashley doesn't seem so beautiful anymore. Rhett says if Ashley loved her for her mind then he wouldn't have to resist her so much. He insists that Ashley's desire for Scarlett must put him in hell, and now he has neither honor nor love. Scarlett cries that Ashley loves her, but Rhett asks why Ashley let her come to **Atlanta**. She says Ashley didn't know what she was planning. Rhett says that if Ashley didn't know, then he doesn't love Scarlett.

*Rhett looks down on Ashley because he isn't doing what Rhett suggests a man should do (that is, making his own money and saving Tara or Twelve Oaks himself). Rhett also implies that he's jealous of Ashley, or at least the attention Scarlett pays him.*



*Scarlett wants money so much that she's willing to put aside her anger at Rhett in order to get it, even when he insults Ashley. This suggests that Scarlett's desire for money surpasses even her feelings for Ashley. Rhett points out that Scarlett and Ashley deviate in their major interests and talents—while Ashley is implied to be a terrible field worker, Scarlett is planning to create a lumber empire.*



*Rhett further points out that Scarlett's obsession with money has replaced her obsession with Ashley. Before the war, Scarlett believed that nothing mattered without the right man, but now she believes that money alone is the most important thing in the world. This suggests that Ashley and his lack of practicality don't fit into Scarlett's current world.*



*Scarlett asserts that Ashley's love for her is nothing like the lust she believes men feel for sex workers. This implies that Scarlett thinks there are two kinds of love: love of one's mind, and love of one's body. Ashley oscillates back and forth between his feelings for Melanie and his feelings for Scarlett, and Rhett seems to be asking which girl he loves physically, and which more deeply.*



*When Scarlett thinks about when Ashley kissed her in the orchard, it seems more like lust to her than deep love. Rhett points out that Ashley talks about "honor," but Rhett suggests Ashley is only trying to resist that he's sexually attracted to her. Scarlett continues to make excuses for Ashley, but he is starting to sound weak in Rhett's terms. Recall too that Ashley did have some inkling of what Scarlett was planning—so by Rhett's logic, he doesn't love her.*



Scarlett thinks it is unfair of Rhett to expect Ashley to be a mind reader. But then she wonders if Rhett is right. If Ashley had said one tender word in the orchard, she never would've come to **Atlanta**. Scarlett decides Rhett is just trying to ruin her love with Ashley. Rhett says Scarlett has enough on her plate without Ashley and asks how much money she wants. Part of Scarlett wants to refuse Rhett's money, but she needs it. She decides that when she's rich, she'll have nothing to do with Rhett. Rhett says she's pretty, and he'll buy her anything she wants. She tells Rhett to drive her to the sawmill. She wants to buy it, and she doesn't care what people think if they see her driving around with Rhett Butler.

Frank wishes he never told Scarlett about the sawmill. It was embarrassing that she bought the sawmill, that Rhett Butler helped her do it, and that she plans to operate it herself. He feels that a wife should submit to her husband. He can't believe she wants to "go into the lumber business" because he's never heard of any woman in business. To his horror, Scarlett drives to the mill daily and sells lumber in town. Once, she intercepts Tommy Wellburn, who is buying lumber elsewhere, and convinces him to buy from her instead. How could a woman do business with men and publicly display her aptitude for math!

Frank hates that Scarlett sends all her money to **Tara** instead of giving it to him. Then, she has more crazy ideas that scandalize him. She wants to open a saloon at the mill because it would bring in good money, and then she could buy more mills. Her opinions also shock Frank: she hates how lazy free Black workers are and wishes the Freedman's Bureau would let her whip them. Before marrying her, she'd been sweet and feminine. Now she talks and makes decisions like a man. Mrs. Elsing and Mrs. Merriwether are commanding women, but they at least pretend to submit to men's opinions. Everyone talks about Scarlett. Also, Rhett Butler always visits Scarlett, and Frank can't stand it. He worries that his neighbors think he's allowing his wife to "unsex" herself.

Whenever Frank tries to stop Scarlett from doing anything, she flies into a rage. She is fond of Frank and appreciates that he saved **Tara**, but his shyness annoys her and he isn't a good businessman. She forces him to collect what was owed to him, realizing he'd never make money without her help. He would've been a good businessman in the old days, but he lacks the aggressiveness required in these hard times.

*Scarlett can't deny that Ashley didn't make an effort to woo her and keep her at Tara. But when she decides that Rhett is just trying to ruin her love story by putting it in blunt terms, it suggests that her love story with Ashley is a fantasy that requires Scarlett's constant effort to keep it intact. Scarlett's relationship with Ashley has never made sense to her, and that's why she finds it beautiful—even though in all other ways, she is a rational, practical thinker.*



*Now that Scarlett has married Frank and taken control of his business, she no longer pretends that she's a sweet, submissive woman. She drives around by herself, manages the sawmill, haggles with people in the streets, and shows how smart she is—all of which are unladylike behaviors. Scarlett is breaking out of the confines of female standards. This makes her a successful businesswoman, but it makes things difficult for her at home.*



*Scarlett's behavior and opinions challenge what's considered proper for women to do. She has often been compared to a Yankee because of her desire for money and her practicality, but her feelings towards Black people are even more violent than other Southerners'. In this way, Scarlett seems to have gone beyond affiliations altogether and has become simply practical and businesslike. She doesn't fit in with Southerners who think of the past, nor with the Yankees who view Black people as equals.*



*Frank would've been a good businessman in the old days—that is, the prewar South—when good manners were all that mattered. In the rapidly changed times, ruthlessness is necessary because no one's wealth is guaranteed. Scarlett believes these times call not for generosity but for selfishness.*



What with managing the mill, Scarlett is grumpy when she comes home. Frank wants peace and quiet in his old age. Sometimes, Scarlett makes him happy, but she doesn't behave how he believes women should behave. He decides that if she had a baby, she'd be happy to stay home. He knows she's unhappy (she cries in the middle of the night), because all women are unhappy unless they have a baby.

*Frank thinks a baby would make Scarlett happy, but she has never been inclined toward motherhood. Frank's thought process then mostly reflects his habit of looking at women as all the same; he makes no effort to get to know who Scarlett is and what could be making her unhappy.*



## CHAPTER 37

One rainy night, Tony Fontaine knocks on Miss Pitty's door in the middle of the night. Scarlett and Frank wake up in fright. Tony has come all the way from Jonesboro, riding his horse as fast as he could, and his news forces Scarlett to face the horrors of Reconstruction again. Tony shares that the Yankees are after him and says he's only alive thanks to Ashley. When Scarlett asks what happened, Tony says he cut Jonas Wilkerson "to ribbons." Frank nods approvingly. There seemed to be some understanding between him and Tony. Scarlett asks how Ashley is involved. Tony says the Yankees aren't after Ashley because Ashley didn't kill Jonas. While Frank saddles the horse, Tony tells Scarlett that Jonas had been stirring up free Blacks and promising them they could vote and marry white women. Tony cries that this can't be tolerated.

*Although the war is over, the tensions between North and South are getting worse rather than better. Scarlett's first encounter with the "horrors of Reconstruction" was when Jonas Wilkerson raised the taxes on Tara, hoping to displace the old wealthy plantation owners. Now, she encounters another supposed horror: that Jonas and other Yankees and Scallawags want to allow Black people to vote and marry white women. Southerners are in outrage that people they've viewed as lesser for generations are not only free, but might also be integrated into society as equals.*



Tony continues his story: one day, Eustis, the Fontaines' old enslaved foreman, came into the Fontaine's kitchen drunk and said something insulting to Sally Fontaine. Tony heard her scream and ran in and shot Eustis. Then Tony went to Jonesboro to hunt down Jonas. Since Tony forgot his pistol, he killed Jonas with his knife. Then Ashley told him to go. Tony plans to settle in Texas and hopes the Yankees won't find him. He says goodbye, goes out into the rain, and mounts the horse Frank has ready for him.

*Before hearing what Eustis said to Sally, Tony shoots him. What Tony despises is that Black people have been given the freedom to say whatever they want to white people. Tony's violent reaction in which he kills two people—Eustis and Jonas, the man who emboldened Eustis to feel powerful—reveals that the South is far from accepting Black people as equals.*



The full meaning of Reconstruction hits Scarlett over the head. She knows now why Frank doesn't like her driving around alone with all the "free issue niggers" about. The Yankees will hang anyone who avenges a white woman for being raped or killed by a Black man. All the white men in the South are eager to defend their white women. Men who had been defeated after the war are becoming reckless and angry again, and Scarlett sympathizes. The South is too beautiful to be "ruined" by Yankees and Black people.

*The "full meaning of Reconstruction" is that the North wants to integrate Black people into society so that they have the same rights as white people. This hits home when Southerners realize that Black men could then marry and have sex with white women. Southerners like Frank and Scarlett see this as "ruining" the South—that is, they see the South as a place where only white people should have power.*





When Frank comes in, Scarlett runs to him and asks how long the South will be like this. Frank soothes her and tells her not to worry about men's business. He assures her that when Southerners have the vote again, everything will be okay. Scarlett doesn't want her children raised in this state of uncertainty and violence. But she doesn't think voting will help anything; she thinks only money will restore the South. As they go back to bed, Scarlett tells Frank she is pregnant.

The Yankees hear that Tony left Miss Pitty's, so they repeatedly search her house. Pitty didn't know about Tony's visit, so she truthfully says she hasn't seen him. Scarlett hates and fears the Yankee soldiers. There's been talk of the North confiscating Rebel property, and she fears the loss not only of **Tara** and Pitty's house, but of the sawmill and store. She's mad at Tony for putting her in danger. And why did Ashley send Tony to them? She swears not to help anyone again, unless it's Ashley. Finally, the Yankees give up and leave Miss Pitty's house alone.

Scarlett now sees how uncertain life is. She shares the South's belief that Reconstruction is making Southerners powerless against forces that want to take everything that belongs to them. As they see it, only Black people have rights now. The Yankees stationed in Georgia regulate how white Southerners run their businesses, what songs they sing, and what oaths they marry under. They take over all the newspapers so no one can publicly protest. All protesters are jailed without trial and suspected of affiliation with the Ku Klux Klan. Black people can make accusations, encouraged by the North's promise that they'll soon have the right to vote.

In the South's opinion, it's awful that the lowest class of formerly enslaved Black people are now the "lords of creation." Now, the highest-class ex-enslaved persons scorn freedom, but the low fieldhand class embraces it and are at the top of the social order. The free Blacks act like the "creatures of low intelligence" the South thought they were. They live in squalor because the Freedmen's Bureau, only focused on the politics, neglects them. They send them back to their white former enslavers with instructions that they be paid wages. White women who live alone are attacked by these ex-enslaved persons. The Ku Klux Klan is created out of a perceived "tragic necessity" to avenge these atrocities. Scarlett is scared of the "lawless negroes" and the Yankees. She kept thinking of what Tony Fontaine said: it can't be tolerated!

*Frank thinks that once native Southerners have the vote, they will be able to reinstate their racist beliefs. Scarlett, on the other hand, sees money as a faster route to becoming powerful. Note that being female, Scarlett can't vote, so this may influence her thinking. She can amass money and power in other ways, but since she's a woman, government is inaccessible to her.*



*As much as Scarlett hates the Yankees and supports Tony's murder of Jonas Wilkerson and Eustice, she doesn't want to lose her property. She implies she'd rather tolerate the Yankee laws so she can safely grow her fortune. So while Scarlett continues to see money as the way to gain power in the new South, other Southerners—like Tony and Ashley—stand up aggressively for their beliefs instead.*



*The North reconstructs the South by extensively monitoring Southerners' activities. Although limiting of the South's freedom of speech seems extreme and oppressive to the Southerners, the Ku Klux Klan is also an extreme manifestation of the South's violent racism towards Black people. The KKK emerges as an extrajudicial group that allows the South to hold onto some power by terrorizing Black people and sympathetic whites.*



*The word choice in this passage illustrates the novel's attitude toward Black people. By referring to them sarcastically as "the lords of creation" and also as "creatures of low intelligence," the novel dehumanizes Black people (by calling them "creatures," not people), and suggests that they're way overstepping to try and take power for themselves. This is how the South justifies creating the KKK. The KKK is a "tragic necessity," subtly suggesting Southerners don't actually want to murder Black people. But still, they see violence as the only way to hold onto power.*



Despite Reconstruction, **Atlanta** is a booming town again. However, money and rights are in the “wrong” hands. The town bustles with a lascivious, Yankee energy, but underneath, Southerners live in fear. The Yankees make Atlanta their headquarters, and Carpetbaggers and refugees come from everywhere. The red-light district and saloons attract more business, and pistol fights break out all night.

Belle Watling is the most famous “madam” in **Atlanta**. She owns a new house that is furnished opulently. Everyone knows Belle couldn’t have afforded the house herself and suspects that Rhett Butler bought it for her. The Yankees build fine homes beside the Southerners’ half-burned homes. They splurge on fine furniture and dine on fine food while in the old houses, Southerners starve. The conquerors are arrogant and the conquered are bitter. Dr. Meade thinks no one should have babies in these awful times.

## CHAPTER 38

Scarlett is afraid Yankees will take everything she has. She doesn’t want to lose everything now when the mill is just starting to earn money. In the spring of 1866, she puts all her energy into the mill. She hates the Yankees and the “impudent free negroes” but keeps her mouth shut, not wanting to end up in jail. She’d never risk everything by joining the Ku Klux Klan. In June, she’ll be too pregnant to go out. It’s already scandalous that she’s out and about now, but she wants to get the mill in order before she goes into confinement in June.

Scarlett puts all her hopes in the mill. Lumber is in high demand as **Atlanta** rapidly rebuilds. Scarlett oversees the operation of the mill and sells lumber in town. She goes out in the streets in a pretty green outfit that conceals her pregnancy and talks business with customers. Sometimes she plays the part of a helpless lady who needs money, but other times she resorts to immoral tactics to win customers. Sometimes she tells prospective customers that her competitors’ lumber is trash, and she sells poor-quality lumber at a high price whenever she can get away with it.

*The “Yankee energy” that dominates Atlanta is seen as low-class and aggressive. The New South is loose, free, and money-loving, whereas the Old South was structured, luxurious, and ruled by people with generational wealth. The South is in a precarious battle between these two lifestyles.*



*As new homes rise up alongside the Southerners’ burned houses, Atlantan society modernizes. For generations, the South’s wealth remained in the same hands. Now, the possibility is open for anyone to make money if they can. The Old Southerners, unused to this way of life, sink deeper into their old ways and endure their poverty bitterly. Insisting nobody should have babies is also a veiled way of saying people should cling to the past, rather than create future generations who will necessarily change things.*



*Scarlett disapproves of the Ku Klux Klan because it puts her and other Southerners in danger—if they’re jailed, they can’t make money. Although she agrees in principle with the Klan, she wants to get on her feet financially, and she believes that protesting the Yankees will only set her back. She’s looking forward and is focusing on her personal gain.*



*In this era, pregnancy is supposed to stop an upper-class woman’s life in its tracks. This view of pregnancy contributes to the idea that women are weaker than men. Scarlett, in going about her business while pregnant, shows that she’s in no way weaker than a man. Further, she continues to use her femininity and her perceived helplessness to trick people.*



Sometimes, Scarlett feels bad for these lies and thinks of what Ellen would say. But Southern chivalry protects her bad behavior: a lady can disrespect a man, but a man will never disrespect her back. Once, one of her lumber competitors talks back. In retaliation, Scarlett steals his customers, drives him to bankruptcy, and buys his mill at a cheap price. Then she looks for a trustworthy person to run her second mill. She doesn't want anyone who's unemployed, because she believes those people lack "gumption." But all the hardworking men, such as Tommy Wellburn and Kells Whiting, are already employed.

One day, Scarlett pulls up beside Rene Picard's pie wagon and asks Rene to work for her. Rene refuses, and their friend Tommy says Scarlett wasn't raised to run a mill. Tommy says everyone's doing what they must, so she should employ a Carpetbagger. She says she doesn't want to hire a thief. Rene and Tommy say all the trustworthy Southern men have better things to do than work for a woman. Scarlett feels that Tommy and Rene are united against her. Tommy recommends she hire Hugh Elsing, but Scarlett says he doesn't have enough "gumption"—the most important quality in a person. But eventually, Scarlett hires Hugh. He's bad at business, but he is honest. She wants to hire a man named Johnnie Gallegher. They get along well and he understands business, but he's busy for now.

Scarlett sends half the money she makes to **Tara**, a third to Rhett, and she hides the rest around the house. Frank puts up with her tantrums because he knows pregnant women often have outbursts. No one knows that she has tantrums because she wants to be financially secure before she has her baby and before taxes are due at Tara again.

It scandalizes **Atlanta** that Scarlett operates the sawmill and leaves her house during her pregnancy. But even worse, she does business with Yankees and enjoys it. Scarlett hates the Yankees as much as everyone, but she wants to make money, and being nice to Yankees helps her do this. Many Yankee officers are building homes and need lumber. Scarlett pretends to be a refined Southern lady in distress, winning their affection. She finds making friends with Yankees easy, as they're lonely and interested in learning about the South. The officers' wives invite Scarlett over for tea. They've read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and want to know if what it says about slavery is true. Did enslavers really keep bloodhounds to hunt runaway enslaved persons? Did enslavers keep enslaved women as concubines? Scarlett resists mentioning how there have been more mixed-race babies since the Yankees came.

*This passage highlights how proper Southern society enables her to cheat people—something that would be considered unladylike. By “gumption,” Scarlett means the willingness to resort to whatever strategy necessary to make money. She herself is perfectly willing to lie and cheat to get more customers than her competitors, so she is looking for a mill manager who is willing to do the same.*



*Rene Picard points out to Scarlett that no man who truly believes in the South's ideals—the very sort of man Scarlett suggests she wants—will agree to work with her. So though Scarlett is a successful businesswoman, constraints placed on women continue to make her life difficult. Scarlett is looking for someone with “gumption”—a quality that seems to be uniquely Yankee because it involves doing everything for money. However, she is not yet ready to hire a Yankee since she's still loyal enough to the Old South to distrust Northerners.*



*Scarlett has become so practical that money is all she can think about. Her obsession with money aligns with her intention of always looking ahead and never back: she always wants to secure the future, and she believes money is the surest way to do so.*



*Southerners in *Gone with the Wind* assert that the stories of white enslaver cruelty are myths. In trying to discredit accounts of slavery like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the South defends itself against the North. Scarlett, for instance, seems to believe that the Yankees were falsely incentivized to free Black people because they are ignorant about slavery and what it really looked like. Though Scarlett looks down on the Yankee women for being so openly curious, she also seems to see Yankee women as valuable people to be close to—she prioritizes future financial gain over supporting, for instance, traditional Southern talking points.*



One day, Scarlett sees how wide the gap between North and South is. She is driving with Peter when three Yankee wives hail her. One says her nurse went back North because she couldn't stand to live around "naygurs," and asks if Scarlett has any suggestions for where to get a new nurse. Scarlett suggests she find a country "darky" who doesn't belong to the Freedman's Bureau. The Yankee woman says she doesn't trust her babies with a Black person. Scarlett, remembering Mammy's gentle hands, thinks how these strangers had no idea how comforting Black people are. She tells the woman her opinion is odd considering that the Yankees freed the "darkies." The woman says Black people "give her the creeps."

Scarlett realizes Peter is breathing heavily. One of the wives points at him and laughs at that "old nigger swelling up like a toad." Peter has never been called "nigger" by a white person. His starts to cry, his pride hurt. Scarlett thinks it is unforgivable that these women insulted Peter; she believes they deserve to be killed. Scarlett says proudly that Peter is family and drives away.

Scarlett sees a tear trickle down Peter's nose. She feels sad for him; it's as though someone had been mean to "a helpless child." Peter says he did his best to care for Pitty all his life. Scarlett says he's like the Angel Gabriel, and then silence falls. Scarlett thinks how stupid Yankees are not to know that Black people need to be "coddled like children." Yankees freed Black people and now wanted nothing to do with them. Scarlett trusts "darkies" more than she trusts white people. She thinks of Mammy, Dilcey, and Pork who have stuck by her despite the promises the Freedman's Bureau made them.

Scarlett says aloud that the Freedman's Bureau set Peter free, but Peter says he won't let "trash" free him. He says Pitty will be upset when he tells her Scarlett let Yankees insult him. Scarlett says she didn't, but Peter argues that she has no place dealing with Yankees. He expects Miss Pitty won't let him drive Scarlett anymore after this. He says it does no good to deal with Yankees if it alienates your own family. Scarlett knows he is right and thinks resentfully of her neighbors. Why does everyone care what she does? When she has money, she'll be kind and generous and everyone will love her as they loved Ellen. She doesn't realize that she has no real desire to be charitable, and only wants people to *think* she's charitable. From then on, Scarlett drives herself around town.

*This passage shows that, even though the North freed Black people, this doesn't mean Northerners don't hold racist views. Scarlett demonstrates how Southerners justify enslaving of Black people by viewing the North as actually crueler and more racist than them. This also, however, suggests that Reconstruction isn't working. If Northerners refuse to employ Black people and describe them using almost subhuman language, Black people aren't going to become equal.*



*Calling Peter family illustrates how the South justifies enslaving Black people by viewing them as an essential part of the ideal Southern family. Scarlett thinks this shows the South's kindness towards Black people, but it only reveals how much they have oppressed them.*



*Scarlett and the Yankee wives display two different forms of racism. Scarlett is nice to Peter because she views Black people as "helpless children." Therefore, she thinks that slavery is good. On the other hand, the Yankee women supported freeing Black people, but they despise them and won't hire them or treat them as equal. Free or enslaved, Black people are still met with hatred and racism.*



*Because the Yankee women openly insulted Peter, he reasons that life is safer and better if he stays essentially enslaved in Pitty's household. The Yankees' racism, in other words, causes Peter and other formerly enslaved people (like Mammy) to stay close to their former enslavers, as this gives them some degree of power and protection. So Peter comes to agree with the Southern white men who look down on Scarlett for working with Yankees: like them, he idealizes the pre-war South. Scarlett, meanwhile, remains unaware that she's selfish and is alienating people.*



Scarlett works hard all May. The only person who seems to understand what she does is Rhett Butler. He's often out of town, likely dating some woman, and when he is in town, he's at Belle Watling's saloon. He no longer calls at Pitty's, but Scarlett runs in to him in town all the time. Sometimes he hitches his horse and drives her buggy. Although he doesn't seem to want anything from her, she wonders if these meetings are on purpose. He doesn't bring up Ashley or the humiliating scene in the jail, and they talk happily for hours without running out of things to say.

On one of these drives, Scarlett complains that everyone in town gossips about what she does. Rhett says it's because she's daring to be different from other women, and her success makes the men jealous. She says she'd be starving if she didn't do what she was doing. Rhett says Atlantans expect her to starve proudly like they do. The other ladies who sell things don't enjoy the work and don't succeed on purpose, which keeps them respectable. He says the penalty for making money in an unladylike manner is loneliness.

Scarlett does feel lonely. She says she's never had female friends. Rhett points out Melanie approves of everything she does. Scarlett remembers privately that Melanie had even approved of her murdering the Yankee. Scarlett says that Melanie has no sense. If she did, says Rhett, she'd realize Scarlett loved Ashley and wouldn't approve of her anymore. She curses him. Rhett says no one of this generation would understand her, but her grandparents would probably be proud. Scarlett laughs, remembering her Grandma Robillard who'd married three times.

Rhett says his grandfather made lots of money as a pirate. When his grandfather died in a saloon brawl, his children were relieved, but Rhett always admired him. Rhett says Scarlett's children will approve of her only if they experience hardship. Scarlett wonders what her and Rhett's grandchildren will be like. Smirking, Rhett asks what she means by *their* grandchildren. Scarlett blushes, suddenly aware of her big stomach which she'd tried to hide under a robe.

*Scarlett and Rhett enjoy each other's company. Rhett accepts Scarlett as an equal, accompanying her on her business trips and talking to her openly about money. In this way, he doesn't view her, as most Southerners do, as inferior because she's female. Note that when they spend time together, there's no indication that Scarlett is trying to beat or trick Rhett—for now he's a friend, not an obstacle.*



*Most Southerners want to "starve proudly" because they view making money as an indecent practice. This is because, before the war, work was a foreign concept to them. Many were generationally wealthy and never had to think about where their money came from. Also, they all had enslaved persons to do everything for them.*



*Even though Scarlett remembers that Melanie is braver and more practical than she appears, she still maintains that Melanie has no sense. Scarlett's obsession with Ashley means she must disapprove of Melanie and create a distinction between them. Rhett also suggests that Scarlett's behavior is only considered inappropriate in the specific context of the 1860s—she's either ahead of or behind the times, depending on one's perspective.*



*Rhett explains that hard work only makes sense to those who have experienced hardship. In this light, the Southerners who disapprove of making money are the ones who reminisce about the comfortable old days when there was no hardship. Scarlett wonders about the future generations because nothing is predictable now that the war has transformed the South.*



Scarlett tells Rhett to get out of her buggy. She becomes suddenly nauseous and vomits. She wants to die of embarrassment. But Rhett tells her not to be ashamed; he knows she's pregnant. He starts to say that's why he's been driving her, but stops. He gently mocks her modesty and says pregnancy is perfectly normal. She should be proud. Scarlett makes a face and says she hates babies. Rhett says they are different because he likes babies. Scarlett is surprised, but then remembers how well Rhett got along with Wade. Rhett says she shouldn't be driving alone. She might be raped or robbed, and this would rile up the KKK and make the Yankees crack down on **Atlanta**. He tells Scarlett to keep a pistol with her offers to drive her when he's in town.

Scarlett asks if Rhett is trying to protect her. Rhett jokes that he's deeply in love with her but is too "honorable" to pursue her; but just like Ashley, his honor fails sometimes. Scarlett tells him to shut up. Rhett says seriously that he wants get Scarlett a gentler horse than won't harm her. She wonders why he is being so kind. Then he teases her again, and she sends him out of her buggy.

Scarlett thinks Rhett is irritating and bad-mannered, but he intrigues her. During these months, Scarlett takes to sneaking sips of brandy throughout the day. She hides this "unwomanly" habit by gargling cologne. When she lies awake at night afraid of the Yankees and missing Ashley, she feels she'll die without whiskey. She misses **Tara** and decides to visit in June. Then she gets a note from Will saying Gerald is dead.

## CHAPTER 39

The day after getting Will's letter, Scarlett's train pulls into Jonesboro. The train depot hasn't been rebuilt since the war. She sits on a barrel and waits for Will, who should be here by now. He should've known she'd take the first train from **Atlanta** when she heard Gerald was dead. She's wearing an ill-fitting mourning dress she borrowed from Mrs. Meade and has only a small bag with her. She doesn't want anyone to see her and say sympathetic things about Gerald. A lump rises in her throat. Why did no one write her that Gerald was sick?

*Further showing how progressive his views towards women are, Rhett is comfortable talking about Scarlett's pregnancy. He also acknowledged when Melanie was pregnant, suggesting he doesn't see pregnancy as shameful (as Scarlett does here). Rhett also surprises Scarlett by telling her that he likes babies. Rhett spends much of his time mocking everything, but there are a few things that seem to really matter to him: he found that he cared for the Confederate Cause, and he likes children.*



*It seems that Rhett cares about Scarlett but isn't willing to admit it. He is clearly protecting her around town, but he covers up his reason for doing so with teasing. Ashley resists his love for Scarlett because he is honorable, but Rhett's seems to insist on keeping his true thoughts private for different reasons.*



*Alcohol helps Scarlett drown out her suffering, which allows her to keep her mind firmly fixed on the future and on making money. Her drinking, like her fixation with the future, is a method of escape. However, Gerald's death calls into question whether Scarlett will be able to successfully continue escaping her emotions.*



*Like Ellen, Gerald dies while Scarlett is away. She loses both her parents while caught up in life in Atlanta, which is very different to how she grew up. Scarlett's determination to secure the future by doing business in Atlanta alienates her from Tara and, before she realizes it, parts of her old life die away. This suggests that she may be losing more than she gains by looking to the future.*



Alex Fontaine crosses the train tracks. When he sees Scarlett, he rushes forward to shake her hand. He says Will is at the blacksmith's and is on the way to pick her up. Alex says he's sorry about Gerald, and that he died like a soldier. Scarlett says she doesn't want to talk about it. Alex says if he had a sister who did what Suellen did, he'd whip her. There is something Scarlett doesn't know, and Alex isn't telling her. Alex looks at her and notices how much she's changed. She looks well-fed, and her eyes have a commanding look in them. Alex has changed too; he looks more rugged than ever. His days in the army had been easy compared to this poverty.

Alex thanks Scarlett for helping Tony escape. He offers to repay her, but Scarlett hushes him. Alex leaves, saying he'll see her tomorrow at Gerald's funeral. Will arrives in the same rickety wagon Scarlett had fled **Atlanta** in. She vows to burn the wagon as soon as possible. Will greets Scarlett like a sister and they start for **Tara** in silence. Scarlett takes in the beautiful red earth, blooming with cotton and honeysuckle. After a bit, Will asks Scarlett if she approves of him marrying Suellen. Surprised, Scarlett says she thought he liked Carreen. Will sighs; Scarlett doesn't know what's been happening here. Carreen is joining a convent; she never got over Brent. Scarlett scoffs and says Charles died but she didn't join a convent. Will says that Charles's death didn't break Scarlett's heart.

Will says that Suellen needs a husband and children like all women do. Scarlett knows there must be another reason why Will wants to marry a "complaining nag" like Suellen. Will says the truth is he doesn't want to leave **Tara**. He's put work into it and now he loves it. Once he marries Suellen, Ashley plans to leave with Melanie and find work in a New York bank. Will says Ashley is ashamed of living at Tara on charity. Scarlett panics. She thinks of Ashley every day; he can't go North! Yes, he's too well-bred to work like a farmer and was meant to live in a mansion, reading books and ruling enslaved persons. He doesn't belong at Tara, but Scarlett won't let him leave Georgia. She'll hire him to run her mill and make it seem like she's doing him a favor.

Will asks Scarlett not to yell at Suellen because it won't bring Gerald back. Scarlett thinks of Gerald's dead body in the parlor and begins to cry. She remembers how Gerald used to cry when she cried, and how he'd come home drunk, jumping fences, and singing at the top of his lungs. Scarlett asks why no one wrote to tell her Gerald was sick. Will says Gerald wasn't sick.

*Alex Fontaine observes that Atlanta has reinvigorated Scarlett. While everyone who is at home in the County is becoming steadily thinner and more haggard, Scarlett has been brought back to life by her time in Atlanta. This suggests that Atlanta is perhaps healthier than the County after the war—at least for someone like Scarlett, who isn't willing to "proudly starve." In the County, everyone clings to the past as it slowly fades away while in Atlanta, more people are rebuilding and making money for a new future.*



*While Scarlett has been in Atlanta, a lot has changed at Tara: Will plans to marry Suellen and Carreen plans to join a convent. Scarlett doesn't understand either decision. She has been so focused on the practical problem of earning money that she can't sympathize with Carreen's emotional turmoil; she can't understand why everyone can't move on from their grief as she has. She is so determined to move on that she wants to burn the rickety wagon that reminds her of her horrifying flight from Atlanta. However, recall that Scarlett is drinking to avoid facing her emotions, so heartbreak may still be in store for her.*



*Scarlett's decision to offer Ashley a position at her mill seems selfish rather than helpful. During their conversation in the orchard, Ashley lamented that he's cowardly in the face of reality. His decision to find a job in New York is an attempt to survive on his own without Scarlett's charity. Rhett Butler pointed out that it was unmanly of Ashley not to support his own family and to accept Scarlett's charity, but now Scarlett plans to yet again enable his weakness by giving him a job at her mill.*



*Although Scarlett was devastated to lose Ellen, she is sad to lose Gerald because he was so similar to her. Together they would go behind Ellen's back because they loved mischief and rowdiness. Scarlett loved and admired Ellen as a great lady, but Gerald was a more realistic role model for her.*



Will tells the story of Gerald's death: Will was paying the taxes and fixing **Tara** with the money Scarlett sent. But Suellen wanted clothes and a horse and carriage. She was jealous that Scarlett had a buggy in **Atlanta**, and she was hurt that Scarlett married Frank. That was a "scurvy trick" to play on Suellen, Will says. Scarlett thinks privately that if a girl can't keep a beau, she deserves to lose him. Will says that a month ago, he took Suellen to Jonesboro, where Suellen visited Cathleen Calvert. Suellen insisted everyone was wrong about Hilton and he's actually nice and smart. She began taking Gerald on walks past Ellen's grave and making him cry.

Will stops the wagon so he can finish the story before they get home. Suellen's idea, he continues, was to take advantage of the Yankee government's offer to pay for damaged property of Union sympathizers. Suellen had learned from Mrs. McIntosh about this offer, and with Hilton's help, gathered the information she needed about the Iron Clad Oath (the oath of Union sympathy). Then, Suellen berated Gerald for letting his family starve when he could get them \$150,000. Scarlett gasps at the high sum, feeling that this much money is worth Suellen's small lie.

Yesterday, Will continues, Suellen took Gerald to Jonesboro. She had made a deal with Hilton that she'd give him some of the money if he attested that Gerald was a Union sympathizer. All Gerald had to do was sign the oath. At the last minute, Gerald refused to sign. Suellen drove him around talking about Ellen and making him cry again. She got him drunk. He was about to sign again when Suellen said the Slatterys wouldn't feel superior to the O'Haras now. Gerald said he wouldn't sign anything such "trash" had signed and that Suellen was no daughter of his.

Will continues: Alex Fontaine saw Gerald in a rage, and Gerald took Alex's horse and rode off. At sundown, Ashley and Will heard Gerald galloping home and singing. As he approached the fence, he said, "Look Ellen!" but the horse didn't jump. Gerald flew forward off the horse and broke his neck. When Scarlett doesn't speak, Will continues towards **Tara**.

## CHAPTER 40

After a sleepless night, Scarlett watches the sun rise over **Tara**. Despite having no master, Tara looks good and the cotton is growing. Scarlett feels thankful for Will. She knows he is responsible for the plantation's success, not Ashley. Tara is now a small farm, not a "planter-aristocrat" estate, but it's saved thanks to Will.

*Suellen and Scarlett have never gotten along, but they're similar in that they both want money and are jealous and competitive when it comes to money and men. Also, like Scarlett, Suellen seems willing to work with Yankees and Scallawags in order to obtain the wealth and status that she wants. This suggests that, although they are always feuding, Suellen and Scarlett both believe that money is the most important thing in the world.*



*Scarlett approves of Suellen's strategy for getting a good sum of money, even if it involves dishonesty. Both sisters are willing to appear disloyal to the Cause and are willing to betray their family in order to get money: Scarlett betrayed Suellen to get Frank's money, and Suellen tries to betray Gerald to get money. Both sisters will do whatever it takes to become rich.*



*Like Scarlett, Suellen believes that money gives a person class. She hates that, in their new state of poverty after the war, the Slatterys now feel superior to the O'Haras. She wants money so she can feel superior to the Slatterys again. Gerald, though, believes that Suellen has disgraced herself by wanting to comply with Yankees. This raises the question of whether class has to do with money, or with loyalty and affiliation.*



*Ellen always feared that Gerald would kill himself jumping his horse drunk, and so he always did it behind her back. He dies how Ellen always feared he would, suggesting that, without her to moderate his behavior, he couldn't survive.*



*Tara has survived by going back to the basics. Instead of being a lavish plantation where its masters live at ease, it is a humble farm. Scarlett knows that Ashley—who can't detach himself from the beauty of the old "planter aristocrat" days—won't be able to take pride in Tara's new look.*





Pork has dug Gerald's grave beside Ellen's. Four men carry out the coffin, followed by a crowd of neighbors. Scarlett notices that Pork's hair is newly grey. Suellen cries noisily, irritating Scarlett because Suellen caused Gerald's death. The neighbors all think Suellen has done something worse than murder Gerald by trying to make him break loyalty to the South. Mr. McRae, Grandma Fontaine, and Mrs. Tarleton—Gerald's closest friends—are particularly angry at her. Will and Ashley talk in Ellen's office about what to do about the angry neighbors. Will is afraid of someone causing a scene. Ashley just sighs; he's giving the service later. Usually neighbors can speak after the service, so Will suggests he speak first to head off bad comments from others.

The coffin is laid in the grave as the neighbors file in. Scarlett is surprised to see that so many people came. Scarlett notices Cathleen Calvert, acting as if her husband hadn't helped bring about Gerald's death. Cathleen is greasy and her fingernails are dirty. Scarlett realizes she'd be just like Cathleen if it wasn't for luck and her "gumption." Scarlett lifts her chin proudly. Ashley steps to the front with Carreen's bible. Scarlett thinks he is better than any priest would be as he proceeds with Hail Marys instead of words about Purgatory. Reaching the end of the Catholic prayers, Ashley launches into an Episcopal service.

When he finishes, Ashley asks if anyone wants to say a few words. Before anyone else could volunteer, Will rises. He says he didn't know Gerald well, but in a few weeks he would've called him Pa. He announces he is going to marry Suellen. The crowd mutters. Mrs. Tarleton's eyes snap, but Will's eyes silently dare her to criticize his fiancé. Will says that Gerald was a true Georgian and had Georgians' good points and bad points. He was fearless and resilient, and nothing from the outside could beat him. But he was beaten from the inside: when Ellen died, his heart died.

Scarlett finds Will's common sense comforting. Will says every Southerner is like Gerald: they can be beaten from the inside when their mainspring—whatever it is—is broken. Mourning would be selfish, for Gerald is happier dead. Then Will asks Mrs. Tarleton to take Scarlett out of the hot sun. Scarlett is humiliated that Will has drawn attention to her pregnancy. Mrs. Tarleton takes her inside, and Grandma Fontaine goes with them.

*As far as the neighbors are concerned, Suellen committed a crime worse than murder. Southerners feel that loyalty to the Cause is the most important thing in the world, and that it is worth dying for. Therefore, Suellen did the worst thing possible in trying to persuade Gerald to break loyalty to the Cause. Scarlett, on the other hand, is angry at Suellen for bringing about Gerald's death. Before she found out that Suellen's trick led to Gerald's death, she approved of her scheme to comply with the Yankees to get money. In this way, Scarlett isn't a faithful Southerner—and neither is Suellen.*



*Cathleen Calvert and Scarlett both resorted to different tactics to save themselves for absolute ruin. Cathleen married her family's old Yankee overseer, Hilton, which allowed her to keep her plantation house. Scarlett, on the other hand, married Frank and took over his businesses to save Tara. Both women had to adapt to a changing postwar world, but Scarlett is still so self-centered that she refuses to give any women credit unless they've done exactly as she's done.*



*Will explains that Gerald represents the quintessential Georgian—hard on the outside but soft-hearted on the inside. The war proved this to be true of Georgians: before and during the war, Georgians were confident and brave. When poverty and hardship swept the state after the war, many Georgians, such as Ashley, didn't know how to keep going. This continues to associate Ellen with the ideal Southern life before the war.*



*Will claims that Gerald is happier dead, suggesting that Gerald was not fit to live in the new South that is completely changed from the old one. The war seems to have acted as a test of strength and resiliency for everyone; some can adapt to the changing times and survive while others can't.*



Grandma Fontaine says Will was really just trying to remove her and Mrs. Tarleton before they said anything disruptive, and to spare Scarlett the sight of the dirt piling up on Gerald's grave. Grandma Fontaine observes that Scarlett has nothing now that her parents are dead, but that she's strong enough to stand alone. Mrs. Tarleton warns Grandma Fontaine not to upset Scarlett into a miscarriage, but Scarlett says she isn't one of those "miscarrying girls." Grandma Fontaine sends Mrs. Tarleton for glasses of buttermilk.

Scarlett unbuttons her tight bodice and looks at the portrait of Grandma Robillard with her breasts half-out. Grandma Fontaine asks if Will is serious about marrying Suellen. Scarlett says he is, and **Tara** is lucky to have him. Grandma Fontaine says Scarlett loves Tara so much that she doesn't mind Suellen marrying an uneducated man from poor lineage to keep it. Scarlett asks why class matters right now. Grandma Fontaine says some people would say she is ignoring rules that should never be ignored, but Scarlett holds firm. Grandma Fontaine asks Scarlett to kiss her, proud of how tenacious she is. She says Will is a gentleman at heart, and he'll do good by Tara. She says he was right when he said people are beaten when they hold onto things that are gone.

Grandma Fontaine says Southerners always stand back up after being beaten, because Southerners are like ripe buckwheat with sap in it; it knows how to stand back up after it's blown down. Grandma Fontaine says that some people don't know how to stand up, like Cathleen Calvert, but the Fontaines and the Tarletons knew how. Scarlett adds that the Wilkeses do too. Grandma disagrees, saying India and Honey haven't tried to catch rich husbands, and Ashley can't even raise a plow. She says Ashley is built for reading books. Alex Fontaine was like that, but necessity made him a good farmer. Grandma Fontaine says Melanie keeps Ashley afloat. Melanie reminds Grandma Fontaine of a young Ellen.

Scarlett is angry that Grandma Fontaine is insulting Ashley. Grandma says Ashley is so different from Scarlett, who went to **Atlanta** to scrounge money however she could. Scarlett says she's wrong. Grandma says Scarlett is smart with money, but not smart like a woman: she knows nothing about people. Scarlett realizes that Grandma made her mad so she'd forget about Gerald, and thanks her. The old lady smiles. Mrs. Tarleton comes back with the buttermilk and says the guests are coming inside.

*Now that both of Scarlett's parents are dead, she has no one to look up to. However, Scarlett believes she's strong enough to stand alone. Further, Scarlett shows how powerful she believes she is by insisting she's not a "miscarrying girl[.]" Essentially, she implies that her ability to carry pregnancies to term makes her a stronger, better woman.*



*Unlike many Southerners, Scarlett believes that her land is more important than class. Class markers, such as education, manners, and lineage, were important before the war, but Scarlett thinks they serve no purpose now. Scarlett now sees that anyone who is strong and smart enough to make their own money and hold onto their land at all costs is basically high-class. In this way, Scarlett values a person based on their tenacity and ingenuity (and specifically, their ability to make money) rather than their breeding.*



*Grandma Fontaine implies that the South will make a comeback, even though it seems utterly beaten at the moment. She lists the people who've stood up after the war, and they're all people who've been able to adapt to the changing times by becoming farmers or marrying for money. In her view, Ashley hasn't adapted, and is one of the people who won't stand back up. Likening Melanie to Ellen suggests that more people than Scarlett now recognize Melanie's strength and tenacity.*



*Grandma Fontaine suggests that Scarlett is more like a man than a woman: she understands money but isn't emotionally intelligent. Her tenacity, practicality, and determination all make her a great businesswoman and survivor, but they seem to come at the cost of her perceiving and sympathizing with others' feelings. Grandma Fontaine implies too that Scarlett's business sense will cost her love as well.*



## CHAPTER 41

After the guests leave, Scarlett goes into Ellen's office and calls Pork in after her. She asks if he remembers the day she caught him stealing chickens when she'd promised him a watch. She hands him Gerald's opulent gold watch. Pork says it should belong to Wade. Scarlett says Wade never did anything for Gerald and asks if Pork would like her to engrave the watch. Pork refuses at first, but Scarlett insists. He says Scarlett is nicer to "niggers" than to white folks. She asks him to send Ashley to her.

When Ashley enters the office, Scarlett offers him a job at the mill. Ashley says nothing. Scarlett brings up her pregnancy to impress on him her need for his help. He stops her, and she asks if her pregnancy is why he won't look at her. He says she always looks beautiful. He says he is ashamed for letting her marry Frank. Because of him, Ashley says, Scarlett went and married a man she didn't love. Scarlett knows Ashley still loves her, but she reminds herself not to throw herself at him. She says he can't go to New York and work in a bank with Yankees—and she says she'll accommodate his inexperience at the mill. Ashley says he doesn't want her accommodations anymore. He needs to learn to stand on his own.

Scarlett asks what happened to Ashley, and why he's become so bitter. Ashley says he realized he was acting like a woman instead of a man. If he goes to **Atlanta** to work for Scarlett, he'll be "lost forever." Scarlett worries that by "lost" he means the Yankees are after him. Ashley smiles at her literalness and explains that if he goes to Atlanta he'll lose all self-respect. Then he looks at her and says there are other reasons. Scarlett says she'll never throw herself at him again. He insists it won't work, and that he's going to New York. He walks towards the door.

Scarlett flings herself on the sofa and cries. Melanie bursts in, worried that Scarlett is having her baby. Scarlett says Ashley is mean and hateful. Melanie throws herself on the sofa and embraces Scarlett, scolding Ashley for upsetting Scarlett. Ashley explains what Scarlett offered. Scarlett wails that she'll lose money and starve because Ashley won't help her. Melanie reproaches Ashley, asking how he can refuse Scarlett when she'd been so kind to them. Melanie notes that she would have died if it wasn't for Scarlett. And she'd love to be back home in **Atlanta**; she only agreed to New York because she thought there was no work in Atlanta. Ashley says "Scarlett" and she looks up at him. He says he'll come to Atlanta because he cannot fight both her and Melanie. He leaves the room with a look in his eyes that scares her.

*Scarlett's action suggests that the O'Haras have a history of being very good to their enslaved persons. When Scarlett gives Pork Gerald's watch, she rewards him for being a loyal enslaved person even though he is technically free. Although her gesture is kind on the surface, it belittles Pork and praises his subservience.*



*Ashley's plan to go to New York is an attempt to face reality—something he's been struggling to do. Going to Atlanta would represent weakness for Ashley; it means he'll live off Scarlett's charity again, while also being constantly confronted by his desire for her. At this point, Scarlett seems to know that Ashley is weak; she says she'll make accommodations for him at the mill, knowing that he likely isn't a good businessman. However, she is still in love with him, so she refuses to recognize his weakness.*



*When Ashley says that he'll be "lost forever" when he goes to Atlanta, he means that he'll lose all hope of good character. He is afraid he's become too much like a woman—that is, not able to support himself. By contrast, Scarlett approaches everything with an attitude the novel codes as masculine. She doesn't understand what it means to fear losing one's character; she's already sacrificed hers in order to remedy her poverty—and poverty is all that scares her.*



*Scarlett puts on a false show of helplessness and tears to persuade Ashley to accept the position at the mill. Scarlett has never been seen to cry, nor is her situation at the mill as desperate as she claims it is. Scarlett also persuades Ashley by appealing to Melanie's kindness and loyalty. She once again deceives Melanie into thinking she's acting out of good intentions when really, she just wants Ashley—Melanie's husband—near her in Atlanta. Melanie remains unaware of what's going on; for her, Atlanta just represents home and happiness.*



After Suellen and Will marry and Carreen goes to the convent, Ashley, Melanie, and Beau move to **Atlanta**, bringing Dilcey with them. They move into a house with a backyard that connects to Pitty's. The top story of the house was destroyed during the siege, and the previous owner built a flat roof over the first story. It's squat with a large set of stairs and an unkempt lawn. Scarlett thinks it's ugly, but Melanie loves it; it's her first home. India comes from Macon to live with them when Honey marries. India looks obviously like a "spinster" now that she's 25.

Melanie and Ashley furnish their house with the cheapest goods from Frank's store. They buy it on credit and refuse anything nicer, and Melanie is proud of her home even though it is so ill-furnished. She is happy, but she still isn't well. She's so thin she looks like a child, with no breasts or hips. However, her huge eyes have a sweet tranquility that never disappears. Her house is always full of people. The old days come to life under her roof; she refuses to change in a changing world, remaining kind and loyal to tradition.

The old ladies of **Atlanta** say Melanie is a role model who will lead young people away from traitorous actions. The traitors are the people who went to the Yankees or made money in dishonest ways. Rhett Butler is in the latter group. The worst traitors are girls who were too young during the war to understand the Cause, and now are marrying Yankee officers. Melanie becomes the leader of a new society. She starts and manages several associations and organizations.

Melanie is also secretary for a sewing circle and a group that beautifies Confederate graves. A debate breaks out between the two clubs as to whether weeds should be removed from Yankee as well as Confederate graves. Melanie raises her soft voice and says they should put flowers on Yankee graves. She says that if Charles had been buried on enemy ground, she'd want a nice Yankee woman to put flowers on his grave. She threatens to withdraw from both clubs and plant the flowers herself.

On summer nights, Melanie's house is always full. Many prominent Confederates often attend. Scarlett won't host such guests until she has fine wine to offer again, but everyone rallies around Melanie like they did around the Cause. Dr. Meade speaks one night of "building back" the South as if the Glorious Cause still stands.

*Scarlett thinks Melanie and Ashley's new house is ugly because it is dilapidated and shows off their poverty. By contrast, Melanie loves it because having one signals that she can afford one, even if it's not luxurious. Scarlett thinks there's nothing to be proud of except wealth and extravagance whereas Melanie, like other Southerners, is still proud even though she is poor.*



*Melanie helps the old days come back to life by showing that at least in her case, a person doesn't need to change even though the world has changed. Even though Melanie's house is nowhere near as fancy as the old estates of the South, she is still proud of it. By taking pride in her home, Melanie gives Southerners hope that the Southern spirit can survive the South's material poverty.*



*Traditional Southerners believe that people have gone too far to survive. They view it as a betrayal to make money with the help of Yankees or to marry a Yankee. In this way, they scorn anyone who adapts to the changing times and anyone who moves towards the future instead of back to the past.*



*In many ways, Melanie acts as a mediator between the Yankees and the Confederates. Her universal sympathy and kindness draws everyone's attention to the similar suffering of people on both sides of the war. In this way, she brings some compassion to the new South by ignoring division and promoting general acts of kindness and generosity.*



*Scarlett doesn't understand why anyone would give a party unless they had the money to host it lavishly. Melanie sees that the South's community is held together by something more than money. The community stays intact because they still believe in the Cause, not in moving forward and becoming rich again.*



Scarlett goes to the parties until her stomach is too big. At the parties, she sits in the shadows and watches Ashley. Everyone discusses hard times, politics, and the war, and it bores her. People lie and say good times will return. They spoke of the impudence of free Blacks and wonder when Reconstruction will end. Scarlett hates that they only talk of the war. Even children talk about it. She hates when Melanie talks about Scarlett's bravery at **Tara**, because she feels no pride in what she did. Scarlett wonders why everyone else can't look forward instead of looking back. Eventually, she begins to use her pregnancy as an excuse to stop attending. Melanie, who wants another baby but can't have one, understands. Scarlett is secretly aware that Ashley and Melanie can't be truly intimate with each other.

Scarlett sees Ashley often but never alone. If she wasn't pregnant, she'd drive out to the mill with him every day—she'll never talk to him again about love, but maybe they could be friends. Scarlett resents her pregnancy because she wants to be running the mills. Hugh is incompetent, his Black labor crews often don't show up for work, and Scarlett is anxious because she's losing money. Scarlett tells Frank one night that she's going to lease convicts to work at the mills. Then she won't have to answer to the Freedman's Bureau. Frank is appalled. Among his friends, it's considered an atrocity that the state leases convicts as laborers because they can't pay to feed them. Frank thinks this traffic of human bodies is like "prostitution" and is far worse than slavery. Frank forbids Scarlett to lease convicts. Shocked, she reluctantly drops the idea.

To Scarlett's surprise, Ashley is as incompetent as Hugh. He's smart and well-read, but he can't make quick estimates and often loses money and customers. Scarlett makes excuses for him because she loves him, telling herself he was just new to business. But there's a dead look in his eyes that scares and confuses her. She's excited to get back to the mills herself and hire Johnnie Gallegher to run one of them. Scarlett decides that her baby is a total inconvenience, and that she'll never have another.

## CHAPTER 42

Scarlett's baby—Ella Lorena—is an ugly girl who looks like Frank. She's born around the time the KKK lynches a Black man arrested for rape in his jail cell. The townspeople are pleased, but the Yankee soldiers are furious. They threaten to arrest every white man in town if the KKK strikes again. Scarlett is thankful that Ashley and Frank aren't in the KKK.

*Scarlett can't stand Melanie's parties because everyone reminisces at them. That day in the garden at Twelve Oaks, she decided that she'd never look back and would only look forward—so these people seem ridiculous to her for looking back. Additionally, Scarlett feels no pride in what she did to survive, since she can't feel pride in anything except money. Realizing that Ashley and Melanie can't have sex (so Melanie doesn't get pregnant) allows Scarlett to continue to tell herself that their marriage is subpar.*



*Scarlett's idea to lease convicts is seen by everyone as immoral. Southerners view it as "prostitution"—using the human body to make money—and "worse than slavery." In reality, the leasing of convicts is similar to slavery: both involve the forced labor of people who are deemed lesser in society. Southerners view leasing convicts as worse than slavery because they think white people are superior to Black people and shouldn't be held against their will and made to do manual labor, while they believe Black people are better off enslaved.*



*Ashley doesn't have the quality of "gumption" that Scarlett was looking for in her mill managers. Before she'd given him the job, she'd said "gumption" was the most important quality in a person. Using Scarlett's own logic, Ashley's lack of gumption should make her respect him less, but she's determined to love him as much as she always has.*



*The KKK murders a Black man imprisoned for rape, showing that racism in the South at the time was such that the Southerners don't think Black people are entitled to human rights: they felt Black criminals should be punished with murder rather than with justice and the law.*



Three weeks after giving birth, Scarlett is ready to go back to work. But Frank puts his foot down. He forbids her to leave the house while things are so dangerous and locks the horse and buggy in the stable. Mammy and Frank also find the money Scarlett hid in the house and deposit it in the bank. Scarlett is furious. She runs to Melanie's and rages about this injustice. Melanie comforts Scarlett and says she'll think of a solution.

That afternoon, a strange man walks over from Melanie's and finds Scarlett in Pitty's backyard. He is one of the homeless "riffraff" that Melanie charitably houses and feeds in her basement. He's over 60 with a wooden leg and a long, grey beard. When he speaks, Scarlett knows he is from the mountains by the way he rolls his r's. He carries a heavy pistol. The man introduces himself as Archie; Melanie sent him to drive Scarlett around and protect her from Blacks and Yankees. Scarlett doesn't like this tobacco-chewing "desperado," but she wants to get back to the mills and accepts his offer. Reluctantly, Frank agrees. Archie becomes Scarlett's bodyguard while she does business. He inspires fear in everyone, so Scarlett is safe.

Most of the time, Archie is silent, although once he tells Scarlett he hates "niggers" as much as he hates talkative women. These kinds of comments make Scarlett hate him, but he serves her purpose so well that she doesn't want to fire him. Since the KKK lynching, ladies in **Atlanta** have been too nervous to go out on their own. Seeing Scarlett driving safely with Archie, all the Atlanta ladies hire him, too. He effectively protects them against Reconstruction. After Archie starts working for her, Scarlett notices that Frank is gone most nights. He says he's busy with the books at the store and with helping Democrats plan to win elections. Ashley also attends these meetings, so everyone at Pitty's usually spent nights at Melanie's.

One morning, Archie drives Scarlett to Hugh's mill and she finds that the free Black workers have deserted it. She's just gotten a big lumber order that needs to be processed. Scarlett tells Archie to take her to Ashley's mill, saying that she's going to hire Johnnie Gallagher and lease convicts. Archie refuses to work for Scarlett if she leases convicts. He explains that he was a convict for 40 years. He murdered his wife because he'd found her sleeping with his brother and was sentenced to life, but he was released on the condition that he fight in the war. The convicts were great soldiers. He lost his leg and his eye, but now he's free.

*Scarlett has ignored everyone who tells her that it's too dangerous to go out and about during this time. Since she is not overly loyal to the Confederate Cause and doesn't support involvement in the KKK because she thinks it's too dangerous, she is not aware of how politically and socially tense Atlanta is.*



*Scarlett looks down on Archie because he looks like a ruffian and a criminal and is from the mountains. However, she is so desperate to keep working that she's willing to associate with someone she doesn't like. Her experiences haven't made her more accepting or sympathetic. By contrast, Melanie's charitableness and generosity extend to all kinds of people from any class or place. She doesn't care if a person was wealthy before the war; she only cares that they need her help.*



*Archie is the perfect protector against Reconstruction because he hates Black people and talkative (that is, forward-thinking) women. He is sensitive both to the Atlanta ladies' fear that Black men will rape them, and also to the criticisms against Scarlett that her outgoing behavior will tempt Black rapists and robbers. Archie's opinions are old-fashioned in that he thinks Black people are lesser and women should be silent. For this reason, the Atlantan ladies like him and see him as a bulwark against modernity.*



*Archie offers Scarlett some perspective on her desire to lease convicts at her mill. The story of his own arrest and release makes the point that convicts are often people with just causes (he thinks he was justified in murdering his cheating wife), and that they are valiant soldiers despite a criminal record. For this reason, Archie believes it is wrong for Scarlett to lease convicts because they are human beings and shouldn't be rented like property.*



Scarlett doesn't understand why Archie would fight for a state that took away 40 years of his life. She remembers how Rhett had joined at the last minute and decides that all Southern men are "sentimental fools." Looking at Archie and his pistols, Scarlett is scared. Scarlett says that if Melanie knew Archie was a murderer, she'd be shocked. Archie says Melanie does know, but she believes Archie redeemed himself in the war. Scarlett doesn't care if Archie stops working for her when she leases the convicts; she doesn't want to be protected by a murderer.

As Archie and Scarlett drive home, they see a crowd outside of the Girl of the Period Saloon. Scarlett tells Archie to pull up. She hopes there hadn't been another KKK incident. She asks what's wrong, and Grandpa Merriwether explains that the Democratic legislature refused to ratify the amendment that would allow Black people to vote. Ashley says the Yankees will force it on them, and they might have a "dark legislature," and a "darky governor."

Ashley wonders whether it would be best to fight or swallow their pride and submit to the Yankees. Grandpa Merriwether accuses him of disloyalty. Tension rises, and Archie's hand goes to his gun. Angry, Ashley says he didn't believe in the war, but he still fought it. Uncle Henry tells Archie to drive Scarlett home before things get violent. Scarlett doesn't admire the legislature for standing up to the Yankees. She might lose her mills over this! She wishes everyone would sit down without a fight.

The next day, Scarlett leases ten convicts to work at her mills and Archie refuses to drive her. Everyone says it's wrong of Scarlett to take advantage of the miseries of others. Scarlett points out that no one objected to slavery. People insist that was different, and that Black people were better off when they were enslaved. Scarlett replaces Hugh with Johnnie Gallegher, since he's the only person she knows who approves of the convicts. He asks Scarlett not to come to the mill because it's inappropriate for a lady to be around a convict gang. Meanwhile, Ashley is doing worse than ever managing the other mill. He's ashamed to manage convicts. Scarlett worries about him because he looks like he's in unendurable pain. She wants to comfort him, but he keeps his distance from her.

*Scarlett is still bewildered by the sentimentality that made all men join the war. She thinks this points to Archie's foolishness rather than his nobility. She also considers him a murderer instead of a man who served his time. By contrast, Melanie believes Archie atoned for his crimes by fighting in the war. Scarlett doesn't view patriotism as a noble quality like everyone else does.*



*Although the Yankees have won the war, the South is resisting the structural changes the Yankees are trying to make. Having lost the war and seen enslaved people freed is one thing, but it's something else entirely to think of those freed Black people in powerful government positions, where they'd be more powerful than their former enslavers.*



*Some Southerners, like Uncle Henry, believe that the Yankees' policies should be resisted without question. In Scarlett's opinion (and maybe Ashley's too), resisting the Yankees will only prevent everyone from moving on and getting back on their feet. In this way, some of the South wants to move forward by fighting for the past while the other half (like Scarlett) want to move forward by accepting change.*



*People's discomfort over Scarlett leasing the convicts reveals their racism towards Black people. They detest wielding their power over white convicts but are happy to wield it over Black enslaved persons. They claim that Black people are better off enslaved, implying that they see Black people as less intelligent than white people and as unable to take care of themselves. The novel suggests that what Scarlett is doing is bad just because she's subjugating and taking advantage of white people in much the same way plantation owners took advantage of Black labor.*



## CHAPTER 43

On a sunny day in December, Scarlett sits on the porch with Ella, wearing a new green dress trimmed with black. She hears hooves and looks up to see Rhett Butler approaching. He's been gone for months and Scarlett missed him, but right now, she doesn't want to see him. She has a feeling he wants to talk about Ashley. She greets him as he comes up the walk and he pretends to be surprised she has a new baby. He takes the baby from her arms and commends her on it being a girl, saying boys are a nuisance.

Scarlett asks where Rhett's been. Rhett hands the baby back to Scarlett and says he was in Cuba and New Orleans, working. She laughs at the idea of him working hard when she knows all he does is bribe Yankees. He laughs and says that meanwhile, she's getting rich off convicts. Rhett says he went to the Girl of the Period Saloon last night and heard of her new business plan. He says Johnnie Gallegher is a "cold little bully," and that he'll work the convicts to death.

Scarlett changes the subject, asking if he has a fiancé in New Orleans. She says she doesn't want to lose his friendship. Rhett asks her to look at him and says he will only marry when he finds a woman he wants badly enough. His words make her remember the time he asked her to be his mistress. Rhett says he goes to New Orleans to take care of a little boy he's in charge of. Scarlett says she can't picture him as a guardian. He asks her not to tell anyone about the little boy.

Scarlett asks where else Rhett's been. Rhett says he was in Charleston because his father died, but he's not sad because he and his father had a poor relationship. Rhett could never be what his father wanted. His father was a Southern gentleman who resented that Rhett supported himself instead of starving proudly during the war. His father refused to see Rhett, forbade Rhett's mother and sister from seeing Rhett, and refused money Rhett sent, thereby letting Rhett's mother and sister go hungry. Thankfully, Scarlett's Aunt Eulalie, a friend of Rhett's mother, takes care of Rhett's mother and sister secretly.

Scarlett says Aunt Eulalie has nothing except what Scarlett sends her. Rhett promises to reimburse Scarlett and laughs at how her eyes light up when at the mention of money. She asks how his father died, and Rhett says, "genteel starvation," but that he'd really "died" when Lee surrendered. He wasn't like Uncle Henry and Mr. Merriwether, who were industrious after the war; rather, he was one of those people who only thought of the old days.

*Scarlett feels nervous around Rhett because she knows she's done something that has upset him. Rhett shows a particular interest in Ella, affirming again that he loves children, particularly girls. Even Rhett, who often seems as unscrupulous as Scarlett, takes some things more seriously than she does, such as the Cause and children.*



*Even Rhett disapproves of Scarlett leasing convicts. Rhett has made money in many dishonest ways. However, to the reader's knowledge, none of his methods exploited human beings. Rhett is usually Scarlett's equal in bad behavior, but she is starting to surpass even him in ruthlessness.*



*Rhett hints that the only woman he'd ever marry is Scarlett because she's the only woman he's ever wanted badly. Rhett also hints that he has a son, or at least a responsibility towards a child in New Orleans. Much of his life remains a mystery, but this suggests that he has more responsibilities than it first seemed.*



*Rhett's father was the quintessential Southern gentleman who flat out refused to move forward and embrace a new future after the war. Rhett explains that his father's loyalty to the Cause was so strong that he subjected his family to starvation to maintain his pride. This story paints Southern pride and loyalty as a potential crime, as Rhett's father's refusal to move forward harms his family.*



*Rhett describes his father the way Grandma Fontaine described the Southerners who wouldn't stand back up after the war ended. Rhett's father "died" as soon as the Cause died, similar to the way that Ashley feels he can't go on now that his old, beautiful life is in the past.*





Rhett says there's a matter he wants to discuss with Scarlett: In short, he thought he could trust her, but he was wrong. As he was riding over, he ran into Melanie. She told him they'd moved to **Atlanta** because Scarlett had graciously given Ashley a partnership in her mill. Rhett says that when he lent Scarlett the money, it had been on the condition that she spend none of it on Ashley. Scarlett asks why he hates Ashley so much, and if he's jealous of him. Rhett laughs. He says he doesn't hate Ashley; he pities him.

Rhett says people like Ashley wish they were dead so they don't have to face real life problems; Ashley is unhappy not because he lost his money but because he lost his world. He was raised in a certain way, and now that those ways are gone, he's useless. Rhett guesses that Scarlett has lost money since Ashley started running her mill. He calls Scarlett a "little cheat," says he won't lend her money again, and vows to prevent all the banks from ever lending to her. Scarlett says he's cruel for picking on struggling people like her and Ashley. Rhett argues that Scarlett is nothing like Ashley; she's determined and smart. Scarlett insists that Ashley is scrupulous and honorable. But Rhett says he's not so honorable that he won't take charity from a woman.

Scarlett remembers something Ashley said in the orchard about the "dusk of the gods" when the strong come through and the weak don't. Scarlett says she won't let Ashley be left behind. Rhett says he'll never give Scarlett money again, and he asks why she's profiting off the poor (the convicts) instead of the rich. She says, hesitating, that it's easier to steal from the poor.

Rhett calls Scarlett a "rogue." This hurts her. She thinks of Ellen—a great lady—and feels sick. She says coolly that she knows she's a rogue, but what else could she be? She'd been trying so hard to stay afloat that she's cast aside the things that don't matter, like manners. She says she'll be well-mannered when she has money again. Rhett says it's hard to pick back up what one's put aside. He stands to go. Looking down at Ella, he says Frank must be proud. He tells Scarlett to tell Frank to stay home at night more often.

*Rhett is angry because Scarlett indirectly used his loan to help Ashley. Rhett's loan helped Scarlett buy the mills, and then the mills allowed for Scarlett to give Ashley a job. It comes as a surprise that Rhett truly cares about the condition he'd set when he gave Scarlett the loan. It seems that Rhett is more serious than he lets on about certain matters.*



*Rhett observes that Ashley is not as admirable as Scarlett thinks he is, and that he is nothing compared to her. Scarlett is upset that she lost her money, but she can cope with the fact that the world is different; Ashley, on the other hand, wishes he had died with the past. Rhett also observes that, compared to Scarlett, Ashley is weak. He has done nothing to survive except rely on others' charity. He insinuates that Scarlett is more of a man, in this sense, than Ashley is.*



*In recalling what Ashley once said about the war weeding out the weak, Scarlett unknowingly admits that Ashley is weak. Instead of believing that he's one of the strong who will make it through the hard times, she believes she'll need to take extra care to see he isn't one of the weak left behind.*



*Rhett calls Scarlett a rogue for leasing convicts, suggesting she's becoming like a criminal. Scarlett thinks of Ellen and feels sad; she still hopes to be like Ellen one day, even though she's nothing like her now. She imagines that, once she's rich, she'll resume being a good person. Rhett implies that it might be too late to be good by then.*



## CHAPTER 44

On a cold afternoon in March, Scarlett drives out to Johnnie Gallegher's mill. Driving alone has been dangerous ever since the legislature refused to ratify the amendment. The North has declared Georgia to be in a state of rebellion, and military regulations are tighter. Scarlett drives with Frank's pistol in the buggy. She hurries past Shantytown, the camp of outcast Blacks and low-class whites. Horrible crimes happen there, but the Yankees don't prevent them. Scarlett sees no one today but smells campfires and dirty privies.

Suddenly, a Black man appears from behind a tree. Scarlett grabs the pistol, but the frightened man calls out that he's Big Sam. He comes out from behind the tree, leaps forward, and shakes her hand. She asks what he's doing in a nasty place like Shantytown. Sam says he doesn't live in Shantytown but has been hiding out there a while. Ever since she saw him building trenches during the siege, he's been traveling. After the war, a Yankee colonel hired him to tend his horse. Sam says this colonel was too ignorant to know that Sam was only a field hand!

Sam says he'd tried out freedom. The Yankee colonel took him North and paid him good wages, but New York and Boston were so busy Sam had been scared. The colonel's wife called him Mister O'Hara and treated him like an equal. She asked him about the cruelty of Southern enslavers, but Sam told her how kind Ellen was to him. He'd eventually gotten tired of freedom, and he missed being told what to do by Gerald and Ellen. Scarlett says Gerald and Ellen are dead. Sam starts to cry, and Scarlett tells him not to, or she'll cry too.

Scarlett asks Sam if he'll be her driver. Sam agrees that it isn't safe these days but declines her offer, saying he must escape to **Tara** because he's wanted for killing a man. A drunk Yankee soldier had insulted him, so Sam strangled him. He's been hiding out ever since. Scarlett decides she must get Sam to Tara. She doesn't care that he's free; he's family and she thinks he belongs to her still. She says she'll get him to Tara that night and gives him money to buy a hat so he can hide his face. Scarlett promises she'll be back at sundown and goes on her way.

*Scarlett thinks Shantytown is the result of the lower classes being given freedom to behave badly, which she believes is what lower-class people will naturally do. She also continues to mentally support the old Southern hierarchies by blaming the Yankees for things like Shantytown and lower-class people's supposed bad behavior, the implication being that a place like Shantytown wouldn't have existed prior to the Civil War.*



*Big Sam was one of Tara's former enslaved persons who was freed and hired for pay after the war. Though he's experienced freedom, Big Sam assures Scarlett that he isn't like the Black people who live in Shantytown. Rather, he assures Scarlett that he is still loyal to her vision of him as the respectable enslaved field hand who is happy with his status.*



*Having Big Sam himself say that he doesn't like freedom shows how white Southerners have essentially made being enslaved the safest path for Black people (Black people who still work for their former enslavers, for instance, aren't being killed by the KKK). This helps white Southerners hold onto their power, and keeps Black people subjugated despite being legally free.*



*Scarlett and other white Georgians fear the free Black people in Atlanta, and always support the white men who lash out at them. However, these same white Southerners nevertheless trust the Black people who are loyal to them and who are still effectively enslaved by them. That Sam kills a white Yankee puts him in danger, as he still has almost no rights and the Yankees are, in many ways, just as racist as the native Georgians.*



The sun is setting when Scarlett reaches the mill. Johnnie Gallagher stands outside with the convict crew. The convicts were energetic when they came, but now they look hungry and desperate. She tells Johnnie she doesn't like the look of the men and asks where the fifth one is. When Johnnie says he's sick, Scarlett notices one of the crew give Johnnie a hateful look. She asks if he's been whipping the men. Johnnie reminds her that he's making her lots of money. Scarlett feels there is something sinister about the mill, with its shack for the convicts. Johnnie might be whipping the men and she'd never know.

Scarlett looks inside the shack. A "mulatto" woman that Scarlett knows lives with Johnnie is stirring a pot of black-eyed peas. When Scarlett asks her, the woman says there's nothing else for the men and no meat in the beans. Scarlett looks in the pantry and finds none of the provisions she'd paid for. She shouts at Johnnie, accusing him of selling the provisions. She interrogates one of the prisoners about what Johnnie feeds them, but the man is too afraid to speak. Scarlett orders one of the hams from the pantry given to the men, ignoring the woman when she says it's Johnnie's private store of food. Scarlett tells Johnnie to come to the buggy with her while the convicts devour the ham.

At the buggy, Scarlett shouts at Johnnie, calling him a scoundrel and a cheat. Johnnie tells Scarlett to mind her own business or he'll quit. Scarlett wants to say good riddance but hesitates; Johnnie is making her so much money at the mill. He realizes she's on the fence and smooths it over. She knows he's a brutal man and that it is awful to leave people to his mercy, but she can't part with him. As she drives away, she can't get the miserable faces of the convicts out of her mind.

By the time Scarlett passes Shantytown, the sun has set. She's never been out this late by herself. Suddenly, a ragged white man and a Black man approach her. The white man asks her for money. Scarlett points the pistol at them. The white man tells the Black man to grab her, saying the money is probably in her bodice. She shoots at the Black man as he approaches her, but he grabs the pistol, tears open her bodice, and gropes between her breasts. Scarlett screams. The white man shouts at her to be quiet, and the Black man covers her mouth.

Then Big Sam charges the Black man, shouting for Scarlett to run. She whips the horse, and the cart's wheels roll over the white man's body. In her mad terror, she hears Big Sam shouting for her. She slows and he climbs in, his face covered in blood. He asks if they hurt her, noticing her exposed breasts. She covers herself and sobs. He takes the reins, saying he'll kill that "black baboon."

*Scarlett decided to lease the convicts even though no one—not even Rhett Butler—approved of this decision. Many people had also insinuated that Johnnie Gallagher—who'd asked Scarlett to leave him alone at the mill—is a bully and would work the convicts to death. When the sight at the mill seems to confirm that things have played out exactly as people thought they would, Scarlett must face the consequences of her selfish desire to make money at all costs. Essentially, she must decide if the money is worth it when the convicts are being treated so cruelly.*



*Scarlett's anger shows that Scarlett herself is averse to mistreating the convicts so badly—at least when the evidence is right in front of her. Though she tries to remedy the situation by getting the convicts food immediately, the fact that the one prisoner is too afraid to talk to her suggests that Scarlett might not have as much power as she'd like to think.*



*Although Scarlett believes leasing the convicts and leaving Johnnie in charge of them is morally wrong, she is willing to go against her better judgement for money. In choosing to walk away without firing Johnnie, Scarlett decides that the convicts are expendable, and that her own desires matter more than their lives.*



*Scarlett has been warned about being attacked by the free Blacks that Southerners fear. In this incident, however, the white man is in charge of the assault. Although the Black man rips open Scarlett's dress, he does so on the white man's orders. Therefore, Scarlett's assault is evidence not of a Black person's cruelty but of the white man's continual abuse of power over Black people.*



*Big Sam is contrasted against the Black man who assaults Scarlett. Note that Big Sam also takes issue not with the white man who led the assault, but with the Black man who assaulted Scarlett—showing that Sam feels superior because he places himself above Black people he sees as lesser.*



## CHAPTER 45

Later that night, Frank brings Scarlett, the children, and Miss Pitty to Melanie's and goes to a meeting with Ashley. Scarlett is angry and hurt that Frank is leaving her. Sam told Frank the men hadn't done more than rip her bodice, and Frank had listened calmly and told Sam he'd take him part way to Tara that night. Frank's calm angers Scarlett. How could he leave her for a silly meeting after what happened to her? If he really loved her, he'd stay and take care of her.

At Melanie's, the women sit by the fire sewing. The children sleep in the nursery, and Archie sits by the fire chewing tobacco. Melanie chats on about the Lady Harpists' group. Scarlett wants to talk about her assault and is angry that everyone is acting like nothing is wrong. She'd escaped a terrible fate and can't stop thinking about the Black hand touching her breasts. She thinks it is odd that Archie is whittling onto the rug and no one tells him to spread out a sheet.

Archie spits tobacco juice into the fire and India scolds him. Miss Pitty says she's glad her father didn't chew, and Melanie snaps at her for being tactless. Scarlett wonders what's wrong with the women. India gives Scarlett a hateful look, then looks at Archie anxiously. Scarlett notices how tense everyone is. She can tell they know something she doesn't and are waiting for something.

Scarlett declares she's too nervous to sew and says she can't believe Frank left her after what happened. Then she asks India why she's staring at her so angrily. India says Scarlett asked for the attack by flaunting herself around town for months, and that she deserved worse. India starts to say something about Frank, but Melanie stops her. India says she hates Scarlett because she has exposed every decent woman by tempting "white trash" and "darkies." She starts to say that Scarlett has put their men in danger, but Melanie says India promised not to tell. Scarlett demands to know what's going on.

Archie silences them and says he hears someone coming. Rhett Butler announces himself and Melanie flings open the door. Rhett demands to know where the men have gone. Scarlett doesn't understand what's happening as Rhett and Melanie argue, but Rhett says the Yankees know what's going on. Melanie finally shares that the men are meeting in the basement of a plantation near Shantytown. Rhett thanks her and leaves swiftly.

*Scarlett thinks Frank doesn't care about her because he goes off to a Democrat party meeting. Frank is going to a meeting that hopes to reinstate policies that oppress Black people and aim to prevent incidents like what happened to Scarlett. However, as usual, Scarlett doesn't believe politics help anything.*



*Scarlett is deeply shaken by her assault and can't stop thinking about it. However, everyone else wants to pretend that nothing happened and talk about meaningless, innocent things. As usual, Scarlett isn't afraid to talk openly about matters that are considered immodest and make other people uncomfortable.*



*Scarlett has been so focused on operating her business and ignoring the rumors about her actions that she is now on the outside looking in. This also creates tension, as Scarlett and readers are now left to wonder what the other women are waiting for.*



*By asserting that Scarlett brought her assault on herself, India shows how traditional white Southerners feel about independent women. Scarlett, India insists, should be more like her and like Melanie—quiet and domestic—and has no business working, especially not while pregnant. She frames the assault not as a violation of Scarlett's body autonomy, but as a deserved lesson punishing Scarlett for her "bad" behavior.*



*Scarlett doesn't understand what everyone is so serious about. Even Rhett Butler, who usually doesn't take anything seriously, is acting as though something very bad is happening. Melanie tells him that the men are meeting near Shantytown which confuses Scarlett because she thought the meetings happened at Frank's store. This highlights a consequence of Scarlett's independence: she's totally lost.*



Scarlett shakes Melanie, demanding to know what's happening. India says it means Scarlett has probably killed Ashley and Frank. Archie tells them to keep sewing because the Yankees might be spying on them. They obey. Scarlett asks what's happened to Ashley, and India observes that Scarlett isn't thinking of Frank. Melanie says they should've told Scarlett, but Frank didn't want to upset her. She says that Frank and Ashley are in the KKK, and that's where they go every night. Scarlett is horrified, but India says she should be proud of them.

Scarlett asks what Rhett was talking about. Archie says that because of Scarlett's incident that afternoon, Ashley and Frank and the KKK set out to kill her attackers. If what Rhett said was true, the Yankees know and have set a trap to catch the KKK. If Frank and Ashley aren't killed, they'll have to flee. Archie says the blood is on Scarlett's hands. Melanie defends Scarlett, saying people must do what they must do.

They hear horses, and Scarlett panics that she's killed Ashley. The women all pretend to sew, keeping their faces blank. The visitor is Captain Tom Jaffery, one of Rhett's friends and a customer of Scarlett's. He asks Melanie where Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Kennedy are. She says they're at a meeting at Frank's store. The captain says they aren't at the store, and that he and his men will wait outside till they return. The Yankees watch the women through the window. Melanie picks up [Les Misérables](#) and reads aloud blandly. Scarlett thinks of Ashley and Frank. If they're not killed tonight, they'll have to leave town like Tony Fontaine did. She doesn't understand why Rhett wants to help when he hates Ashley, and she feels like this is all her fault.

Melanie's voice trails off as she hears horses and singing voices. It's Rhett, singing a song about Sherman's march. He is joined by Ashley and Hugh Elsing, both laughing drunkenly. Scarlett knows that Ashley never gets drunk, and that Rhett is somber when he drinks. Melanie flings open the door and calls to Rhett to bring Ashley in. She acts confused when the Yankee says they're under arrest. Scarlett realizes this is all rehearsed. Ashley and Rhett stumble inside, and Melanie shrieks that they're too drunk to walk.

*Scarlett is usually the one people tell the harsh truth to because she is sensible enough to handle it. However, no one told her that Frank and Ashley were in the KKK because they knew she would disapprove. While India implies that she sees KKK membership as brave, Scarlett just wants everyone to be peaceful so she won't lose her money or her mills.*



*While Scarlett has been running her mills and doing business with Yankees, she hasn't paid one thought to how her actions endanger others. Now that Frank and Ashley have set out to avenge her attackers, she realizes too late that her actions have consequences.*



*The Yankees park outside Melanie's house and wait for the offenders to return, showing that Georgia is practically under martial law during Reconstruction. Southerners see killing a Black man as an act of justice, but to the Yankees, it is a crime. Scarlett isn't proud of Ashley or Frank and is only upset that she endangered them. She can't understand why Rhett is helping when he, like her, dislikes foolish acts of bravery. Rhett is starting to seem less like Scarlett and more like a member of the Old Guard—the group of loyal Confederates.*



*Just as when Melanie lied to the children at Tara to cover up that Scarlett shot the Yankee, Melanie is now lying to cover up Ashley and Hugh's involvement with the KKK. In this moment, Melanie takes charge of a situation that Scarlett can't even comprehend. Although Scarlett might be more tenacious than Melanie, Melanie certainly isn't weak.*



Ashley collapses into a chair, and Melanie scolds Rhett for bringing her husband home drunk. Melanie tells Archie to put Ashley to bed, pretending that this happens all the time. The Yankee sergeant says that Ashley and Hugh are under arrest for killing a Black man. Rhett says Hugh and Ashley have been with him all night. The Yankee asks where, and Rhett pretends to be sheepish. Melanie cries that she has the right to know. Rhett says Ashley, Hugh, Frank and Dr. Meade were at Belle Watling's place. Melanie pretends to faint. Rhett says the Yankees can ask Belle themselves. The hubbub continues as everyone puts Ashley to bed. Tom says he has to arrest them. Rhett says drinking in a sporting house is no crime. Tom says uncertainly that he'll be back tomorrow to question them. India slams the door behind him.

India lowers the shades. Scarlett notices a bloody spot on the chair Ashley sat on. He's hurt! Scarlett and India cry that Ashley is dead, but Rhett says he just fainted from blood loss. Rhett explains that Ashley was too weak to flee. He asks India if she'll fetch a real doctor. India says she's not afraid, and she'll go get old Dr. Dean. She says she's grateful to Rhett but hates him just the same, then grabs her cape and goes.

Scarlett watches Melanie sop blood from Ashley's shoulder with a towel. Scarlett wants to run to him. Noticing her distress, Rhett tells her to brace up; he won't die. Rhett tells Archie where to find the bodies and instructs him to hide them behind Belle's so it looks like they died in a gunfight. Archie nods, his eyes gleaming with respect.

Rhett accidentally calls Melanie by her familiar name "Melly," but she says she'd love him to call her that. Rhett apologizes for saying they were at Belle's, but it was the best possible story. Rhett explains that when he found Ashley wounded at the meeting place, he snuck him in the back door of Belle's. Melanie asks how they got in, and Rhett says he has a key. Melanie looks embarrassed, but thanks Rhett for saving them all. Scarlett realizes that Rhett indeed lives with Belle Watling. Rhett says he gave Belle a list of the men who she was to say were at her house tonight. The Yankees will believe the sex workers because they won't expect them to have any patriotism.

India returns with Dr. Dean, who gets to work on Ashley. Rhett takes Scarlett into the parlor. With unusual gentleness, he says she's had a horrible day. Scarlett asks if Frank is at Belle's. Rhett says Archie is carrying Frank to the vacant lot. He was shot through the head.

*Belle and Rhett are very unpopular in Atlanta, so most supposedly upstanding men (like Ashley and Hugh) would normally want nothing to do with them. But this story saves their lives, as the implication is that the Yankees probably won't go talk to Belle. Again, it is mysterious why Rhett helps the Old Guard. He's not a member of the KKK or the Old Guard, and he dislikes Ashley and others who can't move on from the past. He is either helping because he is having another sentimental moment as when he joined the war, or because he cares about Scarlett and wants to help her loved ones.*



*Scarlett is terrified that Ashley has been mortally wounded, and she doesn't even seem to notice that Frank is missing. She is still so obsessed with Ashley that she has no room for feelings for anyone else. In fact, her love for Ashley causes her to disregard the feelings of others completely.*



*Rhett makes it clear that there were casualties at the KKK meeting earlier. Still, Scarlett only thinks of Ashley's pain and hasn't realized that Frank didn't come back with the group. Rhett's practicality starts to earn him respect in this circle.*



*Rhett is unusually courteous when speaking to Melanie. Even though it comes out that Rhett lives with a sex worker, Melanie feels that he has saved their lives and believes that he's a good person as she always has. Recall too that Melanie has helped Belle before when Belle wanted to donate money to the war hospitals. Belle, this suggests, is patriotic and supports the Southern cause. Here, her status as a low-class woman protects her and allows her to help men who feel the same way.*



*Rhett's gentleness towards Scarlett suggests that what he did for the Old Guard earlier was for her. Scarlett finally realizes that Frank is nowhere to be seen. Frank's death shows how dangerous involvement with the KKK is, even for formerly wealthy white men.*



## CHAPTER 46

The next day, news of the KKK incident spreads through town. Every Klan member is ready to flee, but India goes from house to house telling everyone that Rhett said not to leave. They trust him only because he saved Hugh and Ashley. Belle Watling tells Tom Jaffrey that a riotous group had been to her house the night before and broke her mirrors. She gives their names and says they're regulars. Jaffrey asks Belle's girls to appear before the provost.

Frank and Tommy Wellburn's bodies are found behind Belle's, pistols in their hands. The Atlantans hate that they owe their lives to Rhett Butler and Belle Watling, the two most despised people in town. They knew the Yankees are amused to see the arrogant Southerners humiliated like this. However, the Yankees feel bad for Scarlett. She was nice to them, and now she's lost her husband.

Dr. Meade is so ashamed about how he'd been saved that he says to Mrs. Meade that he'd rather have been hanged. To his shock, Mrs. Meade says it's more important that he's alive. They argue about Rhett, whom Dr. Meade loathes, and whether Rhett is motivated to help former Confederates because of his relationship with Scarlett or with Melanie.

A Black coachman comes to Melanie's house the next day and leads her out to a carriage. Belle Watling asks Melanie to get in with her for a moment. Melanie holds Belle's hand and thanks her for everything she did to save the men. Belle tells Melanie it wasn't safe of Melanie to send a thank you note to her house. Belle doesn't talk like a "bad woman;" in fact, she seems very nice. Belle apologizes for saying Ashley was in a brothel; Ashley isn't a regular. Melanie says she only feels gratitude towards Belle. Belle says she hasn't forgotten how Melanie accepted her donation for the hospital. Then, Belle says she'd never help Scarlett, since Scarlett is a "cold woman." Melanie defends Scarlett and says she'll be proud to speak to Belle in public, but Belle insists it's not safe to do so.

## CHAPTER 47

Meanwhile, Scarlett sits alone in her bedroom. The house is quiet now that Frank's body is buried and neighbors aren't coming in and out. Scarlett's grief isn't like other griefs she's been through; this time, she feels tormented by her conscience. Not only did she kill Frank, but she married him when he really loved Suellen. She had also made him very unhappy. The only thing she gave him was Ella, and she did that unwillingly.

*It is surprising that Rhett helps people he dislikes and who despise him, but also that Belle Watling helps people who despise her. Again, there's more to both Rhett and Belle than people think. And at least based on their actions, they're just as loyal to the Cause as the rest of the Old Guard Atlantans are.*



*The Atlantans are humiliated that their lives were saved with such a disgraceful story. This suggests that they are more honorable than they are practical. The Yankees, though, seem less monstrous than the Southerners think they are, since they're so sympathetic to Scarlett.*



*For some women, the clear moral distinctions of the past aren't as useful now: Mrs. Meade would rather deal with the supposed disgrace of her husband having been at a brothel than lose him. While Rhett is obviously drawn to Scarlett, he is uniquely kind and courteous around Melanie, suggesting that both women have a transformative effect on him.*



*The fact that Melanie feels proud to be indebted to Belle proves that Melanie sees through a person's outer appearance to their good intentions. She does the same thing with Rhett. Calling Scarlett a "cold woman" suggests that, although Scarlett has tenacity, she doesn't appear warm or loving to other people. Melanie's defense of Scarlett suggests that Melanie sees something good—either real or imagined—beneath Scarlett's surface. However, Melanie and Belle can't overcome the rigid class distinctions that guide their society, which is why Belle says they can't speak in public.*



*Now that Frank is dead, Scarlett finally feels bad for all the dishonest things she's done. Before now, she has never had to confront a tragic consequence of her actions. Although she made Frank unhappy and took him away from the person he really loved, she doesn't take responsibility until she can't fix anything.*



Scarlett wishes Melanie were with her. She wants Ashley too, but if he knew the truth about her relationship with Frank, he won't love her anymore. She won't be able to live without her secret source of strength: Ashley's love. Scarlett rummages in her bureau for the hidden whiskey bottle and drinks several glasses. She'd been tipsy at Frank's funeral, and people noticed. She doesn't care if the neighbors think she killed Frank, but she cares that God knows. She wants to get drunk so she can stop seeing the look on Frank's face when he'd begged her to stay home the night she was attacked.

Downstairs, someone knocks at the door. Scarlett hears Rhett's voice. She is glad; Rhett is the only friend she has tonight. Rhett wants to see Scarlett, but Pitty protests that Scarlett's mourning and it would be inappropriate for him to see her. Scarlett buttons up her black bodice, gargles some cologne, and goes downstairs. Rhett says he has a business matter to discuss with Scarlett, and it can't wait because he's leaving town tomorrow. Scarlett doesn't want to go into the parlor where Frank had lain, so she and Rhett go into the library to talk.

In the library, Rhett says he can smell that Scarlett's been drinking heavily. He leads her to the sofa and asks if he can close the door. Scarlett consents because she doesn't want Mammy to overhear them. Rhett sits by her and asks why she's so upset. His blank expression comforts her; she and Rhett are so much alike, and she feels he is the only person she really knows. Scarlett tells Rhett she's afraid she'll go to hell. She knows Rhett won't judge her for her sins because he's just as dishonorable as she is.

Scarlett says she shouldn't have deceived Frank and made him so miserable by running the mill and leasing the convicts; she feels terrible that she killed him. She says it doesn't feel like her who did these things. Ellen was always so kind, and Scarlett has always wanted to be like her. She loved Gerald, but she doesn't want to be thoughtless like him. She'd been mean to Frank because of her nightmare about starving in the foggy wilderness. She thought if she could make enough money not to be hungry, then she'd be nice to everyone again, but that turned out to be wrong.

*Without thinking why, Scarlett wishes Melanie was with her, suggesting that she loves Melanie but doesn't recognize it yet. And still, she clings to Ashley, even as she realizes that she'd need to change her behavior in order to win him from Melanie. Instead of confronting her guilt and grief, Scarlett drowns it out with alcohol. She would still much rather forget the past than confront it.*



*When Rhett calls, Scarlett is dying to talk to him because she knows Rhett won't think less of her for what she's done, as she believes Ashley would. In this way, Rhett seems more compatible with Scarlett. However, she again doesn't think about what this means. It's also a distraction that Rhett wants to talk about business rather than personal matters, which makes Scarlett think she can continue to ignore her emotions.*



*Scarlett finds herself thinking that Rhett's the only person she really knows because he's dishonorable like her, harkening back to Gerald's insistence that love occurs between like minds. However, Rhett has lately done things—such as save the Old Guard—that call into question how dishonorable he really is. It seems that, just as Scarlett starts to see that she and Rhett are compatible, he might be changing and becoming honorable.*



*All her life, Scarlett has wanted to be like Ellen, but she's always been more like Gerald. Scarlett viewed her bad actions as survival tactics that were justified by her hardships, but she is now realizing that her actions might have irreparable consequences. Saying that it didn't feel like her doing past terrible things suggests Scarlett might not be as cold and selfish as she acts, at least on the inside.*





Rhett pulls out his handkerchief and wipes Scarlett's cheeks. Rhett says he doesn't think Scarlett would act any differently if she could do it over again. She's only worried now that she'll go to hell, but she's not actually sorry. He reminds her that her conscience didn't bother her when she offered to be his mistress. Scarlett says she wasn't thinking about God when she did that. Rhett says she'd had no choice other than to marry Frank, and that it was in her nature to run the mill and be independent. He says Scarlett is an opportunist, and that opportunists shouldn't have consciences. Scarlett hopes that Rhett is right, and that God understands.

To distract Scarlett from her tears, Rhett tells her his news: he still wants Scarlett more than he's ever wanted anyone. She jumps up, calling him the most ill-bred man in the world. Rhett says he's asking her to marry him. She sits down, staring at him in disbelief. Rhett says he planned to have her since that day at Twelve Oaks and realizes now that he has to marry her to have her. Scarlett realizes Rhett isn't joking, and he seems different somehow. Once, she'd hoped he'd propose so she could gain power over him—but now, he seems to have the power. Scarlett refuses to marry again, since marriage just means babies and foolish men. Laughing, Rhett says Scarlett has never really been married. He suggests Scarlett marry a man who knows how to make women happy.

Scarlett says this subject is vulgar; it's indecent how much Rhett knows about women. Rhett says they can wait the expected interval before getting married, but he's proposing now before he goes to Europe. He gets on his knee and makes her a mock proposal. He says if she doesn't say yes, he'll stalk her until she has to say yes to save her reputation. She repeats she doesn't want to marry anyone. Rhett asks her what her real reason for refusing is. Really, Scarlett feels like she still belongs to Ashley, and she starts to cry again. But Rhett puts his arms around Scarlett and kisses her passionately until Scarlett feels faint and asks him to stop. He says he's sure none of Scarlett's other "gentlemen" have ever kissed her like this, and he kisses her again.

Rhett tells Scarlett to say yes—and Scarlett obeys. It is as though divine intervention makes her say yes, and she feels suddenly calm. She wants him to kiss her again, but he only holds her in his trembling arms. He asks her if she said yes because of his money. Scarlett says it is partly his money, but she's also fond of him. But she says that she won't lie and say she's madly in love with him.

*Rhett appeals to Scarlett's selfish, opportunistic side to soothe her troubled conscience. He instructs her not to think of the past, and to continue to take opportunities, whether she thinks they're moral or not. Since Scarlett trusts Rhett and values his opinion so much, she essentially takes this as free rein to do whatever she wants.*



*Rhett's proposal distracts Scarlett from examining her conscience for the first time since before the war. She is confused because his proposal is not making her feel power over Rhett the way she'd imagined it would. Usually, Scarlett is always in control with boys, but Rhett's feelings are beyond her grasp, making her feel that, if she can't control him, she isn't going to get anything she wants out of him. And though she's managed to transcend rigid gender roles and find success while married before, now she sees marriage as something that will get in the way of accomplishing her goals.*



*For the first time, Scarlett can voice that doesn't want to marry Rhett because she is still in love with Ashley. She viewed her marriages to Charles and Frank as entirely for convenience and not for love, so she didn't view them as betrayals of Ashley. In this light, her refusal to marry Rhett—even though he has lots of money—suggests that there's something more between them, like love. Marrying Rhett, then, would constitute betraying Ashley.*



*In Scarlett's other two marriages, tricked men into proposing and accepted because she wanted something from them, like it was a game. That she loses control as she accepts Rhett's unprompted proposal suggests her marriage to Rhett will be fundamentally different than her other marriages have been.*



Rhett looks “queer, eager, hurt, mocking.” He puts his fists in his pockets. Scarlett asks why it matters because she’s fond of him, and they get along so well; they are two “rascals,” like he once said. He asks if she’s ever read a book where a disinterested woman ends up falling in love with her husband. She reminds Rhett that he once told her love was bad for a marriage. Rhett says angrily that he once said too many things. She asks why he’s upset when he doesn’t love her either.

Rhett says he’s not in love with Scarlett; if he was, he’d never tell her. Her pulls her to her feet and kisses her again, this time insultingly. He kisses her neck and bosom until she pushes him away. He says her heart is beating fast for only being fond of him, and then asks what kind of ring she wants. She asks for a huge diamond ring. Abruptly, he turns to leave. She follows him into the hall, asking if he’ll kiss her goodbye. He says she’s had enough kissing for the day. Scarlett retorts that she doesn’t care if he never comes back and flounces off. He promises to return and then leaves.

Scarlett tells no one she’s engaged until Rhett comes back. He brings her an enormous diamond and emerald ring. She knows everyone thinks the ring is vulgar, and now, the Atlantans hate her and Rhett even more. They hate that they owe their lives to Rhett and they believe he involved Belle Watling only to insult them. Scarlett and Rhett both scorn what the Atlantans value: pride in poverty, and loyalty to the Confederacy and tradition.

Hatred of the Yankees is at a climax in **Atlanta**. For three years, Georgia had been “terrorized” by Reconstruction. But now Georgia realizes that bad times have just begun. Many Black people are already in public office in many Southern states. Georgia has managed so far to avoid this “final degradation” and keep their government in the hands of white Georgians. But the North, chipping away at their resistance little by little, finally opens the polls to Black voters at about the same time that Rhett and Scarlett announce their engagement. Georgians are furious the Republican Bullock is elected governor. Scarlett doesn’t care, but since Rhett is friends with Bullock, she’s considered a Scallawag—a Republican supporter.

Mrs. Merriwether decides to tell Scarlett not to marry the Scallawag Rhett Butler. When Scarlett reminds her that Rhett saved Mr. Merriwether’s life, Mrs. Merriwether says it was only one of Rhett’s tricks. Scarlett reminds her that Rhett *did* serve in the army for eight months, but Mrs. Merriwether says he wasn’t wounded, and that’s what makes a hero. Scarlett says she’d marry Rhett even if he was a Yankee.

*Rhett implies that he does love Scarlett, even though he pretends that he doesn’t. He looks hurt when she says she doesn’t love him, and seems to fear that Scarlett will never fall in love with him even if they’re married. Scarlett cannot see these signs because she’s mostly thinking about Rhett’s money and how this marriage will benefit her.*



*Rhett says that if he was in love with Scarlett, he’d never tell her—which is ominous if he’s telling the truth, as Scarlett will never find out if he loves her. His reaction after she asks for a huge diamond ring suggests he’s disappointed that she only wants his money. It seems that the things he admired her for—her selfishness and love of money—are now working against him.*



*Atlantans hate the combination of Scarlett and Rhett because they’re both traitors of the traditional South. They don’t live in the past and they love to make money in whatever way they can. In this way, they are more like Scallawags or Yankees than Confederates.*



*The North has won the war, freeing the enslaved persons. However, Georgians feel that they are fully conquered only when a Republican governor is elected, and Black people are allowed to vote. The North ruined Georgia materially, but Georgians held onto their dignity by keeping the political sphere white. On the other hand, Scarlett cares that the war made her poor and regains her dignity by getting rich again. Therefore, she doesn’t care who’s in government, as long as she can keep her money.*



*Even though Scarlett isn’t entirely sure why she’s marrying Rhett, she goes to great lengths to defend him to Mrs. Merriwether and insist that Rhett really is a true Southern gentleman—so Scarlett is trying to have it both ways and impress her old friends while also supporting the Yankees.*



However, it hurts Scarlett that Mammy also dislikes Rhett. Mammy says she watched Scarlett do lots of things that would've hurt Ellen. She's stood by while Scarlett took Charles from Honey and Frank from Suellen, and while Scarlett lied to lumber customers and starved convicts—but she won't stand by while Scarlett marries “trash.” Scarlett says Mammy is forgetting her place, and that she'll send Mammy back to Tara. Mammy says she's free, but she won't leave Ellen's children and grandchildren. She says Rhett and Scarlett think that if they dress in fancy halters they'll become horses instead of mules, but they'll never be more than mules. Scarlett is insulted.

While on honeymoon in New Orleans, Scarlett tells Rhett that Mammy said they were mules. Rhett laughs and says Mammy is one of the few people whose respect he'd like to have one day. Scarlett wonders why everyone has to say mean things about her. Rhett says she knew people would talk when she married him, so why not tell them all to go to hell? She kisses him and he looks at her like he's searching for something.

## CHAPTER 48

Scarlett has a lot of fun on her honeymoon in New Orleans. Although Carpetbaggers are looting the town and many people are starving, Rhett moves in wealthy circles. He knows lots of beautiful women and men with the same reckless air. His friends seemed to have no pasts or futures. When Rhett talks to them alone, Scarlett hears names and places she doesn't recognize. She likes them because they're exciting and worldly. Rhett says he knew she'd like them because they are “Carpetbag aristocrats.” When Scarlett says she thinks they are nice, Rhett says that's because she's only met two great ladies in her life: Ellen and Melanie.

Rhett buys Scarlett the latest fashions, and Scarlett buys extravagant gifts for her family. When Rhett asks what she'll get Mammy, Scarlett says Mammy has been too mean to deserve a present. Rhett decides to make Mammy a red taffeta petticoat, even though Scarlett says Mammy will never wear it. Scarlett and Rhett shop and dine and drink. Scarlett indulges in delicious Creole food, remembering how hungry she'd been a few months ago. Because girls stare at Rhett, Scarlett realizes he's very handsome. She's proud to be with him.

*Mammy accuses Rhett and Scarlett of thinking that they can turn into horses by dressing in “fancy halters,” meaning that they think they can rise in class simply by being rich. This offends Scarlett, but it is exactly what she's trying to do; when she watched the guests at Fanny Elsing's wedding, she decided that wealth, not breeding, made a person high class. Even though she and Rhett are Scallawags (the lowest class in the eyes of Southerners) she thinks they will be high class because they are rich.*



*Although Scarlett openly scorns what the Atlantans value, she cares that they all are gossiping meanly about her. She wants people to think that she's a great lady like Ellen was and to praise her for being generous and kind, but she's unwilling to behave in the way Atlantans would approve of.*



*Unlike loyal Confederate Southerners who are stuck in the past, Rhett's Carpetbagger and Scallawag friends have no pasts or futures. They live in the contemporary post-war world that is completely changed from the past. These people excite Scarlett, but she doesn't admire them the way she admires “great ladies” like Ellen and Melanie, both of whom are loyal to Southern tradition—suggesting that on some level, Scarlett is loyal to that tradition.*



*Mammy is not one to like a flashy red petticoat. Such a garment indicates garish wealth and loose morals, both of which Mammy despises. Scarlett finds New Orleans so exciting because for the first time in a long time, she can live a life that resembles her life prior to the war. She has lovely clothes and more than enough food to eat—and she feels powerful, too, as she realizes how handsome Rhett is.*



Scarlett learns a lot about marriage. Unlike Charles and Frank, Rhett isn't afraid of Scarlett and does whatever he wants whether she likes it or not. She doesn't love him, but Rhett is exciting. He always seems to be restraining his emotions, which she finds tempting. Scarlett learns everything about Rhett except who he really is. He reminds her what it's like to play and have fun, but he's frustratingly superior; he and Ashley are the two men she can't treat like silly children. Sometimes Rhett looks at Scarlett with a puzzling expression of eagerness and patience. When she asks him why he looks at her like this, he laughs it off.

It's fun to live with Rhett—except when Scarlett thinks of Ashley. At night when she lies in Rhett's arms, she wishes he were Ashley. One night, she sighs aloud thinking of Ashley. Rhett “damns her cheating soul” and leaves the room furiously. He is away all night and the next day, Scarlett treats Rhett coldly. The next night, Scarlett has her recurring nightmare of starving in the fog. She wakes, terrified, to Rhett leaning over her. He holds and comforts her. She says it feels horrible to be hungry and to be searching and searching. He asks if she thinks she's looking for a person or a thing. She doesn't know, but she wonders if she'll ever find it. Rhett promises to always keep Scarlett safe.

Rhett says that he recently invested his money in the United States government. Scarlett is shocked that Rhett would let Yankees handle his money. She suggests he buy property in downtown **Atlanta**, but he says that seems like a bad idea now that the Carpetbaggers have gotten hold of Georgia. Rhett says he's going to build Scarlett a house. When they return to Atlanta, they'll stay in a hotel until the house is finished. Scarlett says she wants the house to look like a Swiss chalet, with red wallpaper inside. He asks why not something Creole or Colonial, and she says she's wants nothing old-fashioned.

Scarlett wants to host parties and make everyone envious. Rhett observes that none of the Atlantans will come to their parties because he and Scarlett are Scallawags. Rhett says he'll give Scarlett lots of money for the new house, and for **Tara**, but he won't give her money for the mills. Scarlett, disappointed, says he's not as feminist as he pretends to be. Rhett says he just doesn't want his money to support Ashley. He plans to check her expenses to make sure she's saving nothing aside for Ashley.

*Although Scarlett says she doesn't love Rhett, she feels positive emotions around him, unlike she did with her previous husbands. She also can't manipulate him as she can most men, which suggests he's one of the few men who isn't her intellectual inferior. Scarlett thinks Rhett doesn't love her, although he seems to be eagerly hoping she'll fall in love with him. But Scarlett finds that he restrains his emotions exciting, suggesting she's not inclined to express her emotions or encourage him to open up.*



*Rhett's jealousy when he realizes Scarlett is thinking about Ashley suggests that he genuinely cares for her, but Scarlett seems totally unaware of this—she's selfishly caught up in what she wants and ignores everyone else. That Scarlett continues to have this nightmare raises the question of what Scarlett really seeks in her life. She has been focused on obtaining material wealth, but her nightmare suggests she's still unsatisfied.*



*Rhett expresses that he has become distrustful of Carpetbaggers and doesn't want to invest money in Atlanta where they will have control of it. Scarlett's dream house is something modern with no nods to anything old-fashioned. This is another sign that she has left the past behind and doesn't feel any nostalgia for old ways and traditions of the South. She is becoming more of a true Scallawag.*



*Scarlett believes that since she's now rich, she'll be popular too. Rhett cautions that there's more to popularity than money—she has to get people to like her, after all. He also reveals that he is jealous of Scarlett's feelings for Ashley, but now that they're married, he's in a position to try and stop Scarlett's feelings with control and force.*



## CHAPTER 49

At a Ladies' Sewing Circle meeting at Melanie's, Mrs. Elsing waits until Melanie has gone into the kitchen before she says she won't visit Scarlett and Rhett. Mrs. Merriwether agrees, saying her husband was nagging her to be polite to the man who'd put him in Belle Watling's awful place. Mrs. Bonnell says all the men who were out that night will call once out of politeness. She wants to call on Scarlett out of respect to Ellen, whom she knew when she was a girl. Mrs. Merriwether says she won't visit a girl who married less than a year after her husband died. India maliciously adds that she *definitely* won't call on the person who killed Frank.

Suddenly, Melanie stands in the door. The ladies are shocked to see her gentle eyes flash with anger. Melanie accuses India of being jealous of Scarlett. India says she isn't sorry, thinking of how Scarlett trapped Stuart and Charles, and how it seemed she wanted to trap Ashley too. Melanie says Scarlett is closer to her than a blood sister ever could be. Scarlett stayed with her in **Atlanta**, helped her give birth, saw her safely through the siege to **Tara**, cared for her, and got Ashley a job. And Rhett Butler saved Ashley's life! Melanie accuses the other ladies of being mean to Scarlett and ungrateful to Rhett, who saved their husbands. Melanie demands an apology from them all.

Mrs. Elsing jumps up, saying Melanie is ill-bred. Melanie says Mrs. Elsing is just bitter because Hugh was demoted from Scarlett's mill. Mrs. Elsing says it's sad to hear Melanie—a girl she watched grow up—defend a girl like Scarlett O'Hara. Melanie declares that anyone who won't visit Scarlett can't visit her anymore. Mrs. Elsing cries and she and Melanie embrace, but Melanie is firm. Mrs. Merriwether cries and Pitty faints. India slips quietly out. Later that night, in the Girl of the Period Saloon, Grandpa Merriwether tells Uncle Henry what happened at the sewing circle. Henry says the ladies are right; Scarlett is terrible. But Melanie is also right that everyone should visit them; Scallawag or not, Rhett saved everyone and Scarlett was family.

While in New Orleans, Rhett had predicted that the "Old Guard" wouldn't visit him and Scarlett when they returned, and he's right. The Klan members Rhett saved call a few times to be polite, but never invite the Butlers to their own homes. Scarlett doesn't care because she's surrounded by exciting new people. At the hotel, there are many wealthy Republicans who came to the South to profit off the crumbling society. The wives of Rhett's Scallawag friends often call on Scarlett to play games. However, she's often too busy building her new house to spend time with visitors.

*None of the Old Guards Atlantans want anything to do with Rhett and Scarlett because they see the couple as betraying the Southern traditions in a variety of ways. This suggests that Scarlett was wrong when she decided that wealth made someone powerful and popular. She always planned to be a great lady like Ellen when she became rich again, but now it seems she won't have the chance; she's broken too many Southern traditions and lost too many friends on her way to getting wealthy.*



*Though Melanie defends Scarlett, she doesn't know that Scarlett selfishly did these things for Ashley, not for her. However, Melanie sees something in Scarlett that no one else can see. Even though Melanie is loyal to tradition, she looks beyond how Scarlett has betrayed tradition and focuses on her bravery and generosity. That Melanie feels comfortable standing up to all these ladies shows how powerful Melanie is—but unlike Scarlett, Melanie gains power by embodying the quintessential Southern woman who's quiet and generous.*



*Melanie defends Scarlett to such a degree that she cuts ties with people who she's known much longer than she's known Scarlett. This suggests that she feels something stronger than respect and gratitude for Scarlett. Melanie and Scarlett survived the siege of Atlanta together, killed and buried a Yankee, and put out the fire that almost burned Tara. It seems that in these acts, the two women—who are very different—developed a bond that can't be broken by differences of value, money, or political affiliation.*



*At first, Scarlett doesn't care that no one from the Old Guard will visit her. She looks down on them because they are all stuck in the past and content with poverty. She is so determined to leave the past behind that she doesn't find comfort in the Old Guard's nostalgia for the days. Her forward-thinking mindset has led her to desire the company of people who don't come from the old South—the past.*



Scarlett's red house is much grander than any house on Peachtree Street, even Governor Bullock's. Scarlett spends her time at the lot bickering with the builders. The house has a huge ballroom, balconies, turrets, and a wraparound veranda. Benches, gazebos, and sculptures fill the yard. Inside, there are red plush carpets, red velvet drapes, carved furniture, and gilt mirrors like Belle Watling's. Thinking of the cold emptiness of **Tara**, Scarlett loves her house. Rhett says a person can tell it's a house bought with "dirty money," but Scarlett ignores him.

When they get back from New Orleans, Scarlett and Rhett start to fight. Rhett has opinions about Scarlett's new house and friends that are hard for her to ignore. Also, it makes her angry that Rhett is obedient to Mammy when Mammy has insulted to them both. Once, Rhett says when the Democrats are back in power, Scarlett won't have any friends. Scarlett insists the Democrats will never be back in power; all they do is run around "Ku Kluxing." Rhett says Georgians are "bull-headed" and will get power back. Scarlett says she wants the Democrats to be in power, but even if that happens the Republicans won't lose money.

Rhett says the Republicans' money does them no good; money didn't succeed in making Scarlett a horse instead of a mule. This remark incites such a bad fight that Rhett goes to New Orleans. When he comes back, Scarlett swallows her anger; she just wants to have a good time after so many years of hardship. It's fun to be rich! She doesn't understand how Rhett can say money doesn't matter.

Scarlett invites her friends, old and new, to her house-warming reception. Only Ashley, Melanie, Pitty, Uncle Henry, and the Meades of the Old Guard came. A few others reluctantly agree to come when Melanie insists, but when they hear Governor Bullock will be there, they refuse. Scarlett is infuriated when the ones who come leave when the governor enters.

The next day, Scarlett yells at Melanie for disrespecting her at the party. Melanie says that she wouldn't have attended if she knew the governor would really be there. Melanie says she loves Scarlett, but how can Scarlett forget what the North did to them, killing Charles and burning so many homes? Doesn't Scarlett remember the Yankees robbing **Tara**? Melanie will never let her children forget what the Yankees did. Scarlett says she remembers, but the past is the past and some Republicans are nice. Melanie disagrees. Melanie hugs Scarlett and says they'll always visit each other, just not when Republicans are present. Scarlett leaves in a huff.

*Scarlett's house is extravagant to the point of being garish. Its lavish decorations resemble Belle Watling's brothel, suggesting that Scarlett's house is decorated in bad taste. Even Rhett thinks that the house is a vulgar display of wealth that hasn't been honestly earned. This suggests that he is starting to think that his money is indecent and superficial.*



*Before they were married, Rhett and Scarlett were very similar. They loved money and were practical to the point of ruthlessness. After they marry, their views of the political situation in the South differ. Scarlett believes and accepts that the Republicans have overtaken Georgia. Rhett, on the other hand, believes the Democrats will come back. This shows that Georgia is in limbo as the Old South and the New South fight for supremacy.*



*Scarlett believes that having money means that her hardships are finally over. She never has to worry about food, and she has all the fine clothes she wants. On the contrary, Rhett agrees with Mammy that money hasn't made them anything special. This suggests that Rhett may be moving more into alignment with the Old South, as represented by Mammy.*



*When Scarlett invites Governor Bullock to her party, it is the last straw for the Old Guard Atlantans. Governor Bullock represents the "final degradation" of Georgia to the Southerners—that is, a Republican government that is supported by Black voters.*



*Scarlett is so determined to keep the past in the past that she disregards all the bad things that Yankees and Republicans have done to her. She wants the future and the money she can earn in the future, and so she doesn't care if she or her children forget the horrors of the Civil War. Melanie, on the other hand, remains tied to the past. This begins to drive a rift between the two women, and it suggests that a showdown between these two ways of thinking may be coming.*



Scarlett is hurt that none of her old friends invite her to their parties. She's unwittingly cut ties with old friends and the old days, and people lump her in with Bullock and the Republicans and hate her. Over time, she stops caring. Melanie still comes with Ashley, and Scarlett makes new friends. These new friends are rich Carpetbaggers, gamblers, and members of the Freedman's Bureau who profit off Black wage labor. She also befriends prestigious people from the North and Yankee schoolmarm who came South to educate poor Blacks. Nobody else accepts these people. Meanwhile, the Old Guard becomes even more patriotic, and the Lost Cause becomes a "fetish."

**Atlanta** is severely divided by class. The rich think nothing of the poor whites but do everything to help the poor Blacks.

Occasionally, Scarlett thinks of how unlike Ellen she is now, but since the day she stood in the parlor at **Tara** and decided to be Rhett's mistress, she's become too unlike Ellen to go back. Besides, she's having too much fun drinking champagne and throwing parties. Hypocritically, she's friendly with Republicans but is outright rude to the garrison officers because of their blue uniforms. The blue uniforms remind her viscerally of the war.

The ladies Scarlett associates with come from obscure beginnings, having made their money in unconventional or dishonest ways. They view Scarlett as a symbol of the wealth and class they don't naturally possess, and they strive to be like her. To them, she *is* society. The men, although rich, are ill-bred at heart and make drunken spectacles at Scarlett's parties. She dislikes them but enjoys the excitement they bring. Rhett embarrasses them all because of how well he sees through their prestige to their humble upbringings. The women think Rhett is vulgar. Scarlett becomes convinced that nothing will ever please him, but all that matters to her is that he pays the bills.

## CHAPTER 50

Scarlett always feels like that Rhett is watching her expectantly, wanting something that she isn't giving him. He's pleasant to live with even though he forces everyone to be truthful. He gives her everything she wants and takes her seriously in her business efforts. However, she can't understand why he married her. He didn't marry her for children or money, and certainly not for love. She supposes he married her because he wants her like he wanted Belle Watling. This insults her, but she doesn't care because she's happy anyway.

*As the South rapidly changes, the Old Guard clings more and more tightly to the Lost Cause, becoming obsessed with it. This obsession seems likely to lose against the new wealthy and glamorous high class. The Carpetbaggers, Yankees, and Freedmen's Bureau members are all people who profit off the fall of Southern civilization, as Rhett had once predicted. Scarlett is just like these people, making money selling goods at a high price to people in need. Those who resist this new wave of society are forced to remain poor out of principle.*



*Scarlett starts to realize that she isn't like Ellen at all, even though she's rich. For a long time, she imagined she'd be just like Ellen—kind and loving—as soon as she had money again. However, she now realizes that when she decided to sacrifice morals for money, the consequences were irreparable. And though she doesn't really pick up on it, her reaction to the blue uniforms suggests she can't actually forget the war, echoing what Melanie said.*



*All the rich people who Scarlett befriends were poor when they were born and have since done what Scarlett did after the war, earning their place in upper-class society. Southerners believe these people will never actually be upper class, and interestingly, Rhett seems to agree—when he's always been supportive of earning money before. Rhett's priorities, it seems, are changing as the times change.*



*Scarlett can't imagine that Rhett loves her, even though he watches her expectantly, suggesting that he's hoping she'll fall in love with him. She also can't find a single material reason why Rhett married her. She can't comprehend his behavior towards her because she associates love with her relationship to Ashley, a relationship that has so far only been a fantasy.*



Then, Scarlett finds out she is pregnant. She storms into her bedroom where Rhett is smoking a cigar and screams that she doesn't want more children. Rhett had looked expectant when she told him, but his face hardens at her anger. Scarlett says there are things women can do if they don't want babies. Rhett grabs her wrist and makes her swear she hasn't done anything yet to end her pregnancy. He says he doesn't care how many children she has, but he doesn't want her to die. He takes her into his lap and says he saw a girl die that way once. She gazes at him, surprised to see him so moved. She asks if he really cares about her. Seeing that she's only being playful, Rhett jokes that he's invested too much money in her to lose her.

Months later, Melanie comes out of Scarlett's room and tells an anxious Rhett he can go in. He goes in, and Melanie glimpses him bending over the bassinet. Melanie thinks it is sweet how nervous Rhett is. She sinks into a chair, her back aching as it always does now. She wishes Scarlett's baby girl was hers. Then she realizes she should've told Rhett the disappointing news that his baby is a girl. But Mammy comes out of the bedroom and says Rhett took the news well. In fact, he seems proud his baby is female. Mammy's dislike of Rhett vanishes.

Wade is very scared the day Scarlett gives birth. That morning, Mammy rushed him to Pitty's house saying his mother was sick and Wade shouldn't bother her. Throughout the day, he became more and more afraid Scarlett would die. At noon, he snuck away from Peter and ran back home. Everyone ran up and down the stairs and once, he heard Scarlett groan. Mammy found him and scolded him. She told him to go away, but he retreated down the hall. Melanie found him and told him he had a baby sister. When he asked if his mother would die, she said no and sent him to play. Wade went into the dining room. He doesn't want a girl baby.

Rhett comes into the dining room. Afraid of being yelled at, Wade shrinks away, but Rhett smiles joyfully and says Wade has a sister. Wade runs to him and Rhett reassures him that Scarlett is fine. Wade asks if people like girls better than boys. Understanding what he feels, Rhett says no. He says that he's only so happy he has a little girl because he already has a little boy, and that's Wade. Crying with happiness at being wanted, Wade asks if Rhett has any other little boys. Rhett doesn't answer but offers Wade a drink. Excited to be included in a grown-up ceremony, Wade takes the diluted drink Rhett makes him.

*Scarlett implies to Rhett that she wants to get an abortion. Ending her pregnancy would free her from the responsibilities she'll take on if she has another baby—responsibilities that cut into her ability to be independent and ruthless. Rhett asking Scarlett to not seek an abortion seems in line with his character, given how much he loves children. However, it also suggests he's changing and becoming less supportive of Scarlett's independence and business dealings, the very things that initially drew him to her.*



*While Scarlett is totally averse to parenthood, Rhett is surprisingly taken with it. Melanie implies that it's not considered normal for men to be happy about having daughters (sons give men an heir). But his love for his daughter makes Rhett a more sympathetic figure to Mammy, as she sees that Rhett is actually kind—and doesn't look down on women, as so many other men do.*



*Scarlett has ignored Wade and how terrified he often is throughout the novel. The narration suddenly shifts to Wade's perspective here and reveals how deep his anxiety is. He fears losing his mother, Scarlett, suggesting that he loves her deeply—but the relationship is one-sided. This revelation into Wade's psyche shows that Wade's high anxiety is another casualty of Scarlett's selfishness and forward-thinking mindset.*



*Rhett is particularly kind to Wade and can sympathize with his feelings—something that Scarlett never did. Rhett always said that he and Scarlett were very alike, but differences are starting to appear between them: Rhett loves children whereas Scarlett does not. Also, Rhett doesn't answer Wade when he asks if Rhett has other boys, suggesting that Rhett is still concealing the truth about the little boy in New Orleans that he cares for.*





Mammy enters the room, smiling widely. Wade is delighted to see Mammy being nice to his stepfather. Rhett makes Mammy a drink and they both gush over the beautiful baby. Rhett asks why Mammy's dress rustles, and she pulls her skirt up to reveal the red petticoat Rhett gave her. When he first gave it to her, Mammy refused to wear it. Rhett's eyes dance, and he asks if there's no more "mule" in the harness. Rhett passes around more drinks.

Strangely, Rhett adores the baby. Most men are indifferent to their children, but Rhett thinks his daughter is marvelous. He fires nurses every week for mistreating his baby. He sends for Prissy and Lou, Uncle Peter's great niece, tactfully telling Mammy that they'll be her helpers (Mammy is getting old). Scarlett is ashamed of Rhett's pride, feeling that it is unmanly. Rhett says his daughter is the first person who belongs entirely to him. Scarlett says she belongs to him, but Rhett asks if she really does. They name the baby Eugene Victoria, but when Melanie says the girl's eyes are blue as the Bonnie Blue flag, her name becomes Bonnie Blue Butler.

## CHAPTER 51

When she can go out again, Scarlett has Lou lace her corset as tightly as possible. She is disappointed that she can only get her waist down to 20 inches. She thinks that babies ruin everything as she makes her dress bigger and decides she won't have any more. When she's dressed, she drives out to the lumber yard, excited to talk to Ashley about the account books and hoping to find him alone.

At the mill, Ashley steps out, looking happy to see Scarlett. But she is very disappointed in his accounts, and he can tell. He tells her he would work better with free Blacks instead of convicts; he's no "convict driver." Scarlett says that free Blacks cost more than convicts, and Johnnie Gallegher does an excellent job driving them. She says Ashley should try whipping them, like Johnnie does.

*When Rhett first gave Mammy the red petticoat, she saw it as a superficial symbol of Rhett's wealth and greatness. Once she sees his fatherly instincts, she wears the petticoat; she wears it once she believes that Rhett isn't only a glamorous exterior hiding a cruel and ruthless person inside.*



*Rhett says that Bonnie is the first person who belongs wholly to him, whereas Scarlett doesn't—this is because emotionally, Scarlett "belongs" to Ashley, whom she loves. For this reason, Rhett is able to freely express his love for his baby daughter in a way that he can't for Scarlett. This makes him more sympathetic to people like Mammy, but Scarlett starts to speak of him like she spoke of Charles and Frank: in feminine-coded, unflattering terms. Naming Bonnie after the "Bonnie Blue flag" is also a nod to the past, as they're referring to a flag associated with the Confederacy.*



*Scarlett still feels that babies are a burden and that they ruin a person's life. She still cares as much about her appearance as she did when the story began, and hasn't grown to love other things, such as motherhood. She gets through her childbearing period as quickly as possible so she can get on to what she feels is more important: Ashley and her work.*



*Working the convicts makes Ashley uneasy, but he wouldn't mind "driving" a Black labor crew. This shows that Ashley believes Black people are inferior, while he sees the white convict crew more as equals. Scarlett's suggestion to whip the convicts indicates that she's gotten over her guilt about abusing the convicts.*



Ashley cries that Scarlett used to be so sweet before Rhett “brutalized” her. Scarlett is glad Ashley cares, even though she knows her conduct isn’t Rhett’s fault. Ashley says he can’t bear to think of Rhett touching Scarlett. Scarlett thinks Ashley is going to kiss her, but he apologizes and says he shouldn’t be talking like this. On her way home, Scarlett feels certain Ashley loves her. Since Ashley can’t be intimate with Melanie because Melanie can’t have another baby, Scarlett decides it would be wonderful if she stopped having sex with Rhett. Then she and Ashley would basically be faithful to each other, even though they are married to other people. She will arrange to stop sleeping with Rhett and tell Ashley that she is making a great sacrifice for him.

Scarlett finds Rhett in the nursery playing with the children. She leads him into the bedroom and announces that she doesn’t want more children. Rhett says he can divorce her if she refuses sex. Scarlett asks Rhett to take Ashley as an example: Ashley kindly stays away from Melanie so she doesn’t become pregnant. Rhett sneers and asks if Scarlett visited the mill today. He says that if he wanted to be with her, no lock could keep him out. Since she doesn’t want to be with him, luckily there are other women and he doesn’t value fidelity. He leaves. Scarlett feels suddenly unhappy and starts to cry. She got what she wanted, but she’ll miss Rhett.

## CHAPTER 52

Shortly after Bonnie’s first birthday, the Butlers are gathered in the sitting room. Scarlett pores over her account books and Rhett plays with Bonnie. Wade is restless. Annoyed, Scarlett tells him to go out and play. Wade says he has no one to play with because all the boys are at Raoul Picard’s party. Rhett asks why Wade isn’t there, and Wade says he’s never invited to parties. Scarlett calls him a liar and lists off the Republican boys’ parties he’d been to. Wade says that according to Mammy, those are “white trash” parties. Scarlett is furious, but Rhett agrees with Mammy. He gives Wade money to buy candy then picks up Bonnie.

Wade asks shyly if Rhett fought in the war. Rhett says he was in the army for eight months and was with Johnston when the war ended. Scarlett laughs, saying she thought he was ashamed of his time in the army. Wade looks proudly at Rhett and asks if he had been wounded. Rhett shows him a large scar on his chest he’d gotten in a knife fight in California. Wade skips off to buy candy, deciding Rhett is as brave as his father was.

*Ashley thinks that Rhett is the reason behind Scarlett’s cruelty. However, the convicts were Scarlett’s idea, and Rhett even suggested that it was immoral for her to lease them. Scarlett doesn’t care that Ashley doesn’t know how bad she is, and only cares that Ashley cares about her. And just as Scarlett wants people to think she’s like Ellen even though she doesn’t at all resemble her mother, Scarlett wants Ashley to think she’s a martyr for giving up sex with Rhett even though Scarlett genuinely wants to stop sleeping with him.*



*Even as Scarlett does what she thinks she wants (kicking Rhett out of her bed and pursuing Ashley), she’s still not happy. This mirrors how Scarlett thought all she wanted was money but yet, Scarlett is still unsatisfied. Scarlett also betrays her reasons for refusing to sleep with Rhett when she holds up Ashley as an example. She admires Ashley for what he’s doing, and Rhett can’t ignore that he still hasn’t won Scarlett over.*



*Scarlett has cut ties with the Old Guard. While she doesn’t care about losing those connections, she seems to have not thought about how this would affect Wade. Wade is now only invited to the parties of Scarlett’s new friends—Republicans and Scallawags. He feels embarrassed by these invitations because Mammy says they are “white trash” people, and are supposedly lesser than him.*



*Rhett never used to make a show of bravery; he made fun of the Home Guard and never pretended to care about the Cause. However, he changes when he realizes that Wade cares about these things. This suggests that fatherhood is changing Rhett into someone who cares about the Cause and tradition.*



Scarlett asks Rhett why he lied to Wade, and Rhett says a boy should be proud of his stepfather. Rhett says he'd never considered how his choices would affect Wade, and he is going to make sure Bonnie never has to suffer for her parents' choices. He plans to make sure Bonnie gets invited to parties, because that is where girls find good husbands. Wade skips back in and says Bonnie can marry Beau. Rhett says that's true, but who will Wade marry? Wade says he won't marry; he'll go to Harvard and become a lawyer. Angry, Scarlett says he will go to the University of Georgia and then run her store. Rhett hushes her and tells Wade to grow brave like his father. Wade runs off again.

Scarlett tells Rhett to let her manage her own children. Rhett says she's a poor manager for ruining her children's reputation with good people. He says he won't let Bonnie be rejected in respectable social circles. Scarlett insists Bonnie will be fine since their family has money, but Rhett says money can't buy reputation. He's going to get back in the good graces of the Old Guard by apologizing, donating to their charities, and joining the Klan if he must. He forbids Scarlett to invite Governor Bullock to their house ever again. Scarlett jeers that the speculator is turning respectable and says his first step is to sell Belle Watling's house. Rhett laughs and thanks her for the suggestion.

It is difficult for Rhett to change his reputation. The Old Guard hates Scallawags more than ever before. The Republicans are firmly in office, and, although they can't read or write and are "barely out of the cotton patch," Blacks sit in the legislature and vote for their Republican friends. Tons of promoters get rich with taxpayer money that they don't put towards railroads or schools. The railroad is now a muddy ditch and Blacks ride it for free. The governor tells Congress that Georgians attack the Blacks and need to be ruled by martial law. All Georgians want is to be left alone, but the North views them as violent rebels.

Rhett slowly wins favor with the Old Guard. He votes Democratic and attends the Democratic meetings. To everyone's shock, he goes to church with Wade, whose religious education Scarlett has neglected. He dresses more modestly and acts humble and charming, and he donates generously to the Confederate charities.

*Having children made Rhett realize that his opinions have consequences. Before being a father, he scorned the "gentlemanly" pride of the Old Guard and their love of the Cause. Now, he realizes that this attitude is ruining Wade and Bonnie's reputations. Motherhood didn't transform Scarlett this way; she is just as scornful of the past and of the Old Guard as always. She has no grand ideas for her children's futures, but only wants them to join her businesses and make more money.*



*Rhett has had a complete change of heart. Early on, at the bazaar during the war, he told Scarlett that money could buy everything. Now, he claims that money can't buy reputation. Scarlett has also had a change of heart: when she watched the Old Guard at Fanny Elsing's wedding, she couldn't understand why they acted like ladies and gentlemen even though their money was gone. She felt that only money could buy prestige and power. Rhett and Scarlett have swapped opinions—and Rhett's opinions suggest that he thinks Scarlett hasn't been successful as she's gone about amassing power.*



*Rhett sets about changing his reputation, which is very difficult because he has the worst reputation in Atlanta. From the Old Guard's perspective, Georgia is being corrupted by Republicans who are abusing taxpayer money. They also believe that government has been corrupted by Black people who they view generally as unintelligent.*



*To better his reputation, Rhett starts by stating his Democratic affiliation. It helps that he is a father, because bringing his children to church and to democratic meetings warms the Old Guard—Rhett is making sure young Wade will carry the Old Guard's ideas into the future.*



When Mrs. Elsing questions why Rhett donates, he says he was moved by memories of his army days. He says humbly that, due to a prank while at West Point, he was only in the artillery, and that's why he didn't fight alongside the brave men in the infantry. She questions why he kept his service a secret, and he says that he was ashamed of his past actions. Mrs. Elsing decides Rhett isn't so bad. One day, she sees him take the children out of the house while Scarlett throws a party for Republicans and decides he must be ashamed of Scarlett.

Rhett wins over Mrs. Merriwether by loaning her money for her bakery. He takes a job at the bank, wanting to be a hard-working citizen like his neighbors. He tells Mrs. Merriwether she deserves a loan because of how long she worked to start her business. Then, he asks her advice for how to get Bonnie to stop sucking her thumb. Mrs. Merriwether deduces from this that Scarlett is a bad mother, but that Rhett cares for his children and so can't be bad. **Atlanta** loves to see him walk around with Bonnie. Bonnie's charm helps Rhett get back on the Old Guard's good side.

Bonnie grows up quickly, looking more and more like Gerald every day. Her only problem is that she's afraid of the dark. Once she turns two, she can't sleep in the dark nursery and often wakes the whole house screaming. Scarlett wants to spank her, but Rhett has her sleep in his room next to a lit lamp. The town buzzes when they hear this. It embarrassed Scarlett because it reveals that she and Rhett have separate bedrooms and that Bonnie prefers her father. She decides that Rhett is trying to punish her for banishing him from her bedroom.

One night, Rhett is out late, and Lou puts Bonnie to bed. At some point, her lamp goes out, and Bonnie wakes screaming in terror. When Rhett comes home, he runs up the stairs and takes Bonnie from Scarlett's arms. He shouts at Scarlett that he'll kill whoever forgot the lamp. Scarlett is jealous that Bonnie calms down in Rhett's arms. She watches him talk gently to Bonnie about the monster that had scared her in the dark. At last, Bonnie falls back asleep.

Scarlett scolds Rhett for humoring Bonnie; If he let her scream, she'd get over her fear. Rhett says Scarlett is an "inhuman woman" and reminds Scarlett that he used to comfort *her* when she awoke screaming from nightmares. She tells him if he wants to be Bonnie's "nursemaid," he should come home earlier and sober. Following this, Rhett comes home early and puts Bonnie to sleep himself. He starts to come home sober when Bonnie smells his drunken breath one night and calls it nasty.

*Rhett wins Mrs. Elsing over by convincing her that he's ashamed of his past actions and wishes he could've fought more bravely in the war. He seals the deal by taking the children away from Scarlett's Republican parties, thereby making people think he doesn't agree with Scarlett and that he will raise his children to sympathize with the Old Guard. Scarlett, in contrast, becomes a traitor.*



*One the Old Guard decides that Rhett is a better parent than Scarlett is, they decide he must be a good person. He gets back in the Old Guard's graces not by any particular action or deed, but by showing that he's caring. Scarlett always thought she could be popular if she was wealthy, but her lack of concern for her children in comparison to Rhett makes everyone dislike her.*



*In the same way that Scarlett didn't sympathize with Wade's young terror during the siege of Atlanta, she doesn't sympathize with Bonnie's nightmares. Scarlett also can't understand that Rhett genuinely cares for Bonnie. Instead, she believes Rhett is using Bonnie as a tool to hurt her for refusing to have sex with him.*



*Although she can't sympathize with Bonnie, Scarlett is jealous that Rhett can. Similarly, she had once been jealous of Melanie for having a close relationship with Wade. Scarlett wants to be loving, and wants to be close with her children, but she can't ever seem to attain this.*



*Rhett adds another element to Grandma Fontaine's earlier insistence that women need something to love and fear to hold onto their humanity. He insists compassion is a third essential element to being human. Scarlett has, he suggests, seen firsthand how helpful it is when someone close to her holds onto her humanity, but Scarlett is still unable to look beyond her own experience and sympathize with others.*



## CHAPTER 53

Around this time, Melanie plans a surprise party for Ashley's birthday. She makes everyone swear to keep it a surprise. Archie offers to hang colorful paper lanterns, trying to seem nonchalant. Melanie smiles, and whispers to Scarlett that she'd intended to have Archie do this all along.

Scarlett grumbles about Melanie still having that "desperado" Archie in her house. Melanie says he's harmless, and India says he's devoted to Melanie and would kill for her. Scarlett gets up to go to the mill, and Melanie asks her to hold Ashley there past five and then India will pick him up. Scarlett is delighted to be given this time with Ashley; it makes her feel better that nobody asked her to host at the party with Pitty, Melanie and India. At home, she dresses carefully in a green dress and bonnet then goes to the mill.

Scarlett stops to chat with Carpetbag ladies on her way to the mill. At the mill, Ashley comes to the door, his hair bright in the sunshine. He asks cheerily why she's not at home helping Melanie with the party. He explains that all the men who've suffered through surprise parties warned him. Scarlett smiles because Ashley looks joyful like he used to look at Twelve Oaks.

Ashley asks Scarlett into the office, and they sit down at the desk. She tells him the day is too nice to look over the finances. He agrees, taking her hands and saying she looks pretty. Oddly, his touch doesn't excite her; she feels only friendliness towards him. She pushes this feeling from her mind. Looking into his eyes, she realizes they aren't as remote as they usually are. Ashley says Scarlett never seems to get older. When he was in the army, he would remember her charming outfits. Then he says he wonders what would've happened to him if Scarlett hadn't helped him; the "seeds of greatness" aren't in him.

For the first time, Scarlett can tell what Ashley is thinking. When she'd been tormented by love for him, his mind had been invisible to her. But now, she can see that he isn't sad, but is instead resigned. She tells him not to talk like this; Rhett always bores her with the same "survival of the fittest" nonsense. Ashley says he and Rhett are fundamentally the same but react differently: Neither believed in the war, but Ashley joined and Rhett didn't. Sometimes Ashley thinks Rhett was right.

*Melanie loves everyone, including Archie, the murderer and ex-convict, and Scarlett, who no one else respects anymore. Melanie sees good in everyone and gathers dissimilar people together—though she's not above manipulating people, like Scarlett might.*



*Scarlett's youthful excitement shows that, where Ashley is concerned, she still hasn't grown up. She is still giddy at the thought of seeing him and concerned with dressing prettily for him. Melanie, though, still trusts Scarlett entirely. This suggests that Melanie either sees something in Scarlett that Scarlett doesn't see—or she's extremely naïve.*



*For the first time since the war began, Ashley looks like he did in the old days. Even though Scarlett is intent on forgetting the past and moving only forward, she seems to love Ashley as he was in the past—an Ashley that doesn't exist except as a memory.*



*Ashley also thinks of Scarlett as the girl he knew before the war began, always dressed in pretty clothes and charming all the boys. He loves that memory of her, but, in the present, he only seems to feel indebted to her for everything she's done to help him. From her perspective, his touch actually doesn't make her feel anything the way it used to. This suggests that their feelings for each other might only exist as a memory.*



*Here, Scarlett draws a connection between love and misunderstanding. She has never understood what Ashley thinks while she's been madly in love with him. Now that her feelings have faded slightly, she feels she can understand him. Without the veil of love, Scarlett sees that Ashley and Rhett are similar, but that Ashley is more cowardly.*



Ashley asks Scarlett what her life goal is. Scarlett thinks. She once wanted money and security, but now she has both and isn't happy. Ashley says he doesn't want to be rich; he only wants the old days back. Suddenly, Scarlett's mind fills with memories of life at **Tara** before the war. She says obstinately that she likes these days better. Ashley takes her hand and says the old days had beauty. Scarlett allows herself to remember and imagines being back in the old days. The hard years vanish, and she and Ashley are riding together at Tara before the war through the beautiful landscape. They are going to a party with all their old friends. A voice in Scarlett's mind warns her to not look back.

Scarlett says she understands why Ashley can't be happy. She realizes he's old; his hair is grey. She knows that Ashley can't look forward. With a rush of passion, Scarlett says nothing turned out how they expected. Her heart hurts thinking of her old self who intended to be like Ellen. She begins to cry, and Ashley holds her. It feels good to be held without passion in the arms of an old friend. Suddenly, Ashley wrenches away because he sees that India, Archie, and Mrs. Elsing are standing in the doorway.

Scarlett races home, ashamed and afraid. Everyone will talk tonight at Ashley's party, Melanie would find out, and Scarlett's reputation will be ruined! No one will ever believe she and Ashley were only hugging as friends. Instead, people will suspect an affair. She bursts into tears thinking of how Melanie will feel. Then her heart stops when she thinks of Rhett. Archie will tell Rhett everything. At home, she gets into bed, telling herself that she'll worry about it tomorrow. She'll stay home from the party and think of a way to make it all right. She hears Rhett come home and go to his room.

Much later, Rhett knocks on Scarlett's door and enters, asking if she's ready for the party. She says she has a headache, and he calls her a "cowardly little bitch." Scarlett is afraid Rhett knows what happened. He tells her to get up and get ready; he'll endure a "trollop" for a wife, but not a coward. She begs him to let her explain, even though she knows she has no explanation. He tells her she will go to the party. She undresses, hoping he'll like seeing her in her slip after so long, but he doesn't look. He pulls out her jade dress with pink roses and says she'll wear rouge, too, to really "nail her to the mast." Then he laces her corset so violently she cries out.

*For the first time since Scarlett decided in the garden at Twelve Oaks to never look back, she looks back at all the years before the war. She misses the past like Ashley does, but she knows not to think about it, believing it will only make her sad and helpless. However, the things she wants from the future—money and security—have helped her survive, but they didn't make her happy. Essentially, Scarlett finds no pleasure in looking forward or in looking back.*



*As soon as Scarlett understands Ashley's problem—that he can't look forward—her feelings shift and suddenly, they're just friends. Together, they mourn the past and who they used to be, but they aren't anything more than that. But in the very moment that Scarlett realizes this, their friends discover them—suggesting that Scarlett's reputation will again be ruined.*



*For the first time, Scarlett cries when she thinks about Melanie's feelings, showing that she's started to care for Melanie and respect Melanie's right to Ashley. However, she pushes off her guilt and makes a plan for the future, as she always does. Further, Scarlett decides to hide, suggesting that she doesn't even see being a part of society as a way to gain popularity and save her reputation anymore.*



*Rhett is so angry about Scarlett and Ashley that he acts violent and malicious. He punishes Scarlett by making her confront full-on the damage that she's caused. He wants her to go to the party dressed like a sex worker and stand next to Melanie, whom Scarlett has betrayed. In this way, Rhett forces Scarlett to face what she's never faced: the consequences of her actions. In the past, she always pushed consequences out of her mind "until tomorrow."*



When Scarlett and Rhett arrive, Melanie's house is full of people. Scarlett is afraid to go in and hear what everyone will say. Rhett holds her arm so hard it bruises. Inside, Rhett bows to everyone. Scarlett wonders if people will kill her, and then Melanie walks up, her shoulders squared. Melanie slips an arm around Scarlett's waist. Complimenting Scarlett's dress, she says India couldn't make it tonight, and would Scarlett host with her?

*Scarlett expects Melanie to be crushed and angry about her embrace with Ashley. Instead, Melanie stands loyally by Scarlett. Whether Melanie believes the news or not, she refuses to cut ties with Scarlett no matter what happens. This suggests that Melanie values her relationship with Scarlett above all other relationships.*



## CHAPTER 54

After the party, Scarlett undresses and thinks of how awful it was to stand between Ashley and Melanie and greet the guests. She shakes from the stress of the evening. Rhett had sent her home alone, and she's relieved. She doesn't care if he's at Belle Watling's as long as he isn't here scaring her with his anger. Tomorrow, she'll think of some way to explain herself. Tomorrow, she'll think of Ashley's broken face. It was humiliating to see how much Melanie trusts her. Wanting a drink, she goes downstairs. A light is on in the dining room.

*Scarlett is utterly humiliated and distraught by the whole evening. However, she still refuses to confront her feelings. Instead, she wants to forget them and drown them out with alcohol. This suggests that Scarlett is getting better at admitting her wrongs, but that she still refuses to be humbled by them or change her behavior.*



Scarlett starts back upstairs, but the door opens and Rhett appears. He asks her to join him, his voice thunderous. Scarlett is terrified. He mockingly bows her into the dining room where a single candle is lit, throwing dark shadows. A decanter of brandy is on the table. He tells her to sit. A new fear fills Scarlett. For years she'd thought nothing mattered to him. But now, his nonchalance is gone, and she can feel in her stomach that this incident matters a lot to him.

*Scarlett had mistakenly believed that Rhett was cool, casual, and emotionless about everything, even Scarlett. However, Rhett's malicious fury over Scarlett and Ashley's scandal suggests that he is deeply hurt that Scarlett has been pursuing another man while married to him.*



Rhett offers Scarlett a drink. She refuses, but he pours one anyway and forces her to drink it. She downs the glass and he grins; he knows she drinks in secret. He tells her to sit so they can discuss the evening. His voice is somehow violent. Rhett forces Scarlett into a chair, pain and anger in his eyes. He sits across from her and pours another drink. After a long silence, he says the evening was an amusing comedy with all the characters—the wronged wife glossing over the scandal, the wronged husband supporting his wife, the assembled village, and the lover looking like a “damned fool.” Rhett says he imagines Scarlett still thinks Melanie is a fool for loving Scarlett too much to see the truth. He's not interested in explanations; he knows that while she's been denying Rhett sex, she's been lusting after Ashley.

*Rhett paints a picture of the evening, and then observes that Scarlett still thinks Melanie is a fool even after she's wronged Melanie for so many years. Scarlett has always looked down on Melanie for being “too stupid” to recognize that there's something between Ashley and Scarlett. In this instance, however, Melanie's “stupidity” saves Scarlett's reputation from utter ruin and makes Scarlett look like a better person than she actually is. Rhett criticizes Scarlett for looking down on Melanie for this rather than for being chastened by it.*



Rhett asks if Scarlett would happily bear Ashley's children and pass them off as Rhett's. At this, Scarlett jumps up. Rhett lunges at her and forces her back in her chair. He tells her he could banish Ashley from her mind by exploding her head between his hands. He caresses her hair. Suddenly courageous, Scarlett tells him to get his hands off her. He says he admires her spirit, even when she's cornered. She draws her robe around her and says she's not cornered because Rhett can't understand her or Ashley; all he can understand is "hardness and dirt."

Rhett laughs and presses Scarlett's shoulders against the wall. He says he's laughing because he's sorry for her. He is so close she can smell the whiskey on his breath. He says he knows she's been physically faithful to him, because Ashley is what she calls a "gentleman." But Scarlett has wanted Ashley this whole time. Ashley only wants Scarlett's body, but Rhett says *he* wants her mind and heart. He's sorry for her because she's thrown away happiness for a man who will never make her happy. If she had Ashley, she'd never know him. She could have been happy with Rhett because they were so alike. Rhett says he loves Scarlett because he knows her deeply.

Rhett releases Scarlett and staggers back to the whiskey. Scarlett wonders if he really loves her or is only joking. She runs into the hall. Rhett runs after her and wraps his arms around her under her robe. He insists he won't sleep alone tonight and carries her up the stairs. He feels to her like a mad stranger. Once upstairs, he kisses her savagely. Scarlett feels joy and excitement. For the first time, she's experiencing something stronger than herself. Darkness envelops her.

When Scarlett wakes the next morning, Rhett is gone. Last night, she realized she didn't know Rhett even though she's lived with him for years. She tries to hate him for carrying her up the stairs last night, but she loved it. She should be ashamed but instead she's excited. It feels amazing that Rhett loves her! She has him at last! She can hold the fact that he loves her over his head now. Scarlett feels excited like a bride.

*Even though she's been caught in a scandal, Scarlett maintains that her feelings for Ashley are above everyone's lowly comprehension. She had started to feel that she and Ashley were only friends, but now maintains that they have a pure love that Rhett is only trying to ruin. She claims that Rhett is "hardness and dirt," suggesting she sees him as the inhuman one in this relationship.*



*Rhett thinks Scarlett understands nothing. Scarlett imagines that her and Ashley's relationship is pure when really, in his view, Ashley only lusts after Scarlett. Scarlett also imagines that Rhett only wants her like he wants Belle Watling—sexually—but Rhett confesses that he actually wants her mind and heart too. Rhett asserts that by misunderstanding all this, Scarlett has thrown away her chance at happiness.*



*Scarlett has always wanted to be the center of attention and loves to be in control of every situation. During sex, Scarlett is the center of attention, though she isn't in control. During this sexual encounter, Rhett forces Scarlett to do exactly what he wants—something she normally doesn't do because she's so selfish.*



*Even though Scarlett and Rhett both seem to have gotten what they wanted last night, Scarlett instantly decides that Rhett's passion for her means that she can take control of the situation. Essentially, their night together hasn't changed Scarlett's outlook when it comes to romance—romance is still a power game for her and nothing more, even as she feels genuinely excited about getting closer to Rhett.*





But Rhett is gone for days. Scarlett becomes worried and looks for him everywhere. Then one morning, he comes into his room and says hello casually. She wonders how he can greet her this way after their romantic night. She asks where he'd been and finds out that he was at Belle Watling's. She is aghast that he went to another woman after being with her. Rhett mockingly apologizes for getting carried away the other night. Scarlett wants to cry; it was foolish to think Rhett loved her. He used her, just like he used a woman at Belle's house. She vows to hide how excited she was. Rhett explains that he's been living with Belle ever since Scarlett asked for separate bedrooms. She tells him to leave, saying she'll lock the door after how "disgusting" he was the other night.

Rhett says that if he is "disgusting" then Scarlett can divorce him. She says she'll never disgrace her family with a divorce. He announces he's going to New Orleans and is taking Bonnie with him. When Scarlett insinuates that he'll take Bonnie to places like Belle's, he shouts that he'd never do that to his daughter. He says Scarlett is a horrible mother and she ruined her children, but he won't let her ruin Bonnie. He goes to the children's room and they greet him joyfully.

## CHAPTER 55

The next day, Melanie covers Scarlett's mouth and says she doesn't want an apology. She says that she, Ashley, and Scarlett have been like three soldiers fighting the world together, and she knows Scarlett better than anyone; she knows the rumors about Scarlett and Ashley are nothing but nasty lies. Scarlett feels she has to confess, because Melanie stood between her and social ruin. Her conscience bothers her. It'll be torture to tell Melanie the truth, even though Scarlett once wanted to hurt Melanie with the truth of her feelings for Ashley. But now, Scarlett wants Melanie to think she's good. When Melanie refuses to let Scarlett confess, Scarlett realizes confessing is selfish—it'll ruin Melanie's life. Scarlett's punishment will be to endure Melanie's kindness forever, and to know she doesn't deserve it.

Melanie sews, trying to control her anger. She says that everyone is jealous because Scarlett is smart and successful. Mrs. Elsing hates Scarlett because she is more popular than Fanny. Archie is a bad man and she never should've housed him, and India is still upset that Scarlett took Stuart from her. Melanie says India is vile, and she never wants to see her again. Then she says sadly that it must be hard for India that Melanie loves Scarlett better than her.

*Both Rhett and Scarlett are too proud to be vulnerable with one another. They are both afraid of admitting their feelings for each other for fear that the other doesn't feel the same way. This puts them at an impasse. The pain and humiliation that Scarlett feels also makes her double down on getting Rhett to leave her alone. This is why she calls his behavior "disgusting" even though she enjoyed the sex—she knows he'll take it as an insult, and it'll discourage him from either seeking her out or trying to talk to her again.*



*Rhett and Scarlett both see the worst in each other now. Scarlett thinks that Rhett must want his children to grow up to be like him (that is, to be comfortable in a brothel), which she sees as unacceptable. However, Rhett is clearly still a caring, beloved parent, as evidenced by the children greeting him so happily.*



*Scarlett shows that she has changed because her feelings towards Melanie have changed. She used to have such a low opinion of Melanie that she wanted to hurt her. Now, she realizes that telling the truth would be selfish: it would hurt Melanie and soothe Scarlett's own conscience. Therefore, Scarlett resists a selfish impulse for the first time in her life. While her conscience had plagued her about killing Frank, she'd only wanted to relieve her own guilt. Now, she considers Melanie's feelings and decides to selflessly endure her guilt.*



*Melanie views everyone's hatred of Scarlett as petty, stemming mostly from jealousy. She also sees that everyone's issue with Scarlett comes from past slights. In defending Scarlett, Melanie shows not only that she's an independent thinker but also that she is open-minded enough to accept people who are different from her.*



Scarlett starts to cry, feeling like she ruined Ashley's life and forced him to cut ties with his sister. He'll always look into India's eyes and see the horrible truth that he betrayed Melanie by pursuing Scarlett. It must torture him to be sheltered by Melanie because he values honor so highly. Scarlett realizes that she would respect Ashley more if he came clean. For the first time, her love for him fades slightly. Melanie hugs Scarlett, saying that her enemies are Melanie's enemies too. Scarlett knows she has caused a divide in **Atlanta** that will last for generations.

True to her word, Melanie cut ties with each of Scarlett's haters. She goes with Scarlett everywhere, brings her along to call on neighbors, and won't let anyone speak nastily to Scarlett. Everyone has to choose sides, but the question is not whether Scarlett is innocent but rather who is more trustworthy, India, or Melanie. Those on Melanie's side say Melanie wouldn't associate with an adulterer. Those on India's side say Rhett's absence adds to Scarlett's suspiciousness. Also, the fact that Scarlett is now pregnant despite not sharing a bedroom with her husband suggests she is carrying Ashley's baby. The gossip tears families apart and causes rifts everywhere. Everyone resents Scarlett for causing the first conflict between **Atlanta's** most dignified families.

Miss Pitty suffers the most because she loves Melanie but relies on India to live with her and care for her. Pitty's fear of having to leave her house causes her to choose India's side. Scarlett stops sending her money, and India refuses the money Ashley tries to send. Melanie treats Pitty coldly. In the end, a few people believe Scarlett is innocent. But if it weren't for Melanie, everyone in **Atlanta** would hate Scarlett.

## CHAPTER 56

Rhett stays in New Orleans for three months and doesn't contact Scarlett the whole time. Sometimes she wonders if he'll ever come back. Scarlett doesn't feel well, but Melanie insists that she keep running her businesses. However, Scarlett's heart isn't in it; she has nasty fights with Johnnie Gallegher and never goes to Ashley's mill. She sees Ashley often at Melanie's, but they never speak; his sadness and helplessness irritate her. When Scarlett's anger at Rhett calms down, she starts to miss him. She also misses Bonnie.

Scarlett tries to spend more time with Wade and Ella, but she realizes that Rhett was right—she was too busy making money when they were little, and now she doesn't know them. Ella's short attention span irritates her, and Wade is afraid of her. But when Wade is at Melanie's, he is happy and talkative.

*Scarlett and Ashley are both protected by Melanie's unconditional goodwill. However, Scarlett finds that, even though she isn't coming clean, she wishes Ashley would because then she could respect him more. She thinks it would be the manly thing for him to confess, whereas it is the perhaps more traditionally feminine thing for her to protect Melanie's feelings and stay silent.*



*The rift between Melanie and India—two respected women of the same family—tears apart the tight-knit Old Guard. The group of dignified families who make up the Old Guard have all been united in solidarity against the Northern forces sweeping the state following the Civil War. The fact that people hate Scarlett and not Ashley for supposedly carrying his baby also drives home that the Old Guard is willing to excuse men's behavior, but not women's.*



*Melanie cuts ties even with her closest relatives in order to defend Scarlett. She feels that, even though her fellow Atlantans have been through a lot with her, none of them have been through what she and Scarlett have endured together—not even Ashley.*



*Scarlett is low-spirited while Rhett is away, not even taking interest in her mills or in Ashley—the two things that usually sustain her. She is frustrated with Ashley's helplessness, suggesting that she's starting to realize Ashley is cowardly. But she still isn't fully ready to do away with her obsession of him.*



*Scarlett realizes only now that it's too late to restore her relationship with her children. At one time, she'd thought she would be a good mother once she was rich, but now that she is, she's too distant from Wade and Ella.*



When Dr. Meade tells Scarlett she's pregnant, she can't believe it. Then she thinks of that night with Rhett. For the first time ever, she's glad she's pregnant and she hopes it'll be a boy. She thinks of writing Rhett, but she doesn't want him to know she missed him.

Scarlett gets news of Rhett when her Aunt Pauline writes to say Rhett visited her in Charleston with Bonnie. She writes that she'd heard Rhett was a brute and a cheat, but was pleasantly surprised to find him a gentleman, and very devoted to Bonnie and Scarlett. Pauline raves about Bonnie. Then she says Rhett told her that Scarlett does business at a lumber yard. She advises Scarlett to quit these "unwomanly" dealings; Ellen would be ashamed that Scarlett was in trade, and Scarlett's children will grow up ashamed of her too. Scarlett scowls, thinking it's her "unwomanliness" that enables her to send Aunt Pauline money every month.

One day, Rhett and Bonnie return. Scarlett runs from her room to greet Bonnie and hugs and kisses her daughter, looking over her at Rhett. His face is blank. Without greeting her, Rhett says she looks pale and asks if it means she missed him. His expression angers her, and she says it's his fault she's pale: she's pregnant. Rhett asks if the happy father is Ashley. Scarlett screams that she wishes it was anyone's baby but Rhett's. She's happy to see that this hurts him. Rhett says maybe she'll have a miscarriage and starts up the stairs. She lunges at him, but loses her balance and falls down the stairs, feeling a stab of pain in her ribs.

Scarlett is so sick that she's on the brink of death. Even in her pain, she is devastated to learn that she lost her baby. She can't remember why she wanted it so badly and she desperately wants Rhett. Death seems close as she remembers how scared he looked when he picked her up off the floor after she fell. After that, all she remembers are voices and people running. Melanie comes when Scarlett screams, and death seems further away with Melanie there. Scarlett believes Melanie is pregnant and the Yankees are coming, and she believes Melanie is the one screaming. Dr. Meade says Scarlett is delirious. Scarlett starts to whisper Rhett's name but stops, remembering that he doesn't want her. Rhett sits in his room, gaunt, unshaven, and smoking.

*Out of Scarlett's four pregnancies, the fourth is the only one she's happy about because it resulted from her romantic night with Rhett. This suggests that Scarlett didn't like being pregnant before because she didn't like the men she was with—but now, she suspects she loves Rhett.*



*Scarlett still gets a lot of backlash for her business dealings, even though her money supports her distant relations in Charleston. However, these same family members think her line of work is embarrassing for a woman. Significantly, Rhett told Aunt Pauline about Scarlett's business dealings almost as if he wanted Aunt Pauline to discourage Scarlett from continuing to work at the mill (where she encounters Ashley).*



*Scarlett has missed Rhett and Bonnie, and she is excited to tell Rhett that she's pregnant. However, his sneering, mocking attitude upsets her into pretending that she hates him. Rhett, in his hurt over Scarlett's ongoing feelings for Ashley, also doesn't tell Scarlett how he really feels but acts like he hates her too. This results in disastrous miscommunication between them, one that stems out of each person's selfishness.*



*While Scarlett is sick, the two people she wants are Melanie and Rhett. She wants Rhett but doesn't want to admit she needs him. She believes he doesn't care for her, and so she's too prideful to call out in vain. Throughout the story, during the hardest times, Scarlett has always wished Melanie were with her. In her delirium, she believes she is Melanie in pain during the siege of Atlanta. This suggests that on some level, Scarlett does sympathize with Melanie—but as usual, she's too afraid to admit this when she's fully conscious.*



At last, Melanie goes to tell Rhett that Scarlett is better. He looks at her, weeping, and asks if she's dead. Melanie is frightened by his tears. She gathers her courage and steps in, closing the door. He puts his arms around her and cries into her lap. She strokes his head and he starts to talk, telling truth for the first time in his life. He mutters things Melanie had never heard even a woman say. He says something about Belle Watling and about killing Scarlett, and that she hadn't wanted this baby or any of his babies. He says that if she'd written him to come home, he would have instantly.

Then Rhett tells Melanie what he'd said about Scarlett having a miscarriage just before Scarlett fell. Melanie's eyes widen with horror. Looking down at his powerful hands, she thinks she's never seen anyone so powerful and yet so weak. She wonders if Rhett heard the cruel lie about Ashley and Scarlett and got jealous. She decides he's just drunk; the crazy things he's saying can't be true. Melanie comforts him, but he says Scarlett doesn't love him. Rhett stops himself from saying who he thinks Scarlett loves. Melanie just strokes his hair and says Scarlett will get well.

## CHAPTER 57

Scarlett is pale and thin when Rhett puts her on the train to **Tara** a month after her fall. She feels she'll suffocate if she stays in **Atlanta** any longer. She feels like a sick, lost child. Rhett watches the train leave bitterly and then goes to Melanie's house. Melanie sits on her porch sewing and is embarrassed to see Rhett coming. The last time they talked, when Scarlett was sick, he'd said so many humiliating things. She hopes he's forgotten. Melanie invites Rhett to sit, nervous because of how large and manly he is. When she blushes, Rhett asks if his presence annoys her. His voice is so understanding that Melanie relaxes. She insists she's fine and thinks he's just worried about Scarlett. Rhett asks Melanie to help him: when Scarlett returns from Tara, he doesn't want her to kill herself working at the mills.

Rhett explains that Scarlett won't sell the mills voluntarily, but he wants to suggest that Ashley buy Scarlett out of her share. Melanie says that would be nice, but she and Ashley don't have the money. Ashley was so generous that he gave all their money away and they never saved. Rhett offers to lend them the money so Ashley can buy the mill and they can save to send Beau to college. Rhett says they must hide the loan from Scarlett and Ashley; Scarlett will be angry, and Ashley won't want to take money from Rhett. Rhett will send the money anonymously through the mail.

*This passage makes it clear that Rhett wants Scarlett to call for him—but she's too prideful to do so, and she believes he doesn't want her. Similarly, Scarlett wanted to write Rhett with her news but didn't him to know she needed him. This shows that Rhett and Scarlett constantly misunderstand one another out of pride, and it is now ruining their relationship.*



*Rhett's willingness to speak so openly—something the narration suggests is inappropriate for a man to do—makes him an unreliable person in Melanie's eyes. However, for readers, this passage makes it very clear that Rhett genuinely loves Scarlett. For her part, Melanie begins to question whether she should believe the rumors, but her loyalty to Scarlett remains strong enough to stop her from questioning any further.*



*When Scarlett was just widowed, she was dying to get out of Tara and go to Atlanta. She felt that, as much as she loved Tara, Atlanta was the place where she truly belonged. While Tara was beautiful and serene, Atlanta was crude and exciting. Throughout the story, these two places have grounded Scarlett at different times. Atlanta allowed Scarlett to break out of the confines of mourning and female standards. It allowed her to make her own money running her businesses. Tara, on the other hand, always reminds Scarlett of what's most important to her, and what all her work in Atlanta is for.*



*Rhett was originally the person who loaned Scarlett money so she could get the mill started. He admired her knack for business and her love of money. Now, however, he knows that working at the mill allows her to see Ashley on a regular basis. His jealousy leads him to lend Melanie and Ashley money for the mill under pretense that he's caring for Scarlett's health and Beau's future.*



Melanie is reluctant to deceive Ashley, but she finally agrees. She wonders why everyone says bad things about Rhett; he's always been so kind to her and is so devoted to Scarlett. Melanie says Scarlett is lucky to have Rhett. As Rhett picks up his hat to go, he says he's trying to give Melanie more than just advantages for Beau; he's trying to make sure she can keep the thing most dear to her: Ashley. On this ominous note, he leaves.

When Scarlett returns from **Tara**, she looks healthy. Rhett and Bonnie meet her at the train, Indian feathers stuck in their hair from a game they'd been playing. Scarlett kisses Bonnie and allows Rhett to kiss her since everyone at the depot is watching. On the ride home, she relays positive news from the County.

Scarlett doesn't relay the sad things about the County, such as how many plantations were being overgrown by forest. Even **Tara** is no longer a plantation but is just a small farm. Once she and Rhett are home, she asks what's been happening in **Atlanta**. She hasn't talked to Rhett alone since the day she fell. He'd been kind but impersonal during her recovery, and she can't tell what he feels. He acts mostly as though nothing, good or bad, happened between them. Rhett says everything has been fine but dull in Atlanta.

Then Rhett says that Ashley had asked if he could buy Scarlett's share of the mill. Scarlett asks where Ashley got the money. Rhett shrugs and says he told Ashley that she'd never sell because she's too controlling. Insulted, Scarlett says she will sell. She thinks how she'd only held onto the mills so she could see Ashley. Now, she wants to get back on good terms with him by generously selling him the mill at a low price. Rhett looks slightly triumphant and look at her with his old searching look. Suddenly suspicious, Scarlett asks if Rhett had anything to do with this, but Rhett denies it.

Scarlett sells the mills to Ashley that night. She tries to give him a low price, but he matches the highest bid she'd ever gotten for them. She feels afterwards as if she sold one of her children; she'd run those mills with her own two hands, and she's certain that Ashley will ruin them since he's still a terrible businessman. Melanie passes out wine to Rhett, Scarlett, and Ashley to celebrate the sale. Ashley says he plans to send the convicts back and employ free Blacks. Scarlett says he'll lose all his money; free Blacks demand to be overpaid whereas the convicts are cheap.

*Rhett's design in selling the mill to Ashley and Melanie is partly to keep Scarlett away from Ashley, but he also wants to protect Melanie from her husband's infidelity. This mirrors how when Rhett saved Ashley and Hugh from the Yankees, some questioned whether Rhett did it for Scarlett or Melanie.*



*When Scarlett comes back from Tara, she and Rhett are at an impasse. Scarlett is also still very concerned with how she looks to others, which is why she allows Rhett to kiss her. Tara seems to have reinvigorated Scarlett's health.*



*These days, the stereotypical Southern plantation doesn't exist anymore. Without enforced labor, no one in the country is wealthy anymore. Anyone who lives there has to work their own land and regrow from scratch. Things have changed in the County differently from how things have changed in the City.*



*Even after her miscarriage and her illness, Scarlett holds onto her obsession with Ashley. In the same way that she wanted to sacrifice sex with Rhett so Ashley would admire her, she wants to sell him the mill at a low price. For the longest time, she felt that money and her mills were the most important thing. Now, she is willing to sell them because she's still unsatisfied and wants something else.*



*Scarlett feels that the mills are her children because they are the only thing she's ever been truly invested in. As soon as she sells the mills to Ashley, she realizes that no one has the kind of tenacity she has—or the willingness to exploit others for a profit. Ashley's plan to hire free Blacks is, perhaps, the more progressive choice—it acknowledges that Black people can demand payment for their labor. Scarlett, though, knows will be the death of the mill.*



Ashley says he refuses to make money from the enforced labor and misery of others. Scarlett points out that Ashley had no problem enslaving Blacks. Ashley says his enslaved persons weren't miserable. Besides, he knows Johnnie Gallagher has killed some of the convicts. Scarlett accuses him of calling her a bad person. He says he's not criticizing her, but that they are different. Scarlett wishes she were alone with him so she could say they weren't different, and that she wants to think just like him.

Ashley says money that comes from unethical practices only brings unhappiness. Scarlett disagrees, reminding him of their days of poverty at Tara when they made slippers out of carpet. She says she's happy now because no one has nicer clothes or furniture than she does, and it is all thanks to enforced convict labor. Rhett notes that Scarlett is also happy because she killed the Yankee. Then he says, "poisonously sweet," that the money has made Scarlett very happy. She tries to agree, but for some reason she can't speak.

## CHAPTER 58

After Scarlett's illness, Rhett is different, and Scarlett doesn't like it. He is kinder and more present, but also more impersonal. When they used to fight, at least she knew he cared about her, but now she feels he doesn't care at all. He focuses only on Bonnie. Scarlett, who likes to be the center of attention, is jealous. Rhett hangs out with the Old Guard now, such as Hugh Elsing and Dr. Meade, instead of Scallawags. Scarlett starts to fear Rhett has joined the Klan like Frank.

One night, Scarlett intercepts Rhett in the hall and asks if he joined the Klan. He laughs and says there is no Klan; the Klan was disbanded a while ago, and Governor Bullock was just passing rumors to the federal government to keep the South under Northern rule. Scarlett is relieved that Rhett won't be killed like Frank. She asks if Rhett had anything to do with breaking up the Klan. Rhett says he and Ashley were jointly responsible; although they didn't like each other they had similar political views. Soon, Rhett says, their old Republican friends and the governor will be in jail.

*Scarlett's lack of morals made her excellent at business. She knows that, now that Ashley will be running the mills with a good conscience, they won't do well. Scarlett wants to prove to Ashley that they are similar because she still loves him, but she really has no evidence that they're similar. He looks back while she looks forward, and she sacrifices her morals while he sticks firmly to his.*



*Scarlett thinks that the biggest hardship the war caused her was poverty. She is alone in this opinion; everyone around her believes that her unethical wealth is the worst outcome of the Civil War. Rhett insinuates that Scarlett has become heartless and mercurial. She is speechless because she feels that money has actually left a void in her.*



*Rhett seems to have channeled all his feelings for Scarlett into Bonnie. As he drifts farther and farther away from Scarlett, Scarlett wants him more and more. She wants to feel that he cares about her, just like she cares about him—worrying for him when he joins the KKK suggests she fears losing him to violence.*



*Rhett and Ashley spearheaded the movement to disband the Klan because they believe this will help the Democrats regain control in Georgia. As long as the Klan is active, assaulting free Blacks and instigating violence, the North will keep Georgia under martial law. Without the Klan, the Republicans have nothing to imprison the Georgians for.*



Rhett says the next governor will be a Democrat; per Scarlett's long-ago comment that Rhett's Confederate gold belonged to the Confederacy, he's been donating money to the Democratic party. Scarlett says he's pouring money down a "rat-hole"; the Yankees are too established in Georgia to leave. Rhett says he doesn't believe in politics, but he's doing this for Bonnie's sake. He starts toward his room where Bonnie is calling him, but Scarlett stops him to ask that he stop taking Bonnie to political meetings. Rhett asks how she can find issue with Bonnie sitting on her father's lap rallying for the Democrats. Scarlett says that Rhett probably tells Bonnie Scarlett's a Scallawag. Rhett laughs and goes to Bonnie.

In October, Bullock resigns amid accusations of corruption and misuse of public funds. **Atlanta** is proud and happy, ready to thank God for returning Georgia to its own people. Reconstruction seems to be almost over, and the next governor will surely be a Democrat. Carpetbaggers, Scallawags, and Republicans linger uneasily, then leave town. Scarlett is bewildered. She hates the Yankees and will never forget what they did to her, but in trying to survive she made friends with them. But now, Rhett is friends with the Old Guard again. He rides around with Bonnie, and Scarlett feels left out.

## CHAPTER 59

Bonnie runs wild. When Rhett took her to New Orleans, he allowed her to stay up late and have whatever she wanted. Now, no one can discipline her. Scarlett tries to stamp out some of her headstrong nature, but Bonnie is so charismatic that she always gets her way. Rhett has no desire to make her behave. Bonnie idolizes Rhett, riding on his saddle and talking to him like an adult. Scarlett smiles to see Rhett take to fatherhood so well, but a small part of her is jealous.

When Bonnie turns four, Rhett buys her a Shetland pony that she names Mr. Butler, and Scarlett makes her a riding outfit. Bonnie demands it be made from blue velvet. She and Rhett race down the street on their horses, Rhett slowing his so Bonnie feels she is winning. When she is comfortable riding, Rhett thinks she can try jumping. He starts her out on a foot-high bar. Scarlett laughs with pride and enthusiasm listening to Bonnie's excited yells.

*Thanks to Rhett, the Democrats are getting the funds they need to regain their footing in Georgia. Rhett had always worried only about himself and the present moment, but now that he has Bonnie, he sees that the future matters and believes that the future should be a replica of the past. When the Republicans were firmly rooted in Atlanta, Scarlett didn't care if people thought her a Scallawag. Now, however, she is starting to fear for her reputation if the Democrats return to power.*



*As the Republicans lose hold of Georgia, Scarlett feels left behind. At first, befriending Yankees and Scallawags was a survival technique and part of Scarlett's forward-thinking mindset. She wanted to befriend them because she thought they were the future, but now she's being left behind by everyone. She realizes that she might have moved on too quickly, and that she won't be able to get her old community back.*



*Part of Scarlett is jealous that Bonnie loves Rhett so much, but she is also proud of their relationship. She is also won over by Bonnie's charm just as Rhett is. This shows that, even though Scarlett hadn't wanted her third child, she has grown to love her just as she has grown to love Rhett more than she realizes. Bonnie's headstrong nature also resembles how people have described Scarlett as a girl, suggesting that mother and daughter may be more alike than Scarlett consciously realizes.*



*Bonnie has the same headstrong, willful nature that Gerald and Scarlett shared. She is adventurous and loves to ride horses, just like Gerald. She is also charming and loves pretty things, like Scarlett. Her desire for a blue riding outfit resembles Scarlett's fixation with the color green.*



A week later, Bonnie begs for a higher bar. Rhett tells her she can't jump higher until she's six, but Bonnie persists until he finally gives in. Bonnie shouts for Scarlett to watch from her bedroom window. Scarlett says she's watching and smiles, but she's uneasy. As Bonnie gallops on her pony, Scarlett sees that her eyes are just like Gerald's. Then she realizes Bonnie said the same thing Gerald had said just before his death: "watch me take this one, Ellen!" Scarlett screams for Bonnie to stop, but there is the sound of splintering wood and she sees a whirl of blue velvet.

Three nights after Bonnie's death, Mammy walks to Melanie's house. In the kitchen, Mammy says she wants to tell Melanie what's on her mind. Melanie leads into the sitting room. Mammy cries as she explains that Bonnie's death broke Scarlett's heart, but Rhett is even worse off. She says Melanie must come because Rhett always listens to her and maybe she can help him. Mammy thinks Rhett has lost his mind; When Dr. Meade said Bonnie's neck broke, Rhett shot Bonnie's pony and then held Bonnie's body and didn't let anyone touch her.

Mammy says she thought Scarlett and Rhett would comfort each other, but then Scarlett demanded that Rhett "give [her] [her] baby that [he] killed." Melanie says she doesn't want to hear these awful things, but Mammy refuses to stop. Scarlett wanted to put Bonnie in the coffin in the parlor, but Rhett wanted her in his room. Rhett came home drunk and told Mammy to put candles in Bonnie's room because Bonnie is afraid of the dark. Scarlett and Rhett then argued about when to hold the funeral. Rhett threatened to kill Scarlett and noted again that Bonnie is afraid of the dark—and graves are dark. Scarlett accused Rhett of drinking and visiting Belle Watling, but Rhett said he went to Belle because she didn't call him the murderer of his own child.

Melanie is shocked. She remembers that Rhett said he had a key to Belle's, but she also knows Rhett loves Scarlett from the way he'd cried when she was sick. And Scarlett loves Rhett, so what went wrong? Mammy continues: Mammy went into Rhett's room to tell him it's her fault that Bonnie's afraid of the dark; once, when Bonnie wouldn't go to bed, Mammy had told her a monster would get her if she didn't. Mammy thought Rhett would hit her, but he said gently that he knows Mammy loved Bonnie. But when Mammy asked about the funeral, Rhett threw her out of the room.

*Bonnie's death mirrors Gerald's death almost exactly. Just as he had called out to Ellen just before he fatally jumped his horse, Bonnie calls out to Scarlett. This repeated tragedy points out the fact that Scarlett never really grieved for her father. She pushed the tragedy aside and moved forward to the future. That her daughter, who is so much like Gerald, dies just like him makes Scarlett's loss impossible for her to ignore.*



*Mammy relays the events of the days following Bonnie's death because it seems that both Rhett and Scarlett are too devastated to relay them lucidly themselves. Scarlett has always been able to stand huge losses. She loved Bonnie but not as wholly as Rhett, who was transformed into a different person by his love for Bonnie. Rhett never cared about anything as much as he cared about Bonnie.*



*The fact that Mammy relays these events to Melanie reveals how mean Scarlett and Rhett are to each other. Scarlett accuses Rhett of killing Bonnie, and Rhett continues to drink and visit Belle Watling. At this point, he seems to view Belle as a better person than Scarlett, despite being a sex worker, since Belle is kinder and more sympathetic than Scarlett. In this way, Belle acts as a foil for Scarlett: even one of the lowest-class persons in society is a more moral person than Scarlett even with her prestigious lineage.*



*Melanie is shocked by the ugliness in Mammy's story because she always chooses to see what's best in everyone. However, her habit of simplifying things reveals what she believes is essential to Rhett and Scarlett's relationship: their love for each other. As Melanie sees it, the fact that the couple are at odds now suggests that whatever went wrong was a disastrous misunderstanding.*





Melanie understands Rhett's pain; she thinks how scary it would be to bury one's own child in a dark grave. She runs through the house, hugging Beau as she goes, her napkin still in her hand. At the Butlers' house, she bows to Suellen, Will, Scarlett, and Pittypat before going upstairs. She announces herself gently at Rhett's door, and he lets her in. Mammy sinks into a chair outside the door. All she hears is a low humming from inside. Some time later, Melanie comes out and asks Mammy for sandwiches and cutlery. Mammy brings the food and hears Rhett taking off his boots. Melanie comes out and says to tell Scarlett the funeral will be tomorrow. Melanie says she promised to stay with Rhett all night while he sleeps. As Mammy goes to tell Scarlett, she thinks that Melanie must have angels behind her.

*Melanie can simply and instantly empathize with Rhett's pain. She sees through the complicated aspects of the situation and of Rhett's character and understands exactly how he feels. Even though she is different from him and doesn't understand what's going on between him and Scarlett, this doesn't stand in the way of her sympathy. Her blind trust and instant sympathy make her invaluable to each character. Although she misunderstands them all in some ways, she also understands them deeply and universally.*



## CHAPTER 60

Scarlett feels that everything is wrong. Even as her anguish fades into dull acceptance, the ground seems to crumble under her feet. She knows she can stand anything; she still has money and Ashley, but she feels she is living in her nightmare in which she is a lost child seeking a haven in the fog. Rhett has always been able to make her feel better, but now he is only friendly and distant. She's lonely and wants to cry in his arms, but she can't make herself break through his blankness.

*Scarlett endures the loss of Bonnie as she has endured the losses of so many people she loves. However, she is left with an eerie feeling that she's missing something. This feeling suggests that this time, she can't move forward as she always does to carry out some clear future plan. She lives now in her terrible nightmare where she has no direction.*



Scarlett and Rhett have the unbreakable bond of two people who birthed and buried a loved child. Only Rhett's arms can heal Scarlett, but to lie in them now would feel like lying in the arms of a stranger. He's hardly ever home, and when he is, he's drunk. He starts to look unwell. Scarlett assumes he spends his time with Belle. Once, she runs into Belle in town. Belle gives Scarlett a pitying stare that makes Scarlett blush. She feels like she can't blame Rhett or apologize to him for saying he killed Bonnie.

*Scarlett feels that Bonnie's death created an unbreakable bond between her and Rhett. Now that she's lost her most beloved child, she wants Rhett because only he can heal her. Meanwhile, Rhett has grown even more distant from Scarlett. Unlike Scarlett, he wants the comfort, not of the mother of his dead child, but of another woman. In this way, Scarlett and Rhett's roles have reversed.*



Mammy leaves for Tara, saying Ellen's voice told her it's time to go home. Scarlett tries to stop her, but Rhett says no one wants to live in their house. When Scarlett asks Dr. Meade if Rhett has lost his mind, Dr. Meade recommends she and Rhett have another baby. Scarlett would happily have babies to get close to Rhett again. She leaves her door open, but he never visits. The neighbors grieve for Rhett's loss and think that Scarlett is heartless. Nobody knows how hard Scarlett works to feel better after Bonnie dies. Her new friends drift away, not understanding the hardships she's experienced. She wants to talk with her old friends, like Mrs. Merriwether and Mrs. Elsing, about hard times and tragedy. She understands now why ex-Confederates like to meet: they're all veterans. She yearns for her people, but they've slipped away. Rhett is slipping away too.

*Scarlett feels that everything is slipping away, going back to the old days. Mammy leaves for Tara, suggesting that there's nothing left of the new life in Atlanta anymore. Furthermore, Scarlett has none of her old friends or her new friends. She realizes now that she sacrificed all the people who could understand her grievances by moving so doggedly towards the future. Scarlett now wants to move forward with Rhett, who always seemed to want to create the future with her, but he isn't interested anymore. Scarlett has also finally come around to wanting children, but it seems like too little too late at this point.*



## CHAPTER 61

Scarlett is in Marietta when Rhett sends an urgent telegram that Melanie is ill. Leaving Wade and Ella with Prissy, Scarlett gets the first train to **Atlanta**. It moves painfully slowly through old Civil War sites that once upset Scarlett; now, she pays them no mind. Rhett meets Scarlett at the depot, his face blank. He says Melanie isn't dead, but she is dying: she had a miscarriage. She hadn't told anyone, but Rhett knew because she's been so happy lately. They arrive at Melanie's house. Suddenly lonely, Scarlett grabs Rhett's arm, but he leaves her to go in alone.

Ashley, India, and Aunt Pitty are gathered inside. Ashley looks like a sleepwalker. Scarlett is afraid but refuses to believe Melanie is dying. Ashley says Melanie told no one she was pregnant because she'd been so afraid something would go wrong. Dr. Meade comes out of Melanie's room and looks at Scarlett with grief and contempt. Pitty and India both beg to see Melanie, but Dr. Meade says Melanie wants Scarlett. As he leads her to the room, he orders her not to tell Melanie about her and Ashley.

Dr. Meade ushers Scarlett in and shuts the door behind her. The room is neat and spare, so unlike Scarlett's own lavish bedroom. Melanie lies in bed, her eyes sunken and closed. Until this moment, Scarlett had refused to believe she was dying, but now she knows it is true. She realizes she relies on Melanie and doesn't know how she'll go on without her. She grasps Melanie's cold hand. Melanie's eyes flutter open and she whispers weakly, asking Scarlett to promise to take care of Beau like her own son. Once, Melanie had asked her the same thing while **Atlanta** was burning, and Scarlett had meanly hoped she would die. Scarlett thinks she's killed Melanie, but she promises to care for Beau.

Melanie gathers strength and starts to say something about Ashley and Scarlett. Scarlett is terrified; she thinks Melanie knew about her and Ashley all along, and she's still been a loyal friend. She prays Melanie will live so she can make it up to her. Melanie whispers Ashley's name again, tugging weakly at Scarlett's face to make her look up. Scarlett looks up, but Melanie's eyes are loving; she doesn't know. Melanie asks Scarlett to care for Ashley because he's impractical. Scarlett promises, and Melanie says she's so brave and has always been so good to her. Scarlett wants to scream that Melanie is wrong, but she stands, biting back her confession. It will be her penance to know that Melanie loved her even though she doesn't deserve it.

*After Melanie had her first child, Dr. Meade warned her not to have another or it would kill her. Melanie is the last person that holds everyone together. She sees the best in both Rhett and Scarlett and ignores their less positive qualities. Now that she is dying, Scarlett is starting to realize how much Melanie matters to her, even as it's too late to change anything for the better.*



*Dr. Meade doesn't want Melanie's contented belief in everyone she loves is good to be shattered at the last instant by Scarlett's confession. Melanie wants to see Scarlett before she sees anyone else, suggesting that she trusts Scarlett with her last wishes more than she does her own husband.*



*Just as it is too late, Scarlett realizes how much she depends on Melanie. She's been obsessed with Ashley and believed that his imaginary love supported her through hard times for so long, that she never saw that Melanie was the one who really stood by her. From the beginning, Melanie trusted Scarlett to care for her children. Throughout the story, Melanie hasn't changed whereas Scarlett has undergone a long transformation to come to the realization that she loves Melanie.*



*Scarlett realizes that the most painful consequence of her selfishness is the memory that Melanie loved her far more than she deserved. Now that Melanie is dying, she has no opportunity to go back and right the wrongs she dealt her. Scarlett only comes to this realization though because Melanie is dying—it takes loss for Scarlett to realize how she's been wrong, and then it is too late for her to change her behavior. Melanie also seems more aware and more practical than Scarlett has given her credit for, since she acknowledges Ashley's shortcomings.*



The door opens and Dr. Meade calls Scarlett out. She holds Melanie's hand to her cheek and says goodnight. Melanie asks for one more promise: that Scarlett be kind to Rhett, because he loves Scarlett. Scarlett promises, kisses Melanie's hand, and leaves the room. India and Miss Pitty go in. Ashley is nowhere to be seen. Scarlett leans against the wall, her vision blurry. She never knew how much she loved and needed Melanie. She thinks back to when she killed the Yankee and Melanie stood on the landing with Charles's sword. At the time, Scarlett had laughed at her frailty, but now she knows Melanie would've killed that Yankee if it meant dying herself. Melanie has always stood beside Scarlett, ready to go to battle for her. Melanie is the only girl friend she ever had, and she was so much like Ellen that Scarlett feels she is losing her mother again.

Scarlett wonders where Ashley is. She's losing Melanie, but she still has Ashley. She finds him in his room, holding one of Melanie's gloves. She says his name in a trembling voice but realizes he's just as lost as she is. She says that Ashley can't be frightened because he's so strong, but he says all his strength is gone now that Melanie is gone. Suddenly, Scarlett realizes something, and she says that Ashley loves Melanie. Ashley says Melanie was the only one of his dreams that was ever real. Scarlett says he should've told her years ago instead of stringing her along. She says that men are supposed to know those things, not women.

Ashley winces. His drooping shoulders show he's already criticizing himself. Scarlett thinks of how she promised Melanie she'd care for him, and now she's hurting his feelings. Scarlett can stand this, but Ashley can't stand anything. She opens her arms, and he comes to her, crying, saying he can't live without Melanie. She feels privately that she also can't live without Melanie, but she squares her shoulders and soothes him. The door opens and Dr. Meade calls Ashley urgently. Scarlett pushes Ashley towards the door, telling him to be brave.

Scarlett sits on the bed, more tired than she's ever been. She thinks about how Ashley doesn't love her and how she doesn't care. She should be heartbroken, but she isn't because she doesn't love him. She tries to tell herself love can't change, but it has. He was a childish fancy. Melanie is dead, and Ashley could ask her to divorce Rhett to marry him. But now that Scarlett has Ashley, she doesn't want him. If it wasn't for her promise to Melanie, she wouldn't care if she never saw Ashley again.

*Scarlett feels she is losing Ellen all over again—or, that she's losing someone she regularly deceived and who was an example Scarlett could never live up to. Bonnie's death was a replay of Gerald's death, and now Melanie's is a replay of Ellen's. These repeated tragedies drive home the fact that Scarlett never mourned her mother or her father but always moved on to the next thing, too afraid of being made useless by nostalgia and grief, like Ashley. Ellen's death did not make Scarlett finally emulate the "great lady" but made her leave her old self behind completely.*



*In the wake of losing Melanie, Scarlett's mind searches for the next thing to cling to, and arrives at Ashley. When she finds him, however, he is not what she always fantasized him to be. She's always imagined him as the perfect man: stronger than her, and smarter about love. She finds that he has no strength without Melanie, and she realizes that he loved Melanie but never realized it and never came out and told Scarlett this. With this, Scarlett's shining image of Ashley shatters.*



*At the beginning of the story, Ashley made Scarlett promise to take care of Melanie, whom Scarlett despised. Now, Melanie has made Scarlett promise to take care of Ashley—who suddenly seems unattractive and weak. Scarlett has never loved who she's supposed to, and she's always wanted what she can't have. But she again steps into a more masculine-coded, strong role as she pushes Ashley toward Melanie.*



*Scarlett believed so strongly that love couldn't change that she doggedly loved Ashley even when she had no reason to. Now, she realizes that love changes all the time; she hated Melanie but grew to love her, and she fell out of love with Ashley. She realizes that she tried to make her love of Ashley as unshakeable as everyone's love of the Cause and the Old South, but that Ashley was only a childhood fancy, something she'll never be able to access again—just as the Old Guard's love of Old South is never going to bring it back.*



## CHAPTER 62

Scarlett opens the door and walks into the parlor. The tearful faces of Dilcey, Peter, India and Pitty greet her. India and Pitty come to her, but she snaps at them not to speak to her. She feels instantly sorry; she must pull herself together. There's so much to do and none of these people are strong enough to do it. She apologizes for being cross and steps out onto the porch. A heavy mist hangs in the air, and the lights from windows shine weakly. She tries to cry, but no tears come. She tries to tell herself she'll think about things tomorrow, but her old chant had lost its power. She knows that her too-late realizations—that she loved Melanie and doesn't love Ashley—will plague her the rest of her life.

Scarlett decides she can't go back in. She'll make the funeral arrangements tomorrow. Home is only five blocks away and she needs to rest, so she starts walking up the long hill. As she walks, a feeling creeps over her that feels eerily familiar. She realizes that in her recurring nightmare she runs through fog like this, hunting the haven she can't find. Has her dream come true? All that matters in her life is gone, and the earth is in ruins around her. She runs from a fear she can't name. Lights loom suddenly before her, different from in her dream. The lights signal that this is not a land of ghosts. She sinks to the ground. Where is she running?

The lights are the lights of Scarlett's own home. Then she realizes she's running to Rhett. The fear that haunted her since she returned to **Tara** and found the world gone suddenly disappears. The haven she seeks isn't Ashley; it's Rhett, who sees "truth for truth" and has strong arms to hold her. Why has she never seen that he loves her? She thinks of how he danced with her at the bazaar, helped her escape **Atlanta**, loaned her money—these were the actions of someone who loves a woman. She trembles as she realizes she loves him.

Scarlett loves Rhett because he has none of Ashley's foolish honor, which always let her down. Rhett never let her down, even the night of Ashley's birthday when he should have killed her. Rhett always loved her, and she's always been so mean to him. How could she have said he killed Bonnie? She had to lose everything to realize she loves Rhett. He is "passionate and earthy," like herself. She decides she'll tell him and make everything up to him. She runs up the street, happy because Rhett's arms are at the end.

*For the first time, Scarlett's chant "I'll think about it tomorrow" doesn't work. She sees now that there are irreparable consequences to her constant forward thinking; it has made her blind to the truth. It is only now that Melanie has died that Scarlett realizes she loved and hated the wrong things. She can't move forward in this moment because she can't think of anywhere else to go to; she's out of goals and things to strive for.*



*Scarlett's recurring nightmare is coming true. She has now lost so many things in her life that she can't see the next thing to run to. She is looking, as ever, for the next thing—the haven—but she can't see it. When she sinks to the ground and asks herself where she's running, she's realizing that she's always been running only to keep surviving but doesn't actually know what she's trying to find or where she's trying to go.*



*Scarlett's racing mind finally settles on Rhett. In some ways, it seems as though Rhett is just next in the list of things Scarlett can pursue in her refusal to look to the past. However, for the first time, she loves what she has and what she knows, not what she imagines and wishes she had. This suggests that realizing she loves Rhett is not just a coping mechanism but—finally—the truth.*



*Scarlett feels she had to lose everything to realize she loves Rhett; she had to grow up, and her world had to be completely destroyed for her to realize her own true nature and therefore that Rhett is her perfect match. Gerald—who was also "passionate and earthy" like Scarlett and Rhett—once warned her that love only works between two like minds, and she finally sees this is true.*



## CHAPTER 63

Scarlett enters the front hall. Rhett isn't in the hall, and she thinks anxiously that he's at Belle's. She starts up the stairs but then sees a light on under the dining room door. She thinks fearfully that if Rhett laughs at her, her heart will break. She opens the door and finds Rhett in a chair. She wants to run to him, but his expression stops her. He looks at her steadily and has no reaction. Drink and grief has worn away his handsome figure. He asks if Melanie is dead. Scarlett nods, wanting to shout that she loves him.

Rhett says he didn't go in with Scarlett because he couldn't bear it. He says Melanie was a great lady, his expression like the one he had when he joined the army—a man who has discovered he's loyal. He looks through Scarlett, as if seeing Melanie walking through the room. Scarlett shivers, knowing that Rhett is saying goodbye to the only person he ever fully respected. Rhett's expression turns mocking, and he says Melanie's death must be nice for Scarlett. Scarlett says he doesn't know how much she loved Melanie. She says Melanie thought of everyone but herself and even her last words were about Rhett.

Suddenly interested, Rhett demands to know what Melanie said about him. Scarlett tells him that Melanie said Rhett loved Scarlett. Rhett goes to the window and asks if she said anything else. Scarlett relays her promise to look after Beau and Ashley. Rhett says Scarlett finally has permission to divorce him and marry Ashley. Scarlett cries that she doesn't want a divorce. Her face shows her whole heart, but he looks at her blankly. She starts to confess her love, but he interrupts, saying she should go to bed. Rhett says he can see it in Scarlett's face: she's fallen out of love with Ashley and suddenly finds Rhett attractive, but it's no use.

Scarlett admits that she's been a fool. Rhett tells her to spare him, but she cries that she loves him. He believes her but asks what happened to Ashley. Scarlett explains that Ashley was a habit she clung to, but he's a weak person. She confesses her love again, stammering with shyness. He gives her a drained look and asks if it ever occurred to her that the most "deathless love" can die out. Scarlett says love can't die out, but he says hers for Ashley did. She says she never really loved Ashley, but Rhett says she did a good job pretending.

*Scarlett is ready to shout recklessly that she loves Rhett, but for the first time she stops herself from doing something entirely selfish. This scene is also reminiscent of the time in the orchard at Tara when Scarlett and Ashley were speaking different languages: Scarlett wanted to abandon everything and run away with Ashley because she loved him, but he was caught up in less romantic thoughts.*



*That Rhett's expression resembles the sentimental one he had when he joined the army suggests that the sentimental and nostalgic side of Rhett is reemerging—the side that is very different from Scarlett. Rhett wants to look back and to reminisce about Melanie the "great lady," but Scarlett wants, as always, to move forward by telling Rhett she loves him. Scarlett might now believe she loves Rhett and want to tell the truth, but as usual, she and Rhett aren't on the same page.*



*Scarlett and Melanie were opposites: while Scarlett is practical and selfish, Melanie was selfless and idealistic. Rhett once loved Scarlett because he was like her, but, over time, he became more sentimental like Melanie. It seems possible that Rhett hoped Melanie told Scarlett she loved him before she died because he'd grown to love her and has become more like her. This suggests, in turn, that he's no longer like Scarlett—or in love with her.*



*Early in the novel, Scarlett told Gerald that love was the only thing that could last. Then, after Melanie died, she realized that love could change, for she didn't love Ashley anymore. Now, Rhett asserts that even the greatest love doesn't last. This harkens back to Gerald's warning that love doesn't last, especially through the destructive forces of the war.*



Scarlett sits down, and Rhett talks to her plainly. He asks if she ever wondered if he loved her as much as a man could ever love a woman? He loved her, but he couldn't let her know it because she's brutal to people who love her. When he married her, he knew she loved Ashley, but he hoped he could make her love him. He wanted to take care of her and make her feel safe because she'd been through so much. He wanted to make her play again. Rhett's weary voice reminds Scarlett of Ashley's wistful words that day in the orchard. She's frightened.

Rhett goes on and says that if Scarlett had let him, he would've loved her so well, but he couldn't be honest or she'd hold his love over his head. He couldn't bear that she'd lie in his arms and wish they were Ashley's. That drove him to Belle, who comforted him. Then, the night he carried Scarlett up the stairs, he hoped but was too afraid to believe she loved him, and she gave him no sign. Scarlett cries that she wanted him that night. Rhett says he realizes that they misunderstood one another, but it no longer matters. When Scarlett was sick, he wanted her to call him, but she didn't. He channeled his love for Scarlett into Bonnie, who loved him back. When Bonnie died, everything ended.

Scarlett feels compassion for Rhett that wipes out her own feelings. This is the first time she's come close to understanding another person. She can see that his pride is just like hers. She holds out her arms, saying there can be more babies. Rhett says he won't risk his heart again, and that by saying sorry, she doesn't erase the bad memories. He gives her his handkerchief and looks at her with a kindness that scares her. He asks how old she is, and Scarlett says she's 28. He says at least she still has time to figure out what she wants, now that money and Ashley aren't enough after all. But Scarlett thinks Rhett is her soul and she's losing him.

Scarlett says there must be something left of Rhett's love. He says all that's left is pity and kindness. Rhett says he's going away and, if Scarlett doesn't want a divorce, he'll come back now and then to keep gossip down. In her anguish, Scarlett decides if she can't have his love, she must at least earn his respect. She lifts her chin and asks where he'll go. He says he'll go to Charleston to see family. His eyes have the same wistful look Ashley's had that day in the orchard.

*Rhett is thinking about his and Scarlett's past like a beautiful world that is dead, the way Ashley thought about the Old South. Rhett also observes that Scarlett is mean to those who love her, thinking of how cruelly she treated Melanie. Scarlett always looked down on Melanie for loving her too much to see the reality, suggesting that Scarlett views a person's love as weakness.*



*Rhett explains how Scarlett's love for Ashley and her lack of love for him slowly undid him. He then says that when Bonnie died, everything between him and Scarlett was over. In contrast, Scarlett felt that the more she lost, the more she started to love Rhett. It was only through losing Bonnie, Melanie, Ashley, and her parents that she realized she loved him. This suggests that loss destroys Rhett, whereas loss makes Scarlett find who she is.*



*Rhett isn't willing to forgive and start over with Scarlett. Like other loyal Southerners, he can't forget the past and move onto the future where Scarlett is concerned. He points out that Scarlett is 28—12 years older than she was when the story began. After all that time, he thinks she still hasn't grown up and figured out what she wants. However, Scarlett knows she wants Rhett, but he suggests that it's too late to fix their relationship in much the same way it was too late for Scarlett to fix her relationship with Melanie.*



*Rhett used to be like Scarlett in that he looked to the future and shared none of other Southerners' nostalgia for the past. Now, however, he wants to go back to the old places of his youth which he initially left because everyone there was stuck in their prideful ways. In this way, he has become another Ashley, caught up in love for the past.*



Rhett's nostalgic words sound just like something Ashley said in the orchard at **Tara**. Rhett says he doubts Scarlett will ever know why Rhett wants to seek out the old places, because she's always preferred "glisten to gold." Scarlett asks Rhett to stop, unable to bear his loveless voice. She cries that if he leaves her, she won't know what to do. Rhett pauses and then says what's broken is broken; he can't live a lie with her. He says he wishes he could care where she went and what she did, but he "doesn't give a damn."

Scarlett watches Rhett go upstairs. She feels she'll die from the pain and feels like the last thing in her life that matters is dying. She knows he meant what he said; he's strong and won't change his mind, since he's so unlike Ashley. She'd never understood anyone all her life. If she'd understood Ashley, she wouldn't have loved him, and if she'd understood Rhett, she wouldn't have lost him. She tries to push her agony off to tomorrow, but she can't.

Then Scarlett thinks of **Tara**, and her spirits lift slightly. She went to Tara once in her defeat and emerged strong and ready for victory. She'll go there and find a place to heal and plan how to get Rhett back. She sees the white house, the raw red earth, and feels the country twilight in her mind. Mammy will be there, the last link to the old days. Tomorrow at Tara, she'll think of a way to get Rhett back; "After all, tomorrow is another day."

*Rhett accuses Scarlett of preferring "glisten to gold," meaning that she has been shallow in only caring about money all these years (glisten refers to glittery things, rather than things that are truly valuable like gold). Now that he resembled the Old Guard Southerners who value tradition, he no longer admires her practicality and love of money. He sees only that, like a true Scallawag, she lacks all the values inherent to the Old South.*



*Scarlett finally accepts what many people have said about her: that she doesn't understand people. This cuts her off from her relationships and makes her feel totally alone as she looks to the future. Without Rhett, Scarlett can't love anyone—but she also can't keep doing what she has in the past and try to manipulate him.*



*Scarlett's racing mind rests on Tara. Unlike men, the simple, beautiful County landscape is something she can understand. Like everyone else in the novel, she is finally looking back to the places of her youth. Fixating on Tara at the end of the novel suggests that Gerald was right when he said land was the only thing that lasts through war and great loss. However, Scarlett also sees Tara as a place where she can plan to get Rhett back. Until the end, then, Scarlett makes herself feel better by looking to the future, even if she can't ever reach it.*





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