Half Broke Horses

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF JEANNETTE WALLS

Jeannette Walls is the daughter of Rose Mary (formerly Rosemary) and Rex Walls—making *Half Broke Horses* protagonist Lily Casey Smith her maternal grandmother. Walls asserts that Rose Mary was more concerned with her artwork than motherhood, and Rex was a charming alcoholic who proved a frequent disappointment to his children. As such, Walls and her three siblings lived a chaotic, nomadic life, frequently moving between cities and facing extreme poverty. At times, Walls had to dumpster-dive to find food. At age seventeen, Walls ran away to New York City, where she was able to finish high school and gain admission to the prestigious Barnard College. After graduating with honors, she found work as a journalist and built a successful career as a gossip columnist. Rex and Rose Mary moved to the city to be near their children and lived as squatters for a time; Walls alleges that she was once in a taxi when she saw a homeless woman digging through trash, only to realize it was her own mother. In 2005, Walls published a memoir detailing her unconventional childhood called *The Glass Castle*. The book proved a smash success, selling more than 2.7 million copies and being made into a movie in 2017. Wall wrote *Half Broke Horses* in 2009 and appears briefly at the end of the book as a baby to whom Lily takes immediate liking. Walls has reconciled with Rose Mary and lives with her in Virginia, along with Walls' second husband.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Lily Casey Smith was born during the Progressive Era, a period of cultural and technological upheaval in American society and which saw the passage of two constitutional amendments: The Nineteenth, which granted women the right to vote in 1920, and the Eighteenth, which banned the sale of alcohol. The subsequent period known as Prohibition lasted until the amendment's repeal in 1933. The Progressive Era was also marked by mass industrialization and the introduction of the automobile. Jim and Lily drive a "flivver"—a Ford Model T brought to market in 1908. Made via assembly line production, the Model T was considered the first affordable car for everyday Americans and the most prominent symbol of modernization. Air travel too began to take hold in the first half of the twentieth century. The Wright brothers are credited with building and flying the first successful airplane in 1903. Pioneering aviator Amelia Earhart, whom Rex at one point compares Lily to, became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean in 1928. Lily also lives through both world wars. The United States entered World War I in 1917, at which point the government authorized the creation of 500,000 to 1,000,000 temporary jobs related to the production of munitions and supplies for soldiers. Civilians flocking to help the war effort led to a lack of workers in rural areas, which is exactly what allows Lily to get her teaching job despite not having a high school diploma. For the first time in history, women also entered the workforce in huge numbers to fill jobs traditionally held by men—a fact that continued to spur feminist sentiment well after the war had ended. The U.S. later entered World War II in 1941 after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The war ended in 1945 following the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians in the name of preventing further fighting. The decision to drop the bomb was, and remains, deeply controversial.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls' memoir, picks up almost immediately where *Half Broke Horses* leaves off by telling the true story of her unconventional, impoverished childhood with Rosemary and Rex. Some of *The Glass Castle* is in fact foreshadowed by Lily's story, including Rex's burgeoning alcoholism and Rosemary's intense focus on her art. John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* focuses on poor migrant farm workers in the earlier twentieth century who, like the Casey and Smith families, are often at the mercy of the natural world. F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby* shows a more decadent side of life during the 1920s but, like Lily, questions the morality of unearned wealth. Walls deems *Half Broke Horses* a "true life novel" because it tells the real story of her grandmother growing up at the turn of the century. Other novels that focus on actual historical figures include Hillary Mantel's *Wolf Hall*, about Henry VII advisor Thomas Cromwell, and Paula McLain's *The Paris Wife*, about Ernest Hemingway's first wife Hadley Richardson. McLain's *Circling the Sun* is especially of a kind with Lily's story in that it focuses on real-life aviator Beryl Markham, the first woman to successfully fly across the Atlantic Ocean from east to west.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** Half Broke Horses
- **When Written:** 2009
- **Where Written:** United States
- **When Published:** 2009
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Novel based on true events
- **Setting:** Multiple locations across the southwestern United

States over the first half of the twentieth century, with a particular focus on Texas and Arizona.

- **Climax:** Lily and Jim reject Gaiter's offer to return as managers of his ranch, not wanting to work on behalf of someone else's home. Realizing how penned in they are by the city, however, the two then decide to leave Phoenix to live closer to the land once again.
- **Antagonist:** The natural world, societal prejudice
- **Point of View:** First person

EXTRA CREDIT

Family Literature. Walls was able to corroborate certain facts about the death of Robert Casey, Lily's grandfather, because his own life is detailed in the book *Robert Casey and the Ranch on the Rio Hondo* by James D. Shinkle.

Property Value. The Texas land that Lily inherits from her father and ultimately decides not to sell makes an appearance in Walls' memoir *The Glass Castle*. As an adult, Walls discovers that Rosemary had inherited the land from Lily but refused to sell it, despite the fact that by then it was worth about a million dollars—money that, Walls notes, could have drastically improved her and her siblings' childhoods.

PLOT SUMMARY

Lily Casey and her two younger siblings, Buster and Helen, are bringing the cows in from pasture when a flash flood hits. Lily helps her siblings take shelter in a tree. Upon returning home the next day Mom asserts, to Lily's annoyance, that her prayers saved them.

The family raises cattle on unforgiving terrain in western Texas. Dad trains carriage horses, which he loves despite having been hit in the head by one as a child and developing a speech impediment as a result. They live in a dirt dugout until it is destroyed by a flash flood when Lily is eight, at which point they build a wooden house from scavenged lumber. Dad writes prolifically, often railing against industrialization. Lily is in charge of breaking horses and is thrown often, though Dad insists falling is an important part of life. He also teaches Lily that everyone has a "Purpose in Life."

When Lily is eleven, a tornado destroys their house and the family moves back to their family ranch (which Dad dubs the KC Ranch) in New Mexico. At thirteen, Lily enrolls in a Catholic girls' school. She loves learning and Mother Albertina, the school's Mother Superior, encourages her to think about teaching. Lily is forced to drop out, however, when Dad spends her tuition money on four Great Danes. Back at the ranch, Old Man Pucket shoots the dogs, mistaking them for wolves. He repays the Caseys with horses, one of which Lily claims and names Patches.

With World War I going on, there is a shortage of teachers. As such, despite being only fifteen Lily is able to find a teaching position in Red Lake, Arizona. She makes the 500-mile journey by herself on horseback. Lily loves being a teacher, but is forced to return home when the war ends. During the ride back to the ranch she sees a **red airplane** in the sky, causing her to realize that her father's horse carriage business is doomed.

Intent upon seeing more of the world, Lily boards a train to Chicago. She finds work as a maid and attends women's suffrage rallies with her roommate, Minnie Hagan. Minnie is suddenly killed when her hair gets caught in factory machinery. Reflecting on how unpredictable life is, Lily cuts her own hair to just below her ears. Shortly afterwards she meets Ted Conover, a smooth-talking salesman. After six weeks of dating, the two marry. Soon, however, Lily learns that learns that Ted has another wife. She annuls the marriage and leaves Chicago. Red Lake offers to give her back her job.

While competing in a horse race Lily meets Jim Smith, the owner of the new auto garage in town who teaches her to drive. Helen, who has moved to Los Angeles to become an actress, writes to say that she is pregnant, and the father has abandoned her. Lily agrees to take her in, but once Helen's condition becomes known the town shuns both sisters. Mr. MacIntosh, the superintendent, says Helen must leave. Distraught, Helen hangs herself.

In her grief Lily realizes she wants to have a baby and approaches Jim Smith about marriage. He readily agrees. After marrying, the two leave Red Lake for the town of Ash Fork, where they run an auto garage. Lily gives birth to a daughter, Rosemary, and a year and a half later has a son, Little Jim. With the country in the middle of the Great Depression, Lily resorts to selling bootleg alcohol to make ends meet. They are forced to close the garage, but Jim eventually secures a job managing a 100,000-acre ranch.

Realizing the land has no source of water, Lily suggests building a dam, and Jim convinces investors to let them rent a bulldozer. The following year Jim convinces the English investors to buy the neighboring Hackberry ranch, which has a windmill with well water. Lily loves Hackberry so much that she decides she wants to buy it and comes up with various money-making schemes.

Lily takes her first flying lesson shortly before her thirty-ninth birthday and feels as though she is seeing the world for the first time. Still needing more income, she then gets a teaching job in a town of Mormon polygamists. She attempts to teach her female students that there is more to life than churning out babies, which angers the local patriarch and gets her fired. Lily finds another job in Peach Springs, where she agrees to be the teacher, janitor, cook, and bus driver all at once. She buys a used hearse to employ as a school bus during the week and a taxi on weekends, putting the extra money towards flying lessons. But when Lily spanks the trouble-making son of a local deputy after

he sticks his hand up a girl's skirt, her contract is not renewed. Lily insists she does what is necessary when the rules are wrong, but she is tired of being fired.

Sensing that their own children need more "civilizing," Lily and Jim send both to boarding schools while Lily finishes her degree in Phoenix. Rosemary is kicked out of the academy for being too disruptive. By then, however, Lily has earned her college degree and finds another teaching job in a town called Big Sandy. Rosemary blossoms into a pretty teenager and develops a crush on a ranch hand. After she is caught swimming with him, a furious and distraught Lily beats her to teach her a lesson. In response, Rosemary says she will never beat her own children. Lily reflects that her daughter stops listening to her from that day forward.

When the ranch gets sold out from under them, the family moves to Phoenix, where Lily teaches at a high school and Jim gets a desk job. Despite the comforts of city life, the family grows restless being so disconnected from nature. Lily also resents the seemingly endless bureaucracy of her new school. She suspects Jim is cheating on her, but after confronting him the two realize city life is driving them crazy and they move to the town of Horse Mesa.

Both Rosemary and Little Jim attend Arizona State, but the latter drops out upon getting married and then becomes a police officer. In her third year of college, Rosemary falls in love with the charming but unstable Rex Walls. Lily, who think Rosemary needs someone to anchor her, does not approve of the match. She laments that Rosemary is the one child she could never teach. She warms up to Rex, who is in the air force, when he takes her flying. Rosemary and Rex marry, and as they drive away from the wedding they look to Lily and Jim like "a couple of **half-broke horses**."

In the epilogue, Lily notes that Rex continues to bounce between odd jobs and hatch hair-brained schemes, and he and Lily frequently argue viciously. Rosemary and Rex live a nomadic existence around the desert. Their third baby is a daughter they name Jeannette, with whom Lily feels an immediate connection. Lily senses that her grandchildren have a wild ride in for them, but says they come from hardy stock and that there is nothing that can stop Lily from teaching them a few things.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Lily Casey Smith – The protagonist and narrator of the story, Lily Casey Smith grows up in the rural West over the first half of the twentieth century. Fiercely independent and resourceful, Lily's no-nonsense attitude allows her to thrive even in the face of natural disaster, personal tragedy, and reductive attitudes toward women. Lily respects people who do not complain about their lot in life, and is extremely hardworking. Raised by a carriage horse trainer, she feels a strong connection to horses and begins "breaking" them—or making them submissive—at age six. She also loves school and excels academically, but is forced to drop out when Dad uses her tuition money to buy Great Danes. Not content with waiting around for a man to propose to her on the family ranch, at age fifteen Lily makes a 500-mile journey across the desert to reach Red Lake, where she gets her first job as a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse. She loves teaching because it is one place where she can be her own boss, and she finds the work of educating impoverished children—especially girls—deeply fulfilling. When she loses her job due to the return of many certified teachers at the end of World War I, she takes a train by herself to Chicago. She lives in the city for eight years, during which time she works as a maid and attends rallies for women's suffrage with her friend and roommate Minnie Hagan. She also has a brief, doomed marriage to the two-timing Ted Conover. Upon discovering that he has another wife, Lily annuls the marriage but also asserts her strength by telling Ted that he could never "destroy" her. Indeed, Lily reveals her strength of character repeatedly throughout the story by refusing to bow to restrictive gender roles or arbitrary societal rules with which she disagrees. Upon deciding she wants children, she approaches Jim Smith about marriage, and insists that their union be an equal partnership. She proves invaluable to keeping their family afloat during the Great Depression and while running a 180,000-acre ranch. When the family moves to Phoenix, Lily quickly grows weary of the bureaucracy that accompanies teaching and living in the city. Like Jim and her children, Rosemary and Little Jim, Lily is most at peace when living in harmony with the natural world. Even so, she embraces modern technology's ability to improve work at the ranch and to bolster her own sense of independence. Much as she enjoys riding horses, she grows to love driving cars and, above all, flying airplanes—to Lily, the ultimate symbol of progress and personal freedom.

Dad / Adam Casey – Lily's father, whose name is Adam but is always referred to as Dad in the narrative, was kicked in the head by a horse as a child, resulting in a speech impediment that makes him difficult to understand. Nevertheless, he loves horses and often prefers their company to human beings, because the animals do not mock or pity him. He trains carriage horses for a living. and Lily observes that he seems to have his own language with them. He tries to instill his knowledge of horses in Lily, training her to "break" horses from the age of six. Dad is extremely intelligent and well-read, and frequently writes letters to politicians about the dangerous effects of industrialization on the human soul. His resistance to modern technology, however, suggests that his business is doomed; he scoffs at Lily's asking whether he would ever buy a car, even though the horse-drawn carriage will soon become obsolete. A man of many eccentricities, Dad is obsessed with phonetic spelling—even dubbing the family ranch the "KC Ranch" (Casey

Ranch)—and can frequently be found working on a biography of Billy the Kid. He also believes everyone must work to achieve their "Purpose in Life," and constantly tries to teach his children lessons to help them prepare for that Purpose. Though often a kind and supportive father, Dad also has a hot temper; he went to prison for three years before Lily's birth for allegedly murdering another man, but maintains his innocence throughout his life. He is also prone to half-baked schemes (a tendency that, many years later, will be paralleled by his granddaughter's husband Rex). Much to his daughter's disappointment, for example, he uses Lily's tuition money to buy four Great Danes that he plans to breed; the dogs are later shot by Old Man Pucket. Dad is a proud Irishman who abhors prejudice and identifies with aggrieved Native Americans and Mexicans, sentiments he passes on to Lily. At the end of his life he calls Lily his best hand on the ranch, and dies shortly after she visits him in a nursing home.

Mom / Daisy Mae Peacock – Lily's mother, whose maiden name is Daisy Mae Peacock, is concerned with social proprieties and embodies the traditional femininity of her era. Described by Lily as being very small and dainty, Mom has white skin that easily bruises and wears corsets so tight that they cause her to faint. She refuses to help out with any manual labor—including trying to bail water out of the dugout when a flood hits—and appreciates finery; her prized possession is a walnut headboard that her own parents brought from the East. A deeply religious woman, Mom asserts that her own prayers, rather than Lily's quick thinking, saved the children from the flash flood at the beginning of the story. She frequently chalks up life events to being part of "God's will," much to Lily's annoyance. She also worries about her daughters being able to find husbands, and believes Lily's first marriage has made her less of a "catch." Mom dies while Lily is living in Phoenix.

Helen – Lily's little sister is ladylike and delicate like Mom, and similarly unenthused about working on a ranch. By age sixteen she decides to move to Los Angeles to become a movie star. There, she struggles to find success, and dates a series of men before becoming pregnant by a slick Hollywood producer, who promptly abandons her. Unwilling to have a dangerous back-alley abortion and fearing she will be disowned by their parents, Helen writes to Lily for help and moves into the teacher's quarters with her in Red Lake. Once Helen's condition becomes known to the town, however, people begin to behave coldly toward both sisters. Helen overhears Mr. MacIntosh insist that she threatens the morality to the school and as such she should leave the town. Believing she is not strong enough to face the world on her own, Helen hangs herself the next day. Father Cavanaugh refuses to let her be buried in the town's Catholic cemetery, so Lily, Jim, and Rooster must bury her on a hill. Feeling that Helen's beauty was ultimately a curse, Lily vows never to tell any daughter of her own that she is beautiful.

Jim Smith – Lily's second husband, and the father of Rosemary and Little Jim. Jim is a big, blue-eyed man who first meets Lily after seeing her fall from the mustang Red Devil during a race. Raised by a famous Mormon with fifty-two children, Jim learned to fend for himself from an early age and is an excellent marksman and horse wrangler. His first wife died in the influenza outbreak, and he joined the cavalry during World War I. Despite being twenty years old than Lily, she admires his strength, calm and observant demeanor, and the fact that he owns a dependable business. Jim readily agrees to marry Lily when she asks, asserting that he has wanted to do so ever since he first saw her fall from Red Devil and get back on. He owns the only garage in Red Lake and teaches Lily to drive, something she grows to love. The two maintain an equal partnership throughout their marriage, working together to run their garage in Ash Fork and later their ranch. When the family moves to Phoenix, Jim gets a desk job and grows restless; Lily knows that he misses the satisfaction of manual labor and being able to work outdoors. Jim is a true ranching expert who is deeply in sync with the natural world. Though less willing than Lily to partake in schemes like selling bootleg liquor or digging through trash for recyclables, he is always a steady, supportive presence in his wife's life. When he and Lily settle in Horse Mesa, he is happy to get a job driving a gravel truck, and upon retirement becomes the town's unofficial mayor.

Rosemary – Lily's first child, named for her favorite flower (rose), Catholicism (Mary), and a useful herb. As a child Rosemary is fearless and accident-prone. Though Lily worries about her safety, she admires her adventurous spirit and gumption. Both rambunctious and sensitive, Rosemary cares deeply for animals, and occasionally sets her parents' cattle free. In an attempt to prove she can handle ranch life, she later asks her father to teach her to skin a cow. She finds the process deeply disturbing and the family does not speak of it again. Artistic from a young age, Rosemary dreams of being a painter and is kicked out of Catholic school for being too disruptive. Lily accepts that Rosemary is not meant for academia, though insists she get a teaching certificate when she goes to college so that she has something to fall back on. Rosemary is also beautiful and resembles Helen, though Lily vows never to tell her this. At thirteen, Rosemary develops a crush on her parents' ranch hand Fidel Hanna. After she is caught swimming on the Havasupai reservation with him, a furious and distraught Lily beats her to teach her a lesson. In response, Rosemary says she will never to beat her own children, and Lily reflects that her daughter stops listening to her from that day forward. Rosemary continues to butt heads with Lily as she gets older, especially in her choice to marry the unstable Rex Walls. Insisting that no place has ever felt like home since their family left the ranch, Rosemary says she may never settle down. Lily laments that Rosemary is the one child she could never teach. She calls both her and Rex "**half broke horses**" as they drive

away at the end of the novel, signifying their inability to be tamed. Rosemary (who later changes her name to Rose Mary) is the mother of the book's author, Jeannette Walls.

Mother Albertina – The Mother Superior of Lily's Catholic School in Santa Fe, which Lily begins attending at age thirteen. Mother Albertina explains the origin story of the "Miraculous Staircase" in the school's chapel, and Lily takes an immediate liking to her because she treats all students the same regardless of their ethnic or economic background. Lily thinks that she would have made a "fine horsewoman." When Lily is forced to drop out of school, Mother Albertina tells her that when God shuts a window he opens a door—a phrase that sticks with Lily for the rest of her life. She also encourages Lily to think about becoming a teacher, and later to take the test that will allow her to do so.

Buster – Lily's younger brother by two years. Charming and gregarious, Buster starts attending school at age ten and continues through eighth grade, figuring that this is all the education he needs to be a rancher. He falls for and later marries Dorothy Clemens, and the two raise their family on the KC Ranch.

Rex Walls – Rosemary's boyfriend and later husband, Rex is born in West Virginia and stationed at a nearby air force base. He meets Rosemary in a restaurant and immediately starts a fight when he thinks someone is flirting with her. Rex later visits Lily and Jim at their house in Horse Mesa to see Rosemary's art, which he praises effusively. Lily believes him to be a slick troublemaker who is full of hot air, but also admits that he is extremely charming. She also admires that after he falls off a horse when riding for the first time, he gets back on. Rex shows early signs of alcoholism when he gets drunk while playing poker with the family; Lily tries to stop him from driving home, but he angrily insults her. By means of apology Rex later takes Lily flying with him. They bond over their shared dismissal of rules and regulations, as well as the fact that they have both sold bootleg alcohol. Lily worries that Rex is too unstable for Rosemary, but cannot stop the two from getting married. In the epilogue of the book, Lily notes that Rex continues to bounce between odd jobs and hatch hair-brained schemes, and the two frequently argue viciously. Rex is the father of the book's author, Jeannette Walls.

Dorothy Clemens – Zachary Clemens' daughter, Dorothy is described as a big-boned young woman who is not afraid to get her hands dirty doing work on the ranch. She finds Dad's four Great Danes shot dead, and later convinces him not to shoot Old Man Pucket over this; her own brother was shot and killed following a feud over a game of horseshoes. Dorothy later marries Buster and effectively runs the KC Ranch.

Old Man Pucket – The owner of the ranch that neighbors the Caseys', Old Man Pucket shoots all four of Dad's Great Danes after thinking they're wolves chasing his cattle. After readily admitting to the shooting in court, he repays the Caseys with "**half-broke horses**," one of which is Patches. He also tells Lily she would make a good lawyer.

Patches – One of the "**half broke horses**" that Old Man Pucket gives the Caseys as repayment for killing Dad's dogs. Patches is a pinto mare, her skin a patchwork of white, brown, and black. Lily bonds with Patches because she seems less timid and more intelligent than the other horses, and Patches becomes a part of her life for many years. Lily rides her on the 500-mile journey to and from Red Lake, and later brings her to the ranch she works on with Jim. When they leave that ranch, Lily gives Patches to the Havasupai tribe.

Priscilla Loosefoot – A young half-Navajo woman whom Lily meets while making her first journey to Red Lake, Arizona with Patches. Priscilla rides a donkey and has long black hair. She tells Lily that her mother had sold her to settlers for a pair of mules, but the settlers abused Priscilla and she ran away. After making camp with Lily, she attempts to steal from her saddlebags in the night. When Lily catches her, Priscilla says she had to take advantage of the rare opportunity that had presented itself—a sentiment Lily understands. Even so, the two go their separate ways.

Mr. MacIntosh – The county superintendent in Red Lake, Mr. MacIntosh tells Lily she will only be able to work at the local school until they find a more qualified teacher. Upon firing Lily three years later, he remarks that she has "pretty eyes" and will be fine so long as she finds herself a husband. Lily repeatedly refers to him as "fish-faced," and to her Mr. MacIntosh represents the pencil-pushers and bureaucracy she loathes. Later, when Lily has returned to Red Lake and invites the pregnant Helen to stay with her, Mr. MacIntosh says that the latter must leave to uphold the moral standards of the school—something Lily finds deeply hypocritical, given the sordid lifestyles of many of her students' parents.

Ted Conover – A former boxer turned vacuum-cleaner salesman whom Lily meets in Chicago. He is gregarious and "a bit of a huckster," but Lily quickly falls for him anyways. After six weeks of dating, the two marry. When Lily gets hit by a car and calls Ted's office from the hospital, she learns that he is already married to another woman, Margaret, and that he has nearly drained their joint bank account. She also learns that the diamond ring he gave her is a fake. When confronted, a whimpering Ted apologizes for having "destroyed" Lily. Lily says he does not have what it takes to destroy her, and she gets the marriage annulled.

Margaret Conover – Ted's other wife, with whom he has three children. Margaret is about the same age as Lily, though looks more aged from the stress of child-rearing. Not wanting to hurt her or the children, Lily decides not to confront Ted in front of Margaret but later writes her a letter detailing what happened.

Rooster – Rooster, whose real name is Orville Stubbs, is a part-time deputy in Red Lake who says Lily must ride his ornery

mustang, Red Devil, before receiving her first paycheck. Lily breaks the horse easily, shocking and impressing Rooster. Rooster asks Lily to teach him to read and write, and the two become friends; Lily considers him likable despite his habit of swallowing chewing tobacco. He encourages Lily to enter Red Devil in local races. Rooster introduces Lily to Jim at once such race, and later serves as the best man at their wedding. He also helps bury Helen.

Minnie Hanagan – One of Lily's roommates in Chicago whom she considers her first genuine friend. Minnie is a spunky, opinionated Irish girl with green eyes and beautiful black hair. She attends women's suffrage rallies with Lily and loves to debate politics and religion. One day, however, her long hair gets caught in the machinery at the factory in which she works. She is pulled into the grinding gears and killed. Her death causes Lily to reflect upon the unpredictability and fragility of life. Lily cuts her own hair to just below her ears soon afterward.

Mim – The wife of a rich commodities trader who gives Lily her first maid job in Chicago. Mim lives in a modern home with a radiator and running water. She behaves rudely towards Lily, often acting as though she is not there. Lily thinks she is very unintelligent. Mim fires Lily after only a week for allegedly not knowing her place. After this experience, Lily become certain she does not want to spend her life "polishing silver for rich dunderheads."

Grady Grammage – The President of the Arizona teachers' college that Lily briefly attends. He admires Lily for working her way through college and tells her about the re-opening of a teacher job in Red Lake, which Lily leaves school to take on. He also later helps her find her job at a Mormon school in the small town of Main Street.

Uncle Eli – The patriarch of the remote Mormon town of Main Street where Lily briefly teaches. When Lily tries to teach the local girls that there is more to life than churning out babies, Uncle Eli threatens to get her fired. He later comes to Lily's house in an attempt to scare her off, but she shoots her gun past his head and says if he returns again she won't miss. The sheriff is called, and Lily's contract is not renewed.

Fidel Hanna – A teenage ranch hand working for Lily and Jim, and a member of the Havasupai tribe. Lily describes him as "a tall, good-looking boy" and notices that Rosemary develops a crush on him. Fidel agrees to show Clarice Pearl and Marion Finch around the Havasupai reservation, though he resents the prejudiced way they treat Native Americans. Well-meaning white people took him from the reservation and sent him to school as a child, but he says this simply made him feel like he does not fit in with the Havasupai or the rest of the world. He is caught swimming with Rosemary on the reservation, after which Miss Pearl says she will report him. He then joins the army. Lily later hears that he has been traumatized by the war and upon his return shoots up a Hopi village. After serving time in prison, his own tribe will not allow him to return, and he lives as an outcast by himself on a corner of the reservation.

Gaiters – A famous movie director of Westerns who buys the ranch from under Jim and Lily. He has stereotypical ideas about what a ranch should look like, and fires Jim, along with many of the ranch hands, for not fitting in with his image of a cowboy. Later Jim helps him save the cattle during a particularly bad winter storm, after which Gaiters offers Jim his job back as ranch manager. Not wanting to report to Gaiters, Jim declines.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Little Jim – Lily and Jim's second child, born a year and a half after Rosemary at a modern hospital. He is big like his father and grows up to play football at Arizona State. He drops out of college when he meets his wife, and he becomes a police officer.

Apache – A white man who was kidnapped by Native Americans as a boy and then rescued by Robert Casey. He has lived with the Caseys ever since and gets along well with Dad because both feel like outsiders.

Lupe – The Casey family servant from Mexico, who was disowned by her family after becoming pregnant out of wedlock. The family kept the baby. Lily says Lupe is even more Catholic than Mom. Lily admires that Lupe never complains about her lot in life, no matter how difficult things become.

Robert Casey – Lily's grandfather and Dad's father, who was shot and killed allegedly over an eight-dollar debt.

Father Cavanaugh – The "humorless" priest at the Red Lake Catholic Church that Lily and Helen briefly attend. Upon discovering that Helen is pregnant, he forces her to make a full confession, and says the only place she can go is a home for "wayward" women.

Granny Combs – An experienced midwife who helps Lily give birth to her first child, Rosemary, and gives her a "mind-over-matter" method to get through the pain. She also tells fortunes, and says the baby will be a "wanderer."

Mr. Lee – A Chinese man in Ash Fork who hides cases of bootleg alcohol at Lily and Jim's home when revenuers are onto him. He later agrees to provide Lily with two cases to sell per month, provided that they split the profits.

Blackie Camel – Along with his brother, Blackie owns a flock of sheep that Jim helps save after the ewes are separated from their lambs. Blackie later sells his ranch to English investors and, when they are looking for someone to manage it, recommends Jim for the job.

Old Jake – The only remaining hand at the Camel brothers' ranch, who greets Lily and Jim upon their arrival and helps around the property until he is fired by Gaiter.

Deputy Johnson – A deputy in the town of Peach Springs who gets Lily fired after she spanks his son Johnny.

Johnny Johnson – Deputy Johnson's son, who kisses Rosemary and later sticks his hand up a Mexican girl's dress. Lily slaps him for this. When he hits her back, she begins to beat him to teach him a lesson about mistreating girls.

Clarice Pearl – A senior official in the Arizona Department of Education who asks Lily to connect her with the Havasupai tribe so that she may evaluate their living conditions and hygiene standards. After the visit, she threatens to report Fidel Hanna for indecency when he is caught swimming with Rosemary.

Marion Finch – The nurse who accompanies Clarice Pearl on her tour of the Havasupai reservation.

Boots – A rodeo cowboy who accompanies Gaiters and is meant to help manage the ranch. Lily can tell that he doesn't know what he is doing.

Mr. Clutterbuck – A grocer in the town of Toyah who buys eggs from Lily for one cent and sells them for two. Dad thinks this teaches Lily lessons about negotiating and math.

Gus – A friend of Rex's from the air force whom Lily meets on the way to go flying with Rex.

Glenda – A woman who works at Jim's office in Phoenix. Lily wrongly suspects that the two are having an affair, and has Rosemary tail Jim to discover the truth.

Goggles – The pilot who gives Lily her first flying lesson and, much to her annoyance, calls her "little lady."

Jeannette Walls – Rosemary and Rex's daughter and the author of the story. She appears in the epilogue as a baby. Lily senses an immediate connection with her granddaughter and calls her "a tenacious thing."

TERMS

Breaking (horses) – To break a horse means to make it submissive to human riders. Lily learns to break horses as a child in Salt Draw and becomes an expert at getting even the wildest of horses to bend to her will.

Foal – A foal is a young horse. **Lily** reflects that breaking horses is easier when one has raised them from foals, because the horses have already grown accustomed to obeying humans.

THEMES

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

WOMEN'S STRENGTH IN A MAN'S WORLD

Half Broke Horses is the story of Lily Casey Smith, author Jeannette Walls' fiery grandmother who grew up in the western United States in the first half of the twentieth century. Lily is an extremely strong woman who frequently butts heads with the sexist attitudes of the time. Her story highlights the many ways society has tried to control women's lives, as well as how women like Lily carved their own paths in a world that afforded them few opportunities for independence.

Time and again Lily must cede opportunities and limit her dreams because she is a girl. Though she excels academically, for example, her younger brother Buster is allowed to both start school before her and to study longer. When Lily's father, referred to as "Dad" throughout the novel, pulls her out of school after half a year, she asks if he has done the same to Buster. He bluntly replies, "No. He's a boy and needs that diploma if he's going to get anywhere." Similarly, despite practically running the Casey family ranch from the time she is a young girl, Lily knows that Buster is the one who will inherit the property.

Lily knows that women's choices remain limited no matter how smart or capable they are. Mother Albertina, the Mother Superior of Lily's Catholic school, tells her there are "three careers available" to women: "a nurse, a secretary, or a teacher," and encourages the willful Lily to become the latter. "The women I know with strong personalities, the ones who might have become generals or the heads of companies if they were men, become teachers," she says. Meanwhile, Lily's tradition-minded mother, referred to simply as "Mom," believes her daughter needs only enough knowledge to make someone a good wife. Snagging a husband is the main means by which women of the time are able to ensure security and protection. Before setting off to find work in Chicago, Lily reflects that if she stays at the family "KC Ranch," all she can do is wait for a man to propose or risk becoming a "potato-peeling spinster in the corner of the kitchen." She leaves for the city because, though keenly aware of the ways in which society means to hold her back, Lily insists on seeking more from life.

Though Lily—and later her daughter Rosemary—is forthright and opinionated, she still lives in a world where women face harsh consequences for not being sufficiently submissive and pure. Men are able to behave more freely, and women often bear the brunt of men's actions. Lily does not report her first husband Ted's bigamy to the authorities, for example, fearing that his going to prison would just make life even more difficult for his other wife and their children. And despite not being at fault for Ted's lies, Mom asserts that Lily's first marriage makes her "tainted goods" in the eyes of future suitors.

Lupe, the Caseys' Mexican servant, is thrown out by her own

family after getting pregnant out of wedlock. Lily's younger sister Helen, too, fears rejection by their parents when she becomes pregnant. The slick Hollywood producer she is dating leaves her after she refuses to get a dangerous back-alley abortion, and when Helen moves in with Lily in the small town of Red Lake both sisters are shunned. County superintendent Mr. MacIntosh even says Helen must leave to uphold the so-called moral sanctity of the school, which feels distinctly hypocritical to Lily considering that her students' parents are "cattle rustlers, drunks, land speculators, bootleggers, gamblers, and former prostitutes." Feeling she has no options left as an unmarried pregnant woman, Helen hangs herself. No matter how strong women may be, Lily still lives during a time when women are held to different standards than men and pay a steep price for deviating from accepted behavior.

Despite the danger, Lily repeatedly defies social conventions that dictate what women can do. She enjoys driving and flying airplanes, shocks the Red Lake locals with her ability to break the ornery mustang Red Devil, and pulls her small revolver on men who give her lip. When she takes her first flying lesson, the instructor remarks that he has never taught a woman before, and dismissively refers to Lily as "little lady." She is quick to assert her skill in multiple typically masculine fields, saying, "Don't you 'little lady' me … I break horses. I brand steers. I run a ranch with a couple dozen crazy cowboys on it, and I can beat them all in poker. I'll be damned if some nincompoop is going to stand there and tell me that I don't have what it takes to fly that dinky heap of tin." Upon deciding she wants to have a child, she takes matters into her own hands by approaching Jim Smith and asking without hesitation if he would like to marry her. She also insists that they be equal partners in their marriage and is an invaluable part of their business ventures. It is Lily, for example, who starts selling bootleg alcohol to keep the family from going bankrupt.

Lily not only fights to live life on her own terms, but to empower other women to do so as well. She attends women's suffrage rallies while living in Chicago, and, many years later, single-handedly registers the town of Horse Mesa to vote. She also spanks the Sheriff's son Johnny Johnson after he sticks his hand up the dress of a female student named Rosita, thinking of both Ted and Helen's slick producer and wanting to teach Johnny that there are consequences for mistreating girls. When Lily goes to teach in the remote Mormon town of Main Street, she is confronted by a society that treats its daughters like "breed mares," and endeavors to teach her young female students that there is more to the world than bearing children. She does so in part by telling them her own life story. The novel thus suggests that a key element of finding one's way is by learning from and being inspired by the example of other women.

Of course, Lily is fired from both Mormon school and for spanking Johnny when angry male locals complain; no matter how strong she may be, she is still living in a world that seeks to deny her autonomy. Nevertheless, she insists "I wasn't in the wrong. The rules were. I was a darned good teacher and had been doing what was necessary." She tells Rosemary that she is not a "weak woman," and decides to finish her degree so that she can join a teacher's union and protect herself from being told what to do in the classroom by backward-thinking men. Indeed, Lily's primary means of wriggling out from under the thumb of societal sexism is to always keep her own conscience. Her conviction that her culture's sexist structures are wrong strengthens her resolve to do things her own way, and transforms her into a symbol of what women can accomplish when they put their faith in themselves.

POVERTY AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Lily's life cycles through times of extreme poverty and relative comfort. Though she believes her impoverished background has given her an invaluable work ethic, she also feels looked down upon by the rich. Nevertheless, Lily's story is a testament to the power of hard work and a manifestation of the traditional American Dream.

Lily grows up so poor that her family lives in a dirt dugout for the first few years of her life, and cannot afford many of the things modern people take for granted. For example, Lily has to fight for her chance to attend school not only because she is a girl, but also because her parents cannot always afford the tuition. Lily has no time to wallow in misfortune, however, and appreciates others who similarly make the best of their lot in life. She admires Lupe because, despite being thrown out of her own home, she never feels sorry for herself. She respects Dorothy Clemens—the daughter of a tenant farmer hired by Dad, and who eventually marries Buster and runs the ranch—for similar reasons.

Going without for so long also teaches Lily a sense of resourcefulness, which becomes invaluable throughout her life. As an adult, she and Jim waste nothing—repurposing old clothes and lumber, sitting on crates for chairs, and fashioning wire into coffee mug handles. When she wants to save up money to buy the Hackberry ranch, she shows her children how to dig through trash to find recyclables. When she wants a gown to attend the *Gone With the Wind* premiere, she proudly fashions one out of her living room curtains. Lily's background grants her optimism about her ability to overcome obstacles and an appreciation of what she has.

Unearned wealth, on the other hand, breeds an obnoxious sense of superiority. Lily often feels looked down upon by the rich and has little patience for those who act "hoity-toity."At her Catholic school, Lily quickly establishes herself as more intelligent than her wealthier classmates and also less prone to moping and homesickness; life on the ranch makes life at the academy feel like "one long vacation." She also appreciates that

their gray uniforms "leveled out the differences between those who could afford fancy store-bought clothes and those of us, like me, who had only home-dyed beechnut brown dresses." When Lily becomes a maid in Chicago, her first boss, Mim, seems "very impressed with herself" and treats Lily as if she doesn't exist. Lily decides she will not spend her life under the thumb of people like Mim, insisting, "There was no shame in doing hard work, but polishing silver for rich dunderheads was not my Purpose."

Lily similarly does not see the need for fancy things, and instead asserts that "you can get so used to certain luxuries that you start to think they're necessities." For example, though she enjoys having indoor plumbing and electricity at her and Jim's home in Ash Fork, she is easily able to re-adapt to a simpler life on the ranch. Unlike Mom, who clings to her prized walnut headboard even as a flood destroys the family dugout, Lily rejects blindly worshipping or defining her worth via finery. When Rosemary later attends boarding school, Lily gives her a strand of fake pearls, insisting that if she holds her head high no one will know the difference.

By the end of the story Lily lives comfortably in the tiny town of Horse Mesa, happier in that "glorified camp" than she was in her large house in Phoenix. Lily is never content to sit idly even when she has the means to, however, and in addition to teaching fills her hours with political advocacy. For Lily, the American Dream is not simply about going from rags to riches, or from a life of endless toil to one of indulgent leisure. Without ever glamorizing the difficulties of poverty, her story ultimately suggests that frugality and hard work are themselves moral virtues. For Lily, the American dream is not freedom from work, but rather freedom to support herself through work she finds meaningful.

TECHNOLOGY AND PROGRESS

Lily grows up during a time of rapid technological development across the United States, as electricity, indoor plumbing, telephones, and automobiles become an integral part of American society. Many characters resist the changing times, but Lily is able to find success by embracing modern life without ever forgetting her roots. In her world, only those able to adapt and evolve can survive.

Lily's lifetime spans multiple technological advances that forever change the fabric of American society. The most prominent symbol of modernity for Lily is the automobile. Though initially a rare sight, the car becomes increasingly unavoidable the older Lily gets. She sees no cars on her first journey from the KC Ranch to Red Lake, for example, but by the time she makes her third journey just a few years later she passes several on the road. Electricity, indoor plumbing, the telephone, and paved roads also become more prominent as time passes in the novel. When Jim and Lily leave their garage in Ash Fork behind, for example, Lily notes that the road to the ranch is easy because Route 66 has been paved for the first time. The Christmas lights she and Jim string up one year are the first electric bulbs many of the ranch hands have ever seen. The changes are not limited to traditional technology, either; upon the birth of her second child, Lily notes that midwife Granny Comb's "mind-over-matter method of getting through the pain" has nothing on "marvelous modern anesthesia."

Despite the inevitability of change, Dad constantly rails against industrialization and mechanization, declaring that it is "destroying the human soul." Lily, on the other hand, recognizes that those who cling to the past are doomed. Having witnessed the future of transportation after teaching in Red Lake, she believes that horse-drawn carriages—and, as such, her father's livelihood—will become obsolete. Dad's anger over President Taft replacing the White House stables with a garage seems foolish, and she realizes that, as much as she loves horses, she does not want to join a dying industry. She says, "What Dad didn't understand was that no matter how much he hated or feared the future, it was coming, and there was only one way to deal with it: by climbing aboard."

Unlike her father, Lily readily adopts modern technologies for use on the ranch. She suggests using bulldozers to dig out dams to catch water, for example. She and Jim also use their Chevy, rather than a horse, to pull a plow and dig furrows to divert water during a massive rainstorm. Upon buying a long-range radio for their ranch, Lily tells Jim that the device "brings the twentieth century to Yavapai County." They use it to listen to the forecast and be better prepared for inclement weather. Towards the middle of the novel, Lily decides to show her children "the awesomeness of modern technology" and brings them to "the Boulder Dam, where four enormous turbines generated electricity that was sent all the way to California." This emphasizes that the scope of modern technology is in stark contrast to the world into which Lily was born and suggests that the greatest innovations are yet to come.

Perhaps the most impactful piece of technology on Lily's life is the **red airplane** that flies overhead upon her initial return from Red Lake. The plane, the first she has ever seen, marks a turning point for Lily, as it makes her realize how much more there is to the world than life on the KC Ranch. When she later takes her first flying lesson, she recognizes that the journey that took her a month on the back of Patches would have been mere hours in an airplane, foreshadowing how modern technology will revolutionize transportation across the country: "I loved Patches," she says, "but that had been one long, rump-numbing journey. On an airplane, it wouldn't have been much more than a little hop." This suggests that modern technology can mean much more than convenience; it can also open up and connect the world in ways—both positive and negative—like never before.

Indeed, Lily also notes that flying above the earth feels like

"beholding the entire world, seeing it all for the first time." Technology can be a means to open people's eyes—to new ideologies, different ways of life, and economic possibilities. The train, for example, allows Lily to move to Chicago, where she learns to debate politics and religion, and even joins in marches for women's suffrage. By the time she takes a flight with Rex at the end of the novel, they soar over "a string of telephone poles"—suggesting a coming revolution in people's ability to communicate faster and farther. With technology will come increased access to and exchange of information, resulting in the societal upheavals that are just beginning as Lily' story comes to an end.

CONNECTION TO NATURE

Though Lily appreciates modern technology, she remains intimately connected to the natural world. The novel presents nature as both destructive and nourishing, a force that at once dictates life on the ranch and grants characters freedom from meaningless or harmful societal rules and bureaucracy.

Lily learns to respect nature from a young age. The Caseys live in a dugout for the first few years of her life, where the natural world literally falls through their dirt ceiling from time to time. As ranchers, their livelihood is intimately linked to the land and they are at the mercy of storms, droughts, and floods. The terrain around Salt Draw is particularly harsh and unforgiving, leading Dad to insist that only the toughest among them can survive there. Lily continues to appreciate the power of nature as an adult when she and Jim work on their own ranch. The two are "true aficionados of the weather" and listen intently to the forecast every morning on their long-range radio. Lily says, "With water so scarce and severe storms so dangerous … we lived and died by those forecasts."

Indeed, water is particularly important throughout the novel. Living in the desert, Lily has seen people fight, and even kill, over access to it. She considers tap water an extravagant luxury, and eagerly offers glasses of it to guests at her house in Ash Fork. Jim's feelings about water encapsulate the book's conception of the natural world on the whole: "Without it we'd die, but it could also kill us, and that was why we loved it, even craved it, but also feared it. Never take water for granted, Jim said. Always cherish it. Always beware of it." The message is clear: nature should be both loved and feared.

Though Lily at first enjoys the novelty of living in Phoenix, she eventually feels "penned" in by its paved streets, tall buildings, and endless rules. For the first time in her life she does not like her job; because she is teaching at a large high school, there are "more rules for teachers than for students" as well as mountains of paperwork. She similarly hates all the restrictions of driving on city roads. When she goes to take more flying lessons and confronts even more regulations, she remarks that "city folks" have "chopped up the sky the same way they had the ground." Jim also hates sitting behind a desk for his job in Phoenix and feels especially uncomfortable with being a step removed from labor for the first time in his life. Lily notes that in Phoenix, Jim "missed the sweat and dust and heat of ranching, the smells and hard labor. He missed the way that ranch life forced you to study the sky and the land every day, trying to anticipate nature's intentions."

The monotonous constraints of city life, the novel thus implies, separate Lily from the kind of hard work she so deeply values. By distancing her family from the natural world, living in Phoenix also chips away at their sense of personal freedom. They are most at ease when able to live by the laws of nature rather than man. Lily, Jim, and their children are akin to the **half broke horses** of the novel's title—wild at heart, not yet broken by society's rules, and craving the freedom and visceral experience only nature can provide.

FATE VS. SELF-RELIANCE

The power of nature teaches Lily early on that life is fragile and unpredictable. While her mother is content to passively accept certain catastrophic events as "God's will," Lily instead chooses to believe in her own power to prepare for and respond to whatever comes her way. After Lily saves her younger siblings from the flash flood at the beginning of the novel, she resents Mom chalking their survival up to her own prayers rather than Lily's actions. When another flood hits the dugout, Mom prays instead of helping bail out the water; the dugout is destroyed, and, much to Lily's annoyance, Mom again insists it was "God's will." Lily's thinking contrasts with her mother's because while she too has faith in God, she also has faith in her *own* ability to shape her life. Lily believes God presents opportunities that she must then take advantage of on her own.

Mother Albertina echoes this notion in her advice to Lily when she is forced to drop out of school. Mother Albertina says that when God closes a window he opens a door—but it is up to Lily to find it. Dad similarly asserts that while everyone has a true calling, Lily needs to figure out her "Purpose in Life" for herself. This attitude undergirds Lily's actions throughout the novel. For example, it is why, rather than wait around for a husband at KC Ranch, a fifteen-year-old Lily undertakes a solo, 500-mile across the desert on horseback to reach her first-ever teaching gig. When she reaches Red Lake, she is proud that she has made it "through that darned door." After Helen's death, Lily begins to recognize how self-reliance manifests on an emotional level as well. She believes it is up to her to find her own happiness, noting that the sun "was going to rise and set regardless of whether I noticed it, and if I was going to enjoy it, that was up to me."

Lily's story shows how delicate and unpredictable life can be, and, as such, why it is vital to be prepared to handle whatever happens. When her roommate Minnie Hagan dies suddenly

after her long hair is caught in a piece of machinery, Lily reflects that "there was a lot of danger in this world, and you had to be smart about it. You had to do what you could to prevent disaster." To that end, she cuts her own hair to prevent it ever getting caught in a machine as Minnie's did.

Dad tells Lily that people must "hope for the best and plan for the worst," and raises her to view nearly every experience in her life as a lesson bringing her closer to her "Purpose"—and the most important lesson "is learning how to fall." On a literal level, knowing how to fall from horses without getting injured saves Lily's life when she is hit by a car in Chicago. More broadly, the setbacks in Lily's life teach her how to move forward. Whether it be the destruction of the dugout, having to leave school, filing for bankruptcy, or losing the ranch, time and again Lily is able to learn from her past and pick herself back up. Regardless of the hand she is dealt, Lily balances her faith in God and her search for a broader sense of purpose with her belief that, through self-reliance, she can become the master of her own fate.

SYMBOLS

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

HALF BROKE HORSES

The "**half broke horses**" of the novel's title represent people who can never be quite tamed by society. Half broken horses are those that are not entirely wild, but also not entirely submissive to riders yet. Lily uses the term to describe Rosemary and Rex as they drive away at the end of the novel, understanding that they will never be able to live within the confines of society's rules. As a teacher, it is Lily's job to prepare her students for the world, in effect "breaking" them. But Rosemary is the one child she asserts she could never teach. Lily herself is half broken to an extent, regularly disregarding rules she doesn't agree with—whether they be traffic laws or the insistence that she not teach sheltered Mormon girls that there is more to life than having babies. Lily's half broken nature results in her frequent firing, and it is why she feels happiest when living free from bureaucracy and arbitrary regulations.

THE RED AIRPLANE

The **red airplane** that Lily sees upon her return journey from Red Lake is the ultimate symbol of modern technology, and represents the inevitability of the future. Throughout the book, Lily bravely sets off into the unknown, eager to see what the world has to offer and to be a part of something more than what life on the ranch would allow. She actively seeks and embraces the future, but the plane also reveals that the future is coming even for those who, like Dad, hate and fear it. Lily chooses not to tell Dad about the plane because she knows it will upset him. Nevertheless, no matter how much Dad rails against modernity, he cannot stop it from quite literally flying overhead. As Lily says, the future is not going anywhere, and the only way to deal with it is to "climb aboard." Beyond being unstoppable, the plane also suggests just how much new technology is going to change the fabric of society. Lily notes that a journey that took four weeks on horseback would be a quick hop in a plane; modern technology will connect the world in ways like never before, opening people's eyes to opportunities and ideas that they could never have imagined previously.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Scribner edition of *Half Broke Horses* published in 2010.

Chapter 1 Quotes

"The windmill still lay toppled over the caved-in house, and the yard was strewn with branches. Dad was always going on about the easterners who came out to west Texas but weren't tough enough to cut it, and now we were folding our hand as well. Sometimes it didn't matter how much gumption you had. What mattered were the cards you'd been dealt.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 28

Explanation and Analysis

When Lily is eleven years old, a "monster" of a tornado drops a windmill onto the roof of the Casey's wooden house in west Texas. Despite having mocked those unable to handle living in Salt Draw, in this moment the family decides to throw in the towel as well and to leave for New Mexico. Beyond further establishing the hold that the natural world has on the Caseys' lives, this moment also highlights the novel's tension between fate and self-reliance. Lily has often rejected Mom's insistence that whatever happens to them is God's will, feeling that this leads to passive acceptance of one's fate rather than actively striving to make the most of one's lot in life. Here, however, Lily admits that certain things are ultimately beyond her control, and that sometimes the only way to move forward is to leave the past behind. Self-reliance is about more than taking charge of her destiny; it entails being wise enough to admit defeat and knowing when it is time to seek greener pastures.

Chapter 2 Quotes

Most of the other girls came from rich ranch families. Whereas I was used to hollering like a horse trainer, they had whispery voices and ladylike manners and matching luggage. Some of the girls complained about the gray uniforms we had to wear, but I liked the way they leveled out the differences between those who could afford fancy store-bought clothes and those of us, like me, who had only home-dyed beechnut brown dresses. I did make friends, however, trying to follow Dad's advice to figure out what someone wanted and help her get it, though it was hard, when you saw someone doing something wrong, to resist the temptation to correct her. Especially if that someone acted hoity-toity.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Dad / Adam Casey

Related Themes:

Page Number: 38-39

Explanation and Analysis

Despite excelling academically, Lily feels out of place at the Catholic boarding school she is sent to at age thirteen. Prevailing attitudes of the time expected women and girls to be modest, demure, and submissive—traits that Lily would have had little use for on the ranch. Lily defies expectations of her gender throughout the novel, however, and also resents anyone who looks down on her because of her lack of wealth. This moment also highlights the poverty of Lily's background, and her impatience with prejudice against the poor. In keeping with her character, Lily never feels sorry for herself; on the contrary, here she exhibits the conviction that she is right that her background will help her establish herself throughout her life. Finally, Lily's behavior in school will one day be mirrored by that of her daughter Rosemary, who similarly proves more rambunctious than her ladylike classmates.

Mom and Dad always talked as if it was a matter of course that Helen and I would marry and Buster would inherit the property, though I had to admit I'd never actually met a boy I liked, not to mention felt like marrying. On the other hand, women who didn't marry became old maids, spinsters who slept in the attic, sat in a corner peeling potatoes all day, and were a burden on their families, like our neighbor Old Man Pucket's sister, Louella.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Mother Albertina, Helen, Buster, Old Man Pucket, Mom / Daisy Mae Peacock, Dad / Adam Casey

Related Themes:

Page Number: 39

Explanation and Analysis

Halfway into the school year Mother Albertina, the Mother Superior, calls Lily into her study to praise her academic performance and encourage her to think about doing more with her life than simply getting married. Specifically, she tells Lily to think about becoming a teacher. Lily's thoughts in this moment underscore the realities of living in a man's world: she has always taken it as a given that Buster will get the KC Ranch simply because he is a boy, while she and Helen's ultimate goal will be marriage. Despite having no immediate interest in finding a husband, Lily's fears about becoming a spinster reflect the fact that there are few opportunities for women at this time, and sexist attitudes make it extremely difficult for women to strike out on their own. Lily's meeting with Mother Albertina is an important turning point in her life, because it is the first time she considers that she does not have to passively accept the options society has given her so far.

The problem with half-broke horses like these was that no one took the time to train them. Cowboys who could ride anything caught them and ran them on fear, spurring and quirting them too hard, taking pride in staying on no matter how desperately they bucked and fishtailed. Not properly broken, they were always scared and hated humans. A lot of times the cowboys released them once the roundup was over, but by then they'd lost some of the instincts that kept them alive out in the desert. They were, however, intelligent and had pluck, and if you broke them right, they made good horses.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 49

Explanation and Analysis

Old Man Pucket gives Dad a string of horses in repayment for shooting his Great Danes. Lily observes that the horses are in rough shape, and have yet to be broken—that is, made submissive to human riders. Half-broke horses are a

recurrent image in the novel, and the term is used to refer both to the actual animals and to people like Rosemary (and to an extent Lily herself)—individuals who remain half-wild and untamed by the rules and regulations of society. Lily also views her many teaching jobs largely as an effort to train the half-broken, impoverished children in rural towns. The danger of being half-broken is the inability to feel at home in either the wild or society. In this way, Lily's words foreshadow the difficulties her daughter Rosemary will face; after the family leaves their ranch, Rosemary insists that no place ever feels like home and leads a chaotic, nomadic existence.

Chapter 3 Quotes

I'd been on the road, out in the sun and sleeping in the open, for twenty-eight days. I was tired and caked with dirt. I'd lost weight, my clothes were heavy with grime and hung loosely, and when I looked in a mirror, my face seemed harder. My skin had darkened, and I had the beginnings of squint lines around my eyes. But I had made it, made it through that darned door.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Patches, Mother Albertina

Related Themes:

Page Number: 61

Explanation and Analysis

Lily makes this reflection upon reaching Red Lake after her long, difficult journey from the KC Ranch with Patches. These lines detail the difficulty of Lily's undertaking, highlighting her immense strength and determination. Here Lily also reiterates her conception of fate and self-reliance; as Mother Albertina told her before she left school, when God closes a window he opens a door. Lily believes that being pulled from school represented a window being closed, while the offer to teach in Red Lake was a new door. It was up to Lily, however, to make her way through that door—in this case, via an exhausting ride through the desert. Later in the novel, Lily will also reflect upon how much faster and easier this journey would have been using modern transportation, emphasizing the increased presence of technology and the irrelevance of things like travel by horseback.

I couldn't help feeling a little burned about being told by Fish Face that I was now unqualified to do something I'd spent the last four years doing.

Superintendent MacIntosh seemed to know what I was thinking. "You're young and strong, and you got pretty eyes," he said. "You just find yourself a husband—one of these soldier boys—and you'll be fine."

Related Characters: Mr. MacIntosh, Lily Casey Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 69

Explanation and Analysis

During World War I, many civilians left their hometowns to work in factories in support of the war effort. This led to a teacher shortage, which was how Lily initially found a job in Red Lake despite having neither a high school diploma nor a teaching certificate. Though she has proven herself entirely capable, the county superintendent Mr. MacIntosh fires Lily upon the war's end and the return of teachers with official qualifications. Mr. MacIntosh's attitude is in keeping with the sexism of the time period; the novel has already established that, for women living in a man's world, finding a husband is typically the quickest path to financial security. Lily however, maintains goals beyond marriage, and Mr. MacIntosh is yet another example of the sexist expectations she will bump against throughout her life as she tries to establish her independence. Lily will forever associate Mr. MacIntosh with meaningless rules, and this moment also foreshadows the insensitivity and selfishness he will later display upon demanding that a pregnant Helen leave Red Lake.

As I listened to Dad, I could feel myself pulling away from him. All my life I'd been hearing Dad reminiscing about the past and railing against the future. I decided not to tell him about the red airplane. It would only get him more worked up. What Dad didn't understand was that no matter how much he hated or feared the future, it was coming, and there was only one way to deal with it: by climbing aboard.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Dad / Adam Casey

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 68

Explanation and Analysis

When Lily makes the return journey from Red Lake, she sees an airplane for the first time. Upon arrival at the KC Ranch, she reflects on both the plane and on all the cars she had seen during her time in Arizona, and then asks Dad whether he would ever consider getting an automobile. In response, Dad begins to rant against technology. It is in this moment that Lily realizes she does not want the life of a horsewoman, and that the carriage horse business Dad has devoted his life to is likely doomed. Unlike Dad, Lily understands that new technology will become increasingly unavoidable, and that she must embrace it if she wishes to survive in the modern world. She will continue to exhibit this attitude throughout the novel—using technology to improve ranching methods, learning to drive, and taking flying lessons.

> But no matter how much planning you do, one tiny miscalculation, one moment of distraction, can end it all in an instant. There was a lot of danger in this world, and you had to be smart about it. You had to do what you could to prevent disaster. That night at the boardinghouse, I got out a pair of scissors and a mirror, and although Mom always called my long brown hair my crowning glory, I cut it all off just below my ears.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Mom / Daisy Mae Peacock, Minnie Hanagan

Related Themes:

Page Number: 73

Explanation and Analysis

Lily's roommate in Chicago, Minnie Hagan, is killed unexpectedly when her hair gets caught in a piece of machinery at the factory in which she works. Minnie's story would not have been altogether uncommon at the time; in the early twentieth century many women flocked to work in factories where the conditions were often extremely dangerous. Lily is deeply shaken by Minnie's death, and her subsequent reflections upon the unpredictability of life are in keeping with the novel's exploration of fate and self-reliance; as she has done throughout her life, Lily accepts that many things are out of her control but that it is up to her to prepare for the world in whatever ways she can. The fact that she does so by cutting her long hair—a traditional symbol of femininity—is yet another example of her bucking the restrictive societal expectations placed upon her gender.

Chapter 4 Quotes

> I discovered that I loved cars even more than I loved horses. Cars didn't need to be fed if they weren't working, and they didn't leave big piles of manure all over the place. Cars were faster than horses, and they didn't run off or kick down fences. They also didn't buck, bite, or rear, and they didn't need to be broke and trained, or caught and saddled up every time you needed to go somewhere. They didn't have a mind of their own. Cars obeyed you.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Jim Smith

Related Themes:

Page Number: 98

Explanation and Analysis

After seeing her fall from the mustang Red Devil during a race, Jim Smith offers to teach Lily how to drive. She learns to do so on a "flivver"—that is, a Ford Model T—and immediately embraces the new technology. Lily has welcomed modernity ever since seeing the red airplane pass overhead on her return from Red Lake. She has long recognized the need to "climb aboard" the future, and she does so quite literally here. Her reasons for liking cars echo her reason for liking teaching: they give her the opportunity to be in charge. Driving also grants her the freedom and independence of riding horses without many of the difficulties of dealing with live animals. By listing all of the automobile's comparative advantages, Lily makes clear that the car will easily overtake horses as the country's primary means of transportation.

> The parents of my schoolkids included cattle rustlers, drunks, land speculators, bootleggers, gamblers, and former prostitutes. They didn't mind me racing horses, playing poker, or drinking contraband whiskey, but my showing some compassion to a sister who'd been taken advantage of and then abandoned by a smooth-talking scoundrel filled them with moral indignation. It made me want to throttle them all.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Mr.

MacIntosh, Helen

Related Themes:

Page Number: 107

Explanation and Analysis

When the town of Red Lake learns of Helen's pregnancy, both she and Lily are shunned. Mr. MacIntosh tells Lily that Helen's presence is a threat to impressionable school children as well as the reputation of the Arizona Board of Education, and as such that Helen must leave Red Lake. By becoming pregnant, Helen has deviated from the societal expectation that women be pure. Lily senses the immense hypocrisy of townspeople taking offense at Helen while readily engaging in their own immoral behavior. This scene emphasizes the deep-seated misogyny of Lily's time, which held women to impossible and often cruel double standards. It also establishes the context for Helen's despair and ultimate suicide.

She was convinced that Mom in particular would never forgive her for bringing shame on the family. Mom and Dad would disown her, she believed, the same way our servant girl Lupe's parents had kicked her out when she got pregnant. No man would ever want her again, Helen said, she had no place to go. She wasn't as strong as me, she said, and couldn't make it on her own.

"Don't you ever feel like giving up?" Helen asked. "I just feel like giving up."

"That's nonsense," I said. "You're much stronger than you think. There's always a way out." I talked again about the cottonwood tree. I also told her about the time I was sent home from the Sisters of Loretto because Dad wouldn't pay my tuition, and how Mother Albertina had told me that when God closes a window, he opens a door, and it was up to us to find it.

Related Characters: Helen, Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Lupe, Dad / Adam Casey, Mom / Daisy Mae Peacock, Mother Albertina

Related Themes:

Page Number: 108

Explanation and Analysis

After overhearing Mr. MacIntosh say she must leave Red Lake, Helen is distraught. Her fears echo the sexism of the time and the harsh, unfair consequences for women who strayed from societal prescriptions for female behavior. The mention of Lupe underscores that Helen has legitimate cause to be concerned, while her statement that she feels like "giving up" foreshadows her suicide. Lily, meanwhile, attempts to lighten Helen's spirits by recounting stories of self-reliance—including the opening scene from the novel, when the siblings were able to survive a flash flood by climbing a tree. She once again invokes the words of Mother Albertina, which have propelled Lily forward through many hardships. Unlikely Lily, however, Helen never learned to pick herself back up after a fall; her background has not prepared her for the situation she has found herself in, and as such she feels unable to survive it.

Chapter 5 Quotes

I realized that in the months since Helen had died, I hadn't been paying much attention to things like the sunrise, but that old sun had been coming up anyway. It didn't really care how I felt, it was going to rise and set regardless of whether I noticed it, and if I was going to enjoy it, that was up to me.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 113

Explanation and Analysis

After Helen hangs herself, Lily falls into deep despair. She resents the people of Red Lake and finds little joy in teaching—or anything else, for that matter. One morning, however, as she watches the sun come up she realizes that she has let sadness cloud her vision for too long. The self-reliance that has guided her actions up to this point comes to guide her emotional state as well; just as Lily has walked through the "door" of opportunity in the past, she now decides to take her happiness into her own hands. She subsequently realizes she wants to have a baby and approaches Jim Smith about marriage.

A distinctly malodorous aroma arose from the hole, and for a moment I missed my snazzy mail-order toilet with the shiny white porcelain bowl, the mahogany lid, and the nifty pull-chain flush. As I sat down, though, I realized that you can get so used to certain luxuries that you start to think they're necessities, but when you have to forgo them, you come to see that you don't need them after all. There was a big difference between needing things and wanting things—though a lot of people had trouble telling the two apart—and at the ranch, I could see, we'd have pretty much everything we'd need but precious little else.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 133

Explanation and Analysis

After going bankrupt in Ash Fork, Jim gets a job managing a huge, remote ranch. Upon arrival Lily is momentarily disappointed by the lack of the creature comforts she enjoyed in their previous home—including indoor plumbing. Despite this, she is, as always, quick to adjust to her new surroundings and make the best of their comparatively spartan living situation. Lily has long associated hard work with morality and refuses to get caught up in wealth and finery like the rich couples she cleaned for in Chicago. For her, the American Dream is simply about being able to live by the fruit of her own honest labor. Throughout the novel she remains more concerned with practicality than luxury, and this quality enables her to save money for the things she really cares about—such as flying lessons.

"Just you remember," I said, "that this is what could happen when an animal gets freedom. Animals act like they hate to be penned up, but the fact is, they don't know what to do with freedom. And a lot of times it kills them."

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Rosemary

Related Themes:

Page Number: 142

Explanation and Analysis

Lily says these words to Rosemary after the latter lets Bossie, the family cow, free from her pen; without supervision, Bossie proceeds to eat an entire sack of feed and dies. Rosemary hates seeing anything be caged, and this is not the last time she will attempt to set an animal on her parents' ranch free. But Bossie could not fend for herself and was lost without the guidance of her human handlers. Lily similarly believes that Rosemary requires "structure" in her life, and will later assert that her daughter needs an "anchor" of a husband to rein in her flighty tendencies. Bossie's fate thus foreshadows Rosemary's tumultuous marriage to the unstable Rex Walls: without a tether, Rosemary and Rex embrace freedom to the point of self-destruction, constantly bouncing from city to city, falling into poverty, and, in Rex's case, struggling with addiction.

Chapter 6 Quotes

That, I came to see, was the heart of the matter. You were free to choose enslavement, but the choice was a free one only if you knew what your alternatives were. I began to think of it as my job to make sure the girls I was teaching learned that it was a big world out there and there were other things they could do besides being brood-mares dressed in feed sacks.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 165

Explanation and Analysis

Lily makes this observation while working in the tiny, secluded town of Main Street, which is full of Mormon polygamists. Lily is distraught by the fact that many of her female students seem to "disappear" into marriages around age thirteen. The town is also extremely poor and isolated. Just as Lily did not realize how much more there was to the world than the KC Ranch until she saw the red airplane, these girls do not know that they have options beyond what Main Street wishes to show them. Lily's words reflect her commitment to empowering other women by opening their eyes to what else is out there, and also reflect her conception of self-reliance; she will go on to tell these girls that they can pull themselves from their situation so long as they have the "gumption."

Chapter 7 Quotes

But the Jesuits were used to dealing with untamed ranch boys, and they regarded Little Jim as one more rambunctious rapscallion. Rosemary's teachers, however, saw her as a misfit. Most of the girls at the academy were demure, frail things, but Rosemary played with her pocketknife, yodeled in the choir, peed in the yard, and caught scorpions in a jar she kept under her bed. She loved to leap down the school's main staircase and once took it in two bounds only to come crashing into the Mother Superior. She was behaving more or less the way she did on the ranch, but what seemed normal in one situation can seem outright peculiar in another, and the nuns saw Rosemary as a wild child.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Little Jim, Rosemary

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 192

Explanation and Analysis

Sensing their children need more "civilizing," Lily and Jim send both Rosemary and Little Jim to boarding school. Rosemary attends the same Catholic school that Lily went to as a girl, and, also like her mother, does not fit in with her submissive, quiet classmates. Lily spent her time in school "hollering like a horse trainer" and Rosemary too disregards gendered expectations of female behavior. But while Lily recognizes that her daughter's enthusiasm can be a valuable asset, she has also learned that the rest of society does not necessarily see it that way. Rosemary's school behavior is an early indication of the fact that she is a "half-broke horse," or a wild child who will never be tamed. The fact that Buster behaves similarly yet faces few consequences further underscores the sexist attitudes of the time, which regard little boys as more naturally rambunctious.

Dad's death didn't hollow me out the way Helen's had. After all, everyone had assumed Dad was a goner back when he got kicked in the head as a child. Instead, he had cheated death and, despite his gimp and speech impediment, lived a long life doing pretty much what he wanted. He hadn't drawn the best of cards, but he'd played his hand darned well, so what was there to grieve over?

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Helen, Dad / Adam Casey

Related Themes:

Page Number: 199

Explanation and Analysis

Dad dies in a nursing home shortly after Rosemary and Lily drive to visit him one final time. Despite having been close to her father, Lily is not particularly upset over his death because he embodied the self-reliance she so respects. The notion of being dealt a certain hand or lot in life has arisen multiple times throughout the novel at this point, and Lily always believes that what matters is a person's ability to play their cards the best they can. Dad took control of his fate and had the best life he could have, given his circumstances. Despite his setbacks he managed to fulfill his own version of the American Dream. Lily feels that Helen, in contrast, did not do everything she could to survive. Lily believes Helen had other options, and that waste is part of what makes Helen's death so existentially painful for Lily.

Chapter 8 Quotes

Cars were supposed to mean freedom, but all these people stuck in traffic on one way streets—where you weren't even allowed to make a U-turn to get the hell out of the jam—might as well have been sitting in cages. ... Nothing had ever made me feel as free as flying and I was only a few hours away from getting my pilot's license so I decided to take up lessons again. The airport had a flying school, but when I showed up one day, the clerk passed me an entire sheaf of forms and started yammering about eye exams physicals, takeoff slots, elevation restrictions and no-fly zones. I realized that these city folks had boxed off and chopped up the sky the same way they had the ground.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 224

Explanation and Analysis

Lily and Jim move the family to Phoenix, which Lily likes at first due to its many restaurants and shops. She quickly begins to feel penned in by the many rules and regulations of the city, however. Lily has always embraced technology and modernity but finds that traffic laws suck the

freedom—and as such the joy—out of driving. She is similarly disappointed to learn that the "city folk" have imposed what seem to her like arbitrary restrictions on the sky. Though she has long sought to embrace modernity, Lily will never feel truly at ease within the confines of city life. She and her family are half-broke horses in the sense that only amidst the wild, unrestricted natural world do they feel truly free.

Chapter 9 Quotes

I felt there was a lot more I could say about the subject of danger. I could have given her an entire lecture on it, talking about my dad getting his head staved in by a horse when he was three, about my Chicago friend Minnie getting killed when her hair got caught in machinery, about my sister, Helen, taking her own life after accidentally getting pregnant. Life came with as much adventure and danger as any one body needed. You didn't have to go chasing after them. But the fact of the matter was, Rosemary hadn't really listened to what I had to say ever since that time we visited the Havasupai and I gave her the whipping for swimming with Fidel Hanna.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Fidel Hanna , Helen, Dad / Adam Casey, Minnie Hanagan, Rosemary

Related Themes:

Page Number: 257

Explanation and Analysis

The day after Rex drunkenly insults Lily during a poker game, Lily tries to convince Rosemary that her boyfriend is dangerous. Rosemary refuses to listen, insisting that constantly worrying about danger causes people to miss out on adventure. Lily reflects that Rosemary does not have any real idea of what danger the world holds yet, whereas Lily's many experiences have granted her an understanding of the fragility and unpredictability of life. She wishes she could instill this knowledge in her daughter, but she has been unable to teach Rosemary ever since Lily beat her for swimming with Fidel Hanna. This moment reveals the core tension between Lily and Rosemary's conception of fate and self-reliance, which shapes their competing interpretations of the world: Lily has always believed that because she cannot control what is going to happen, she must prepare for the worst. Rosemary, however, believes that because she cannot control what will happen, there is no use wasting time worrying about it at all.

I shook my head and looked at the lilies. "I could cut you all the slack in the world, but I still think my daughter needs an anchor."

"The problem with being attached to an anchor," he said, "is it's damned hard to fly."

Related Characters: Rex Walls, Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Rosemary

Related Themes:

Page Number: 258

Explanation and Analysis

After drunkenly insulting Lily during a poker game, Rex attempts to make amends by appearing with a bouquet of lilies and offering to take Lily flying. Though she accepts the flight offer, Lily continues to insist that Rosemary needs a man who will keep her grounded—and that Rex is too unstable to fill that role. Rex, like Rosemary, prefers to focus on the present rather than planning for the future. Rex represents adventure, opportunity, and freedom, but also instability and recklessness. He and Rosemary's relationship echoes the earlier story of Bossie the cow, whom Rosemary let out of her pen only for the cow to eat herself to death. Rex and Rosemary fuel each other's more selfish and impulsive tendencies, and despite his promise of flight, their lives never really take off.

As Rosemary climbed into the car, Rex patted her behind like he owned it, then got in beside her. They were both still laughing as Rex gunned the motor the way he always did.

Jim put his arm around me and we watched them take off up the street, heading out into open country like a couple of half-broke horses.

Related Characters: Lily Casey Smith (speaker), Jim Smith, Rex Walls, Rosemary

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 265

Explanation and Analysis

In the final moments of the novel, Lily and Jim watch Rosemary and Rex drive off after their wedding. Rex's aggressive driving suggests he is as reckless as ever, while his owner-like treatment of Rosemary suggests how strong

of an influence he will have as her husband. Just as the midwife Granny Combs' predicted upon her birth, Rosemary is a wanderer. By calling her and Rex half-broke horses, Lily is suggesting that the two are not—and likely never will be—able to live within the rules of society. Having already reflected that Rosemary was the one child she could never teach, Lily accepts that she also cannot "break" her daughter; Rosemary will forever be willful and half-wild. Lily senses the adventure and hardship that await her as she ventures into the world on her own.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

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

CHAPTER 1

As Lily, her younger brother Buster, and their younger sister Helen try to bring the family cows in from the pasture, Lily senses that the animals know "trouble" is coming. Then there is a sudden rumble in the ground, and a flash flood rushes toward the children. Lily and Buster carry Helen between them as they run, climbing a cottonwood tree just in time to avoid being slammed by a six-foot wall of water. The children sit in the tree for hours. Lily, the eldest at age ten, takes charge. Helen says she can't hold on any longer, but Lily tells her she has to. She grills her siblings about their multiplication tables, state capitals, and whatever else she can think of, and is able to keep them awake through the night.

Lily's straightforward voice and practical recitation of how she saved her siblings establishes her as a brave, resourceful girl who does what she needs to do in order to survive. This scene also makes clear that she and her family are living in an inhospitable, unpredictable environment, where nature can turn on them in an instant. Lily will reference climbing the cottonwood tree later in the novel as a means of reminding Helen that there is always a way out of tricky situations.

In the morning, the children climb down and wade through the now shallower water to reach their house. Upon arrival, Dad rushes to greet them while Mom kneels in prayer, asserting that her praying through the night is what saved them. She demands that they thank both her and their guardian angel. After Lily tells her father how she saved her siblings, he tells her that maybe *she* was the guardian angel.

This scene introduces Lily's parents and establishes Mom's deep (yet ultimately passive) religious belief. Lily values self-reliance over blind faith and resents the implication that an outside force saved her siblings.

The family lives on Salt Draw near the Pecos river in west Texas, an unforgiving terrain with hard soil, prickly plants, and thunderstorms. Because the land is so dry, the family's 160 acres is barely enough to raise their cattle. The land is also overrun with peacocks, which Dad intended to sell but proved unpopular with locals. Dad's main job is breeding and training carriage horses, which he loves despite having been kicked in the head by a horse as a child. This resulted in his walking with a limp and having permanently slurred speech. He still loves horses, however, because they do not pity him like people do.

This further establishes how inhospitable the land is where Lily's family lives, and how nature dictates their lives. Dad's peacock scheme foreshadows his later purchase of Great Danes with Lily's tuition money, and suggests his susceptibility to harebrained schemes. His devotion to horses will also later blind him to the fact that his entire business is becoming obsolete.

Lily notes that she was born in 1901, shortly after Dad got out of prison for allegedly murdering a settler in a land dispute. Dad's own father, Robert Casey, had been killed in a similar dispute decades earlier. Dad maintained his innocence, though. After marrying Lily's mother, they left the area and moved to their current location along Salt Draw.

Life in the southwest at this time is dangerous and often lawless. This passage also establishes the Casey family's deep connection to the area, Dad's quick temper, and the circumstances from which Lily will ultimately pull herself.

Lily and her family, like many in the area, live in a simple dugout in the ground as a result of not having enough timber for a house. Insects, snakes, and small mammals sometimes fall from the ceiling, and the dugout is always filled with mosquitos. When Lily gets yellow jack fever, Dad takes care of her. Mom says the fever may have "boiled her brain" and made it harder for her to find a husband.

The Caseys live in extreme poverty and, as ranchers, are almost entirely at the mercy of the natural world. Mom further represents and has internalized many of the sexist attitudes of the time. Lily must overcome both poverty and misogyny to fulfill her version of the "American Dream."

Mom is overly-concerned with "proprieties" and refuses to help with any chores requiring manual labor. Her prized possession is a carved walnut headboard that once belonged to her parents and reminds her of "the civilized world." Because she refuses to do chores, Dad does them with Apache, an old man who was captured by Native Americans as a child and found by Robert when he was a scout in the U.S. Cavalry. The family also has a Mexican servant, Lupe, who was thrown out of her own home after having a child out of wedlock. Lily likes Lupe because she never feels sorry for herself.

Mom is a product of her environment and generation, and shows the dominant attitudes towards women's roles in the early twentieth century. Lupe's story reveals the consequences faced by women who step beyond these sexist boundaries—especially as Apache and Lupe come from societies even more marginalized than women of the white Casey family. Lily's admiration of Lupe reflects a core part of Lily's own character, and she will reject self-pity throughout the novel regardless of her circumstances.

Mom, on the other hand, feels like she had not signed up for life in Salt Draw when she married. The family moved there after Robert got shot and killed; his children argued about how to split up his herd of horses. Dad felt like he got cheated out of his share and is caught up in lawsuits against his elder brother over the herd. Lily notes that her father has a serious temper, in part due to his frustration with not being understood because of his speech impediment.

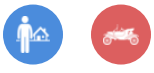
The wild environment of the American southwest is further established, as is the importance of owning land and the rationale behind Dad's appreciation of animals over human beings. Dad must overcome his own personal hardships to support his family.

Salt draw is home to frequent dangerous flash flooding. When Lily was eight, a flood poured into the dugout. Mom refused to help them bail the dugout out, instead insisting on praying. As a result it collapsed, though Mom said this was "God's will." After the flood a neighbor abandoned his home, and the family quickly scavenged his lumber to build a new wooden house. Mom reasserts that the flood was God's will.

Nature continues to control the family's life. Walls again shows the contrast between Mom's belief in fate and Lily's belief in self-reliance, as well as the need to take advantage of any and every opportunity—something Lily will continue to do throughout her life whenever disaster strikes.

Despite the way his speech makes him sound, Lily asserts that Dad is smart and well-read. He is a prolific writer, frequently focused on the perils of industrialization and mechanization. He is also a critic of the treatment of Native Americans and Mexicans by the U.S. government. Believing himself to be a better teacher than the one-room schoolhouse, he tutors Lily, who in turn tutors her siblings.

This scene establishes Dad's resistance to progress early on, an increasingly dangerous trait in the face of increasingly unavoidable technology. He passes his hatred of prejudice on to Lily, who admires those who treat people equally regardless of race, gender, or social status.



Mom is closest with Helen, who inherited her dainty features and constitution. She dotes on Buster as the future of the family, and who Lily notes is "one of the fastest and smoothest talkers in the country." Mom is not sure what to do with Lily, who has too much "gumption" to be a real lady. Lily says that the brunt of housework often falls to her, and laments that, without electricity, running water, or plumbing, the work is endless.

Helen has inherited many of Mom's passive "ladylike" qualities, which will ultimately spell her doom. Lily, on the other hand, will always bristle against prescribed societal roles for women. With hard work, she plans to prove her worth in a man's world.

Lily reflects on helping Dad train the horses from the time she turned five. Dad tells Lily to always "think like a horse," and also says horses are always driven by fear; the key to controlling one is convincing him you'll protect him. Dad seems to have a private language of grunts and clicks to communicate with the horses, and he cracks the whip next to their ears rather than on their backs so as not to hurt them.

Lily learns to value hard work from a young age. Her connection to horses clearly runs deep, and she will carry the lessons from her interactions with the animals throughout her life—both as a teacher and later a mother, when she tries to tame her wild daughter Rosemary.

Lily says she was in charge of breaking the horses, a job made easier by the fact that they raised them from foals. She did this by riding them bareback until they "accepted their fate." She was thrown often, though Dad said falling was an important part of life. Once, while riding an easily-spooked horse named Roosevelt, Lily was flung from the horse's back and snapped her forearm. Mom was furious, but Dad set the bones. When Lily called the horse "dumb," Dad insisted it was not the horse's fault. Lily got back in the saddle after four weeks.

Walls shows Lily's strength and her connection to horses, and emphasizes the importance of learning to fall—something that will save Lily's life when she is later hit by a car in Chicago. Lily's self-reliance is exemplified by her ability to pick herself up after falls and setbacks throughout her life, and she will always admire others who do the same.

Lily also feeds chickens and collects eggs. Once a week she goes to the nearest town to sell most of the eggs to Mr. Clutterbuck, the grocer, for one cent. He then sells them for two cents, telling Lily that this is how the world works. Lily unsuccessfully tries to barter, which Dad thinks will help her learn the "art of negotiation" and achieve her "Purpose in Life." He has a "Theory of Purpose," and believes anything that does not achieve that purpose is a waste—hence why he never buys the children toys. Lily recounts being hit in the stomach with a baseball while playing with her siblings and neighbors. The blow ruptured her appendix and she had to be taken to the hospital, but her father asserted that it was okay, because the appendix is a vestigial organ with no "Purpose." If she wanted to risk her life again, she should do it for a "Purpose."

Dad's notion of "Purpose" contrasts with Mom's blind faith in God's will and helps Lily establish a sense of self-reliance; she knows she must find her Purpose for herself rather than rely on anyone else to show her the way. Lily will reflect on this need for purpose at multiple turning points throughout her life, and Dad's insistence on turning everything in his children's lives into lessons will further manifest in Lily's own parenting style.

Lily notes that tornados are frequent in Salt Draw, and that the inhabitants fear them even more than flash floods. When she is eleven, a "monster" of a tornado strikes. Dad sets all the horses free so they have a chance to gallop away from the storm. Lily sees sunlight through the clouds and takes "that as a sign." The family, plus Apache and Lupe, hide in the crawl space under the house. Mom grabs everyone's hands to pray, and Lily asks God to forgive her "earlier lack of sincere faith." They all survive.

Nature continues to be something that Lily's family must respect and fear. Mom's faith in God's will continues to guide her actions. In her fear, Lily also momentarily puts her misgivings about this type of thinking aside, though only after she and her family have already done everything in their power to make it through the storm.

Upon emerging from the crawl space, they find that a windmill has smashed their roof. A furious Dad compares west Texas to hell, and, assuming he will not be tried again for "that phony old murder charge," decides to move the family back to the Casey Ranch in New Mexico. The family packs up their carriages with everything they can, including the walnut headboard. Despite the hardship of life in west Texas, Lily knows she will miss it. For once she accepts her mother's assertion that it is God's will—or at least his way of telling them to move on.

Lily reinterprets the notion of God's will, deciding to view it as a guide that they must follow on their own (in this instance, by leaving the inhospitable Salt Draw behind). The family's relative lack of belongings emphasizes their poverty, and the move from Salt Draw represents the first major turning point in Lily's life. She will remember the lessons of west Texas—to value hard work and respect nature—wherever she goes.

CHAPTER 2

The family travels for three days to reach the Casey Ranch, which Dad likes to call the "KC ranch," where the countryside is so green that Lily can hardly believe her eyes. The ranch is farm-like, with tomato vines and peach orchards. The house is made of sturdy adobe and stone, and contains two bedrooms, plus a woodshed and barn stall for Lupe and Apache. To Lily, it feels like "grandeur." The next day they spot a mirage on the horizon that looks like an upside-down town. They are all mesmerized, even as Dad explains the science behind it. He draws a diagram in the dirt and explains how cold air bends light. When Lily finally understands, he says, "Eureka!" Lily feels a rush, like she might "get a handle on this old world after all."

The fact that it takes three days to reach the ranch is an early indication of how tedious and time-consuming horse-drawn travel can be. The family's poverty is again emphasized by the fact that simply having a sturdy home with two bedrooms constitutes nearly-unimaginable grandeur for Lily and her siblings. Dad's explanation of mirages underscores his intelligence and serves as the first moment in which Lily realizes how much she enjoys learning for its own sake.

Despite being only eleven, Lily oversees the hiring of farmhands for her father. Dad is distracted by training horses, and continues to write to politicians and newspapers "railing against" modernization. He is also working on a book on phonetic spelling and a biography of Billy the Kid—who had swapped a horse out at the Casey Ranch when Dad was a teen. Dad considers the Kid "a good American boy" who only shot people who deserved it. He also admires that he stood up for Mexicans. Dad's biography will vindicate the Kid and prove to the world that despite his speech impediment, Dad is good with words.

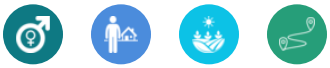
Lily continues to be extremely hard working and self-reliant, stepping into traditionally masculine roles on the ranch without complaint. Dad's hatred of modernity will become increasingly futile as modern technology becomes more embedded in everyday life. His evaluation of Billy the Kid reveals the subjectivity of morality in this world, and again emphasizes his impatience with racial prejudice.

That fall Lily turns twelve and Buster enrolls in a Jesuit school, despite being two years younger than Lily. When Lily turns thirteen, her parents finally let her attend a Catholic girls school in Santa Fe, 200 miles away. Lily is impressed with the beauty of Santa Fe and takes an immediate liking to the strict but fair Mother Albertina, the Mother Superior of her new school. Mother Albertina explains that the staircase to the choir loft in the school chapel has 33 steps, the same age as Jesus when he died. It was built by a mysterious carpenter, seemingly in answer to the nuns' prayers.

The fact that Buster is allowed to attend school before Lily underscores the sexist nature of society at this time. When Lily is eventually allowed to go, she must travel a vast distance, emphasizing how isolated the ranch—and much of the American southwest—still was at this time. Mother Albertina will play an important role in Lily's life, and from the beginning serves as a role model of a strong woman.

Compared to the ranch, school feels like a vacation to Lily, and she excels academically. She begins to tutor other students and notes the differences between the soft-spoken girls from rich families and herself, who is so used to yelling and "hollering like a horse trainer."

Lily's background, though difficult, has equipped her to take on school life with ease. Her tutoring other students foreshadows her later becoming a teacher, while her difference from the other girls underscores the fact that she does not fit in with traditional conceptions of femininity.



One day Mother Albertina calls Lily into her study and tells her that while many girls are at the school to become marriage material, Lily does not have to get married. Though women continue to have few professional opportunities, she encourages Lily to think about becoming a teacher. She says that Lily, like her, has a "strong personality." Lily reflects that she loves learning and that she could be her "own boss" in the classroom. Unfortunately, Mother Albertina calls Lily back to her study later to tell her that Dad has failed to pay her tuition for the next semester, and she will need to leave school.

Mother Albertina's speech reiterates the limited options for even the strongest, most intelligent women of the time. Teaching could be a way for Lily to assert her independence and autonomy in such an environment, and she takes Mother Albertina's advice to heart. The family's poverty stands in the way of her goals momentarily, however, representing yet another "fall" from which Lily will have to pick herself up.

Mother Albertina sees a tearful Lily to the train station and assures her that when God closes a window he opens a door. Dad meets Lily in the town of Tinnie, along with four huge Great Danes in the back of the carriage. Dad spent the tuition money on the dogs, which he plans to breed. Lily is outraged, especially upon learning that Buster gets to stay in school because he is a boy. The ranch is in mild disrepair when they arrive, and Lily wonders if Dad stopped paying tuition so she would have to help out there again.

Lily will remember Mother Albertina's words for much of her life and turn to them in times of strife. They echo her belief in her ability to take control of her own future, as opposed to relying on faith in "God's will." The fact that Buster is allowed to stay in school again reveals the inescapable sexism of Lily's environment.

The Caseys have brought in tenant farmer Zachary Clemens, his wife, and daughter, Dorothy, to help out on the ranch. Lily admires Dorothy's work ethic. One day Dorothy finds all four dogs shot dead by neighboring Old Man Pucket, who accuses them of chasing his cattle. A furious Dad grabs his shotgun, but Dorothy wrestles it from him and tells him that shooting Pucket would just start a feud—and a feud had killed her own brother years earlier. Lily reminds Dad that a feud killed his father as well.

Lily continues to admire strong women, like Dorothy, who take their lives into their own hands. Men's anger threatens to tear Lily's world apart, and it is only through a woman's wisdom that Dad is prevented from starting a potentially deadly feud.

Dad decides to file a legal claim against Old Man Pucket instead and appoints Lily to speak for him in court. Lily is well-prepared to make a presentation, but the judge cuts her off and quickly rules that Pucket needs to pay her father back in horses or cattle. Pucket later brings a string of horses to the Casey corral and hands them off to Lily, who sees no point in holding a grudge against a neighbor. Pucket tells Lily should would make a good lawyer.

Lily's intelligence is again evidenced by this foray into law, however brief, and this also foreshadows her knack for politics much later in life. The fact that she readily forgives Old Man Pucket shows how practical-minded Lily is, another trait that will serve her well as she works to lift herself from poverty.

Old Man Pucket's horses are "**half-broke**," meaning no one had properly trained them and they will be very difficult to ride due to their fear of humans. Lily takes to a mare who seems less skittish than the rest, saying that though she is not a beautiful horse, she is smart. Lily names her Patches after her white, brown, and black coloring. Lily accepts that her chance at education is behind her, so she needs to make the most of what she has. She begins to break Patches properly, and the horse proves a quick learner. They start racing in small races.

Lily connects with Patches because the horse reminds her of herself: brave, intelligent, and somewhat willful. Lily values these attributes more than beauty, despite the fact that women often are only valued for the latter. In a sense, Lily is a "half-broke horse" too, and this is in part why she so easily connects with Patches. The mare will prove a steady, invaluable companion to Lily for decades to come.

That summer Buster finishes eighth grade and does not feel the need to continue to high school, having already achieved a higher education than most out West. Lily notices that he and Dorothy like each other and observes that he would need someone hardworking like Dorothy beside him if he were ever to run the ranch on his own.

Societal sexism means that Buster will inherit the ranch despite the fact that Lily has proven herself the more capable sibling. Women's strength is again emphasized by the fact that Dorothy is more adept at running the ranch than is Lily's brother.

Lily receives a letter from Mother Albertina. With World War I starting there is a shortage of teachers, and Lily would just need to pass a test to get a job—despite being only fifteen. Mom thinks leaving the ranch would reduce Lily's chance of finding a husband, and Dad wants her to stay and help, but they allow her to take the test. She passes easily and is assigned to a school in Red Lake, Arizona, five hundred miles west.

Mother Albertina has presented Lily with a "door" like the one she mentioned upon Lily's leaving school, and it is up to Lily to walk through it. Lily's intelligence and gumption help her break free of life on the ranch, where her options as a woman would be especially narrow.

Lily rides Patches to Red Lake, packing light and planning to stop at towns along the way. She estimates the trip will take four weeks. She plans to hide her hair and keep her "voice low," and Dad gives her a small gun for added protection. The morning of her departure, he also gives her "all sorts of advice," mostly in the form of clichés, and says she has "horse blood in her veins" and will be back. Lily waves goodbye as she and Patches begin their journey.

The daunting journey does not appear to faze Lily, whose strength and independence grow yet more prominent. The fact that she must appear more masculine yet again emphasizes that she is living in a man's world, but her past experiences on the ranch and connection to nature will help her survive in the unknown.

CHAPTER 3

As Lily travels, the road is hot and largely empty, apart from occasional cowboys or "wagonfulls of Mexicans." Lily and Patches rest in the shade during the hottest parts of the day and then keep going until night. Lily stops to buy food—like jerky and biscuits—in the small towns they pass, where she also often asks lonely shopkeepers about road conditions.

In the not too distant future, the tedium and isolation of this journey will be drastically reduced by modern transportation. In the meantime, Lily bravely and capably guides herself forward.

After passing Indian Reservations, Lily falls into a rhythm with Priscilla Loosefoot, a Navajo woman not much older than Lily and riding a donkey. Priscilla says her parents had traded her to settlers for two mules, but she ran away after the settlers abused her. The two make camp together and Priscilla says they could make a good team. That night, however, Lily awakens to find Priscilla going through her saddlebags. She pulls her revolver on Priscilla, who defends herself by saying she was taking advantage of a rare opportunity. Despite understanding where Priscilla is coming from, Lily tells her to stay behind and moves on alone.

Priscilla's story underscores the lack of value placed on girls' lives at this time in history. Her attempt to rob Lily further highlights the desperation created by poverty, especially for Native Americans who also face racial discrimination and many levels of structural oppression. In keeping with her character, Lily does not begrudge another woman doing whatever it takes to survive, yet is smart enough to continue on alone.

After twenty-eight days, Lily arrives in Red Lake. She notes that she is filthy and has lost weight, and that there are new lines around her eyes, but she has made it "through that darned door."

Lily is referencing the "door"—that is, the opportunity—Mother Albertina spoke of upon her leaving school. Much later in the novel, Lily will reflect on how much shorter this journey could have been with modern transportation.

Shortly after Lily's arrival, she meets the county superintendent, Mr. MacIntosh. He explains that the board wants certified teachers with at least an eighth-grade education, and she will be there until they find someone more qualified. Lily is happy to see that the one-room schoolhouse has an oil-stove and a blackboard; there are no living quarters, however, so she sleeps on the schoolroom floor in her bedroll. Nevertheless, Lily loves being able to teach exactly what she wants and how she wants. Her students are of all ages and extremely poor. There are no school supplies, so children practice reading with whatever texts they can find at home.

As a woman in a man's world, teaching represents a rare opportunity for Lily to be her own boss. The lack of school supplies underscores the continued poverty of the American Southwest. Nevertheless, Lily continues to be appreciative of whatever she has—a trait ingrained in her by a childhood of poverty and hard work. She illustrates her resourcefulness by having children learn from whatever materials they can find.

Halfway through the year, Mr. MacIntosh finds a certified teacher for Red Lake. For the next three years after that, Lily moves between small towns in the same county as a teacher. Despite her nomadic and lonely existence, she loves teaching and feels confident in her skills. When the war ends, however, Mr. MacIntosh says he has to fire her, asserting that despite her glowing reviews she will never be as qualified as all the certified teachers returning home. Lily is angry, having worked hard to teach "wild and illiterate kids" in small towns. Mr. MacIntosh says she has "pretty eyes" and will be fine if she just finds a husband.

Though Lily found some independence in teaching, she is ultimately still under the thumb of society and held back by the lack of opportunities she has had to complete her own education. Mr. MacIntosh's attitude reflects the fact that marriage was still considered the ultimate goal and means of stability for women of the time. Sexism like his is an obstacle Lily will have to consistently overcome to establish her career.

During the ride back to the ranch, Lily sees a **red airplane**, her first ever. She excitedly gallops after it and, upon realizing that it stays up by "planing the air," wishes she had students to explain this to. When she makes it home, the ranch seems smaller than when she left, though in good condition, and she notices how much older her family looks. Buster and Dorothy are now married, and the latter basically runs the ranch. Mom frets about Helen, who is now sixteen, finding a husband; Helen, meanwhile, wants to move to Los Angeles in the hope of becoming an actress.

This moment represents a major turning point in Lily's life, as the red airplane opens her eyes to the world of possibilities that exist beyond the KC ranch. It also represents the increasing presence of modern technology in her world. Mom's worries reflect attitudes toward women of the time, while Helen's dream of acting sets the stage for her later trouble in Los Angeles.

Having seen the **airplane** and cars in Arizona, Lily has doubts about the future of the carriage horse business. Lily no longer wants the life of a horsewoman and realizes that Dad is stuck in the past. Seeing the plane made her understand how much more there is to the world, and she doesn't want to sit around at the ranch waiting for a man to propose or becoming a "spinster." A month later, she boards a train to Chicago—"the biggest, most boomingest city I could find."

Lily realizes that modern technology is inescapable, and those like Dad who do not embrace it will be left behind. Her reference to becoming a "spinster" (an older unmarried woman) again reflects the sexist attitudes of the time, while her decision to go to Chicago on her own reiterates Lily's boldness and self-reliance in her pursuit of something greater than life on the ranch.

The trip to Chicago takes only four days, whereas Lily's trip with Patches took a month to go half that distance. Lily gawks at the size of the crowds and buildings, and marvels at the lake, wondering how so much water could sit "there undrunk, unused, and uncontested." She rents a room in a women's boarding house and circles "help wanted" ads in the newspaper. Finding a job proves more difficult than expected, as people are unimpressed by her lack of education and big-city experience.

The shortness of the trip to Chicago suggests how much modern technology will do to connect the world in ways like never before. Having grown up surrounded by poverty, Lily is shocked by the city's abundance. Despite having shown herself to be intelligent and capable, Lily has trouble finding work, suggesting the lack of value placed on certain types of labor and how the wealthy look down on people from impoverished backgrounds.

Lily resigns herself to becoming a maid, and quickly finds work with a commodities trader and his wife, Mim. Their house is modern, with a radiator and running water. Mim is rude and dim, however, and fires Lily after a week for not behaving meekly enough. Lily finds another maid job, but also starts going to school in the evenings to gain her diploma, reflecting that "polishing silver for rich dunderheads" is not her "Purpose."

The novel associates unearned wealth with being snobby and shallow, in contrast to the moral virtue imbued by hard work. Lily resents being treated poorly by the rich, and her experience with Mim strengthens her personal conviction to eventually work for herself alone.

Lily loves the hustle and bustle of Chicago and grows close with her roommate, a spunky Irish girl with long black hair named Minnie Hagan. The two regularly discusses politics and religion and attend rallies for granting women the vote. Minnie gives Lily her first tube of red lipstick for her twenty-first birthday, and Lily considers her a genuine friend. One evening, however, Lily comes home to learn that Minnie's hair got caught in the machinery at the factory where she worked, pulling her into the grinder gears and killing her. Lily reflects on how delicate and unpredictable life is, and chops her hair off to just below her ears.

Minnie shows Lily a different kind of woman than she has seen before, while Chicago expands her knowledge of the world at large. Lily's activism foreshadows her attempts to stand up for women and girls via her teaching career. Minnie's death evokes the danger of factory work in the early twentieth century—when there were fewer regulations—while Lily's response is in keeping with her belief in the power of self-reliance over fate.

Lily's new haircut makes her feel modern and flapper-like, and attracts the attention of Ted Conover, a former boxer turned traveling vacuum-cleaner salesman. Despite Ted being "a bit of a huckster," Lily falls for him and the two begin dating. Lily partakes in her first glass of champagne and cigarette, and Ted also teaches her how to swim. After six weeks Ted proposes with a flashy-looking diamond ring, and the two marry in a Catholic Church. Lily enjoys married life, and the two live frugally. Ted encourages Lily to "dream big" about her future.

In the 1920s flappers were young women who flaunted societal expectations of how their gender should behave. Lily has long done this on the ranch, and her independence now asserts itself in the city in a new way. Her sense that Ted is a "huckster" foreshadows his indiscretion. Nevertheless, he exposes Lily to a lifestyle she was sheltered from on the ranch.

Ted is often away for work, but Lily does not mind because she is so busy with her own job and school. She receives her high school diploma at age twenty-six and begins looking for a better job. While Ted is on the road, Lily is hit by a car when crossing the street. Falling from horses taught her to take a fall, however, and she is fine. Nevertheless, the man driving the car insists on taking her to the hospital.

Lily continues to be dedicated to bettering herself and her lot in life. Though unable to predict what the future holds, her background has prepared her to handle whatever setbacks or literal falls come her way.

At the hospital Lily calls Ted's office, introducing herself as his wife and asking how to reach him on the road. Ted's coworker tells Lily he is not on the road and that his wife's name is Margaret. Lily rushes out of the hospital and heads to Ted's office, where she waits until she spots him leaving for the day. She stealthily follows him back to another apartment, where she knocks on the door and is greeted by a tired-looking woman Margaret. Despite her urge to confront Ted, Lily does not want to hurt Margaret or their many children and pretends to be with the census.

Lily's boldness manifests itself despite her distress at the revelation of Ted's indiscretions. Because they live in a man's world, both Lily and Margaret will have to pay the price for Ted's behavior. This is a reality Lily recognizes and which shapes her decision not to confront Ted's wife. When men break the rules, women are often the ones who suffer.

The next morning, Lily finds that Ted has nearly drained their joint bank account. She packs her gun in her purse and confronts him at his office, beating him with her purse. Ted breaks down in tears and insists that he loves Lily and has destroyed her life, but Lily will have none of it; she asserts that Ted does not "have what it takes" to destroy her. She walks out, slamming her purse against the office door so hard that the glass shatters.

Throughout the novel, Lily will confront men who cross her with her pistol—her way of asserting her own power in the face of a sexist society. Her assertion that Ted cannot destroy her reflects her deep strength of character and is in keeping with the self-reliance she has been developing throughout the book.

Lily is angry but knows she will survive. She reflects again on the inability to predict the future, and how everything can change in an instant. Looking out at the lake, she decides it is time to return to the ranch. She is able to get her marriage annulled, but does not press charges against Ted, understanding that his going to prison would just make life even harder for his wife and children. She does, however, write a letter to Margaret explaining what happened. Lily tries to sell her engagement ring, but the jeweler tells her it is fake.

This scene again reflects the fact that women are often the victims of men's bad behavior, a reality Lily refuses to contribute to. She will later retell the story of Ted's fake ring upon giving a string of fake pearls to her daughter, asserting that finery is arbitrary and what really matters is the character behind it.

Lily applies to the Arizona state teachers' college in Flagstaff and works multiple jobs while waiting to hear back. By the time she is accepted, she has saved enough for a year of college. She reflects that she is leaving Chicago having learned more about herself and others, including how easily people can steal your trust. While riding the train back, she also notes how little she feels she has accomplished in the past eight years; teaching during the war made her feel fulfilled in a way Chicago never could.

Living in Chicago has opened Lily's eyes to life beyond the ranch, but she will never be completely suited to or comfortable in the city; for her, true freedom is found in teaching in rural schools. Her experience with Ted will also make her skeptical of the suave Rex Walls later in the novel. Though she has been hardened, she continues to value hard work and self-reliance above all, and to assume that these virtues can overcome any obstacle.

CHAPTER 4

Though there are many cars in Santa Fe, things have changed little back at the ranch. Buster and Dorothy have children, Mom seems frail, and Helen is working as a clerk in Los Angeles. Patches is still alive and well despite being seventeen years old, and Lily relishes being able to ride a horse for the first time since leaving for Chicago. Mom still worries about Lily finding a husband, especially now that she has already been married once. Lily knows she no longer wants to live on the ranch and leaves quickly for Flagstaff.

The automobile is a symbol of modern technology, and its increased presence in Santa Fe again hints at modernity as an unstoppable force. Mom's suggestion that Lily's value has been decreased by her first marriage would be in keeping with prevailing attitudes of the time. Though Lily remains connected to horses, she now knows she needs more than the ranch can offer.

Lily loves college and feels more focused than her younger classmates, but worries about paying the next year's tuition. The college president, Grady Gammage, tells Lily that Red Lake is again looking for a teacher and is willing to take her back, despite only having a year of college. Lily readily accepts and makes the long journey with Patches for the third time. This time she notices more cars on the road. Red Lake is also more developed than it had been fifteen years earlier, and has an automobile garage with a gas pump. The schoolhouse now has a "teacherage" for Lily to sleep in.

Lily continues to be extremely self-reliant and dedicated to making her dreams of teaching a reality. The presence of cars on the road and the automobile garage in Red Lake again hint at ever-encroaching modern technology and the quickly changing landscape of the Southwest.

Lily is strict with her students, reflecting that, like horses, it is easier to gain their respect from the outset. When she goes to pick up her first paycheck, a couple of local deputies, including a man called Rooster, tell her she needs to ride the ornery mustang in the neighboring corral. Lily knows they think of her as a fancy school teacher from the city and decides to play along, pretending to know little about riding. Lily senses that the mustang is "just another **half-broke horse**." To the shock of the deputies, she is easily able to get him under control while she rides.

Lily's teaching draws from the lessons of the natural world, as well as the strict examples set by Mother Albertina and Dad. Her connection to horses helps her both in the classroom and again when she defies sexist expectations of women's behavior by easily breaking the mustang.

Word spreads about Lily breaking the mustang, and her help with horses becomes sought after in Red Lake. Rooster follows her around like a faithful sidekick and encourages Lily to enter the mustang, named Red Devil, in local races, some of which Lily wins. She also plays poker with Rooster and his friends, and becomes known as "the mustang-breaking, poker-playing, horse-race-winning schoolmarm of Coconino County." One day Rooster asks Lily to teach him to read and write. She starts tutoring Rooster on Saturday afternoons before their poker nights.

Lily continues to ignore societal prescriptions regarding how women should behave, and regularly engages in typically masculine pursuits. Rooster's illiteracy suggests the continued isolation and poverty of Red Lake. Lily's tutoring Rooster also echoes that fact that Dad tutored Lily as a child, and underscores the importance of education for getting ahead in life.

Lily buys a red silk shirt to wear at the horse races so spectators can recognize her, and the shirt becomes her trademark. During a bigger race than usual, the sound of a backfiring car startles Red Devil and Lily is thrown from the horse. She gets back on and finishes the race anyway. This impresses a man named Jim Smith, who Rooster says owns the town's new garage. Jim says he can teach Lily to drive.

Lily breaks traditional gender roles and proudly establishes an identity of her own instead. The car startling Red Devil is a literal manifestation of old and new technologies colliding. Jim owning the garage evidences that he, like Lily, is willing to embrace modern technology.

Jim teaches Lily to drive on a Ford Model T. Lily realizes she loves cars even more than horses because they don't "have a mind of their own" and "obey" their driver. She quickly gets the hang of it and loves driving around town, noting that the horses need to get used to the sound because the automobile is not going anywhere.

As the first affordable commercially-produced car, the Model T cemented the automobile's status as a symbol of modernity in the early twentieth century. Lily embraces modernity, and her assertion that the horses need to get used to cars echoes her earlier thought that the only way to deal with the future is to climb on board.

It soon becomes clear that Jim is courting Lily, and though she is not interested in marriage, she admires his work ethic and lack of pretension. Although he does not practice Mormonism, Jim was born to the famous Mormon named Lot Smith, who had eight wives and fifty-two children; as such, Jim learned to fend for himself early on. His first wife died in the influenza outbreak ten years earlier. Despite being twenty-years older than Lily, Jim is still observant, calm, and dependable, and Lily enjoys spending time with him.

Jim exhibits many of the characteristics Lily has valued throughout the novel, and mirrors her own strength, self-reliance, and lack of self-pity. His substance contrasts with Ted's shallow flashiness. Even his Mormon background will prove useful later in the story when Lily begins to teach in the remote Mormon town of Mainstreet.

Helen has been writing to Lily about her life in Hollywood and the series of men she has been seeing. One day Lily receives a letter in which Helen says she is pregnant, and that the father abandoned her when she did not want to get a back-alley abortion. Once her factory job discovers she is pregnant, however, Helen knows she will be fired. Fearing the danger of an abortion, Lily tells Helen to have the baby and stay with her at the Red Lake teacherage until she figures out what to do.

Helen's story echoes Lupe's, who also got pregnant out of wedlock, and again echoes the fact that women of Lily's time faced harsh consequences for deviating from accepted social behavior. Men, meanwhile, were able to get away with treating women poorly. The danger—and illegality—of abortion at the time meant women's choices were extremely limited.

Lily is shocked at how frail and jittery Helen appears upon her arrival at Red Lake. Helen seems distracted, and, still convinced she can make it as an actress, worries what having a child will do to her figure. She seems unable to accept the gravity of her situation. She takes a liking to Lily's crimson shirt, but when she tries it on Lily sees that her pregnancy is beginning to show. Lily thinks about how to find Helen a husband in the town.

Lily prides herself on being practical and taking stock of the world as it is, which is why Helen's seeming inability to accept her situation worries her. Lily's shirt represents her independence, but Helen is now at the mercy of a deeply sexist world. For women of the time, finding a husband would have been the best way to achieve a sense of security—but, as Mom told Lily after her first marriage, having been with a man now makes Helen "damaged goods."

The sisters begin attend the local Catholic Church, where the grim Father Cavanaugh realizes that Helen is pregnant and unmarried. He forces her to make a confession and then tells Helen that she must go to a home for "wayward women." The whole town now knows about Helen's pregnancy, and treats both sisters with contempt. Mr. MacIntosh comes to the teacherage and says that to uphold moral standards at the school, Helen needs to leave.

Though Lily maintains faith in God, organized religion is never presented as a lasting source of comfort in the story. Both Father Cavanaugh and Mr. MacIntosh represent the narrow misogyny of the time. The fact that both are in positions of power further underscores how pervasive and inescapable sexism is in Lily's world.

Lily tries to assure Helen that they will find a way to survive. She insists their parents will understand, and that she will start racing horses on the weekend to provide for Helen and the baby. Helen is inconsolable, though remembering how Lupe's parents kicked her out and fearing that no man will ever want her again. She says she is not strong enough to make it on her own and feels like giving up, but Lily tells her about all the setbacks in her own life and how she overcame them, echoing Mother Albertina's words that "when God closes a window he opens a door."

Lily continues to exhibit the pragmatic, optimistic thinking that has allowed her to carve her own path in a sexist society. Her words echo the importance of falling already established by the novel. Lupe's story, however, reiterates how difficult Helen's is also. Women in their world are meant to be submissive and pure, and not everyone has Lily's strength.

The next day Lily plans to take Helen to the Grand Canyon to put their problems in perspective. Lily goes to get the car, but suddenly is overcome with a sense of dread and the feeling of being choked. She rushes back to the teacherage to discover that Helen has hanged herself.

Lily views nature as cathartic and healing. Her sudden dread suggests the deep connection she has with her sister. Helen's tragic death reveals the depth of her hopelessness, and, in turn, the depth of society's ire towards women who stray from certain prescribed behavior.

Father Cavanaugh refuses to let Lily bury Helen in the Catholic cemetery because suicide is a sin. Lily, Jim, and Rooster bury Helen at the top of a hill in Lily's red silk shirt. Lily believes that the hill is so beautiful that it must be sacred.

The priest is again a source of cruelty rather than comfort. Lily's independence means she has formulated her own relationship with God, however, and here ties the beauty of the natural world to her conception of religion.

CHAPTER 5

Lily feels overwhelmed by grief following Helen's death, and resents Red Lake for not affording her sister compassion when she needed it most. As time passes, the thought of having a baby helps ease her grief. To do so she will need a husband, though. Lily decides that she trusts Jim Smith, and without hesitation or any grand gestures asks him if he would like to marry her. She says that they must be equal partners in whatever they do, and that, despite his Mormon origins, he must not take other wives. Jim readily agrees, saying he has wanted to marry Lily since he saw her fall of the horse and get back on, and that she is as much woman as "any man can handle."

Like most everything else in her life, marriage is something Lily takes into her own hands. She continues to never be content waiting around for things to happen to her. Her demand to be an equal partner with Jim is in keeping with the independence and self-reliance she has exhibited throughout the novel, while her demand that Jim not take more wives reflects lingering anxiety from her marriage to Ted.

Jim and Lily marry in the classroom once school is out for the summer, with Rooster as Jim's best man. Despite feeling as though she has gotten a late start marrying at twenty-nine, Lily also feels her age might help her "enjoy the journey" even more. Jim agrees to leave Red Lake and move his garage to the more developed town of Ash Fork. Together they build a new sandstone garage by hand. Jim teaches Lily to pump gas, change oil, and fix flat tires, and she continues to pitch in even after she gets pregnant that winter. They also build their own house and install their own indoor plumbing. Lily is proud to have a flushing toilet and running water, much like the "rich people" she worked as a maid for in Chicago.

Lily and Jim are clearly well-matched, with both of them valuing hard work and self-reliance. Both also embrace modern technology, as shown by their choice to open a garage. Lily's work ethic pushes her to keep going even in the late stages of pregnancy. On paper, she has also now achieved the "American Dream" by obtaining many of the luxury items she saw as a maid; later in the novel, however, she will change her conception of success.

When Lily is eight and a half months pregnant, Jim insists she stays home. She quickly gets cabin fever, and snaps at a pushy Jehova's witness who comes to the door, angry with his insistence on telling her what to believe. Lily asserts that people need to find their own way to heaven. In her frustration, she accidently sits on a sewing needle. She takes this as a sign that she needs to get out of the house and insists on going back to work.

For Lily, hard work is an end unto itself; she will never be content to sit idly even when she has the means to. Her words to the Jehova's witness also reflect her belief in self-reliance.

Two weeks later, Lily gives birth with the help of local midwife Granny Combs, who uses a "mind-over-matter" method to help her get through the pain. Granny Combs also tells fortunes and says the baby girl will be "a wanderer." Lily names the baby Rosemary and notes that she looks like Helen. Considering Helen's beauty to have been a curse, Lily vows never to tell Rosemary she is beautiful. A year and a half later Lily gives birth to a boy, this time at a modern hospital with the use of anesthesia—something she notes is much more effective than Granny Comb's pain management method. They call him Little Jim.

Granny Combs' fortune will come true later in the novel, as Rosemary leads a nomadic existence after marrying Rex Walls. Rosemary's beauty and resemblance to Helen foreshadow the struggles she will have with men and also set the stage for Lily's strict parenting as an attempt to protect her. As with other technology, Lily embraces modern anesthesia.

The country is now in the middle of the Great Depression, and hard times hit farmers who have farmed the land in northern Arizona "beyond its limit." The garage loses business as people can no longer afford to buy gas, and Lily fears they will go into bankruptcy. One day Mr. Lee, a local Chinese man who made money selling bootleg alcohol during prohibition, comes by and asks Lily and Jim to hide some cases of booze while revenuers are onto him. Lily realizes she can make extra money selling it, and that revenuers would never suspect a mother of two. Jim reluctantly agrees, and Mr. Lee agrees to bring them two cases a month and split the profits. Lily proves an excellent and discreet liquor lady, and the extra money balances the family's books.

Lily continues to be extremely resourceful and to do whatever it takes to keep her family afloat. She has no need for rules or laws that she deems arbitrary, and as such feels no guilt for selling bootleg liquor. The fact that it is Lily, and not Jim, who prevents the family from going bankrupt further emphasizes Lily's strength despite living in a deeply sexist world.

That spring the Camel brothers, a pair of ranchers from a nearby town, drive their flock of sheep to a shipping station. There, a hand foolishly separates the lambs from their mothers. Chaos ensues as the ewes and hungry lambs try to reunite, and the ewes refuse to give milk to a lamb that is not their own. Jim has the idea of wiping the ewes' noses with a kerosene-soaked rag, blocking their sense of smell so they will let any lamb feed. He then helps the brothers reunite the babies and their mothers. One lamb is left, having not been claimed by any ewe, and Jim declares that it is meant to be Rosemary's pet. They name it Mei-Mei, Chinese for "little sister," and it follows Rosemary everywhere.

Jim's quick thinking reveals his intelligence when it comes to the natural world and importantly impresses the Camel brothers, who will recommend him to manage their ranch. The presence of Mei-Mei foreshadows the fact that Rosemary will grow to be a sensitive child, and later teenager, who hates to see animals caged or mistreated.

Later a man pulls up to the house in a car with two women sitting inside and asks to buy alcohol. Sensing he is already drunk, Lily refuses, causing him to become angry and call her "the sister of a whore who'd hanged herself." Lily grabs her gun and points it in his face, saying the only reason she won't shoot is because of the women in the car, and he angrily leaves. Two days later two men in uniform with badges and guns come to the house and ask about liquor being illegally sold. Rosemary throws a fit when she sees the officers, and Lily insists she is just a teacher and mother with her hands full. The officers believe her and leave, and Lily is amused at having fooled them. Jim insists they get out of the bootleg business, however, and within six months the bank forecloses on them.

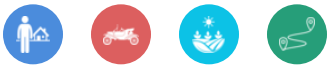
Lily once again stands up to a man without hesitation. She then uses sexist beliefs about women as submissive, docile, and pure to her advantage, fooling officials into thinking she could not possibly be running an illegal business. The fact that the family so quickly goes bankrupt after Lily stops selling reveals how instrumental her efforts were in keeping her family afloat.

Lily and Jim decide to auction off their belongings and look for work in California. Before they leave, one of the Camel brothers, Blackie, stops by to tell them he sold his ranch to English investors (whom they call "Poms"), who need someone to manage it. He recommends Jim, who gets the job. The family moves to the nearby town of Seligman—an easy journey because the road has been paved for the first time. The ranch is another full day's ride and extremely isolated; Lily cannot see the "slightest sign of civilization."

Lily and Jim's understanding of the natural world helps them avoid disaster and prepares them to take advantage of this now opportunity. The paved road to Seligman represents the continued march of modernization, though ultimately Lily will once again be living in relative isolation from the rest of society—and as such forced to rely on herself to survive.

The ranch is very large and in solid working condition, and has a garage filled with twenty-six different vehicles, ranging from covered wagons to a Chevy pickup truck. Lily knows she and Jim will have to play every role on the ranch, but that they are both prepared for it. She momentarily misses things like indoor plumbing, but understands that luxuries are not necessities.

The garage is akin to a museum of various technologies, including those from Lily's childhood. This is fitting, because she will need to draw on the lessons from her past to succeed on the ranch. Importantly, her success up to this point in life has not clouded her judgment, and she is still able to live simply.



The ranch is over 100,000 acres, and it will take them a week to tour the perimeter. The family tours the land for ten days but finds no natural source of water. Lily suggests renting a bulldozer to build a dam, and writes up calculations about how much more money having a reliable source of water would eventually bring in. The English investors visit, and Jim presents the idea; they agree, and soon enough they are able to get a bulldozer to the ranch. They build dams all over the ranch, including a large one in front of the house. That winter it fills with rain, and people come from all over to swim and fill buckets of water. It becomes known as "Big Jim's Dam," and eventually simply "Big Jim."

Lily continues to be an invaluable partner in her marriage with Jim. Her suggestion of using a bulldozer reflects her ability to embrace modern technology, even if it means changing the natural world. Technology allows her and Jim to control parts of nature in a way she never could as a child. In fact, the dam itself is named after Jim—representing their newfound ability to make the land work for them, at least at times.

With prices still low from the Great Depression, Jim is able to buy cattle for cheap and hire twelve cowboys to drive the cattle to the ranch. Lily tries to keep Rosemary away from them. Rosemary is like a "**half-broke" horse** herself, Lily thinks, in that she is happiest running free outside. She proves unafraid of coyotes or wolves, and hates seeing animals penned in. The Poms send Jim a pureblooded Guernsey cow named Bossie in appreciation for his work at the ranch. One day her stall is left unlatched, and she dies after devouring an entire bag of feed. Rosemary insists Little Jim did it, but Lily doesn't believe her and says that sometimes animals don't know what to do with freedom, and "it kills them."

Jim, like Lily, is both pragmatic and forward-thinking. Lily's concern over Rosemary being around men stems from her awareness of the way society treats women who stray. This is not the last time Lily will compare her daughter to a half-broke horse, and Rosemary will continue to buck societal rules throughout her life. Like Bossie, Rosemary hates being penned in, but does not yet understand the danger too much freedom or indulgence can pose.

To manage her workload at the ranch, Lily says she will not do any unnecessary cleaning, or "maids work." This includes washing clothes, which she brings into town to be steam cleaned, and their Levi's, which they never wash; they in fact appreciate them getting so caked with grime that they are briar- and waterproof. Lily also keeps the cooking simple, making steak, potatoes, and beans seasoned with salt. She makes cottage cheese once, but it is devoured so quickly that she declares it a complete waste of time.

Lily rejects many typical aspects of women's work—in effect, behaving in the exact opposite way from Mom, who did housekeeping but not manual labor. Lily wants to only engage in labor that has a purpose beyond aesthetics, reflecting her eminently practical, resourceful nature.

Lily senses a growing tension between herself and Rosemary, who has become more rambunctious after spending time out repairing fences with Jim. Lily drills her on arithmetic and spelling and worries that Rosemary is too unfocused, noting how much work she herself was already doing at age four. Rosemary constantly gets into dangerous situations and is accident-prone. Lily refuses to "mollycoddle" her, insisting she learn from her mistakes—even when her dress catches on fire after hovering over a jack-o'-lantern.

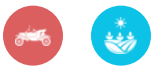
The tension between Lily and her daughter will grow throughout the novel, as Rosemary—still very much a half-broke horse—remains resistant to the many lessons Lily wishes to teach her. Rosemary setting herself on fire mirrors a scene in author Jeannette Walls' memoir The Glass Castle, in which a young Walls—Rosemary's daughter—accidentally lights herself on fire while making hot dogs when Rosemary is not watching.

That winter Lily and Jim buy a long-range radio, along with two giant batteries, since they still don't have electricity. World War II is brewing in Europe, but they are more interested in listening to the weather forecasts each morning, since this has a huge effect on life at the ranch. The children love storms and play in the water and mud after them. Jim says there is nothing like water in the world, and they need to both cherish and fear it.

The radio is yet another piece of modern technology making its way into Lily's world and, by sharing the forecast, improving life on the ranch. Nevertheless, technology cannot defeat the natural world. Jim's speech about water foreshadows the drought and floods soon to come.

Over the next year, a serious drought occurs and Lily and Jim save the ranch by hauling drums of water from another town. When the rains return in August, they threaten to break the dam. Lily and Jim decide they need to create furrows to divert the water. They hitch a plow to the Chevy, with Lily in the driver's seat while Jim shouts directions. Their dam holds, though many others are destroyed. The next day, the ranch is covered with colorful flowers, their seeds having been turned up by the water.

Even with technological innovation, nature still dictates life on the ranch. Through hard work—and the help of an automobile—Lily and Jim are able to keep the ranch running. The flowers at the end of the chapter represent the fact that even as nature can be destructive, it also creates beauty and life.



CHAPTER 6

Jim convinces the English investors to buy the neighboring Hackberry ranch, which has a windmill with well water. He and Lily now preside over 180,000 acres of land. Lily loves Hackberry, and believes its well means that their days of "hauling fuel drums" like they did in the storm were over. Lily buys a truck-load of lead pipe from Los Angeles, which they use to connect the spring water to a spigot at the house. Lily paints the rooms different colors, something the artistic Rosemary especially appreciates. Lily decides she wants to buy Hackberry, and the family begins saving every penny. Lily comes up with money-making schemes, including selling encyclopedias door-to-door, and takes the children to scavenge for bottles to recycle, insisting it is teaching them "resourcefulness."

Rosemary's artistic inclinations are beginning to blossom, and her love of the Hackberry rooms foreshadows her dream of becoming an artist. Now that she has identified a new goal to work towards, Lily continues to be extremely resourceful and hardworking, doing whatever it takes to save money for Hackberry. She also continues to try to teach her children lessons in everything they do.

Lily is now nearing her thirty-ninth birthday. When the family drives by a sign for flying lessons, she insists they stop. The pilot, whom she calls Goggles, is surprised that Lily, not Jim, wants the lesson, because he has never taught a woman before. Lily scoffs at being called a "little lady," and Goggles agrees to take her up in the rickety two-seater plane. Lily takes her first flight and feels as though she is seeing the world for the first time. Rosemary is surprised she spent money since they are supposed to be saving; Lily responds that she could make money as a pilot, and the lesson was an investment in herself.

Goggles reflects the sexist attitudes of his time, which Lily is quick to call him out on. Lily has been fascinated by flying ever since she saw the red airplane soar overhead on her return from Red Lake, and it is the pinnacle of human technology at the time. Flying allows Lily to see the world as never before. Flying lessons are one of the very few non-essential things Lily readily spends money on, reflecting their importance to her.

Still needing more income, Lily writes to Grady Gammage, who helped her get her job in Red Lake, about teaching opportunities. He tells her about a remote job in a town of Mormon polygamists. Jim accompanies her and the children to help them settle in the town. Main Street is tiny, and Lily shares the teacherage room with Rosemary and Little Jim. There are no cars, and people are so poor that the children wear dresses made of feed sacks. When the locals discover that Jim is the son of the famous Mormon Lot Smith, they warm up to the family.

By reaching out to Grady Gammage, Lily is again drawing upon her past to influence her future. Lily has had a rocky relationship with organized religion up to this point in the novel, and this, combined with her feminist viewpoints, forebodes drama upon moving to a deeply religious polygamist town.

Lily observes that the students' houses are like "breeding factories" where up to seven wives "churn out" babies. The girls are "docile and submissive," and at around thirteen years old they disappear into their arranged marriages. Lily decides she must teach her female students that they do not have to become "broodmares dressed in feed sacks." She includes lessons on nursing, women like Amelia Earhart and Eleanor Roosevelt, and her own story of breaking horses and learning to fly a plane. She encourages them that they can all do it too, so long as they have the "gumption."

Because Lily has worked so hard to establish her autonomy and independence in a sexist world, she cannot abide watching the young girls she teaches be treated like animals. By drawing upon her own history as inspiration, she emphasizes just how unique her life has been and how powerful it can be to simply show these girls what options exist beyond the restrictive confines of their town. She reiterates her belief in the power of self-reliance above all else.

The local patriarch, Uncle Eli, scolds Lily for teaching the girls "worldly ways," and says the town will shun her if she continues. Lily refuses to be cowed, and the next day gives a lesson on religious freedom. When Uncle Eli comes to the house to intimidate her, Lily grabs her revolver and shoots past his ear, saying that next time she won't aim to miss. The sheriff comes by, and Lily knows she won't last long. She continues to teach, but is fired by the county superintendent in the spring.

Lily butts heads with male-dominated society, but as always, retains her conviction that she is doing what is right. She once again pulls out her revolver to defend herself. Nevertheless, she is still living in a patriarchal world, and no matter how strong she might be personally, she is ultimately forced to face the consequences of going against society's rules.

Lily gets another job in Peach Springs, where she agrees to be the teacher, janitor, cook, and bus driver. The town has set aside money for a new form of transportation for the kids. Lily buys a hearse from a used car lot and spray paints "school bus" on the side. She drives 200 miles every day to pick up and drop off her students. Rosemary and Little Jim also attend the class, and she paddles them often to make sure no one thinks she is playing favorites. One day Little Jim is unconscious after falling off a swing, and Lily must frantically pile all the children into the hearse and drive them home before heading to the hospital. Jim wakes up on the way, but, not wanting to go back to school, Rosemary pretends to be sick. Lily makes her spend the night alone in a room at the hospital to teach her a lesson, and she never plays hooky again.

Lily taking on so many jobs at once again emphasizes her incredible work ethic and refusal to ever complain about her lot. The hearse is yet another sign of her resourcefulness. The episode with Rosemary reveals Lily's refusal to put up with bad behavior from her children, though it also suggests the occasionally harsh nature of her parenting. She continues to be concerned with teaching her children lessons.

Lily decides to use the hearse to run a taxi business on weekends and puts some of the extra money towards more flying lessons. When her neighbor's three cousins visit from Brooklyn, she agrees to drive them to the Grand Canyon and takes Rosemary with her. Lily is appalled at how spoiled and delicate the Brooklyners seem. They ask Rosemary about Santa Claus, but she has no idea what they are talking about. On a hill, the hearse's brakes give out. The Brooklyn ladies are scared, but Lily is proud that Rosemary remains fearless. Lily is able to maneuver the car so that they crash safely, and says that if you drive you need to know "how to crash."

The Brooklyn cousins exist in sharp contrast to the people of Lily's world. To Lily, city folk are deeply frivolous and weak, and lack the strength of character imbued by growing up closer to the land. Lily continues to value boldness and bravery, while her emphasis on knowing "how to crash" echoes Dad's insistence that Lily know "how to fall."

Lily decides to show the children what Christmas is like, and tries to convince them that Santa Claus has brought them gifts. Rosemary is not fooled. The kids are excited about Christmas lights, though, and the family cuts down a pine tree. That night Jim connects the lights to the hearse battery, and the sight astounds the children—as well as some ranch hands who have never seen electric lights before.

Rosemary's refusal to accept Santa Claus adds comic relief to the story. The Christmas lights again represent the increased presence of modern technology, even on a ranch seemingly in the middle of nowhere.

Deputy Johnson's son Johnny Johnson is in Lily's class, and a real trouble maker. He kisses Rosemary and sticks his hand up another girl's dress, causing Lily to slap him. He hits her back, at which point she hits and spanks him to teach him not to mistreat girls. Afterwards she refuses to apologize to the Deputy, and her contract is not renewed. Jim says she has a habit of getting into altercations, but Lily insists she just has a habit of sticking up for herself and does what is necessary when the rules are wrong. Nevertheless, she is tired of being fired. She realizes she is crying in front of Rosemary, something that makes her feel as though she has let her daughter down. She asserts that she is "not a weak woman."

Lily again stands up to the misogyny surrounding her, and again must face the consequences. She perseveres by sticking to her belief that she has been doing what is right. Her refusal to cry in front of Rosemary stems from her hatred of people feeling sorry for themselves or showing weakness. It evidences how much she values being stoic and strong, and setting a good example for her daughter—even if from an outside perspective, it might be good for Rosemary to see that not everyone can be strong all the time.

Lily is determined to prove to the town that Deputy Johnson did not break her spirit. When *Gone With the Wind* is set to play at the local movie theater, she vows to attend in a fancy dress. *Gone With the Wind* is her favorite book, and she admires that Scarlett O'Hara never lets anything get in her way. Lily sews her own gown out of her red living room curtains. Jim drives her in the hearse. Upon arrival, Lily waves to the crowd, including Deputy Johnson, as the photographer's lightbulb flashes.

Lily rejects finery and, as always, finds practical uses for what she already has. Her admiration for Scarlett O'Hara is unsurprising given the respect for strong, no-nonsense women she has exhibited throughout the book. As with Ted, she refuses to let a man think he has broken her spirit.

CHAPTER 7

Rosemary and Little Jim love to play together, and especially love to ride horses. They frequently get banged up while playing outside, but their parents tell them to "tough it out." One day while Lily is driving with Rosemary, the hearse gets stuck in the mud. Lily spots a group of wild horses and shows Rosemary how to catch one so that they can ride it home. Rosemary wants to keep it, but Lily says the last thing they need is another "**half-broke horse**," and tells Rosemary to smack her on the rump to send the mare away.

Lily's children are similar to their mother in their love for the outdoors. Lily refuses to coddle them when they get hurt, just as Dad refused to coddle her when she broke her arm or had to get her appendix taken out. Lily again makes reference to the half-broke horses of the book's title, referencing those creatures who, like Rosemary, have yet to be tamed.

Sensing the kids need more "civilizing," Lily and Jim send both to boarding schools. Lily vows to finish her degree and join the teachers' union so she won't keep getting fired for her "style." She registers for a heavy course-load and finds a boarding house in Phoenix, again relishing academic life and feeling like it is a break from the ranch chores. Neither Rosemary nor Little Jim take to boarding school, and Rosemary especially is viewed as a "wild child" at her Catholic school because of her rambunctious demeanor. Her classmates make fun of her for being a farmer's daughter. When she stands up for herself and dunks a classmate's head in dishwater, Lily is proud and feels that there is some of herself in her daughter after all.

Sick of having to deal with men who try to control her classroom, Lily takes matters into her own hands. Rosemary is further established as a half-broke horse—a child who simply cannot fit in with her structured school environment. Nevertheless, Lily values her daughter's boldness and the fact that she sticks up for herself. Little Jim's behavior is not viewed as a problem by his school because he is a boy and boys are more expected to be unruly—again reflecting the sexist attitudes of the time.

Despite being tested and proving bright, Rosemary is not allowed back at the academy after her second year because she is too disruptive. Both she and Little Jim are ecstatic to return to life on the ranch. By then, Lily has earned her college degree. She easily finds another teaching job in a town called Big Sandy and enrolls Rosemary and Little Jim in her class. World War II is underway, but it does not have a big effect on their lives apart from a shortage of gasoline. Mom has died while Lily was studying in Phoenix, and now Buster and Dorothy have put Dad in a nursing home. Dad begs Lily to come see him before he dies, calling her his "best hand."

Rosemary being unable to stay in school foreshadows her later inability to stay in one place or ever adhere to societal rules for long. With her degree, Lily is able to better take charge of her career. Dad's acknowledgement that Lily was his "best hand" reflects her work ethic and intelligence, while also emphasizing the unfairness of Buster being the one who inherited the ranch.

Lily trades beef for gasoline ration coupons and sets off with Rosemary in the hearse. They run out of gas by Tempe, however. Lily goes into a diner and plays up being a damsel in distress, asking the male customers if they can lend them some gas. They oblige, and after this Lily says to Rosemary, "Whoever said I couldn't play the lady?"

Lily again uses prejudiced expectations of women's behavior to her advantage, making a fool of well-meaning men in the process. Here, acting "ladylike" is simply another example of Lily's resourcefulness and self-reliance.

They reach Tucson and visit Dad in his old folks' home, where he appears very frail and is too sick to be moved. Lily is proud that Rosemary remains stoic beside her grandfather, and thinks that she has "a brain, a spine, and a heart." Dad makes Rosemary promise to bury him at the KC ranch, and he dies that evening. The next morning, they put his body in the back of the hearse and Lily drives faster to make it to the ranch before the body starts to rot in the heat. Once they arrive, they bury him in the ranch's cemetery. Lily does not feel as gutted by his death as she was by Helen's; she feels Dad had cheated death by surviving being kicked in the head by the horse as a boy, and that he had lived a long and happy life.

Lily has already expressed her reluctance to cry in front of her daughter, and as such appreciates Rosemary's stoicism; Lily knows Rosemary does not need to adhere to an academy's rules to be a good person in her estimation. Lily appreciates that Dad took charge of his own fate and made the best of his lot; as such, his life was all that it could be, and she finds no reason to mourn his death.

Dad left the KC Ranch to Buster and the homestead on Salt Draw to Lily, but also owed thousands in back taxes. Lily debates selling the land to pay them or digging into their savings meant to buy Hackberry. On the way home, she has Rosemary try her hand at persuading men to give them gas, and she takes to it quickly despite only being twelve. They stop to see the Madonna of the Trail in Albuquerque, a twenty-foot statue of a pioneer woman holding a baby in one hand and a rifle in the other, while another child clings to her skirt. Lily is moved to tears at the sight. She resolves not to sell the Salt Draw homestead, wanting deeply to own a piece of land and accepting they may never have enough money to buy Hackberry anyway.

The Madonna of the Trail represents how much work women must do to survive in Lily's world—at once occupying the roles of wife, mother, and pioneer. Lily sees her own story reflected in the statue—a rarity for women of her time. Having grown up so close to nature but always on a man's terms, this sight is what causes Lily to realize how much she wants to have a piece of the earth to herself.

With the war going on, the military is using the railroad system to ship troops and equipment. Lily and Jim take the cattle to market when the train is available in December, and they bring Rosemary and Little Jim to help. Rosemary roots for the cattle, and sometimes tries to let a steer escape—something that makes Lily say she is not suited to ranch life. Rosemary is now thirteen, "quite a looker," and smitten with a Havasupai cowboy named Fidel Hanna. Lily tells her to watch herself around cowboys.

Modern transportation continues to become further embedded in society. Rosemary exhibits the same reckless urge towards freedom that led her to release Bossie the cow. Lily knows that Rosemary's blossoming beauty will spell trouble for her daughter.

Rosemary declares that she wants to learn to skin a steer, something she will need to know as a rancher. Jim agrees, and slaughters one a few days later. Lily reflects that unlike herself, Rosemary has grown up around cowboys and as such has been sheltered from this part of ranch life. Rosemary cries while skinning the steer but finishes the task, proving she can do it but also that she does not have the heart for ranch life, and none of them mention the event again.

Rosemary is stubborn and proud, like Lily, but too sensitive for the life of a rancher. From this moment on, it is clear that her own life will follow a different path than her parents'.

The next summer Clarice Pearl, a woman with the Department of Education, writes to request that Lily drive her and a nurse to a Havasupai village to investigate hygiene standards. Lily asks Fidel Hanna, who lives on the reservation, to help. He says they are "coming to inspect the savages." Lily takes Rosemary and picks up Miss Pearl and a nurse, Marion Finch, both of whom she views as "disapproving do-gooders."

Fidel Hanna calls out the racism and prejudice inherent to this inspection of his home. Lily, truly her father's daughter, similarly recognizes that Clarice Pearl and Marion Finch are misguided and snobbish in their efforts to "help" the reservation.

Lily tries to explain some background about local tribal traditions while she drives, but the officials are dismissive. Fidel and his friends guide them the rest of the way to the village on horseback. While Lily marvels at the beauty of the land, the two officials continue to look on with disdain. Fidel comments that when people like the officials take Native children and send them to schools, they are just making them unfit for both the outside world and reservation life—like he is. Rosemary declares that it's like the Garden of Eden, and says she wishes she could live there. Lily says that living in a dirt house gets old quickly.

The officials continue to exhibit racist prejudice towards the tribe. Fidel Hanna confronts the problems with people like Clarice and Marion taking Native children from the reservation in the name of a supposedly better life; really, Hanna suggests, this life is simply more familiar to people like Miss Pearl and Miss Finch, but often worse for the people they purport to help.

The next night Lily wakes to discover that Rosemary had snuck out to go swimming with Fidel and his friends in her underwear. Clarice Pearl found her and angrily dragged her back. Lily is furious that Rosemary disobeyed her and ignored everything she has taught her, and feels something "dark" come out of her as she beats Rosemary with a belt until she feels she has gone too far. The next night at home, Lily tries to tell Rosemary that she was simply trying to teach her a lesson. Rosemary pulls away and says she will never whip her own children.

Clarice Pearl's indignation upon finding Rosemary again reflects sexist attitudes of the time about proper behavior for girls. As someone who grew up breaking wild animals and always trying to teach lessons to her own children and others, Lily is furious that her efforts towards reaching her own daughter have failed, and she lets her anger take the better of her. This moment arguably marks the first and most important break between Lily and Rosemary.

When Clarice Pearl threatens to report Fidel for indecency with a minor, Fidel joins the army. He is later traumatized by the war, and when he returns he shoots up a Hopi village. After serving time in prison, his own tribe will not allow him to return, and he lives as an outcast by himself on a corner of the reservation.

Miss Pearl's actions further reflect the racism of the time. The poverty and hardship that Lily faced as a child were magnified for people like Fidel Hanna, and the consequences for falling out of line even greater.

Lily sends Rosemary back to boarding school. The Poms declare their intention to sell the ranch. Gaiter—a famous movie director—and a rodeo cowboy Lily calls "Boots" buy the ranch, though Lily can sense that they don't know anything about proper ranching. They rename it the Showtime Ranch, tear down the buildings, and fire Jim and Old Jake, along with the primarily Mexican and Native American ranch hands, because they don't look enough like cowboys. Lily resents the changes, feeling that she and Jim ran the place honestly and well for the past eleven years. Still, Lily refuses to feel sorry for herself. She gives Patches, nearing thirty, to the Havasupai, and the family sets off for Phoenix. As they drive away in the hearse, Lily tells Little Jim he must not look back.

Gaiter and Boots have only a shallow understanding of ranching, lacking the deep history and connection that Lily and Jim have with the natural world. The two men prioritize appearance and comfort over hard-won knowledge and experience, which will quickly prove their downfall. Lily remains stoic as ever, and her leaving echoes the Casey family leaving Salt Draw behind many years earlier.

CHAPTER 8

Lily and Jim get much needed dentures when they get to Phoenix, which makes Lily immensely happy. They also buy a big new house and car. Lily loves Phoenix at first, impressed by the many restaurants and stores. They also get their first ever telephone. The children hate Phoenix, however, feeling boxed in by the paved streets and buildings. Soon enough, Lily begins to feel penned in as well. She hates all the rules and restrictions of the road, and when she goes to take more flying lessons, realizes how the "city folks" have "chopped up the sky the same way they had the ground."

Modern dentistry is another element of technology that Lily is happy to embrace. None of the family can stomach being so far removed from nature, however, which to them represents freedom. The city, on the other hand, is full of seemingly endless rules and meaningless regulations—things for which Lily has never had patience. Despite having ostensibly achieved a high level of success by moving to a big house in a developed area, Lily and her family quickly become miserable.

Jim gets a job as a warehouse manager and Lily as a high school teacher. They also buy other properties to rent out, for the first time "living on the backs of others." With electricity they can now listen to the radio all day, but that means Lily becomes more exposed to the news. She becomes more aware of crime and worried about her surroundings. She bolts the door, which she never did at the ranch, and sleeps with her revolver under the bed. She notes that on the ranch they worried about the weather, but in the city they worry about themselves.

Not only is the family a step removed from the natural world and all the freedom it entails, but Lily and Jim are also no longer living the self-reliant lifestyle that brought them so much satisfaction. In theory, this should create more free leisure time; in reality, it simply makes both Lily and Jim more anxious and less satisfied with their daily lives.

Air-raids sound through the city every Saturday. When Hiroshima happens, Rosemary is deeply disturbed by the atom bomb and disagrees with Lily that it was for the greater good. Rosemary paints and draws obsessively, which Lily considers her one real talent. While still keeping her promise never to tell her daughter that she is beautiful, Lily enrolls Rosemary in modeling school, but Rosemary insists that all she wants is to be an artist. Lily agrees to pay for art lessons, though she still believes the only ways for women to make a living are as nurses, secretaries, or teachers.

The family is living in Phoenix during World War II. Rosemary's dedication to her art is only growing stronger, while Lily believes the societal rules for women have yet to change. Lily's evaluation of the atomic bomb as a force for the greater good reflects her ever-practical, sometimes harsh mindset, while Rosemary's view is in keeping with her more sensitive nature and care for all living things.

For the first time in her life, Lily does not enjoy teaching. Her wealthier students do not obey her, and no longer being in a one-room school house entails lots of bureaucracy. She laments that there are "more rules for teachers than students." Jim is also bored at his job behind a desk and misses the connection to nature that comes with ranching.

Lily and Jim continue to feel constrained by city life and distanced from the hands-on hard work that both so deeply value.

When a winter storm hits, the Department of Agriculture knocks on their door to say ranchers are struggling and Jim has been recommended to help. He eagerly travels to help the ranchers in a small plane with a pilot, at one point even jumping with a parachute when there is no place to land. By the time he arrives at the Showtime Ranch, he finds dead cattle frozen by the pond as the men drink coffee by the warmth of the stove inside. He gets them to work. In all he is gone two weeks, and comes back looking tired and thin, but happy.

As Lily predicted, Gaiter and Boots do not know how to properly run a ranch and have made a mess of the property through their ignorance and negligence. Despite the difficult and dangerous nature of the work, it is clear that this—or at least some place similar—is where Jim belongs.

Gaiter calls Jim to offer him his job back managing the ranch, but he and Lily immediately agree that they do not want to have to work for Gaiter. Lily also does not want to work on someone else's home again. Jim has become a local hero for parachuting out of the plane to save cattle, and Lily notices how women flirt with him. She arrives unannounced at his office one day to find the bookkeeper, Glenda, in his doorway with red lipstick and a push-up bra. Lily becomes worried that he is cheating and enlists Rosemary to spy on him. She follows him at lunch one day, but only finds him eating alone. The next day Jim confronts Lily about her spying. That night they agree they are feeling pent up by the city and want to leave.

City life has caused Lily to grow anxious not only about her own safety, but about her marriage. She takes matters into her own hands, repeating some of the spying behavior she used with Ted, but her fears are unfounded. Despite ostensibly having achieved the American Dream, neither Lily nor Jim—nor, for that matter, their children—is happy in Phoenix. The Smith family is a bunch of half-broke horses who will never be at home away from the freedom of the natural world.

CHAPTER 9

Lily gets a job as a teacher in the tiny town of Horse Mesa, which has only one telephone, and groceries delivered twice a week. They are all happy to be out of the city. Jim is content with his job driving a gravel truck, and Lily is happy to be back in a one-room schoolhouse without bureaucrats second-guessing her. Because the school only goes through eighth grade, Rosemary and Little Jim go to boarding school once again. Lily gets Rosemary a string of fake pearls before she leaves, then tells her about Ted and the fake diamond he presented her with. She asserts that if Rosemary holds her head high, no one will know the pearls are fake.

Living closer to nature and free from the constraints of big city life, Jim and Lily are finally at peace once again. Lily still has no need for finery, having learned through her marriage to Ted that such things are ultimately meaningless; all that matters is knowing your own worth.

Lily discovers she has a knack for politics. She helps the United Federation of Teachers stop the Department of Education from shutting down local schools, and at one point even barges into the governor's office to berate him for not funding an education bill. She becomes the Democratic precinct captain for Horse Mesa, and proudly registers all thirteen families to vote.

Lily's political skill was foreshadowed back when she stood in for her father in court after Old Man Pucket shot his dogs, and again when she attended women's suffrage rallies in Chicago. Her political life comes full circle here.

Both Rosemary and Little Jim attend Arizona State. Little Jim is now bigger than his father and plays football. He marries a girl named Diane and drops out of school to become a police officer. Upon his marriage, Lily thinks, "one down." Lily agrees to let Rosemary study art in college as long she gets her teaching certificate. Though many men ask Rosemary for dates, Lily believes she needs a solid man to anchor her.

Lily still does not think art is a viable career, but supports Rosemary regardless. Rosemary continues to be half-broken, fulfilling Granny Combs' prophecy that she will be a "wanderer."

After her third year in college, Rosemary meets Rex Walls while swimming in a canyon with her friends. He is from West Virginia and stationed at a nearby air base. He starts a fight with a man who flirts with Rosemary on their first date at a Mexican restaurant, and the two run out without paying the bill in a move Rex calls "the skedaddle." Rosemary says he is the first man to appreciate her art. He comes to Horse Mesa to see her paintings, which he praises effusively. When Lily shows him her dentures, he pulls out his own, saying he lost his teeth in a car accident at seventeen. Lily is impressed that he is able to laugh the incident off. Rex calls Rosemary's artwork masterpieces and puts them up on Lily's walls.

Rosemary and Rex's first date forebodes the never-ending tumultuousness of their relationship. (In The Glass Castle, Rex will regularly employ "the skedaddle" with he and Rosemary's own children.) Despite his instability, Rex exhibits the same refusal to pity himself that Lily has admired throughout the novel. Note also that flight is so common now that there is an air force base near Lily's home.

Lily continues to be suspicious of Rex, who is charming but unstable. Rosemary likes Rex specifically because he has a wild streak, and views life with him as an adventure. One Saturday morning when Rosemary is home from college, Rex comes to Horse Mesa and asks if Lily and Jim would teach him to ride a horse. They reluctantly agree and saddle up some neighbor horses. Lily can tell Rex is ill at ease and tries to give him tips.

Rex reminds Lily of Ted, and she has learned by this point that charm is not an indication of good character. Rosemary's penchant for adventure and danger—first manifested in her accident-prone childhood—fuels her love for Rex.

Rex keeps up a brave face and insists on galloping. Then the mare gets spooked and takes off. Recognizing that the horse is scared and needs permission to stop, Lily stands in front of her and gets her to slow down. When she does stop, Rex falls off. Lily is impressed that he gets back on the horse, and the group continues to ride for the afternoon. Rex then gets out a bottle of liquor and they play poker. Though he is a good player, Lily notices that he keeps refilling his liquor glass. Lily insists Rex not drive home drunk, he refuses to take instructions from some "old leather-faced, hard-assed biddy" and drives away.

This is the first evidence of Rex's drinking problem, which will be further evidenced in the epilogue (and which serves as a major plot point in The Glass Castle). His temper echoes Dad's early in the novel, but Lily still admires his ability to get up after a fall—in effect, to take control of his fate.

The next day Lily insists that Rex is dangerous, but Rosemary says if you worry about danger you miss out on adventure. Lily notes that Rosemary has not really listened to her ever since the whipping for swimming with Fidel Hanna.

Rosemary's conception of danger contrasts with Lily's. The latter has learned that because life is unpredictable, one must always prepare. She sees no need to seek danger when it is always so present, and believes Rosemary is foolish to think otherwise.

Rex shows up with a bouquet of lilies by way of apology. Lily still insists that Rosemary needs an anchor in her life, but Rex says that makes it "hard to fly." He then offers to take Lily for a plane ride. The next Sunday he picks her up, wearing her aviator's jumpsuit. On the road he tells her about his background, and the two bond over both selling illegal hooch.

Lily is still not one for sentimentality, but Rex is able to win her forgiveness with the promise of a flight. It becomes clear that Rex and Lily have much in common when it comes to flouting rules and conventions.

Rex pulls over to a trailer park and introduces Lily to Gus, an old air force buddy who jokingly warns Lily against letting Rex marry her daughter. Lily is unamused. Rex leaves Lily with Gus while he collects the plane from the air force base; Lily appreciates that he, like her, pays no attention to silly regulations. He returns and takes her in the air. Lily loves flying, even as Rex does tricks like flipping the plane upside down and nearly skimming the land. He then directs a herd of cattle with the plane, remarking that you "can't do that on a horse."

The conversation with Gus foreshadows future trouble for Rosemary and Rex. Though Lily and Rex both dislike rules, Lily breaks them in the name of personal conviction, whereas Rex often does so just for the thrill of it. Rex's flight maneuvers reflect his reckless persona. His herding of cattle with a plane again foretells the death of more traditional ranching methods.

That spring, Rosemary announces she is going to marry Rex, causing Lily to remark that she is the one kid she couldn't teach. Rex decides not to reenlist. Lily worries where they will live, but Rosemary says she feels like she hasn't had a home since they left the ranch and may never settle down. Still, Lily accepts her decision and pays for the wedding to make sure they marry in a Catholic church. She invites many of the people she has known throughout her life to the wedding, where Rosemary seems to be having the time of her life. Afterwards she and Rex drive away, looking to Lily and Jim like "a couple of **half-broke horses**."

From childhood, Lily has believed that everything in life could be a lesson. Dad taught her that everything has a Purpose, and she has made her career as a teacher. The ultimate sadness for Lily, then, is that she can never reach Rosemary. True to Granny Combs' prediction, Rosemary is a wanderer. She and Red may never be tamed, and may never be able to live within the confines of traditional society—which is why Lily refers to them as half-broke horses.

EPILOGUE

Lily and Jim stay in Horse Mesa, with Jim becoming the town's unofficial mayor after he retires. Lily keeps teaching, never content without working. Little Jim and his wife Diane find a ranch house in the suburbs and start a family. Rex takes odd jobs and frequently smokes and drinks. Rosemary continues to paint and has many children, the second of whom dies as a baby. The two live a nomadic existence around the desert. Their third baby is a daughter they name Jeannette. Lily feels an immediate connection with her, and senses that she is tenacious. Lily senses that her grandchildren have a wild ride ahead of them, but says they come from hardy stock and that there is nothing that can stop Lily from teaching them a few things.

None of the characters have changed much, instead leaning further into their established personas: Lily's work ethic never falters, Rex's substance abuse issues have grown more prominent, and Rosemary remains dedicated to her art at the expense of nearly everything else. Above all, Lily remains dedicated to instilling lessons in her family to the end.

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