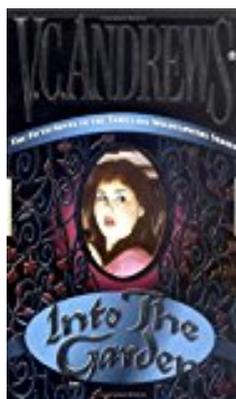


# [PDF] Into The Garden (Wildflowers)

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**Description:**

**About the Author** One of the most popular authors of all time, **V.C. Andrews** has been a bestselling phenomenon since the publication of her spellbinding classic *Flowers in the Attic*. That blockbuster novel began her renowned Dollanganger family saga, which includes *Petals on the Wind*, *If There Be Thorns*, *Seeds of Yesterday*, and *Garden of Shadows*. Since then, readers have been captivated by more than fifty novels in V.C. Andrews' bestselling series. V.C. Andrews' novels have sold more than one hundred million copies and have been translated into sixteen foreign languages.

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## **Forbidden Pleasures**

When Jade called to invite me, as well as Misty and Star, to her home for our first official meeting of the OWP's, my heart seemed to wake up and beat happiness as well as blood through my veins and arteries. My whole body came alive and lifted as if some heavy chains had been broken. I could almost hear them shatter and clank at my feet.

Geraldine was busy preparing our dinner, cleaning the vegetables for our salad, inspecting every carrot, every lettuce leaf for some imperfection and then pausing to baste the roast chicken, but always listening with one ear tilted in my direction. Our downstairs phone was on the kitchen wall near the door and I had no phone in my room. The only time I could have any privacy during a personal call was when she was upstairs, out of the house, or in the bathroom. The moment I cradled the receiver, she spun on her heels, demanding to know who had called.

"It was Jade," I announced, unable to hide my excitement, "inviting me to her house for a brunch."

"Jade?" Geraldine's small eyes narrowed into suspicious slits, darkened with accusations, fears, and threats. "Isn't she one of *them*?"

Geraldine usually referred to the other girls in my group therapy as "Them." It made it sound as if they were all monstrous, alien creatures. If they were monstrous, what was I in her eyes? I wondered. She blamed everything on my father when she spoke about it, if she ever spoke about it, but deep down in my heart, I believed she blamed me as well. I could see it and feel it in the way her eyes lingered on me like two tiny spotlights of accusation.

After all, I thought, she had made me feel as if there was something polluted about me because I had been born a child out of an adulterous affair, even if the adulterer was her own mother. Sin was always something contagious in Geraldine's eyes. Why shouldn't she believe I had inherited a tendency toward it?

I couldn't remember her ever looking at me with pleasure, and certainly never with pride. She was always searching for something to criticize as if she had been given the responsibility of ensuring that I never wandered from the path of righteousness, her righteousness. My premature voluptuous figure only reinforced her tarnished image of me. Once she even told me it meant I'd be oversexed, and she always talked about sex as if it was a disease. She often tried to make me feel ashamed of what I looked like and she had even gone so far as to try to prevent me from having a female figure as long as she could, making me wear what were practically straight-jackets when my body started to develop.

"She's one of the girls, yes," I said finally, hoping she wouldn't start criticizing Jade and the others as she had done so many times in the past.

"The girls? You mean those girls from Doctor Marlowe's clinic?" she asked, grimacing as if she had just bitten into a rotten walnut.

Geraldine never had approved of the therapy sessions. She hated the idea of strangers knowing anything intimate about us. She would have had me keep it all locked inside, no matter what damage it did to me. In her way of thinking, you swallowed the bad with the good and you locked it inside and worked, worked, worked, keeping yourself busy to forget whatever was unpleasant or ugly.

"Doctor Marlowe never referred to it as a clinic, Mother. You know we went to her office in her

home. You make it sound terrible, like a hospital or a research lab or something with the four of us being treated like guinea pigs," I told her.

She grimaced again, only with more disgust this time. Geraldine could twist her mouth until it almost looked like a corkscrew. She was so thin these days, she hardly had a cheek to pull in, but it dipped in like the center of a saucer when she turned her lips.

"It's just a bunch of hocus-pocus, all this psychological mumbo-jumbo. What did people do before all this counsel and analysis, huh? I'll tell you," she said quickly. As she often did, Geraldine asked a question that she had already answered to her liking in her own mind. "They gritted their teeth and they endured. It made them stronger.

"Nowadays, you have all these moaners and groaners, crying and complaining as soon as they're in the least bit of difficulty. They're even on television -- television! And why? To tell the most personal things! People have no shame anymore. They are willing to tell complete strangers their most private secrets and business, for the whole world to see and know. Disgusting.

"We're just thinning the blood with all this stupidity," she insisted, "thinning the blood, making ourselves weak and pitiful. There's no grit. People have no self-respect and these so-called doctors just encourage it all."

"Doctor Marlowe has helped us, Mother, helped all of us through very difficult times," I insisted.

"Um," she said, grinding her teeth. "Well, I don't want you associating yourself with such girls. I didn't like the idea of that doctor bringing you all together like that in the first place. It wasn't healthy."

"But I like them and they like me. We have..."

"What?" she snapped. "What do you have?"

"A lot in common," I said.

She stared at me, her eyes turning red with fear and shock.

"You mean, they...their daddies..."

"No, they each have a different problem, none of them like mine," I said quickly.

She recovered instantly, whipping her upper body ramrod straight. She hated anything that even vaguely suggested what had happened.

"What good will come of you being around girls with problems, Cathy? You're just going to poison the well some more. They can't be good influences. If you were sick with pneumonia, would it be good for you to hang around with patients sick with tuberculosis? No, of course not. If this Doctor Marlowe thought you were in need of help, why would she mix you in with other girls who were sick, too? To make more money, faster, that's why," she said.

"No, that's not true. It was a technique..."

"Technique," she spat. "They have all sorts of words, to cloud the truth and get away with their hocus-pocus. I don't want you having anything more to do with those girls, hear?"

"But -- "

"No but's, Cathy. I have all the responsibility now. Always did," she spat. "You go off and get into trouble with some disturbed teenage girls and I have more to handle. It's enough running this house and making sure you get what you need."

"But I need friends, too!"

"Friends, yes, but not mental cripples," she insisted, and turned her back on me.

"They're not mental cripples. If they're mental cripples, what am I?"

She was silent.

"I'm going," I asserted.

She slammed a pot down on the counter so hard, I felt my insides jump into my throat. Then she turned toward me, wagging the pot she gripped in her hand like a club.

"You'll not be disobedient now," she warned. "I'm legally your mother and I'm still the one responsible for you, and you'll obey, hear?"

I stared at her. Suddenly, she turned from flushed red to the whitest pale and fell back against the counter.

"Mother, what's wrong?" I cried.

She waved me off.

"Nothing," she said, taking a deep, and what looked like a painful, breath. "It's just a little dizzy spell. Go tend to your own chores. I'll be calling you to set the table soon."

She clutched her stomach and chest as if to keep everything inside and turned her back to me. I waited and watched until she straightened up her bony shoulders, this time with more effort, and then returned to what she was doing. She moaned under her breath, but said no more. I watched her for a moment before leaving the kitchen.

I was determined to go to Jade's house. I wouldn't be shut out. I hadn't told Geraldine that the brunch was tomorrow. I would sneak out and go, I thought. I would just use her golden rule: what she doesn't know, won't hurt her. Hide the truth. The truth can bring pain. Why bring her any pain? Sometimes it's kinder to lie.

Because I didn't talk about the brunch anymore, Geraldine didn't mention it again and the subject drifted off like so many unpleasant thoughts and words in our house. Sometimes, when I looked around my home, I thought the already dark walls were becoming even darker as more vile, nasty, and ugly words were splattered over them.

Geraldine liked the house this way. She kept the curtains drawn tight most of the day so "people couldn't gape through our windows and snoop." As if anyone really cared what went on in our little home, I thought. We had to be the most boring people on the street. Who'd want to know about us? Geraldine never participated in any social events and rarely spoke to anyone. She liked keeping to herself, keeping the lights low, the doors shut tight, the world at bay.

After dinner, I managed to get to the phone to call Jade without Geraldine overhearing. She had gone upstairs to the bathroom. She didn't like using the downstairs bathroom. She was always afraid

either I or my adoptive father when he was here could hear her. I knew that was the reason because she always yelled at me after I used the downstairs bathroom and said, "When you go, start with some tissue in the water so you don't make any disgusting noises. These walls and doors are so thin, you can hear someone's stomach gurgle."

I should have asked her if the walls and doors were so thin, why didn't you ever hear what went on behind mine? She hadn't heard me when I needed her most, and now as I reached for the phone, I hoped her voluntary deafness would continue.

"It's Cathy. I have a problem," I began, when Jade answered her phone.

"Oh no," she cried. "I knew your mother wouldn't let you come. And I'm having this great brunch prepared for us. Star and Misty are definitely coming. Please don't tell me you can't come."

"No," I said, laughing at her skepticism, "I'm coming too, only I have to keep it from my mother for now. She doesn't want me to go to your house."

"Why?" she demanded. I could hear the indignation, like some bubble, expanding in her every passing moment. Only Star could stand up to that explosion when it occurred. "Does she think she's better than me and my family?"

"She was never in favor of my going to Doctor Marlowe in the first place, remember? She thinks we're all going to be bad influences on each other."

"What about her? What about her influence or lack of it? She let all that happen to you right under her snooty nose. She's about the worst excuse for a mother -- "

"Please," I pleaded, thinking if she only knew the truth.

"Well, what do you want me to do?"

"Tell your driver I'll be waiting on the corner and not at my house."

I gave her the cross street and assured her I would be there when he came.

"Great," she said. "Tomorrow, the police will come and accuse me and my chauffeur of kidnapping you. Your mother will press charges, for sure."

"No, she won't," I said, laughing.

"All right," she concluded. "At least you have the guts to do the right thing and not let her intimidate you. The girls will be proud of you," she added.

It made me feel good to hear her say that and I realized I wanted nothing as much as I wanted their respect. I wanted it much more than I wanted Geraldine's.

"Thanks. Should I bring anything?"

"Yes," she said, "you."

I laughed again and quickly hung up just as I heard Geraldine's footsteps on the stairs. I knew how good she was at seeing deceit in my eyes, so I finished putting away the dishes quickly and told her I had a headache and was going to lie down. That was the one excuse she always seemed to buy. I think that was because she had headaches so much herself.

"All right," she said, retiring to the living room to look for something "decent" on television. "Don't forget. I'll be doing the week's shopping in the morning."

I didn't volunteer to go along and she didn't ask. We did so little together. We never went to a restaurant, to the movies, or even to the mall. It made her nervous when I accompanied her to stores because she was always watching the way men looked at me and then telling me to close my coat more or hold my arms up higher so my upper body didn't swing so much. She made me so self-conscious about myself, I didn't enjoy being with her anyway.

As quickly as I could, I went upstairs to my room and closed the door. That was one of her house rules...keep your bedroom door closed, guard your privacy, and don't expose yourself and therefore make someone else uncomfortable. With my father gone and just she and I here, what did it matter now? Even though I wondered, I didn't question it. It was easier to simply let her dictate her laws of behavior and let them float on through the house like birds without eyes, bumping into everything until they settled somewhere and waited to be nudged again.

I went to sleep that night dreaming about the girls, about having friends and doing fun things together, maybe even having parties and meeting boys.

I met Misty, Star, and Jade when Dr. Marlowe put us together for group therapy. We were all so different, and yet, we were all alike in one way: we were all victimized somehow by our own parents.

It had been a while since we had last seen each other. Every time the phone rang, which it didn't do often, I was hoping it was one of them. Who else would care to call me? Geraldine had no family to speak of, no sisters or brothers, other than me, of course. Our mother and her father were long gone, and my adoptive father's family, none of whom had wanted anything much to do with him anyway, were now as much persona non grata as he was. It got so I welcomed solicitors, just to hear another voice over the phone. Geraldine was always right nearby going, "Hang up, hang up, just hang up."

But Jade had finally called. She had called!

The hardest thing for me to do was conceal my excitement the next morning. I took the easiest way out. Since Geraldine never wanted to know about my periods, she had no idea when they should be occurring. I complained about menstrual cramps and told her I didn't have much of an appetite. As usual she put her hands over her ears and shut her eyes if I said anything like that.

"If I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times, Cathy. You don't talk about those things. Those things are personal and should be kept locked up inside your own head. They're not for the ears of strangers."

"You're not a stranger, Mother," I pointed out, even though I thought she behaved like one sometimes.

She shook her head.

"That's not the point. What happens in your body is nobody's business, not even mine," she insisted.

We'd had this same discussion on and off before. Sometimes, I liked to have it just to get a rise out of her, to see and hear her say the same things. It was as if I needed constant proof that she was the way she was and she actually believed the strange things she said.

Once I said, "But what if something's wrong? How will I know if I don't tell you?"

"You'll know," she insisted. "Your body is your best judge of itself."

If that's true, I better head right for the mental hospital, I wanted to say, but sealed my lips and gave up instead.

To avoid any more discussion and especially any nitty-gritty details I might let slip from my mouth after what I had told her about my period this morning, Geraldine hurried along, diving into her chores like someone jumping into a pool to get out of the hot sun. She had already eaten her breakfast, which was usually just a piece of toast and a cup of tea, followed by one of her herbal panaceas. My father used to make fun of them, but she ignored him. I never took them and she never offered them or encouraged me to take them. It was as if she had some secret super-remedy for everything and didn't want to share it.

This morning I just had some juice and a little bowl of cereal. Before she went up to her bedroom to change into what she called appropriate clothes for the public, she told me she would like me to clean out the food pantry.

"Take everything off the shelves and dust around, and then make an inventory. I've got an idea about what we have and what we need, of course, but I want it better organized," she instructed.

Geraldine ran the house as if it was a nuclear submarine, polishing, cleaning, checking, and rechecking every nook and cranny. At times she made me feel like some sort of junior officer or worse, a grunt. While most girls my age were enjoying their summer vacation, going to the beach, to the malls, and movies, meeting friends and having parties, I was at work in our backyard, on our patio, in our house, straightening and reorganizing things I had straightened and reorganized only a week or so before. Once, while I watched a squirrel working hard to accumulate its food, going through the same motions, I thought, I'm not much different. Maybe that's why he stops, gazes at me, and goes on without any concern.

I thought the best thing to do was get right into the pantry so she would think things were clicking along just as she had expected. She came downstairs all dressed, her cloth shopping bag in hand, and looked in on me.

"Good," she said, watching me clean out one of the shelves. "Take your time and do it right. I won't be any longer than usual."

I waited until I heard the front door close and then I quickly went up to my room to choose something nice to wear. It was a warm day, but I didn't own a single pair of shorts. Geraldine wouldn't buy me any, but I had a pair of jeans I had cut at the knees without her knowing. I had them stuffed in the leg of another pair.

I put them on and found a light pink cotton sweater she hadn't thrown out. She often sifted through my meager wardrobe, searching for anything I might have grown out of, and then either donated it to the thrift shop or simply put it in the garbage. Anything that might have become slightly tight or even suggested being too short was doomed.

The girls at Doctor Marlowe's had always been critical of the way I kept my hair. It wasn't entirely my own fault. Geraldine trimmed it unevenly and wouldn't let me go to a beauty parlor. She thought that was a big waste of money.

"They call themselves stylists," she said, "and then they can charge you twice as much as they should. Most of the time, all they do is look in some magazines and try to copy what they see even if it doesn't fit you."

I didn't argue with her. She didn't even look to see if I nodded or looked like I disagreed. Geraldine always expected that whatever words of wisdom she cast my way would fall into my net and be held dearly by me. Why shouldn't she believe that? I thought. I rarely gave her any reason to doubt it. Unlike most girls my age, at least up until now, I would avoid arguments, speaking back, or being defiant.

I must say my heart was pounding so hard when I started out of the house, I thought my legs would turn to wet noodles and I would faint at the door. She would come home and find me sprawled on the floor and tell me that's what I get for trying to defy her wishes. I almost expected to feel an electric shock when I reached for the polished brass doorknob and turned it. Taking a deep breath, closing my eyes and opening them, I stepped out of the house into the bright warm sunshine.

It was a glorious day and certainly not one to spend boxed up in a food pantry, cleaning and polishing shelves and taking inventory. The clouds looked like thick smears of whipped cream over blue frosting. The sidewalk and streets glittered, and the Santa Ana breeze was warm and gentle. All of it gave me more courage.

I hurried down our narrow sidewalk and onto the street, turning right and walking quickly without looking back once. If I did, I thought, I might hesitate and hesitation might lead to my returning home.

I was hoping the limousine would be there already and I wouldn't have to wait, but it wasn't. Seconds seemed more like minutes. I strained my neck to look down the street for signs of the long black car I had seen bringing Jade to Doctor Marlowe's or waiting for her afterward. It wasn't in sight.

I glanced at my watch and looked fearfully in the direction from which Geraldine would be coming. It was far too early for her to be returning, but nevertheless, I couldn't help worrying that she might have forgotten something or simply decided to come home to check on me. She often had these spurts of paranoia, jumping up to see if doors and windows were locked or if I was doing whatever chores I was supposed to be doing.

It was surely only my imagination, but it seemed to me that every passing driver looked at me with suspicion and wondered why I was loitering at the corner. Fortunately, Geraldine had no interest in our neighbors so I didn't have to worry about any of them calling her or telling her they had seen me. She hated gossip and compared it to dogs barking at each other or cats hissing. It was all meaningless and wasteful and led only to unhappiness and trouble. Idle talk was worse than idle hands. If you had nothing of value to say, keep your lips firmly shut was Geraldine's motto.

Finally, I saw the sleek shiny black automobile turn up the street and glide toward the corner where I waited. The chauffeur slowed and pulled to the side. Before he could get out to open the door, it flew open and Misty cried, "Get your booty in here, Cat!"

I glanced once toward my house and then practically lunged into the big automobile. Star was sitting there cool and collected, her beautiful pearl black skin never looking more radiant and smooth, her eyes like black diamonds. She had her hair freshly braided and wore a khaki knee-length cotton skirt and a matching cotton blouse. I slipped in beside her and Misty closed the door.

"Onward," she cried.

The driver nodded and smiled, and we pulled away from the curb.

Misty wore a pair of leggings with an oversize T-shirt that read *How's my walking? Call 555-4545*.

She was a petite girl, but complained about her figure being too boyish. I was willing to trade bodies with her anyway. Her blue eyes seemed to sparkle with impish joy at the sight of me.

"That's not your real phone number, is it?" I quickly asked, nodding at the T-shirt.

"No. It's the Motor Vehicle bureau. I had it made up on the boardwalk in Venice Beach."

"Can't you get into trouble for that?" I asked.

"Now how is she going to get into trouble for that?" Star questioned. "Cat, you're about as timid as a church mouse. I bet you only cross the street at crosswalks," she added.

"As a matter of fact, that's true," I said.

Star laughed.

"Stop picking on her," Misty ordered, and turned back to me. "How have you been?" she cried, reaching forward to squeeze my hands. "Can you believe we're really getting together? And how about this limousine?"

"You should have seen when it pulled up to my house," Star said. "The neighbors were staring and Granny kept shaking her head and muttering, 'Lordy be, Lordy be. My grandchild, riding in that chariot.'"

I could easily imagine the scene.

"What are you going to tell people when you return?" Misty asked her.

"I don't know. Maybe I'll tell them I was in a movie," she suggested.

"What happens when they find out you're not in a movie?" I followed.

"Who cares?" she replied. "They don't have any right sticking their noses in my business anyway, do they?" she demanded, her eyes wide and furious.

I shrugged.

She stared at me a moment, still looking furious, and then she smiled and laughed.

"You act like the sidewalk is thin ice and you're made of lead and heavy stones. You don't have any reason to be scared of anyone anymore. You're a member of the OWP's. Go on, tell her, Misty," she said.

"That's right," Misty said. She grew serious for a moment. "Have you gone back to see Doctor Marlowe?"

"Not yet," I said. "She called and spoke with my mother once, but no appointment has been set. What about you two?"

"I've been back to see her," Star said. "But I'm finished now."

"Me too," Misty said. "I think Jade is too. You're the only one left."

"She told me to call her any time," Star said, "but I hope I don't need to." She gazed at me. "Just go

see her and finish it," she continued. "The longer you hold off doing something you're scared of doing or you don't think is pleasant, the worse it seems."

"She's right," Misty said.

"Of course I'm right. I don't need you telling everyone I'm right."

Misty just threw one of her small shrugs and pretty little smiles back at her.

"I'm hungry," she said. "I deliberately just nibbled on breakfast so I'd have a good appetite. Jade said she was making sure we had a special buffet. I can't even imagine what it will be like."

"It's just food whether a fancy cook from France prepares it or not," Star said.

"Wrong," Misty sang. She marked the air with her right forefinger, making an X.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Star demanded.

"I'm keeping track of your boo-boo's," Misty replied.

Star shifted in the seat, shook her head, and looked at me.

"So what have you been doing with yourself, huh? You're sitting there like some Buddha while we gobble like turkeys."

"Just helping around the house, reading, taking a walk sometimes. There's a lot to do in the yard. My mother fired the gardener we had. She said we have to be economical because we're going to be living only on our interest income."

"Why doesn't she go out and get a job then?" Star asked.

"She makes it all sound critical, but I know we have a good income. There was money she inherited, besides the money my father had to surrender."

"He should have had to surrender more than money," Star muttered. "And you know what I'm referring to, Cat."

I felt myself turn red, the heat rising quickly up my neck and into my face.

Misty glanced at her with a look of reprimand and Star turned to gaze out the window. We were all quiet for a moment, but Misty hated silences. They made her fidget.

"That's a nice sweater," she told me.

"Yeah," Star said. "The way it fits, I'm surprised your mother let you wear it."

"She doesn't know," I said. "She doesn't even know I have these cut-off jeans."

"You snuck out, didn't you?" Star realized. "That was why you wanted to be picked up at the corner?" she demanded.

"Yes," I said.

"What's going to happen when she finds out?" Misty said.

"I don't know."

"Nothing's going to happen," Star insisted. "Don't make her more scared than she already is." She turned to me. "She'll bitch a little and then she'll realize you can't be treated like some infant."

"Parents," she added, nodding, "have to grow up too."

"Amen to that," Misty said, imitating her.

Star gave her one of her Star looks and then smiled and shook her head.

"Well, look at this," she said, and we leaned over to gaze out the window at the security booth and the gate that led into Jade's neighborhood. "That girl does live like some princess. No wonder she's spoiled rotten."

The guard waved us through and the large gate swung open. We all gaped at the beautiful, enormous houses, each one custom-made.

"Wow," Misty said. "These make my house look like a bungalow."

"What do you think it does to my granny's? I guess I live in a dog house," Star said.

The streets in the development were wide and lined with palm trees. There was even a sidewalk. Occasionally, the houses were broken up with free space, trees, and lawn, and there was a lake at the center, around which all the houses were built. All of them had good-size yards behind them, too.

"Are we still in America?" Misty cried.

"Not my America," Star said.

The limousine slowed and then turned into a circular driveway. We continued to gape as Jade's house came into view. It was as big as she had described. I remembered how proudly she had described it.

It certainly held my attention. The limousine came to a stop and the chauffeur got out quickly to open the door for us. For a moment, none of us moved. We just stared.

"Well, what are we acting like a bunch of silly tourists for?" Star cried. "It's just a big house. C'mon," she said, and stepped out first.

Misty and I followed, neither of us able to stop gaping. As we started toward the tall double front door, it was flung open and Jade appeared.

"I'm absolutely famished," she announced to us, her hands on her hips. "I skipped breakfast waiting for you guys. At least you can walk faster," she added.

Jade was truly the most elegant looking teenage girl I knew. She had long, lush brown hair with a reddish tint that flowed gently down to her shoulders. Her eyes were green and almond shaped. Her high cheekbones gave her face an impressive angular line that swept gracefully into her jaw and perfectly shaped lips. Her nose was a little small, but also just slightly turned up and she was always stylishly dressed and perfectly made-up.

"It's not our fault you live out in the boondocks," Star quipped.

"Boondocks! This is probably the most desirable gated community in Los Angeles, maybe even the whole West Coast!" Jade bragged.

Star looked around as if deciding whether or not she wanted to move in.

"Um. No graffiti at least," she said, and Jade laughed.

"C'mon, c'mon. Everything is set up for us in the back. Did you bring bathing suits?" Jade asked.

"No one told me to," Star said.

"I didn't think of it," Misty said, shaking her head.

I was ashamed to say I didn't even own one.

"That's all right. I'll find something for each of you. Worse comes to worse," she added with a coy smile, "we'll skinny-dip."

"What?" I cried.

"Just kidding," she said, and took my hand. "Cat, stop worrying," she ordered. "We're going to have a good time for a change. You have to leave your sadness and troubles outside the door."

"She doesn't know how to stop worrying," Star said.

"Well, let that be the first commandment of the OWP's: no worries."

"Right," Misty said. "Isn't this great?" she added. "We're together, forever."

She threaded her arm through mine and squealed with delight.

"Right," Star muttered, taking my other arm, "misery loves company."

They were all around me. I looked again at the beautiful mansion. How could anyone be miserable here, especially me? I wondered, as I entered with my best friends in all the world, my only friends in all the world. We had each had our private storms and now, all our bright and hopeful smiles made one united, special rainbow.

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