

The sound of hollyhocks

[Health & Medicine](#), [Alcoholism](#)



The theme of Hugh Garner's "The Sound of Hollyhocks" concerns one of Canada's most serious social problems. The theme suggests how condescension and discrimination can have devastating effects on the people around us. The story is set in Pinehills Clinic where alcoholics and psychotics are placed to recover. Wilf Armstrong, an alcoholic at the clinic, ends up with "Rock Hudson", who is a psychotic at the hospital, as his roommate. "Rock Hudson" was the nickname given to William Cornish Ranson by some of the other alcoholics. Rock was forced into mental illness by his mother because his wife, Sarah, was from a different social class. Rock comes from a rich family and he met Sarah at one of his father's branch of banks. They got married secretly because Rock knew that his mother would object such a marriage since Sarah came from a poorer and less prestigious background. The first meeting between Sarah and Rock's mother proved to be a disaster. Due to Rock's mother's disapproval of Sarah, Sarah and Rock's marriage starts to fall apart. One thing leads to another, and Sarah and Rock's marriage ends with Sarah's abrupt death. This pushes Rock into his present state of hearing flowers talk to him. This is a great example of how social problems such as condescension and discrimination can have devastating effects on those around us. If Rock's mother had not shown such hostility towards Sarah and Rock, they wouldn't have grown apart and Sarah would not have died and Rock would not have gone crazy. So Rock's mother, who originally just wanted the best for his son, becomes the person that pushes Rock into his mental illness, which ultimately lead to his death. Things like this happen every day in Canada and around the world. Awhile ago, several "skinheads" were tried for beating a Sikh man to death due to

racial and religious differences. They were tried and convicted for their crimes. Everyday, things similar to this happen, and many people get away with it. Social problems as serious as this cannot be ignored. In order for us to prevent things like this from happening, we must instill a sense of morals into our youths, teaching them that condescension and discrimination isn't right. So that blacks, whites, or any color for that matter, will not be a basis for judging someone.