

Margaret Mitchell
GONE WITH THE WIND

Chapter I

carlett O'Hara was not beautiful, but men seldom realized it. In her face were the delicate features of her mother, a French aristocrat, and the heavy ones of her Irish father.

Seated with **the Tarleton twins**¹, Stuart and Brent, in the cool shade of the porch of Tara, her father's plantation, that bright April afternoon of 1861, she **made a pretty picture**². Her waist was the smallest in three counties, she was sixteen years old. Her manners were the result of her mother's gentle admonitions and the stern discipline of her Mammy.

The twins laughed and talked. Nineteen years old, hard of muscle, with sunburned faces and deep auburn hair, their eyes merry and arrogant, they were alike. These boys were born to the ease of plantation life. The boys' family had more money, more horses, more slaves than any one else in the County, but the boys had less grammar than most of their poor neighbors.

¹ **the Tarleton twins** — близнецы Тарлотны

² **made a pretty picture** — являла очаровательное зрелище

Stuart and Brent had just been expelled from the University of Georgia. Their older brothers, Tom and Boyd, had come home with them, because they refused to remain at an institution where the twins were not welcome.

«I know you two don't care, and Tom too», Scarlett said. «But what about Boyd?»

«Oh, he can study law in Judge Parmalee's office over in Fayetteville», answered Brent carelessly.

«Why?»

«The war! The war is going to start any day, and we won't stay in college that time».

«You know there won't be any war», said Scarlett. «It's all just talk. The Yankees are too scared of us to fight».

She did not endure any conversation of which she was not the chief subject. War was men's business, not ladies'.

Then she asked,

«What did your mother say about your situation?»

The boys looked uncomfortable.

«Well», said Stuart, «Tom and us left home early this morning before she got up».

«Didn't she say anything when you got home last night?»

«We were lucky last night. Just before we got home that new stallion Ma got in Kentucky last month was brought in. When we got home, Ma was out in the stable with a sackful of sugar. **The darkies**¹ were popeyed, they were so scared. And when she saw us she said: 'Oh, what are you four doing home again?' And then the horse began to snort and rear, and she said: 'Get out of here! Can't you see he's nervous?»

¹ the darkies — чернокожие

I'll talk to you four in the morning!' So we went to bed, and this morning we got away and left Boyd with her».

«Will your mother ride the new horse to the Wilkes barbecue tomorrow?»

«She wants to, but Pa says he's too dangerous. We'll tell you a secret», said Stuart.

«What?» cried Scarlett as a child.

«You know, Ashley Wilkes' cousin, Miss Pittypat Hamilton, told us there was going to be an engagement announced tomorrow night at the Wilkes ball».

«Oh. I know about that», said Scarlett in disappointment. «That silly nephew of hers, Charlie Hamilton, and Wilkes».

«No, it isn't his engagement that's going to be announced», said Stuart triumphantly. «It's Ashley's to Charlie's sister, Miss Melanie!»

Scarlett's face did not change but her lips went white.

The twins talked about the barbecue and the ball and Ashley Wilkes and Melanie Hamilton. But Scarlett was silent.

Chapter II

When the twins left Scarlett, she went back to her chair like a sleepwalker. She sat down wearily. Her hands were cold, and a feeling of disaster oppressed her. Ashley is going to marry Melanie Hamilton! Oh, it can't be true! Ashley can't be in love with her. Nobody can. Scarlett recalled with contempt Melanie's thin childish figure, her serious face. No, Ashley can't be in love with Melanie, because he was in love with her!

Mammy emerged from the hall, a huge old woman with the small, shrewd eyes of an elephant. She was black, pure African, devoted to the O'Haras.

«Why are you sitting here, Miss Scarlett??»

«I am tired. I want to sit here and watch the sunset. Please, Mammy, bring me my shawl and I'll sit here till Pa comes home».

Mammy waddled back into the hall. Scarlett went quietly down the front steps. Soon she was at the end of the driveway and out on the main road. She sat down on a stump to wait for her father.

«Oh, Ashley! Ashley!» she thought.

He never talked about love to her. And yet she knew he loved her. Sometimes he looked at her with a yearning and a sadness which puzzled her. She knew he loved her. Why did he not tell her so?

He was courteous always, but aloof, remote. Ashley was proficient in hunting, gambling, dancing and politics, and was the best rider of all. He was interested in books and music and writing poetry. She loved him and she wanted him and she did not understand him.

Why has he captivated Scarlett? She did not know. Ashley is going marry Melanie! It can't be true! Oh, where is Pa? She looked impatiently down the road again, and again she was disappointed.

The sun was now below the horizon. At last she heard a sound of hooves. Gerald O'Hara was coming home. He came up the hill at a gallop on his long-legged horse. Gerald was an excellent horseman.

«I wonder why he always wants to jump fences», she thought.

Gerald did not see his daughter in the shadow of the trees. She laughed aloud. Gerald recognized her,

and dismounted with difficulty, because his knee was stiff, and stumped toward her.

«Well, Miss», he said, «so, you're spying on me and, like your sister Suellen last week, you'll tell your mother about me?»

Scarlett teasingly clicked her tongue.

«No, Pa, I'm not a **tattletale**¹ like Suellen», she assured him.

Gerald was a small man, little more than five feet tall, but very heavy. His thick torso was supported by short sturdy legs. He was sixty years old and his curly hair was silver-white, but his little blue eyes were young. His was Irish. And he had the tenderest of hearts.

Scarlett was his oldest child. She was more like her father than her younger sisters, Carreen and Suellen.

«You look very presentable now», she said. «But it seems to me that after you broke your knee last year, jumping that fence...»

«Well, my own daughter is telling me what I shall jump and not jump!» he shouted. «Miss, what are you doing out here without your shawl?»

«I was waiting for you. I want to know if you bought Dilcey».

«Yes I did, and the price has ruined me. Bought her and her little wench, Prissy. I gave him three thousand for the two of them».

«Pa, three thousand! And you didn't need to buy Prissy!»

«Prissy is a pretty little wench».

«I know her. She's a sly, stupid creature», Scarlett rejoined calmly. «And the only reason you bought her was because Dilcey asked you to buy her».

¹ **tattletale** — ябеда

«Well, what if I did? Well, come on, let's go to supper».

«How are they all at Twelve Oaks?»

«As usual. Cade Calvert was there and, we all sat on the gallery. Cade has just come from Atlanta».

«Did they say anything about the barbecue tomorrow?»

«Yes, they did. Ashley's cousin, Miss Melanie Hamilton, and her brother Charles have already come from Atlanta and...»

«Was Ashley there, too?»

«He was». Gerald turned and peered sharply into her face. «You want to talk about him, right? He was there and he asked most kindly about you. And now, daughter, what's all this about you and Ashley?»

«There is nothing», she said shortly.

«Really? Has he asked to marry you?»

«No», she said shortly.

«Nor will he», said Gerald.

Fury flamed in her.

«Miss! I learned from John Wilkes that Ashley was going to marry Miss Melanie. It will be announced tomorrow».

So it was true!

«Is it a spectacle you've been making of yourself?» he bawled. «Have you been running after a man who's not in love with you?»

«I haven't been running after him. It... it just surprised me».

«You're lying!» said Gerald, and then he added: «I'm sorry, daughter. But there are lots of other lads. If you had any sense you'd have married Stuart or Brent Tarleton long ago. Think it over, daughter. You know little enough of any man, and of Ashley, too.

Those Wilkes... The whole family is strange enough. Yes, Ashley can ride and play poker. He can do all those things, but his heart's not in it. He's queer».

Scarlett was silent and her heart sank.

«Scarlett! Why won't you marry Cade Calvert? The Calverts are good folk, all of them. I'll leave Tara to you and Cade...»

«I don't want marry Cade!» cried Scarlett in fury. «And I don't want Tara or any old plantation! **They don't amount to anything¹**».

«Do you tell me that Tara... that land... doesn't amount to anything?»

Scarlett nodded obstinately.

«Land is the only thing in the world that amounts to anything», he shouted.

«Oh, Pa», she said disgustedly, «you talk like an Irishman!»

«And I am proud of it. And don't forget that you are half Irish, Miss!»

Chapter III

That night at supper, Scarlett's mind was in a ferment over the dreadful news she had heard about Ashley and Melanie. Of course, she did not intend to tell her mother what was so heavy on her heart. Her mother, Ellen, will be shocked and grieved to know that a daughter of hers wants a man who is engaged to another girl. But she wanted the very comfort of her mother's presence. She always felt secure when Ellen was by her.

¹ **They don't amount to anything.** — Они ничего не стоят.

She rose suddenly from her chair at the sound of creaking wheels in the driveway. Looking out the window, Scarlett saw Pork. Pork entered, his usual dignity was gone, his eyes were rolling.

«Mister Gerald», he announced, breathing hard, «your new housemaid is here».

«New housemaid? I didn't buy any new housemaid», declared Gerald.

«Yes, you did, Mister Gerald! Yes! And she wants to speak with you», answered Pork, giggling and twisting his hands in excitement.

«Well, bring in your wife», said Gerald, and Pork beckoned into the hall to his wife. She arrived from the Wilkes plantation to become part of the household of Tara. She entered, and behind her came her twelve-year-old daughter.

Dilcey was tall. Her immobile bronze face was unlined. Indian blood was plain in her features. The red color of her skin, narrow high forehead, all showed the mixture of two races. When she spoke, her voice was not so slurred as most negroes' and she chose her words more carefully.

«Good evening, young Misses. Mister Gerald, I am sorry to disturb you, but I wanted to come here and thank you again for buying me and my daughter».

«Hm-hmm», said Gerald.

Dilcey turned to Scarlett and something like a smile wrinkled the corners of her eyes.

«Miss Scarlett, Poke told me how you asked Mister Gerald to buy me. And so I give you my Prissy for your own maid».

She jerked the little girl forward. She was a brown little creature, with skinny legs like a bird. She had sharp eyes and stupid look on her face.

«Thank you, Dilcey», Scarlett replied, «but I'm afraid Mammy will have something to say about that. She's been my maid ever since I was born».

«Mammy is getting old», said Dilcey. «She a good mammy, but you are a young lady now and you need a good maid. Prissy has been maiding for Miss India for a year. She can sew and fix hair».

It was late, and Scarlett went to bed. She dropped her head upon her folded hands, and her thoughts went sadly back to Ashley. How can he plan to marry Melanie when he really loves her, Scarlett? And when he knows how much she loves him? Then, suddenly, an idea, shining and new, flashed like a comet through her brain.

«Why, Ashley hasn't an idea that I'm in love with him!»

Her mind stood still as if paralyzed for a long, breathless instant.

«How could he know? I've always acted so prissy and ladylike around him he probably thinks I don't care a thing about him. Yes, that's why he's never spoken! He thinks his love is hopeless. And that's why he's looked so...»

Her mind went swiftly back to those times when he was looking at her in that strange manner.

«He thinks I'm in love with Brent or Stuart or Cade. But if he knows I love him...»

This was the answer to Ashley's reticence, to his strange conduct. He didn't know! She had only to...

«Oh!» she thought rapturously. «What a fool I've been! I must think of some way to let him know. He won't marry her if he knows I love him!»

Even now, it wasn't too late! And Ashley's engagement had not even been announced yet! Yes, there was plenty of time!

If no love lay between Ashley and Melanie but only a promise, then why wasn't it possible for him to break that promise and marry her? Surely he will do it, if he knows that she, Scarlett, loves him. She must find some way to let him know. She will find some way! And then...

Lying in the bed, she pictured the whole scene in her mind. She saw the look of surprise and happiness that came over his face when he realized that she really loved him, and she heard the words he said asking her to be his wife.

By this time tomorrow night, she might be Mrs. Ashley Wilkes!

She sat up in bed, and for a long happy moment she was Mrs. Ashley Wilkes... Ashley's bride!

Chapter IV

As the carriage bore Scarlett down the red road toward the Wilkes plantation, Scarlett had a feeling of pleasure.

«Perhaps it will be my wedding day!», thought Scarlett. «I'll tell Ashley that I love him and he will marry me. Why not? I am sure he loves me, too»

The chimneys of Twelve Oaks began to show on the hill across the river.

«I'll live there all my life and I'll tell my children and my grandchildren how beautiful this spring was».

She was so happy at this thought that she began to sing.

«I don't know why you're so happy this morning», said Suellen crossly. «You know as well as I do that Ashley's engagement is going to be announced tonight. And you cares about him».

«That's all you know», said Scarlett.

«Susie, you know that's not so», protested Carreen. «It's Brent that Scarlett cares about».

Scarlett turned smiling green eyes upon her younger sister.

«Darling, I don't care a thing about Brent», declared Scarlett. «And he doesn't care a thing about me. He's waiting for you!»

Carreen's round little face became pink.

They crossed the river and the carriage mounted the hill. Scarlett loved Twelve Oaks even more than Tara.

The long picnic tables stood under the thickest shade. As the smell of fresh pork came to her, Scarlett wrinkled her nose appreciatively. She was full of food and tightly laced.

The whole County was here, thought Scarlett. The four Tarleton boys and their father leaned against the tall columns, the twins, Stuart and Brent, Boyd and Tom with their father, James Tarleton. Mr. Calvert was standing close by the side of his Yankee wife. On the porch steps stood John Wilkes. Beside him stood Honey Wilkes.

Frank Kennedy was hurrying to the carriage to assist Suellen. Frank Kennedy owned more land than anyone in the County, but he was forty, slight and nervous and had a thin beard. But where was Ashley? And Melanie and Charles?

Her eyes fell on a stranger. He was standing alone in the hall. He looked quite old, at least thirty-five. He was a tall man. Scarlett thought she had never