Gone With The Wind By Mitchell Essay, Research Paper

The novel being summarized is titled Gone with the Wind, written by Margaret

Mitchell. It was published in 1936, after it took her seven years to write, and

won a Pulitzer Prize in 1937. Gone with the Wind was the only book Ms. Mitchell

wrote and is an American Classic. Gone with the Wind was a story of men and

women living in the south during the war between the states and of the south?s

transformation after the was. The novel began in about 1861 at Tara and Twelve

Oaks, two southern plantations in Georgia. We were given a glance of the

hospitality and generosity of plantation life. When the men went off to war, the

women moved to Atlanta. While in Atlanta, they worked as nurses as they awaited

the return of their men. Sherman?s troops marched in and burned Atlanta, so

the women were forced to leave. They returned to Tara, where we observed the

destruction and desolation of the land. After the war, the story shifted back

and forth between Atlanta and Tara. We experienced the struggles to save Tara,

rebuild Atlanta, and the effects of the carpetbaggers. The story continued until

about 1871 as the main characters began to regain the security and grace of the

days before the war. There were four main characters in the story. They were

Scarlett O?Hara, Ashley Wilkes, Melanie Hamilton-Wilkes, and Rhett Butler.

Scarlett, Ashley, and Melanie were raised together, and Rhett Butler was an

outsider who came from Charleston. Scarlett was the daughter of a wealthy Irish

plantation owner. She was not beautiful but she was spoiled. She was selfish and

scheming. She was also charming so men easily fell in love with her. Scarlett

was obsessively in love with Ashley Wilkes and attempted several times to lure

him away from his lovely wife Melanie. She was also attracted to Rhett Butler

and eventually married him. Scarlett was a survivor. When she was faced with a

problem, she took charge; whether it was taking care of Melanie when she had the

baby, shooting a union soldier, building the lumber company, or taking care of

something else. Melanie Hamilton, in contrast to Scarlett, was unselfish and

gentle. She always saw the good in people and situations and looked beyond their

flaws. She had an inner strength that kept her from complaining about the

injustice done on the south and on her loved ones. Melanie married her cousin,

Ashley Wilkes; therefore she became Scarlett?s antagonist. Melanie was

generous, loving, and forgiving at all times to all people. Although she was

physically weak, her heart was strong. In the end her second pregnancy caused

her death and she put her trust in Scarlett to take care of her husband and son.

Ashley Wilkes was the gentle and elegant son of a plantation owner. He was weak

and indecisive. He was not any good at farming or hard labor. However, he did

take on tasks of honor and sacrifice. After the war, Ashley lost the life he had

expected and had difficulty finding the strength to continue his life. Rhett

Butler was a very wealthy, handsome, southern gentleman from Charleston. He was

a man who knew his own mind and followed it no matter what. He was a smart

businessman, but had a sense of honor and integrity that he always returned to.

He was irresistibly drawn to Scarlett, who he saw was just like him. Against his

better judgment, he fell in love with and married her, despite of her faults.

The first conflict was the War and its effects on the south. The characters were

trying to reclaim their old life, even though so much had changed. They had

dreams of victory despite the evidence of losing the battle. It is almost as if

everyone was in denial. The conflict was resolved when the war was over, the

soldiers came home, and everyone began trying to rebuild their lives. The second

conflict was that Scarlett believed she would marry Ashley Wilkes, and he

married Melanie. She tried to convince him not to, but he did not listen.

Throughout the story, she tried to charm him away from Melanie. The conflict was

resolved when Scarlett found out she really loved her husband, Rhett Butler. The

third conflict also involved Scarlett. She desperately needed money to keep Tara

from being taken by the carpetbaggers after the war. They wanted three hundred

dollars and she only had ten left. Scarlett went to Rhett (before they were

married) and he refused so she went to Frank Kennedy. He married her and helped

her open a business with Ashley. She was then able to pay the taxes with her

income and Tara was saved. The fourth conflict was another involving Scarlett.

Ashley asked her to take care of Melanie while he is gone to war. Scarlett does

not want to do it but feels obligated to. The arrival of Melanie?s baby came

on the night Atlanta was burning and there was no help for the delivery.

Scarlett?s strength in adversity took over, as did her promise to Ashley, so

she delivered the baby and brought both Melanie and her newborn child to the

safety of Tara. The resolution was that even though Scarlett did not want to

care for Melanie, she did anyway. It was not just because Ashley asked her to,

but because it needed to be done. This bonded Scarlett and Melanie. The fifth

conflict was Rhett?s problem with loving a woman who loved another man. He

gave into his love for her and then pulled back when he was hurt. He showed his

love the only way she would accept it- with money. This took care of her

problems and concerns about money. Rhett solved his problem by leaving Scarlett

and returning home. This story was about people?s hopes and dreams, about

honorable treatment of others, and about facing reality amidst adversity. There

is no truth or substance in trying to recapture the past. It becomes a foolish

obsession that causes self-defeat and confusion. The true dreams of tomorrow are

lived by honor, truth, and humility. We should accept things as they really are

and not how we would like them to be.