

# **Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man Study Guide**

**Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man by Fannie Flagg**

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# Plot Summary

Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man is the first novel written by acclaimed novelist, actress, and comedian Fanny Flagg. This novel is the diary of a young, southern girl that chronicles her life from her eleventh birthday until the day she packs her bags to leave Mississippi. It all begins with a big opportunity to own a malt shop that moves Daisy Fay and her family from their home in Jackson, Mississippi to Shell Beach, Mississippi, another scheme among many in which her father hopes they will strike it rich. Like the others, this venture sours, but not before Daisy finds humor in the dead animals in the freezer and the tunnels she dug that nearly sent the entire shop collapsing into the sand. Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man is a novel full of humor that is about southern ideals but also about breaking free of those ideals and becoming your own person. It is a novel readers of all ages will enjoy.

Daisy Fay receives a typewriter for her birthday, so she uses it to write a diary about the important events in her life. This begins with her father's desire to buy a half interest share in a malt shop in Shell Beach. Daisy's father has trouble getting this money together, making it appear that the family will remain in their home of Jackson, Mississippi. However, a win at bingo for her mother provides the necessary cash to buy into Mr. Harper's latest scheme to strike it rich. The town of Shell Beach turns out to be nothing but a bump on the road to the more popular vacations spots in Louisiana and Florida and the malt shop a shack on the beach. It does not matter to Daisy, however, because she is caught up in her father's excitement.

As the Harpers begin meeting their neighbors, Daisy finds herself forced into the Junior Debutante club run by a local woman who was a popular debutante herself as a child. This group includes Kay Bob Benson, a local girl who looks down her nose at Daisy every chance she gets. Daisy settles into life and helps her father around the malt shop. Daisy befriends a neighbor boy as well, spending the summer with him and her pregnant neighbor. When school begins, Daisy finds herself falling in love with her teacher and going against character by actually paying attention in class.

Unable to make a big payment on the malt shop, Daisy's father burns the shop down. Fed up with his infidelity, his drinking, and his crazy schemes, Daisy's mother goes to live with her sister in Virginia. Though she misses her mother, Daisy is pleased with the attention this situation garners from her teacher. Then one afternoon, Daisy and her friend, Michael, are playing on the beach and they find a dead woman. Daisy recognizes the woman as a girlfriend of a local gangster. Daisy is advised to keep this knowledge to herself, so when the FBI comes to talk to her, she refuses to say anything until her father forces it out of her.

A few weeks later, Daisy sees the gangster watching her at the local fair. Daisy runs away and tells her father, who disappears into the night. The next morning, the gangster is dead and Daisy is convinced her father killed him. A short time later, Daisy's mother takes her out of her father's clutches and moves her to a Catholic boarding school.



Daisy stays there for three years, only to return to her father's care after her mother dies of cancer.

Daisy befriends Pickle Watkins in high school and together they scheme to become one of the popular girls. However, Kay Bob Benson, Daisy's mortal enemy, beats them to the punch again. When Daisy fails algebra, she has to move to Jackson to go to summer school. Daisy and Pickle lose touch; later Daisy learns that Pickle became pregnant and had to get married. When Daisy visits her, she discovers that the Pickle she once knew no longer exists.

Daisy begins working at a local theater and is soon the star of many of their productions. Daisy falls in love and becomes engaged, but her fiancé ends up marrying a different girl instead. Daisy's friend talks her into competing in the Miss Mississippi contest in order to win a scholarship to acting school. The competition almost does not happen, however, when Daisy's father asks for the money she has saved. Daisy feels she owes it to him for killing that gangster but later learns he did not kill the man. Daisy's friends help her go to the competition anyway and she wins the entire contest with some help from her family and friends.



# Part 1, 1952: April 1, 1952-May 19, 1952

## Part 1, 1952: April 1, 1952-May 19, 1952 Summary

This novel is written as though it were the diary of a young girl, Daisy Fay Harper. The novel chronicles the most important events in Daisy's life from the time she was eleven until she is eighteen and preparing to leave Mississippi for the first time.

April 1, 1952. Daisy Fay has just turned eleven and Grandma Pettibone gave her a typewriter so she can become something better than her parents. Daisy uses the typewriter to write a diary, chronicling the important moments in her life. In this first entry, Daisy talks about her father, a war veteran whose friend, Jimmy Snow, offers him a chance to become half owner in a malt shop. Mr. Harper met Jimmy Snow while they were both in the military during the war. Mr. Harper was not a good soldier, however, and was often disciplined for poor behavior.

April 2, 1952. Daisy talks about her father's job as a projectionist at the local theater. Daisy likes to go to the theater while he is working and watch the films from the balcony. Daisy enjoys the movies and admires the movie stars. Daisy's mother does not approve of this fascination, however. Daisy's mother approves of little having to do with Mr. Harper. Daisy's mother claims she would have left him years ago if it were not for Daisy. Daisy's mother is overprotective and often worries about Daisy's health. Daisy's mother also worries about her father's influence on Daisy and often blames Daisy's improper actions on her father.

April 12, 1952. Daisy tells the reader about a scheme her father came up with to make the money he needs for his part of the malt shop. Mr. Harper froze cartons of English red worms, but they all died. Daisy also says that no one in her father's family or her mother's family likes her father; therefore, he feels there is no reason for them to stay in Jackson. The only person that really likes Mr. Harper is Aunt Bess, Grandma Pettibone's sister. However, Aunt Bess is also an outcast in the family for her unconventional behaviors. May 2, 1952. Jimmy Snow is getting anxious for Mr. Harper to come up with the money for the malt shop. Mr. Harper has begun talking about putting Daisy on a game show to win the money. Mr. Harper has also promised his wife he will stop drinking so much since he got in trouble at work.

May 6, 1952. There was a big bingo game in town last night. Everyone was hoping to win because the prize was five hundred dollars. Grandmother Pettibone is an avid bingo player and often plays dozens of cards at once. When it came time for the big game, Grandma Pettibone was playing her own cards and her friend's cards because the friend was too nervous to play. However, Grandma Pettibone got so lost in trying to cover all the numbers that Mrs. Harper ended up winning. The prize money is exactly the amount Jimmy Snow needs for the malt shop. May 19, 1952. Mrs. Harper did not want to give the money to her husband for the malt shop but finally agreed when he promised to stop drinking and to stop looking at other women.



## **Part 1, 1952: April 1, 1952-May 19, 1952 Analysis**

These first few entries in Daisy Fay's diary introduce her, her family, and the situation that will drive the plot. Daisy is only eleven; therefore, her perceptions of some of the things that take place around her is a little confused, perhaps even mistaken. For example, when her father promises to quit drinking but begins drinking a lot of an "elixir," Daisy is too naïve to realize her father is replacing the elixir with alcohol. This incident introduces to the reader the possibility that Daisy might be somewhat of an unreliable narrator as her perceptions might be slightly different from reality.

Daisy's father is an alcoholic womanizer who wants to find that one easy scheme that will make him rich and help him not to have to work for the rest of his life. An example of this is Mr. Harper's desire to buy half interest in a malt shop in Shell Beach, the situation that will drive the early part of the plot. Daisy's mother is a responsible, concerned mother who comes off as the bad guy when compared to her husband. Daisy does not understand her mother's attitude toward herself and her father; therefore, her mother comes off as less than a sympathetic character in these early diary entries.



## **Part 1, 1952: May 29, 1952-June 30, 1952**

### **Part 1, 1952: May 29, 1952-June 30, 1952 Summary**

May 29, 1952. The Harpers arrive in Shell Beach and discover it is a small town that is not as popular with vacationers as they believed. The malt shop is a small shack on the road that leads to the beach with six booths and a small living area in the back where the family will live year round. The Harpers meet their neighbors, the Romeos, and Daisy learns that their son, Michael, is about her age. They also meet Mrs. Dot, who runs the Junior Debutantes club and writes a short column for the local paper. Daisy is amused when her family appears in the paper shortly after their arrival. Daisy also meets a local man who runs a battalion of female militants in case the Communists should attack. Daisy helps her dad prepare the shop for business, making signs announcing the name of the place and ordering merchandise to sell.

June 4, 1952. Daisy has met a local girl her age, Kay Bob Benson. Daisy dislikes Kay because Kay thinks she is better than Daisy. Daisy and her father go exploring on the weekends and often rent boats from a local man. On the way to the boat rental, there is a house where a crippled girl lives with her highly-religious parents. Daisy and her father try to avoid them, but sometimes it is impossible. Daisy's father often argues with the girl's father to allow the girl to walk. Daisy and her father also go to Beulah Heights, the black part of town, to hire a dishwasher. The dishwasher tells Daisy that an albino woman lives in Beulah Heights, but no one ever sees her. Daisy gets a job, too, taping the ears of a little girl to keep them from sticking out on nights when her parents are running their nightclub.

June 5, 1952. Daisy meets Michael and likes him pretty well. Daisy and Michael go with the bread delivery guy to a remote grocery store where he makes deliveries. There Daisy and Michael meet a young man named Jessie who suffers from elephantiasis. The Harpers hire a waiter, and Mrs. Harper allows her husband to get a liquor license to sell beer at the malt shop. June 30, 1952. The malt shop is open, and Daisy is bored because everyone is too busy to play with her. Daisy enjoys the archery range Mr. Grimmert opened next door. Sometimes Daisy will let Mr. Grimmert pop balloons that she holds in her mouth until her mother found out and made her stop. Daisy likes to go to the Pistals' nightclub after she tapes their daughter's ears to get paid. However, Mr. Pistal's brother, Claude, has come to town and does not like Daisy hanging out at the club. Daisy does not like Claude. Mr. Harper has also decided to learn taxidermy and is keeping dead animals people bring him in the ice cream freezer until he can work on them in the off season.

### **Part 1, 1952: May 29, 1952-June 30, 1952 Analysis**

The Harpers arrive in their new residence and begin getting to know the people who live there. It is an eclectic group of people who live in Shell Beach, ranging from Mrs. Dot,



who was once a wealthy debutante, to Billy Bundy, a radio evangelist. These people are becoming an important part of Daisy's life, the characters who will interact with her for the next few years, and therefore their stories are important to the overall development of the plot.

Kay Bob Benson is an important introduction in these entries because she represents a bully, an obstacle to Daisy's happiness. Kay Bob is a spoiled, only child who looks down her nose at Daisy. This will continue throughout Daisy's childhood; therefore, Kay's introduction in this section of the novel is noteworthy. Michael Romeo, as well, is important in this part of the novel because he will become Daisy's playmate for the next few years. Michael is the opposite of Kay Bob, a young man who is looking only for a friend, unconcerned with social status or rumor. Mrs. Dot, as well, is an important introduction because she is Daisy's Junior Debutante leader and will become an influential adult in Daisy's life despite her determination to treat the club as a nuisance that her mother has forced upon her.

Another important aspect of these entries is the growing tension between Mr. and Mrs. Harper. Daisy mentions several times that her parents spend a great deal of their time fighting. The reader might believe that Mrs. Harper is tense about the new business, but the frequency of this arguing implies that the marriage might be in danger, possibly foreshadowing a time when Mr. or Mrs. Harper might leave the family.





## **Part 1, 1952: July 1, 1952-August 8, 1952**

### **Part 1, 1952: July 1, 1952-August 8, 1952 Summary**

July 1, 1952. Daisy witnesses a terrible fight between her parents when her father fails to come home one night. Daisy's mother destroyed so many dishes that they had to close the shop until they could get some more. The Harpers' dishwasher quit, so they hired a new one. Velveeta and Mrs. Harper become fast friends, and Velveeta is soon telling Mrs. Harper everything that Daisy or her dad do. July 12, 1952. Mrs. Harper has to go to Jackson to take care of her mother who has had a heart attack. Daisy continues to go to the Junior Debutantes, who have decided to adopt a child overseas. Daisy continues to go to the Pistals' nightclub where she sees a young boy, Ray Layne, sing. The next day, Ray asks Daisy to go swimming with him and tells her all about his girlfriend. A carnival has set up across the street and the owner lets Daisy sweep out the penny arcade.

July 21, 1952. The malt shop falls three feet from the tunnels Daisy has been digging under it. However, Mr. Harper has agreed not to tell Daisy's mother if she promises not to tell her about his drinking. July 30, 1952. Mrs. Harper returns to the malt shop and Velveeta tells her everything that has been going on. Mr. and Mrs. Harper fight, and Mrs. Harper hits her husband with a phone. Grandma Pettibone is better and has begun dating a new man, even though she has no idea if her first husband died or just left. Grandpa Pettibone went to the store one day and just never came back. Daisy saved Angel's life one afternoon when they were fishing with Michael and Michael pulled a snake into the boat, causing everyone to jump into the water. Angel could not swim and Daisy managed to get her to shore. Jimmy Snow got arrested for crashing his plane into the house of his ex-girlfriend after she married another man.

August 3, 1952. The waiter and his girlfriend are having a baby. Daisy has stopped going to the carnival because the jealous daughters of the owner hurt her feelings. Daisy has begun entertaining the customers at the malt shop by pretending to be an orphan. Unfortunately, her acts upset her mother. In fact, Daisy has discovered that her mother is on edge a lot lately and has to be more careful around her. August 8, 1952. Daisy has ringworm. This gives Kay Bob Benson more fuel to use against Daisy. Kay Bob's birthday is coming up and Daisy's mother wants her to buy a present. Daisy is trying to find the worse present possible.

### **Part 1, 1952: July 1, 1952-August 8, 1952 Analysis**

The fights between Daisy's parents seem to be escalating. Daisy is not clear what the problem is between her parents, but the reader is able to figure out by the things Daisy reports her parents are saying to one another that Mr. Harper has been cheating on his wife with a local girl. This causes tension between the couple that is affecting Daisy because her mother is tense and coming down harder on Daisy than she might have

before. These developments not only continue to suggest an end to the Harpers' marriage, but continue to show how naïve young Daisy can be.

The Junior Debutantes continues to be a part of Daisy's life even though she finds the meetings boring. Kay Bob Benson is also a big part of this, causing more tension for Daisy. The reader wonders if Daisy might have gotten more from the meetings if Kay Bob was not a part of them. When Daisy gets ringworm, Kay Bob uses it to hurt Daisy more, a suggestion of what life will be like for Daisy as she grows older in Kay Bob's shadow. An important note here is also the fact that Daisy saved Angel's life. While at this point it simply seems like a heroic thing Daisy did, it will later turn out to have more significance than even Daisy herself knows at this point. Finally, it is important for the reader to note Daisy's fascination not only with movies and carnivals but with her own ability to entertain people. This fascination shows the reader what is important to Daisy and what might lay in her future.



## Part 1, 1952: August 13, 1952-September 2, 1952

### Part 1, 1952: August 13, 1952-September 2, 1952 Summary

August 13, 1952. Jessie, the obese young man Daisy went to see some weeks before, has passed away. Jessie left Daisy one of his sweetheart pillows. August 16, 1952. A new act is coming to the Pistol's nightclub. It is a woman named Tawney the Tassel Woman whose act is for adults only. Daisy is determined to see her act even though Claude Pistol is determined to keep her out. When Daisy complains to Peachy Wigham about Claude, Daisy tells Peachy how mean Claude is. August 18, 1952. Daisy and Michael went to see a movie and learned that a comic actor is coming to town to pick one child to receive a free pony. Daisy is determined to win the pony and dreams that by winning the contest she might be able to meet some of her favorite actors.

August 22, 1952. Daisy had to go to Florida with her mother to rescue Grandma Pettibone. Mr. Grimmitt's sister-in-law has come to live with them. Her name is Edna and she is pregnant, but her husband is dead. August 23, 1952. Daisy and Michael went to watch Tawney's show through a back window but got scared away when someone came out the back door. August 26, 1952. Daisy got in trouble when Velveeta told her mother was at Tawney's show. Daisy thinks Velveeta is reading her diary. When Daisy tells her dad this and admits that she writes about him in it, he buys her a lock box. Daisy found some papers her mother has that claim her father had a baby with another woman. Daisy vows to remember the woman's name for future use. Daisy is spending more time with Edna, but she does not like that Mr. Grimmitt is trying to get her married off to some sailor. Mr. Harper got his taxidermy kit in the mail and it contains eyes of all different sizes and shape.

August 28, 1952. Daisy walks in on her parents in bed together and does not understand why they are both so angry with her. August 29, 1952. Daisy goes to the Beauty Box to have her hair done the day before the contest for the pony. August 30, 1952. Jimmy is supposed to take Daisy to the contest, but he never shows up. Daisy walks, but by the time she arrives the contest is over. August 31, 1952. Daisy learns that Jimmy never showed up because he was arrested for dropping DDT all over his ex-girlfriend's house. The carnival has moved on and Velveeta is leaving, which makes Daisy happy. Mrs. Harper is going to take Daisy to New Orleans to check out a private Catholic school there and has hired an accountant to go over their books at the malt shop. Daisy is fascinated by the accountant because he is missing a hand. September 2, 1952. Daisy and her mom have come back from New Orleans to learn that Edna is going to marry a sailor, and the accountant has discovered there is not enough money for Daisy to attend the private school. Therefore, Daisy will be forced to wear the uniforms her mother already bought at the local public school. At the Junior Debutante



meeting, Daisy learns how to treat a colored servant and realizes her mother treated Velveeta all wrong.

## **Part 1, 1952: August 13, 1952-September 2, 1952**

### **Analysis**

Daisy continues to spend time at the Pital's nightclub even though Claude Pital is determined to keep her out. Daisy has decided that Claude is just mean; Peachy Wigham seems to concur on this conclusion when she tells Daisy stories about how Claude can be heartless and cruel. Claude is an adult who seems interested in protecting Daisy from the adult world of the nightclub, but Daisy does not see it that way, causing an adversarial relationship that will continue to develop and prove dangerous later in the novel.

Velveeta is also an adult that Daisy does not like. This relationship is interesting because Velveeta is the only true friend the reader is aware that Daisy's mother ever has in the novel, but it is a relationship that proves difficult for Daisy. The reader wonders if this is because Daisy is jealous of her mother's divided attention or if it is truly about Velveeta's gossipy nature. Interesting about this situation, however, is that Daisy is just as nosy as Velveeta, going through her mother's private papers and learning about a woman who sued her father in a paternity suit. This also tells the reader, even though Daisy is too young to understand, that Mr. Harper has a habit of being unfaithful in his marriage. Finally, the reader sees once again the character of Daisy's mother not only through her relationship with Velveeta but also through her desire to send Daisy to a Catholic boarding school. Mrs. Harper is aware that her husband's behaviors create an unstable life for their only child, but she is limited in the ways she can protect Daisy. The concern is there, however, despite the fact that Daisy does not understand it for what it is, again underscoring the somewhat unreliable narrator that Daisy is proving to be.



## Part 1, 1952: September 4, 1952- November 8, 1952

### Part 1, 1952: September 4, 1952-November 8, 1952 Summary

September 4, 1952. Mr. Grimmert tells the Harpers that Edna was never married before, and he is glad that he was able to get her married to a sailor. Daisy is angry and thinks Mr. Grimmert is lying about Edna. September 6, 1952. Daisy received a letter from Mr. Grimmert apologizing for the lies he told about Edna. Daisy notices that Mr. Grimmert writes a lot like her mother. Before school begins, Daisy and her dad are going to participate in the Big Speckled Trout Rodeo Contest in which the person who catches the biggest fish will win. Mr. Harper already has the winner in his freezer. September 13, 1952. Daisy has learned that Kay Bob Benson is the result of artificial insemination, or what she calls incinerator. September 15, 1952. Daisy and her father spend the days during the fishing contest playing on the banks of the river, out of sight of the other competitors. Daisy has her BB gun with her. September 18, 1952. Mr. Harper put the trout in a pot of boiling water to thaw it, but the water made its eyes all cloudy. Mr. Harper went and got his taxidermy kit and glued new eyes on it. However, before they could go to the contest headquarters, they learn that another fisherman has caught a trout slightly larger. Mr. Harper takes Daisy's BB's and puts them inside the fish to make it heavier and makes Daisy take the fish to be weighed. They win, getting an outboard motor. However, they do not have a boat.

September 21, 1952. Daisy is home alone when Claude Pistal comes to the shop with a girl named Ruby. Daisy talks to her for a minute, making note of a large ruby ring on the girl's finger. September 22, 1952. Mr. Harper and Jimmy Snow are having trouble coming up with some money for a big payment on the malt shop. At the final meeting of the Junior Debutantes, Mrs. Dot becomes nostalgic about her girlhood. September 30, 1952. School has begun and Daisy loves her new teacher, Mrs. Underwood. Daisy is shy in class, but she knows all the answers. Mr. Harper has begun giving up on his taxidermy dream. October 21, 1952. Mrs. Harper gives Daisy money for lunch at school everyday, but she prefers to eat at the barbecue stand across the street instead, something that makes her mother mad. Daisy's parents are fighting a lot over a woman Mr. Harper has been seeing. Mrs. Underwood takes Daisy aside and tells her she can come to her anytime she needs to talk. October 27, 1952. The sixth graders are having a big Halloween party. Daisy would rather go to the theater than to see their Halloween shows but does not want to disappoint Mrs. Underwood.

October 29, 1952. Daisy and Michael have written a script and are going to put on a haunted house at the Halloween party. Daisy and Michael have created the script and all the props themselves. November 1, 1952. The Hall of Blood and Guts went really well. Some of the kids were really frightened by their props. When Kay Bob Benson



came in, she knew what everything was, until she got to the point where they forced her hand into a bowl of maggots. Kay Bob thought it was just spaghetti, but it was really maggots. November 4, 1952. Mr. Harper is still having trouble coming up with the money for the malt shop. The Junior Debutantes are planning a trip to the roller rink. November 8, 1952. The girl that married the Harper's waiter called and told Mr. Harper that her husband had disappeared. It turns out he has another family in Minnesota. Daisy does not think he did it on purpose, not like Grandpa Pettibone. The trip to the roller rink was spoiled when Kay Bob Benson got Michael and Daisy in trouble for falling down so much. Next time the Junior Debutantes are going to the Harwin County Fair.

## **Part 1, 1952: September 4, 1952-November 8, 1952**

### **Analysis**

It turns out that Daisy's friend and neighbor, Edna, got pregnant out of wedlock. The setting of this novel is a time in which that did not happen often and was something of a scandal when it did happen. Therefore Daisy is upset by the implication which forces her mother to once again show her concern for her daughter when she writes a letter of apology and signs the neighbor's name to it. This also introduces the theme of unwanted pregnancy which will make an appearance again later in the novel. Mr. Harper's character is also explored a little more in these entries when he attempts to win a fishing contest by cheating, for a prize that he does not even want or need. Mr. Harper is also accused of infidelity again, leaving his wife so angry that all they do is fight. The home atmosphere is growing difficult for Daisy, but she seems to be oblivious of it to a certain point, again showing the reader how little she really understands about the adult world at this point in the novel.

Daisy takes revenge on her enemy, Kay Bob Benson, by covering her hand in maggots during a Halloween party. However, Daisy does not use the information that Kay Bob Benson was conceived through artificial insemination to hurt Kay, suggesting to the reader that Daisy has far more character than Kay Bob and that she understands what is fair play and what is not. Daisy is showing herself to be a strong, considerate person even at such a young age. However, Kay Bob continues to torture Daisy, making her life difficult despite Daisy's normal sense of restraint.

Daisy is in love with her teacher. Most children love one of their teachers at some point and Daisy is no different. Her crush on Mrs. Underwood is fascinating because it is growth experience for Daisy and represents her capacity for love despite her unusual family situation. Finally, Daisy meets Claude Pital's new girlfriend and makes note of her ruby ring. This is an important scene because it will prove to be a pivotal moment that Daisy will recall later in the novel.



# Part 1, 1952: November 10, 1952- December 6, 1952

## Part 1, 1952: November 10, 1952-December 6, 1952 Summary

November 10, 1952. The malt shop burned down even though Daisy tried to put out the flames. Surprisingly, Daisy's father managed to save most of their important things, like Daisy's private papers. Everyone is being nice to Daisy now, and Michael's mother gave her a bunch of clothes. However, Daisy's mother is no longer talking to her father.

November 14, 1952. Mrs. Harper has left her family to go live with her sister in Virginia. Afterward, Daisy's dad got real drunk and was cruel to Daisy. November 16, 1952. Mrs. Underwood knows about Daisy's mother leaving. November 19, 1952. Daisy got a letter from her mother. Daisy has befriended Vernon Mooseburger, a boy in her class who is bald due to some disease. Daisy wrote an essay in class that Mrs. Underwood chose to be in a competition at the Harwin County Fair. November 21, 1952. Michael and Daisy were playing on the beach and found a dead body. Michael thought he killed her, so he ran away, but later it was proved that she had been dead several days. When Daisy returns to the beach to see the body, she recognizes the woman's ring. It is Claude Pistol's girlfriend. However, Mrs. Romeo will not let Daisy tell the police the truth.

November 23, 1952. Mrs. Dot has begun to act weird and her column is not making much sense. Daisy is sent to the nurse for a crying fit at school and sees a girl get a coke just because she got her period. After that, Daisy and a girlfriend go to the nurse pretending to have their periods, too. When Mrs. Underwood learns of this, she tells Daisy what a period is, and Daisy does not like what she hears. November 24, 1952. A couple came to the school claiming to be Daisy's aunt and uncle, but they are really an FBI agent and the sister of the dead woman. They want to know what Daisy knows about Claude Pistol. Daisy refuses to talk and they take her back to school. When Daisy gets home, they are talking to her father. Daisy finally tells them the truth when her daddy makes her. Now Daisy is afraid she will be killed by Claude Pistol, so she writes her will in the diary. November 25, 1952. Mr. Harper went to the Pistol's nightclub and tells them to tell Claude to leave Daisy alone. The FBI agent calls later and tells them that Claude is in South America.

November 26, 1952. Mrs. Underwood has had to have her appendix out, and Daisy sneaks into the clinic to see her. The head nurse tries to throw her out, but Mrs. Underwood talks her into letting Daisy stay. November 28, 1952. Mrs. Dot takes the Junior Debutantes and Michael to the fair. Daisy tries to win something for Mrs. Underwood and ends up with a gold fish. Toward the end of the night, Daisy sees Claude Pistol watching her and gets scared. Daisy hides in the back of truck and the owner comes, driving off with her inside. Daisy told the man she was there and he drove her to Peachy Wigham's, who called her father. Daisy stayed the night with Peachy





while her father went out. In Peachy's house Daisy finally meets the albino woman, Ula Sour. When he came to get her, Mr. Harper told Daisy that Claude Pistal was dead. The police show up at the house after they arrive, but Mr. Harper lies and tells them he was with a girlfriend the night before. December 6, 1952. The Pistals are moving because of the publicity about Claude's crimes. Daisy learns that Claude did not want to kill Daisy, he only wanted to find Angel, who was his daughter. They also tell Daisy that all the times Claude threw her out of the nightclub was just to protect her from his criminal buddies.

## **Part 1, 1952: November 10, 1952-December 6, 1952 Analysis**

Once again, Daisy is so innocent that she does not realize what is happening around her. Daisy catches her father burning down the malt shop but believes that it was an accident. Daisy does not even wonder why many of the family's important belongings were in the trunk of the car. However, the reader realizes that Mr. Harper burned down the malt shop because he could not afford the payments on it and because he wanted the insurance money. Mrs. Harper realizes this as well and decides to leave the family for good, promising to one day return for Daisy.

Claude Pistal comes back into the picture when the body of his girlfriend is found murdered on the beach. Daisy recognizes the dead woman's ring, which she saw in an earlier part of the novel, but Mrs. Romeo stops her from saying anything out of fear that Claude Pistal might not appreciate her talking. This causes Daisy to be frightened of Claude, and she panics when she sees him at the fair. Daisy runs away and her father is called, leaving her to stay at Peachy's while he goes to deal with something. The next morning Claude is dead, implying the Mr. Harper and Jimmy Snow killed him, but Daisy never asks her father if this is true. In fact, Daisy seems unconcerned with who killed Claude but is happy he is dead. Later, Daisy learns that Claude was Angel's father and that he only wanted to talk to her about Angel and that he never would have hurt Daisy. The reader believes this and wonders who did kill Claude. The fact that he was involved with some dangerous criminals seems to imply that this is the cause of his death, but the reader is not exactly sure at this point.





## Part 1, 1952: December 15, 1952-March 23, 1953

### Part 1, 1952: December 15, 1952-March 23, 1953 Summary

December 15, 1952. Daisy is to be Mother Goose in the Christmas play at school. During practice one day, Daisy sneaks out to get a gift for Vernon Mooseburger, the name she drew in class. Daisy wants to get him a wig, but the one she wants is not for sale. Instead, Daisy decides to steal it. December 23, 1952. Everyone exchanges gifts in class. Vernon loves his wig. December 27, 1952. Daisy's mother came for a visit and enjoyed the school play. December 29, 1952. The saleslady at the store came to Daisy's house and told her dad she stole the wig. Mr. Harper made her return it in front of everyone. December 30, 1952. Mrs. Dot wrote a nice review of the Christmas play, mentioning Daisy at the end. January 2, 1953. Michael and Daisy went to the movies and saw Kay Bob Benson there with the new cute boy in class. January 23, 1953. The FBI came to visit the Harpers in order to verify his alibi for the night Claude Pistol died. Daisy learns the name of her daddy's new girlfriend is Rayette Walker. January 24, 1953. Daisy visits Rayette Walker and asks her to leave her daddy alone so he might get back together with her mother. Daisy makes her swear on a bible. January 25, 1953. Daisy's dad is mad at her for making Rayette stay away. Jimmy Snow comes over and tells Daisy that Rayette helped murder Claude Pistol in order to protect Daisy. January 26, 1953. Daisy visits Rayette and tells her it is okay for her to see her father.

February 2, 1953. Daisy goes to the mother-daughter dinner with Rayette. Everyone knows who Rayette is and Kay Bob points out that she is not Daisy's mother, embarrassing everyone. Only Mrs. Underwood is nice to them. The same day, Daisy learns she needs glasses. Now Daisy is convinced she will never get a boyfriend with glasses and a chipped tooth. February 6, 1953. Rayette takes Daisy to buy some glasses. Daisy hates them and Kay Bob makes fun of her. February 14, 1953. Daisy gave Mrs. Underwood a valentine that she really liked. February 16, 1953. Mrs. Dot was found the day before running on the beach naked. It turns out, she also stabbed her husband with a penknife. February 18, 1953. The Junior Debutantes are refusing to spend money to get Mrs. Dot a gift. Daisy goes with Mrs. Romeo to visit Mrs. Dot even though she cannot go inside. Mrs. Romeo is shocked by Mrs. Dot's condition.

February 20, 1953. Billy Bundy and Mr. Harper come up with a scheme to make some money. They want Daisy to pretend to drown and then come back to life. Billy Bundy says this will make Daisy famous. February 22, 1953. Mr. Harper buys a film projector to rig it, so it will shine a cross on the clouds when Daisy comes back to life. Daisy and Billy Bundy go to steal a boat to use in the miracle. They are nearly caught by Mr. Caldwell, the cripple girl's father, but manage to get the boat. March 2, 1953. Daisy has returned from the dead. Daisy took the boat out into the Gulf of Mexico to the point



where no one could see her and then her father told everyone she had drowned. Everyone searched for her all night. Daisy then rode the boat partway to shore and then swam the rest of the way and announced that God had sent her back to help the sinners. March 23, 1953. Billy Bundy ran a revival out of his tent where Daisy was the star guest. However, after Daisy touched Mr. Caldwell's daughter and she began to walk again, the crowd went crazy and they had to run away without getting any money.

## **Part 1, 1952: December 15, 1952-March 23, 1953**

### **Analysis**

Daisy once again shows the reader the depth of her compassion when she steals a wig for her friend, Vernon, who has a disease that causes him to be completely bald. Daisy also asks her Daddy's new girlfriend to go with her to the mother-daughter dinner, even though she really wants her parents to get back together. Daisy figures if Rayette really did help kill Claude with her daddy and Jimmy Snow, then she owes it to Rayette to be nice. Daisy has reached this conclusion after Jimmy Snow implied to her that Rayette was one of the killers, making Daisy think her father really did kill Claude. However, the reader has their doubts based on Mr. Harper's previous behaviors. Mr. Harper just does not seem like the kind of person who would be capable of murder.

Mrs. Dot has a breakdown and ends up in a mental hospital. Kay Bob claims she saw it coming and the reader can probably agree. Mrs. Dot has a difficult husband and she lives in the past, a situation that is not healthy. This has an impact on Daisy, however, who looks to Mrs. Dot as a mother figure despite the fact that she dislikes the Junior Debutantes meetings. Later, Daisy finds herself the center of a new scheme her father has cooked up to make money. Mr. Harper wants to pretend Daisy drowned and came back to live. Daisy never once questions her father's behavior even though it is clearly a very dangerous situation and could lead to Daisy being injured. Daisy comes out of it alright. Unfortunately, however, they do not make any money. Daisy does manage to convince Mr. Caldwell that his daughter has been cured and can walk. The reader knows from earlier entries that Mr. Caldwell's daughter's only problem was her parents, but it does not change the perception Mr. Caldwell has. This situation will change the daughter's life, something else that will have an impact on Daisy's life.



## Part 2, 1956: June 22, 1956-November 26, 1956

### Part 2, 1956: June 22, 1956-November 26, 1956 Summary

June 22, 1956. Daisy has been going to boarding school near her mother. However, a week after her freshman year in high school, her mother has died of cancer. Daisy did not even know she was sick. Daisy has returned to Shell Beach and visited all her old friends. Mr. Harper and Jimmy Snow are living in a hotel where Mr. Harper is the manager. Daisy has her own room, right next to the bar. Soon Daisy is to start attending Magnolia Springs High School and she is nervous, filled with nostalgia for her old boarding school. September 21, 1956. School has begun and Daisy has made friends with Pickle Watkins, a local girl who helped her beat up another girl who was pushing around Daisy. Daisy and Pickle have a lot in common, like their desire to never get married, and Daisy has decided to join the band to be with Pickle. September 27, 1956. Daisy and Pickle are going to try out for the cheerleading squad. October 2, 1956. Pickle has talked Daisy into joining the Future Homemakers of America, but Daisy hates it. They made the cheerleading squad, however.

October 9, 1956. Daisy changed rooms at the motel because the noise from the bar keeps her from sleeping. Daisy has to drink to get to sleep. Pickle has come up with a scheme for her and Daisy to become popular which includes dating two senior boys, Mustard Smoot and Marion Eugene. Daisy dislikes being a cheerleader because she has to hug the boys when they win, and they are all sweaty. October 11, 1956. Pickle is scheming to be invited to the Senior Radiator where all the cool seniors hang out during the winter. October 15, 1956. Pickle and Daisy were swimming when Lemuel, Pickle's brother, talked Daisy into riding their mule. The mule was stung by a bee and took off, causing Daisy to ride through town with her bathing suit top down. Daisy is humiliated and angry with Pickle for not helping her. October 18, 1956. Pickle got in trouble for spending the night at Daisy's. Pickle's father is worried she has been with a boy. October 26, 1956. Mr. Harper is never home and he throws up blood, but he will not get help. Velveeta found a bunch of empty liquor bottles under Daisy's bed.

November 1, 1956. Daisy and her friends are excited that a psychic is coming to town. November 5, 1956. Daisy dislikes it when Marion Eugene wants to kiss her. November 6, 1956. Daisy and her friends went to see the psychic. Daisy learns from the psychic that her mother wants her to wear a ring she gave Daisy so Daisy's mom can help her, but Daisy does not believe it. The psychic also told Pickle she would win a prize. November 21, 1956. One of Daisy's friends is going to get married to her boyfriend while she and Pickle plan to go to the Homecoming dance with Mustard and Marion. Daisy has decided to arrange for Vernon Mooseburger to go to a Dale Carnegie Course to learn to be more confident. November 23, 1956. Mr. Harper has a new girlfriend



named Ruth. November 24, 1956. Vernon has started the Dale Carnegie Course and Pickle has decided that she and Daisy should become Rainbow Girls because all the popular senior girls are in it. Daisy is on the decorating committee for the Homecoming Dance. November 25, 1956. Pickle's dad will not let her go to the Homecoming dance with Mustard, but she can go with her brother. The team lost the homecoming game. The dance was boring because the boys cannot dance. Afterward, the girls had a pajama party to celebrate their friend's wedding.

## **Part 2, 1956: June 22, 1956-November 26, 1956**

### **Analysis**

Daisy's mother moved her to a Catholic boarding school for three years. However, her death has brought Daisy back to her father and his constant scheming and alcoholism. Daisy has made a new friend, Pickle, who is determined to make her and Daisy popular among the students at their high school. Daisy does not appear to care much about her social status in school, but she likes Pickle, so she follows what she wants. Daisy has joined the band and the cheerleaders, but she finds little excitement in dating the senior boy Pickle has set her up with. Daisy is a typical teenager, concerned only with what makes her friend happy. However, Daisy has also begun drinking in order to help her sleep, dangerous behavior that can pose a problem for her later in life. Daisy shows her strong character again in this situation when she stops drinking on her own.

Pickle seems to have been brought into the narration to present a contrast to Daisy. Where Daisy's home life is unconventional and unstable, Pickle must deal with a sex-crazed, abusive father. Where Daisy cares little about boys and marriage, Pickle is obsessed with being liked by everyone around her. Pickle has taken the reins of Daisy's life, trying to take her along on her quest to be liked, but all Daisy cares about is making Pickle happy. This leaves the reader wondering what will happen in this relationship and where Pickle will find herself in the future.



## Part 2, 1956: December 3, 1956-May 29, 1957

### Part 2, 1956: December 3, 1956-May 29, 1957 Summary

December 3, 1956. Daisy has a disastrous science project. December 4, 1956. Daisy hates the bridesmaid's dresses for the wedding. The motel is failing. December 5, 1956. Vernon is on the debate team now and very confident. December 7, 1956. Pickle and Daisy are trying to raise money for sewing machines in order to win a prize. December 10, 1956. Jimmy Snow took Pickle up in his plane to take pictures of farms for a contest to raise money, but she forgot to write down which farm was which. December 11, 1956. Pickle and Daisy hire themselves out as slaves to raise money for the sewing machines. The woman that hires them is rumored to have a child she keeps locked up. Every day they are there, Pickle looks for her. When Pickle finds her one day, she runs off frightened, leaving Daisy to deal with her. The girl attacks herself and is only calmed by country music. Daisy suggests to her mother that her father come and hook up speakers where she cannot reach them. December 15, 1956. Daisy is mad at Pickle for leaving her at the crazy girl's house. Daisy tries to stay mad at Pickle all day but finally has to forgive her. December 19, 1956. Pickle lost out on the prize for the sewing machine, so she takes a picture of an old man for a contest the newspaper is running. December 28, 1956. Daisy's friend has gotten married.

January 8, 1957. On the night of Daisy and Pickle's initiation into the Rainbow Girls, they dropped sand crabs around the room, causing a panic. They were thrown out. Daisy leaned too close to a heater and the dress melted off her body, so she had to go home in her underwear. February 16, 1957. Jimmy Snow is in the hospital again, so Daisy makes him and her dad promise to join Alcoholics Anonymous. March 12, 1957. Daisy and Pickle continue to date Mustard and Marion Eugene in hopes of going to the senior prom. April 1, 1957. Daisy chipped another tooth while playing the saxophone in a parade in New Orleans. April 10, 1957. Daisy found out her father and Jimmy Snow never went to any Alcoholic Anonymous meetings but were playing pool downtown. Daisy is angry with them and lectures them for setting a bad example for her.

April 23, 1957. Pickle and Daisy are planning prom night, deciding to stay up all night and having breakfast in the Magnolia Springs Hotel. They even plan to get their hair done at the Beauty Box. May 22, 1957. The prom was a lot of fun, but Pickle's dad embarrassed her by dragging her out of the Magnolia Springs Hotel dining room in front of everyone. Daisy got her yearbook and everyone wrote something nice or funny in it. May 29, 1957. Daisy failed algebra so she has to spend the summer in Jackson with her grandmother to take it in summer school.



## Part 2, 1956: December 3, 1956-May 29, 1957 Analysis

Daisy has shown her strong character again by first helping Vernon with his confidence troubles and later by encouraging her father and Jimmy Snow to join Alcoholics Anonymous. Daisy gets her first lesson in alcoholism however when neither Mr. Harper, who has become ill from his drinking, and Jimmy Snow, who has had legal problems and multiple accidents from his drinking, will commit to the program. Daisy tries, though, and that is important to show the reader the depth of her character. At the same time, Daisy has become aware that Pickle is being abused by her father, but she does not know what to do to protect her friend. At the same time, Daisy is constantly coming down on Pickle for not standing up for her. Daisy has a good idea of what it means to be a friend, but she struggles with the same issues Pickle does, when and how to help a friend in need.

One of Daisy's friends gets married at the tender age of fifteen to her seventeen-year-old boyfriend. This highlights the setting of the novel, showing the reader how marriage and parenthood were something that was encouraged on the young, even the very young. The mother of Daisy's friend is in full support of this early marriage and even allows the couple to live in her home. This is the atmosphere in which Daisy lives, so the reader should not be surprised if Daisy or another of her friends contemplates marriage at an early age. Finally, Daisy must move away for the summer, leaving Pickle behind with her abusive father. This foreshadows events that might lead to the end of the friendship.





## Part 3, 1958: January 22, 1958-November 1, 1958

### Part 3, 1958: January 22, 1958-November 1, 1958 Summary

January 22, 1958. Pickle stopped writing to Daisy two months after she left for summer school. Later Daisy found out Pickle was pregnant. Daisy, Jimmy Snow, and her father have moved to Hattiesburg where her father is managing a bar. The motel failed. Daisy is now attending a Catholic high school. February 3, 1958. Daisy has gotten a job working the spotlights in a small community theater, the Azalea Street Playhouse. February 19, 1958. Daisy has befriended Mr. Cecil, the costumer at the theater. Mr. Cecil is gay and is often followed around by a group of men he calls the Cecilettes. Daisy has also befriended Professor Teasley, the director. February 26, 1958. Mr. Cecil introduced Daisy to Paris Knights, an artist who is very sophisticated and makes sculptures of men's penises. March 11, 1958. Daisy and Mr. Cecil write a sketch for the cast party. March 16, 1958. Everyone liked the sketch. Professor Teasley has promised Daisy a part in their next play. March 21, 1958. The part Professor Teasley has given Daisy in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is a maid. April 6, 1958. Daisy ad libs during the play and Professor Teasley fires her.

April 9, 1958. Lem, Pickle's brother, came to the bar and told Daisy how his father raped Pickle and made her pregnant. Pickle married Mustard when she found out about the baby. April 11, 1958. Daisy went to Magnolia Springs to see Pickle, but Pickle has changed and is no longer the same friend she was before. April 16, 1958. Daisy and Mr. Cecil have written another sketch that is really funny. They are going to do it at the cast party for *Anne of a Thousand Days*. April 23, 1958. The sketch went over great again. As a result, Professor Teasley has given Daisy a big part in the next play, *Yellow Jack*. April 28, 1958. Daisy and Mr. Cecil do their last sketch at the country club. Daisy really likes acting and is excited about the upcoming play. May 1, 1958. Daisy is a big hit in *Yellow Jack*, but she upset one of the other actors with her makeup. May 8, 1958. Mr. Cecil introduces Daisy to his new boyfriend and she recognizes him as a priest from her school.

August 28, 1958. Daisy went on tour with *Yellow Jack* and has just returned. As part of the tour, they performed in Magnolia Springs where Daisy saw Mrs. Underwood. Just as Daisy was beginning to get all full of herself, Professor Teasley introduced her to a cripple girl who admired her acting. This humbled Daisy. September 16, 1958. Daisy is working on a new play while also looking forward to her graduation from high school. Daisy is trying to find a way to get to New York after graduation. September 30, 1958. Daisy continues to get good reviews on her acting. October 19, 1958. Daisy's latest play did not go well because of prop problems. October 27, 1958. Daisy is back to doing lights. November 1, 1958. Daisy heard about a raid on a local gay bar and went there to



warn Mr. Cecil. Mr. Cecil was not there, but Mr. Gamble, the father of a friend, was there. Daisy manages to get Mr. Gamble out of the bar without being seen.

## **Part 3, 1958: January 22, 1958-November 1, 1958**

### **Analysis**

Daisy has lost contact with Pickle and later learns she got pregnant. When Daisy learns the truth about Pickle's baby, that it is the result of a rape perpetrated by her father, Daisy goes to see her. Pickle is no longer the scheming young girl who was once full of life, but a bitter, old-beyond-her-years woman. Daisy sees this and wonders what she could have done to stop this, showing Daisy's compassion once again. The reader sees that the reader has presented Pickle's story to show the reader how easily Daisy could have fallen into the same sort of trap, but has not. In fact, Daisy is beginning to make something of her life.

Daisy has gotten a job with a theater, something she has loved since her father worked as a projectionist. Daisy runs the lights at first, but quickly begins taking parts in the plays and doing so well that the local paper raves about her work. Daisy is clearly talented as an actress and has a good future there if she can only get out of Mississippi. Daisy wants to go to New York, but she has so far been unable to find a way. This foreshadows a time when Daisy might finally find a way to get out of Mississippi and do something productive with her talent.





## Part 3, 1958: November 4, 1958-August 1, 1959

### Part 3, 1958: November 4, 1958-August 1, 1959 Summary

November 4, 1958. The singer Daisy met years before at the Pistol's nightclub is coming to town. November 18, 1958. Daisy and the singer, Ray Layne, are dating. December 28, 1958. Ray Layne asked Daisy to marry him on Christmas Day. January 27, 1959. Daisy is converting to Catholicism to please Ray. Ray has begun singing with his old group again and they tease him for getting married. February 16, 1959. Daisy has begun planning her wedding and honeymoon. Ray's mother takes Daisy aside and advises her to go to a doctor and get birth control. February 28, 1959. Daisy is humiliated by her first pelvic exam. April 7, 1959. Ray and his group are going to Florida for a month. May 22, 1959. Ray has gotten back with his old girlfriend, Ann. June 8, 1959. Daisy saw Ray's wedding picture in the paper.

June 17, 1959. Mr. Cecil wants Daisy to enter the Miss Mississippi contest. They figure she will need five hundred dollars for everything she needs. Mr. Cecil arranges for Daisy to apply for a job as a weather girl at the TV station. June 21, 1959. Daisy gets the job at the TV station. Daisy is going to get contact lenses. June 24, 1959. Daisy has begun working and is in a new play. Daisy got her contact lenses, but she can only wear them a few hours a day. July 1, 1959. Daisy and Mr. Cecil are working on a new sketch for the contest. July 2, 1959. Daisy has discovered she needs two talent pieces, so she is going to use one of the first sketches she did for the theater group. July 3, 1959. Daisy has missed her period. July 11, 1959. Daisy tells Mr. Cecil she is pregnant. July 12, 1959. Mr. Cecil offers to marry Daisy. Instead Daisy calls Peachy Wigham for help. July 15, 1959. Daisy's period comes on the way to see Peachy Wigham, so instead she has a nice visit with her.

July 18, 1959. Daisy loses her job at the TV station when the manager realizes she does not know how to forecast the weather. July 21, 1959. Daisy gets a job as a receptionist at a rental company. Mr. Cecil is helping Daisy pick out her costumes for the contest. Daisy wants to win a scholarship to the American Academy and study acting. July 23, 1959. Daisy was having dinner with friends when Ray walked in with Ann. Daisy was polite but then got drunk at her friend's apartment. July 24, 1959. Daisy's father asks for some money and she finds herself giving him every penny she has saved for the Miss Mississippi contest. July 26, 1959. Jimmy Snow is furious that Daisy gave her father all her money. Then Jimmy tells Daisy that he and her father never killed Claude Pistol for her, that he was killed by his criminal buddies. August 1, 1959. Daisy has moved into the YWCA. Jimmy came to get her yesterday and took her to her father's bar where all her friends were waiting. They played, This is Your Life. Everyone who



Daisy ever helped came out and gave her something she needed for the contest, including free dental work, a formal gown, and a sequined bathing suit.

## **Part 3, 1958: November 4, 1958-August 1, 1959**

### **Analysis**

Daisy falls in love and becomes engaged with a boy she met as a child in Shell Beach, Ray Layne. Ray is a singer who came to the Pistals' nightclub when she was little, and they spent a day swimming together. Ray was engaged to another girl, but they broke up. Now Daisy has put all her own dreams on hold in order to become Ray's wife. The only thing Daisy is certain about is that she does not want to have children. However, after Ray breaks her heart and marries his ex-girlfriend, Daisy finds herself possibly pregnant. Daisy makes the decision to have an abortion but is still struggling with the decision when her menstrual period begins. Daisy finds herself wondering if perhaps she would have gone through with the abortion and wishes that Pickle had had that option.

Daisy begins preparing to compete in the Miss Mississippi contest in order to win one of the many scholarships the pageant offers to its competitors every year. Daisy would like to win a scholarship to an acting school in New York. However, before Daisy can get her teeth fixed and do all she needs to do to go to the pageant, her father asks for the money. Daisy still believes her father killed Claude Pistol for her, so she hands the money over. It is then that she learns the truth, that her father went to Rayette's house that night and got drunk. Daisy is disappointed to learn her father did nothing to protect her that night and that he is a user and an alcoholic. Daisy moves out of her father's apartment and goes out on her own for the first time. Daisy's friends finally come together to help her in the same way she has helped them over the years. Daisy gets everything she needs for the pageant, as well as the discovery that she has a real family and that people really care about her, something she has often struggled to believe throughout her life.



## Part 3, 1958: August 3, 1959-September 3, 1959

### Part 3, 1958: August 3, 1959-September 3, 1959 Summary

August 3, 1959. Daisy and her father arrive in Tupelo just in time to register for the contest. Daisy has had to take a hotel room across town because of the crowd. Daisy's father gives her the name of a cab driver who will be willing to drive her around as long as she is in Tupelo.

August 4, 1959. The cab driver, Mr. Smith, is quiet but he is always there when she needs him. Daisy meets a couple of the older girls in the contest who are there for their final year. They spend the night drinking in the older girls' room.

August 5, 1959. Daisy does her first sketch for the talent contest. August 6, 1959. Daisy does her first interview with the judges and it seems to have gone well. Daisy watched the other talent acts and finds them boring, including Kay Bob Benson's twirling act.

August 7, 1959. After the swimsuit competition, Daisy learns she is in the finalist group.

August 8, 1959. The contestants did their talent numbers again. The finalist then went to a party at the local country club. Daisy was to perform her act but was caught holding a cigarette another girl was smoking. Later, the three older girls Daisy befriended sing a profane song that gets them all in trouble.

August 9, 1959. There is an emergency meeting in which the pageant coordinator announces that the three older girls will not be performing that night. Daisy arrives at the theater and is nervous about performing. It seems like something goes wrong with all the talent acts. However, when it is Daisy's turn, she does well. The scholarships are announced, but Daisy does not get one. Daisy is disappointed. Then the finalists are listed and Daisy is one. The judges argue a long time over the winner, but when it is finished, Daisy has won. Daisy is shocked because she was told the contest was fixed.

August 11, 1959. Daisy goes home to a huge celebration with all her friends and family. Before leaving, Daisy sees Mr. Smith watching her at the airport and suddenly realizes he is her grandpa Pettibone. Her father confirms this. August 17, 1959. Daisy learns that the competition was fixed and the winner should have been a girl named Margaret Poole. However, Daisy's Grandpa Harper is the president of the stagehands union and he got all his friends to help fix the competition so Daisy would win. August 21, 1959. Daisy is making plans to go to Atlantic City and Mr. Cecil plans to go with her to help with her costumes. August 25, 1959. Jimmy Snow has died in a plane crash. Mr. Harper has taken his death very hard. September 3, 1959. Daisy is leaving and she does not plan to return to Mississippi until she is a somebody.



## **Part 3, 1958: August 3, 1959-September 3, 1959 Analysis**

Daisy arrives at the Miss Mississippi pageant only to find Kay Bob Benson is one of the contestants. Daisy ignores her and befriends some of the older girls, who eventually get her into trouble. Daisy does well at the competition, especially with the talent section in which she uses some of her comedic sketches. Daisy is a fine actress and a wonderful comedian, so she makes it into the finals. The fact that Daisy wins is a surprise to everyone except for the stagehands who helped her do it. It turns out the contest was fixed from the beginning, but the stagehands fixed it in a new direction to help Daisy, whose grandfather is the president of the stagehands union.

Daisy has also met her Grandpa Pettibone again, whom she thought was dead after walking out on the family many years before. It turns out that Mr. Harper has known where Grandpa Pettibone was all along but kept his secret for him. Daisy has also made all her friends and family proud. Unfortunately, Jimmy Snow dies in a plane accident shortly after her success because of his drinking. Daisy is sad because at times Jimmy was more of a father to her than her own father. However, Daisy is not so insensitive as to not see her father's devastating grief at Jimmy's death. Daisy is still going to Atlantic City for the next competition, determined to make it on her own and to not come home until she is somebody. Somehow the reader believes she will make it.



# Characters

## Daisy Fay Harper

Daisy Fay Harper is the main character of the novel and the author of the diary in which the novel is formatted. Daisy Fay is a precocious eleven-year-old girl when the novel begins. Daisy shares with the reader the events of her life that she finds interesting, beginning with her father's desire to move the family from their home in Jackson, Mississippi to Shell Beach, Mississippi. Then Daisy shares with her diary all the things that happen to her family from the moment her mother wins the money needed to make the move until she is eighteen and ready to leave Mississippi for greener pastures.

Daisy is living in a world that is filled with stereotypes, a south where racial tension are still growing and women are expected to aspire to marriage and motherhood. Daisy stands out from this world, however, because she fights the stereotypes and becomes a woman all her own. Daisy is bored with etiquette classes, finds racial tensions ridiculous, and worries about nothing except the things that affect her world. Daisy is more concerned with getting caught with ball bearings inside a prize winning trout and being invited to stand at the senior radiator with the other cool kids at school. Daisy is a unique character who is full of life, a character that surprises with every turn of the page.

## William Harper, Jr.

William Harper Jr. is Daisy's father. Mr. Harper is the type of man who keeps looking for the next big thing that will make him rich. Mr. Harper is not the type to hold down a full time job and is always talking his wife and daughter into some scheme that will make them rich and allow them to live the life they were meant to live. Mr. Harper takes his family to Shell Beach in order to run a malt shop that will make them rich, but when he cannot make the tax payment on the building, he burns it down for the insurance. Mr. Harper then comes up with a scheme to make his daughter appear as though she has drowned and come back to life in order to make money from the Christians who will want to be close to Daisy in order to cure their own ails. Mr. Harper never thinks about the impact of his schemes on his family, and as a result he loses his wife.

Mr. Harper is an alcoholic who is also a womanizer. Mr. Harper often cheats on his wife and does very little to hide his infidelity. For this reason, Mrs. Harper often threatens to leave her husband, but it takes him burning down their home to finally convince her to go. Mr. Harper's alcoholism begins to take a toll on his health as Daisy reaches adulthood. Daisy, who has finally come to realize what this disease is and the impact it has on her father, tries to get him to sober up, but soon realizes she cannot control his actions. This begins to define their relationship; however, Daisy never truly gives up on her father.



## **Mrs. Harper**

Mrs. Harper is Daisy's mother. Mrs. Harper is a conservative woman who is often overprotective of her only child. Every time Daisy appears to have any symptom of a disease, Mrs. Harper quickly takes her to the doctor or forces her own home remedies on her. Despite her deep concern for her daughter, Mrs. Harper rarely expresses love to her child, leaving her with the impression that she does not care about Daisy's welfare but only pushes doctors and treatments on her to torture her.

When Daisy's father burns down the malt shop in Shell Beach, Mrs. Harper realizes she can no longer deal with his antics. Mrs. Harper moves away, finding a job in a restaurant. Eventually Mrs. Harper sends for Daisy and places her in a Catholic boarding school in order to protect her from her father's antics. When Mrs. Harper begins to suffer from cancer, she chooses not to tell Daisy until days before her death. Mrs. Harper's death leads Daisy back to her father's custody, back where her mother never wanted her to be.

## **Grandma Pettibone**

Grandma Pettibone is Mrs. Harper's mother. Grandma Pettibone never approved of Mr. Harper and often calls him a worm in front of her daughter and granddaughter. Grandma Pettibone spends most of her days playing bingo with her group of girlfriends. When the Harpers move to Shell Beach, Grandma Pettibone finds herself a man and remarries, even though she does not know for sure if her first husband is dead. Grandma Pettibone's first husband simply went out to the store and never came back. On Grandma Pettibone's honeymoon with her second husband she became ill and Mrs. Harper had to go rescue them.

## **Jimmy Snow**

Jimmy Snow is a friend of Mr. Harper's and co-owner of the malt shop in Shell Beach. When Daisy first meets him, Jimmy is a crop duster, flying his plane over peoples' crops to dust them with insecticide. Jimmy and Mr. Harper met when they were both in the military during the Second World War. Several times during the years in Shell Beach Jimmy Harper is arrested for harassing the woman he was once engaged to after she marries someone else. Later, Jimmy Snow moves to Hattiesburg with the Harpers, becoming more of a father to Daisy than her own father. Jimmy eventually dies in a plane crash due to his alcoholism.

## **Kay Bob Benson**

Kay Bob Benson is Daisy's mortal enemy. Kay Bob is the only child of a wealthy couple who live in Shell Beach. From the moment they meet, Daisy dislikes Kay Bob. Kay Bob often condescends to Daisy, making Daisy feel as though she cannot do anything right.



Daisy is forced to spend time with Kay Bob, however, because they are both in the Junior Debutantes and in the same class at school. Where Kay Bob goes out of her way to make Daisy's life difficult, Daisy occasionally goes out of her way to exact revenge on Kay Bob, such as when Daisy sticks Kay Bob's hands in a bowl of maggots at Halloween. Later, when Daisy competes in the Miss Mississippi Contest, Kay Bob is also in the contest. Daisy gets the last laugh when Daisy wins.

## **Mrs. Dot**

Mrs. Dot is a neighbor of the Harpers and the woman who runs the Junior Debutantes club. Mrs. Dot was raised in a wealthy family where a woman's virtue was highly valued. However, Mrs. Dot married a man who was lower in the social structure and no longer is able to participate in the parties and things that made her childhood a joy. Mrs. Dot is unhappy in her marriage, and her nostalgia, mixed with her husband's cruelty, cause her to have a mental breakdown. Mrs. Dot eventually gets out of the hospital, however, and is able to attend a party for Daisy before Daisy goes to compete in the Miss Mississippi Pageant.

## **Peachy Wigham and Ula Sour**

Peachy Wigham is a black woman who runs a store and a mortuary in the black section of Shell Beach. Daisy befriends Peachy on the multiple occasions her father takes her there. Peachy has a reputation for being able to get a person anything they want, and Mr. Harper often takes advantage of this knowledge. Daisy does so a few times as well. While visiting this black area, Daisy hears a rumor about an albino who lives there. Daisy asks Peachy about her, but Peachy refuses to answer her questions. Eventually, however, Daisy discovers Ula Sour living in Peachy's home. Ula is a kind woman, not unlike Peachy and the other adult women Daisy knows. Daisy and Ula soon become good friends. Later, when Daisy is an adult and she finds herself in trouble, it is Peachy and Ula she turns to and they are more than happy to help her.

## **Pickle Watkins Smoot**

Pickle Watkins is a girl Daisy befriends when she returns to her father's home after her mother's death. Daisy follows Pickle through many schemes to make them popular at school. One of these schemes is to join the Rainbow girls and the other is to have senior boys for boyfriends. However, Pickle's father is highly religious and abusive toward his daughters, especially Pickle, because he believes she is having sex with her boyfriend. After Daisy and her father move away, Daisy learns that Pickle was raped by her father and became pregnant, forcing her to marry her boyfriend. Daisy goes to visit her and finds a woman that is nothing like the girl she once knew. The reader suspects the writer added Pickle to the story to provide a contrast for Daisy, to show what might have happened if she had had a weaker personality.



## Mr. Smith or Grandpa Pettibone

Mr. Smith is a cab driver that Mr. Harper arranges to drive Daisy around during the competition for the Miss Mississippi Pageant. Mr. Smith is kind and always seems to be there just when Daisy needs him. Mr. Smith is the only friend Daisy has at the competition, so she invites him to the final competition. When Daisy leaves after everything is over, she finds Mr. Smith watching her go at the airport. It is not until then that Daisy realizes that Mr. Smith is Grandpa Pettibone, her maternal grandfather who disappeared when she was a small child.





## Objects/Places

### Daisy Fay's Lock Box

Daisy Fay's father buys her a lock box to keep her diary in after he learns that she occasionally writes about him, and Velveeta, the dishwasher, reads them then reports to Mrs. Harper.

### Taxidermy Kit

Mr. Harper decides to learn taxidermy and has a kit delivered to him that includes everything he needs, including fake eyes.

### Ice Cream Freezer

Mr. Harper keeps dead animals in the ice cream freezer to use in his taxidermy endeavors during the off season.

### Fancy Pillow

A young boy, Jesse, leaves a fancy pillow to Daisy Fay when he dies. It is the only thing Daisy Fay has ever inherited.

### Mule

Pickle's brother talks Daisy Fay into riding on his mule. The mule is stung by a bee shortly after Daisy Fay mounts it and it rides wildly down the main street, bouncing Daisy Fay around so hard that she loses the top to her bathing suit.

### Twelve-Pound Trout

Mr. Harper freezes and then thaws a twelve-pound trout given to him by a friend in a fishing contest. Mr. Harper passes the fish off as one he and Daisy Fay caught, stuffing it with ball bearings in order to make it weigh more. They win an outboard engine with the fish.

### Hall of Blood and Guts

One Halloween, Daisy Fay and her friend, Michael Romeo, create a haunted house that they build and script themselves in order to entertain their classmates. Daisy Fay uses



the haunted house, the Hall of Blood and Guts, to get revenge on a girl who has bullied her since the day they met.

## **Dashes from Dot**

Dashes from Dot is the name of the column in the local paper written by Mrs. Dot. The Harper's are mentioned in the column many times over the few years they live in Shell Beach.

## **Junior Debutantes**

Mrs. Dot, who is from a wealthy, southern family, runs a group of junior debutantes in Shell Beach. Daisy Fay is forced to become a member by her mother, but she dislikes the meetings, finding them boring and unproductive.

## **Azalea Street Playhouse**

Daisy Fay becomes a member of the Azalea Street Playhouse when she, her father, and Jimmy Snow move to Hattiesburg. Daisy Fay begins by working the lights, but soon begins taking parts in the productions.

## **Peachy Wigham's Shop**

Peachy Wigham runs a small shop and a mortuary in the black part of town. Daisy Fay visits there often as a child and turns to Peachy as a young adult when she believes she might be pregnant.

## **Harper's Malt Shot and Delicatessen**

The Harper family moves to Shell Beach in order to run a malt shop in which they own a half interest. The shop is called, Harper's Malt Shot and Delicatessen.



# Themes

## Family

This novel is about a young girl who is growing up healthy and happy despite the craziness going on all around her. Daisy Fay's father is an alcoholic who is always looking for the next big scheme that is going to make him rich. Daisy's mother is a good, Christian woman who married for love but finds that her husband has an eye for women—a tendency in her husband that she cannot control. Daisy's mother repeatedly tells everyone that she only stays with her husband for Daisy's sake, but it is clear to everyone that Mrs. Harper loves her husband. The fact that he strays from time to time is something she can overlook. However, the fact that he cannot hold down a job and burns down the malt shop for the insurance money is something she cannot overlook.

Daisy's friend Pickle has a father who is deeply religious and concerned with his daughter's relationships to the boys in her life. Daisy is aware that Pickle's father often beats her, as Daisy sees the marks on Pickle's back during gym, but Daisy does not know what to do about it. Pickle is a strong-willed, optimistic young woman who is always scheming to find ways to make herself and Daisy popular. Daisy goes along, even though popularity is not her thing, because she loves Pickle. When Daisy moves away and distances herself from Pickle, she soon learns that family is not all it is cracked up to be for Pickle. Pickle's father raped her and left her pregnant, forcing her into a marriage she does not want and a life she never wanted.

Daisy grows up in a crazy household where her father is hardly around and her mother just picks up and walks away. Daisy sometimes feels as though no one is looking out for her. However, Daisy learns the meaning of family when she finds herself penniless, unable to fulfill her dream of going off to art school and becoming a real actress. Everyone Daisy has ever touched, everyone who has ever mattered to her, comes together and gives her the things she needs to win the Miss Mississippi Beauty Pageant. Daisy finally learns what family is all about, making family a theme of the novel.

## Southern Traditions

The novel is set in the Deep South, in a coastal town in Mississippi. Due to this setting, there are things about the novel that are historic, such as the segregation of the whites and the blacks, as well as things that are a regular occurrence in reality—the alcoholic father and the deeply religious mother. However, the author of this book goes out of her way to separate her story from some of these themes. Daisy Fay is a member of the local Junior Debutantes, a group that teaches young women how to be good mothers and wives, but Daisy does not settle well into this group and often does not pay attention to the lessons being taught. The same goes with a group of Rainbow Girls, a



religious group that also attempts to teach piousness to young women. Daisy Fay finds this group pretentious and annoying, causing Daisy to purposely ruin her initiation.

Daisy Fay does not live the typical "Southern belle" lifestyle. Daisy Fay runs around in her bathing suit most of the time and rejects the "virtuousness" of a proper young lady. Daisy also rejects the racial prejudice that ran deeply among her white peers, taking as one of her closest friends a black woman who runs a store in the black section of town. When Daisy finds herself in trouble, it is this woman she turns to, not one of her many white friends.

While there is a lot of southern tradition in this novel, there are a lot of southern stereotypes that the author seeks to avoid, creating a story in which the main character practically laughs in the face of years of culture and tradition. Daisy Fay is a girl all her own, a girl who believes in herself and does not rely on others to dictate her behavior, and in a sense Southern traditions are not only explicated in the novel but also parodied.

## Humor

Daisy Fay is a young woman whose parents were never prepared for the responsibility of raising a child. Daisy's father is an alcoholic and her mother is overly protective, constantly afraid that Daisy will die of some terrible disease. Caught between these two, Daisy often finds herself frustrated and unable to predict what her parents will do next. At the same time, Daisy is forced into a Junior Debutante club she does not like and is tortured by a bully who believes Daisy Fay is beneath her in social standing. Sometime later, Daisy Fay's mother leaves the family and forces Daisy to remain with her father, where she is often ignored and at one time even finds her life to be in danger. When her mother dies, Daisy Fay returns to her father and finds her father's good friend, Jimmy Snow, makes a better father than her own biological father.

All these things make for a difficult life. However, Daisy Fay uses humor to get her through, often seeing the things around her in a haze of childlike admiration and simple misunderstanding. If not for humor, Daisy's life would turn out to be just as dull and tragic as that of her friend Pickle. Therefore humor is a major theme in this novel.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view of this novel is first person. This novel is written as though it is a diary of a young woman, Daisy Fay Harper, began when she was only eleven and ending upon her winning the Miss Mississippi crown. The novel is filled with stories that have special meaning to this young woman, beginning with her eleventh birthday and ending with the reception of friends after her successful bid at Miss Mississippi.

The novel's point of view is an intimate one that creates a connection between the reader and the main character that is stronger than any other point of view might allow. Daisy Fay is writing in a journal, but the novel is written in such a way that it might be a group of personal letters written by this fictional character specifically for the reader. It is a point of view that is often restricting, but due to the format of this novel, it has a special impact on the reader that creates a strong character and leaves the reader feeling as though Daisy Fay Harper is someone they know, a friend or relative, who is writing an intimate set of letters just for the reader. For this reason, this point of view works well in this novel.

## Setting

The novel is set in the southern part of the state of Mississippi in the late 1950s. The novel begins in Jackson Mississippi but the setting quickly moves to Shell Beach, a small town on the Gulf of Mexico, where the family buys a partial interest in a malt shop. Shell Beach is a very small town where everyone knows everyone else, presenting an intimate setting for Daisy Fay's childhood. The family eventually moves from Shell Beach but only to a little larger town a few miles away; therefore, the intimate feel of the small town setting continues throughout the novel.

The setting of the novel is important because it is set in the Deep South. The author uses this setting to present a southern story of a young woman growing up in both a stereotypical family and setting. However, there is nothing stereotypical about Daisy Fay Harper, the main character of the novel. The author has used the setting, not only because it is familiar to her, but because it is a backdrop that shows the uniqueness of her character in a way that another setting would not. Therefore, the setting of this novel is perfect for the characters and the plot that the author has presented to the reader.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is a simple English that is punctuated with the slang a young child might use and the southern dialect of characters living in the South. The language is easy for the reader to understand and contains few foreign or unfamiliar phrases that might complicate the reading process for some readers. The only uniqueness about the



language of this novel is the southern slang that some readers might not be familiar with, but many of these words are self explanatory or are easily explained by their context.

The language of this novel is appropriate to the novel's characters and the setting. The author has used a language that is common among young people living in the South during the time period in which this novel is set. The author has captured the language and slang of a young woman quite well and the language illuminates her character, showing growth in her speech patterns and her understanding of the adult world.

## Structure

The novel is written in diary format. Each separate section of the novel is presented with a date, showing the reader how much time has passed since the last entry. The novel is also divided into several parts with each part named for the year in which the entries begin. The novel is written like a diary; therefore, it is told mostly in exposition, but the author does present some scenes within the novel in the format of the young diary writer presenting a scene in order to more fully describe what has taken place on that particular day.

The novel contains one main plot. The plot follows the growth of Daisy Fay Harper from the time she is eleven until she is eighteen. Daisy Fay Harper is the daughter of an alcoholic, and this relationship often causes difficulties for Daisy Fay as she learns to deal with her father's disease, eventually coming to understand that it is a disease. However, much of the novel deals with Daisy Fay's struggles with normal childhood obstacles and ends when she finally reaches the desired end she has always hoped for, the opportunity to get out of Mississippi and become a star.



## Quotes

"I am an only child. Momma didn't even know she was going to have a baby."  
Part 1, 1952: April 1, 1952, pg. 13

"Guess what? I saw the kittens being born...I'm never going to have children. No wonder Momma was mad at me for weighing nine pounds." Part 1, 1952: April 2, 1952, pg. 19

"I don't know why I want those things. I just do." Part 1, 1952: May 2, 1952, pg. 31

"According to Mattie Mae, there is a real live albino living in Beulah Heights. Her name is Ula Sour." Part 1, 1952: June 4, 1952, pg. 45

"Her family in Memphis had some heirlooms from General Lee, but the only thing General Grant left behind was empty whiskey bottles." Part 1, 1952: July 1, 1952, pg. 59

"I found out I got ringworm from Felix. If it gets in my head, they will have to shave off my hair. I'll be bald just like Eisenhower, and I am a Democrat."  
Part 1, 1952: August 8, 1952, pg. 70

"The more I think about it, the more I am convinced that Tawney had little motors in her brassiere. A real fake!" Part 1, 1952: August 23, 1952, pg. 79

"She just told how happy she had been when she was a young girl, without a care in the world and going to party after party with so many nice young men. Then she looked at us kind of sad like and said 'I wish someone could take all those days, hours, and minutes and put them in an envelope and slip them back under my door.'" Part 1, 1952: September 22, 1952, pg. 99

"I am getting plenty of attention being a victim of a fire disaster and the product of a broken home at the same time." Part 1, 1952: November 21, 1952, pg. 125

"Poor Angel. I will miss her. Just think she has to go through life with big ears and on top of it she doesn't even know she is an Italian person..." Part 1, 1952: December 6, 1952, pg. 149

"I am back from the dead, and you wouldn't believe what happened." Part 1, 1952: March 2, 1953, pg. 175

"Someone told him when a girl says no, she really means yes. I'd love to get hold of the person who started that one." Part 2, 1956: March 12, 1957, pg. 231

"I promise I won't come back until I'm somebody." Part 3, 1958: September 3, 1959, pg. 320





## Topics for Discussion

Who is Daisy Fay? Why is she writing this diary? About whom does Daisy Fay write? Why? What things does the reader learn about Daisy Fay by reading her diary? How does Daisy's character change as the novel progresses? How is the reader made aware of these changes? Why does the writer create these changes to her main character?

Who is Mr. Harper? What habit does he have that makes it clear to the reader he is not a man to be admired despite Daisy's love for him? When does Daisy first become aware that Mr. Harper is not the father she always thought he was? What causes this awareness? How do Mr. Harper's unusual behaviors shape the person Daisy becomes through the course of the novel? Did these behaviors help or hinder Daisy as a child? As an adult?

Who is Mrs. Dot? Why does she run the Junior Debutantes? What is it about Mrs. Dot's childhood that makes her qualified to run the Junior Debutantes? How did her marriage change these circumstances? How does Mrs. Dot's husband treat her? What is the name of Mrs. Dot's column in the paper? What does she write about in this column? What eventually happens to Mrs. Dot? Why?

Discuss Mrs. Harper. Why does Mrs. Harper not approve of her husband's schemes? Why does Mrs. Harper constantly threaten to leave her husband? What does Mr. Harper do to make his wife unhappy of which Daisy is only marginally aware? Why does Mrs. Harper eventually leave her husband? Why does she not take Daisy with her? What eventually happens to Mrs. Harper? How does this affect Daisy?

Discuss Peachy Wigham and Ula Sour. Who are they? Why does Daisy become so friendly with Peachy? Why does Daisy spend a great deal of time searching for Ula Sour at the beginning of the book? How does she find her? What type of relationship do they have? Why does Daisy turn to Peachy when she thinks she is in trouble? Does Peachy agree to help? Why?

Discuss Pickle. Who is Pickle? How do she and Daisy become friends? What type of personality does Pickle have? How does Pickle compare to Daisy? What type of family does Pickle have? How does Pickle's family compare to Daisy's? How does Pickle end up married before she graduates high school? How does that compare to Daisy's situation? Why do you think the writer presented Pickle as a contrast to Daisy?

Discuss the Miss Mississippi Contest. Was the contest fixed? Why? Who was supposed to win? Who did? Why? Is this fair to the other contestants? Did the winner deserve the crown? Why or why not? How did the winner get the crown? Who was involved? How does this affect the outcome of the novel? How does this illustrate a theme of the novel?