

The story begins with Cathy and Christopher arriving at the house of their son, Bart, which was entirely built to replicate Foxworth Hall (which burned down in *Petals On the Wind*). They are planning on moving to Hawaii soon afterwards, but several events keep them from doing so. They meet Joel, who they soon learn is Corrine's brother, who was long thought dead. He claimed he spent several years in an Italian monastery and they soon learn that he is feeding Bart false information about God and punishment. Bart also begins to look at Joel as a father figure; a fact that troubles Cathy greatly. Bart is still bitter towards his mother and Chris for their incestuous relationship, so their stay is not pleasant. He has grown into a handsome young man, who is extremely jealous and power hungry, and bitter that Chris is the guardian of his money until he reaches thirty-five. Eventually, Cindy and Jory, along with his wife Melodie, join Bart at his home, which adds to the tension.

Bart soon shows signs of jealousy towards Jory, because of Melodie. We soon find out that Melodie is pregnant, but the happiness soon dies when Jory gets into an accident leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. Melodie withdraws from Jory and finds solace in Bart and the two begin an affair, which Bart soon realizes is an empty relationship and he is just a replacement for Jory. Melodie goes into labor on Christmas Day, although she tells no one and ends up having twins Deirdre and Darren. The pressure of motherhood is too much for her and she flees, leaving the children and Jory. Cathy tries to console both her sons and tries to keep a firm hand on the wild and free-spirited Cindy, who has a knack for finding boys. After a long period of torment from Bart, and later Joel who disapprove of her ways, Cindy leaves to go to a school in New York.

They hire a nurse, named Antonia Winters, or Toni for short, who comes in to try and help Jory recuperate and she soon starts an affair with Bart, who seems infatuated. Cathy discovers, though, that Jory has feelings for Toni and that he deserves her love more than Bart. Cathy and Christopher stay there for years, which disturbs Cathy because it reminds her so much of Foxworth Hall. Eventually, Toni falls for Jory and they begin a relationship. Cindy later comes home for a visit and notes of how she ran into Melodie in New York, who had apparently remarried two days after her divorce from Jory was final and resumed her dancing career. Bart has now built a chapel, in which he commands the family to attend Sunday sermons, presided over by Joel. Cathy and Chris eventually become disgusted by the "fire and brimstone" sermons and tell Bart that they will no longer attend. Bart secretly starts having the twins go to the chapel, in which they pray for forgiveness for being the "Devil's Issue", which Cathy overhears, reminding her of Cory and Carrie. She confronts Bart with this, and tells him to leave the twins alone, telling Toni never to let them out of her sight, unless she knows they are with Jory or herself. Soon Chris and Cathy decide to move out with Jory, the twins and Toni, and Cathy eventually confronts Bart with this telling him they are all leaving, and Bart in his resentment, acts as if he wants nothing more.

In the end, while Cathy is waiting for Chris to come home from work, he never shows. Joel comes and quite happily tells them that he heard on the radio of a car accident, in which a man was killed. She later finds out that it was Chris who was killed, and she notes how similar it was when their father was killed. Bart soon realizes how much he really loved Christopher and gives a moving eulogy at his funeral, and soon after finds his place as a televangelist who travels the world. Toni and Jory have also gotten married, and Jory later tells Cathy that she is pregnant, and if they have a boy they will call him Christopher and if it is a girl they will call her Catherine. Then one night Cathy goes up to the attic and sits by the windows and dies (but not before decorating it with paper flowers), ending the Dollanganger tales.