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Gone with the Wind
Part One

Margaret Mitchell

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Gone with the Wind

Part 1

MARGARET MITCHELL

Level 4

Retold by John Escott

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Introduction

'You, Miss, are no lady,' Rhett Butler said. 'But ladies rarely interest me, and I cannot understand, my dear Miss O'Hara, what a wild and hot-blooded girl like you can find to like about the handsome but very boring Mr Wilkes.'

The story of *Gone with the Wind* begins in April 1861 in the southern part of the United States. Every young man for miles around is in love with sixteen-year-old Scarlett O'Hara. But Scarlett can think of no one but Ashley Wilkes, the handsome, intelligent, perfect Southern gentleman. He is planning to marry Melanie Hamilton, but Scarlett will do anything to make him love her.

But although Ashley loves Scarlett, he knows that they are wrong for each other. They are just too different. As Scarlett's father tells her, the Wilkes family 'enjoy reading books, going to Boston and New York to see paintings and hear music.' Scarlett, on the other hand, is 'a wild and hot-blooded girl', in the words of Captain Rhett Butler.

Rhett, an older man with a dark past, likes the fire in Scarlett's character and is amused by her selfishness. He is nothing like the gentlemanly Ashley, but he is clever, handsome and charming. He understands Scarlett and wants her for himself.

But as the winds of war begin to blow, Scarlett learns that, even for her, there are more important things than the admiration of men. Scarlett has to use all her cleverness and strength to stay alive.

Scarlett is a very confident, selfish young woman. She will do anything to get what she wants. But she is not completely without feelings for others. And neither is Rhett. In fact, although they fight almost every time they meet, Scarlett and

Rhett find that they have more similarities than differences in their characters.

The story of Scarlett O'Hara, Ashley Wilkes and Rhett Butler is one of the greatest love stories ever told. It is also a story of the American Civil War and the death of the lifestyle of the 'Old South' after that terrible war. That is the meaning of the title: the war sweeps through the southern state of Georgia like a wind destroying everything in its path. After the war, the Old South has 'gone with the wind'.

Before the war, Georgia and the other southern states of the US were very different from the northern states. In the north, great cities were growing up, there were many factories, and the economy was moving towards the modern age. In the south, there were very few factories. Cotton was grown in the hot southern climate and was very important for the southern economy. Most people's lifestyles still centred on farms and big cotton plantations. Southern society was old-fashioned. It was important to be a gentleman or a lady, and a man should ride and shoot well. Black slaves were still used for the hot work in the cotton fields and in people's homes.

Gone with the Wind shows us a romantic view of life in the Old South. We see it through the comfortable life of rich plantation owners who are good to their slaves.

Margaret Mitchell was born in Atlanta, Georgia on 8 November 1900. As a child, she enjoyed writing and telling stories at an early age. Like Scarlett O'Hara, Margaret enjoyed being the centre of attention. She loved parties and flirting with boys of her age. In 1918, Clifford Henry, a soldier, asked Margaret to marry him. They were planning their wedding when he was killed in battle. It was a terrible blow for Margaret.

Mrs Mitchell took her daughter to Massachusetts, where

Margaret went to Smith College. It was the last time Margaret saw her mother, who soon after became ill and died in January 1919. Margaret decided to leave college and stay at home to look after her father.

Her first marriage, in 1922, was a very unhappy one and did not last. Her husband was in some ways like Rhett Butler, and some people think that she was thinking of him when she wrote her book in later years.

Margaret went to work as a writer for the *Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine* and continued in that job for four years. In July 1925, she married John Marsh, a friend of her first husband. After she broke a bone in her lower leg in 1926, John made a suggestion to her: he thought she should spend her time writing a book. She did, and the result was *Gone with the Wind*. It took her ten years to finish it, and she did not think it was very good. She did not want to show it to anybody at first. But when it finally appeared, so many people wanted to meet her that she had to hide!

Gone with the Wind was the only book Margaret Mitchell wrote. When she died on 16 August 1949, killed by a speeding taxi, the people of Atlanta lost a valuable member of their city. Margaret's generous work helping the sick had made her a much loved citizen. She gave so much to her city and did much good during the years of World War II. Today there is a special building in Atlanta to celebrate Margaret Mitchell's life.

The Civil War background of the story is one that she knew well from the stories of old family members. Her grandmother, for example, was the daughter of a plantation owner and remembered the life of the Old South well. They also remembered well the terrible four-year civil war in which nearly a million Americans died.

The American Civil War (1861–65) started mainly because

the thirteen southern states did not want to stay in the United States after Abraham Lincoln became president. They wanted to become a separate country from the northern states. These thirteen states were Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Missouri and Kentucky. The US government in the north wanted to change the south and free all slaves. The south did not want the 'Yankees' in the north to tell them what to do. So these states left the United States in 1861 and called themselves the Confederate States of America, or the Confederacy.

When the Civil War began, the Confederates believed they would win: the men of the south knew how to ride and shoot better than the Yankee city boys. But the population of the southern states was only 9 million while the north's was 22 million. And, as Rhett Butler knew from the start, there were no factories in the south for making guns, and the south had no fighting ships. At first, things went well for the South. The Confederate General Robert E. Lee took some northern cities. But the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1–3 1863, changed the South's dreams. It was a very bloody battle and it ended General Robert E. Lee's successes. General Meade's northern soldiers won after taking the railway lines, weakening Lee's control. Between 46,000 and 51,000 men lost their lives in that three-day battle. But the fight was not over. Lee's army escaped into Virginia. Then the battle in Vicksburg destroyed the South's chances of ever winning.

In November 1863, President Abraham Lincoln spoke in Gettysburg and gave new meaning to the fight. It was no longer a fight to keep all of the states together, but it was a fight to make people free. It became a fight to free the slaves.

The North had the advantage of experience with sea battles and the South did not. The North blockaded the South's port

cities so that nothing could get in or out. Men like Rhett Butler tried to get ships through the blockade at night. They were known as 'blockade runners'. These blockade runners were very successful at first. They could sell the south's cotton and bring in necessary things like food, medicine and guns. But this was not enough to save the Confederacy. The Yankees marched through Georgia. They burned everything in their path and they attacked the capital, Atlanta.

Like the women in Mitchell's story, Atlanta's richer women worked as nurses for the soldiers hurt in the war. Public buildings, homes, churches and streets became hospitals. Women also collected money to help the Confederate army. They sold things to get money. They collected clothes, medicine and food for the soldiers, too.

When the South finally lost the war, Atlanta's population was reduced from around 10,000 to only about 3,000.

Gone with the Wind reached the bookshops in 1936 and sold over a million copies in its first six months. It won the famous Pulitzer Prize, and then became even more famous as a film in 1939. The book is now one of the world's best sellers stories of all time.

The 1939 film by David Selznick had some of the biggest film stars of the day including Clark Gable as Rhett Butler, Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara, Leslie Howard as Ashley Wilkes and Olivia de Havilland as Melanie. It ran for three hours and thirty-nine minutes. It is probably one of the most watched films ever, and people love it today as much as they did in 1939.

Chapter 1 News of a Wedding

Scarlett O'Hara was not beautiful, but men did not realize this when caught by her charm as the Tarleton twins were. Her eyes were green, and her skin was that soft white skin which Southern women valued so highly, and covered so carefully from the hot Georgia sun with hats and gloves.

On that bright April afternoon of 1861, sixteen-year-old Scarlett sat in the cool shadows of the house at Tara, her father's plantation. Stuart and Brent Tarleton sat each side of her. They were friendly young men with deep red-brown hair, and were clever in the things that mattered in north Georgia at that time – growing good cotton, riding well, shooting straight and behaving like a gentleman.

'Don't you two care about being sent home from the University of Georgia for bad behaviour?' Scarlett was saying.

'The war^{*} will start soon,' said Brent. 'You didn't think we'd stay in university with a war going on, did you?'

'There isn't going to be a war,' said Scarlett, looking bored. 'Ashley Wilkes and his father told Pa just last week that our men in Washington will come to an agreement with Mr Lincoln about the Confederacy.[†] Anyway, the Yankees[‡] are too frightened of us to fight. And if you say "war" once more, I'll go inside the house and shut the door!'

They looked across the red earth of Gerald O'Hara's land, which stretched away as far as the eye could see. The white

^{*} war: in this story, the word describes the American Civil War.

[†] Confederacy: the Southern States of America.

[‡] Yankees: the name used for the soldiers and people of the Northern States of America.

house was like an island, sitting in a wild red sea, the earth blood-coloured after the rains of recent weeks.

‘Scarlett, you’ll promise to dance with us at the party at Twelve Oaks tomorrow, won’t you?’ said Brent.

‘If you do, we’ll tell you a secret,’ said Stuart.

‘What secret?’ asked Scarlett. ‘Who told you?’

‘Miss Pittypat Hamilton, Ashley Wilkes’ cousin who lives in Atlanta. Charles and Melanie Hamilton’s aunt,’ said Stuart.

‘She said that we’ll hear news of a wedding tomorrow night, at the party,’ said Brent.

‘Oh, I know that!’ said Scarlett, disappointed. ‘It’s about Charlie Hamilton and Honey Wilkes. Everyone knows they’ll get married some day.’

‘No, it’s about Ashley,’ said Stuart. ‘He’s going to marry Charlie’s sister, Miss Melanie!’

Scarlett’s face did not change but her lips went white – like a person who is in the first moments of shock.

‘They weren’t going to marry until next year,’ said Stuart, ‘but with all the talk of war, both families think it will be better if they’re married soon.’ He smiled. ‘Now, Scarlett, you must promise to eat supper with us at the party.’

‘Of course I will,’ said Scarlett automatically.

‘And give us plenty of dances?’

‘Yes.’ She spoke as if in a dream.

‘And sit with us at lunch, too?’ said Brent.

‘What?’ said Scarlett. ‘Oh, yes, of course.’

The twins were unable to believe their good luck. They talked on about the dance, and Ashley Wilkes and Melanie Hamilton. They laughed and joked, and waited for Scarlett to invite them to supper; and it was some time before they realized she was not listening to them.





The twins waited for Scarlett to invite them to supper; and it was some time before they realized she was not listening to them.

Scarlett watched the twins ride away.

Ashley was going to marry Melanie Hamilton! Oh, it couldn't be true! It was all a mistake. Ashley was in love with *her*, not Melanie!

Mammy came out of the house. She was a big old negro who loved Ellen O'Hara and her family. 'Are the gen'lemen gone?' she asked. 'Why didn' you ask them to stay to supper?'

'I didn't want to listen to them talking to Pa about the war all through supper,' said Scarlett.

'You just ain't* polite, Miss Scarlett,' said Mammy. 'Now come into the house before you get cold.'

'I want to watch the sun go down,' said Scarlett. 'I'll sit here until Pa comes home. Just fetch me a light coat, Mammy.'

Mammy went back into the house and Scarlett made a sudden decision. 'I'll go and meet Pa,' she thought. 'He'll be coming back from Twelve Oaks soon, and he'll know about Ashley.'

As a child, Scarlett had not given Ashley Wilkes a single thought. But two years ago, he had arrived home after touring Europe – riding up to Tara with the sun so bright on his fair hair that it shone like silver. 'You've grown up, Scarlett,' he had said, kissing her hand. And from that moment on, she wanted him as simply as she wanted food to eat, and horses to ride, and a soft bed to sleep in.

For two years, he took her to dances and suppers, and a week did not go past without Ashley calling at Tara. It was true he never spoke to her of love, and his clear grey eyes never burned with that hot light Scarlett knew so well in other men. But she was sure that he loved her. She saw him looking at her sometimes, in that sad, strange way of his.

Scarlett heard the sound of Gerald O'Hara's horse and saw him coming across the fields at full speed. Gerald was sixty years

* *ain't*: *aren't* or *isn't* or *haven't* in Southern American English.

old, a small man with silver-white hair and hard little blue eyes. He was surprised to see her.

‘How is everyone at Twelve Oaks?’ she asked him.

‘They’re all talking about the war,’ he said, ‘and —’

‘Did they speak about the party?’ Scarlett asked quickly.

‘Yes, I think they did,’ said Gerald. ‘Miss Melanie Hamilton and her brother Charles have come from Atlanta and —’

‘Oh, so she did come!’ Scarlett’s heart became heavy. ‘Was Ashley there, too?’

‘Yes, he was.’ Gerald looked closely at his daughter. ‘That’s why you came to meet me, isn’t it? Why didn’t you say so before? Now what’s all this about you and Ashley?’

‘There’s nothing, Pa,’ she said.

‘Has he asked to marry you?’

‘No,’ said Scarlett, quietly.

‘And he won’t,’ said Gerald. ‘John Wilkes says that Ashley is to marry Miss Melanie. They’ll tell everyone tomorrow.’

A pain cut across Scarlett’s heart and she found it hard to breathe. Her father watched her, and looked uncomfortable.

‘Have you run after a man who’s not in love with you?’

‘No!’ said Scarlett.

‘You’re lying!’ said Gerald. Then went on in a kind way, ‘There are lots of other young men, Scarlett. I want you to be happy, and you wouldn’t be happy with him.’

‘Oh, I would! I would!’

‘The Wilkes are different from other people,’ said Gerald. ‘They marry their cousins and keep their strangeness in the family. Look how they read books, and go to Boston and New York to see paintings and hear music.’

‘Nobody rides a horse better than Ashley!’ said Scarlett.

‘Oh, yes, Ashley can ride and drink with the best of men, but he cares nothing about those things,’ said Gerald. ‘Now listen,

there are other fine boys to marry, Scarlett. And when I'm gone, I'll leave Tara to you and —'

'I don't want Tara!' cried Scarlett, angrily. 'Plantations don't mean anything when —' She was going to say *when you don't have the man you want*, but Gerald's shout stopped her.

'Not mean anything! Land is the only thing in the world that *does* mean anything!' he cried. 'It will come to you, Scarlett, this love of the land. It's in your blood and there's no denying it.' He held her arm as they walked towards the house. 'I'll not worry your mother with this, and nor must you.'

They met Ellen O'Hara at the door. She was carrying the black bag in which she always kept the medicines she used for the slaves. Mammy was with her, and did not look pleased.

'Mr O'Hara,' Ellen said, 'a baby is dying at the Slattery house and Mammy and I are going to see what we can do.'

'The Slatterys!' shouted Gerald. 'Those white trash?'

'She is always nursin' negroes and white trash who could look after themselves,' said Mammy, annoyed.

'Take my place at supper, Scarlett,' said Ellen, touching her daughter's cheek. She was a tall woman, with a quiet, gentle voice and a warm smile that charmed everyone.

There was something magical about her mother's touch, thought Scarlett, and for a moment forgot all about Ashley.

But later an idea came to her. 'Ashley doesn't *know* I love him!' she thought. 'He thinks I love Brent or Stuart, and he's marrying Melanie because he thinks he can't have me! I must tell him, then we can run off to Jonesboro and get married! By this time tomorrow night, I might be Mrs Ashley Wilkes!'

Chapter 2 Rhett Butler

Early the next morning, Gerald told his plantation manager, Jonas Wilkerson, to pack his things and leave. Jonas, Ellen had discovered, was the father of Emmie Slattery's dead baby, and now Ellen would not have him working at Tara. Jonas was a Yankee and hated all Southerners, and he was angry at losing the best manager's job in the neighbourhood.

Ellen told Gerald that she was not going to the party at Twelve Oaks. 'I must check Jonas's figures in the plantation books,' she said. 'Mammy will stay and help me.'

So Gerald rode on his horse beside the carriage that took Scarlett and her two sisters down the road to Twelve Oaks.

Scarlett thought about her plans to marry Ashley. 'No one must suspect anything,' she thought, 'so I'll flirt with every man there, from old Frank Kennedy to shy Charlie Hamilton. It will be cruel to Ashley, but it will make him want me more.'

'I don't know why you look so happy this morning,' said her sister, Suellen, looking at Scarlett. 'You know Ashley's going to marry Melanie, Pa said so. And I know you love Ashley!'

'Suellen, that's not true!' said Careen, the youngest of the three. 'It's Brent that Scarlett cares about.'

The whole family knew that Careen loved Brent Tarleton. But he never gave her a thought except as Scarlett's baby sister. 'I don't care about Brent,' said Scarlett, smiling, 'and he doesn't care about me. He's waiting for you to grow up!'

Careen went red in the face, 'Oh, Scarlett, is he really?' she said.

They went over the hill, and saw Twelve Oaks. The house was white and beautiful under the blue sky. Lunch was going to be served outside, and Scarlett saw the Tarleton twins with their two brothers, Boyd and Tom; and Alex and Tony Fontaine; and the two Calvert boys, Raiford and Cade.

‘Good! Everyone is here!’ thought Scarlett.

John Wilkes stood on the entrance steps, a silver-haired man with a quiet charm that was as warm as a summer sun. Next to him was his daughter, Honey Wilkes. His other daughter, India, was nowhere to be seen, and Scarlett guessed that she was in the kitchen giving final orders to the servants.

‘Poor India,’ thought Scarlett. ‘She’s been so busy looking after Twelve Oaks since her mother died that she’s had no time to catch any man except Stuart Tarleton, and it’s not my problem if he thinks I’m prettier than her.’

John Wilkes helped Scarlett from the carriage, and Frank Kennedy hurried to give a helping hand to Suellen, who went red but looked delighted. Frank was forty, with a thin red beard. He was nervous with women and was surprised when Scarlett, remembering her plan, gave him one of her best smiles.

Stuart and Brent Tarleton moved towards her, and Scarlett looked around as she talked and laughed with them. Suddenly, she noticed a stranger standing alone. He looked at least thirty-five and was tall and strong, with a black moustache. Scarlett went red as he stared at her with a cool smile. Then he turned away as someone called, ‘Rhett! Rhett Butler!’

Rhett Butler? Did she know the name? Scarlett’s thoughts turned to Ashley and she forgot about the smiling man.

‘I must go and comb my hair,’ she told Stuart and Brent. ‘You boys wait for me, and don’t run off with any other girl!’

As she went up the wide stairs, a shy voice behind her called her name. Scarlett turned and saw Charles Hamilton, a nice-looking boy with soft brown hair and deep brown eyes.

She gave him her biggest smile. ‘Why, Charles Hamilton, you handsome old thing! I’m sure you came all the way from Atlanta just to break my poor heart!’

Charles almost fainted. This was the way girls talked to other boys, not to him!

‘Now you wait here until I come back,’ said Scarlett. ‘And don’t talk to those other girls or I’ll be very jealous!’

‘I – I won’t,’ he said.

Scarlett saw Rhett Butler, a few feet away. He was smiling again, and had a strange look in his eye as he stared at her.

Scarlett went red again and hurried on up the stairs.

Cathleen Calvert was in the bedroom.

‘Cathleen,’ said Scarlett, ‘who is that nasty man Butler?’

‘My dear, don’t you know?’ whispered Cathleen, excitedly. ‘He’s from Charleston, but his family won’t speak to him!’

‘Really?’ said Scarlett. ‘Why?’

‘He took a girl out riding in a carriage one afternoon and they stayed out nearly all night! When they finally arrived home, he said that the horse ran away and that they got lost in the forest. And guess what?’

‘Tell me,’ said Scarlett, hoping for the worst.

‘He refused to marry her the next day!’

‘Oh,’ said Scarlett, disappointed.

‘He said that he did nothing to her, but her brother invited him to fight – and Mr Butler shot him! Well, after that, Mr Butler had to leave Charleston.’

‘Did she have a baby?’ whispered Scarlett.

‘No,’ said Cathleen, ‘but no one will ever marry her now.’

‘I wish Ashley would stay out all night with me,’ thought Scarlett. ‘He’s too much of a gentleman not to marry me afterwards.’

Chapter 3 Changes

Scarlett sat under a large tree, with her lunch on a plate in front of her. But although there were seven handsome young men sitting around her, Ashley was not one of them and she was not

happy. He was sitting on the grass with Melanie Hamilton, talking quietly and smiling the slow, lazy smile that Scarlett loved. Melanie had dark hair and a heart-shaped face. She was small, but seemed older than her seventeen years.

Scarlett saw Rhett Butler talking to John Wilkes. He looked at her and laughed, and she had the feeling that this nasty man knew her true feelings about Ashley, and was amused.

It was two o'clock and the sun was warm. Scarlett was just wondering if India would suggest that the ladies went into the house, when she heard Gerald arguing with John Wilkes.

'Hope for peace with the Yankees?' Gerald was shouting. 'No, the South must show that it's strong and ready for a fight!'

Other men joined in the discussion. 'Of course we'll fight!' 'Yankee thieves!' 'One Southerner can fight twenty Yankees!'

Charles Hamilton found himself alone with Scarlett as the others moved away. 'Miss O'Hara,' he said, 'if I go to fight, will you be sorry?'

Scarlett thought men were stupid to think women were interested in these things, but she answered, 'I'll cry into my pillow every night,' not meaning a word of it.

'Miss O'Hara, I must tell you something,' said Charles, suddenly feeling brave. 'I – I love you! I want to marry you!'

Scarlett wanted to tell Charles he looked silly, but said automatically, 'This is so sudden. I don't know what to say.'

'I'll wait for ever!' cried Charles.

Scarlett noticed that Ashley was now with the group of men.

'If Georgia fights, I'll go with her,' Ashley was saying. 'But most of the sadness in the world was caused by wars, and when they were over, no one knew what they were about.'

More arguing burst out after this until Rhett Butler spoke. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'can I say a word? There's not one gun factory in the South, and not a wool or cotton factory either. We haven't a single war-ship, and the Yankees could quickly stop us

selling our cotton abroad with a blockade. They have all the things we haven't got, gentlemen. All we have is cotton and slaves – and brave talk!

Everyone was shocked, but Scarlett could not help feeling he was right. She had never seen a factory, and did not know anyone who had. 'But he's no gentleman to say these things at a party, where everyone is having a good time,' she thought.



It was late afternoon, and the ladies were resting in the six great bedrooms at Twelve Oaks, to be ready for the dance that evening. They had their dresses off, and most were asleep.

Scarlett checked that Melanie was lying down next to Honey Wilkes before she quietly left the room and went down the stairs. From a window, she saw Ashley drinking and talking with a group of men on the step outside. She walked silently across to the library. 'I'll wait in here until he comes into the house,' she thought, 'and then I'll call to him.'

The library was half-dark with the curtains closed to keep out the sun. Across the room was a sofa with its high back towards her, and around the walls were hundreds of books. Scarlett left the door open and tried to remember what she was going to say to Ashley. 'Perhaps it will help if I pray,' she thought, and closed her eyes.

'Scarlett!' It was Ashley's voice. She opened her eyes and saw him looking at her from the doorway. 'Are you hiding from Charles or the Tarletons?' he said.

She pulled him into the room.

'What is it?' he said. 'Have you got a secret to tell me?'

'Yes – a secret,' she said. 'I love you!'

He was silent, and there was a worried and confused look in his eyes. Then he made himself smile and said lightly, 'You have

every other man's heart here today, Scarlett, isn't that enough? Do you want mine, too? Well, you've always had it.'

'He doesn't believe me!' she thought. 'He thinks I'm just flirting with him!' Scarlett looked into his eyes. 'Ashley! Tell me you love me, my dear!' she cried.

He put his hand across her lips. 'Don't say these things.'

'But I love you,' she cried, 'and I know you love me. Ashley, you do care, don't you?'

'Yes,' he said quietly. 'I care.'

'And you do want to marry me?' she said.

'I'm going to marry Melanie,' he replied. He took her hands in his. 'How can I make you understand, Scarlett? Love just isn't enough when two people are as different as we are.'

'But you said you cared for me,' said Scarlett.

'I was wrong to say it.'

She began to get angry. 'You're afraid to marry me!' she said, her voice getting louder. 'You'll marry that stupid little fool who can only say "No" and "Yes"!'

Ashley's face went white. 'Stop!' he said.

She pulled away from him. 'I'll hate you until I die!' she shouted, and she hit him hard across the face.

He said nothing, but lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it. Then he was gone, and the memory of the sad and hopeless look on his face would stay with her until the day she died.

Scarlett began to shake. 'Now he'll hate me,' she thought. 'Every time he looks at me he'll remember me saying all those things.' She began to feel hot all over. Did other people know how she felt about Ashley? Was everyone *laughing* at her?

Her hand dropped to a little table next to her, and her fingers closed around a pretty glass bowl. She picked it up and threw it wildly across the room. It missed the top of the sofa but crashed against the wall beyond.



'But I love you,' she cried, 'and I know you love me. Ashley, you do care, don't you?'

‘This,’ said a voice from the other side of the sofa, ‘is too much!’ A man had been lying on it, but now he stood up.

It was Rhett Butler.

Scarlett almost fainted. ‘Sir,’ she said, ‘you are no gentleman to listen to other people’s conversations!’

‘And you, Miss, are no lady,’ he said. ‘But ladies rarely interest me, and I cannot understand, my dear Miss O’Hara, what a wild and hot-blooded girl like you can find to like about the handsome but very boring Mr Wilkes.’

‘You aren’t good enough to clean his boots!’ she shouted.

He laughed. ‘And you were going to hate him all your life!’

She wanted to kill him, but she walked out of the room and pulled the heavy door shut behind her with a crash.



A horse came fast towards the house, its rider low over the animal’s back. Excitement was in every line of the man’s face as he jumped down. The other men crowded round him, and he spoke quickly. Suddenly, Stuart Tarleton gave a shout.

Scarlett saw these things through a window as she went quietly back up the stairs. ‘Somebody’s house must be on fire,’ she thought. She went on to the bedroom and was about to open the door when she heard voices inside.

‘Scarlett flirted with every man here today,’ Honey Wilkes was saying. ‘She was certainly going after Charles, and you know Charles and I are going to be married.’

‘Are you really!’ whispered other voices excitedly.

‘Yes, but don’t tell anybody yet,’ said Honey. ‘But there’s only one person Scarlett cares about – and that’s Ashley!’

‘Honey, you know that isn’t true,’ said Melanie. ‘And it’s so unkind to say it.’

‘It is true! Scarlett took Stuart from India, and today she tried to take Mr Kennedy from Suellen. And Ashley –’

Scarlett ran back down the stairs. 'I must get home!' she thought. But when she was on the steps outside, she stopped. She couldn't go home! She couldn't run away and show them how ashamed she was feeling! It would only make things worse.

She hated them. She hated Ashley. She hated *everyone*!

'I'll stay and make them sorry,' she thought. 'I will!'

She turned towards the house – and saw Charles Hamilton.

'Do you know what's happened?' he cried.

She said nothing, only stared at him.

'Mr Lincoln called for soldiers!' he said. 'Seventy-five thousand of them! Of course, it will mean fighting, Miss Scarlett, but don't you worry, it'll be all over in a month.'

Scarlett was only half-listening. 'He has plenty of money,' she was thinking. 'He lives in Atlanta, and if I marry him quickly it will show Ashley that I don't care – that I was only flirting with him. And it will just *kill* Honey. She'll never get another man, and everyone will laugh at her! And it will hurt Melanie because she loves Charles so much.'

'Will you wait for me, Miss Scarlett?' Charles was saying.

Scarlett made a decision. 'I don't want to wait,' she said.

He held her hand, his mouth wide open. Twice he tried to say something, but the words wouldn't come. At last he said, 'Can – can you possibly love me?'

She said nothing but looked down at the floor, pretending to be shy. Charles wanted to shout and sing and kiss her, and then to tell everyone that Scarlett O'Hara loved him!

'Will you marry me soon?' he said, not daring to breathe.

'The sooner the better,' she said.



Within two weeks, Ashley was married to Melanie, and Scarlett was married to Charles. Two months later she was a widow.

Charles died from typhoid. He never fought a battle. He never

got close to a Yankee. Soon after, Scarlett discovered that she was going to have a baby, and she became the mother of Charles' son. She called him Wade. She did not love or want the child, and it did not seem possible that he was hers.

Every time she thought of Ashley, she cried, and went back to her bed and refused to eat. Ellen tried to help but failed. And then Charles' aunt, Miss Pittypat Hamilton, wrote asking if Scarlett could come to Atlanta for a long visit. She and Melanie wanted very much to see Charlie's dear little baby.

So Scarlett went to Atlanta with Wade, and Prissy, her young slave. She did not want to go, but any change was welcome.

Chapter 4 Atlanta

The war was making Atlanta a busy city. Trains thundered in and out, and the narrow, muddy streets were full of army wagons and ambulances. Scarlett rode from the railway station in Miss Pittypat's carriage, with 'Uncle Peter', a tall, thin negro who was Aunt Pitty's old slave.

She saw a tall, handsome woman in a bright coloured dress, and with hair so red that it couldn't possibly be the real colour. 'Who is that, Uncle Peter?' she whispered.

'I don't know,' said Uncle Peter, looking away quickly.

'Yes, you do. Who is she?'

'Belle Watling,' he said after a moment. 'Miss Pitty ain't goin' to like you askin' questions about women like that.'

Scarlett was suddenly shocked. 'She must be a bad woman!' she thought, staring. She had never seen a prostitute before.

Miss Pittypat's red-brick house was on Peachtree Road, and Aunt Pitty was waiting excitedly on the front step. Melanie was with her and Scarlett saw the loving smile of welcome on the little heart-shaped face – and felt a rush of dislike.

This jealous dislike grew as the days went by, and sometimes Scarlett had to leave the room when Melanie talked about Ashley. But Atlanta was more interesting than Tara, and she was busy nursing at the hospital with Mrs Meade, the doctor's wife, and other women. All married women in Atlanta nursed the soldiers, and most were glad to do it. But Scarlett was a nurse only because she had to be.

'Melanie is content to stay at home and never go to parties, and to wear black for her brother when she's only eighteen years old,' thought Scarlett. 'But she was never popular like me and she doesn't miss the things I miss. And she's got Ashley and I haven't got anybody!' And she began to cry.

One afternoon, two ladies of the town – Mrs Merriwether and Mrs Elsing – visited Aunt Pitty.

'The McLure girls were called to Virginia to bring home their brother,' Mrs Elsing told them. 'He was hurt.'

'Pitty, we need you and Melanie to take their places at the sale tonight,' said Mrs Merriwether.

'Oh, but we can't go,' said Aunt Pitty. 'With poor Charlie dead only a –'

'Don't say "can't" to me, Pittypat Hamilton,' said Mrs Merriwether. 'We need you to watch the negroes with the food, and we need Melanie for the McLure girls' table. Just remember, it's to make money for the Cause!'^{*}

'I think we should go,' said Scarlett suddenly, trying not to look too enthusiastic. 'We must do it for the hospital.'

They all looked surprised that it was Scarlett who offered, but Mrs Merriwether said, 'Scarlett's right. You must all come.'



^{*} Cause: the one word used to describe all the reasons for the South going to war with the North.

Scarlett sat behind a table with Melanie at the sale. They were in a large room, which was usually full of soldiers learning the business of war. But tonight there were flowers and coloured lights around the room, and music was playing. There would be dancing soon, but already Scarlett's feet were secretly moving in time with the music.

Across the room, a tall man, dressed in black, with a fine white shirt, was staring at her. He smiled and she smiled back – until she remembered who he was, and then her hand flew to her mouth! It was Rhett Butler, and now he was coming over!

'I did not think you would remember me, Miss O'Hara,' he said. There was laughter in his eyes, and Scarlett's face went bright red as she remembered their last meeting.

Melanie turned at the sound of his voice. 'Oh, it's Mr Rhett Butler, isn't it?' she said, smiling. 'I met you –'

'At Twelve Oaks,' he finished for her.

'What are you doing so far from Charleston, Mr Butler?'

'Business,' he said. 'I find I must not only bring things into your city but must also stay here to sell them.'

Melanie gave him a delighted smile. 'You must be the famous Captain Butler we've heard so much about – the blockade runner. Scarlett, what's the matter? Are you feeling faint?'

Scarlett sat down on a chair. 'Of all the people to come here,' she was thinking, 'why did *he* have to come?'

'It's quite warm in here,' Rhett was saying. 'Can I take you across to a window, Miss O'Hara?'

'No,' said Scarlett, so rudely that Melanie stared.

'She's not Miss O'Hara any longer,' said Melanie, smiling in a kind way. 'She is Mrs Hamilton, and my sister now.'

'Oh,' said Rhett, looking closely at Scarlett. 'And are your husbands here tonight?'

'My husband is in Virginia,' said Melanie, proudly. 'But Charles –' She could not go on.

‘Charles is dead,’ said Scarlett.

‘My dear ladies!’ said Rhett. ‘I’m so sorry. But to die for one’s country is to live for ever.’

Melanie smiled at him through her tears while Scarlett felt herself hating him. ‘He doesn’t mean a word,’ she thought.

Melanie forgot about Captain Butler and Scarlett as customers crowded round her table. Scarlett sat quietly on her chair, wishing that Captain Butler was back on his ship.

‘Has your husband been dead long?’ he asked her.

‘Yes, almost a year.’

‘And this is the first time —?’

‘I know it looks strange,’ she said. ‘but the McLure girls couldn’t come, so Melanie and I came —’

‘For the Cause,’ he finished for her.

‘Why does he make it sound so cheap?’ thought Scarlett. When Mrs Merriwether spoke of ‘the Cause’, she spoke proudly. Scarlett wanted to tell him this but then remembered she was only here because she was tired of sitting at home.

He seemed to guess her thoughts, because he said, ‘Would you be here if the Confederacy didn’t need you, Mrs Hamilton?’

‘Of course not,’ said Scarlett. ‘People would think I hadn’t loved —’ And she stopped. She could not pretend to him that she had loved Charlie, not after the things he had heard in the library at Twelve Oaks.

He moved close to her. ‘Don’t worry,’ he whispered. ‘Your guilty secret is safe with me!’

‘How can you say those things!’ she said, angrily. But then she looked at him, saw the laughter in his eyes and realized he was joking with her — and she found herself laughing, too.

Several people near them were shocked to see Charles’ widow laughing with a strange man, and began to whisper about it.

Dr Meade called for everyone to be quiet. ‘Gentlemen,’ he

said, 'if you want to dance with a lady this evening, you must pay for her! Remember, all the money is for the Cause!'

The young girls whispered excitedly, while the men laughed.

'Oh, if only I could wear an apple-green dress and have flowers in my hair!' thought Scarlett. 'Twenty men would fight to dance with me and pay their money to the doctor!'

Rhett Butler was watching her. Suddenly, he called out: 'Mrs Charles Hamilton – one hundred and fifty dollars in gold!'

Scarlett was so surprised, she could not move. Everyone looked at her, and she saw the doctor whisper to Rhett Butler, probably telling him that widows could not dance.

'Another one of our young ladies, perhaps?' said Dr Meade.

'No,' said Rhett. 'Mrs Hamilton.'

'Impossible,' said the doctor. 'Mrs Hamilton will not –'

'Yes, I will!' Scarlett heard herself shout.

She saw the shocked faces of Melanie and the older women; she saw the surprised and annoyed faces of the younger girls. But Scarlett didn't care. She was going to dance again!

'I – I'm doing it for the Cause,' Scarlett told Rhett, and he began to laugh. 'Stop laughing, everyone is looking at us!'

'Do you care if people talk?' said Rhett.

'No – but – well, a nice girl is supposed to care.' She changed the subject. 'Tell me, do you have a lot of money?'

'What a rude question, Mrs Hamilton!' he laughed. 'But the answer is yes, and I'll make a million on the blockade. One can always make money from a war, whether one is on the winning side or not.'

'Do you think the Confederacy will lose?'

'Yes,' he said.

'Oh, well, these things bore me,' said Scarlett. 'Captain Butler, don't hold me so tightly, people are looking.'

'If no one was looking, would you care?' he said, smiling.

'Captain Butler!' she said, pretending to be shocked. Then



*She saw the shocked faces of Melanie and the older women;
she saw the surprised faces of the younger girls.*

added, 'You dance very well for a big man, but it will be years and years before I'll dance again.'

'I'll offer more money for you in the next dance,' he said, 'and the next, and the next.'

'Oh, it's the end of the music,' said Scarlett. 'And here's Aunt Pittypat coming out of the back room. I suppose Mrs Merriwether told her. Her eyes are as big as saucers.'



'I don't care if they talk,' said Scarlett, next morning. 'I'm sure I made more money for the hospital than any girl there.'

'What does the money matter?' cried Aunt Pitty. 'Poor Charlie dead only a year! And that Captain Butler is a terrible person, Scarlett.'

'I can't believe he's all that bad,' said Melanie, gently. 'When you think how brave he's been, running the blockade —'

'He isn't brave,' said Scarlett. 'He does it for money. He doesn't care about the Confederacy, and he says we're going to lose. But he dances wonderfully.'

Pittypat and Melanie were so shocked they could not speak.

'I'm tired of sitting at home and I'm not going to do it any more,' Scarlett went on. 'If they all talked about me last night, then it won't matter what they say about me now.'

Melanie put her arm round Scarlett. 'You did a brave thing last night,' she said, 'and it's going to help the hospital a lot. Aunt Pitty, it's been difficult for Scarlett. And war times aren't like other times. Think of all the soldiers who are far from home and without friends. We've been selfish. We must have a soldier here to dinner every Sunday from now on.'

Chapter 5 Heroes

The autumn of 1862 went quickly for Scarlett, with nursing, parties and visits to Tara. The visits to Tara were disappointing, because Ellen worked from morning until night, and Gerald was busy because he could not get a manager to take Jonas Wilkerson's place. Suellen was waiting for the war to end so that she could marry Frank Kennedy, and Careen dreamed about Brent Tarleton. So Scarlett was never sorry to return from Tara to Atlanta.

There were many things she did not tell Ellen, but her biggest secret was that Rhett Butler called at Aunt Pittypat's house whenever he was in town. Scarlett went riding with him in his carriage, and he took her to dances and sales. She looked forward to his visits because there was something exciting about him, something different from any other man she knew. 'It's as if I'm in love with him!' she thought. 'But I'm not.'

He sat and listened to Melanie for hours as she talked about Ashley and how proud she was of him. 'But *I* only have to say Ashley's name and he smiles nastily at me!' thought Scarlett.

'Why are you nicer to Melanie than to me?' she asked him one day. 'I'm much prettier than she is.'

'Dare I hope that you're jealous?' he said, smiling.

'Don't be silly!' she said.

'Another hope gone! If I am "nicer" to Mrs Wilkes, it's because she is one of the very few kind and unselfish people I know. And, although she is still young, she is one of the few great ladies I have been lucky enough to meet.'

'Don't you think I'm a great lady, too?' said Scarlett.

'My dear, I think we agreed when we first met that you were no lady at all,' said Rhett.

‘Oh, you rude, horrible man, reminding me of that again!’ she said. But he only laughed at her.

The older men and women in Atlanta did not like Rhett, but they agreed that he was brave. But when they told him this, he replied that he was as frightened as the ‘brave boys’ who were fighting. This annoyed them because everyone knew there wasn’t a cowardly Confederate soldier anywhere. He always said ‘our brave boys’ or ‘our heroes in grey’, but made it sound like an insult. And when young ladies thanked him for being one of the heroes who fought for them, he smiled and said that he would do the same thing for Yankee women if the Yankees paid him enough money.

At an evening of music at Mrs Elsing’s home, Rhett was talking with a group of men when Scarlett heard an angry voice arguing with him, ‘Are you saying, sir, that the Cause for which our heroes are dying is not sacred?’

‘All wars are sacred to those who have to fight them,’ replied Rhett, in a bored and lazy voice. ‘If the people who started wars didn’t pretend they were sacred, who would be foolish enough to fight? No, it’s money that wars are really fought about, but few people realize it. Their ears are too full of fine words from stay-at-home speakers.’

And before Scarlett could reach him, he was leaving.

‘Let him go,’ said Mrs Elsing, holding her arm. ‘He’s not one of us. He’s a snake-in-the-grass who we were foolish enough to invite into our homes!’

Later, Mrs Merriwether rode home in Aunt Pitty’s carriage, and immediately said what she thought. ‘He insulted us all and the Confederacy, too,’ she said. ‘Saying that we were fighting for money! Saying that our leaders have lied to us! Pitty, you must never let that man into your house again!’ She turned to Scarlett and Melanie. ‘And I don’t want to hear you two girls speaking to him again – Melanie, what’s the matter?’

Melanie was white and her eyes were wide open. 'I *will* speak to him again,' she said in a low voice. 'I will not be rude to him. I will not tell him to stay away from the house.'

Mrs Merriwether's mouth fell open, and Aunt Pitty's did the same. Uncle Peter turned to stare.

'Now why didn't *I* say that?' thought Scarlett.

Melanie's hands were shaking but she went on quickly. 'I won't be rude to him because of what he said, because it's – it's what Ashley thinks.'

'Melanie Hamilton, that's a lie!' said Mrs Merriwether. 'There was never a Wilkes who was a coward –'

'I never said Ashley was a coward,' said Melanie. 'I said he thinks what Captain Butler thinks, and he does. But he says it differently. In his letters, Ashley says we should not be fighting the Yankees. He says war isn't wonderful or sacred or any of those things, it's just dirty and useless and a terrible waste of men's lives.'

Scarlett said nothing. She was shocked to realize anyone as perfect as Ashley could think the same as a man like Rhett Butler. 'They both understand what is true about the war,' she thought, 'but Ashley will fight and die for it and Rhett won't. I think that shows Rhett is sensible.'

It was all very confusing.

Chapter 6 Missing

In the early part of 1863, the war went well for the Confederacy, but on the fourth day of July, there was news about hard fighting in Pennsylvania, near a little town called Gettysburg. The news came slowly, and fear began to spread across the town. Mothers prayed that their boys were not in Pennsylvania, but those who knew their relations were fighting next to Dr Meade's son,

Darcy, said they were proud for them to be in the big fight that would win the war.

In Aunt Pitty's house, the three women looked into each other's eyes with fear. Ashley was fighting with Darcy.

People waited outside the newspaper office for news. Scarlett, Melanie and Aunt Pitty came and waited in their carriage. Scarlett saw Mrs Meade with her youngest son, Phil, waiting for news of Darcy. Then the crowd began to move as Rhett Butler came through on his horse.

'The first lists will be out soon,' he said. 'Yes, look!'

The side window of the newspaper office opened and a hand came out. In it were the lists of the dead – long, narrow pieces of paper with the names close together. The crowd began to fight for them and there were shouts of, 'Let me through!'

Rhett got off his horse and pushed his way forward, his heavy shoulders above the rest of the crowd. Then he was back with five or six lists in his hand. He gave one to Melanie, and the others to the ladies in the carriages near him.

Melanie's hands shook so much that she gave the list to Scarlett, who quickly began to read. 'White... Wilkins... Winn... Zebulon... Oh, Melanie, he's not on it! He's not on it!'

Melanie began to cry with happiness, while Scarlett's heart seemed ready to burst. Ashley was alive! Ashley was alive!

Mrs Meade sat in her carriage and looked across at Melanie. 'Darcy won't need those new boots now,' she said.

'Oh, my dear!' cried Melanie, and jumped from her carriage.

'Mother, you've still got me,' said Phil. 'And if you'll just let me, I'll go and kill all the Yankees –'

'No!' cried Mrs Meade.

'Phil Meade, don't talk like that!' said Melanie, climbing in with Mrs Meade. 'Drive us home. Captain Butler, can you tell the doctor? He's at the hospital.'

Scarlett looked at the list again. So many names from Atlanta, and from all of Georgia. Calvert – Fontaine – Munroe. And surely there couldn't be *three* Tarletons! But there were. 'Tarleton – Brenton, Stuart and Thomas.' And Boyd killed the first year somewhere in Virginia. All the Tarleton boys gone!

'I'm sorry, Scarlett,' said Rhett. 'Many of your friends?'

'Yes,' she said. 'Oh, Rhett, why do there have to be wars? Why didn't the Yankees just pay for the negroes? Or why didn't we just give them the negroes for nothing?'

'It isn't about the negroes, Scarlett,' he said. 'They were just the excuse. There'll always be wars because men love wars.' He turned away. 'Now, I'm going to find Dr Meade.'



After losing the battle of Gettysburg, the tired and much smaller Confederate army were pushed back into Virginia for the winter. As Christmas got closer, Ashley came home for a week. His father and his sisters – Honey and India – came to Atlanta to join him and Melanie.

Scarlett wanted to cry with happiness when she saw him. There was something new and strange in the lines of his sun-burned face. He was the same handsome Ashley, but much more exciting! He looked at her and said, 'Oh, Scarlett! You pretty, pretty thing!' and kissed her on the cheek.

Each day she tried to speak to Ashley alone, but Melanie was always with him. They all had questions to ask him about the war but, although he told them jokes and funny stories about friends, it seemed to Scarlett that he did this to stop them asking the questions he did not want to answer.

The week passed quickly, and Ashley had to return to Virginia. He said goodbye to Melanie in their room, and then Scarlett was at last able to see him alone.

'Ashley, may I go to the station with you?' she asked him.

‘Father and the girls will be there,’ he said. ‘I want to remember you saying goodbye here. Will you let me do that?’

‘Ashley, I’d do anything for you,’ she said.

‘Would you?’ he said. ‘There’s something you can do for me.’

‘What is it?’ she asked, happily.

‘Will you look after Melanie for me?’ he said.

‘Look after Melanie?’ she said, disappointed.

‘She loves you so much,’ he said. ‘Scarlett, when I think of what might happen to her if I was killed –’

‘Don’t say it!’ she said. ‘It’s bad luck to speak of death!’

‘I can’t tell what will happen to me or to any of us,’ said Ashley. ‘But when the end comes, if I’m alive, I’ll be far away from here. Too far to look after Melanie.’

‘The – the end?’ said Scarlett.

‘The end of the war – and the end of the world.’

‘Ashley, surely you don’t think the Yankees will win.’

‘All this week I’ve talked lies,’ he said, ‘I didn’t want to frighten Melanie or Aunt Pitty. But yes, Scarlett, I think the Yankees will win. Gettysburg was the beginning of the end.’

‘I couldn’t live if you were dead!’ she thought wildly.

‘Don’t repeat what I’ve said,’ he told her. ‘I don’t want to frighten the others. You’re strong, and it will be good to know that you and Melanie are together if anything happens to me. You will promise, won’t you?’

‘Oh, yes!’ she cried, ready to promise him anything. ‘Ashley! I can’t let you go away! I can’t be brave about it!’

‘You must be brave,’ he said. He took her face in his hands and kissed her lightly. ‘Scarlett! Scarlett! You’re so fine and good and strong. So beautiful – not just your sweet face, my dear, but your mind and your body.’

‘Oh, Ashley,’ she whispered happily, waiting for him to say

the three magic words 'I love you'. But they didn't come. Instead, she heard Uncle Peter with the carriage outside.

'Goodbye,' Ashley said softly.

'Kiss me,' she whispered. 'Kiss me goodbye.'

At the first touch of his lips on hers, she threw her arms around his neck and pulled him to her. For a moment he held her close, but then quickly pushed her away.

'No, Scarlett, no,' he said in a low voice.

'I love you!' she cried. 'Ashley, say you love me!'

She looked into his face – and it was the unhappiest face she was ever to see. 'Goodbye!' he said, his voice a whisper.



For the next two months, Scarlett was happy. She had felt the quickness of Ashley's heart when her arms went round his neck. She had seen the look on his face. Oh, he loved her! She was sure of this now, and could almost feel sorry for Melanie.

But then in March Melanie said that she was going to have a baby, and a sharp pain cut right through Scarlett.

'Dr Meade says it will be here in late August or September,' Melanie said happily. 'Oh, Scarlett, isn't it wonderful?'

'Dear God!' thought Scarlett. 'A baby! Ashley's baby. Oh, how *could* he when he loves me and not Melanie? I can't go on living here now. I'll go home to Tara.'

And the next morning she got up intending to pack her things, but something happened that stopped her.

News came that Ashley was missing. He'd been missing for three days, after going on a five-man search to discover where the Yankee army were preparing to fight their next battle.

A shocked Scarlett was certain that God was punishing her for loving a married man. Melanie's face was white and frightened, like a child lost in the dark.

'Scarlett,' she said. 'You're all I've got now. Oh, I know Ashley

is dead!' Suddenly, she was in Scarlett's arms, and they were crying and holding each other close.

'At least I've got his baby,' whispered Melanie.

'And I've got nothing,' thought Scarlett. 'Nothing but the look on his face when he said goodbye.'



The first reports were 'Missing – believed killed,' but they changed to 'Missing – believed to be a prisoner.' Melanie, her hopes alive again, met every train, praying for a letter. She refused to obey Dr Meade and stay in bed, and one afternoon she fainted at the station and Rhett Butler brought her home.

'Mrs Wilkes, you're going to have a baby, aren't you?' he said. And when she gave an embarrassed nod, he went on, 'Then you must take better care of yourself or you'll harm the baby. I'll talk to some people I know in Washington. If Mr Wilkes is a prisoner, he'll be on a prisoners' list, and if he isn't – well, there's nothing worse than not knowing. But you must promise me you'll take care of yourself, or I won't help.'

'Oh, you're so kind,' cried Melanie.

A month later, Rhett brought news that Ashley was not dead but at Rock Island, a cruel and terrible prison in Illinois where many men would die before the end of the war.

'He had a chance to get out, but refused it,' said Rhett. 'The Yankees need men to fight the Indians in the West, and any prisoner who will join the Yankee army and fight the Indians for two years can get out of prison.'

'Why didn't he do that?' cried Scarlett. 'Why didn't he join, and then run away and come home as soon as he got out?'

Melanie became angry. 'How can you suggest that? I'd prefer to know he was dead at Rock Island than he was no longer a Confederate but a *Yankee* soldier! Of course he refused.'

When Scarlett was alone with Rhett, she asked, 'Wouldn't

you join the Yankees to get out of that place, and then run away?’

‘Of course,’ said Rhett, with a cold smile.

‘Then why didn’t Ashley?’ said Scarlett.

‘He’s a gentleman,’ said Rhett – meaning Ashley was a fool.

Chapter 7 News from Tara

That summer, for the first time since the war began, the people of Atlanta heard the sound of battle. The Yankees were getting closer! Many old men, like John Wilkes, and young boys, like Phil Meade, were sent to guard the bridges at Chattahoochee River, at the back of the main Confederate army.

Then, on a hot July afternoon, after a terrible battle at Peachtree Creek, a stream of Confederate soldiers began to arrive in Atlanta. Some were covered in blood, others helped those who couldn’t walk to get to the hospitals.

Within days, the Yankees were on three sides of Atlanta, and the railway to Tennessee was under Yankee control. Only one railway to the south, to Macon, was still open. But if they could hold it, Atlanta could stand against the Yankees.

But when shells began to fall in the streets, women, children and old people began leaving the city. Mrs Elsing and Mrs Merriwether refused to leave. They were needed at the hospital, they said proudly, and no Yankee was going to run them out of their homes. Mrs Meade also refused. Phil was fighting not far away and she wanted to be near. Aunt Pitty was among the first to leave. She went to Macon to stay with a cousin. ‘You girls should come with me,’ she said.

But Scarlett did not like Aunt Pitty’s cousin. ‘I’ll go to Tara, and Melanie can go to Macon with you,’ she said.

'Scarlett, don't leave me!' cried Melanie. 'I'll die if you aren't with me when the baby comes! You promised Ashley that you'd take care of me. He told me he was going to ask you.'

'I'll keep my promise,' Scarlett said, tiredly, 'but I won't go to Macon. I'll go home to Tara, and you can come with me.'

But Dr Meade stopped Melanie going to Macon or Tara. 'You cannot travel,' he said. 'It might be dangerous. Miss Pitty, you go to Macon and leave the young ladies here. Miss Melanie, you must stay in bed until the baby comes.'

He spoke privately to Scarlett 'She is going to have a difficult time,' he said. 'You must stay with her until the baby comes. With these shells falling, it may be at any time.'

So Aunt Pitty went to Macon, taking Uncle Peter with her. And Scarlett and Melanie were left alone in Atlanta with Wade and Prissy.



Those first days, Scarlett would not go into the streets. Every time she heard the scream of a shell coming, she rushed to Melanie's room and threw herself on the bed, and the two of them hid their heads in the pillow. Prissy and Wade hid under a table downstairs, Wade crying and Prissy screaming.

'I'd rather let Melanie die than go out and find the doctor when the shells are falling,' thought Scarlett.

But Prissy calmed Scarlett's fears. 'Don' you worry, Miss Scarlett. I know all about deliverin' babies,' she said. 'Ain't my mother told me all about it? Jus' leave it to me.'

At the end of July, Scarlett received a letter from Gerald telling her that Careen was ill with typhoid and that Scarlett must not come home. That night, she sat outside the house and thought of Tara. Life there would never be the same. She would never again hear the wild, happy voices of the Tarleton boys. Or the Munroe boys, or little Joe Fontaine, or —

The front gate opened and she quickly brushed tears from her face before looking up.

- It was Rhett Butler. 'So you didn't go to Macon,' he said. 'Why did you stay?'

'To be with Melanie. She – well, she can't go just now.'

'Is Mrs Wilkes still here?' he said. He lit a cigar. 'And you stayed with her. How strange.'

'I see nothing strange about it,' she said, uncomfortably.

'You think Mrs Wilkes is silly and stupid,' he said. 'So why do you stay when there are Yankee shells falling all around?'

'Because she's Charlie's sister and – and like a sister to me,' said Scarlett, her cheeks getting hot.

'You mean because she's Ashley Wilkes' widow,' said Rhett.

Scarlett became angry. She liked to think she was a mystery to men, but Rhett could see through her like glass.

He took her hand in his. 'How lucky, to find you alone,' he said, and something in his voice made her face go hot again.

'He's going to tell me he loves me!' she thought. 'Then I can tell him he's wasting his time, and he'll feel a fool!'

He kissed her hand, and something electric passed through her whole body as his warm mouth touched her skin. 'I'm not in love with him,' she told herself. 'I'm in love with Ashley.'

'Scarlett, you do like me, don't you?' he said.

'Well . . . sometimes,' she said.

'Could you ever love me?'

'I've got him!' she thought, and answered in a cool voice. 'Certainly not! Not until you behave like a real gentleman.'

'And I don't intend to do that,' he said. 'So you don't love me? Good, because although I like you, Scarlett, I don't love you, and I didn't want to be the *second* man not to return your love, my dear.'

'You – you don't love me?' she said.

'Did you hope that I did? I'm sorry. But I do like you a lot. I

know you still think lovingly of the wooden-headed Mr Wilkes, who has probably been dead these last six months. But there must be room in your heart for me, too. Scarlett, I want you more than I've ever wanted any woman.'

Scarlett was surprised and confused. 'Are you asking me to marry you?' she said.

He dropped her hand and laughed loudly. 'No, I'm not a marrying man, didn't I tell you that?'

'But – but – what –?'

'My dear,' he said quietly. 'I'm asking you to be my lover.'

Lover! Scarlett felt shock and disappointment at the same time. 'Get out!' she cried. 'Get out and don't ever come back! I'll – I'll tell my father, and he'll kill you!'

She watched him smile. He was not ashamed, he was amused! She ran into the house and tried to crash the door shut behind her, but it was too heavy.

'May I help you?' he asked.

And he crashed it shut for her as she ran upstairs.



As the hot, noisy days of August came to an end, the shelling stopped. Then worrying news came from the south. The Yankees were trying to take the railway at Jonesboro, and Tara was close to the fighting. Eventually a soldier came to say that the Confederate army had pushed the Yankees back, but the railway was damaged and it would be some time before trains could travel again. He brought Scarlett a letter from her father, after meeting him in Jonesboro, and was able to tell her that the Yankees hadn't got to Tara.

'But what was Pa doing in Jonesboro?' she asked.

The soldier looked nervous. 'He – he was looking for an army doctor to go to Tara with him,' he said.

Scarlett opened her father's letter and began to read:

Dear Daughter, Your mother and both girls have typhoid and are very ill, but we must hope for the best. When your mother went to her bed, she told me to write and say that you must not come home and put yourself and Wade in danger, too. She sends her love and asks you to pray for her.

For the next week, Scarlett waited nervously for more news, but none came. No one knew where the Confederates were, or what the Yankees were doing. She had seen enough typhoid in the Atlanta hospitals to know that a week was a long time with that terrible illness, and she wanted to be at home. 'Oh, why doesn't this baby come?' she thought.

The last day of August arrived, and with it came rumours of a big battle south of Atlanta. People waited for news. If the Yankees won the Macon railway, they would soon be in Atlanta!

On the first of September, Scarlett woke to hear a sound like distant thunder. 'Rain coming,' she thought at first. Then she went to the window. 'No, not rain, guns! And from the south!' There lay Jonesboro, Tara – and her mother.

Scarlett went to Melanie's room. Melanie was in bed, her eyes closed and with dark circles around them. She looked worse than any sick person Scarlett had ever seen. Then her eyes opened and a soft warm smile lit her face.

'Scarlett,' she said. 'There's something I want to ask you.' Scarlett sat down on the bed and Melanie held her hand.

'I'm sorry about the guns, dear,' said Melanie. 'They're towards Jonesboro, aren't they? I know how worried you are. You could be at home if it weren't for me, couldn't you?'

'Yes,' said Scarlett, rudely.

'You're so good to me, and I love you for it. If I die, I want you to take my baby. Will you do that?'

Scarlett pulled her hand away, frightened. 'Don't be silly, Melanie,' she said. 'You're not going to die.'

'Promise me, Scarlett, then I won't be afraid,' said Melanie. 'I'm sure my baby will come today.'

'Oh, all right, I promise,' said Scarlett. 'Why do you think it will come today?'

'I've been having pains.'

'I'll send Prissy for Dr Meade,' said Scarlett.

'No, you know how busy he is. Just send for Mrs Meade.'

Chapter 8 The Yankees Are Coming

Scarlett sent Prissy for Mrs Meade and, after a long time, the little black girl returned alone.

'She wasn't there,' said Prissy. 'She got news that Mr Phil was shot an' she went with a carriage to fetch him home.'

Scarlett stared, wanting to shake her. 'Well, don't just stand there, go and fetch Mrs Merriwether!'

'She ain't there,' said Prissy. 'I stopped on my way home, but the house was shut up. She's probably at the hospital.'

Scarlett thought for a moment. 'Go to Mrs Elsing and explain everything,' she said. 'Ask her to come. And hurry!'

She went back to Melanie's room where Melanie was lying on her side, her face white. 'Mrs Meade is at the hospital,' lied Scarlett. She didn't want to worry Melanie by telling her about Phil getting shot. 'But Mrs Elsing is coming.'

It was an hour before Prissy came back, walking slowly along the road. Scarlett hurried out to meet her.

'Mrs Elsing is over at the hospital,' said Prissy. 'A lot of soldiers came in on the early train, most of them hurt bad -'

'You must go to the hospital,' said Scarlett. 'I'll give you a letter for Dr Meade, but if he isn't there, give it to one of the other doctors. And hurry back this time!'

Minutes later, Prissy went off with a letter and Scarlett went back upstairs. Melanie asked no questions, but her face was full of pain. An hour passed and then another. Afternoon came, and

Melanie's pains were worse. Where was Prissy? Why didn't she come? Scarlett went to the window. Had the sound of the guns died away, or was it her imagination? Then she saw Prissy running down the street, fear written all over her little black face. Scarlett quickly moved from the window.

'I'll get some cooler water,' she told Melanie.

She got downstairs as Prissy came in. 'They're fightin' at Jonesboro, Miss Scarlett! They say we're losin' the war!'

'Where's Dr Meade? When is he conning?' said Scarlett.

'He ain't at the hospital. Mrs Merriwether and Mrs Elsin' ain't there either. A man told me the doctor was down at the railway station with the soldiers from Jonesboro. But, Miss Scarlett, I was too frightened to go down there. People are dyin' down there, and I'm frightened of dead people.'

'What about the other doctors?' asked Scarlett.

'Miss Scarlett, I couldn't get them to read your letter,' said Prissy. 'They're workin' in the hospital like they're all crazy! "Don't worry me about babies when we've got men dyin' here!" one of them shouted at me.'

'Listen,' said Scarlett. 'I'll get Dr Meade and you sit with Miss Melanie. Don't tell her where the fighting is, and don't tell her that the other doctors won't come, do you hear?'

Scarlett hurried out of the house and into the hot sun. A soldier came riding past and she stopped him.

'Are the Yankees coming?' she asked him.

'Yes, Miss,' he said. 'The army are leaving Atlanta soon.'

Scarlett began to run. People rushed past her as she pushed her way through the crowd and on towards the station. But as she went round the side of the Atlanta Hotel, she stopped.

There, lying on the ground under the heat of the sun, were hundreds and hundreds of men. Some were screaming with pain. There was blood everywhere, and the smell of unwashed bodies came to meet her. She put a hand across her mouth and nose.

Then she lifted her skirts and stepped over dead men, and men with blood on their uniforms, and men making sounds which had to mean: 'Water! Water!'

'Dr Meade!' cried Scarlett. 'Is Dr Meade here?'

A man looked up. It was the doctor. His shirt and trousers were red with blood, and his face was grey with tiredness.

'Thank God you're here,' he said to Scarlett. 'I can use every pair of hands. Quickly, come here!'

She went to him as fast as she could across the rows of bodies. 'Doctor, you must come! Melanie is having her baby!'

'Baby?' thundered the doctor. 'Are you crazy? I can't leave these men. Get some woman to help you. Get my wife.'

She started to tell him why Mrs Meade could not come – then stopped. She could not tell him his son was hurt.

'Doctor, please!' she cried. 'Please come!'

He looked at her. 'The Yankees are coming and the army is moving out of town. I don't know what they'll do with these men. There aren't any trains. The Macon line is under Yankee control. Listen, I can't promise, Scarlett, but I'll try.'

Scarlett went back through the rows of men. On the streets beyond the Atlanta Hotel, soldiers were moving out of the city. There seemed to be thousands of them. Wagons went past, throwing up clouds of dust. There were drunken women with painted faces among the crowd. Scarlett saw Belle Watling, and heard her drunken laugh as she held on to a one-armed soldier.

Scarlett began to run again. When she got back to the house, Wade was waiting outside.

'Wade hungry,' he cried.

'Be quiet!' said Scarlett. 'Go and play in the back garden.' She looked up and saw Prissy at the bedroom window. Scarlett waved at her to come down, then went into the house. Prissy came down the stairs three at a time.



*On the streets beyond the Atlanta Hotel,
soldiers were moving out of the city.*

‘The doctors can’t come,’ said Scarlett. ‘You’ve got to deliver the baby, and I’ll help you.’

Prissy’s mouth fell open.

‘What’s the matter?’ said Scarlett.

‘I – Miss Scarlett – I don’t know nothin’ about deliverin’ babies,’ said Prissy, looking at the floor.

Scarlett took Prissy’s arm and squeezed it. ‘You black liar! What do you mean? You said you knew everything about –’

‘I was lyin’, Miss Scarlett!’ cried Prissy.

Scarlett had never hit a slave in all her life, but she hit Prissy’s black cheek as hard as she could. Prissy screamed loudly and tried to pull away.

‘Scarlett, is it you?’ Melanie’s weak voice came from upstairs. ‘Please come! Please!’

Scarlett tried to remember what Mammy and Ellen did when Wade was born. ‘Build a fire and make sure there’s plenty of water,’ she told Prissy. ‘Bring all the towels you can find, and some string and a pair of scissors. Quickly!’

She pushed Prissy towards the kitchen, then took a deep breath before going upstairs.



There was never an afternoon as long as this one. Or as hot. Scarlett pulled the bedroom curtains across to keep out the sun. Melanie tried to be brave, but when evening came, she began calling for Ashley – over and over – until Scarlett wanted to cover her face with a pillow. ‘Perhaps the doctor will come after all,’ thought Scarlett, and she told Prissy to go to the Meades’ house and see if he or Mrs Meade were there.

Prissy went, but came back soon after, alone.

‘The doctor ain’t been home all day,’ she reported. ‘An’, Miss Scarlett, Mr Phil is dead. He was shot. I didn’t see Mrs Meade because she was gettin’ his body ready for –’

‘All right,’ said Scarlett quickly.

Melanie opened her eyes and whispered, 'Are the Yankees coming?'

'No,' said Scarlett. 'Prissy's a liar.'

'Yes, Miss, I am,' agreed Prissy.

'The Yankees are coming,' whispered Melanie, guessing correctly. 'My poor baby. Scarlett, you mustn't stay here.'

'You know I won't leave you,' said Scarlett.

'Why not?' said Melanie. 'I'm going to die anyway.'

Chapter 9 Escape from Atlanta

Scarlett came down the dark stairs slowly, like an old woman. She went outside and sat on the front step. It was all over. Melanie was not dead, and Prissy was giving the small baby boy his first bath while Melanie was asleep.

The night air was cool and fresh on her face and arms. More soldiers were leaving the city, passing by the house, although she could not see them clearly in the darkness.

What could she do? Where could she turn for help? Scarlett remembered Rhett. He was strong and clever, and he wasn't afraid of the Yankees. And he had a horse and carriage, too.

She called Prissy. 'Captain Butler lives at the Atlanta Hotel,' she said. 'Go there quickly and tell him about the baby. Tell him that I want him to get us out of here.'

'Suppose Cap'n Butler ain't at the hotel?' said Prissy.

'Go to the bar-rooms, go to Belle Watling's house,' said Scarlett. 'Just find him, or the Yankees will get us all!'

Scarlett went back into the house and waited. After some time, she saw that the sky was becoming pink over the east of the city. Then a large flame shot high into the darkness.

'The Yankees are burning the city!' she thought.

Moments later, Prissy ran into the room.

'The Yankees —?' Scarlett began.

'No, it's our men,' said Prissy. 'They're burnin' the gun factory, an' what the army left. We're all goin' to burn up!'

'Did you see Captain Butler?' said Scarlett.

'Yes, I saw him, an' I says "Come quick, Cap'n Butler, an' bring your horse an' carriage." An' he says they took his horse but he'll steal another one.'

'He's coming? He's going to bring a horse?'

'So he says.'

Scarlett began to feel better. She would forgive Rhett anything if he got them out of this mess. 'Wake up Wade and dress him,' she told Prissy. 'Then pack some clothes for all of us. Don't tell Miss Melanie we're going, not yet, but put two thick towels around the baby and pack his clothes, too.'

It seemed hours before Rhett finally came with a wagon. He was dressed as if he was going dancing, in a white coat and trousers. He carried two guns, and his pockets were full of bullets.

'Good evening,' he said, smiling and taking off his hat. 'Fine weather we're having! I hear you're going on a trip.'

'If you make any jokes, I'll never speak to you again,' said Scarlett, her voice shaking.

'You're frightened!' He pretended to be surprised.

'Yes, I am! And if you had any sense, you'd be frightened, too!' she said. 'We must get out of here.'

'And where are you going?' he asked politely.

'I'm going home,' she said.

'You mean to Tara?' he said. 'Scarlett, are you mad? The Yankees may be all over Tara by now. You can't go right through the Yankee army!'

'I *will* go home!' she cried, tears running down her cheeks.

Suddenly, she was in his arms. His hands smoothed her hair gently, and when he spoke his voice was gentle, too.

'Don't cry, my brave little girl,' he said. 'I'll take you home.'



Rhett turned west along the narrow street, and the wheel of the wagon hit a stone so hard that Melanie cried out in the back of the wagon. Wade and Prissy were next to her with the new baby. Scarlett was in the front next to Rhett.

‘Must we go through the fire?’ she asked him.

‘Not if we hurry,’ he said.

He stopped the horse suddenly. ‘Soldiers,’ he said.

Long lines of Confederate soldiers walked through Marietta Street, too tired to care about the burning buildings around them. Many had no shoes, and their uniforms were torn and dirty. They went past silently, like ghosts.

‘Take a good look,’ said Rhett, ‘so you can tell your grandchildren that you saw the last soliders of the sacred Cause.’

Suddenly she hated him for insulting these broken men. She thought of Charles, of Ashley who might be dead, and all those brave young boys, now dead. She forgot that she had once thought they were fools.

Rhett watched the soldiers with a strange and thoughtful look on his face. Then there was a crash of falling wood and Scarlett saw a thin flame above the building next to them.

‘Rhett, hurry!’ she shouted.

They went quickly from one narrow street to another until the sound of the flames died behind them. Rhett did not speak. His face looked cold and hard, as if he’d forgotten where he was. Scarlett wanted him to say something – anything – but he only sat and stared at the dark road ahead.

‘Oh, Rhett,’ she said. ‘I’m so glad you aren’t in the army!’

At this, he turned his head – and she saw in his eyes how angry and confused he was. After that, she said nothing.

At last, they were on a wider, smoother road.

‘We’re out of the city,’ said Rhett. ‘Do you still want to do this crazy thing? The Yankee army are between you and Tara.’

‘Yes!’ she said. ‘Please, Rhett, let’s hurry!’

‘You can’t go to Jonesboro down this road,’ he said, ‘they’ve been fighting up and down there all day. Do you know any wagon paths?’

‘Oh, yes,’ cried Scarlett. ‘I know a wagon path. Pa and I used to ride it. It comes out only a mile from Tara.’

‘Good,’ said Rhett. ‘Maybe the Yankees aren’t there yet. Maybe you can get through if—’

‘I can get through? Aren’t you going to take us?’

‘No,’ he said. ‘I’m leaving you here.’

‘Leaving us?’ she said wildly. ‘Where are you going?’

‘I’m going with the army,’ he said.

Rhett, stop joking!’

‘I’m not joking, my dear,’ he said, smiling. ‘Think how delighted our soldiers will be at my last-minute appearance.’

‘Oh, Rhett!’ she cried. ‘Why are you going?’

He laughed. ‘Perhaps because I’m a Southerner, and I’m ashamed. Who knows?’

‘You should *die* of shame, leaving us alone and helpless—’

‘Scarlett, anyone as selfish and strong-minded as you is never helpless. God help the Yankees if they get you!’ He stepped down from the wagon. Then he put his hands up, caught her under the arms and brought her to the ground next to him. He took her several steps away from the wagon. ‘I’m not asking you to understand or forgive,’ he said. ‘I’ll never understand or forgive myself for this foolishness. But the South needs every man, so I’m off to the wars.’ His warm, strong hands moved up her arms. ‘I do love you, Scarlett, although I told you I didn’t. Do you want to change your mind about what I suggested before? A soldier would go to his death with beautiful memories.’

He was kissing her now with slow, hot lips. Charles had never kissed her like this. The kisses of the Tarleton and Calvert boys never made her go hot and cold like this.

A voice came from the wagon. It was Wade's.

'Wade frightened!'

And suddenly Scarlett remembered that she was frightened, too, and that Rhett was leaving her. And on top of it all, he was insulting her with his shocking suggestions!

She pulled herself away from him. 'You coward!' she screamed. 'You nasty, horrible thing!' And she hit him across the mouth with all her strength.

He put a hand to his face. 'I see,' he said quietly.

'Go on!' cried Scarlett. 'I don't want to see you ever again! I hope a shell lands right on you. I hope it blows you into a million pieces. I hope —'

'Never mind the rest,' said Rhett, smiling. 'I understand your general idea.' He walked back to the wagon. 'Mrs Wilkes?'

Prissy's frightened voice answered from the wagon. 'Miss Melanie fainted a long way back, Cap'n Butler.'

'That's probably best,' he said. 'If she was awake, I doubt that she could live through all the pain. Take good care of her, Prissy.' He turned round. 'Goodbye, Scarlett.'

Scarlett knew he was looking at her but she did not speak. She saw his big shoulders moving in the dark, then he was gone. She came slowly back to the wagon, her knees shaking. She put her head against the neck of the horse and cried.

Chapter 10 Home

Many times on that journey Scarlett heard soldiers coming, and had to hide the wagon in fields among the trees; then wait while the men went past like ghosts in the darkness. She lost her way and cried when she could not find the little wagon path she knew so well. But a few miles after she found it, the horse dropped to its knees, too tired to go any further.

Scarlett climbed into the back of the wagon, heard Melanie whisper, 'Scarlett, can I have some water please?' and heard herself answer, 'There isn't any,' before she went to sleep.

When she woke, the sun was pouring through the trees and everything was silent. She sat up and looked round quickly, but there were no soldiers anywhere. In the wagon, Melanie lay so still and white that at first Scarlett thought she must be dead, but then she saw Melanie's shallow breathing.

They were under some trees in someone's front garden, Scarlett noticed. 'It's the Mallory place!' she thought, excited at the thought of friends and help. But the stillness of death lay over the plantation and, when she looked towards the house, there were only some smoke-blackened stones left.

'Is this what Tara will be like?' she thought.

She woke Prissy, then looked over and saw that Melanie's eyes were open.

Scarlett found some apples under the trees, then got some water from a stream near the house. They all had a drink, then Scarlett gave the rest of the water to the horse. The animal was on its feet again but it was very old, she saw now.

They were fifteen miles from Tara, but the horse moved so slowly it took all day to travel there. Every empty, burned-out house they passed frightened Scarlett more. There were dead men and dead horses lying by the road, and the fields and trees seemed full of ghosts in the afternoon sun.

There was a sudden noise and Prissy screamed loudly. But it was only a cow coming from behind some trees. The animal looked at them with large, frightened eyes.

'She needs milkin', said Prissy.

'It must be one of Mr MacIntosh's that the Yankees didn't get,' said Scarlett. 'We'll take it with us, then we can have some milk for the baby.'

It was evening when they reached the top of a hill and went down through the line of trees that led to Tara. Was it there? Or was the darkness hiding just a few smoke-blackened stones like the MacIntosh place? But no! Tara had escaped! It was there! The white walls showed through the darkness.

Then Scarlett saw a shadow come from inside the house. Someone was home! A shout of delight started in her throat – but died there. The shadow did not move or call to her but, stiffly and slowly, came down the steps.

‘Pa?’ she whispered. ‘It’s me, Scarlett. I’ve come home.’

Her father looked at her. ‘Daughter,’ he said. ‘Daughter.’

‘He’s an old man!’ thought Scarlett, shocked.

A baby’s cry came from the wagon and Gerald looked across.

‘It’s Melanie and her baby,’ whispered Scarlett. ‘She’s very ill – I brought her home.’

Gerald went to the wagon, straightening his shoulders. ‘Cousin Melanie!’ he said. ‘Twelve Oaks is burned. You must stay with us.’

‘We must carry her,’ said Scarlett. ‘She can’t walk.’

Another person came from the house. It was Pork, Gerald’s personal slave. He ran down the steps. ‘Miss Scarlett!’

Scarlett caught him by the arms and felt his tears on her hands as he held them. ‘Glad – glad you’re back!’ he cried.

It was Pork who carried Melanie indoors. Prissy took the baby, Wade followed them up the steps into the house. Scarlett caught her father’s arm before he could follow, too.

‘Did they get well, Pa?’ she said.

‘The girls are getting better,’ he said. ‘Your mother –’

‘Yes?’

‘Your mother died yesterday,’ said Gerald.



Gerald said it over and over again as he followed Scarlett around the house. ‘She died yesterday – she died yesterday.’ Scarlett felt

nothing except a great tiredness. She would think of Mother later, or she would simply cry and cry.

Later, when she was alone with her father, she asked, 'Why didn't the Yankees burn Tara?'

'They used the house for offices,' said Gerald.

'Yankees – in this house?' The thought made her feel sick.

'They were, daughter,' said Gerald. 'We saw the smoke from Twelve Oaks before they came. But Miss Honey and Miss India were in Macon, so we didn't worry about them. We couldn't go to Macon. The girls were so sick – your mother – we couldn't go. Our negroes ran away. They stole the wagons and the horses. Only Mammy, Dilcey and Pork stayed. The Yankees came up the road from the river and I met them at the front door.'

'Oh, brave little Gerald!' thought Scarlett.

'They told me to leave,' went on Gerald. 'They told me they were going to burn the place. I told them that we had typhoid in the house and they would burn it over the heads of three dying women. The young officer was – was a gentleman.'

'A Yankee gentleman? Pa!'

'A gentleman,' said Gerald. 'He rode away and came back with an army doctor who looked at the girls – and your mother.'

'You let a Yankee into their room?'

'He had medicine and we had none. He saved your sisters,' said Gerald. 'They didn't burn the house, they moved in. The officers filled all the rooms except the sick room, and the soldiers lived in tents around the place. They killed the cows, the chickens and the pigs. They took the pictures and some of the furniture.'

'And – and Mother? Did she know Yankees were in the house?'

'She never knew anything.'

'Thank God,' said Scarlett.

'And then they moved on.' He was silent for a long time and then he held her hand. 'I'm glad you're home,' he said simply.



After Gerald went to bed, Scarlett went to the room where Careen and Suellen were sleeping. Mammy was there, watching them. Her eyes lit up when she saw Scarlett.

‘My child is home!’ Mammy said softly. ‘Oh, Miss Scarlett, now that Miss Ellen is dead, what are we goin’ to do?’

Scarlett sat down next to the bed. ‘I want you to tell me about Mother,’ she said, ‘I just couldn’t ask Pa about her.’

Tears came from Mammy’s eyes. ‘It was those Slattery trash that killed Miss Ellen. I told her an’ told her not to —’

‘Slatterys?’ said Scarlett, confused.

‘Emmie Slattery was sick with typhoid an’ Miss Ellen went to nurse her,’ said Mammy. ‘I told her to leave those white trash alone, but she didn’ listen. Then, when Emmie was gettin’ better, Miss Careen went down with typhoid, an’ then Miss Suellen. So Miss Ellen had to nurse them, too. With all the fightin’ up the road, an’ the Yankees across the river, an’ the field negroes runnin’ off every night, I was nearly crazy with worry. But Miss Ellen was cool an’ calm, except that she worried because we couldn’t get medicines. An’ then she went down with typhoid, too.’ Mammy dried her tears before she went on. ‘Miss Ellen went fast, Miss Scarlett. Even that nice Yankee doctor couldn’t do anythin’ for her. She died a few nights after the cotton burned —’

‘Has the cotton gone?’ said Scarlett. ‘Tell me!’

‘Yes, Miss Scarlett. The Yankees burned it.’

‘Three years’ cotton!’ thought Scarlett. ‘One hundred and fifty thousand dollars, in one big fire!’

Chapter 11 Murder

Next morning, when Scarlett went down to breakfast, Gerald was sitting at the table. As Scarlett sat down, he said, ‘We will wait for Mrs O’Hara. She is late.’

Scarlett stared at him. He was looking at her in a strange and confused way, and his hands were shaking.

‘Has Pa lost his mind?’ thought Scarlett. ‘No! He’ll get better. He *must* get better! I won’t think about it now. I won’t think of him or Mother or any of these awful things!’

She left the room without eating.

Pork was outside the house. ‘Have you been over to Twelve Oaks or the MacIntosh place to see if there’s anything left in the gardens that we can eat?’ Scarlett asked him.

‘No, Miss,’ said Pork, ‘We ain’t left Tara.’

‘You go to MacIntosh, and I’ll go to Twelve Oaks,’ she said.

The road was hot and dusty, but she was hungry, and they needed food from somewhere. At the bottom of the hill was the river, and Scarlett took off her shoes and put her feet into the cool water before going on to Twelve Oaks.

It was burned down, and just a few blackened stones were left of the house where she had danced and flirted with the men, and dreamed her dreams of marrying Ashley.

‘Oh, Ashley, I hope you are dead!’ she thought. ‘I don’t want you to see this!’

She walked to the garden and found some potatoes in the soft earth. Without stopping to clean it, Scarlett picked up a potato and began to eat. But it was old and the taste was bitter, and Scarlett was sick almost immediately.

Then she lay down, her face against the earth, and thought of the people who were dead, the way of life that had gone forever, and the dark and frightening future.

But the past was the past, Scarlett told herself, sitting up. Those lazy, happy old days were gone, never to return. There was no going back. ‘I’m going to live through this,’ she said aloud. ‘And when it’s over, I’m never going to be hungry again. If I have to steal or kill – as God is my witness – I’m never going to be hungry again!’



After two weeks, she knew that her father would never get any better. He would always be waiting for Ellen, always listening for her. When Scarlett asked him for advice, his only answer was, 'Do what you think best, daughter.'

One morning, she was at the open window of her bedroom. She had hurt her foot and was sitting in a chair. Melanie was in her room with the children, Careen and Suellen were in their room, and Gerald, Mammy, Pork and Dilcey were in the fields.

Scarlett was wondering how they were going to buy food. The only money in the house was Confederate money, and that had almost no value now. 'And if I can get my hands on some money,' she thought, 'how can we carry food from Jonesboro to Tara?' The old horse that brought them from Atlanta had died.

It was while she was worrying that she heard the sound of a horse. She looked up quickly – *and saw a Yankee soldier*. He was a rough-looking man with an untidy black beard – and a gun! And he was getting off his horse outside the front door.

Scarlett heard him come into the house and walk through the rooms downstairs. 'In a moment,' she thought, 'he'll walk into the kitchen!' There, cooking over the fire in two large pots, were apples and vegetables – brought painfully from Twelve Oaks and the MacIntosh garden – dinner for nine hungry people, but only really enough for two. The thought of the Yankee eating their meal made Scarlett so angry that she began to shake.

She went to the cupboard and took out the heavy gun which Charles had never used. Then, quickly and silently, she ran downstairs, holding it behind her.

'Who's there?' he shouted. And she stopped in the middle of the stairs. He was standing in the doorway of the dining-room, his gun in one hand. 'So there is somebody home,' he said, smiling and putting his gun away. He walked across



He was standing in the doorway of the dining-room, his gun in one hand. 'So there is somebody home,' he said.

until he was standing below her. 'All alone, little lady?' he said.

Before he could move again, Scarlett lifted her gun and shot him in the face. The noise filled her ears and the man crashed backwards on to the floor. Scarlett ran down and stood over him, looking into what was left of his face. As she looked, two streams of blood ran across the floor, one from his face and one from the back of his head. He was dead. She had killed a man. 'Murder,' she thought. 'I've done murder. Oh, this can't be happening to me!'

A sound behind her made Scarlett turn round. Melanie, wearing only a night-dress, was coming down the stairs. She saw the dead Yankee, then smiled proudly at Scarlett.

'She – she's like me!' thought Scarlett. 'She would do the same thing!'

'Scarlett! Scarlett!' cried the frightened voices of her sisters. Then Wade began to scream. Melanie climbed back up the stairs and opened the door of the girls' room.

'Don't be frightened!' she said, laughing. 'Your sister was trying to clean Charles' gun, and it went off and nearly frightened her to death! Wade, your mother just shot your dear Pa's gun. When you get older, she'll let you shoot it, too.'

'What a cool liar!' thought Scarlett. 'I couldn't think that quickly. But why did she lie? They've got to know I've done it.'

Melanie came back downstairs, although she was weak and in pain. 'Scarlett, we must get him out of here,' she said. 'He may not be alone, and if more soldiers come and find him –'

'He must be alone,' said Scarlett. 'I didn't see any others from the upstairs window.'

'Well, no one must know about it,' said Melanie. 'The negroes might talk and then they'll come and get you. We must hide him before they come back.'

'I could dig a hole in the corner of the garden and put him in it,' said Scarlett. 'But how will I get him there?'

‘We’ll each take a leg and pull him,’ said Melanie.

‘You couldn’t pull a cat. You’ll kill yourself.’

‘All right,’ said Melanie. ‘You pull him out and I’ll clean up the mess. But can’t we go through his bag and his pockets first? He might have something to eat.’

Scarlett found a wallet inside his coat. It was full of money – United States money as well as Confederate money, and one ten-dollar gold coin and two five-dollar gold coins. Melanie found some coffee in the bag, and there were rings and other small pieces of jewellery in his pockets.

‘A thief!’ whispered Melanie. ‘He stole all this! I’m glad you killed him, Scarlett.’



No one asked where the horse came from, they were just pleased to have him. The Yankee lay covered in the hole in the corner of the garden. No ghost came to frighten Scarlett during the long nights when she lay awake afterwards.

‘I won’t think about it,’ she said to herself.

But whenever she had to do something difficult after this, she thought: ‘I’ve done murder, so I can do this.’

Chapter 12 Peace, At Last

By May, 1865, the war was over and the Confederacy had lost. The dream they had loved and hoped for, the Cause which took the lives of their friends, was finished. But Scarlett cried no tears. She simply thought: ‘Thank God! Now the cow won’t be stolen. Now the horse is safe. Now I won’t be afraid to drive round the country looking for something to eat. And if Ashley is alive, he’ll be coming home.’

In that warm summer after peace came, a stream of Confederate soldiers came through Tara, on their way home. Most were walking, although a few lucky ones had a horse. They asked

each soldier for news of Ashley, and Suellen asked about Mr Kennedy, but none of them knew anything.

Then, one afternoon, Uncle Peter surprised them all by arriving from Atlanta. He came on an old horse and brought news of Aunt Pitty, who wanted Melanie and Scarlett to come back to live with her again.

He also brought a letter – from Ashley.

‘He’s comin’ home!’ Uncle Peter told them. ‘He’s alive!’

Melanie fainted, but Scarlett took the letter and opened it quickly. She recognized Ashley’s writing:

My love, I am coming home to you –

Tears filled her eyes so that she could not read any more. Holding the letter, she ran to her mother’s room while the others tried to help Melanie. She shut the door, then crying and laughing and kissing the letter, she whispered, ‘My love, I am coming home to you!’



When weeks went by and Ashley did not come, Scarlett began to worry that something had happened to him along the way.

The never-ending line of soldiers went through, and Scarlett’s heart began to grow hard. They were eating the food which was meant for the mouths of Tara. Food was hard to get, and the money in the Yankee’s wallet would not last forever.

Will Benteen was a soldier who was very ill when he arrived. One of his legs finished at the knee, and a roughly cut wooden leg was fitted to it. He looked like a poor farmer, not a plantation owner, but this did not stop the girls working to save his life. Then, one day, he opened his light blue eyes and saw Careen sitting beside him.

‘Then you weren’t a dream, after all,’ he said.

Will had owned a small farm in Georgia, and two negroes. He knew that his slaves were free now, and that his farm was burned, but these things did not seem to worry him.

‘You’ve been good to me, Miss Scarlett,’ he said. ‘And, if you’ll let me, I’m goin’ to stay here and help you with all the work until I’ve paid you back. I can’t ever pay it all, because there’s no price a man can pay for his life.’

So he stayed and, slowly and quietly, a large part of the work and worry of Tara, passed from Scarlett to him.



It was a warm September afternoon, and Will was sitting on the front steps of Tara, talking to Scarlett. Melanie came out to join them. Although she did her share of the work at Tara, she was thin and never completely well.

Will was talking about his trip to Fayetteville that morning when he looked along the road leading to Tara.

‘Another soldier,’ he said.

Scarlett looked and saw a man with a beard, wearing the usual grey and blue uniform which was dusty and torn.

‘I hope he isn’t very hungry,’ she said.

‘He’ll be hungry,’ said Will.

Melanie stood up. ‘I’ll tell Dilcey to –’

She stopped so suddenly that Scarlett turned to look at her. Melanie’s hand was at her throat and her face was white. ‘She’s going to faint,’ thought Scarlett, jumping to her feet.

But Melanie was running down the steps, her arms stretching out towards the soldier. And then Scarlett knew the truth.

The man lifted his face and looked towards the house, as if he was too tired to take another step. Melanie, crying out, threw herself into his arms.

Scarlett took two steps forward, but Will stopped her.

‘Don’t spoil it,’ he said quietly.

‘Let me go, you fool! Let me go! It’s Ashley!’

Will held her. ‘He’s her husband, ain’t he?’ he said calmly.

Scarlett looked at him angrily – and in the quiet kindness of his eyes she saw understanding and pity.

Gone with the Wind

Part 2

MARGARET MITCHELL

Level 4

Retold by John Escott

Series Editors: Andy Hopkins and Jocelyn Potter

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Introduction

'There is something left,' said Ashley. 'Something you love better than me. There's Tara!' And he pressed the wet earth into her hand.

Scarlett looked down, and suddenly she knew how very dear that red earth of Tara was to her – and how hard she would fight to keep it.

The war between the northern and southern states of the US is over, and the South has lost. Scarlett has lost her husband and many friends in the fighting. And she still can not have the love of the man she really wants – Ashley Wilkes.

The only thing she has is Tara, the family home, and even that may be taken away from her. The Northerners are charging very high taxes, and Scarlett has no money to pay them. The handsome and dangerous Captain Rhett Butler has money, but she can't ask him for help.

But there is a fire inside Scarlett, and she is clever and strong. She will do anything to save Tara and rebuild her life.

Scarlett is a very independent woman, especially after the war. War changes everybody and everything. It makes rich men poor and strong men weak. Scarlett is stronger than most of the men in the story. Some men admire her and others strongly dislike her. Women rarely like this kind of woman. Only Melanie is a loyal friend to Scarlett. But is Melanie a fool? Does she know that Scarlett wants her husband?

Every time something bad happens in Scarlett's life, she says, 'I won't think of it now, I'll think of it later.' Nothing can destroy her. There are many bad things about her character, but we have to admire her strength and her hope. Today may be bad, but, as she says, 'Tomorrow is another day.'

The story of Scarlett O'Hara, Ashley Wilkes and Rhett Butler is one of the greatest love stories ever told. It is also a story of the

American Civil War and, in this second part, the death of the 'Old South' after that terrible war.

In the 'Old South', life centred on farms and cotton plantations. Southern society was old-fashioned. It was important to be a gentleman or a lady, and a man should ride and shoot well. Black slaves were still used for the hot work in the cotton fields and in people's homes. In the eyes of northerners, this was wrong. For the rich owners of the cotton plantations, it was a comfortable and beautiful life. Like the character of Scarlett, there was much in southern society that was bad, but that does not stop us from feeling for its people.

Its destruction was ugly and bloody. Nearly a million Americans died. In the southern state of Georgia, where the story takes place, the war swept through like a wind destroying everything in its path. After the war, the Old South was 'gone with the wind'.

The historical background of the story is one that Margaret Mitchell knew well although she was not born until many years afterwards. She knew about it from the stories of old family members. Her grandmother, for example, was the daughter of a plantation owner and remembered the life of the Old South well. They also remembered the terrible four-year war and the hard years after the war, when people were poor and hungry and had to rebuild their lives.

Margaret Mitchell was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on 8 November 1900. As a child, she enjoyed writing and telling stories at an early age. Like Scarlett O'Hara, Margaret enjoyed being the centre of attention. She loved parties and playing at love with boys of her age. In 1918, Clifford Henry, a soldier, asked Margaret to marry him. They were planning their wedding when he was killed. It was a terrible shock for Margaret.

Mrs Mitchell took her daughter to Massachusetts, where

Margaret went to Smith College. It was the last time Margaret saw her mother, who soon after became ill and died in January 1919. Margaret decided to leave college and stay at home to look after her father.

Her first marriage, in 1922, was a very unhappy one and did not last. Her husband was in some ways like Rhett Butler, and some people think that she was thinking of him when she wrote her book in later years.

Margaret went to work as a writer for the *Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine* and continued in that job for four years. In July 1925, she married John Marsh, a friend of her first husband. After she broke a bone in her lower leg in 1926, John made a suggestion to her: he thought she should spend her time writing a book. She did, and the result was *Gone with the Wind*. It took her ten years to finish it, and she did not think it was very good. She did not want to show it to anybody at first. But when it finally appeared, so many people wanted to meet her that she had to hide!

Gone with the Wind was the only book Margaret Mitchell wrote. When she died on 16 August 1949, killed by a speeding taxi, the people of Atlanta lost a valuable member of society. Margaret's generous work helping the sick had made her a much loved citizen. She gave so much to her city and did much good during the years of World War II. Today there is a special building in Atlanta to celebrate Margaret Mitchell's life.

The American Civil War started mainly because the thirteen southern states did not want to stay in the United States after Abraham Lincoln became president. They wanted to become a separate country from the northern states. These thirteen states were Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Missouri and Kentucky. The US government in the

north wanted to change the south and free all slaves. The south did not want the 'Yankees' in the north to tell them what to do. So these states left the United States in 1861 and called themselves the Confederate States of America, or the Confederacy. The war began when the Confederates tried to make the US army leave the south.

At first the South did well, but by the end of 1863, the North was starting to win. President Abraham Lincoln spoke in Gettysburg and gave new meaning to the fight. It was no longer only a fight to keep all of the states together, but it was a fight to make people free. It became a fight to free the slaves.

On 9 April 1865 General Robert E. Lee finally gave up his southern soldiers to the north's General Ulysses S. Grant in Virginia. Other southern soldiers gave up soon after. The North had won. Slaves were free.

Many slaves did not know how to live as free men and women. Some preferred to continue working as they did before the war. Others tried life in the north but found it very hard. Some returned to the south, like Big Sam in *Gone with the Wind*. Some negro men got into trouble. Their lives were in danger if they insulted white women. Groups of white men often took the law into their own hands and punished them for this. The most well-known of these groups was the Ku-Klux-Klan. In Part 2 of this story, some of the men join the Klan.

Immediately after the North won, the Yankees increased taxes in the south. Many Yankees saw an opportunity to get rich and hurried south by train, carrying their luggage in small carpet bags – the early form of a suitcase. These men became known as 'Carpetbaggers'. They demanded payment, and if people could not pay the taxes, the carpetbaggers could buy their land very cheaply. Many men from the north made a lot of money from the building-up of the south during this time.

The Yankees also changed voting laws in the South. In

the beginning, they gave the vote to any southern man who promised to be loyal to the United States. Some agreed to this, but many people, like Scarlett's father, angrily refused. Many proud Southern gentlemen preferred to die than to become a Yankee.

Many Southerners lost their homes and land during and after the war. They had no money for food and had to find new ways to earn a living. Building new houses was big business. Scarlett understands this and manages to buy a sawmill – a very good way to get rich. Sawmills produced the wood for building houses, and everybody needed wood.

Gone with the Wind reached the bookshops in 1936 and sold over a million copies in its first six months. It won the famous Pulitzer Prize, and then became even more famous as a film in 1939. The book is now one of the world's best sellers stories of all time.

The 1939 film by David Selznick had some of the biggest film stars of the day including Clark Gable as Rhett Butler, Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara, Leslie Howard as Ashley Wilkes and Olivia de Havilland as Melanie. It ran for three hours and thirty-nine minutes. It is probably one of the most watched films ever, and people love it today as much as they did in 1939.

Chapter 1 Money Problems

On a cold January afternoon in 1868, Scarlett O'Hara was writing to Aunt Pitty when Will Benteen came into the room.

'Miss Scarlett,' he said, 'how much money do you have?'

She stared at him, wondering if something was wrong. 'I've got ten dollars in gold, the last of that Yankee's money.'

'That won't be enough for the taxes,' he said.

'Taxes?' said Scarlett. 'We've already paid the taxes.'

'Miss Scarlett, you don't go to Jonesboro often and I'm glad you don't,' he said. 'A lot of Yankees and Carpetbaggers* are givin' the orders now.'

'But what's that got to do with our taxes?' said Scarlett.

'They're puttin' the value on Tara sky high and you'll have to pay more tax,' said Will. 'If you can't, Tara will be sold, and I've heard that somebody is hopin' to get it cheap.'

Will and Ashley looked after any business in Jonesboro, and had agreed not to tell Scarlett the more worrying details of what was happening. But Will could not hide this from her.

'Those Yankees!' she cried. 'Wasn't it enough for them to win the war? How much extra do they want us to pay?'

'Three hundred dollars,' said Will.

'Then we've got to get three hundred dollars somehow,' she said. 'They can't sell Tara!'

Will looked angry. 'They can and they'll enjoy doin' it. The country has gone to hell, if you'll excuse my sayin' so, Miss Scarlett. Carpetbaggers and white trash can vote, and most Southern gentlemen can't. Anyone who was on the tax books

* Carpetbagger: a Northern white person who earned money from the building-up of the South during the time immediately after the American Civil War.

for more than two thousand before the war can't vote – men like your Pa and Mr Tarleton. I could vote if I took their Oath and became a Yankee, but I'll never do that! But people like Jonas Wilkerson and the Slatterys, *they* can vote, and they're givin' the orders now.'

'Vote!' cried Scarlett. 'It's taxes we're talking about. Will, we could borrow money on Tara and –'

'And who has any money to lend you on this place? Only the Carpetbaggers who are tryin' to take it away from you.'

'I've got the jewellery I took off the Yankee –'

'Miss Scarlett, who has money for jewellery round here?' said Will. 'Most people ain't got enough money to buy meat.'

They were silent for several minutes.

'Where is Mr Wilkes?' she said.

'He's in the field, cuttin' wood,' said Will.

Scarlett had not had a private talk with Ashley since his return because Melanie was always with him, but she found him alone in the field and told him the news.

'Only one person we know has money,' he said. 'That's Rhett Butler.' A letter from Aunt Pitty had said that Rhett Butler was back in Atlanta, looking rich.

'Don't talk about him,' said Scarlett. 'What about *us*?'

Ashley stared across the fields. 'What will happen to everybody in the South?' he said. 'I can't help, Scarlett. The world I belonged to has gone, and I'm afraid. I can't make you understand these things because you're never afraid. You face the real world without wanting to escape it, but I can't.'

'Escape!' cried Scarlett. 'Oh, Ashley, I do want to escape! I'm so tired of it all! Let's run away! We could go to Mexico – they want officers in the Mexican army. You know you don't love Melanie! You told me you loved me that day at Twelve Oaks, and I know you haven't changed.'

'We were going to forget that day at Twelve Oaks,' he said.



*'You told me you loved me that day at Twelve Oaks, and I know
you haven't changed.'*

‘Do you think I could ever forget it?’ she said.

His voice was deadly quiet. ‘And do you think I could leave Melanie and the baby? Scarlett, you’re sick and tired, that’s why you’re talking this way. But I’m going to help you –’

‘There’s only one way to help me,’ she said. ‘Take me away. There’s nothing to keep us here.’

‘Only honour,’ he said quietly.

She began to cry, and he took her into his arms and pressed her head against his chest, whispering, ‘You mustn’t cry.’ And he kissed her, hungrily, as if he could never have enough.

‘You do love me!’ she cried. ‘You do love me! Say it!’

He pushed her away. ‘Don’t!’ he said. ‘Or I shall make love to you now, here, in the field!’

She smiled, remembering the feel of his mouth on hers.

‘We won’t do this!’ he cried. ‘And it will never happen again, because I’ll take Melanie and the baby and go!’

‘Go?’ she cried. ‘Oh, no!’

‘Yes, by God!’ he said. ‘Do you think I’ll stay here now, when this might happen again?’

‘But, Ashley you can’t go. You love me!’

‘All right, I love you! And a moment ago I almost took you, like a –’ He could not find the words.

Scarlett felt a cold pain in her heart. ‘If you felt like that and didn’t take me, then you don’t love me,’ she said.

‘I can never make you understand,’ he said.

‘There’s nothing left for me to fight for,’ she said.

He picked up some of the red earth at his feet. ‘There is something left,’ he said. ‘Something you love better than me. There’s Tara!’ And he pressed the wet earth into her hand.

She looked down at it. And suddenly she knew how very dear that red earth of Tara was to her – and how hard she would fight to keep it.

‘You needn’t go,’ she said. ‘It won’t happen again.’

Chapter 2 Return to Atlanta

Scarlett heard the sound of a horse and saw a shiny new carriage stop by the house. Jonas Wilkerson got out.

Scarlett was surprised to see the man who was once her father's plantation manager. Will had said that Jonas had made a lot of money – mostly by cheating negroes or the government – and here he was, stepping out of a fine carriage with a woman who was dressed in fashionable clothes. The woman looked towards the house, and Scarlett recognized her immediately.

‘Emmie Slattery!’ she said before she could stop herself.

‘Yes, it’s me,’ said Emmie, holding her head proudly.

Emmie Slattery! That dirty, cheap female whose fatherless baby Scarlett’s mother had helped to deliver! Emmie, who gave typhoid to Scarlett’s mother and killed her. That overdressed, nasty piece of white trash was coming up the steps of Tara – smiling, and looking as if she belonged there!

‘Get off those steps!’ cried Scarlett. ‘Get off this land!’

Jonas tried to control his anger. ‘You mustn’t speak like that to my wife,’ he said.

‘Wife?’ said Scarlett. ‘So you’ve made her your wife at last, have you?’

‘We came to talk business with old friends –’ began Jonas.

‘Friends?’ said Scarlett. ‘My father threw you off this plantation after you fathered Emmie’s baby. And the Slatterys took our help and paid us back by killing my mother. Get off this land before I call Mr Benteen and Mr Wilkes!’

Emmie ran back to the carriage, but Jonas did not move. ‘Still the proud lady!’ he shouted at Scarlett. ‘Well, I know your father’s gone crazy! And I know you can’t pay your taxes. I came here to offer to buy this place, but I won’t give you a dollar now! I’ll buy it cheap when it’s sold for taxes!’

'I'll pull this house down and plant every field with salt before either of you put a foot in it!' shouted Scarlett.

Jonas turned and walked angrily to the carriage. He climbed in next to his wife, who was crying, and they drove off.

Scarlett was so frightened that she found it difficult to breathe. Jonas Wilkerson at Tara? Never, never, never!

'I'll get money from Rhett!' she thought. 'I'll sell him the Yankee's jewellery, then I'll pay the taxes and laugh in Jonas Wilkerson's face!' Another thought came to her. 'But I'll need money for taxes every year.'

What had Rhett said?

'I want you more than I've ever wanted any woman.'

'I'll marry him,' she thought coolly, 'then I'll never have to worry about money again. But he mustn't suspect that we're poor or he'll know it's his money I want and not him.'



Scarlett and Mammy stepped from the train at Atlanta. Scarlett had wanted to come alone, but Mammy wouldn't let her. And because Mammy had helped Scarlett make a new dress from some curtains, Scarlett felt unable to stop her coming.

Mammy knew about the taxes, and that they were in Atlanta to get the money to pay them. 'Why ain't you sayin' where the money is comin' from?' she asked, suspecting something. 'An' why do you need a new dress to borrow it?'

Scarlett didn't answer. They walked to Aunt Pitty's house, saddened by the city's burned and blackened buildings. The streets were full of Yankee soldiers, or negroes, who stared at Scarlett in an insulting way as she walked past.

A closed carriage came along Peachtree Street and a woman's head appeared at a window. It was Belle Watling.

‘Who was that?’ asked Mammy. ‘I ain’t never seen hair that colour in my life!’

‘She’s the town’s bad woman,’ said Scarlett.

And Mammy’s mouth fell open.



‘My dear, did I tell you that Rhett Butler was in prison?’ Aunt Pitty said at supper that evening.

For a moment, Scarlett was so shocked she could only stare. ‘Yes!’ went on Aunt Pitty. ‘He’s in prison for killing a negro who insulted a white woman, and they may hang him!’

‘How – how long will he be in prison?’ asked Scarlett.

‘Nobody knows,’ said Aunt Pitty. ‘And the Yankees don’t care whether people are guilty or not, they’re so worried about the Ku-Klux-Klan.* Do you have a Klan near Tara? I’m sure you do, and Ashley doesn’t tell you about it. Klansmen aren’t supposed to tell. They ride out at night, dressed like ghosts, and call on Carpetbaggers who steal and negroes who are rude or insulting. Sometimes they frighten them and make them leave. Sometimes they kill them and leave them with the Ku-Klux card on them. The Yankees are very angry about it, but I don’t believe they’ll hang Captain Butler because they think he knows where the money is. Everybody believes he’s got millions of dollars in gold, belonging to the Confederacy. *Somebody* got it, and we think it was the blockaders.’

Millions – in gold! Scarlett imagined it. She could repair Tara, and plant miles and miles of cotton. She could have pretty

* Ku-Klux-Klan: a secret group of white people whose members punished others (often black people), for doing something which the Klan thought was a crime, even if the law didn’t. They covered their faces and wore long white clothes.

clothes, and a good doctor to look after Pa. And Ashley – oh, she could do so much for Ashley!

Chapter 3 Prison Visiting

There were soldiers talking outside the Yankee prison. Scarlett, wearing her new dress, walked towards them.

‘Can I help you?’ one asked politely.

‘I want to see Captain Butler,’ said Scarlett.

‘Butler again? That man’s popular,’ said the soldier. He was also a captain. ‘Are you a relation?’

‘Yes – his – his sister.’

The captain laughed. ‘He’s got a lot of sisters. One of them was here yesterday. Come and wait in the office.’

Scarlett’s face was red as she sat down on a chair and gave the soldier her name. After a time the door opened and Rhett appeared. He was dirty and hadn’t shaved, but he came in with a smile and was obviously happy to see her.

‘Scarlett!’ he said, laughing. ‘My dear little sister!’

He kissed her cheek before she could stop him.

‘Remember, my men are just outside,’ the captain said.

When the door closed after him, Rhett moved towards her again. ‘Can I give you a real kiss now?’ he said.

She smiled at him. ‘Only on the cheek, like a good brother.’

‘I’ll wait and hope for better things,’ he said. ‘When did you arrive in Atlanta?’

‘Yesterday,’ she replied.

‘And you came here this morning! My dear, how good of you!’

‘Aunt Pitty told me about you last night and I just couldn’t sleep, I was so unhappy and worried about you,’ she said.

‘Scarlett, it’s wonderful to hear you say things like that,’ he said. ‘How pretty you are! Let me look at you.’

She laughed and turned round on her toes.

‘What have you been doing since I last saw you?’ he said.

She sat down next to him and put a hand on his arm. ‘The Yankees came to Tara, but they didn’t burn the house. Everything is fine. We did well with our cotton last autumn, and Pa says we’ll do better next year, but there are no parties, Rhett, and I get bored in the country. I came here to get some dresses, and then I’m going to Charleston to visit my aunt.’ She gently squeezed his arm. ‘I’m so frightened for you, Rhett. They won’t really hang you, will they?’

He put his hand on hers. ‘Will you be sorry?’ he said. ‘If you’re sorry enough, I’ll put you in my will.’ There was laughter in his eyes as he squeezed her hand.

His will! She looked down quickly, but not before he saw the excitement in her face. He watched her closely as he spoke.

‘The Yankees think I ran away with the Confederacy gold.’

‘Well – did you?’ she said. ‘Where *did* you get all your money? Aunt Pitty says –’

‘What rude questions you ask!’ he said, laughing.

She was so excited it was difficult to talk sweetly to him.

‘You’re too clever to let them hang you,’ she said. ‘You’ll find a way to get out, and when you do –’

‘And when I do –?’ he asked, moving closer to her.

‘Well, I –’ Her face went prettily red again. ‘Oh, Rhett, I’ll die if they hang you. I –’ She stopped and looked down.

‘Scarlett, you can’t mean that you –’

She tried to cry. Would tears seem more natural? She closed her eyes but turned her face upwards so that he could kiss her more easily. But he did not kiss her lips. He took her hand and kissed it, then turned it over to kiss the other side. It was rough from work, and the nails were broken. It wasn’t the soft, white

hand of Scarlett O'Hara. He picked up the other one and looked at them together.

'Look at me!' he said, quietly. 'So everything is fine at Tara, is it? Well, these aren't the hands of a lady!'

'Don't say that!' she cried. But she was thinking, 'Why didn't I wear Aunt Pitty's gloves? How stupid!'

'You've worked like a field negro,' he said, dropping them. 'Why did you lie? I almost believed you were sorry for me.'

'But I *am* sorry,' she said.

'No, you aren't. You want something. Tell me what it is instead of behaving like a prostitute selling herself.' He looked closely at her. 'Did you really think I'd marry you?'

Her face went red.

'You know I'm not a marrying man,' he went on.

'Oh, Rhett, you can help me – if you'll just be sweet!'

'What do you want? Money?'

'Well – yes – I do want some money,' said Scarlett. 'I want you to lend me three hundred dollars.'

'You were talking about love but thinking about money,' he said. 'How like a woman! What will you offer me in return?'

'Jewellery?' she said.

'I'm not interested in jewellery,' he said.

'There's Tara –'

'No,' he said. 'What do you want the money for?'

'To pay taxes,' said Scarlett. 'Oh, Rhett, I lied about everything being all right. Pa is – not himself since Mother died. And there are thirteen of us to feed, and we never have enough to eat, or warm clothes or –'

'Where did you get the dress?' he asked.

'It's made out of some curtains,' she said.

He was silent for a moment, then he said, 'I don't like your first offer. Make me another one.'

She took a deep breath and looked him straight in the eye.

'You said you had never wanted a woman as much as you wanted me. Well – well, if you still want me, you can have me!'

He looked back at her and she felt her face getting hot. Then he said, 'Let me understand this: if I give you three hundred dollars, you will be my lover. Is that right?'

'Yes,' she said. 'Are you going to give me the money?'

He smiled. 'I couldn't give it to you. I have the money, yes, but not here. And I'm not saying where it is or how much.'

Her face became ugly and she jumped at him with an angry cry. He held her round the waist as she tried to bite and kick him.

'Let me go!' she said. 'You knew you weren't going to give me the money, but you let me go on! You're a hateful pig!'

He laughed. 'Come to my hanging, it will make you feel better,' he said.

'Thank you,' she said, 'but they may not hang you until it's too late to pay the taxes!'

Chapter 4 Another Plan

It was raining when she started to walk back to Aunt Pitty's house. Her clothes were soon wet, but she didn't care. 'How can I go back to Tara and tell them they must all go – somewhere?' she thought. 'Oh, I hope they hang Rhett Butler!'

She heard the sound of a carriage and turned to look.

The driver saw her. 'Is it – Miss Scarlett?' he said.

'Oh, Mr Kennedy!' said Scarlett. 'I'm so glad to see you!'

Frank Kennedy smiled and looked pleased as he stopped and helped her into the carriage. 'What are you doing in this part of the town?' he said. 'Don't you know it's dangerous?'

Scarlett noticed how well-dressed he was. The carriage was new, too. 'I didn't know you were here in Atlanta,' she said.

‘Didn’t Miss Suellen tell you about my shop?’ said Frank.

‘No,’ she replied, although she remembered Suellen did say something about it. ‘A shop? How clever you must be.’

‘I came to Atlanta at the end of the war,’ he explained, ‘and there were beds and blankets on the train which nobody seemed to want. The Yankees were going to burn them but I got them first. I had ten dollars, and used it to put a roof on an old shop near Five Points, and I moved the beds and blankets in and started selling them. I sold them cheap, then bought other things and sold those, too.’ He looked proud. ‘I made a thousand dollars this year, Miss Scarlett. Five hundred went to buy more things, but I’ll probably make two thousand next year, and I’ve already got an idea for another business.’

Scarlett quickly became interested. ‘You have?’ she said.

He laughed and hurried the horse along. ‘A pretty little woman like you doesn’t want to hear anything about business.’

‘The old fool!’ she thought, but she said, ‘Oh, but I *do*,’ and smiled sweetly. ‘What other business?’

‘A sawmill,’ he said. ‘I haven’t bought it yet, but I will. Anybody who owns a sawmill can make money. The Yankees burned so many houses, and people have gone crazy building new ones. They can’t get enough wood, and they can’t get it fast enough. I’m going to buy this sawmill as soon as people pay me some of the money they owe me.’ His face went red again. ‘You know *why* I want to make money quickly, don’t you?’

Scarlett knew he was thinking of Suellen. For a moment, she wondered about asking him to lend her three hundred dollars. ‘But he won’t,’ she thought. ‘He wants to marry Suellen in the spring, and if he lends me the money the wedding will have to wait. Oh, why does this old fool want to marry her? Once she gets her hands on his money, she won’t care whether Tara is sold for taxes or burned to the ground!’ Suddenly, an idea came into

her head. 'Can I make him forget Suellen and ask *me* to marry him instead? He's old enough to be my father. But he's a gentleman, and now isn't the time for me to be fussy.'

He saw her staring at him and she looked away quickly.

'Are you cold?' he asked.

'Yes,' she said, in a small voice. 'May I put my hand in your coat pocket? I forgot to bring my gloves.'

'Oh – of course!' he said, delighted. 'But why did you come to this part of town?'

'I – I went to see if the soldiers would buy some clothes I had made to send home to their wives,' she lied.

'You went to the Yankees?' he said, shocked. 'Miss Scarlett! Does Miss Pittypat know that you –?'

'Oh, I shall *die* if you tell Aunt Pitty!' said Scarlett, and began to cry. It was easy to cry because she was so cold.

Frank became embarrassed. He wanted to put her head on his shoulder, but didn't know what to do.

'I came to Atlanta to try to make a little money for myself and my son,' said Scarlett, tears running down her cheeks.

And then Frank saw that her head *was* on his shoulder, although he didn't know how it had got there.

'I won't tell Miss Pittypat,' he said, 'but you must promise not to do anything like this again.'

Her green eyes looked up at him. 'But I must do something. There's nobody to look after me or my poor little boy now.'

'There will always be a home for you and Wade with us when Miss Suellen and I are married,' he said.

Scarlett tried to look embarrassed.

'Is something wrong?' said Frank.

'I – I thought she wrote to you,' said Scarlett. 'Oh, she should be ashamed! Oh, what an unkind sister I have!'

Frank stared at her, his face grey. 'What –?'

'She's going to marry Tony Fontaine next month,' lied Scarlett. 'She got tired of waiting for you.'



During the next two weeks, Scarlett made him feel like a strong, warm-hearted man who was lucky enough to catch a charming but helpless little woman. And when they stood together to be married, he still did not know how it had all happened. And so quickly too! He only knew that for the first time in his life he had done something wonderful and exciting.

No friends or relations came to the wedding. That was how Scarlett wanted it. 'Just us two, Frank,' she said. 'I always wanted to run away and be married. Please, dear, just for me!'

And before he knew it, he was married!

Chapter 5 The Sawmill Business

Frank gave Scarlett the three hundred dollars, although it ended his hopes of buying the sawmill. But she let him see how happy this made her, and then he was happy, too.

Will wrote to say the taxes were now paid and that Jonas Wilkerson was angry not to get Tara. Scarlett knew that Will understood why she had married Frank, but wondered what Ashley thought of her. She also had a letter from Suellen. A violent, insulting letter. And though many of the things Suellen said were true, Scarlett never forgave her for saying them.

She knew people in Atlanta were talking about her, but she did not care. Tara was safe. Now she had to make Frank realize that his shop must bring in more money. There were next year's taxes to pay – and there was still the sawmill. Scarlett knew that there was money to be made from the sawmill.

Nobody knew just when Frank realized that Scarlett had

tricked him into marrying her. Suellen certainly never wrote to tell him. Perhaps it was when Tony Fontaine came to Atlanta on business, obviously not married. But Frank could not believe Scarlett had married him coldly and without *any* love.

Two weeks after the wedding he became ill, and Dr Meade sent him to bed. As each day passed, Frank worried more and more about the shop, and the boy who was looking after it for him.

‘I’ll go and see how things are,’ Scarlett told him.

When she arrived, she sent the boy out for his dinner then looked at the books to see just how much money people owed Frank. She was shocked to find it was more than five hundred dollars! And owed by people she knew – the Elsing and the Merriwethers, among others.

‘Frank may be willing to stay poor just to be friendly with these people,’ she thought, ‘but I’m not!’

She was making a list of the names when the door opened and someone came in. It was Rhett Butler.

‘My dear Mrs Kennedy,’ he said. ‘My *very* dear Mrs Kennedy!’ She stared at him. ‘What are you doing here?’ she said.

‘I heard you were married, so I came to congratulate you.’

‘Oh, you are the most –! What a pity they didn’t hang you!’

‘There are others who share your opinion,’ he said, smiling.

‘How did you get out of prison?’ she asked.

‘I persuaded a government friend of mine in Washington to speak for me,’ he said. ‘I knew things about him that he didn’t want others to know.’

‘But you were guilty,’ she said.

‘Yes, I did kill the negro,’ agreed Rhett. ‘He insulted a lady.’ He spoke softly. ‘And don’t tell Miss Pittypat but, yes, I do have the money, safe in a bank in England.’

‘The money?’ said Scarlett. ‘You have the Confederate gold?’

‘Not all of it!’ he said, laughing. ‘There must be fifty or more

blockaders who have some. But I've got nearly half a million! If only you had waited and not rushed to marry again!

Scarlett felt sick. Half a million dollars. It was hard to believe there was so much money in this cruel world.

'Tell me,' he said, trying not to look too interested, but failing, 'did you get the money for the taxes?'

And suddenly, she knew that *this* was why he was here. It was not to laugh at her, but to make sure she had got the money to pay the taxes. Oh, how nice he could be sometimes! Did he really care about her, more than he was willing to say?

'Yes, I got the money,' she said.

'Did you wait until you had the wedding ring on your finger?' he said, smiling 'And did Frank have as much money as he told you, or did he trick you? You needn't have secrets from me, Scarlett. I know the worst about you.'

'Oh, Rhett, you're the worst – well, I don't know what! No, Frank didn't trick me but –' Suddenly it was good to tell someone her troubles. 'Rhett, if Frank would just ask people for the money they owe him, I wouldn't be worried.'

'Don't you have enough to live on?' he said.

'Yes, but – well, I *could* use a little money.'

'I'll lend you some money, but I want to know what it's for,' said Rhett. He smiled again. 'And I won't ask you to repeat that charming offer you made me once.'

'You're a –!' she began.

'I know you're worrying about that,' he went on, smoothly. 'Not worrying a *lot*, but worrying a little. Now, why do you want money? Not for Ashley Wilkes, I hope.'

She became hot with anger. 'Ashley Wilkes has never taken a dollar from me! Ashley is –'

'Oh, yes!' he said. 'Ashley is wonderful! So why doesn't he take his family and get out of Tara, and find work?'

'He's been working like a field negro! He's –'

‘Yes, he does the best he can, but you’ll never make a farm worker out of a Wilkes. Now, cool down and tell me how much money you want, and what you want it for.’

Scarlett tried to control her anger. She wanted to throw his offer back in his face, but she told herself to be sensible.

‘I want to buy a sawmill,’ she said at last, ‘and I think I can get it cheap. And I want two wagons and horses, and a horse and carriage for myself.’

‘A sawmill?’ said Rhett.

‘Yes,’ she said. ‘Are you busy this afternoon?’

‘Why?’ he asked.

‘I want you to drive to the sawmill with me,’ she said. ‘I want to buy it before you change your mind!’



‘The sawmill?’ cried Frank. ‘You sold your jewellery to Captain Butler and bought the sawmill?’

It was the shock of Frank’s life when Scarlett told him. At first he thought she was joking, but he soon discovered that it was no joke.

Early each morning she drove out to the sawmill with Uncle Peter, Aunt Pitty’s old slave, and did not come back until it was dark. A man called Johnson was made manager and he brought in free negroes to do the work. And Scarlett was soon earning enough money to talk about buying another sawmill.

Frank couldn’t understand it. This wasn’t the soft, sweet, helpless person he had married. This Scarlett knew what she wanted, and went after it – like a man! And she became angry so easily. He only had to say, ‘Scarlett, I wish you wouldn’t –’ and it was like a thunder-storm breaking!

‘A baby,’ he thought. ‘She needs a baby.’

Then, on a wild wet night in April, Tony Fontaine rode in from Jonesboro and knocked on their door, waking up Frank

and Scarlett. Frank hurried down to let him in. Scarlett followed moments later, and came downstairs as Tony blew out the lighted candle Frank was holding.

'They'll hang me if they catch me!' Tony was saying. 'I'm going to Texas to hide, but I need another horse, Frank.'

'You can have mine,' said Frank.

'What happened?' Scarlett asked.

'You remember Eustis, who was one of our slaves?' said Tony. 'He came to the kitchen today, while Sally was making dinner. I don't know what he said but I heard her scream and try to get away. I ran into the kitchen, and there he was – drunk.'

'Go on,' said Scarlett.

'I shot him, and when Mother ran in to look after Sally, I began riding into Jonesboro to find Jonas Wilkerson. *He* was to blame. He had talked to those black fools and told them that negroes could have anything – could have white women!'

'Oh, Tony, no!' cried Scarlett.

'Yes!' said Tony. 'On my way past Tara I met Ashley and he went with me. We found Wilkerson in a bar, and I took my knife to him while Ashley held the others back. It was finished before I knew it. Wilkerson was dead and Ashley was putting me on my horse and telling me to come to you. He's a good man, Ashley.'

'But surely if you went back and explained –'

Tony laughed. 'Scarlett, how do you think the Yankees will reward a man for keeping negroes off his women? By hanging him, that's how! Now, I must go.'

Scarlett was afraid. Someone could rape or kill her, and the Yankees would hang anyone who tried to punish the criminal. She didn't want her children to grow up with all this hate and fear. She wanted them to know only warm homes, good clothes and fine food.

'Only money can buy these things,' she thought. 'Lots of money. That's what I'll have, and I don't care how I get it!'



Scarlett followed moments later, and came downstairs as Tony blew out the lighted candle Frank was holding.

When Tony had gone, Scarlett told her husband a secret she had kept for several weeks.

‘Frank,’ she said, ‘I’m going to have a baby.’



The spring months went by, and each day Scarlett went to the sawmill, certain that Johnson the manager was cheating her but unable to catch him. And she went to see builders and people who were planning new homes. She often lied about the quality of her wood, and sold bad wood for the same price as good wood.

One man who owned another sawmill openly called her a liar and a cheat, but it hurt his business because people would not believe that someone like Scarlett – a lady – would behave the way this man was saying she did. In the end, the man had to sell his business – and Scarlett bought it cheap.

She had to find someone to manage the second sawmill and she gave the job to Hugh Elsing. He was not a good businessman, but he was honest.

People were shocked to see Scarlett doing business with Yankees. But Scarlett did not care. ‘When I’m rich,’ she thought, ‘I’ll say what I think of them, but until then I’ll smile sweetly and take their money.’

Then in early June, a message came from Will at Tara. Gerald, Scarlett’s father, was dead.

Chapter 6 Changes at Tara

It was evening when Scarlett arrived in Jonesboro. Will met her with the wagon and they drove along the road towards Tara.

‘Scarlett, I’m goin’ to marry Suellen,’ he said.

‘Suellen!’ she said. ‘I always thought you loved Careen.’

'The only man Careen loved – that Tarleton boy – was killed in the war. And now she's goin' into the church in Charleston to live an' work.'

'Are you joking?' said Scarlett.

'No, and you mustn't argue with her or laugh at her,' he said. 'It's all she wants now. Her heart is broken.'

'But you don't love Suellen, do you?' she said.

'I do, in a way,' he said. 'And Ashley and Melanie will be goin' soon, and I couldn't live at Tara then without marryin' Suellen. You know how people talk –'

'Ashley?' said Scarlett. 'Going where?'

'Up North,' said Will. 'A Yankee friend wrote to him about workin' in a bank there.' He looked at her, and she had the old feeling that he knew all about her and Ashley.

'He can't go!' she thought. 'I'll find him a job at the sawmill, but he must think he's helping me or he won't come.'

'Tell me about Pa,' she said.

'He wasn't ill,' said Will, 'but – well – about a month ago Suellen talked to some people in Jonesboro, and afterwards she was all excited, although she didn't say anythin'. Then she started goin' for walks with your Pa. I saw her talkin' to him, but I'm sure he didn't know what she was sayin' half of the time. But now I know that she was tryin' to make him take the Yankee Oath.'

'Pa take the Yankee Oath!' cried Scarlett.

Will nodded. 'So that the Yankees would pay \$150,000 for the cotton they burned at Tara during the war. They'll do that for any Southern gentleman who takes the Oath.'

'\$150,000!' said Scarlett. And all for signing a loyal Oath to the United States Government. That much money for a small lie! Scarlett didn't blame Suellen.

'Well, Suellen got your father drunk and took him into Jonesboro, and he almost signed it,' Will went on. 'But at the last

moment he realized what he was doing and he threw the paper in Suellen's face. Then he rode off like a crazy man.'

'Oh, poor Pa,' said Scarlett.

'That evening, Ashley and I heard him riding across the fields,' said Will. 'He tried to jump the fence. "Look, Ellen! Watch me jump this one!" he shouted. But the horse stopped, and threw him over. The fall broke his neck.'



Gerald O'Hara's funeral was on a hot June morning. People said kind words to Scarlett and Careen, but they did not speak to Suellen. She had tried to make her father forget his honour as a loyal Southerner and take the Yankee Oath, and they would never forgive her for that.

When everyone had gone after the funeral, Scarlett asked Ashley to speak with her. When they were alone, she offered to make him a half owner in one of her sawmills in Atlanta.

'Ashley, you must come,' she said. 'It may be months before I can look after the sawmills now, because of the baby -'

'Scarlett! Please!' he said. 'I can't -!'

'But you'll go to New York and live with Yankees!' she said.

'Yes,' he said. 'I've decided to go North. I've taken too much from you already, Scarlett - food, a home, clothes for myself and Melanie and the baby. And I can't - you know I can't live near you, and you know why.'

'Oh - that?' she said. 'I made a promise out in the field last winter, and I'll keep it.'

'I can't be sure I will,' he said. 'I'm going to New York.'

'Oh, Ashley!' said Scarlett, and began to cry wildly.

Moments later, Melanie came in, her eyes wide with worry. 'Scarlett, what is it? Is it the baby -?'

'It's Ashley - he's so - so horrible!' shouted Scarlett.

'Ashley, what have you done?' Melanie ran to Scarlett.

‘Let me explain,’ said Ashley. ‘Scarlett was kind enough to offer to make me manager of one of her sawmills in Atlanta.’

‘Manager!’ cried Scarlett, angrily. ‘I offered to make him half-owner and he —’

‘I told her I had arranged for us to go North and she —’

‘Oh!’ Scarlett began to cry again. ‘I told him how much I need him — how I can’t get anybody to manage the sawmill — and he refused to come! And now I’ll have to sell it and we’ll probably all go hungry, but he won’t care!’

‘Ashley, how could you refuse?’ cried Melanie. ‘After all Scarlett has done for us! She saved my life in Atlanta when my baby came. And she killed a Yankee here, to save us. Yes, did you know that? And now, the first time she asks us to do something for her —! Oh, Ashley, just think what it will mean for us to live in Atlanta among our own people. Maybe we’ll have a little home of our own. Oh, Ashley, do say yes!’

Scarlett looked into Ashley’s tired eyes as he spoke.

‘I’ll come, Scarlett,’ he said. ‘I cannot fight you both.’

Chapter 7 Danger in Atlanta

Scarlett was disappointed when Ashley was not a better businessman than Hugh Elsing. But she could do nothing about it until after her baby was born.

‘I’ll never have another child!’ she decided.

Scarlett’s baby was a girl — Ella — and she was born during a week when a negro, raped a white woman and was quietly hanged by the Ku-Klux-Klan before he could be brought to the law. Scarlett thanked God that Ashley was too sensible to belong to the Klan, and that Frank was too old and weak.

But people stayed at home behind locked doors, and men were afraid to leave their women and children unguarded. Both

Ashley and Hugh stayed at home, and work at the sawmills stopped, which annoyed Scarlett. After three weeks, she got up from her bed and said that she was going to the sawmills again. Frank and Mammy said it was too dangerous, so Scarlett rushed across to Ashley's house, which was at the bottom of Aunt Pitty's garden, and complained loudly to Melanie.

'I *will* go,' she said. 'I'll carry a gun and shoot anybody who tries to hurt me.'

Melanie was shocked. 'Scarlett, I'll die if anything happens to you! I'll tell Ashley to go back to the sawmill at once.'

'What good will he be if he's worried about you every minute of the day?' said Scarlett. 'No, I'll walk there and get some negro workmen on the way —'

'No!' said Melanie. 'Decatur Road is full of bad negroes, and you'll have to pass by there. I'll think of something.'

And that afternoon, a tall, thin old man with a wooden leg and only one eye came across the garden from Melanie's house. He was one of the many old soldiers without homes or families who stopped at Melanie's house and were given food and a place to sleep before moving on again.

'Mrs Wilkes sent me to drive for you,' he said. 'My name's Archie, and Mrs Wilkes has been good to me, so here I am.'

Scarlett didn't like the look of him, but she said, 'All right. If my husband agrees.'

Frank was disappointed when the baby did not change Scarlett, but she was determined to go to her sawmills, so he agreed to let Archie drive her.

Scarlett sometimes wondered about Archie's earlier life and, one morning, she learned something about it.

'You can never be sure that free negroes will come to work,' she was saying. 'I'm going to get some convicts.'

Archie turned to her angrily. 'The day you get convicts at the sawmills will be the day I stop workin' for you. People who use

convicts don't care. They feed them cheaply and get all the work they can out of them.'

'Why do you care?' she said.

'Because *I* was a convict for nearly forty years,' he said.

A shocked Scarlett listened to his story. Archie murdered his wife because she was his brother's lover, and he was sent to prison for the rest of his life. But during the war, when things were going badly for the Confederacy, convicts were given the chance to go free if they fought against the Yankees. Archie took his chance and was now a free man.

'Mrs Wilkes knows,' said Archie. 'I wouldn't let a nice lady like her take me into her house without knowin'.'

Scarlett said nothing, but she thought, 'A murderer! How could Melanie be so — so —? Oh, there are no words for it.'

But when she began using convicts — five for each sawmill — Archie kept his promise and stopped driving her. Frank also asked Scarlett not to use convicts, and at first Ashley refused to work with them. But Scarlett got her own way eventually, although Ashley did no better with the convicts than he had with negroes. And now there were grey hairs in his head and a tired look in his eyes, and he almost never smiled.



On a warm December day, Scarlett was sitting outside Aunt Pitty's house with her baby when she looked up to see Rhett Butler riding along the road.

'Hello, Rhett,' she said. 'You've been away a long time.'

'Yes, I have,' he said. 'And I was on my way to see you when I saw Mrs Ashley Wilkes. It was quite a surprise. Of course, I stopped to talk with her, and she told me that you were kind enough to make Mr Wilkes a half-owner in your sawmill.'

'What about it?' said Scarlett, looking guilty.

‘When I lent you that money, you promised not to use it to look after Ashley,’ he said. ‘Scarlett, you have no honour.’

‘Why do you hate Ashley?’ she said.

‘I don’t, I pity him. His world is gone and he’s like a fish out of water. How did you get him to come to Atlanta?’

Scarlett pushed the memory of the argument with Ashley from her mind. ‘I explained that I needed his help because I was going to have a baby. He was pleased to come.’

‘Well, you’ll never get another dollar out of me,’ said Rhett. He looked down at the baby. ‘I suppose Frank is very proud of his daughter and has lots of plans for her.’

‘Yes, well, you know how silly men are with their babies.’

‘Then tell him to stay home at night more often, if he wants to see her grown up,’ said Rhett.

‘What do you mean?’ said Scarlett. ‘Are you trying to tell me that Frank is – is –? Oh!’

Rhett laughed loudly. ‘I didn’t mean he was seeing other women! Frank? Oh, how funny!’ And he went away laughing.

Chapter 8 Ku-Klux-Klan

The March afternoon was cold as Scarlett drove alone along the Decatur road. Frank’s gun was on the seat beside her as she went past old army tents and rough wooden buildings where the black prostitutes, and the white and negro criminals lived.

Suddenly, a big negro stepped out from behind a tree.

Scarlett quickly picked up Frank’s gun. ‘What do you want?’

‘Miss Scarlett! Don’t shoot Big Sam!’ came the reply.

Big Sam! He was one of the slaves who had worked at Tara and who went to fight for the Confederacy in the last months of the war. ‘Sam!’ said Scarlett. ‘What are you doing in this nasty place? And why haven’t you been into town to see me?’

‘I don’t live here, Miss Scarlett,’ said Sam. ‘I’m just stayin’ here for a time. I went up North, but I didn’t like it, an’ I’m goin’ home to Tara as soon as I get the chance.’

‘Would you like to stay here and work for me?’ said Scarlett. ‘I need a driver.’

Sam looked unhappy. ‘Thank you for offerin’, Miss Scarlett, but I’ve got to get out of Atlanta. I – I killed a man.’

‘A negro?’

‘No, a white man. A Yankee soldier,’ said Sam. ‘He said somethin’ bad an’ – I didn’t mean to kill him, but I’m strong, an’ – an’ now they’re after me!’

Scarlett thought for a moment, then said, ‘I’ll send you to Tara tonight. I have to drive out to my sawmill now, but I’ll be back before it’s dark. Wait for me here.’

‘Yes, Miss Scarlett,’ said Sam. Like many ‘free’ negroes, he was pleased to have somebody to tell him what to do again.

That evening, the sun had gone when Scarlett reached the bend in the road. Big Sam was nowhere to be seen, and she began to worry. Then she heard feet coming along the road.

But it wasn’t Sam. It was a big white man and a small, fat negro. Scarlett put her hand on the gun at her side.

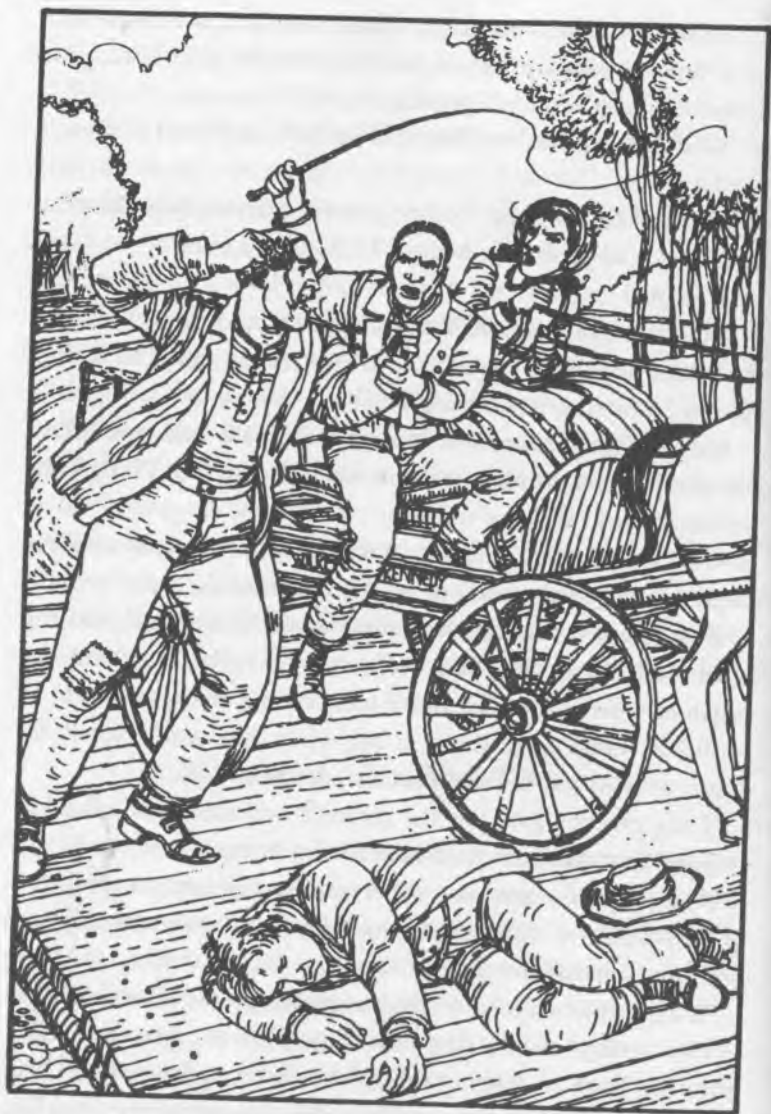
‘Lady, can you give me any money?’ said the white man. He stopped Scarlett’s horse and held it. ‘I’m hungry.’

‘Get out of the way,’ she answered, keeping her voice calm.

‘Get her!’ the man shouted to the negro. ‘She’s probably got her money inside her dress!’

What happened next was like a terrible dream. The negro ran to the carriage and Scarlett shot at him, but the gun was pulled from her hand so roughly that it almost broke her wrist. Then she felt a hand at her throat, and her dress was torn open from her neck to her waist. The black hand pushed between her breasts, and Scarlett screamed like a mad woman.

‘Shut her up!’ shouted the white man. ‘Pull her out!’



*Then the negro jumped down as Big Sam came towards him.
'Run, Miss Scarlett!' shouted Big Sam.*

A third man was in the road and the white man suddenly cried out. Then the negro jumped down as Big Sam came towards him.

‘Run, Miss Scarlett!’ shouted Big Sam.

Scarlett started the horse and felt the carriage go over the white man, who was lying where Sam had knocked him down. Then she heard another shout from behind, and looked back to see Big Sam running after her. She slowed enough to let Sam jump on to the carriage, then rushed on towards the town.



That night, Frank sent Big Sam to catch the train to Jonesboro. Then he took Scarlett, Aunt Pitty and the children to Melanie’s and went off with Ashley.

Scarlett almost burst with anger. How *could* he go out tonight? The women were sitting together in Melanie’s room. India, Melanie’s cousin, was with them, and Archie was standing by the fire.

Scarlett wanted to scream. How could they be so calm? Did nobody *care*? But there was a nervousness about Melanie and India, she noticed. At each sound of a horse outside, they lifted their heads from their reading and looked at each other.

‘Something’s wrong,’ thought Scarlett. ‘But what is it?’

Then Archie said, ‘Somebody’s comin’, and it isn’t Mr Wilkes.’ He moved to the door. ‘Who’s there?’

‘Captain Butler,’ came the answer. ‘Let me in.’

Melanie ran to the door and pulled it open.

‘Where have they gone?’ Rhett said. ‘Tell me quickly!’

‘What’s happened?’ said Melanie. ‘How — how did you know?’

‘The Yankees have suspected them from the beginning, Mrs Wilkes,’ said Rhett. ‘They knew there was going to be trouble tonight, and they’ve prepared for it. I heard two Yankee officers

talking about it. Your husband and the others will be caught. Where did they go? Have they got a meeting-place?

'Don't tell him!' shouted Archie. 'It's a trick. Didn't you hear him say he was with Yankee officers?'

But Melanie was looking at Rhett. Her voice shook as she spoke to him. 'Out on the Decatur road,' she said. 'They meet at the old Sullivan plantation – the one that's half-burned.'

'Thank you,' said Rhett. 'I'll ride fast. When the Yankees come, pretend you know nothing.' He went out into the black night, and they heard him ride away at great speed.

Aunt Pitty gave a cry. 'The Yankees – coming here?'

'What's it all about?' said Scarlett. 'What does it mean?'

'Mean?' said India. 'It means you've probably caused Ashley's and Mr Kennedy's deaths!'

'Where's Ashley?' cried Scarlett. 'What's happened to him?'

'Where's your *husband*?' said India, her eyes full of anger. 'Aren't you interested in him?'

'India, please!' said Melanie, her face white and shocked. 'Scarlett, we didn't tell you because Frank thought – well, you were always against the Klan, and –'

'The Klan!' screamed Scarlett. 'Ashley? Frank?'

'Of course they are in the Klan!' said India. 'And all the other men we know. They are white men and Southerners!'

'Oh, now the Yankees will take my sawmills and the shop, and put Frank in prison!' cried Scarlett. She looked at them. 'What did Rhett Butler mean?'

India and Melanie were too afraid to speak.

'Mr Wilkes and Mr Kennedy and the other men have gone out tonight to kill that negro and that white man,' said Archie. 'Now it seems that the Yankees suspect somethin' and have sent soldiers to wait for them. And it's all because of you!'

Suddenly, there was the sound of horses outside the house, followed by somebody knocking hard at the door.

‘Archie, open the door,’ Melanie said quietly and calmly.

A Yankee captain and some soldiers stood outside. Scarlett recognized the captain. It was Tom Jaffery and he was a friend of Rhett’s. He saw Scarlett and took off his hat.

‘Good evening, Mrs Kennedy,’ he said, looking round the room quickly. ‘And which of you ladies is Mrs Wilkes?’

‘I am,’ said Melanie, coolly. ‘Why are you here?’

‘I’d like to speak to Mr Wilkes and Mr Kennedy,’ he said.

‘They aren’t here. They’re at Mr Kennedy’s shop.’

‘They’re not at the shop,’ he said, looking serious. ‘We’ll wait outside until they return.’

Soldiers surrounded the house, a man at each window and door. After a long time, there was the sound of horses feet – and of Rhett Butler singing! And there were other drunken shouts of ‘What the hell!’ from Ashley and Hugh Elsing.

Archie’s hand moved towards his gun.

‘No,’ whispered Melanie firmly. ‘I’ll do this.’ And she opened the door with an annoyed look on her face. ‘Bring him in, Captain Butler,’ she called. ‘I suppose you’ve got him drunk again. Bring him in.’

The Yankee captain spoke from outside. ‘I’m sorry, Mrs Wilkes, but I’ll have to arrest your husband and Mr Elsing.’

‘Arrest?’ said Melanie. ‘If you arrest everyone who is drunk, captain, your prison will be full of Yankee soldiers! Bring him in, Captain Butler, if you can walk yourself.’

Ashley was white-faced and wearing Rhett’s long coat. He was half-carried into the room by Rhett and Hugh. The Yankee captain followed them, half-amused but suspecting something, too.

‘Oh, Ashley, I’m ashamed of you!’ cried Melanie. ‘Drunk! And out with a Yankee-loving Carpetbagger like Captain Butler! Archie, take him to his room and put him to bed, as usual.’

‘Don’t touch him,’ said the captain. ‘I am arresting him for his part in a Klan killing. A white man and a negro were killed out near the Decatur road tonight, and Mr Wilkes –’

‘Tonight?’ said Rhett. He began to laugh. ‘Not tonight, Tom. These two have been with me since eight o’clock.’

‘With you, Rhett?’ The captain was confused now. ‘Where?’

‘I don’t like to say.’ Rhett looked at Melanie, then looked away quickly. ‘I hate to say it in front of the ladies.’

‘I want to know!’ said Melanie. ‘Where was my husband?’

‘At – at Belle Watling’s house,’ said Rhett. ‘He was there with Hugh and Frank Kennedy and Dr Meade and – oh, a lot of others. We had a party. A big party – drinks, girls –’

‘At Belle Watling’s? Oh!’ Melanie put a hand to her breast – and appeared to faint.

‘Now you’ve done it, Tom!’ cried Rhett. ‘There won’t be a wife in Atlanta who will speak to her husband.’

‘Rhett, I didn’t know –’ The captain looked embarrassed.

‘Go and ask Belle if you don’t believe me,’ said Rhett.

‘But – I’ve got to arrest these men!’

‘I didn’t know it was against the law to get drunk at Belle’s house,’ said Rhett. ‘Tom, there are fifty witnesses to say that they were there.’

‘There always are,’ said the captain. ‘Oh. I’ll go, but I want to see them in the morning for questioning.’

The captain went out, and Hugh Elsing went with him. India quickly closed the door, and they pulled all the curtains while Ashley was taken into the bedroom and put on the bed. Rhett’s coat was taken off him. Melanie was on her feet again and she began cutting off Ashley’s shirt. It was covered in blood.

‘He’s hurt!’ cried Scarlett.

‘You fool!’ said India. ‘Did you think he was really drunk?’

Melanie put a towel against Ashley’s shoulder to stop the blood. He opened his eyes and smiled weakly at her.

Rhett said, 'I'm sorry I had to say that Mr Wilkes and the others were at Belle Watling's house, Mrs Wilkes, but I had to think quickly, and I know Belle will be glad to lie for me. When I got out to the old Sullivan plantation, I saw that Mr Wilkes was hurt and could not ride far, so I took him, Dr Meade, Mr Merriwether, Hugh Elsing and all the others to Belle's. No one saw us. We went in through a private door at the back which is always locked.' He looked Melanie straight in the eye. 'But I have a key.'

Melanie became embarrassed, but Scarlett was thinking: 'So it's true! He lives with that awful Watling woman.'

Rhett looked at Archie as Melanie turned back to Ashley. 'Take my horse to the old Sullivan place,' Rhett said to him. 'The white Klan clothes are pushed down under the floor. Burn them. And there are two – men in the back room. Put them over the horse and take them to the field behind Belle's house. Put guns in their hands. Shoot both guns at once – it's got to look like an ordinary shooting. Do you understand?'

Archie nodded, then said, 'Him?'

'Yes,' Rhett answered quietly.

And Archie went out of the back door.

Something about those two last words made Scarlett say, 'Where's Frank?'

Rhett took her arm and led her into the next room. Only when they were alone did he say, 'Archie's carrying him to the field behind Belle's. He's dead. Shot through the head.'

Chapter 9 Atlanta's Most Unpopular Couple

Scarlett sat in her bedroom drinking brandy and feeling sorry for things that she had done. She wondered if everyone in the town

thought that she had killed Frank. People at the funeral that day had been cool with her, but she didn't care.

Somebody knocked on the door downstairs and she heard Aunt Pitty open it. Then came the voice of Rhett Butler, and she knew that he was the one person she *did* want to see tonight.

'I'm going away tomorrow and will be away some time,' he was saying to Aunt Pitty. 'It's very important that I see her.'

'Oh, but I don't think – not today –' Aunt Pitty began.

Scarlett ran to the top of the stairs. 'I'll be down in a moment, Rhett!' she called, and saw Aunt Pitty's surprised and shocked face looking up at her.

They talked together in the library, behind closed doors. Scarlett did not want Aunt Pitty to know about her drinking, but it was almost the first thing Rhett noticed.

'Brandy,' he said. 'And you've been drinking a lot of it.'

'What if I have?' she said.

'It's a bad thing to drink alone, Scarlett,' said Rhett. 'What's the matter? It's more than just old Frank dying.'

'Oh, Rhett, I was wrong to marry Frank! He loved Suellen but I lied and told him she was going to marry Tony Fontaine.'

'So that's how it happened,' said Rhett. 'I often wondered. But he didn't *have* to marry you. Are you sorry you still own Tara, and that you aren't poor and hungry?'

'No!'

'No, of course you aren't,' said Rhett. 'It's the brandy that's making you feel sorry for yourself.'

'How dare you –!' began Scarlett.

'I'm going to England, and I may be away for months.' He smiled. 'I still want you more than any other woman, Scarlett, and now Frank is gone I thought you ought to know it.'

'Oh!' she cried. 'You are the rudest –! And on the day of Frank's funeral! Will you please leave this house –'

'Listen,' he said calmly. 'I'm asking you to marry me.'

'Is this one of your bad jokes?' she said angrily.

'It's no joke,' he said. 'I'm afraid that if I wait until I come back, you'll be married to some other man who has a little money. I can't go on waiting to catch you between husbands, Scarlett.'

'But – but Rhett, I don't love you,' she said.

'That wasn't important when you married before,' he said. 'What's *really* stopping you? Tell me.'

Suddenly she thought of Ashley.

'It's because of him that I don't want to marry again,' she thought. *'I belong to Ashley – to Ashley and Tara – for ever.'*

She did not know that her thoughts brought a look of softness to her face which Rhett immediately understood.

He became angry. 'Scarlett O'Hara, you're a fool!'

And then his arms were round her and he was kissing her, softly at first, and then violently, so that before she knew it she was kissing him back.

'Stop – please – I'm faint,' she whispered after a moment.

'None of the fools you've known have kissed you like this, have they?' he said. 'Charles or Frank or your stupid Ashley? What did they know about you? I know you.' His mouth was on hers again. Then he said, 'Say yes! Say yes, or –'

She whispered 'Yes' and felt a sudden calm come over her.

He looked down at her. 'You mean it?'

'Yes,' she said again.

'Why?' he said, suddenly uncertain. 'Is it my money?'

'Rhett! What a question!'

'Don't try to sweet-talk me. I'm not Charles or Frank,' he said. 'Is it my money?'

'Well – money does help, you know,' she said. 'And I am fond of you, Rhett. But if I said I loved you I would be lying, and you would know it.'

He looked at her and laughed, but it was not a pleasant laugh.

‘All right,’ he said. ‘What shall I bring you back from England? A ring? What kind do you want?’

‘Oh, a diamond ring, Rhett!’ said Scarlett. ‘And buy a great big one!’



The ring Rhett brought back from England was so large that it embarrassed Scarlett to wear it. But only when it was on her finger did she tell everyone that she was going to marry him.

They became Atlanta’s most unpopular couple, except for Yankees and Carpetbaggers. Everyone blamed Scarlett for Frank’s death, and for putting the lives of other men in danger. And they hated Rhett for using Belle Watling, a prostitute, to save their men from the Yankee prisons. They were sure he did it on purpose, just to embarrass them.

Only Melanie was loyal to Scarlett, and reminded people how Scarlett had helped her and her family when they had no home.

‘Those of you who do not visit Scarlett,’ she told the ladies of Atlanta, ‘need never, never visit me!’

Rhett took Scarlett to New Orleans after they were married, and he kept her too busy to think of Ashley very often. But sometimes, when she lay in Rhett’s arms with the moonlight shining across the bed, she thought how perfect life could be if only it was Ashley’s arms that held her so closely.

They stayed at the National Hotel in Atlanta while a house was built for them. There were many ‘new people’ (as old Atlantians called them) staying there, also waiting for their homes to be completed, and Scarlett found them pleasant and exciting to be with. They were rich and well-dressed, and never talked about the war or ‘hard-times’.

Her house was the biggest and most fashionable in Atlanta. Rhett gave her anything she wanted and listened to her talk about the shop, her sawmills, the convicts and the cost of feeding

them, and gave her good, sensible advice. He never talked about having children, as Charles and Frank had done.

But then Scarlett learned that she was going to have another baby, and told the news to Rhett.

‘I won’t have it!’ she screamed. ‘A woman doesn’t have to have children if she doesn’t want them! There are things –’

‘Scarlett, you haven’t done anything!’ he shouted. ‘I don’t care if you have one child or twenty, but I do care if you die.’ He held her close. ‘I don’t want children any more than you do, but I don’t want to hear any more foolish talk.’



Scarlett’s baby was named Eugenie Victoria, but Melanie called her Bonnie, and she was always called this afterwards.



When Scarlett was able to visit the sawmills again, she found that Ashley’s was not doing well.

‘Ashley, you’re too soft-hearted,’ she said. ‘You ought to get more work out of the convicts. They only have to tell you they’re sick and they stay away from work! That’s no way to make money. A couple of knocks with a stick will –’

‘Scarlett! Stop!’ cried Ashley. ‘Don’t you realize they are men – some of them sick and weak and – oh, my dear, when I see the way he’s hardened you, you who were always so sweet –’

‘Who has hardened me?’

‘Rhett Butler. Everything he touches he poisons. I know he saved my life, and I’m grateful, but I wish it had been any man but him. And when I think of him touching you, I –’

‘He’s going to kiss me!’ thought Scarlett, happily. But he stepped back, as if realizing he had said too much.

‘I’m very sorry, Scarlett,’ he said. ‘I mustn’t say these things. I have no excuse except – except – no excuse at all.’

All the way home in the carriage Scarlett thought of his words. No excuse at all – except that he loved her and did not want to think of her lying in Rhett's arms! Well, in future she would live without those arms! The idea pleased her. And it would mean that she would not have to have any more children.

But how could she let Ashley know what she'd done for him?

'I wish I could talk to Ashley as easily as I can talk to Rhett,' she thought. 'But I'll let him know somehow. Of course, it will be difficult telling Rhett I want separate bedrooms.'

But it was not as difficult as she thought.

He gave her a long, cool look when she told him. 'Scarlett,' he said, 'if you and your bed still held any charms for me, locked doors would not keep me away. But fortunately the world is full of beds – and most of the beds are full of women.'

'You mean you'll –?'

'Of course,' he said. 'It's surprising I haven't taken advantage of one of them before.'

'I shall lock my door every night!' said Scarlett.

'Why? If I wanted you, no lock could keep me out.'

Chapter 10 A Surprise Party

It was Ashley's birthday and Melanie was giving him a surprise party. Everyone knew except Ashley. That morning, Scarlett, Melanie, India and Aunt Pitty were getting things ready.

'If you're going to the sawmill,' Melanie asked Scarlett, 'can you keep Ashley busy until five o'clock? If he comes home earlier, he'll catch us finishing cakes or something.'

Scarlett was always happy to be alone with Ashley. 'Yes,' she said. But she saw India look quickly at her. 'She always looks strangely at me if I speak of Ashley,' thought Scarlett.

'Keep him there for as long as you can after five o'clock,' said

Melanie, 'then India will drive down in the carriage and pick him up. And, Scarlett, come early tonight.'

As Scarlett rode home, she thought: 'She wants me to come early, but she doesn't want me to welcome guests with her and India and Aunt Pitty. And I wanted to stand next to Ashley and welcome guests with him. Why wasn't I asked?'

Rhett knew the answer, and told her. 'A Yankee-lover welcoming people, when all those important Confederate-lovers are going to be there? Don't be silly, my dear. It's only because of loyal Melanie that you're invited at all.'

Scarlett dressed with more care than usual for her trip to the shop and the sawmill that afternoon, and Ashley was surprised to see her at the office. There was almost a smile on his face when he welcomed her.

'Scarlett!' he said. 'Why aren't you at my house helping Melanie to get ready for the surprise party?'

'Ashley!' cried Scarlett. 'You aren't supposed to know!'

'Oh, I'll be the most surprised man in Atlanta,' said Ashley, with laughter in his eyes.

'Who told you?' she asked.

'Almost every man who is invited, and who has ever had a surprise party given to him,' said Ashley, and Scarlett had to smile. He took her hands, spreading them wide so that he could look at her dress. 'Scarlett, you get prettier all the time.'

But as he touched her, she realized for the first time ever that it did not excite her. 'How strange!' she thought.

'I'll always remember you as you were on that day at Twelve Oaks,' he said. 'You were wearing a white dress covered with little green flowers, sitting under a tree with a dozen boys round you.' He dropped her hands, and the light went out of his eyes. 'We've come a long way since then, Scarlett. You've come straight and quick, but I've come slowly. And without you, and all you've done for me, I'd be nothing now.'

'Oh, Ashley, you sound so sad!' cried Scarlett.

'No, I'm not sad any more,' he said. 'I –'

He stopped, but suddenly Scarlett knew what he was thinking. 'You're not sad,' she thought. 'You've just lost hope.'

'Ashley, what do you want?' she asked him.

'I don't know,' he said. 'Perhaps I want the old days back again. The memory of them never seems to go away.'

His voice and the way he spoke brought those memories back to her, and it hurt to think of them. 'I like these days better,' she said, but did not look at him when she spoke.

He laughed softly, put his hand under her chin and lifted her face up to his. 'Oh, Scarlett, what a poor liar you are!'

He made her remember things she wanted to forget – the beauty, the charm of the old days. 'I mustn't let him make me look back,' she thought. 'It hurts too much. That's what's wrong with Ashley. He's afraid of the future, so he looks back. Oh, Ashley, my love, you mustn't look back!'

She remembered the Scarlett O'Hara who loved pretty dresses and charming young men. Without warning, tears came into her eyes and began to fall down her cheeks, and she looked up at Ashley like a small, lost child. He took her gently in his arms, pressed her head against his shoulder, and put his cheek next to hers. Like a loved friend but not a lover.

She heard the sound of someone outside, and suddenly he pushed himself away from her. She looked up at him, but he was not looking at her. He was looking over her shoulder.

She turned. And there stood India – her face white and her eyes filled with anger. Archie was with her, and with them stood Mrs Elsing.



Scarlett never remembered how she got out of the office. Shame and fear hurried her home to her empty house. It was silent in

the April sunshine. The negroes were at a funeral and the children were playing in Melanie's garden.

Melanie!

Melanie would hear of this. Scarlett went cold at the thought as she went up to her room. The news would be all over town by supper-time, and people would believe that she and Ashley were lovers. And it had been so innocent, so sweet!

Scarlett burst into tears when she thought of the hurt in Melanie's eyes when India told her. 'What will Melanie do?' she thought. 'Will she leave Ashley? And what will Rhett do?'

Scarlett pulled off her clothes and lay down on the bed.

'I won't think of it now, I'll think of it later.'

She heard the negroes come back later. Mammy knocked on her door but Scarlett sent her away, saying that she didn't want any supper. Then, after a long time, Rhett knocked on her door and she said, 'Come in.'

'Are you ready for the party?' he said. It was dark and she could not see his face.

'I - I have a bad head,' she said. 'I don't think I'll go.'

There was a long pause before he replied. 'What a cowardly little cat you are!' And his voice was hard and cruel.

He knew! She lay shaking, unable to speak.

He lit the candle next to her bed and looked down at her, and she saw that he was dressed in evening clothes.

'Get up,' he said. 'We're going to the party.'

'Oh, Rhett, I can't - I won't go until -'

'If you don't show your face tonight, you'll never be able to show it in this town as long as you live,' he told her. 'And I won't have a coward for a wife. Get your clothes on!'



Lights were on in every room of Melanie's house and Scarlett could hear the music far up the street. Rhett held her arm roughly and walked with her to the door.

‘I’ll face them!’ she thought. ‘I don’t care what they say, or what they think. Only Melanie – only Melanie!’

The music stopped as they entered, and the room slowly became silent. Scarlett lifted her chin and made herself smile. Then someone came hurrying through the crowd.

Melanie went immediately to Scarlett’s side and put an arm round her waist. ‘What a lovely dress, my dear,’ she said in her small, clear voice. ‘India couldn’t come tonight. Will you welcome our guests with me?’

Chapter 11 Wonderful – and Wild

Rhett sent Scarlett home from the party alone, and she went to her room. Oh, how awful it had been! She could not forget Ashley’s face, full of shame. ‘Will he hate me now?’ she thought. ‘Now that Melanie’s love has saved us both? Melanie, who will always believe we were innocent.’

Scarlett got herself ready for bed, then went downstairs to get herself a drink. There was a light in the dining-room.

‘Rhett must have come in quietly and not gone to Belle Watling’s,’ she thought. ‘I’ll go without my brandy, then I won’t have to see him. And I’ll lock the door of my room.’

But the dining-room door opened and Rhett was standing there with a candle. ‘Do come and have your drink, Mrs Butler,’ he said. And she saw that he was very drunk.

‘I don’t want a drink. I heard a noise –’

‘You heard nothing,’ he said. ‘Come here!’

Scarlett went down to the dining-room.

‘Sit down,’ he told her. Always before, life had seemed to be a joke to him, but now Scarlett saw that something mattered to him, and it mattered very much. He poured out a glass of brandy and put it in her hand. ‘You’re wondering if Miss Melanie knows



But the dining-room door opened and Rhett was standing there with a candle.

all about you and Ashley. Well, someone told her, but she didn't believe it. I don't know what lie Ashley Wilkes told her – but any lie would do, for she loves him and she loves you.'

'If you weren't so drunk, I –'

'You locked me out of your bedroom because you didn't want me, or my children!' he shouted. 'And all the time you were wanting Ashley Wilkes! Oh, how that hurt!'

She drank her brandy and stood up. 'You don't understand Ashley or me, and you're jealous of something you can't understand.' She turned and walked towards the door but he came across the room and held her against the wall.

'I'm sorry for you, my pretty little fool,' he told her. 'If I was dead, and Miss Melanie was dead and you had Ashley, do you think you could be happy with him? Hell, no! You would never know what he was thinking about. You would never understand his books or his music. But we, my dear wife, understand each other. I loved you, and I *know* you – and I want you!' Suddenly, he lifted her off her feet and into his arms, and began to climb the stairs. 'And this is one night you will not turn me out of your room!'

She screamed, but he kissed her so violently that everything was pushed from her mind. And then her arms were round his neck and her lips were shaking under his.



When Scarlett woke up the next morning, he was gone. But she remembered the wild and wonderful night.

Rhett did not appear for dinner, or for supper. And when a second day passed without news of him, she was disappointed and afraid. Had he been in an accident? After the second night, she decided to go to the police. But as she finished her breakfast in her room, she heard his feet on the stairs.

'Oh, hello,' he said, coming in.

'Where – where have you been?' she asked.

‘Don’t you know? I thought the whole town knew, after the police called at Belle’s the night before last –’

‘Belle’s! You’ve been with that woman –?’

‘Of course,’ he said. ‘I hope you didn’t worry about me.’

‘You went to her from me, after – after –’

‘Oh that,’ he said, carelessly. ‘I’m sorry for the way I behaved at our last meeting, Scarlett. I was very drunk.’

She wanted to cry. ‘He just used me when he was drunk, like he does the women in Belle’s house!’ she thought.

‘Get out!’ she told him.

‘Don’t worry, I’m going,’ he said. ‘I just came to say that I’m going to Charleston and New Orleans and – oh, a very long trip. I’m leaving today and I’m taking Bonnie with me. Get Prissy to pack her little things. I’ll take Prissy, too.’

‘You’ll never take my child out of this house,’ she said.

‘My child, too, Mrs Butler. Have her packed and ready in an hour, or what happened the other night will be nothing compared to what *will* happen,’ he said, his voice cold.

He was gone for three months and, during that time, Scarlett learned that she was going to have another baby – the result of that wild night with Rhett which still filled her with shame! But for the first time, she was glad, because now she had the time and the money for a child.

Rhett returned without warning. One day Scarlett heard Bonnie cry ‘Mother!’ and hurried from her room to the top of the stairs, where Bonnie threw herself into Scarlett’s arms.

Rhett was at the bottom. He looked up at her with his dark eyes, and suddenly she was just glad that he was home.

‘Where’s Mammy?’ asked Bonnie, and Scarlett let her go.

She watched Rhett come up the stairs and wondered if he would kiss her, but he did not.

‘You don’t look well, Mrs Butler,’ he said in a careless voice. ‘Does this mean that you’ve missed me?’

It made her angry, this careless way of his. She hadn't wanted to tell him like this, but now the words rushed to her lips. 'It's because I'm going to have a baby!' she said.

He looked surprised, and moved towards her, as if he was going to put a hand on her arm. Scarlett turned away from him with hate in her eyes – and his face hardened.

'And who's the happy father?' he said coolly. 'Ashley?'

Her voice shook with anger. 'You know it's yours! But I don't want it any more than you do! No woman would want the baby of a man like *you*! I wish it was anybody's but yours!'

She stepped forward to tear his face with her finger-nails. But he moved to one side quickly. Scarlett missed him and fell – over and over – to the bottom of the stairs.

Chapter 12 A Secret Plan

Scarlett lost the baby and almost died. Every time Melanie came out of Scarlett's room, she saw Rhett sitting on his bed, his door wide open, watching his wife's room. And when at last she was able to tell him that Scarlett was better, he put his head in his hands and began to cry.

Melanie had never seen a man cry before and it frightened her, but she closed the door softly and went to him. And when she put her hand on his shoulder, his arms went round her, and before she knew it, she was sitting on the bed and he was sitting on the floor with his head on her knees.

He began to talk wildly, telling Melanie things that made her cheeks go hot with embarrassment. 'Captain Butler, you must not tell me these things!' she said.

'You don't understand,' he cried. 'She didn't want a baby. We hadn't slept together –'

‘Captain Butler! You mustn’t say —!’

‘I was drunk, and I wanted to hurt her —’

Melanie looked at him. ‘Is it possible that he heard and believed the terrible lie about Ashley and Scarlett, and was jealous?’ she thought, suddenly. ‘No, he’s too sensible. He’s drunk, and his mind is running wild.’

‘You can’t understand!’ he said. ‘You’re too good to understand. I was crazy with jealousy! She doesn’t love me, she never has. She loves —’ He stopped as his drunken eyes met hers and he realized who he was talking to. ‘If I told you, you wouldn’t believe me, would you?’

‘No,’ said Melanie, softly. She began gently to smooth his hair. ‘Don’t cry, Captain Butler. She’s going to get well.’

A month later, Rhett put Scarlett on the train to Jonesboro with Wade, Ella and Prissy. Then he rode to Melanie’s house where she was sitting outside.

‘Scarlett has gone to Tara?’ she said.

‘Yes,’ he said, smiling. ‘Tara will do her more good than all of Dr Meade’s medicines. But I’m worried about her health because she tries to do too much.’

‘Yes, she does,’ agreed Melanie.

‘That’s why I want Mr Wilkes to buy her half in the sawmills,’ said Rhett. ‘I know she’ll sell to him.’

‘Oh!’ said Melanie. ‘That would be nice, but —’

‘Miss Melanie, I want to lend you the money,’ said Rhett.

‘That’s kind of you, but we may never be able to pay —’

‘I don’t want you to pay it back,’ he said. ‘I’ll just be glad to know that Scarlett isn’t making herself ill. The shop will be enough to keep her busy and happy. Do you understand?’

‘Well — yes, but —’ said Melanie, uncertainly.

‘You want to buy your son a horse, don’t you? And you want him to go to a good university, and to Europe?’ he said.

‘Oh, of course,’ cried Melanie. ‘But everyone is so poor.’

‘Mr Wilkes could make a lot of money out of the sawmills one day,’ said Rhett. ‘Will you do it, to help Scarlett?’

‘You know I’ll do anything in the world for her,’ said Melanie. ‘She’s done so much for me. But my husband –’

‘If I send the money to Mr Wilkes, without telling him who has sent it, will you see that he uses it to buy the sawmills?’ said Rhett. ‘It must be our secret.’

Melanie was silent for a moment. Then she said, ‘Yes. And Scarlett’s lucky to have a husband who is so nice to her!’



Scarlett came back from Tara looking much healthier and full of news. She asked, ‘Has anything happened here?’

‘Ashley wanted to know if I thought you’d sell him your sawmill, and the half-part you have in his,’ said Rhett.

Scarlett looked surprised. ‘Where did Ashley get the money?’

‘It seems that it came from someone he nursed with typhoid at Rock Island,’ said Rhett. ‘It came with an unsigned letter from Washington. Of course, I told him you wouldn’t sell. I told him that you enjoyed telling other people what to do.’

‘Let me look after my own business!’ she said, angrily. ‘And – and I *will* sell them to him!’

Until that moment, Scarlett had never intended to sell her sawmills, but Rhett made her angry by speaking about her that way, and to Ashley of all people! So that same night, she sold the sawmills. And then wished that she hadn’t.

Chapter 13 Two Deaths

When Bonnie was four, Rhett bought her a horse and taught her to ride. The two of them were often seen riding together. Then

Rhett decided that the time had come for her to learn to jump, and he built a low gate in the back garden.

Bonnie jumped the low gate easily and Scarlett could not help laughing at Rhett, who looked so proud. After the first week of jumping, Bonnie wanted the gate to be higher.

‘The horse’s legs aren’t long enough,’ Rhett told her.

‘They are! They are!’ said Bonnie. ‘I jumped Aunt Melanie’s fence, and that’s *very* high!’

‘Oh, all right!’ said Rhett, laughing. ‘But if you fall off, don’t blame me.’

He made the gate higher, and Bonnie called to her mother: ‘Mother! Watch me jump this one!’

‘I’m watching, dear,’ said Scarlett, smiling.

Watch me jump this one!

There was something about those words... what was it? Scarlett looked at her small daughter as Bonnie rushed towards the gate, her blue eyes full of excitement. ‘They’re like Pa’s eyes,’ thought Scarlett.

And then she remembered! She heard her father’s voice: ‘Ellen! Watch me jump this one!’

‘No!’ cried Scarlett. ‘No! Oh, Bonnie, stop!’

But there was the terrible sound of breaking wood, and a cry from Rhett. Then Scarlett saw the horse running off without its rider.



Bonnie died from a broken neck. Three nights later, Mammy went to Melanie’s house.

‘Miss Melanie,’ said Mammy. ‘Mr Rhett won’t let us take that poor child, an’ there’s the funeral tomorrow.’

‘Won’t let you take her?’ said Melanie.

‘He put her in his room and told me to bring lots of lights, and not to close the curtains. “Don’t you know that Miss Bonnie is

afraid of the dark?" he says. So I get him a dozen candles, an' he says "get out!", an' he locks the door. An' that's the way it's been for two days. He won't open it for Miss Scarlett or anybody, an' he won't say nothin' about the funeral. You've got to help us, he'll listen to you.'

The thought of arguing with Captain Butler while he was half-crazy with sadness made Melanie go cold, but she followed Mammy to Scarlett's house and went quickly up the stairs.

'Please let me come in, Captain Butler,' she said, softly. 'It's Mrs Wilkes. I want to see Bonnie.'

The door opened and Mammy smelled brandy on Rhett's breath as he took Melanie's arm and pulled her inside. Then she sat outside, crying and praying.

After a long, long time, the door opened and Melanie's head appeared. She looked tired, and there were tears in her eyes. 'Go and tell Miss Scarlett that Captain Butler is willing to have the funeral tomorrow morning,' she said.

After Bonnie died, Rhett did not often come home. But when he did, he was usually drunk. Scarlett could not be angry with him, or blame him for Bonnie's death any more. Nothing seemed to matter to her now. She was lonely and unhappy and afraid. There was no one to talk to. Even Mammy had gone back to Tara.

'He loved that child,' Dr Meade told her, 'and he drinks to forget her. Have another baby as quickly as you can.'

But Rhett did not seem to want any more children. He never came to her bedroom, even though she left the door open now.



Scarlett was away from Atlanta for a few days when Rhett's message came: '*Mrs Wilkes is ill. Come home immediately.*'

Rhett was waiting for her at the station with the carriage.

'She's dying, and she wants to see you,' he said.

'Not Melanie! Oh, not Melanie! What happened?'

'She lost the baby she was going to have,' said Rhett.

'I didn't know she was going to have a baby!'

'She didn't tell anyone,' he said.

'Dr Meade said it would kill her to have another baby.'

'It has killed her,' said Rhett.

'But, Rhett, she can't be dying! I didn't when I —'

'She isn't as strong as you,' he said.

The carriage stopped outside Melanie's house.

'Are you coming in?' said Scarlett.

'No,' he said.

She ran inside. Ashley, Aunt Pitty and India were there.

'She asked for you,' Ashley told her.

The door of Melanie's room opened quietly and Dr Meade came out. 'Come with me,' he said to Scarlett. He whispered: 'Miss Melanie is going to die peacefully, and you aren't going to tell her anything about Ashley, do you understand?'

She went into the room where Melanie lay in bed with her eyes closed. Her face was a deathly yellow. Scarlett stared at her — and knew then that Melanie was dying. She had hoped Dr Meade was wrong, but now she knew. '*I need her!*' she thought, and it was true. Suddenly, Scarlett realized how much she needed Melanie — had *always* needed her. Loyal Melanie — who was always there, loving her, fighting for her.

She held Melanie's hand. 'It's me, Melanie,' she said.

Melanie's eyes opened for a second, then they closed again. After a pause, she said 'Promise me?'

'Oh, anything!' cried Scarlett.

'My son — Beau — look after him. I give him to you.'

'I promise,' said Scarlett.

There was a pause before Melanie's whisper came again. 'Ashley,' she said. 'Ashley and you —'

Scarlett went cold. Melanie had known all the time! She dropped her head on to the bed and began to cry.

‘Ashley,’ Melanie said again, and her fingers reached out to touch Scarlett’s head. Scarlett looked up into Melanie’s eyes – and saw no blame, only the fight for breath to speak.

‘Thank God!’ she thought. ‘She doesn’t know!’

‘What about Ashley, Melanie?’ said Scarlett.

‘You’ll – look after him,’ whispered Melanie.

‘Oh, yes,’ said Scarlett. ‘I’ll look after him.’

‘But – don’t ever let him know.’

‘No,’ said Scarlett. ‘I’ll just – suggest things to him.’

Melanie was able to smile.

And so the care of Ashley Wilkes was passed from one woman to another without him ever knowing. But now the fight went out of Melanie’s tired face, as if with Scarlett’s promise, peace had come to her.

‘You’re so clever – so brave – always been good to me –’

At these words, it was Scarlett’s turn to fight – against the tears that were coming into her eyes. She could not speak.

Dr Meade opened the door, and Scarlett put Melanie’s hand against her cheek. ‘Good night,’ she said.

‘Captain Butler –’ came the whisper, very softly now. ‘Be kind to him. He – loves you so much.’

Then India and Aunt Pitty followed the doctor into the room as Scarlett went outside. ‘She was the only woman except Mother who ever loved me,’ thought Scarlett.



She found Ashley in his room. He looked at her – and she saw fear and confusion in his eyes.

‘What will I do?’ he said. ‘I can’t live without her!’

She stared at him, feeling that she understood him for the first time in her life. ‘You – really love her, don’t you? Oh, you’ve

been a fool, Ashley! Why didn't you see that you only wanted me like – like Rhett wants that Watling woman?' And then she saw the hurt look in his eyes and remembered her promise to Melanie to look after him. 'Forgive me,' she said.

He came to her quickly and his arms went round her.

'Don't cry, my dear,' she said. 'You must be brave.'

A door opened and someone called: 'Ashley! Quick!'

'Hurry!' said Scarlett, and pushed him out of the room.

'I never saw what he *really* was,' she thought. 'Only what I *wanted* him to be. What a fool I've been! Now Melanie is dead, and I've got him to look after, like a child. Oh, if I hadn't promised her, I wouldn't care if I never saw him again!'

Chapter 14 Tomorrow

Home! That was where she wanted to be. Home with Rhett! Rhett, with his strong arms to hold her. Rhett, who loved her! Melanie had known this, and with her last breath had said: 'Be kind to him.'

'I love him,' Scarlett thought. 'I don't know how long I've loved him, but it's true. Rhett's loved me all the time, and I've been so nasty to him. But I'll tell him I've been a fool and he'll understand, he always has.'

She found him in the dining-room at home.

'Is Miss Melanie dead?' he asked.

Scarlett nodded, suddenly afraid that it may be too late.

'She was the only completely kind person I ever knew,' he said. 'A very great lady.' Then his voice changed. 'So that makes it nice for you, doesn't it?'

'Oh, how can you say that!' cried Scarlett, tears coming into her eyes. 'You know how I loved her! And her last words were about you.'



*He came to her quickly and his arms went round her.
'Don't cry, my dear,' she said. 'You must be brave.'*

He looked at her. 'What did she say?'

'Oh, not now, Rhett.'

'Tell me,' he said. His voice was cool but the hand he put on her wrist hurt.

'She said – "Be kind to Captain Butler, he loves you so much,"' Scarlett told him.

He stared at her and dropped her wrist. Suddenly he walked across to the window. 'Is that all she said?'

'She said – Ashley – she asked me to look after Ashley.'

He was silent for a moment and then he laughed softly. 'How nice for you,' he said. 'Miss Melanie is dead and you can leave me and go to Ashley, and all your dreams can come true.'

'Leave you?' she cried. 'No! No!' She ran to him and held his arm. 'Oh, you're wrong! I don't want to leave you, I –' She stopped, unable to find the right words.

'You're tired,' he said. 'You'd better go to bed.'

'But I must tell you!' she cried.

'Scarlett,' he said heavily, 'I don't want to hear.'

'But you don't know what I am going to say!'

'My dear, it's written plainly on your face,' he said. 'Something made you realize that you don't love the unfortunate Mr Wilkes after all. And that same something made me seem more attractive suddenly.' He shook his head. 'But it's useless to talk about it.'

'But, Rhett!' she said. 'Oh, I love you so much! I was a fool not to know it! Rhett, you must believe me!'

'Oh, I believe you,' he said. 'And did you ever know that I loved you as much as a man can love a woman? But I couldn't let you know it. You're so cruel to those who love you, Scarlett. I knew you didn't love me when you married me, but I was a fool and thought I could make you care. I wanted to make you happy – the way I made Bonnie happy. But there was always Ashley. Every night I sat across the table from you, and knew that you were wishing Ashley was sitting in my place. But

then Bonnie came, and she was like you – brave and pretty and full of life – and I gave her the love that you didn't want. But when she died . . . she took everything.'

'Rhett, there can be other babies –'

'Thank you, no,' he said.

'But Rhett –'

'I'm going away,' he said. 'I'll come back often enough to stop people saying that your husband has left you, if that worries you, but I'm going away.'

'Let me come with you!'

'No,' he said.

'Where – where will you go?' she said.

'Perhaps to England – or Paris.'

'But, if you go – what will I do?' she cried.

He looked at her, and there was pity in his eyes. 'My dear,' he said, softly, 'I don't care what you do.'

She watched him go out of the room and knew that he was the last thing in her world that mattered. She had never understood either him or Ashley, the two men she had loved, and now she had lost them both.

'I won't think of it now,' she told herself. 'I'll go crazy if I think of it now.'

She tried to find some way of stopping the pain.

'I'll – I'll go home to Tara tomorrow!' she thought. 'Yes!'

Tara! She could see the white house, waiting to welcome her through the red autumn leaves. She could see the red earth of the fields and the dark beauty of the trees on the hills.

And Mammy would be there! Suddenly, she wanted Mammy the way she had wanted her when she was a little girl.

Scarlett lifted her chin. She could get Rhett back. There was no man she couldn't get if she really wanted him.

'I'll think of it tomorrow, at Tara,' she told herself. 'Because tomorrow is another day.'

