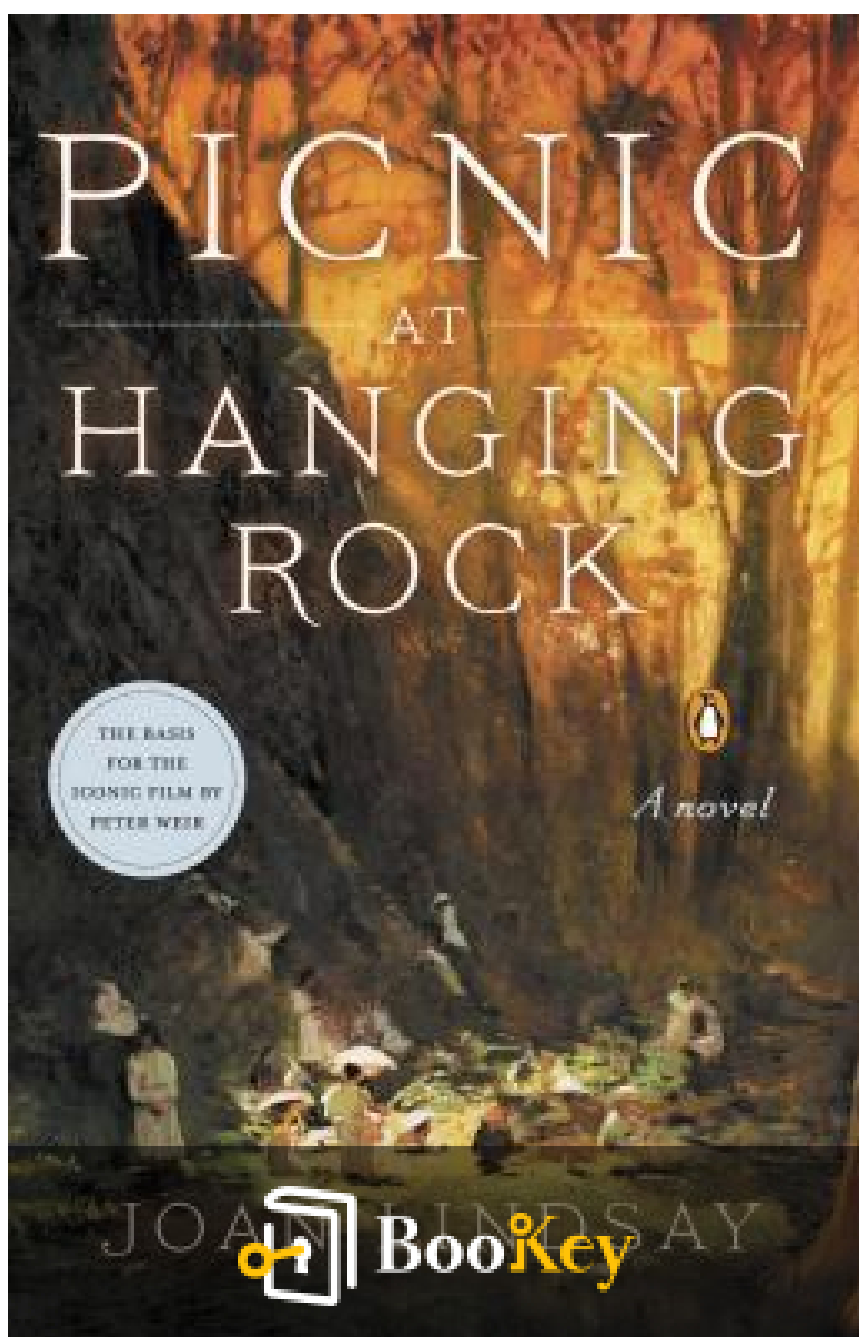


Picnic At Hanging Rock PDF (Limited Copy)

Joan Lindsay



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Picnic At Hanging Rock Summary

A Mysterious Disappearance Amidst Beauty and Intrigue.

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About the book

Set against the haunting beauty of the Australian landscape in the year 1900, "Picnic at Hanging Rock" weaves a mesmerizing tale of mystery and the unknown, exploring the delicate boundaries between reality and illusion. When a group of schoolgirls vanish during a seemingly innocent excursion, the ensuing investigation unravels the serene facade of their lives, exposing the repressed desires and societal expectations of the time. Joan Lindsay crafts a chilling narrative that invites readers to question the nature of truth and the unforeseen forces that govern our fates. As the sun-drenched day gives way to shadows, the unanswered questions linger, compelling you to delve deeper into this enigmatic tale of beauty, obsession, and the inexplicable.

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About the author

Joan Lindsay was an Australian author best known for her novel "Picnic at Hanging Rock," published in 1967, which has since become a classic of Australian literature and is celebrated for its haunting atmosphere and ambiguous narrative. Born on November 16, 1896, in Melbourne, Lindsay demonstrated a passion for writing from an early age, drawing on her rich imagination and deep appreciation for the natural beauty of Australia. Her literary career was notable not just for this iconic work but also for her ability to weave elements of mystery and historical context into her storytelling, capturing the complexities of human experience. Despite her success, Lindsay remained a somewhat enigmatic figure, preferring to keep her personal life private, which only adds to the intrigue surrounding her works. "Picnic at Hanging Rock" is often regarded as a reflection of her fascination with the supernatural and the unexplainable, echoing the cultural and social tensions of early 20th-century Australia.

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Chapter 1 Summary:

On a warm summer morning, the girls of Mrs. Appleyard's College for Young Ladies were buzzing with excitement for the annual picnic to Hanging Rock, coinciding with Saint Valentine's Day on February 14th. The air was filled with the hum of cicadas and buzzing bees as they donned their holiday muslins, eager for a day of adventure.

Mrs. Appleyard, the strict headmistress, was known for her disdain for Valentine's festivities, a sentiment shared by most of the girls, except for the romantic Miranda. The college itself, a grand but out-of-place mansion, had a storied history; built during Australia's gold rush with the intention of becoming an elite boarding school, it eventually became a profitable venture for Appleyard, despite her lack of experience in education.

The morning's festivities centered around romantic cards exchanged among the girls, with the vivacious and beautiful Miranda receiving a multitude. She and her close friends, Irma and Marion, characterized by their vibrant personalities, engaged in playful banter about their Valentine's. Their excitement was palpable, especially for visiting the natural beauty of Hanging Rock, which Miranda described as pristine and filled with forests and ferns.

As they prepared for their outing, the two governesses, Miss McCraw and

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the charming Mademoiselle de Poitiers, took on the roles of chaperones. Miss McCraw, a stern mathematician, found the day a distraction from her passion for calculus, while Mademoiselle expressed her own exuberance about escaping the confines of the college.

The students gathered on the front veranda, filled with anticipation as they awaited Mr. Hussey, the beloved driver of the covered drag that would take them to the picnic grounds. His jovial nature added to their excitement. As the vehicle set off, lively chatter filled the air, contrasting sharply with the usually imposed silence of the college. With the afternoon sun warming them, the girls embraced their freedom, relishing the adventure ahead.

After a stop to refresh the horses, Mr. Hussey led them closer to Hanging Rock. The massive rock formation, with its vertical walls and rich history, loomed ahead, capturing the girls' imaginations. The drag, drawn by five powerful horses, navigated the winding roads, the girls' conversations blending with laughter and shared joyous moments.

As they approached the picnic grounds, Miranda skillfully opened the gate, ushering in a new chapter of exploration. The vibrant colors of the setting and the anticipation of the day's activities set the stage for adventure, mischief, and the possibility of discoveries that would forever alter the course of their lives.

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Chapter 2 Summary:

In this chapter set at the serene and picturesque Picnic Grounds, the scenery is described vividly, featuring flat stone circles for fireplaces, a unique wooden privy reminiscent of Japanese architecture, and a sluggish creek that occasionally disappears into pools during the end of summer. The girls from Appleyard College have gathered for a picnic under the shade of eucalyptus trees, enjoying an array of delectable foods prepared by Cook, including chicken pie and a special heart-shaped iced cake.

The atmosphere, however, feels deceptively quiet to Edith, who expresses her disdain for rural life, claiming it can only appeal to those who are "dreadfully poor." Marion counters her claim by highlighting the privileges allowing them to indulge in such a feast. Despite Edith's remarks, the surrounding nature buzzes with hidden life—beetles skim across the water, ants labor tirelessly, and birds await the cooler evening.

Post-lunch, the girls become lethargic, each engaged in various leisurely activities; some draw, while others doze off. The governess, Miss McCraw, appears stern yet somewhat distracted, absorbed in her book, as the girls request to explore the nearby Hanging Rock. Mr. Hussey, their guide, is keen to keep things on schedule and assures he will be ready to depart by five o'clock, his old watch being temperamental on this day.



As the girls venture towards the creek to catch a closer view of the Rock, they converse about the minor obstacles ahead, revealing their spirited personalities. Edith, initially hesitant about getting her feet wet, joins the others as they cross the creek without incident. Nearby, a well-to-do picnic party, characterized by their attire and demeanor, is described, contrasting the girls in their lively exploration.

The chapter shifts to the perspective of two young men—Albert, a laid-back coachman, and Michael, a new arrival in Australia—who observe the girls from a distance. Their conversation touches upon class and upbringing as Albert shares anecdotes from his difficult childhood in an orphanage, providing emotional depth and a sense of camaraderie with Michael, who finds his perspective intriguing.

As the chapter culminates, Michael reflects on the freedom that this Australian landscape embodies—a stark contrast to his life in England, while he ponders the alluring presence of the girls, particularly the striking Miranda. Here, the narrative interlays themes of innocence, hidden complexities of character, and the untamed charm of nature, setting the stage for impending developments as the day progresses.

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Chapter 3 Summary:

In Chapter 3 of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, the four girls from Appleyard College—Miranda, Marion, Irma, and Edith—approach the imposing geological formation known as Hanging Rock. The majestic peaks evoke a powerful sense of awe and contemplation, encouraging each girl to reflect individually on the ancient beauty before them. As they traverse the rocky terrain, they are absorbed in their private thoughts, with Miranda exhibiting a near spiritual connection to the landscape, while Edith struggles with anxiety and discomfort.

Marion, the more pragmatic of the group, measures the geological age of the Rock, provoking an unsettling realization in Edith regarding time. Irma, ever empathetic, tries to comfort her, pointing out how their bodies are made up of countless cells, a thought that overwhelms Edith even further. The contrasts between the girls' personalities are clear; Irma's nurturing nature, Marion's analytical approach, and Edith's insecurities come to light as they discuss their experiences and observations.

As they ascend further, they reach a platform offering a view of the picnic grounds below, bustling with activity. The girls briefly fantasize about staying up all night to enjoy the beauty of the surroundings, engaging in light-hearted teasing about their fellow students, which includes the fussy Miss Lumley and the mysterious orphan, Sara, who seems to have an



unspoken bond with Miranda.

When Irma is inspired to dance, her carefree spirit contrasts sharply with Edith's discomfort and worry, symbolizing the different ways they cope with the moment. Miranda leads the group to a higher point, leaving Edith trailing behind, increasingly anxious as she feels disconnected from the others.

As the chapter closes, the girls succumb to fatigue, falling into a deep sleep near a monolith. However, their tranquility is shattered when they awake, with Edith feeling unwell and seeking to return home. In a climactic moment, she realizes that the others are drawn toward the heights, their movements alien and distant. Despite her frantic calls for Miranda, she's met with only silence, escalating her sense of fear and isolation. Her terrified cries echo into the stillness of the Rock, emphasizing the deepening unease as nature envelops the girls and foreshadowing the mystery that is about to unfold.

The chapter beautifully interweaves their differing personalities and emotions against the backdrop of the stunning yet foreboding Australian landscape, setting the stage for the pivotal events that are to come.

Aspect	Summary
Setting	Hanging Rock, an imposing geological formation in Australia

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Aspect	Summary
Main Characters	Miranda, Marion, Irma, and Edith from Appleyard College
Themes	Awe of nature, individual reflection, anxiety, friendship dynamics
Character Dynamics	Miranda feels a spiritual connection; Marion is pragmatic; Irma is nurturing; Edith struggles with anxiety
Symbolism	The Rock represents beauty and danger, highlighting the girls' inner turmoil
Climactic Moment	Edith feels unwell and realizes the others are drawn away, escalating her fear of isolation
Ending	Chapter ends with a sense of foreboding, as Edith's cries echo in silence, foreshadowing a mystery

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The power of nature inspires individual reflection and connection.

Critical Interpretation: As you stand before the awe-inspiring beauty of nature, like Hanging Rock does for the girls in their journey, allow yourself to be enveloped by the serenity and grandeur that surrounds you. Take a moment to reflect on your own thoughts and feelings, embracing the quietness that nature offers. In this space, you might experience a kind of spiritual awakening, where the weight of your anxieties slips away, encouraging you to explore your inner self. Just as Miranda feels a profound connection with her environment, you too can find clarity and inspiration in the world around you, fostering a deeper understanding of who you are and the journey you want to pursue.

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Chapter 4:

In this chapter, the events at Appleyard College unfold against the backdrop of an idyllic Picnic day that swiftly takes a darker turn. Mrs. Appleyard, the headmistress, awakens from a wistful dream of her late husband, reflecting on the prosperous state of the College and her ambitions for it. Determined to uphold her authoritative role, she interacts with Sara, a particularly defiant and troubled student. Sara struggles to memorize a poem by the esteemed poet Felicia Hemans, berating its lack of sense. Uninterested in Mrs. Appleyard's expectations and missing her brother, she lashes out in frustration.

While Mrs. Appleyard steadfastly returns to her duties, the narrative transitions to the vibrant garden outside and the pleasure of the picnic, where Mademoiselle (a French teacher) and the older students are likely enjoying tea under the trees at the scenic Hanging Rock. Sara grapples with her emotions alone in the schoolroom and succumbs to tears, expressing her resentment towards Mrs. Appleyard and yearning for the comfort of her brother Bertie.

As evening approaches, Mrs. Appleyard grows increasingly anxious waiting for the return of the students and Mr. Hussey, the coachman. A sense of unease hangs in the air when she discovers that the drag, which should have returned the girls by eight o'clock, is alarmingly late. After a tense



conversation with Tom, a young staff member, Mrs. Appleyard's concerns escalate into fears of an accident, highlighting her authoritative yet vulnerable nature.

The chapter culminates in the return of the drag, but joy quickly fades into

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Chapter 5 Summary:

Chapter 5 Summary

On the eerie morning of February 15th, a sense of dread permeated Appleyard College following the mysterious events of the prior day. Headmistress Mrs. Appleyard, driven by a keen need to maintain control and silence surrounding the disappearance of the schoolgirls Miranda and Irma Leopold, along with their governess Miss McCraw, took steps to conceal any gossip by canceling church transportation for the day. Rumors had already begun to circulate, even as the impact of the previous day's ordeal left many girls bedridden with shock.

While Mrs. Appleyard stewed in her study, local doctor McKenzie was summoned to examine some of the affected students, including Edith Horton—who, after being traumatized, displayed symptoms of hysteria. The doctor recommended rest and light nourishment, hoping time would resolve the distress. Meanwhile, Constable Bumpher arrived with an inept young officer in tow to gather details regarding the ominous absence of the girls. This prompted interviews with those last seen with the girls, including the two young men, Albert Crundall and Michael Fitzhubert, who could only provide vague recollections.

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As rumors swirled through the local community, the police organized search efforts for the missing individuals. Gardener Crundall and Fitzhubert both recounted their experiences on the day of the picnic, noting the girls' gracefulness as they crossed the creek towards Hanging Rock. Meanwhile, unease gripped the college as stomachs turned at meals unappetizing to the girls, some of whom gathered in hushed groups deliberating the incident.

By Tuesday, the search continued as various authorities attempted to piece together what had happened. Fitzhubert and Crundall's testimonies, along with Edith's fragmentary recollections from the day, began to take shape but revealed little. The community's obsession with the case deepened, leading to media coverage that sensationalized the disappearance.

As the weeks dragged on, the weaves of gossip and speculation spread, marking the tragedy as the "College Mystery" in public consciousness.

On Wednesday, in an effort to rekindle memory related to the incident, Bumpher returned to Appleyard College to take Edith and their French governess, Mademoiselle, back to the scene of the picnic. However, Edith's account remained erratic and confusing, with minimal clarity about her memories. While recounting a "nasty red cloud" spotted shortly after she saw Miss McCraw, Edith amusedly referred to her governess as uncharacteristically dressed, wearing "pantalons" instead of her usual skirt.

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Meanwhile, Mrs. Appleyard worked diligently to draft letters to inform the parents of the missing girls, grappling with the pressure and secrecy enveloping the school. These letters, carrying the weight of uncertainty and dread, signified the spiraling chaos and loss of control she faced. Each missive was crafted with careful consideration to balance sympathy and realism, as the clock ticked on a mystery that burdened not just the school but the entire community surrounding Hanging Rock.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Power of Control and the Weight of Secrets

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 5 of 'Picnic at Hanging Rock', Mrs. Appleyard's desperate attempts to maintain control in the face of chaos unveil a significant truth about life: the burden of secrecy and the illusion of control can lead to deeper crises. As you navigate your own challenges, consider the consequences of suppressing fears and truths. Embrace openness and communication instead; by sharing your struggles and uncertainties, you cultivate resilience and transparency. This chapter reminds us that while we might strive to govern our circumstances, true strength lies in acknowledging vulnerabilities and allowing vulnerability to become a source of connection and growth.

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Chapter 6 Summary:

On Thursday afternoon, February 19th, Michael Fitzhubert and Albert Crundall find themselves enjoying a reprieve from their respective duties at Colonel Fitzhubert's lake—Michael from his aunt's garden party, and Albert from his day as a coachman. The scene is idyllic, with a lake shimmering under the sun and a well-dressed party leisurely enjoying strawberries, champagne, and music. This backdrop sets the stage for their blossoming friendship, which defies their differing social standings—Michael comes from a wealthy family while Albert, lesser-educated and working class, brings his own brand of rough wisdom to their exchanges.

As they sit together, swapping lighthearted banter, Albert remarks on Michael's uptight attire, to which Mike responds by contemplating their differences in upbringing and lifestyle. Despite these contrasts, their bond grows through shared moments and mutual confidence, with Albert serving as a valuable source of insight into life in Australia.

Their conversation turns serious as Mike reveals his deep concern over the mysterious disappearance of three local girls at Hanging Rock. He is haunted by thoughts of their fate, contrasting sharply with Albert's more pragmatic approach to such tragedies, leading to a heated exchange about Mike's guilt and responsibility. This exchange culminates in Mike's determination to search for the girls himself, proposing an expedition to Albert, who initially



resists but ends up agreeing to accompany him. They plan to set out early the next morning.

As the garden party shifts into a quieter phase and the guests disperse, the tension surrounding the girls' disappearance looms in the background. The police search has yielded little hope, frustrating authorities who had pinned hopes on a bloodhound that ultimately failed to produce any leads. Colonel Fitzhubert expresses his own disillusionment over the case during dinner with Michael and expresses concern about the growing timeline since the girls vanished.

Amidst this foreboding, Michael engages in some light deception with his uncle about where he plans to ride, revealing his desire to explore the rock without disclosing his true intentions. As he prepares for bed, his excitement mingles with anxiety about the following day's adventure, showcasing both his resolve and the weight of the secrets he carries about his quest for the missing girls.

Overall, this chapter sets up an intricate mix of friendship dynamics, social class contrasts, looming dangers, and a quest driven by moral obligation, all of which align to deepen the narrative's exploration of mystery and personal conviction.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The power of friendship transcending social class and background

Critical Interpretation: Imagine finding a connection with someone who seems so different from you, yet shares a mutual understanding that builds a robust bond; this chapter illustrates how Michael and Albert, despite their contrasting social standings, forge a friendship that illustrates the beauty of human connection. Such friendships push us to broaden our perspectives, challenge ingrained stereotypes, and motivate us to step beyond the confines of our own societal expectations. This shared journey of understanding, marked by empathy and respect for individual experiences, can inspire you to pursue meaningful relationships with those outside your usual circles, reminding you that true companionship often thrives in the richness of diversity.

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Chapter 7 Summary:

In Chapter 7, we witness a serene morning break after a restless night on the Mount, with all its familiar sounds of nature—streaming water, chirping birds, and the gentle humor of a puppy. Mike, a young man staying with his well-off relatives in the Australian countryside, begins to feel optimistic again, momentarily setting aside the shadows cast by recent, unsettling events surrounding the mysterious Hanging Rock. The chapter paints a vivid picture of the rich landscape and the comfortable life of the Fitzhuberts—a privileged community amidst a backdrop of the ongoing Boer War and Victoria's Jubilee celebrations.

As Mike ventures into the stables, we meet Albert, the coachman, who embodies the lively, straightforward spirit of the Australian bush. Their conversation reflects their differing backgrounds: while Mike is of the upper-class Englishman, Albert's casual demeanor hints at a working-class bravado and an affectionate camaraderie towards Mike. Equipped with provisions for their day—tea and snacks—alongside some rudimentary medical supplies, they set off for the Hanging Rock, intent on exploring its mysteries together.

As the two men ride through breath-taking scenery, Mike absorbs the beauty of this Australian paradise: vibrant gardens, rich soils, and quaint villages juxtaposed with opulent lifestyles. They encounter signs of community life

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and light-hearted stories, including a reminiscence from Albert about his sister. However, the deeper, darker significance of the Hanging Rock looms large over their excursion as they approach their destination.

Once they reach the creek where a picnic was held and memories of the missing girls echo, Mike grapples with the weight of both nostalgia and dread. As their conversation shifts and Albert prepares to search an area of the Rock, Mike's spirit is consumed by reflections of the girls who vanished, particularly Miranda—a figure of both innocence and allure. This leads to a poignant moment as Mike grapples with his feelings about a potential grim search and what it might mean for both the girls and himself.

Alone in the wild, Mike feels the pulse of the forest and contemplates both his emotional turmoil and the vastness of nature. As the day unfolds, he becomes increasingly lost in thought while searching, ultimately arriving at a solitary decision to remain near the Hanging Rock overnight. After a tempest of feelings, including frustration with the authorities, he resolves to continue his search alone, defying his friend's practical advice to return home.

As darkness descends, Mike anticipates the dawn, fueled by a resolute determination. The chapter concludes with his restless night, where he fumbles through dreams connecting him to Miranda. His journey becomes not just a search for the missing girls but an exploration of his own yearning

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and struggle against the forces of nature and fate. The culmination of the day brings Mike to the precipice of both emotional and physical challenges as he embarks on an ascent towards the daunting Hanging Rock—a symbol of both beauty and the unknown—driven by love, loss, and a desperate need for answers.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The Importance of Facing the Unknown

Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 7, Mike's decision to remain near the Hanging Rock overnight is a powerful testament to embracing the unknown in our lives. It reminds you that confronting your fears and uncertainties, like Mike's search for the missing girls, can lead to profound personal growth. Just as Mike's journey intertwines with the haunting beauty of nature and the unsolved mysteries around him, your own quests—be they emotional, professional, or existential—can unveil deeper truths about yourself. By daring to explore the shadows, you might discover not only the answers you seek but also a greater understanding of your own resilience and purpose.

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Chapter 8:

In this chapter, Albert reflects on the troubling situation of his friend Michael, who has stayed overnight at the creek after a moment of impulsiveness. Albert frets about Michael's well-being, feeling a strange sense of concern for someone beyond his usual self-absorbed existence. As he arrives home to Lake View, he is met with a warm yet apprehensive Cook, who informs him of the Colonel's anxiety over Michael's absence. In a series of half-truths, Albert tries to explain Michael's whereabouts, asserting that his friend has chosen to stay the night at the Macedon Arms, a humble tavern, to avoid a long ride home in the dark.

That night, Albert experiences unsettling dreams of Michael calling for help, which leads him to awaken with renewed urgency. Once morning breaks, he decides to check on Michael, pinning a deceptive note to the stable door before setting off on his horse, Lancer. As he rides through the familiar terrain, Albert's mounting anxiety prompts him to search for signs of Michael, noticing a lack of hoofprints that would indicate Michael's return.

Arriving at the creek, Albert finds remnants of Michael's presence, including his belongings. Frustration builds as he imagines Michael getting lost or getting himself into trouble on the rock they had visited the day before. Following a trail of footprints, Albert soon discovers Michael lying unconscious, severely injured from a fall. Acting swiftly, he tends to



Michael's wounds, making the critical decision to seek professional help.

Albert rides to find Doctor McKenzie, who is tending to a shepherd's wife.

The two men quickly return to Michael, where the doctor assesses his injuries and determines that while Michael's condition is serious, he is alive.

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Chapter 9 Summary:

In Chapter 9, the aftermath of the rescue of Irma Leopold becomes the epicenter of stirring rumors and heightened tensions at Appleyard College. The school is engulfed in media frenzy as authorities search tirelessly for the remaining three missing girls: Miranda, Marion, and Greta McCraw, with the police deploying extra resources from Melbourne, including tracking dogs and officers. While Irma remains unconscious, the Hon. Michael Fitzhubert's incapacitation means no new leads emerge, causing speculation and horror to spread through the community.

Upon hearing the news of Irma's recovery, the headmistress delivers a formal announcement, which initially produces a joyful reaction among students, some of whom even engage in emotional reunions. However, this moment of relief soon gives way to an unsettling undercurrent in the days that follow, as whispers and worries regarding the unaccounted girls linger in the air. This atmosphere is compounded by the headmistress's own efforts to create a facade of normalcy, marked by superficial changes like repapering rooms and scheduling entertainments that fail to lift the spirits of the students who feel exposed as part of a scandal.

As Easter approaches, the seasonal shift signals not only the end of the term but also increasing tension within the College. The headmistress, Mrs. Appleyard, grapples with the grim reality of the situation, which worsens



with her visit to the police headquarters, where she learns that the missing girls might suffer a fate of exploitation in Sydney. This disturbs her deeply, forcing her to confront uncomfortable possibilities while she struggles to maintain the school's reputation amidst parental concerns and students' dwindling morale.

Simultaneously, trouble brews with the staff at the College. Mademoiselle de Poitiers abruptly resigns to marry, leaving a gap in the faculty, while conflicting accounts among the girls amplify the crisis of confidence that grips Appleyard. Sara Waybourne, a student who often reflects the complex emotional climate at the College, becomes embroiled in a disturbing conversation with Mrs. Appleyard regarding her unpaid fees and uncertain future at the institution. With strange happenings and mounting dissatisfaction, the ambiance grows even more foreboding.

Throughout the chapter, the interplay between expectation and dread is palpable. Mrs. Valange, the art mistress, makes an impact as she stands up against the headmistress, advocating for Sara's artistic potential while navigating the tense atmosphere. Unbeknownst to them, the increasing isolation and emotional strains—coupled with ghosts of the past—deeply affect the students, especially Sara, who holds memories of Miranda and longs for a different reality.

The chapter concludes with a sense of pervasive uncertainty, echoing

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through the empty halls of the College, where the characters—students and staff alike—each wrestle with their individual fears and the collective dread of what may lie ahead. As the night settles in, it emphasizes the psychological toll of the missing girls on everyone at Appleyard College, punctuated by Sara's memories of Miranda and the longing for connection amidst chaos.

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Chapter 10 Summary:

In this chapter, the aftermath of the disturbing events at Hanging Rock and their impact on the community are explored through the lives of various characters. The narrative opens by observing the ripple effect of the picnic's events since St. Valentine's Day, where multiple characters, including Mrs. Valange, Reg Lumley, and others, have experienced disruptions in their lives, mirroring the turmoil of lesser creatures in nature. Time has passed, and by March thirteenth, the intricate tapestry formed by the lives of these characters is still unfolding.

Two key individuals recovering from the incident are Irma Leopold and Mike Fitzhubert. Irma, under the care of Doctor McKenzie, has almost entirely lost her memories of the traumatic experience at the Rock, perhaps forever, due to brain damage. Constable Bumper attempts to interview her but gains little insight. Meanwhile, Mike's health improves as he resumes more normal activities, including breakfasting heartily and being able to appreciate the surroundings for the first time since his return.

New developments arise when Mrs. Cutler, who looks after Irma, receives a visit from a lady dressed beautifully in lilac and her handsome foreign companion. The presence of the charming lady and the gossip surrounding Irma's ordeal reignite the townsfolk's curiosity and speculation.

Conversations among friends and family bring forth both relief and sorrow

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as they share in the aftermath of the tragedy, while Irma and Mademoiselle reminisce tenderly about fractured relationships and lost times.

Amidst this backdrop, Mike feels the pressure to formally thank Irma for her gratitude regarding his rescue efforts. He agrees to visit her at the Lodge, fueled by both obligation and the stirring of feelings he may have for her. Irma's innocent charm and beauty disarm Mike during their tea in the garden. They are both aware of an unspoken connection that revolves around their shared trauma, leading to conversations laden with tension and unresolved emotions.

As summer progresses, the beautiful serene days are contrasted with the memories of the Rock. The relationship between Mike and Irma deepens, though the looming shadow of their past remains a constant presence. An excursion to the lake becomes a metaphor for their fleeting happiness and the inevitable passage of time, as they enjoy simple pleasures together. Mike reminisces fondly about their outings and shares light-hearted moments, despite the summer drawing to a close, symbolized through the changing landscape and Irma's growing unease about their summer days coming to an end.

Through this chapter, the interweaving lives of characters at Appleyard College and their community reflect the multifaceted nature of love, loss, and the haunting memories left in the wake of an unspeakable event. The

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narrative leaves a sense of unresolved tension as the effects of the picnic continue to extend and evolve, like darkening patterns in a tapestry yet to be fully revealed.

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Chapter 11 Summary:

Chapter 11 introduces readers to the domestic life of Colonel and Mrs.

Fitzhubert as they prepare for an impending move to Toorak, signaling a transition in their lifestyle. Mrs. Fitzhubert, overseeing the preparation of their garden, is engaged in lively dialogue with her husband at breakfast.

The Colonel is preoccupied, complaining about overcooked ham and wondering where his nephew Mike is. Their conversation quickly shifts to the arrival of Irma Leopold, their young visitor and an heiress, whom Mike has been romantically linked with.

Irma, mindful of punctuality, navigates the villa's atmospheric surroundings—its misty garden and Spanish-moss-draped drawing-room, adorned with elegant furnishings and fragrant roses. Despite the picturesque setting, Mike's absence casts a shadow over lunch, creating tension within the gathering. Irma, noted for her beauty and charm, catches Mrs. Fitzhubert's eye, who hopes for a match between her and Mike. The Colonel's nonchalant remarks about traditional meals and social etiquette further emphasize the underlying social dynamics at play.

As the luncheon progresses, the awkwardness of Mike's absence becomes palpable. Colonel Fitzhubert tries to entertain Irma and his wife with topics ranging from rose cultivation to gossip about the Royal Family. Yet, their conversation drifts into mundane territory, with Irma feeling increasingly

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detached and anxious for Mike to arrive.

After lunch, influenced by Mrs. Fitzhubert's hopes for a future connection between Irma and Mike, Irma departs into the garden, reveling in the refreshing atmosphere. However, her joy is soon shaken by a sudden storm, mirroring her emotional turbulence. The onslaught of rain and thunder signal an abrupt change in her circumstances, and as she returns to her room, she finds Mike's letter awaiting her.

The letter, all too formal and rushed, reveals that Mike will not be returning to say goodbye, having received news that requires him to leave early for home. Irma's initial excitement transforms into disappointment; he conveys his fondness for her yet expresses doubt about their future interactions. This abrupt closure forces Irma to confront the fragility of her feelings and the looming distance between them.

The chapter's concluding moments shift to the characters' inner thoughts and struggles, weaving in a deeper exploration of their emotions. As nighttime sets in, Mike reflects on his restless night, while Irma, caught between dreams and reality, contemplates the inevitable—her blossoming love for Mike juxtaposed with the uncertainty of their connection as they face a separating future. The evocation of the natural world surrounding Lake View serves to amplify the characters' introspective journeys, hinting at mysteries and challenges that may lie ahead, notably the foreboding presence of the

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Hanging Rock.

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Chapter 12:

In the chapter, an atmosphere of tension and transition envelops Appleyard College as the students and staff grapple with lingering trauma from a recent picnic incident at Hanging Rock, where several girls mysteriously went missing. The chapter begins on a quiet afternoon, the stillness punctuated by the smell of roast mutton and cabbage following the boarders' lunch.

Dora Lumley, a student, distracts herself with peppermints while Mademoiselle, the French governess, is preoccupied with a letter from Irma Leopold, a former student who has recovered from her ordeal at Hanging Rock and is preparing to reunite with her parents arriving from India. Irma expresses her bittersweet feelings about leaving the school and details of her impending journey to Melbourne, where she plans to meet her family. There is an underlying anxiety about the repercussions of the picnic incident, particularly as Irma's father has demanded further investigation, including the involvement of a high-profile detective.

When Irma arrives at the college in a striking scarlet cloak, her presence is immediately recognized, prompting an unusual reaction from Mrs. Appleyard, the headmistress, who greets her formally. This abrupt visit is poorly timed, as Mrs. Appleyard is grappling with the fallout from Mr. Leopold's insistent requests. Irma's interaction with Mrs. Appleyard reveals



tension; the headmistress criticizes Irma's lack of academic diligence, which Irma sharply counters, pointing out the emotional impact of the events at Hanging Rock.

After this encounter, Irma longs to see her former classmates and heads towards the gymnasium for a farewell. As she arrives, her presence initially lacks the enthusiastic response she might have anticipated. Instead, the students appear to be transfixed by collective memories of the picnic, their gazes turning inward as they recall scenes filled with vibrancy and laughter, yet tainted by the shadow of what transpired at Hanging Rock. This moment morphs into a chaotic scene as the girls' emotions bubble to the surface. The gymnasium erupts into hysteria as they demand answers about their missing friends, Miranda and Marion, forcing Irma into a state of panic.

Mademoiselle desperately attempts to maintain order amidst the escalating chaos, but the girls' anguish over their lost peers culminates in a near-manic desire for retribution against Irma, whom they irrationally blame for the tragedy. Just then, Tom, an amiable presence from the kitchens, arrives with a message for Irma, providing a momentary distraction and allowing her to escape the fray. She bids farewell to the staff and students, offering a fleeting wave that signifies her departure not just from Appleyard College but from her childhood and innocence as well.

As Irma departs, Mademoiselle contends with her own turmoil, reflecting on

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the chaos and her inability to control the situation. The chapter closes with hints of the darker realities hidden within the school, encapsulated by the eerie sounds echoing from the darkened corners of the gymnasium, reminiscent of the earlier experiences of loss and madness. This nuanced interplay of emotion, memory, and foreboding encapsulates the lingering impact of tragedy on youthful innocence as the chapter unfolds through the lens of the girls' fractured perceptions and unresolved fears.

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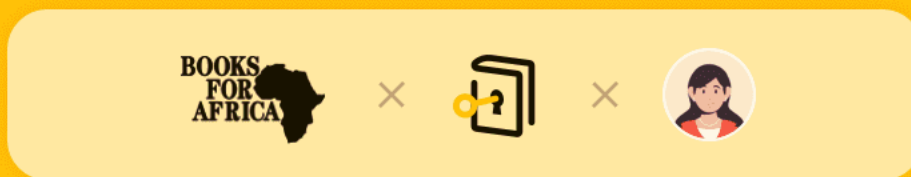




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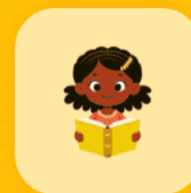
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Chapter 13 Summary:

In Chapter 13, the atmosphere at Appleyard College is tense and subdued following the recent mysterious events surrounding Miranda and the Hanging Rock. Mrs. Appleyard, the Headmistress, sits down for supper with the boarders only to be plagued by inner turmoil regarding two unanswered letters: one from Mr. Leopold, presumably concerning Miranda's disappearance, and the other from Miranda's father. While the students engage in quiet conversation, the absence of Sara Waybourne due to a migraine and Edith Horton complaining of neuralgia contributes to the prevailing unease.

As Mrs. Appleyard struggles with the challenges the school faces, including dwindling enrollment and local gossip about the College being haunted, she contemplates drastic measures. Despite the possibility of shutting down the College, she finds herself compelled to confront the situation since rumors are circulating about strange occurrences at night. Reflecting on her precarious position, she examines the student ledger and realizes that only a few pupils are likely to return after Easter, heightening her sense of dread.

After a tedious day, a telegram arrives from Constable Bumper with no new updates, while other staff members go about their routines unperturbed. However, a dramatic turn takes place when Reg Lumley arrives unexpectedly at the college. Reg, depicting himself as an authority figure,



confronts Mrs. Appleyard with the intent to remove his sister, Dora Lumley, from her position at the school. He cites the negative publicity related to the college and claims that Dora should not be associated with "crime"—a word Mrs. Appleyard quickly corrects to "mystery."

As tensions escalate, Mrs. Appleyard bluntly outlines her disdain for Dora, calling her incompetent and revealing her relief at not needing to provide a reference for her work. Reg, visibly shaken, tries to assert his authority but ultimately finds himself dismissed as Mrs. Appleyard sends for Dora to pack her belongings. The framing of their encounter reflects the power struggle between them and highlights Reg's smug, pompous nature contrasted with Mrs. Appleyard's authoritative presence.

Dora quickly gathers her things and departs with her brother, inciting speculation among the remaining girls about the details of her abrupt exit. Meanwhile, Sara Waybourne remains oblivious to the gossip, preoccupied with personal struggles and a growing feeling that her time at Appleyard College is reaching an end. It becomes evident that both Sara and Mrs. Appleyard are in desperate need of attention from Dr. McKenzie, showcasing the broader undercurrents of distress affecting the entire institution.

As the chapter concludes, Reg and Dora catch a train back to Warragul, where they settle down for the night in a modest hotel. However, their



reprieve is short-lived when a fire breaks out in the building due to an unattended oil lamp, introducing a shocking and unforeseen tragedy into the lives of the Lumleys. This harrowing event serves to heighten the chapter's tension and foreshadows further complications for the characters involved.

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Chapter 14 Summary:

In Chapter 14, the controversial death of Reg Lumley ignites a media frenzy surrounding his funeral, which serves as a public tribute to a life filled with arguments, debates, and strong opinions. This chapter reflects the recurring themes introduced in the earlier story set at Hanging Rock, showcasing the juxtaposition of life and death, particularly as Reg's passing leads to a mix of sympathy and spectacle.

Following this, the narrative shifts focus to Michael Fitzhubert, who is staying at Lake View, his family's holiday home, which feels empty without its owners. The cold and dreary atmosphere contrasts sharply with his memories of Haddingham Hall, the historical family estate. This moment serves to emphasize the absence of warmth and familiarity in the now lifeless space.

During his time at Lake View, Mike is prompted to search for a letter from a solicitor that had gone unnoticed. He spends his day wandering the grounds, experiencing a deep melancholy as he reflects on the changes brought by the seasons and the stark emptiness of his surroundings. This physical journey mirrors his emotional state as he grapples with feelings of longing, especially for Irma Leopold, who is soon to depart for England. His conversations with the Cutlers, who express their own sadness over Irma's upcoming departure, add to the sense of loss permeating the chapter.



As night falls, Mike visits Albert in the stable, where they share drinks and indulge in rich conversation laced with humor and camaraderie. Albert, a coachman and Mike's friend, reveals to Mike a vivid dream he had, involving a ghostly visit from his deceased sister, which sparks a deeper discussion about dreams, memories, and the past. This dialogue highlights the characters' struggles with their realities and the emotional burdens they carry, particularly how dreams serve as a link between the two worlds.

The next morning brings a change as Mike prepares to leave for the city, but before he departs, Albert receives an unexpected letter from Irma's father. The letter expresses gratitude for Albert's role in the rescue at Hanging Rock and includes a generous cheque. This moment marks a significant turning point in Albert's life, opening possibilities that he previously thought unattainable.

Outside, Albert encounters a local acquaintance, Irish Tom, who brings news of a tragic fire at a hotel, tying back to the earlier events in the story and reinforcing the interconnectedness of fate and fortune. As Albert absorbs this shocking news, he is simultaneously elated by the letter from Mr. Leopold, which now propels him toward a potential new chapter in his life, illustrating the dual nature of existence where joy and sorrow can coexist.

The chapter concludes with Albert penning letters to inform Mike about his

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career changes and to Mr. Leopold, expressing his gratitude in his own unique way. These letters carry a weight of sincerity and hope, as Albert contemplates a future that feels richer and more promising, even as the shadows of past tragedies linger. This intricate interweaving of lives and events sets the stage for the unfolding mysteries that lie ahead, evoking a sense of anticipation and inevitability in the narrative.

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Chapter 15 Summary:

Chapter 15 Summary

On Sunday morning, March 22, Appleyard College buzzed with preparations for church as the boarders, cut off from the outside world, remained unaware of the tragic events surrounding the Lumleys' hotel fire. Constable Bumper was on leave, leaving the staff at the college shorthanded with only Mademoiselle and Miss Buck on duty. Among the staff and students, the atmosphere was tense, particularly for Minnie, the housemaid, who observed the Headmistress, Mrs. Appleyard, acting unusually frail and distressed as she prepared for a visit from Mr. Cosgrove, Sara Waybourne's guardian.

Sara, previously a student at the college and now an orphan, had been taken away unexpectedly by Mr. Cosgrove, raising concerns about her well-being. Mademoiselle, worried for Sara, confronted Mrs. Appleyard about the abrupt decision to let the girl leave, but Mrs. Appleyard dismissed these concerns, revealing her disdain for Sara and her behavior at the school. The chasm between the two women, bridged only by professional duty, now seemed wider with Sara's departure.

As the day progressed, the college's turmoil was punctuated by the shocking news of the Lumley tragedy, a topic quickly turning into gossip among the



staff and the boarders. The imminent school holidays stirred an air of relief and excitement while hints of underlying sadness permeated the conversations, especially regarding Sara's absence.

Tuesday passed quietly, with preparations for the upcoming Easter holiday. Rosamund organized a farewell telegram for Irma, demonstrating the mixed emotions the boarders felt. With their mundane routines disrupted by Sara's sudden exit, the students compared notes on their trousseaux, celebrating newfound freedom but reflecting on the void left by the missing girl. As they packed, nostalgia mixed with anticipation, highlighting the transient nature of their friendships.

On a quiet Tuesday night, Dianne de Poitiers, deeply affected by thoughts of Sara, found her mind racing under the full moon. The memory of Sara's cherished portrait of Miranda tormented her. She questioned the intentions of Mr. Cosgrove and pondered Sara's future, feeling a clash of emotions as her protective instincts flared for the lonely child.

Wednesday brought the last of the boarders' departures, leaving empty rooms that echoed past laughter. Mrs. Appleyard's rising anxiety over the Lumley tragedy consumed her as she sorted through correspondence, reflecting on the chaos of her life. Her usual control was faltering, further aggravating her state of mind as she contemplated the fragility of her authority over the school and its inhabitants.

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By Thursday, as preparations for Easter were underway, the atmosphere was one of restrained hope and visible change. The arrival of a letter from Mr. Cosgrove further complicated matters. In it, he expressed his intention to arrive at the college for Sara on Easter Saturday. The letter contained a request for Sara's needs, prompting Mrs. Appleyard to mask her growing apprehension with formal hospitality, unaware of the storm brewing just beneath the surface of her controlled façade.

Thus, as Easter approached, the college stood at a crossroads, with the ghost of Sara's presence lingering and the shadows of tragedy and uncertainty growing ever larger. The mundane routines of life at Appleyard College were becoming intertwined with deeper, darker undercurrents that could threaten the very foundations of the institution.

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Chapter 16:

In Chapter 16, the narrative begins with Constable Bumper experiencing shock upon receiving a confidential letter from Dianne de Poitiers, a French governess at Appleyard College. The letter conveys her deep concern regarding the sudden and unannounced disappearance of a thirteen-year-old pupil, Sara Waybourne, taken by her guardian, Monsieur Cosgrove. Dianne notes that neither of the two women present during this time—Minnie, the maid, and the cook—saw Cosgrove arrive or leave with Sara, which deepens her worry that the child has gone missing.

Dianne describes her unease and asks Bumper to visit the College discreetly, ensuring no one else hears of her correspondence. She reveals that she suspects something sinister might be at play but struggles to express her fears in English. As Bumper reads the letter, he recalls the governess's calm demeanor and starts to regard her suspicions seriously.

Later, Bumper casually converses with his wife, who insists she knows nothing about the gossip surrounding Mrs. Appleyard, the harsh headmistress of the College. She mentions Mrs. Appleyard's infamous temper and hints at rumors regarding her drinking habits. Bumper, intrigued by the mysteries surrounding the College and its staff, prepares to follow up on Dianne's concerns.



As Thursday progresses, the weather turns warm, and tensions rise. Edward Whitehead, the gardener, while tending to the hydrangeas, discovers a shocking sight: the body of the missing Sara, mangled and soaked in blood. Stunned and sickened, he tries to compose himself before delivering the tragic news to Mrs. Appleyard, who reacts with disbelief and horror. Her anguished scream reveals the gravity of the situation, hinting at her fragile mental state.

Whitehead's account details the chilling circumstances surrounding Sara's death and Mrs. Appleyard's desperate urgency to get to the police. As he drives her toward the station, he notices her distraction and despair. When they arrive, Appleyard instructs him to leave, emphasizing her need for solitude to deal with the impending questions about the tragedy.

Meanwhile, another perspective is provided through the testimony of Ben Hussey from the livery stables, who recalls his unease over Mrs. Appleyard's demeanor as she requests a ride to the Hanging Rock—a place associated with the disappearance of other girls. Her hostility toward the Rock hints at a deeper conflict rooted in the past events that transpired during a previous picnic there.

As the chapter unfolds, Mrs. Appleyard traverses the forest toward the Rock, feeling nature for the first time in her life. This stark contrast to her sheltered life indicates a sudden awakening to the raw and wild world surrounding

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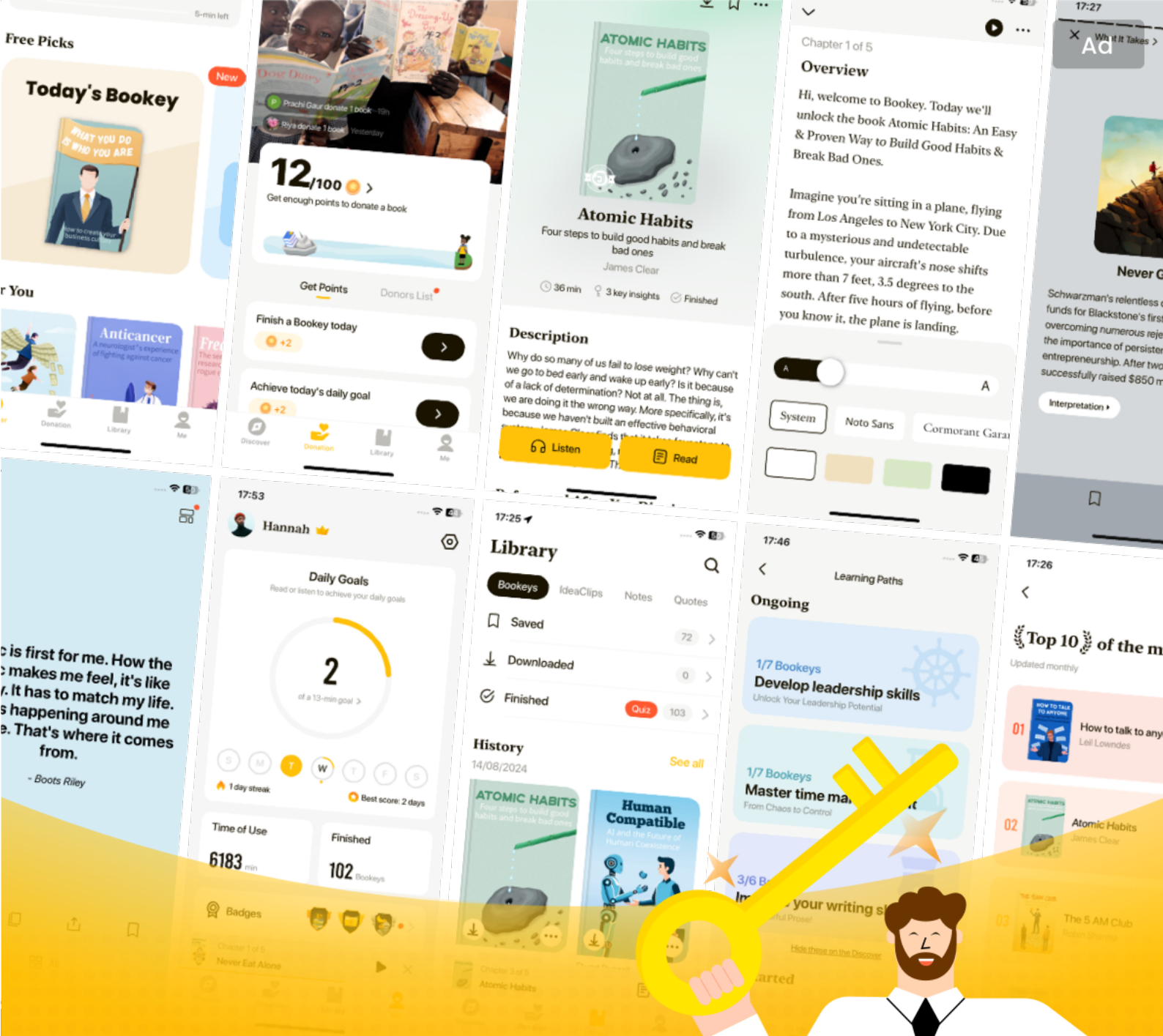
her. Eventually, she reaches the apex of her despair, leading to a climactic encounter with her own fears and regrets. In a moment of sheer terror, as the memory of the lost girls haunts her, she succumbs to a panic-stricken state, culminating in a leap that echoes the tragedy of Sara's earlier fate.

This chapter intricately weaves various perspectives on disappearance, trauma, and the impact of oppressive environments, establishing a foundation for the events that will follow. As circumstances converge with escalating intensity, the narrative sets the stage for critical revelations and the unraveling of buried truths.

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Chapter 17 Summary:

In this excerpt from a Melbourne newspaper dated February 14, 1913, the focus is on the tragic mystery surrounding a group of schoolgirls from Appleyard College who disappeared thirteen years earlier during a picnic at Hanging Rock. This event, marked by uncertainty and tragedy, involves a peculiar geological formation renowned among geologists for its striking rock structures, including monoliths and deep caves, that add a sense of enigma to the narrative.

The incident took place on a fateful Saturday when twenty schoolgirls and two governesses set off for a day of camaraderie and fun. However, the day turned ominous when one governess and three girls vanished during the afternoon, leading to widespread speculation about their fate. Despite extensive searches by police and the public, the mystery remained unsolved, especially after a series of setbacks that included the unexplained death of the college headmistress and the total destruction of Appleyard College by a bushfire the following summer.

The only survivor found was Irma Leopold, one of the missing girls, discovered unconscious at the base of some boulders by Michael Fitzhubert, a young English visitor. While Irma eventually regained consciousness, a head injury rendered her unable to remember the events surrounding the disappearance of her companions. This gap in memory only deepened the

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intrigue surrounding the incident.

Another key figure, Edith Horton, a fourteen-year-old boarder who had ventured a short distance up the Rock with the missing girls, returned in a state of hysteria. Like Irma, she was unable to provide any details about the time she was away. Unfortunately, despite years of inquiries, Edith died without shedding light on the mystery, leaving an air of haunting uncertainty.

The story also highlights the fate of Irma, who has since become Countess de Latte-Marguery and now resides in Europe. Though she has occasionally spoken to interested parties regarding the events, her recollections remain limited. As a result, the College Mystery, likened to the legendary case of the Marie Celeste, appears doomed to remain unresolved, locked in the shadows of time alongside the memories of those who were there.

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