

The Big Sky Study Guide

The Big Sky by A. B. Guthrie, Jr.

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Plot Summary

The Big Sky, by A.B. Guthrie, is an adventure novel about the days on the Western frontier. This is the story of Boone Caudill who grows up with a mean and domineering father who he comes to hate. The seventeen-year-old boy decides he is not taking another beating from Pap, knocks him out, and runs away from home.

On the road Boone meets Jim Deakins and rides to Louisville with him. This is the beginning of a long friendship between the two men that ends in a misunderstanding many years later. Boone has an uncle, Zeb Calloway, on his mother's side who is a trapper on the frontier. Boone decides to go West and Jim decides to go with him. The two men sign on to the Mandan, a boat operated by Jourdonnais and Summers and go up the Missouri River into Indian country hoping to make their fortunes hunting and trading in furs. With them is a twelve-year-old Blackfoot Indian squaw named Teal Eye who was kidnapped from her people by a rival Indian tribe. Her father is the Blackfoot chief, Heavy Otter, and Jourdonnais thinks that by returning her, he will be able to do a lucrative business with the Blackfoot. The girl escapes and the Mandan is attacked by another Indian tribe and all aboard are killed. The only survivors are Boone, Jim Deakins and Dick Summers.

The three men live by hunting and trapping in Indian territory. Boone comes to love the outdoor life and his life hunting and trapping. He isn't interested in getting rich, just in having what he needs to survive. When Dick leaves the group, Boone decides he wants to find Teal Eye. He has no idea what happened to her, but they begin to look for Heavy Otter and the Blackfoot. They push further and further into Indian territory and can't find them. Many of the Indians were wiped out in a smallpox epidemic, but Teal Eye survived. Boone follows the Indian custom in asking for her and she becomes his squaw.

Boone adopts the Indian ways and customs and is very happy with Teal Eye. After many years, she gives him a son, but the child is blind and has red hair, like Jim. The distraught Boone shoots Jim, leaves Teal Eye and returns to Kentucky where he finds his brother's son has red hair. After all the years of living outdoors and with the Indians, Boone doesn't fit in with his family in Kentucky. He can't stand the confines of a house. When a friend of the family tries to pressure him into marriage, he leaves. He visits Dick Summers and tells him some of what happened. Can he go back to Teal Eye and the frontier?

This book is an interesting adventure story about the life of the trappers during the periods of America's westward expansion. The book is about life in the wilderness and how people survived.



Chapters 1-4

Chapters 1-4 Summary

The Big Sky, by A.B. Guthrie, is an adventure novel about the days on the Western frontier. This is the story of Boone Caudill who grows up with a mean and domineering father who he comes to hate. The seventeen-year-old boy who is always getting into fights decides he is not taking another beating from Pap, knocks him out, and runs away from home.

The book opens as John enters the cabin and asks Serena where Boone is. John limps from a ball in his leg that he got at Tippecanoe. Boone comes in and Pap tells him there is a warrant for him because of his fight with Mose Napier. The two men go outside and Pop begins punching and kicking Boone, who finally runs, picks up a piece of wood and hits Pap. Boone packs his clothes and the Indian skin strop. Serena hands him the chicken she had been preparing for dinner. He grabs his rifle and says goodbye.

Chapter Two finds Boone walking in the rain. He thinks about the fights with Mose Napier and his father. Boone is heading for St. Louis and knows Paper would know that from his brother Dan. He thinks of joining his Uncle Jeb Calloway in the West. Boone walks all night and at daybreak stops to eat the chicken. After eating he turns his attention to the rifle and then falls asleep. When he awakes, he resumes his trek till he sees a town he assumes is Frankfort, Kentucky. Boone avoids the town in case the law is looking for him. When he reached the river, he stole a boat and rowed to a place on the distant bank. He crept into a barn and snuggled next to a cow for warmth. Boone thought of his family and began to cry.

In Chapter Three, Boone leaves the barn several hours before sunup. He thinks of his mother cooking breakfast and knows she is worrying about him but not saying anything to his father. Boone decides to follow the turnpike and avoid the towns. Since the chicken is gone, he is now hungry. He meets a man with a wagon and gets a ride. The man's name is Jim Deakins and he is going to Louisville. Boone gives his name as Zeb Calloway. They drive on talking, circling the toll gates where possible. Deakins, who doesn't want to spend the night with the corpse he is hauling, asks Boone to stay with him. They eat and sleep.

In Chapter Four, the men arrive in Louisville, and Boone is impressed with the size of Louisville. He tells Jim his plans to go to Indian country and asks him if he wants to come. Then Boone tells Jim his real name. Boone waits with the mules while Jim delivers the body. Pap appears with the law and Boone runs. Pap and the crowd follow. Boone reaches the Ohio River and jumps into a boat. When the boat capsizes, he clings to a piece of timber and reaches the Indiana shore.



Chapters 1-4 Analysis

At the age of seventeen, Boone doesn't get along well with his father. He is constantly getting into trouble and incurring his father's wrath and beatings. After the fight with Mose Napier, his father says there is a warrant out for him and starts to beat him. But Boone had taken as much as he could and hit Pap over the head with a piece of wood, packed his things and left. His mother understood his reasons for having to leave.

Boone meets Jim Deakins and the two travel to Louisville together. Boone reveals his plans to go West and asks Jim to come with as long as Jim can keep his mouth shut. He tells him about Pap.

Pap did just what he told Boone he would do; he came after him with the law. Boone escapes from them in Louisville and hears Pap call out that he will be in St. Louis. He wants his son to go back home.



Chapters 5-8

Chapters 5-8 Summary

Boone continues his journey in Indiana. He meets many wagons that are heading West, but they are too full to offer him a ride. He shot a rabbit and made a campsite along the road when a man on horseback appears and introduces himself as Jonathan Bedwell. He eats and spends the night at Boone's campsite. When Boone awakens in the morning, he finds that Bedwell and Boone's rifle are gone.

In Chapter Six, Boone looks around for Bedwell. Boone is sick from the alcohol he drank. As he walks, he thinks about his mother and returning home, but he knows he is in trouble with the law now. He is trying to follow Bedwell's trail to retrieve his rifle, but he had trouble following the trail. He steals a hen and finds a cave in which to spend the night. The next morning he continues his journey. Around noon, he sees a man on a horse. Boone goes around the area and later finds Bedwell and follows him. As they are fighting, the sheriff arrives.

Chapter Seven: The sheriff takes Boone to Paoli and charges him. Boone is to stand trial and has a lawyer, Squire Beeches, appointed to represent him. Bedwell lies under oath, saying he bought the rifle in Kentucky. The only friendly face in the court room belongs to an Indian. The jury finds Boone guilty and he is taken to jail.

In Chapter Eight, Jim Deakins now has a horse and wagon and is looking for Boone. He wonders if Boone drowned in the river but finds a man who has seen Boone on the road to Paoli. Jim arrives in Paoli and takes a room for the night and learns Boone is in jail. At dinner, the group, which includes the sheriff, talks about Boone, and Jim just listens. The keys to Boone's cell are on the table in front of the sheriff. Jim slips the key into his pockets and walks out. He releases Boone from the cell and tells him to get on a horse, but Boone wants his gun and kill the man who beat him, but Boone mounts the horse and escapes with Jim.

Chapters 5-8 Analysis

Boone is young and inexperienced. In Indiana, he drinks alcohol with Jonathan Bedwell and when he awakes in the morning, both Bedwell and the rifle are gone. Boone realizes that he is young and prey to anyone. He thinks of his mother and returning home, even if it means putting up with his father's beatings, but he knows he can't go home because he is in trouble with the law so he keeps running. When he finds Bedwell, he attacks him, trying to retrieve his rifle and is arrested. Now he is in more trouble and is found guilty by a jury and imprisoned in Paoli, Indiana.

Jim Deakins liked young Boone and the idea of going West with him. When he left Louisville, he looked for Boone and found him in jail in Paoli. Jim knew the rifle was really Boone's. Since the sheriff paid no attention to the cell keys on the table, Jim is



able to slip them in his pocket and release Boone. The two steal a horse and escape. Boone has a temper that he has a hard time controlling, but this time he had enough sense to listen to Jim and the two made it out of town.



Chapters 9-12

Chapters 9-12 Summary

Boone has now been in St. Louis for three weeks. Both he and Jim found work. Boone works in a livery stable and Jim found a job at a store. They are at the camp where they live. Boone asks the hunter, named Summers, about his uncle and finds it's been five or six years since the man has seen him. Jourdonnais, who runs the boat, signs up both Jim and Boone. They plan their journey as a pirogue appears. The men are invited to join them on shore. Two of the men are sick and one of them dies.

In Chapter Ten, they have the boat moving. The Indian squaw Teal Eye is with them. The men aren't allowed to touch her by the orders of Jourdonnais. Eventually they stop and eat and drink and begin to move again at dark. They quietly guide the boat, called the Mandan, past a group of buildings. Even though Jourdonnais has a hunter's permit, they must be careful. They are headed for the lands of the Blackfoot Nation.

Chapter Eleven has the Mandan continuing her journey up the Missouri River. Boone isn't feeling well but doesn't say anything. Finally Jim tells Boone that Boone has the clap and he will get over it.

Chapter Twelve has the journey on the Missouri continuing. They are in a dangerous part of the river. Time is important and they made as much progress as they could during the daylight hours. The hunters need to arrive before the winter. They come to a jam in the river they have to find a way around it. When the boat almost tipped, they lost Teal Eye. Boone rescues her from the river.

Chapters 9-12 Analysis

Boone and Jim achieve their goal of reaching St. Louis and finding a way into Indian territory. They sign on to the Mandan which is operated by Jourdonnais and sail up the Missouri River. Their goal is the Blackfoot Nation.

Even though he is young, Boone holds his own with the older men. He is very sensitive about his inexperience and when he has some physical problems, he is afraid to say anything. Finally, he asks Jim, who tells him he has the clap and that it will eventually go away. They continue their journey through the dangerous water. They all know of the dangers but are willing to take the risk.



Chapters 13-15

Chapters 13-15 Summary

Jim, Boone and Summers are talking about buffalo hunting. They talk about how to hunt and skin a buffalo. The Mandan continues its journey on the Missouri having reached the Platte River. The men shaved the heads of Jim and Boone since it was their first time crossing the Platte. They have crossed into Indian territory, and they stopped at the post of Cabanne's. There were Indians on shore waiting. They did some trading with them, and after Jourdonnais talked to Cabanne, they were on their way again.

In Chapter Fourteen, Boone and Summers are talking while the rest of the men are sleeping. Summers gives Boone a rifle. Later when they are on land, Summers shows him how to hunt buffalo. When they killed one, he showed him how to skin it. As Summers was butchering the buffalo, Boone spots a dust cloud of a pack of Indians approaching. They took what they could carry and went to hide from the Indians. Summers made the peace sign for the Indians. The twelve Indians approached them. One charged them and Summers shot him. They felled several of their horses as they charged. Just then the Mandan appeared, and they made it safely to the boat.

Chapter Fifteen has Jourdonnais thinking about Summers. He figures Summers was more interested in fun and adventure than money. Jourdonnais kept the boat on the opposite side of the river from where Boone and Summers had met the Indians. They keep an eye out for Indians now since there was always the danger of a raid from the Sioux.

Summers went out with a scouting party and was gone for what seemed a long time. Boone went with him. They find signs of the Indians, including a group of bullboats. They know the Mandan will be clear until reaching this point. They are in a section of the river where the boat has to be pulled by the men in the water. Just then Summers is attacked and kills the Indian and the crew is attacked.

Chapters 13-15 Analysis

The Mandan is now in Indian territory and the danger is increased. Since it is Jim and Boone's first time in Indian territory, the crew shaves their heads Indian style. Both Jim and Boone learn from the experience of the others. Boone is excited about the prospect of hunting buffalo. He is young and adventurous and they are heading to an area where there are huge profits to be had. Summers is a good teacher who has had years of experience as a hunter. Boone learns how to hunt and butcher a buffalo and has his first encounter with hostile Indian scouts. He doesn't hesitate to kill when he has to as that is his only chance of staying alive.

Summers enjoys the life as a hunter. He is Jourdonnais's partner but isn't interested in money. He likes the fun and the adventure, but he isn't as young as he used to be and he realizes this when he goes out scouting and is attacked by a party of Sioux.



Chapters 16-18

Chapters 16-18 Summary

The men sleep outside and have a problem with mosquitoes. Boone and the crew were now dressed as Indians with their hair long and wearing moccasins. Boone still thinks about home and his family once in a while. He didn't want to go back, even though he wondered about them. Boone had been with the Mandan for a year.

The Mandan passed Fort Tecumseh and kept going. They were in the territory of the Rees where they couldn't hunt because of the territorial claims of the Rees. Meat was plentiful for the men and they bargained with the squaws for their services. Boone accompanies Summers to a meeting with Two Elks. The Rees will side with the white man in a war against the Sioux. One night while laying awake in camp, Boone sees two men sneaking into the camp. The men are apprehended and known to Jourdonnais and Summers. They next morning the men tell them that Zeb Calloway is at the new Fort Union which is one hundred miles away.

In Chapter Seventeen, Boone thinks of how he felt when he thought the two men were going to hurt Teal Eye. She was always watching the banks as if she was looking for something. Boone thinks of his Uncle Zeb and hopes Zeb will be happy to see him. The Mandan reaches Fort Union. As they approach Fort Union, Boone is told to be sure to keep Teal Eye hidden. The Mandan crew is greeted by McKenzie as they pull in. Jourdonnais accuses McKenzie of sending the two men to their camp. He and Summers go ashore to talk to McKenzie about the incident. McKenzie tells them they will be killed in the Blackfoot Nation. No one goes there yet. McKenzie tries to make a deal with them to buy their cargo for his American Fur Company but Jourdonnais refuses. They find that Zeb will return at sundown.

The Mandan is moored two miles from the fort. Summers, Deakins and Boone are at the fort waiting for Zeb. Zeb returns with a group and greet Summers who introduces him to his nephew. They sit around and talk and tell Zeb that they are headed for Blackfoot country. They will return Teal Eye to her people and hope to make a deal with the Blackfoot.

Chapters 16-18 Analysis

Boone is happy with his new life but wonders about his family once in a while. He didn't want to return but he knows now he could handle Pap. He was more muscular now as a result of the life he now led. Boone had grown up a lot in his year on the Mandan.

They learn that Zeb Calloway is at Fort Union, which is one hundred miles ahead. Boone hasn't seen his uncle in a long time and is looking forward to the meeting. He hopes his uncle is happy to see him.

Jourdonnais and Summers work for a trading company and there are apparently some internal problems within the company. This is alluded to by the two men who were caught sneaking into their camp.

Teal Eye was stolen from her people and Jourdonnais and Summers plan to return her and make a deal with her father, the chief. Calloway doesn't feel it is worth it to go to the Blackfoot Nation. He thinks that the animal supply along the Missouri has been depleted by the American Fur Company. Boone thinks his uncle is getting old.



Chapters 19-21

Chapters 19-21 Summary

The Mandan continues on its journey to the Blackfoot Nation. It is now the short autumn with winter approaching. The men did what they could to keep the Mandan moving. They have seen no Indians since leaving Fort Union, just an abundance of animals. They plan to build a fort before meeting with the Blackfoot and they dream of the fine furs they will catch for business.

Teal Eye is more animated and recognizes the lands of her own nation. Jourdonnais hopes to be recognized as the white man who returned her to her people and hopes it will be the beginning of a long and profitable business relationship. They look for a place to build their fort and find one above Teapot Creek. They all have visions of being warmly greeted by the Indians for the return of Teal Eye. The next morning they find Teal Eye gone.

The men work on their fort, and Boone misses Teal Eye. One day Jim notices a cloud of dust approaching. They moor the Mandan in a safe place and send Jim and Boone to scout. The Indians came at them and they ran for shelter. Boone swam underwater away from the boat. The Indians overran the Mandan, killing the men. Boone is injured but alive without a rifle.

As Chapter Twenty begins, it is seven years later, 1837. Boone, Jim and Summers are living in a camp. They are having their problems with the company. Boone is like Summers in that he isn't looking to get rich from trade. Boone is happy with his life, unlike Jim who always wants to go to St. Louis or Taos. After surviving the Indian massacre they met six men from the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and stayed with them. An Indian arrives carrying an antelope. He is a Blackfoot who is not with the Nation. The Indian eats and falls asleep.

In Chapter Twenty One, it is winter and snowy. Poordevil has joined their group and they are moving around, laden with furs and supplies. There are plenty of traders now in addition to preachers and their women. The four men find a place to camp, eat, talk and sleep. The next morning they empty their traps

Chapters 19-21 Analysis

Jourdonnais, hopes that returning Teal Eye to her people will bring a profitable business relationship with the Blackfoot. He has dreams of establishing a trading house to rival the American Fur Company. Those dreams do not materialize since all but Summers, Jim and Boone are killed by the Indians while the men are building their fort.

Seven years later, Jim, Boone and Summers are still doing business. Boone is happy with his life under the big sky. He isn't looking to get rich off hunting and trade. He just



needs enough to live. Jim isn't quite that happy and keeps talking about returning to St. Louis or another city.

Their group grows to four when an Indian named Poordevil wanders into their camp. Poordevil basically makes himself at home and falls asleep. They decide they have a partner if they want one.



Chapters 22-24

Chapters 22-24 Summary

Jim kept a lookout for the Blackfoot who were waging war on the Crow. The Blackfoot also kill any white men they find. The group was looking to meet Bridger's men. They see a herd of buffalo and set off after them. There is also a group of Indians or hunters; they don't know which. It was a group of men that they knew who are ahead of Bridger. Since they've been having trouble with the Blackfoot, Boone and the others have to tell them to stay away from Poordevil. After eating, the men departed.

In Chapter Twenty Three, Boone's group continues on toward Jackson Hole. They are now near the Grand Teton range. It is the first time for Jim and Boone, and Dick knows how exciting it is for them. He thinks of going home to Missouri and settling on a patch of land.

In Chapter Twenty Four the men are drinking, talking and playing a game gambling with skins. A supply caravan arrived at the post and men were busy trading. The Indians weren't happy with the prices they received or with the white man working their land. There were also the wars with the Blackfoot. There was talk of this being the last rendezvous. The men are drinking and Poordevil is asleep from all the alcohol. They are telling stories of their days hunting and their encounters with the Indians. Suddenly, Boone announces that he is leaving, and Poordevil goes with him. Boone baits Streak by saying he won't let anyone bother Poordevil. Streak and Boone begin to fight. Boone breaks Streak's arm and hears Jim's warning of Streak having a knife. Boone gets the knife and kills Streak.

Chapters 22-24 Analysis

Jim thinks the life they lead is lonesome and knows that it doesn't bother Dick or Boone, but it bothers him. While going through the Grand Tetons, Summers also thinks of going home to Missouri. He could have a comfortable good life there and be happy.

Summers feels there will soon be a fight between Boone and a man named Streak, and the fight will leave one of them dead. Summers was correct in his assessment of the situation. At the rendezvous, Boone baits Streak about how he won't let anyone bother Poordevil. The two begin to fight and Boone kills Streak.



Chapters 25-27

Chapters 25-27 Summary

Dick, Boone and Jim are looking at the rendezvous site early in the morning and discussing their plans. Summers wants to go off on his own and figures that the old days are gone, and the West is being settled. It isn't the same kind of fun that it used to be. He says goodbye to his two best friends, Jim and Boone.

In chapter Twenty-Six, Jim, Boone and Poordevil are following a trail. They are going beyond Three Forks where the Blackfoot are. Jim knows Boone is looking for Teal Eye. He stays with Boone, though Jim wonders why he stays.

Boone shoots an elk and they decide to camp at the spot. They eat and talk, and Boone thinks about Summers and wishes he were there. Four Indians appear, a family of four. Jim offers them food and soon they are all talking. They are Shoshone and are at first nervous when they see Poordevil, a Blackfoot. Jim and Boone trade with the Indians before they left.

In Chapter Twenty-Seven it is early fall as Boone looks out at the Yellowstone plains. Boone sets out on his own to get a horse at the Crow village. He selected one but felt that the Indians wouldn't trade for it. He would offer it to Heavy Otter, Teal Eye's father. Boone waited for night, planning to steal the horse. At nightfall, in the dark, he finds the red horse and puts a rope around its neck. A Crow Indian approaches and Boone kills him. He takes the scalp as an offering to the Blackfoot. He led the horse out and back to his camp.

Chapters 25-27 Analysis

Dick Summers decides to go his own way. He knows he is leaving his best friends but knows the old days are gone. He is heading back East. It isn't that he is afraid to stay in the West; it's just that the West is now being settled and things aren't like they used to be. He is getting old and he knows it. He had his fun in the West and now wants something different.

Jim gives in to Boone, and they head into Blackfoot territory. He knows Boone wants to find Teal Eye and wonders why he agreed. Boone is his friend and he knows that Boone is dependable. He also knows Boone depends on him.

Boone doesn't understand his preoccupation with Teal Eye but plans to bring her father a horse as a gift. He has visions of marrying her and being the son to Heavy Otter, the chief. Boone doesn't know if she is married or anything about her. Jourdonnais thought that returning Teal Eye to her people would allow him to do business with the Blackfoot and he was killed.



Chapters 28-30

Chapters 28-30 Summary

They were pass the Yellowstone and meet the Three Forks and still there were no signs of the Blackfoot. They should have returned to the river by this time. The group moves on looking for the Indians. Since there were still no Indians no Indians at the Three Forks, they went upstream to where the Madison and Jefferson came together and find no Indians, just deserted villages.

The group comes to a village with a horrible smell. The village is full of dead Indians. Poordevil tells them that it is smallpox. Boone says that the whole Blackfoot Nation can't be dead. They traveled on and saw a man with a horse. He asks the Indian about Heavy Otter and then has Poordevil ask. The Indian tells them that a boat brought the sickness and the Blackfoot fled, including Heavy Otter who was sick. They fled to Titty River. The Indian draws a map on the ground, and the men try to figure out where the place is located.

Chapter Twenty-Nine finds the three traveling north reaching the Dearborn valley and then the south fork of the Medicine River. Poordevil is familiar with the land. They finally reach the Titty and Jim comments that he thinks they are in British country. They come to a place with a few Indian families and are told Heavy Otter is dead. The Indian lodges are scattered in the area. They find the Piegan chief, Red Horn. Teal Eye is there. Boone gives Red Horn the horse.

In Chapter Thirty, Boone is waiting for an answer about whether or not he can have Teal Eye for his squaw. They followed the Indian procedure and offered gifts.

Chapters 28-30 Analysis

The group wanders around looking for the Blackfoot. They come across villages of dead Indians who died from smallpox. When they find a group of live Indians, they find the Piegan chief Red Horn and Teal Eye.

Boone followed the Indian custom and properly asked for Teal Eye as his squaw. They were waiting for an answer from Red Horn. Teal Eye apparently remembers who Boone is and smiles at him once or twice. It appears that Boone's fantasy may come true.



Chapters 31-33

Chapters 31-33 Summary

The year is 1842, and Boone has been with the Piegan's for five years. He liked the life and was happy with Teal Eye. Jim traveled a lot to various cities and came back with news. Boone was always happy to see him and was waiting for him to return from St. Louis.

Red Horn comes to talk to Boone about what they need for trading. He is worried about the animal stocks being depleted with all the hunting and trapping of the white man, but Boone tells him not to worry.

It is winter in Chapter Thirty-Two and Jim has returned. Jim tells Boone all the news. Dick Summers is married and has a pig farm. Jim tells Boone about the new steamboats and how many people are going to Oregon and California. Red Horn and some other Indians came to talk with them. Boone tells them of a man he met in the mountains. He was just learning the area and a way across the mountains.

In chapter Thirty-Three, Elisha Peabody appears and meets with Boone. The Rocky Mountain Fur Trading Company is looking for mountain passes for a wagon road. Peabody shows Boone books of maps and wants to know where the passes go. Boone tells him what he can. Boone doesn't like the expansion into Indian country and tells that to Peabody. Peabody wants Boone to show him the area and Boone tells him to wait until after winter. Boone finally agrees and is hired to take Peabody to Oregon.

Chapters 31-33 Analysis

Boone finds the life he wanted with Teal Eye and is very happy living the Piegan way of life. He has no desire to move around or find another woman. When Red Horn says Boone will some day return to the white man's civilization, Boone tells him that he is wrong. He is now a Piegan and has no desire to live in the white man's civilization.

The United States is expanding to the West. Peabody represents the Rocky Mountain Fur Company that is looking for lands for settlement and a way through the mountains to Oregon. He hires Boone to take him to Oregon. Boone doesn't like the idea of the encroachments on the Indian land but Peabody tells him he can't stop progress. Teal Eye who listens to the men talking is nervous because she knows something is happening. Boone will be leaving for the trip since he is working for money.



Chapters 34-36

Chapters 34-36 Summary

After eating, Boone tells Teal Eye that she will be going to Red Horn where she will wait for him. She says she will prepare Boone's things for the trip. She asks if he will return to the Piegans and he says he will. Later that night he learns she is pregnant.

Chapter Thirty-Five has the group traveling. Deakins is with them. Peabody, thinking about both Boone and Jim, thinks they balance one another. Peabody thinks about the other men in the group, Zenon and Beauchamp. Even though they have some clashes, he feels he has a good crew. He envisions the wagon trains crossing the mountains and the trade and commerce that will result. They find the pass for which Peabody is looking. Boone tells them the pass is an ideal place for an ambush.

In Chapter Thirty-Six, the next morning Peabody comments that they weren't ambushed. Boone says he'll go on foot to look for any war parties. They reach the divide at the middle of the day. The group have seen no sign of Indians, and Boone begins to think that he might be wrong about Red Horn. Then he hears something in the wind and starts back to the group, wondering if they are still alive. When he arrives, he finds that Jim has been shot and Zenon is dead. Their supplies are gone. Jim tells him that it wasn't Red Horn but Piegan soldiers who attacked them for their horses. Boone builds a lodging of sticks and stones around Jim to keep him warm and works to try to stop the bleeding.

Chapters 34-36 Analysis

Teal Eye is worried that Boone will not return to the Piegans. Boone says he will and if he didn't, she would be able to find another man. Later that night, he learns she is pregnant. This pleases him and he wonders what the child will be like. Peabody thinks Boone is more Indian than white man. Boone has adopted the Indian customs and acts like an Indian.

Boone and Jim both feel they will face problems from the Indians; they just don't know when or where. When Boone, who had been scouting ahead, hears something, he quickly starts back to the group. Thinking of his friend Jim, he is prepared to kill Red Horn if anything has happened to Jim. But it wasn't Red Horn who attacked them. It was a group of Piegan soldiers looking for horses. Boone works to save the life of his friend, Jim.



Chapters 37-39

Chapters 37-39 Summary

The snow continued to fall, and Jim is still alive and sleeping. Food is scarce and Boone has traps set, and the men are hungry. They shoot a gun periodically hoping that the shot will be heard and that help will arrive, but they are running low on powder. Jim awakens and Boone apologizes for the lack of food.

Chapter Thirty-Eight has the men talking. Jim talks about God and says what worries him is not knowing what happens after he dies. Jim says that he feels like he is always hungry and asks for something to eat. He talks about Summers. Jim decides that he is dying and so are the others. His rantings tell the other three men that he won't last long. Boone leaves to go hunting, telling Peabody to watch Beauchamp.

In Chapter Thirty-Nine, Boone is out hunting. He knows they are dying without food. Jim's mention of Summers reminded Boone of rock goat being high in the mountains. He plods through the snow wearing snow shoes and can't rest long or he will freeze. Near a lake he sees a set of animal tracks in the snow and finds goats. He shoots one animal and then another. He built a fire and slept and then ate. He then buried one goat in the snow since he couldn't haul both of them. Boone found he couldn't even carry one goat. He butchered the goat to make his load lighter and returns to the camp and feeds Jim.

Chapters 37-39 Analysis

Jim is very ill and raving. The men are starving even though Boone sets the traps and hunts. There isn't much food to be found. The men know from Jim's ravings that he won't last much longer but his ravings about Summers jogs Boone's memory. He remembers about the rock goat that live high in the mountains and sets out to hunt for one. He tells Peabody to keep an eye on Beauchamp so he doesn't kill Jim for food.

Boone is close to starvation and freezing but he uses his logic and experience to find the goats; he eats to give himself some necessary strength and returns to camp with food for Jim and the others. He quickly finds his friend and tries to get some strength into him. It was Jim's rantings that jogged his memory about the goats, or they all would have starved.



Chapters 40 - 42

Chapters 40 - 42 Summary

Jim talks about how hungry he is but they now have food. The men have eaten four goats so far and Jim is recovering very quickly now that he has food. Jim claims he is fit to travel. They discuss whether Flathead House or McKenzie will outfit them. Flathead House is about two days away. Peabody decides they will go on.

Chapter Forty-One brings the beginning of an early spring. Peabody obtained supplies from Flathead House. Jim and Boone are talking about the previous winter. They had reached Oregon and fulfilled their contract and were now on their way back. They talk about where Teal Eye will be waiting. They are approaching the place where Teal Eye is supposed to be, and Jim spots a camp in the distance. Some of the Piegans ride out to meet them. Teal Eye has had a son, but the baby is blind.

In Chapter Forty-Two, Boone is in one of his moods and is grumpy and silent. He is bothered by his son being blind. Jim is nearing Fort McKenzie and finds there are few customers in the store. He learns there is a fear of trouble with the Indians. The fear at the fort is that Boone will lead the Piegans against them. Jim begins his way back to the camp with a case of whiskey and a letter for Boone.

The Indians at the camp are talking about moving the camp to where there are more buffalo. Boone asks if the medicine man can cure his son's blindness and is told no, it is better to kill the blind. He is also suspicious of Jim and Teal Eye since the baby has red hair like Jim. He finally leaves, telling Teal Eye he will be gone for a while. Boone decides to set a trap for Jim and Teal Eye. He will stay around and watch to see if Jim goes to Teal Eye. Boone sees Jim returning to the camp but doesn't greet him. Jim arrives at the camp looking for Boone to give him the letter. He tells Teal Eye about the letter. She tells him that she is worried about Boone and begins to cry. He comforts her.

Boone comes back into the village and walks in on them. They step apart. Boone shoots Jim just as he tried to deliver the letter. Boone confronts Teal Eye. Jim tried to explain to Boone but can't. As Boone walks out with the letter, Teal Eye tells him not to come back.

Chapters 40 - 42 Analysis

Jim survives and recovers thanks to the care of Boone. Both men fulfill their contracts when they reach Oregon and are now on their way back. Boone is looking forward to seeing Teal Eye and their child and suggests that Jim take a squaw and settle down. Jim says that it's not in his nature to do so.

Boone learns his son is blind. The baby has red hair like Jim, and Boone is suspicious. He knows that Jim likes Teal Eye. He tells Teal Eye that the blind baby is better off dead



and she protests. He can't stop thinking about Jim with Teal Eye and sets a trap for them. Jim returns to the village with the letter for Boone. Teal Eye begins to cry and Jim tries to comfort her. Boone walks in, sees them in an embrace, and shoots Jim without even asking any questions. He never gave either of them a chance to explain. Jim was his best friend and in his anger over the blindness of his son, he never even gave Jim the benefit of the doubt.



Chapters 43-45

Chapters 43-45 Summary

It is now spring in the valley, and Boone is on a boat with Old Man Mefford, who is taking his furs to St. Louis. Boone is leaving the hills and is so quiet on the boat that the others tease him that his mother never taught him to talk. The men talk about how safe the river travel is; they haven't seen any Indians. Most of the Indians are gone now. Boone sees a steamboat go by on the river.

The letter that Jim had brought from the fort was from his mother telling him that his father had died and that she would like to see Boone. He wanted to turn around back to the life he had lived all those years but he knew it wouldn't be the same. When a farmer calls out something from shore, the boat stops and Boone starts to fight the man, until the wife stops them.

In Chapter Forty-Four, Boone is back on the boat again. They stop at Independence landing and talk to the people there. They find a group heading for Oregon with wagons.

Boone gets off the boat before it reaches St. Louis. He meets a priest and sits to talk to him. The priest wants to serve among the Indians and asks all kinds of questions. Boone tells him that the Indians have their own god and don't want the white man's ways. Boone got up and resumed his walk to Paoli. In Paoli, Boone asks about Bedwell and Judge Test. He learns the judge died and nobody knows Bedwell.

Boone arrives home in Chapter Forty-Five and is talking with his mother. Dan's wife is there also. It amazes Boone that his mother can grieve for his father. His brother Dan can't see how Boone likes his life as a trapper.

Chapters 43-45 Analysis

After Boone left the Indians, he rode down the Missouri on a boat with Old Man Mefford and got off before St. Louis. The letter that Jim had given him said his father died and his mother wants to see him. He is on his way back to her Kentucky cabin. When he arrives, he finds his brother Dan is married with two sons.

Boone is filled with hatred and revenge. While passing through Paoli, he looks for Bedwell, the sheriff and the judge, finding the last two are dead. He is looking to get even with them for what they did to him. He has a hard time still dealing with his anger. He is always willing to fight, as with the farmer on shore and with the man with the dog.

At his family's home, he doesn't fit in with their civilization. He still wears his Indian clothes and sleeps outside. He finds a house too confining. He also won't eat their cooking and wants his meat plain without spices. He doesn't seem happy with his family and does not seem to want to fit in with them.



Chapters 46-48

Chapters 46-48 Summary

Boone's nephews want to hear stories about the West and Dan tries to prod Boone into telling some stories, so Boone tells them a story about a bear. Boone's nephew has rusty colored hair and Boone finds out that it doesn't come from the mother's side of the family.

In Chapter Forty-Seven, Boone is talking to Nancy, one of the friends of the family. Boone thinks about how different white women are from Indian women. She wants to know when they will marry. He thinks for a while and then tells her he has a woman. He goes into the cabin, takes his things and leaves.

In chapter Forty-Eight, Boone is looking for Dick Summers. Dick is happy to see him and introduces him to his wife who thought Boone is an Indian. Boone is invited to stay for dinner. The two men sit outside and talk. Boone said he was visiting family in Kentucky and now heading back. Dick says they plan to move to Oregon the next year and Boone tells them to get ride of all their furniture first. He tried to talk Dick out of moving to Oregon. Boone decides not to stay for dinner. He won't talk about Deakins or Teal Eye until the end, when he tells Summers that he killed Jim and doesn't know if he can ever go back. He leaves.

Chapters 46-48 Analysis

Boone doesn't fit in well with the kind of life his family leads. The girl they introduced him to, Nancy, wants to know when they will get married. This is too much for Boone, the thought that this woman thinks she owns him or has any claims on him revolts him. He can't deal with it and takes his belongings and leaves.

Boone goes to see Dick Summers. He finally tells him that he killed Jim and he doesn't know if he did the right thing. He wonders if he can ever go back. Boone doesn't tell Dick the details but after seeing his rusty-haired nephew, he wonders.



Characters

Boone Caudill

Boone Caudill is seventeen when the book opens. He is the son of Serena and John Caudill. After a fight with his father, he flees and his father follows. Boone has no money and no transportation. All he has is a rifle which is stolen by Jonathan Bedwell. Boone has a bad temper that he has a hard time controlling, which is why he finds himself in trouble. This is why he and his father had the fight which led to him running away. Jim Deakins helps him escape from several situations and they sign onto the Mandan and head up the Missouri River to the Blackfoot Nation. He, Jim and Summers survive the Indian attack on the Mandan. Years later Boone looks for and finds Teal Eye. He takes her as his squaw and lives with the remaining Piegans. He is known as Strong Arm. Even though he doesn't favor the expansion to the West through Indian lands, he agrees to lead Peabody and a group to Oregon. Teal Eye has a blind, red-haired son, and Boone is suspicious of red-haired Jim. He is obsessed with the idea of the red hair. When he finds Jim trying to comfort Teal Eye, he shoots him. Boone returns to his family in Kentucky and finds he doesn't fit in. He visits Summers and tells him he killed Jim and doesn't know if he can go back to Teal Eye.

Jim Deakins

Jim Deakins is on his way to Louisville when he gives Boone a ride. He is transporting a body to a family and was spooked by it and didn't want to stay alone. The two men like each other, and Jim decides to go West with Boone. This is the beginning of a friendship which lasts for many years. When Boone is imprisoned in Paoli, Indiana, it is Jim who helps Boone escape. They reach St. Louis and sign on the Mandan and travel up the Missouri River to the Blackfoot Nation. He, Boone and Summers survive the Indian attack on the Mandan. Jim lives the life of a trader and roams the area. He agrees to go with Boone into Blackfoot territory to look for Teal Eye even though they have no idea where she is or if she is even alive. When Boone settles with Teal Eye and the Piegans, Jim keeps traveling to the cities to trade furs but always returns to the Piegan village. Jim is with Boone and the Peabody group on the way to Oregon and is shot by a Piegan. Boone nurses him back to health. Boone who is suspicious of Jim having fathered his blind son, finds Jim comforting Teal Eye and shoots him. Boone never even asked Jim if there was any truth to his suspicions. Jim basically accepted Teal Eye because she was Boone's woman not because he had any romantic interest in her.

Teal Eye

Teal Eye is an Indian squaw and the daughter of a Blackfoot chief. She is sailing on the Mandan and is protected by Jourdonnais and is about twelve years old. She was stolen by the Crows. Jourdonnais picked her up in St. Louis and plans on returning her to her



people. The day after they select a site for their fort, Teal Eye runs away. Years later Boone finds Teal Eye living with the Piegans and takes her as his squaw. She had survived the smallpox epidemic. As Boone is leaving for a trip, she tells him she is pregnant. She has a blind son with red hair and Boone thinks the child is Jim's. When he finds Jim comforting Teal Eye, he shoots him and leaves, leaving Teal Eye behind.

Dick Summers

Dick Summers is a hunter who is on the Mandan. He is an experienced buffalo hunter and shows Boone how to hunt buffalo. Summers knows Boone's uncle. Summers, along with Boone and Jim, survive the Indian attack on the Mandan. Summers spends several years with Boone, Jim and Poordevil and then returns to Missouri where he marries and becomes a pig farmer. Boone visits him and finds he plans to move to Oregon and tries to talk him out of it.

Zeb Calloway

Zeb Calloway is the brother of Boone's mother, Serena. He went West many years ago; when Boone left home, he decided to try to find his uncle. Zeb is at Fort Union on the Missouri River. He refuses the offer to join the group on the Mandan saying he doesn't think they will be able to deal with the Blackfoot in exchange for Teal Eye. Zeb eventually dies at Fort Union where he lived.

Jourdonnais

Jourdonnais commands the Mandan which is sailing up the Missouri River to the Blackfoot Nation. He thinks if he returns Teal Eye to her people he will be able to do business with the Blackfoot and build his own trading company to rival the American Fur Company. He is killed when the Indians attack the Mandan in 1830.

Poordevil

Poordevil is a Blackfoot Indian who has broken away from the Blackfoot Nation. He lived with a variety of other Indian tribes and in 1837 wanders into the camp of Boone, Jim and Dick Summers. He becomes one of their group and stays with them until Boone settles with Teal Eye.

Elisha Peabody

Elisha Peabody is a representative of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. They are looking for lands for settlements and for passes through the mountains and hire Jim and Boone to show them the way to Oregon.



Heavy Otter

Heavy Otter is a Blackfoot Chief and the father of Teal Eye. He died during the smallpox epidemic.

Red Horn

Red Horn is the Piegan chief in the village where they find Teal Eye.



Objects/Places

Kentucky

Kentucky is where Boone was born and lived until he fled. He lived in a cabin with his family near Frankfort.

Louisville

Louisville is a major city in Kentucky.

Paolia

Paoli is a small town in Southern Indiana where Boone is tried for assault and battery and imprisoned.

St. Louis

St. Louis is the major city in Missouri.

Mandan

The Mandan is the boat that is commanded by Jourdonnair and travels up the Missouri to the Blackfoot Nation.

Fort Union

Fort Union is a fort along the Missouri River. It is where the group from the Mandan meet Zeb Calloway.

The Blackfoot Nation

The Blackfoot Nation is north of Fort Union along the Missouri River.

Grand Teton

The Grand Teton is a mountain range in Wyoming where the rendezvous was held.

Yellowstone

Yellowstone is an area in Wyoming with hot springs.

Three Forks

The Three Forks is where the Madison, the Missouri and the Jefferson Rivers come together in the heart of the Blackfoot Nation.

Themes

Adventure

The major theme of *The Big Sky* is adventure. The men went to the frontier and into Indian country for the adventure and for the experience of the lifestyle. Like Boone, they didn't want to be confined to an urban area or even to a house. They wanted to live in the great outdoors under the big sky. These men lived off the land literally and learned the ways of the Indians in order to survive. They lived from trapping animals and selling the skins and were the first traders in Indian territory.

All the men were there for the adventure, and they watched the area change. Like the Indians, as the animal life was thinned due to hunting, they moved on to a new area. For some of the men, like Jourdonnais, money was the attraction. They hoped to profit from trade. For others, like Dick Summers, it was fun and after a number of years, when it stopped being fun, he gave it up. For others, like Boone Caudill, it was the way of life. There were no restraints of society which were the restraints Boone couldn't abide by. He lived off the land, taking what he needed for survival.

The adventures to be had was an allure for many young men at the time. They lived a hard life but were happy. Material things weren't important. They preferred life in the vast unspoiled lands where the buffalo roamed freely. The danger was great, but it was worth it to them for the adventure to be had.

Trust

Another theme of the book is trust. Trust is a big part of friendship and relationships, and trust is what the members of the group had in the other members. This was true of Boone, Dick and Jim after the attack on the Mandan. They were the only survivors in hostile Indian territory. Both Boone and Jim learned from Dick and trusted him to do the right thing as he was the experienced one.

As long as there was trust in a relationship, the people were happy. Boone was very happy and content as long as he trusted Teal Eye and Jim. His blind son's red hair made him suspicious since Jim also had red hair. He couldn't accept his son's blindness and began to suspect his best friend and his squaw. His happy existence was ended.

He sets a trap for them by saying he is going away for a while. Jim brings a letter for Boone and comforts a crying Teal Eye. Boone walks in and shoots Jim without asking any questions. The lack of trust in Teal Eye and Jim and his rash behavior brought an end to everybody's happiness.



Progress

Another theme of the book is progress. This is the period of the westward expansion of the United States as people moved into the frontier and eventually to California and Oregon. Even though people like Boone didn't like progress, there was no way to stop it. The growing country expanded.

When Boone first went up the Missouri River, the land was unsettled. There were a few forts and trading posts. When he headed back to St. Louis, there were farms along the banks of the river. This was also the time of the big push to go to California and Oregon. This was Peabody's purpose. The company he worked for was looking for a way through the mountains to Oregon and paid Boone and Jim to show them the way. The area was then cleared for wagon trains to pass through.

When Boone visited his family, they were talking about Oregon. His visit to Dick Summers revealed that Dick and his wife planned to move to Oregon the following year. Boone tried to talk him out of it. He didn't like seeing the vast lands spoiled by settlements and the encroachment of the white man as the nation spread to the west. To him it was unnatural, but he couldn't stop progress.

Style

Point of View

The book is written in the third person point of view with an impersonal narrator. This perspective allows the narrator to provide the reader with descriptions of scenery and background details that completes the setting and the action of the novel. The novel is basically the story of Boone Caudill and his life on the frontier. If the author had chosen the first person perspective, the knowledge of the reader would have been confined to events that happened in the presence of the storyteller and the reader's information would be limited. The use of the third person perspective avoids this problem and allows the author to provide information to the reader.

The use of the third person is appropriate for a novel of this kind since it allows the author to provide the information about the setting, characters, events, etc. There is a great deal of dialogue between the characters that reveals the personality of the characters.

Setting

The setting of the novel is mostly on the American frontier of the eighteen hundreds. The novel begins in Kentucky where Boone grew up in a cabin near Frankfort. When he flees, he goes to Louisville and from there he goes on to Indiana, where he has some problems with the law in Paoli. He and Jim then go to St. Louis where they sign on to the Mandan, a boat run by Jourdonnais, and begin their journey up the Missouri River. Their ultimate goal is the Blackfoot Nation, which is above Fort Union.

Most of the novel takes place in Indian territory. The men move around quite a bit. Their rendezvous is held in the Grand Teton mountain range in what is now Wyoming. When they are looking for the Blackfoot tribe, they travel through the Yellowstone area and pass the Three Forks, where the Madison, Missouri and Jefferson Rivers join. They follow the Madison and Jefferson to their juncture looking for the tribe. Boone takes Peabody and his group through the mountains to Oregon.

Language and Meaning

The language of the novel and the meaning of many of the words and terms relate to the vernacular of the period of the novel. The conversations are in the everyday language of the eighteen hundreds American frontier. This sometimes makes for difficult reading as the reader has to stop and reread a word or sentence trying to figure out the meaning; however, this adds to the realism of the novel. Even though it is a little irritating at times, it is worth the struggle since it contributes so much to the ambiance and atmosphere of the book. There are also words and terms in French since Boone



traveled up the Missouri with a French crew. These terms are not translated but do not detract from the action of the novel.

Structure

The structure of the novel consists of five parts with a total of forty-eight chapters. The parts are based on time with each part telling the reader what is going on in the lives of the characters at the time. The reader can see the changes that occur in the characters over time.

There is a Table of Contents listing the parts but not the chapters. There is also a map showing the area of the country that provides the setting for the action. This map shows the rivers that are mentioned and the location of the various forts as well as where various events took place. It is very useful to the reader and is located in the front of the book. The structure works well for the novel.



Quotes

"What if he did have some store liquor in him when he tackled Mose? It was still right, and it settled things man to man, like they ought to be settled. And still the Napiers had gone to law and put the high sheriff after him. And it would be like Pap to get the law on his side, being he couldn't do for himself. It wasn't fair, bringing in the sheriff, just because a body did what he had to. It wasn't right to set the law on a man, making him feel small and alone, making him tun away. It wasn't right, all taking sides against one and th one not in the wrong." (Chapter 2, pg. 8)

"It wasn't any use trying to run away. Everywhere people picked on a boy, chasing after him like they'd chase a wild brute, or playing friendly and stealing from him. Better to go back to Ma and let Pap beat on him. Better to have something to eat and a home to lie in. Only, the law was after him now, and maybe home would be the jailhouse, and Pap would want to kill him, or come nigh to it." (Chapter 6, pg. 29)

"But he hated to seem like a green 'un; and, more, he hated people to be sizing him up and maybe laughing, knowing there was something wrong. Already Summers looked at him sometimes, and Jim, too, and Jim asked questions when he walked stooped to favor himself as he had to when he first got up, now that it had grown so bad." (Chapter 11, pg. 80)

"As it was, Jourdonnais in his desperate need for funds had had to beg, holding out the possibilities of rich profits in the Trois Fourches. Looking at Summers, seeing the alert face that was untroubled by regrets or ambition, Jourdonnais thought that Summers had joined him for the fun rather than the profit. He was glad that Summers was an easy man, without the dark strain of violence that ran so often in mountain men" (Chapter 15, pg. 110)

"Boone figured it was better to take what came and not trouble the mind with questions there was no answer to. Under a rock or a chip, now, a man could spot bugs and sometimes a snake." (Chapter 16, pg. 118)

"It was good enough, Boone thought to himself. What did a man want as long as he had marrowbones and hump ribs and a sire to keep him warm and a free country to move around in? It took something to beat a place where you could kill a buffalo every day and not half try to take just the best of it and leave the rest to the wolves. What more could anyone want, unless may be it was a good squaw to keep camp and to lie with him at night?" (Chapter 19, pg. 160-161)

"Summers wondered, feeling a little foolish inside, that he still wanted to protect them, like an uncle or a pappy or somebody. It was Boone he felt most like protecting, because Boone thought simple and acted straight and quick. He didn't know how to get around a thing, how to talk his way out or to laugh trouble off, thje way Jim did. Not that Jim was scared; he just had a slick way with him. Come finally to a fight, he didn't shy off. Boone, now, was dead certain to get himself into a battle at Rendezvous, with the



man called Streak, and not in a play battle, either. It would be one or t'other, Summers was sure, and shook his head to get shut of the small black could at the back of it." (Chapter 23, pg. 184)

"Beaver, Boone said he was after, but Jim knew better. It was little Teal Eye, held secret in Boone's head all this time, and all the time growing and taking hold of him, until finally his mind was made up and God himself couldn't change him." (Chapter 25, pg. 205)

"'Might as well turn about and foller the Missouri north,' Boone said. 'Injuns are bound to be somewheres.' Lying awake at night, hearing the sound of water and the wind in the trees, seeing the dipper sitting close and steady, he told himself the Piegans were sure to be about. A nation didn't just up and leave a country. He would find the Piegans and Heavy Otter's band. He would find Teal Eye, or learn what had happened to her." (Chapter 28, pg. 222)

"It was a good life, the Piegan's life was." (Chapter 31, pg. 246)

"Watching him ride ahead, his strong shoulders loose and his body giving to the pace of his horse, Peabody concluded he was more Indian than white man. Outwardly he was hardly white man at all. He wore the clothes of an Indian and carried a bag of amulets - a medicine bundle, as it was called. His voice was rough and deep in his chest, even when the sounds it made were English sounds. His face was dark-eyed, weathered, and often inscrutable. He had a squaw for a wife." (Chapter 35, pg. 271)

"As Jim said, after a while nothing hurt too bad. A body could stand it. He could sit and drink snow water and let things float crazy in his head while the strength slipped from him, not feeling like so much as raising a finger to scratch an itch. By and by he up and died, being too tired to live, as maybe Jim was dying now, with his breath weak in him and his cheeks sunk and his eyes big with starving." (Chapter 39, pg. 295)

"It was past the time when the great owl nested, past the moon of the bid winds. Teal Eye looked for him, standing maybe at the entrance to the lodge and facing west, hoping to see, far off, the fleck that would come to be a horseman and the horseman coming to be her man. Red Horn would have seen there was meat in her tepee, and Red Horn and the young Piegans would be friendly enough. A thing done was a thing done, and no need to think more about it." (Chapter 41, pg. 305)

"Looking out at hills set small and close and the sky pales and low overhead and the trees thick enough to smother him, he was half a mind to turn about and strike out as he had struck out long before. Only it couldn't be the same again, the life couldn't - not any more, not for a while, no matter how much he wanted the world big again and the way clear and the air blue and deep above. A hard and aimless anger edged up in him, wanting something to take itself out on. He shifted himself on the pirogue." (Chapter 48, pg. 366)



Topics for Discussion

Why did Boone leave his home? What were the circumstances?

What business did Jourdonnais and Summers have on the Missouri River? Why are they going to the Blackfoot Nation?

Is Boone disappointed when he has his long-awaited meeting with Uncle Zeb? Why or why not? What are his impressions?

What is the purpose of Teal Eye? What happens that disrupts Jourdonnais's plans?

How does Boone come to take Teal Eye as his squaw? Why does he live the Piegan way of life?

What happens between Jim and Boone? Why does Boone's shoot Jim? Was he justified?

What problems does Boone have when he returns to Kentucky? Why does he suddenly leave?