

# Rappaccini's Daughter Essay: Allegory of the Garden of Eden

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In the literal sense, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Rappaccini's Daughter* is the story about the rivalry between two scientists that ultimately causes the destruction of an innocent young woman. However, when the story is examined on a symbolic level, the reader sees that *Rappaccini's Daughter* is an allegorical reenactment of the original fall from innocence and purity in the Garden of [Eden](#). Rappaccini's garden sets the stage of this [allegory](#), while the characters of the story each represent the important figures from the Genesis account. Through the literary devices of poetic and descriptive diction, Nathaniel Hawthorne conveys the symbolism of these characters, as well as the setting.

The story takes place in mid-nineteenth century in Padua, Italy and revolves around two major settings; the [mansion](#) of an old Paduan family, and Rappaccini's lush garden. The mansion is described as, "high and gloomy...the palace of a Paduan noble... desolate and ill-furnished..." This description establishes a dark mood throughout the story. Hawthorne writes, "One of the ancestors of this family...had been pictured by Dante as a partaker of the immortal agonies of his *Inferno*..." The allusion of Dante refers to *The Divine Comedy* and the *Inferno* describes the souls in Hell. Furthermore, Baglioni converses with Giovanni

in this mansion chamber and tries to manipulate him in his attempt to destroy Rappaccini. In a sense, the dark and gloomy mansion symbolizes the domain of evil.

The second major setting is the garden. The author uses poetic diction to describe Rappaccini's garden. Hawthorne writes, "There was one shrub in particular...that bore a profusion of purple blossoms, each of which had the luster and richness of a gem...seemed enough to illuminate th...

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