

# **Don't Stop the Carnival Study Guide**

**Don't Stop the Carnival by Herman Wouk**

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# Plot Summary

After suffering a heart attack, Broadway publicity agent Norman Paperman flees the high-stress, urban life for what he believes will be the quiet, soothing Caribbean. With his millionaire tycoon friend Lester Atlas, Paperman flies to the fictional island of Amerigo to investigate a resort hotel that's for sale. Atlas, in his cigar-chomping, guffawing manner, shows his friendship by offering to help Paperman acquire a property in the West Indies that will provide a nice, peaceful life for the harried press agent and his wife, Henny. Loud and boastful, Atlas is especially proud to be mentioned in a recent Time magazine, although the portrait is one of a manipulative, cutthroat businessman who provokes corporate in-fighting and scandal. Lester Atlas also has visions of investing in Caribbean real estate himself, hoping to cash in on what he sees as a trend, and wants the Papermans to scout potential properties for him.

What happens next is a comedy of terrors, as practically everything Paperman touches turns to trouble. On his first day at the Gull Reef Club, Paperman nearly drowns while scuba diving but is pulled shore by a Navy frogman named Bob Cohn. At a party later that night at the club, Paperman meets Iris Tramm, a former movie actress and resident of the club. There is an instant attraction between them, although the beautiful widow is elusive. Paperman's wife is still in New York, although the reader learns that the press agent had a vigorous second career as an admirer and sometimes seducer of showgirls before his heart attack. Paperman meets Amerigo Governor Sanders and his wife at the party, then later walks Iris to her cabin and realizes she's the former movie actress, Janet West. Within just a few days of negotiating the purchase, Paperman learns that guests are threatening to leave because of electrical problems at the Gull Reef Club and that a water shortage is about to shut down the entire plumbing system.

A condition of Lester Atlas arranging financing for the resort purchase is that Paperman remodel the facility and add more guest rooms so the increased income will enable him to retire the loan and then afford him and his wife a comfortable retirement income. As he sets about the business of fixing up the club, some tragic-comic scenes ensue when the transplanted New Yorker gradually realizes that competent tradesmen are scarcer than snowflakes on the island, and that practically every other day is a holiday. Just as his remodeling project gets started, his right hand manager takes offense at something Paperman either did or didn't do and quits. As he desperately tries to find a replacement, the water reserves run out and Paperman must purchase several truckloads of water from a barge to refill the cistern. There is the briefest of respites while the resort returns to "normal" and Paperman (known to his native employees as "Mistuh Papuh") can untangle his overwrought nerves.

During another party at Gull Reef Club for his guests, Paperman relaxes and sips drinks with friends as they watch thunderclouds gather in the darkening skies. Paperman becomes elated at the prospect that rains might do for his water reserves what water trucks could not—fill the reservoir for free. Jubilant, they watch the storm as it condenses over the town several miles away, thunders and starts to rain everywhere but at the Gull Reef Club. Paperman hires a college-age, bearded young man named



Church Wagner as bartender. He is an excellent bartender and very responsible toward his job and the club. However, one day there is a scene when Church is caught having sex with one of the cleaning maids in an empty guest room. Then, several of the maids come down with gonorrhoea and quit, leaving Paperman to clean rooms as well as run the resort. His friend, Iris Tramm, offers to help: she works gratis in the office because she's bored and wants something to do.

With the cistern partially filled with a few days' supply of water, a stiff earthquake rolls through the islands and shatters the cistern sending costly drinking water shooting out in a stream. Desperate, Paperman jokes that the water at Gull Reef Club is more expensive than the wine. Meanwhile, he must do something about a gigantic hole in the clubhouse left by local workers before they walked off the job. Some loyal employees suggest that he contact Hippolyte, who knows the Gull Reef Club like the back of his hand and is a great worker except that he is "fonny." After an exhaustive search, he finds Hippolyte and hires him to repair the cistern, the electric water pump, the hole in the clubhouse and more. An enigmatic figure who always carries a machete, the Calypso-speaking Frenchman Hippolyte Lamartine and his crew get right to work and have everything humming in short order. Paperman learns that the natives call Hippolyte "fonny" because he was sent to a mental institution on one of the other island for chopping off a policeman's head with his machete. It is unclear whether Hippolyte has been discharged or escaped from that facility.

At the alcoholic conclusion of another wild day, Paperman escorts Iris back to her bungalow and they at last make love. Paperman is giddy with delight until he soon learns that Iris is the long-term mistress of the governor, and his mood darkens once again. Lester Atlas and Henny Paperman arrive from New York City at practically the same time. As Norman Paperman tries to sort out his domestic and business troubles, he leaves Atlas ("Mistuh Ot-loss") temporarily in charge of the club and finds out later, much to his horror, that Atlas has fired Hippolyte because he finds him a disturbing presence. Paperman puts out the word among his staff to alert him if they should see any sign of Hippolyte roaming the grounds with his machete.

Coming off a major bender, Iris Tramm jumps in her car and speeds into town to look for her dog that has disappeared. She slams her car into two vehicles stopped in the middle of the road and, as natives socialize in the street, is rushed to the hospital and dies. Henny and Norman Paperman finally realize that the Caribbean is probably not the place for a pair of expatriate New Yorkers. They arrange to sell the Gull Reef Club. When the deal goes through and they are ready to return to New York, Paperman admits to his long-suffering wife that he had an affair with Iris, which she already suspected. Tolerance, if not love and forgiveness, enable them to face the prospect of resuming their lives together in New York.

# Lester Atlas

## Lester Atlas Summary

Exhausted from a long plane ride from New York City, Norman Paperman arrives on the island of Amerigo (formerly known as Kinja and still called that by natives) with his boisterous friend Lester Atlas. They are rowed to the Gull Reef Club in a dinghy by one of the native employees, and meet current owner Amy Ball, a proper English woman who's offered the club for sale for \$55,000. After their long journey, Atlas heads for the bar while Paperman decides to go snorkeling and almost drowns. He's pulled handily from the water by an underwater demolition team (UDT) member, otherwise known as a Navy frogman, named Bob Cohn. The lean, muscular frogman shows off the large fish he's speared, indicating that it will serve as dinner for two—himself and a "babe" he's met at the Club. Paperman thanks him profusely, and then meets up again with Atlas who is busy puffing his cigar and quaffing down bourbons as he tells the owner that she needs to add more beds to the resort because the primary service she sells to tourists is sleep.

Abrasive and ill-mannered, Lester Atlas justifies himself by claiming he's a "truth teller" who knows how to run a successful business and who wants to help people. However, Paperman, who has been befriended by Atlas because Paperman's wife once worked for the extrovert Atlas, hopes to somehow remain detached from his traveling partner while they check out the hotel as a business opportunity. Paperman's heart sinks when he notices people reading a recent issue of Time magazine with a lengthy article describing Atlas' shady business dealings in the corporate world.

Atlas had gained control of a southern furniture company in a tough stock battle, sold everything and made more than \$1 million, leaving the corporation a defunct enterprise and causing the loss of 400 jobs although the original family owners had made some money on the transaction. He defended his actions by saying that the fired workers were slackers who produced inferior furniture with inferior equipment. This visceral, simian quality in Lester Atlas is, however, disguised beneath his tropical island attire and festive mood. Nevertheless, back in their room, Atlas reveals his true nature to Paperman as he describes his plans to remake the Gull Reef Club, expand its capacity, and turn a tidy profit for Paperman within a few years so he can sell and reap his benefits.

Sleepily, as he tries to nap, Paperman listens to Atlas' plans for the Gull Reef Club as well as his own real estate speculation; he wants Paperman to scout properties that he can turn around and profit by selling.

That night, Paperman meets the beautiful Iris Tramm who reminds him of the gorgeous Broadway girls he'd played with for so many years until his heart attack. Immediately enchanted with Iris, Paperman is chagrined as she joins the frogman to cook his fish for their dinner. Introduced to Governor Sanders and his wife, Paperman quickly refutes the



rumor that Lester Atlas plans to buy up a lot of land and build a super-hotel and enjoys conversing in French with some visitors from Chad who are with the governor. Then Lester shows up, loudly hee-hawing and chewing on his cigar and raising once again the question of whether he's someone to be trusted, or even controlled.

Doing the limbo to steel drum music, Paperman finds her erotically lithe body incendiary and is happy to join her for a drink in her cabin after the party. She hands him a Scotch and tells him she's having coffee because she doesn't drink much. As she strums a Calypso tune on her guitar, Paperman realizes that she is the former movie actress Janet West.

## Lester Atlas Analysis

Most of the major characters and themes, as well as the setting, are introduced in the first chapter. These include the high-strung Norman Paperman, the swaggering Lester Atlas, the alluring but elusive Iris Tramm, the Kinjan governor Alton Sanders, and several native employees of the Gull Reef Club. The clash between North American and Caribbean cultures becomes immediately apparent, for example, when the irritable and impatient New Yorkers Paperman and Atlas are slowly rowed to the resort in a dubious dinghy instead of sped there on a concrete bridge. Paperman's first brush with this let-it-all-hang-out culture is anxiety-provoking as he wants to be relaxed and nonchalant but isn't ready to wind down yet. Atlas, on the other hand, sees only a business opportunity in the booming Caribbean real estate market and is giddy at the prospect of making lots of money.



# Janet West

## Janet West Summary

Iris Tramm/Janet West drives Paperman and Atlas to the airport in her new white Chevrolet convertible, with her dog Meadows. Before he leaves for New York, blustering about how much he hates to fly and over the fact there is no bar at the Amerigo airport, Atlas tells Paperman not to worry about the finances of buying the Gull Reef Club and reasserts his mantra that the Caribbean is on the cusp of a major real estate boom. Once Atlas has left, Iris takes Norman on a mini-tour of the island that also serves as an opportunity for the author to furnish the reader with more local color. They drive through the narrow, twisted streets of the town where impoverished native children play in the street and adults are fond of driving backwards. Iris also takes Paperman up to Signal Mountain where the wealthy upper class islanders, mostly white, live in their estates overlooking the harbor and ocean.

As Iris drives toward Pitt Bay for a picnic, Paperman vividly recalls her dazzling beauty as a screen idol and asks whether she'll ever act again, to which she firmly replies no. Paperman finds her even more beautiful and alluring in a tragic sort of way as she speeds nervously through island streets and the highway to the country. Once at Pitt Bay, they relax on the beach and Norman starts to romance Iris as her dog, Meadows, growls and tries to protect her. Each time he tries to get closer to her, the dog drives him back until she finally tells him to sit. They jump into the crystal clear water and are amazed at the underwater sights as they snorkel, but Paperman is startled at a large creature that drives him to the surface. Once back on the beach, Iris tells him the leopard ray he's encountered is harmless. They eat a large and delicious picnic lunch, then Paperman tries to romance her again but their idyll is broken when a white Jeep with the governor and his African guests from Chad comes tearing down the dirt road to the beach. Her dog scampers off to bark at the intruders.

When the dog runs up to the governor, he strokes Meadows' ears playfully while the Africans walk around on the beach. Iris and the governor exchange a few words, and he asks whether they'd like a ride back up the hill in the Jeep when he realizes that they've driven the Chevrolet down the rough, unpaved road. Iris declines and instead angrily throws a beer can in the direction of the Jeep, asking rhetorically if it's too much to ask that "they" don't act superior to "us." Then she thrusts herself at Paperman, pushes him down on the blanket and rolls him around tomboy-style. Iris gives him a passionate kiss, and then tells him to get up and get ready to leave, and to go back to New York and not return without his wife.

## Janet West Analysis

Paperman gets a glimpse of Iris Tramm's fiery nature as well as her ambivalence and familiarity toward Governor Sanders. The fact that her dog approaches him playfully





without barking puzzles him at first, but he is obviously smitten by her and already views her through a rose-colored lens. Iris seems ambivalent, too, about Paperman—teasing and tempting him while pushing him away. In her reckless driving as well as her quick temper, Iris Tramm reveals aspects of her personality that will determine her fate. In Paperman's blind romanticism also lie the seeds of his own eventual failure and demise.



# The Sending

## The Sending Summary

Lester Atlas returns to a snowy Manhattan and phones Henny Paperman to tell her that Norman will be delayed another day in Amerigo attending to business. Miffed that her husband hasn't come home for a special 20th anniversary turkey dinner she's prepared, Henny sits and watches the swirls of snow and wonders what Norman is up to in the tropics. Henny's husband arrives the following evening in an arctic blast of cold air, carrying a present for her—an antique bracelet of silver and diamonds purchased from a homosexual shop owner in Amerigo after Iris Tramm had bartered the price to half. Startled and shocked, Henny tells Norman to return it but he refuses although he's spent his last dime on the bracelet out of guilt over his flirtation with Iris.

Once he brushes the snowflakes off, Norman learns that their daughter Hazel and her New York University English instructor/lover Sheldon Klug ("The Sending") will be coming to join them for a delayed 20th anniversary turkey dinner. Obviously, both of Hazel's parents loathe the slovenly young man who scarfs up all the dinner rolls before the food is even placed on the table. In a symbolic gesture of passive aggressive anger, Henny Paperman insultingly piles Sheldon's plate with great mounds of meat, vegetables, dressing, and gravy as if feeding a dog. During dinnertime conversation, The Sending announces that he's writing a book on the homosexuality of Balzac and plans to finish it within a year on a Guggenheim fellowship. Paperman is so startled that he spills wine over the table.

The discussion turns to the Cold War and the threat of Soviet missiles in Cuba. The Sending blandly brushes off the idea that there's any threat from the good-natured Russians, and asserts that capitalist Americans are a far greater threat to world stability. More Freudian analysis of the temperaments of the two world powers follows a psychoanalytic view by Sheldon that Balzac's compulsive womanizing was merely overcompensation for his innate homosexuality. Sheldon further offends Hazel's parents when he reveals that he is the still-married (but separated) father of a three-year-old child.

As Sheldon and Hazel depart, The Sending tells the Papermans that he doesn't seek or need their approval to enjoy the company of their daughter and that his life's path is to find and enjoy his own self-fulfillment.

Later, as the Papermans make their way to Sardi's restaurant after seeing a Broadway show, Norman is still sputtering with outrage at Sheldon while Henny tries to calm him down. Norman tortures himself and Henny with ruminations about how well they'd raised their daughter and the fact she had a good bunch of friends before she got involved with the man he calls a "fat pontificating slob." Norman looks at a copy of the daily newspaper and notices that four of his clients' names are mentioned but also



realizes he doesn't care any more. They notice a large and noisy crowd gathered around Sir Laurence Olivier and a huge, apelike figure seated next to him—Lester Atlas!

Atlas sees them and invites them to his table, where they reluctantly join the entrepreneur and actor and he listens politely as they describe their planned adventure at the Gull Reef Club. One of Paperman's newspaper friends asks what the status of the deal is, and Atlas says they're going back down to Amerigo to buy the place. Norman squeezes Henny's hand as they sigh with the thrill of their adventure.

## The Sending Analysis

Norman Paperman, in the environment of his New York City home and family, is revealed as a neurotic, people-pleasing hustler whose daughter, Hazel, resents his patriarchal attitudes and whose wife, Henny, still loves him despite his longtime and well-known philandering. Upon his return to New York from Amerigo, Paperman can't find the enthusiasm for his work as a publicity agent that he once had, and in a transparently duplicitous move tries to disguise his blossoming affair with Iris Tramm by bringing his wife an expensive piece of jewelry.

The "generation gap" between 19-year-old Hazel Paperman and her parents yawns ever wider when she shows up for their 25th wedding anniversary dinner with her 25-year-old married lover who is also her English instructor at New York University. The Papermans are repulsed by his general appearance and demeanor, as well as his slovenly table habits. They are shocked and outraged to learn that he is also the father of a young child, although separated from his wife. What Hazel had hoped would be a pleasant gathering for Sheldon Klug ("The Sending") to gain the favor of her parents ends in anger and disappointment as the young couple leaves the Papermans' apartment early in a huff.



# The Deal

## The Deal Summary

Norman and Henny Paperman arrive in Amerigo for a close-up look at the Gull Reef Club and are met at the airport by its current owner, the Land Rover-driving Mrs. Amelia Ball. They are both enthralled once again with the island and eager to relocate when Mrs. Ball informs them that another group of investors from Chicago is negotiating to buy the resort and is waiting for financing to close the deal. Paperman asks if a check for \$5,000 would be sufficient for him to make the purchase, and when the real estate agent agrees calls Lester Atlas' New York office to learn he's in Butte, Montana but should return the call that afternoon. Meanwhile, Mrs. Ball suggests that the Papermans join her by the pool for "elevenses," or cocktails. However, before he relaxes, Paperman speaks with Thor, the Swedish bartender/manager of the hotel, who agrees through his thick accent to stay on after the sale if his salary is upgraded.

At first when they arrive at the Gull Reef Club, Norman tries to ignore Iris Tramm and pretend she's not there. Nevertheless, Mrs. Ball and her friends spot the faded film star sitting alone under a palm tree and invite her over to their table. Just as Paperman starts to get uncomfortable pretending to the group that he barely knows Iris, he's summoned to a long-distance call with Atlas in Montana. With both of them shouting into the line because of a bad and fading connection, Paperman manages to get Atlas to agree to finance a \$5,000 binder to purchase the Gull Reef Club. With shouts of joy from Mrs. Ball and her attorney, Paperman writes out the check and iris announces to the group she's pleased with her new landlord and landlady.

When they return to frigid New York, the Papermans encounter Hazel and Sheldon preparing to go out for a midweek dinner and theater date. Hazel tells her father that Bob Cohn, the Israeli frogman who pulled him out of the waves at Amerigo, has called several times. When Paperman reaches Cohn, he invites him for dinner to which he gets a prompt yes. When he arrives, Hazel is fascinated with him and with diving and submarines. Hazel suggests that all four go to the restaurant together, at which both Hazel and Henny pepper Cohn with more questions about scuba diving and about Israel. After regaling the Papermans with his action adventures tales from Israel, Cohn abruptly asks Norman to loan him \$100 that he promises to repay instantly when he returns to Amerigo.

Surprisingly, Paperman receives a special delivery letter with a \$100 bill and a brief note from Cohn in Amerigo the next day. He also writes "Iris sends her love" and tells them they're lucky because The Sending will be famous someday soon. Meanwhile Norman's repeated failures to speak with the itinerant Lester Atlas are driving him slowly mad. A surprise farewell party for him thrown by one of his producer/clients fails to rally Paperman's spirits, as does a second party the following night. Between frantic calls to Atlas, he learns that Lester has left Montana and gone to St. Louis with a promise to call. Late that night, Paperman receives a phone call from the bank telling him his



account has insufficient funds to cover the \$5,000 check to Mrs. Ball. He drags himself through another miserable day, and then tries to drown his anguish in alcohol. When Atlas finally calls, Paperman says he's covered the check by selling his client list to an obnoxious publicity agent for \$7,500.

Atlas promises to give Norman the \$5,000 in cash that night in New York, and to go with him to Amerigo the next week to complete the remainder of the transaction for \$50,000. The two fly back to Amerigo to complete the purchase, but Atlas becomes infuriated at a hidden service charge in the documents handed him by the bank and threatens to leave and return to New York. Mrs. Ball interjects that she'll pay the \$800 service charge and the deal is consummated. Norman is alarmed at the fact he'll have to pay the bank about \$1,000 a month for six years, leaving him only about \$5,000 a year to support himself and his family when he's accustomed to living on \$20,000 or more per year. Atlas reminds him that's the reason he needs to expand the resort and add more guest rooms and that, if he does so, his income should be around \$15,000. Hesitantly, nervously, Paperman signs the documents.

## The Deal Analysis

The hard fiscal reality of purchasing the Gull Reef Club hits Norman Paperman in the head as he completes the purchase with the co-signature of Lester Atlas. The vast differences in personalities between the two men are revealed as Lester Atlas, the shrewd, bullying, dealmaker takes charge of the negotiations with the resort owner, attorney, and bank officials while Norman Paperman stands by in mute amazement. A primary loan, and a secondary loan plus promissory notes and a tight repayment schedule cause Paperman to balk when he realizes how little cash will remain for his own disposal. Lester's plan for adding more guest capacity to the Gull Reef Club—and more income—only partially allays Paperman's fears. He would run away to escape the deal if he could except for the prospect of facing his wife and friends with news of his failure and the nightmare of trying to restart his publicity business after selling all his client information to another agent. With a cannonball in his stomach, he signs the purchase agreement as the honeymoon of moving to a tropical island quickly ends and Paperman wrestles with the vague feeling that he's been railroaded.



# The First Day

## The First Day Summary

Lester Atlas leaves Amerigo in high spirits, convinced that he's been a regular Santa Claus to Paperman in arranging his purchase of the resort, while Paperman has come to see his friend as a "human rhinoceros." Once he stops smarting from what he perceives as the short end of the real estate transaction, Paperman returns to the resort, gets into relaxing clothes and sips a martini, which helps his state of mind. He agrees to meet with Thor, the blue-eyed, blond Swedish bartender/office manager, to go over the books. When he steps into the business office, which feels like an oven, Paperman immediately decides to buy an air conditioner. He also tells Thor he'll give him a raise when it becomes apparent that the finances and day-to-day operations are in good order.

Yet, Thor startles Paperman with the news that the Gull Reef Club is almost out of water. The barge is coming to the island the next day with fresh water and a certain amount is allocated to the resort as Senator Evan Pullman, a high-ranked member of the legislature and bar owner, is sleeping with Lorna, a strikingly beautiful black woman who works at the Gull Reef Club. His head reeling, Paperman takes a call from his wife in New York, who tells him their daughter, Hazel, is going to a folk music festival with the Sending and staying in a hotel where her parents used to rendezvous. Paperman hits the ceiling and tells Henny to forbid Hazel to go. Henny then tells Norman that her doctor suspects she may have kidney stones and her return will be delayed. Dismayed, Paperman mingles with the guests. One of them is a local contractor who offers to bring his work crew from the nearby Crab Cove Resort to do the remodeling at Paperman's club.

Paperman retires, half convinced that at last things are going the right way. He is awakened the next morning by violent pounding on his door and loud shouting. Sheila, the cook, arouses him to tell him she needs a check for \$115 to pay for a delivery of meat to serve the guests lunch. It's mid-morning as Paperman dresses and stumbles groggily toward the main house from his cabaña; as he crosses the lawn, he notices a large sailing yacht tied up to the pier and swarming with partying white people. Amelia Ball's voice roars out from the sailboat, summoning him to join the party. As the champagne flows, Paperman realizes that Thor and Mrs. Ball are lovers, that she's just bought the sailboat for him, and that he's quitting his job at the Gull Reef Club. Just before Thor takes the sailing yacht into the harbor, Paperman jumps ashore and notices a huge rusted hulk moving slowly through the water—the barge full of fresh water from Guadeloupe.

Hysterically, Paperman waves his arms and screams at the barge captain in French to stop at the Gull Reef Club but the boat continues to the main waterfront, where it slowly docks giving Paperman time to catch up with it and board speaking broken, breathless French. The captain shows Paperman his logbook with columns of numbers but doesn't



realize Paperman is not a customs official but a frantic resort operator. Finally, Paperman runs into town looking for Senator Pullman, in hopes he can intervene. After asking at various bars where to find the part-time legislator, Paperman finds the senator who says he can do nothing about the barge but is an electrical engineer if he ever needs electrical work. Pullman advises Paperman to ask Lorna what to do about the water problem. Paperman rushes back to the club to find an angry clutch of tourists waiting for the gondolier to carry them across the water to the resort.

Paperman piles them and their luggage into the boat, which almost capsizes, and begins to row. As they approach the dock in front of the Gull Reef Club, Paperman sees Gilbert the bartender standing on the pier wearing the gondolier's hat. Paperman asks him to remove the hat as bartenders don't wear gondolier's hats, then finds Millard, a strongly built native gardener, and recruits him as temporary gondolier, making the switch official by giving him the gondolier's hat. In the midst of this shuffling, the work crew from Crab Cove Resort arrives to tackle the remodeling. As they set to work, Paperman breathes a quick sigh of relief and realizes that he' sweated through his clothes, goes to his room to change, then to jump into the cool swimming pool where he encounters Iris Tramm.

When she hears that Thor has left and Henny won't be coming for a while, Iris offers to help Norman with the office work. As Paperman tries to relax and enjoy the sunshine, he hears loud crashing noises at the clubhouse and sees rising clouds of dust. Concerned about the remodeling, he rushes inside to discover that a large dining room window has been torn out and covered with a large brown tarpaulin, and that a portion of the surrounding concrete wall has been demolished. The contractor tells him that this is a faster and more cost effective way to accomplish the remodeling and will cause less disruption to guests. He also asks for a \$2,000 advance for the job, and as they head for the office so Paperman can write a check he learns from Lorna that seven guests have arrived at the airport and are expecting a ride to the club as specified in their promotional brochure.

Paperman races off to the airport in the club's Land Rover to encounter seven upset travelers with a small mountain of luggage, angry at the Gull Reef Club and at a taxi driver parked at the airport who had refused to drive them to the club, saying he was busy when there was no one else at the airport. Norman quickly calculates he can't possibly get all the guests and their luggage in the Land Rover, so he tries to negotiate with the taxi driver who repeats that he's busy and can't take any customers. Paperman holds out a \$10 bill and asks if he'll drive the tourists to town and he'll take their luggage in the Land Rover, to which the driver agrees. When he arrives at the club, Paperman finds a group of sullen white tourists on the dock near the moored gondola and not far from where Senator Pullman sits.

Pullman informs Norman that Millard, who is a bonded alien worker from Nevis, cannot work in any job other than gardener since there is a shortage of native Kinjan gardeners. Therefore, Paperman puts the gondolier's hat on his head and rows the sluggish boat, loaded down with tourists and the unhappy Millard, to the other side where he flaunts authority and tells Millard to carry the guests' luggage inside. Then he





gives the gondolier's hat back to Gilbert and tells him to return to the boat, that he will take over the bar. However, once he's inside the clubhouse, Paperman remembers Iris Tramm working in the office and he rushes in to check on her. She tells him good-naturedly that the business and the books are fine, and introduces him to a slim, bearded young man who is an artist and teacher named Church Wagner, who wants to know if he can show some of his paintings in the lobby.

Paperman agrees, and then asks if Church would like a job bartending. Church replies that he would, and that he worked as a bartender while in college. Norman takes him to the bar, shows him the ropes and tells him he's hired. Then he asks Gilbert to show him about the water supply, based on what he'd learned from Thor before he suddenly departed. As they peer into the cistern through a square black hole in the kitchen, Paperman is amazed that the pipe only extends part of the way to the bottom and a large mass of dark water remains untouched. Gilbert explains that the remaining water at the bottom is where "stuff" such as dead insects, leaves, bird droppings, dead toads and lizards settles. Realizing that he's already drunk a good deal of this water, Paperman reels as he becomes nauseated. They clamp the cover back on the cistern, and then Gilbert leads Paperman on an inspection of the pumping apparatus beneath the structure. He learns, to his relief, that there is an emergency tank with one day's supply of water.

Lorna acts as if she doesn't know Senator Pullman when Paperman asks about getting more water, and then tells him her brother Anatone can deliver a truckload of water at large expense, if needed, but says his best bet is to hope for rain. Norman returns to the office to ask Iris to have a martini and dinner with him; she accepts the drink but declines the meal. As they sit by the pool with their drinks, Norman watches a thunderstorm darken the sky and begin to pour rainfall on the ocean just offshore. Iris informs him that she checked the high school for a reference on Church Wagner and discovered that he'd been fired for getting the 43-year-old spinster principal pregnant. The principal had been given a leave of absence and moved to the states. Paperman watches the sky with joyous anticipation that fades into powerless melancholy as the storm continues to drench everywhere except the club, then dissipates. Before he goes to bed, Iris Tramm tells Norman she wants no more sweet talk; they will be like brother and sister.

At about 11 p.m., Paperman is awakened by violent banging on his door. Two black housemaids have come to give him the bad news that the club is out of water. Norman puts on a bathrobe and slippers and tramps through the clubhouse confidently telling partying guests that the water will be restored in a matter of minutes. He takes Church with him to the basement to demonstrate how to switch to the emergency water tank and turn on the pump. This they do successfully, and the pump roars to life, but no water flows. They determine that the pump needs priming but no one knows how to do that except Gilbert, long since departed the club for home. With some nearly incomprehensible directions from the speech handicapped Virgil, Paperman finally finds Gilbert and brings him to the club. He restores the water in a minute, and Paperman at last goes to bed.





## The First Day Analysis

This chapter might well have been titled "The Longest Day," because of the many trials and tribulations Paperman endures as he begins to take the helm of the Gull Reef Club. At once, both Paperman and the reader are plunged into the nightmarish, chaotic world of trying to operate a resort in the Caribbean. This juxtaposition of tropical paradise with human madness is what lends the novel its comic theme, and Herman Wouk exploits it masterfully. The reader, aware of Paperman's heart condition and sensing his frustration at trying to function in the nonsensical world of Kinja, is held with bated breath to see what happens in scene after unpredictable scene. In every relationship Paperman has—with his wife, his business partner, his would-be lover, his employees, and his daughter—there is conflict and ambivalence. If anything, Paperman's relocation to Amerigo to find peace and happiness seems only to have exacerbated the many conflicts of his neurotic personality that come into startling clarity as the novel progresses. With each new dilemma, the reader is left to wonder whether this is the straw that will metaphorically break his back and push him into complete blubbing insanity—or another heart attack.



# The Second Day

## The Second Day Summary

Norman Paperman is awakened on his second day as owner of the Gull Reef Club not by pounding fists but by a head-splitting stench that makes him imagine a huge, rotting whale on the nearby beach. He rushes out of his cottage in the same clothes from the day before, wearing mud-clotted sandals to discover that the guests are in an uproar about the smell. Paperman then realizes that the water truck he's summoned from Anatone—Lorna's brother—is resting on a garbage barge and the wind happens to be blowing in the wrong direction. He learns from Anatone that at least 10 more truckloads of water at \$50 each will need to be delivered to fill the cistern of the resort. Reeling from this latest trauma, Paperman is assailed by an elderly couple who dresses him down for allowing the water problem and then the horrid smell, and tells him they're leaving.

One elderly couple, George and Harriet Harmer from Hartford, Conn., recognize the name Paperman and ask if he's the son of Ike Paperman—to which Norman replies yes. Amiable after their anger passes, they decide to stay after all so long as Paperman can do something about the smell. He agrees, and then meets again with the contractor about the remodeling job that has left the hotel looking rather bombed-out. Just as they begin their discussion, there is a loud scream from a woman's voice and the Harmers reappear, Harriet Harmer wide-eyed with fear and staggering on her husband's shoulders. Revived with sips of Cheery Heering liqueur and the ministrations of a nearby doctor, Mrs. Harmer comes to her senses. Paperman learns that her fright came not from seeing a scorpion or any other natural shock, but from opening the door to their room and finding bartender Church Wagner having athletic sex with a black, pregnant chambermaid on their bed in full daylight.

Tex Akers, the contractor who Paperman has hired to do the hotel remodeling, shows up and in a roundabout fashion asks for another \$1,000 to continue with the work. When Paperman balks, Akers suggests he call a mutual friend to ask for a reference but Paperman instead calls another transplanted New Yorker whom he trusts. This man advises him not to give Akers another cent until the job is finished. Paperman tells a crestfallen Akers he can't afford another advance, and the contractor says he'll try to talk his crew into working without pay. Akers says he knows that Paperman's "business partner" on the cover of Time magazine can afford the \$1,000, and Norman tells Akers they aren't partners. Paperman then rushes into the bar to confront Church Wagner about his sexual misadventuring. Meanwhile, Akers returns to the office to tell Paperman that his crew won't work. They're leaving, and he can call if he can raise the money. Paperman becomes hysterical and calls the local building supply company and learns that Akers' account, which had been \$5,000 in arrears, had recently gone down to \$3,000—and that Akers hadn't purchased any materials for the Gull Reef Club remodeling job.



After threatening to fire Church Wagner if any more improprieties occur, Norman returns to his cottage and eats a large breakfast brought to him by one of the maids as he continues to fight his asthma attack. As he eats, he creates a pile of used tissues on the floor; exhausted he then falls into a deep and prolonged slumber. Paperman awakes feeling rested, glances around the room, then at the floor where he discovers what appears to be a black sweater which he absently reaches down to pick up. However, it's not a sweater, rather a swarming, writhing mass of black ants on the discarded tissues. In an instant, his right hand and arm are covered with ants; he runs screaming into the shower where he washes them off, then returns with an insect spray to finish off the rest. As he sprays a direct hit of insecticide into the quivering mass, suddenly the ants advance in waves toward him, crawl up his legs and into his crotch, biting with ferocity. Paperman howls like a madman as he rushes down the path to the ocean, frantically washing the ants off as Meadows—iris Tramm's dog—barks vigorously on the beach.

Iris comes to see what the fuss is about, and then runs to her cabin to get Norman a bathrobe and a shot of whiskey. As he crashes onto the beach, she cradles his frenzied head and listens to his account of the day's disasters. In a nervous fit, Paperman jumps up and starts screaming that the ants are after him again. Iris explains they're merely sand fleas, common that time of year. As they return to their cabins, Iris informs Paperman that he's taking her to a special dinner at Government House. They encounter Anatone at the party, who speculates merrily that it will probably rain that night. A grouchy Paperman says he'll sue God if it does. They also encounter other friends who tell them that Tex Akers, the contractor who was to remodel the Gull Reef Club, has fled the island and disappeared—the fifth contractor to have left Kinja in a year.

As the group discusses the impending bankruptcy of Crab Cove and its auction by the bank, which presents an investment opportunity for Lester Atlas, they feel the floor shake and rumble as another earthquake rolls through Kinja. Tinkling glass chandeliers and objects crashing to the floor cause a fright, and one of the group hides under the table. As they dust themselves off, Tom Tilson asks Paperman whether the Gull Reef Club can put on his annual Christmas holiday party for 200 people at \$25 a head, or \$5,000. Startled, Paperman accepts the challenge and tries to talk a drunken Iris into leaving to go somewhere for dinner. Iris becomes foul-mouthed and offensive in her inebriation, calling Paperman a "weak effeminate Jew" because of his fear of ants. A huge and long-lasting thunderstorm pours rain on the island for two hours and Iris continues her invectives as they eat dinner. Paperman suggests she go to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, but Iris says she couldn't accept the "religious idea" embodied in AA. They leave and go to a horror film at the local theater as Paperman. They encounter Church Wagner at the movies, and he tells Paperman the quake had caused no damage to the club, and that the cistern water level had risen by three feet.

## The Second Day Analysis

Despite the manifold frustrations of running the Gull Reef Club, Norman Paperman becomes more enmeshed in his island life and more tenacious about succeeding. His



growing romantic involvement with Iris Tramm helps to motivate him to stay and master the challenges of living in the Caribbean. Although Iris, not unlike the goal of thriving in business on Amerigo, at times seems unattainable, Paperman puts his nose fully into the wind and his hands firmly on the role of resort operator, while nevertheless fully aware of the many idiosyncratic and sometimes debilitating quirks of islanders. It's as if Paperman comes under some sort of spell that shuts down his well-developed fear/flight instinct, even to the point of his shrugging off Iris' anti-semitic harangue against him. It's as if Paperman has become fey, or exhilarated as before sudden death.



# The Quake

## The Quake Summary

As Paperman and Iris Tramm work in the office of the Gull Reef Club about a week later, there is another earthquake of about the same intensity of the previous one but they shrug it off and continue working. Then a guest from Indianapolis pops his head in to tell him there's a water leak forming from the foundation of the building. Realizing there is probably a crack in the cistern, Paperman starts to despair. His sense of desperation only deepens when he realizes that in the first week of his operation the hotel has netted just under \$40, far from enough money to repay the bank loan or to support his family. Iris tries to encourage Paperman by reminding him that Senator Pullman—who doubles as a Ms. Fixit—is on the premises trying to fix an electrical problem. They inspect the cistern and Senator Pullman tells Paperman he must release all the very costly water from the cistern at once to prevent a collapse of the cistern walls and with it the entire clubhouse. Then the cistern can be repaired from the inside, he says. However, Paperman asks why they must release all the water when the crack only goes two-thirds of the distance from the top, and Pullman agrees that's possible and a good solution.

Just as Paperman draws a deep sign, his assistant Lorna greets Norman and Iris at the office with news that one of the guests has an overflowing toilet and is threatening to leave by noon if it isn't fixed. Before he can take care of the toilet, Paperman gets a visit from a large, officious representative of the Department of Immigration named Miss Buckley who informs him that his pregnant employee, Esmée Caroline de Quincy, is a citizen of a British island on a work visa and that she must leave Amerigo before her child is born. Otherwise, she says, Paperman will become the 'de jure' foster father of the child, responsible for its welfare as well as that of the mother for the rest of his life. Rattled, Paperman assures Miss Buckley that he will send Esmé back to Nevis before the baby is born.

Quickly rifling through his mail before he goes to fix the toilet, Paperman reads in a letter from his wife that Sheldon (The Sending) will be joining the entire Paperman family at the club for Christmas. He also gets a note from Lester Atlas to the same effect that he'll also be there for the holidays. Then he rushes off to fix the leaking toilet with plunger and various foul-smelling chemicals. The "cashmere" Paperman, whose entire prior mechanical experience consists of using a can opener, trots off to the guest room and, amid disgusting smells and sights, manages to clear the toilet. He directs his staff to clean up while he rushes off to meet an arriving party of guests at the airport.

On the way, a taxi driver stops suddenly just over the top of a hill in the heart of town. Paperman slams on the brakes of the Land Rover too late and crashes into the rear of the cab. His head is smashed against the windshield and he passes out. When Paperman regains consciousness, he is spread out on the sidewalk in the blazing sun.



Although the damage to the two vehicles is relatively minor, completing the police inquiry and paperwork seems to take forever, making him late to the airport.

## The Quake Analysis

Wouk hits his stride as a writer of supercharged comedy in this short chapter. The reader, while chuckling at the seemingly endless round of crises in Norman's life, can't help but wonder what effect the mounting stress may be having on his already-damaged heart. It becomes clearer both to the reader and to Paperman that existence on Amerigo, for an American, is an hallucinatory traipse through a house of mirrors as the Fat Lady of Fate roars with mechanical laughter just outside. There is a certain guilty pleasure for the reader in watching Paperman undergo his rituals of torture in this existentialist comedy. It also becomes apparent that Iris Tramm is the only real friend Paperman has on the island and that, despite her drinking problem, she is there for him with a helping hand and a bit of sane advice when he needs it, which is frequently.



# Lionel

## Lionel Summary

Paperman greets an old Broadway producer friend named Lionel at the airport, with four of his friends from New York, for a stay at the Gull Reef Club and scout it for a possible party of 11 people over Christmas. Lionel entertains the other guests with stories of Broadway, and the group is generally in a good mood when Paperman arrives. In addition, they are thrilled to rapture by the club and the entire Caribbean setting; Lionel keeps referring to it as "Cloud 9." He's so enthusiastic that he offers to buy the Gull Reef Club, which provokes horse laughter by both Paperman and Iris Tramm, who offers to drive him around the island. When Paperman returns to the office, he asks his cook, Shiela, about the former handyman at the resort known as Hillopyte and wonders aloud whether it might be good to get him back to fix the cistern and other problems. Paperman asks Shiela to find Hippolyte, who had left after a dispute with the former owner, and ask him to come in to talk with him.

With a full house of guests and the main club still sporting a huge gaping hole, Paperman consults with Shiela and decides to have a big cookout on a small beach near the resort, although he knows it will deplete his tiny cash reserves and put him right on the edge, financially. As he ponders her list of items for the beach bash, Paperman becomes conscious of how utterly he relies upon her for planning and cooking all the meals, managing the waitresses, and for a thousand other chores—such as turning off the cistern drainpipe. In a moment of fleeting paranoia, Paperman also realizes that Shiela could be ripping him off but he prays that she comes through on this party because of his total faith—whether well or ill placed—on her.

Paperman joins Lionel, Iris, and some of the others in Lionel's party for a bit of spear fishing with the frogman Cohn. While they're floating amid the underwater spectacle of the reef, Lionel notices something large cross his field of peripheral vision with vertical gill slits and a pointed, ugly nose. Cohn waves forcefully for them to get out of the water, and helps Lionel ashore as the shark passes. Cohn tells the group it's unusual and unnatural to see sharks in that area, but that they're drawn in by the smell of garbage dumped into the water by an action of the Republican legislature. Although the garbage is supposed to be disposed of 10 miles at sea, the rickety old boat used for that purpose can't make the full trip, with the result that sharks come close to shore.

Paperman takes Lionel to the airport so that he can ship a glass fish sculpture to the U.S. on his flight home and encounters his assistant, Lorna, who is on her way (unannounced) to Miami to care for her sick cousin. Lorna tells Paperman she's left Esmée in charge of the switchboard and guest reservations. Paperman also learns that Republican Senator Pullman is being extradited to Florida on a bigamy charge; his arrest and extradition arranged by the Democratic Gov. Alton Sanders.



## Lionel Analysis

With the arrival of his Broadway friend Lionel, who has been to Amerigo before, and four other New Yorkers who have never been there, Paperman sees clearly their starry-eyed enchantment not unlike his own when he visited and decided to purchase a resort. He rationalizes to himself that the whole thing is nothing more than a middle-aged daydream, which he would never have acted on the fantasy without the enthusiastic but slightly skewed encouragement of Lester Atlas. As reality further dawns on him, Paperman also knows that he is exactly where he is, in the present time and place, and that there's no going back to retrieve time he lost or squandered working as a Broadway press agent. The present challenge before him is to make a success of the Gull Reef Club, with all the insanity and unpredictability of Kinja, because that's where his money, his hopes and dreams are invested. For Paperman, the honeymoon is definitely over.





# The Bayfins

## The Bayfins Summary

The toothless Virgil rows the gondola gingerly across the water to pick up Paperman, and explains that he's late because Sheila, the cook, instructed him to polish up some 50 basins stored under the clubhouse because the cistern water pump has broken down. As he enters the club, Paperman can sense instantly that something is wrong because the familiar vibration of the floor from the pump has ceased. He sees two chambermaids sloshing buckets of water past him on their way to upstairs guest rooms. Then Norman notices that the floor above the cistern has been jacked up so that the repairman, Millard, can fill buckets of water for placement in the guest rooms. Sheila explains that they are putting a washbasin and pail of water in every room until the electric pump is repaired, as they'd done in previous power outages on the island in such emergencies as hurricanes. Paperman searches about for the pregnant Esmée without success, and then answers a call from Miss Buckley at Immigration who summons him to her office immediately.

Sweating from both heat and tension, Paperman races to the Immigration office to see Miss Buckley but is kept waiting for what seems hours as melancholy alien workers traipse in and out of her office. Miss Buckley warns Paperman that Esmée is very close to her delivery date and that Nevis girls are famous for their trickery in trying to evade immigration laws. Norman offers to get a physician's certificate that Esmée is far from delivery, but Miss Buckley scoffs at the idea. He protests that the Gull Reef Club has been caught in political crossfire because of the deportation of Senator Pullman and his former employee Lorna, which has left him short-staffed and without access to a backup water supply. Miss Buckley fumes as she summons another alien into her office, and Paperman leaves.

When he returns to the club, Paperman asks Church Wagner to see if he can find Esmée but he protests that it's too dangerous to go to her residence near the Thousand Steps because she lives with the 6-foot-2 father of her child, a native Kenyan who is a very jealous public works employee. Paperman laughs out loud with the realization that he won't have to assume legal responsibility for Esmée's child, and is further cheered as a thunderstorm gathers and passes over the resort dropping many inches of rain to replenish the still-damaged cistern up to its two-thirds capacity. He returns to the small apartment he's moved into so he can rent out the larger cottage to guests for the extra income, and listens to the rain beating on the galvanized iron roof as he sips a scotch and wonders how his wife, Henny, will respond to the tiny living quarters.

## The Bayfins Analysis

The emotional merry-go-round that is life on Amerigo/Kinja continues to carry Paperman in exhausting circles as he tries to manage his own life and the Gull Reef Club. The



growing realization that things are out of control and probably will remain so forever slowly enters his head, but Paperman seizes on moments of relative calm to soothe himself into believing that things will be OK. His latent paranoia becomes stronger as his props are one by one knocked out from under him—his trusted employees who leave or deceive him, his expensive water reserves, and his business partner Lester Atlas. With each day and each crisis, Paperman becomes more fragile and more like a paper man when faced with the gritty, unpredictable Caribbean carnival of life on the island.



# Champagne, Si—Agua, No

## Champagne, Si—Agua, No Summary

At a desperate pail-n-basin party to distract the guests from the water crisis, Paperman runs into Governor Alton Sanders and his wife—both African-Americans who are not quite accepted in Kinjan society. Mrs. Sanders, who is in the islands for a few days on her way to a U.N. conference in Venezuela, asks Paperman to recount the troubles he's been having trying to run a business on Amerigo. Even though her husband is governor, Mrs. Sanders hates the island and thinks it's barbaric.

Norman's well-rehearsed monologue soon has them both in stitches, and they insist he eat dinner with them. He treats them to the best steaks in the house, brandy and coffee in the hopes the governor will intervene in the current situation with Miss Buckley at Immigration. However, Paperman's heart sinks when the governor reminds Norman that he's a federal appointee, under the Department of Interior, while the Immigration Office is a local agency—thus he has no power over Miss Buckley. Nevertheless, Mrs. Sanders makes a face at her husband, as if to challenge the notion of his powerlessness. Norman notices that Mrs. Sanders wears a Phi Beta Kappa key on her bracelet.

The hotel guests are having a great time dancing and drinking despite the water situation and the fact that the huge tarpaulin draped across the open wall in the lobby now has a large hole in it that flaps in the strong winds. Church Wagner assures Paperman that, from his sailing experience, he knows how to handle canvas and will secure the tarp so there's no danger. Feeling unsteady, Paperman decides to go to Iris Tramm's cottage and see if she'll join the party. Through the wind and rain, she finally hears him knocking and let him inside to say that she's just taken a sleeping pill and doesn't want to go to the party. She teasingly jokes about Paperman not trying to seduce her while she's drugged, and he gently puts her to bed as he curses under his breath that she brought the subject up at all. He then staggers back to the hotel where an alluring young white model who's staying at the resort for an advertising shoot does a drunken limbo, making him ashamed of the white race.

Suddenly the tarp tears loose and whooshes across the dance floor, knocking over tables and dancers as it sails through the lobby. Church, Paperman and several partying sailors manage to wrestle the tarp back into place and the party continues. Paperman gets roaring drunk and goes to bed. The next morning, awakened to a champagne hangover, his head throbbing, Norman learns that none of the chambermaids has come to work because of concern for Esmée. Iris Tramm offers to clean the rooms, and Paperman helps; as they do the maids' work they hear a deep rumbling sound and discover that the remaining intact portion of the cistern has ruptured leaving the hotel with not an ounce of water. Sheila somberly tells Paperman she's leaving to get Hippolyte.



## Champagne, Si—Agua, No Analysis

The tragic-comedy of life at the Gull Reef Club continues. The author's choice of the name Amerigo for the island becomes clearer. Simply add "round" to the name, and it becomes aptly descriptive—Amerigo-round.



# Hippolyte Lamartine

## Hippolyte Lamartine Summary

Thanks to the arrival at the Gull Reef Club of Hippolyte Lamartine and his "strange crew," things start to look up for Norman Paperman—the cistern is repaired and full of water, the pump works, remodeling on the old dining room proceeds apace, electricity is flowing, and all employees, including Esmée, are back at work. Although Hippolyte is physically repulsive—short, fat, ill-tempered and always carrying a machete—he is a wizard at repair and maintenance. When he's not working, Hippolyte sharpens his machete with a stone. In addition, when Paperman asks if his two workers, who strongly resemble him, are his brothers Hippolyte merely shakes his head and speaks to them in a language that is neither Calypso nor French. Sheila says Hippolyte is a Frenchman from Guadeloupe who lives in an inbred settlement of white natives at one end of the island. When Paperman tries to speak to him in French, Hippolyte screws up his face as if Paperman is speaking gibberish. Hippolyte goes about his work like a long-absent property owner who must correct years of incompetence on the part of caretakers, not really listening or conversing with anyone.

When Paperman tries to get Hippolyte to tell him how much the repairs, now being accomplished with seven workers—will cost, the irascible Frenchman remains inscrutable behind grunts and nearly unintelligible speech. Norman learns from longtime islanders at the bar that Hippolyte has recently been discharged from a mental hospital. They greet Hippolyte warmly, ask how he's doing and tell him to do a good job for their friend, Mr. Paperman. They also inform Norman that Hippolyte fathered two children with Sheila, his trusted cook. They vouch that Hippolyte's a great worker, but say they had to fire him when he tried to rape their maid—after he'd allegedly slashed a policeman's throat, which was never proven. When he learns that Hippolyte was in a mental hospital in Guadeloupe and asks why he wasn't treated on Amerigo, Paperman learns that a psychiatric hospital has never been built on Kinja because it would raise the tricky question of who should be inside and who outside.

Iris Tramm shows up with her dog and joins the group; they decide to take Tom Tilson's 60-foot yacht out to Big Dog Island for lunch and Norman and Iris relax in comfortable leather chairs in the stern, taking in the scenery and each other. The captain of the boat is a Frenchman who resembles Hippolyte, and he tells Paperman that Hippolyte is sort of a cousin. He was sent to Guadeloupe after an incident in which he got into a fight with a ferry captain, tore up his ticket and \$300 in cash, ripped off his clothes and jumped into the Caribbean Sea proclaiming that he'd swim to Guadeloupe. He was rescued by the Coast Guard several miles out to sea, surrounded by sharks, and then taken into the hospital for electric shock therapy. The captain assures Paperman that "Hippolyte all better" now. Iris and Norman take a small rowboat to a secluded beach on Big Dog Island where they kiss under orange blossoms and decide to meet the next day for a sailing and lunch date.



When they return to the hotel, Paperman has an invitation to dinner from one of the wealthy "hill crowd" named Bunny Campbell; Iris urges him to go alone since she has a business dinner engagement. When he arrives at Broadstairs, the Campbell's estate with its own private beach, Paperman is greeted by Mrs. Campbell wearing shorts and holding a spray can of insect repellent in one hand. She offers to inoculate him against the sand flies, but he tells her they don't bother him and they proceed inside the house, where he runs into Amy Ball—the former owner of the Gull Reef Club—among a crowd of drinkers on the terrace. She tells Norman she's happy that he's hired Hippolyte and that it was her former lover and employee Thor who fired Hippolyte. Then, through slurred speech, Mrs. Ball tells Norman that she'd rather have \$10,000 or \$15,000 in cash now than wait for him to retire the bank note and then the promissory notes. Excitedly, Paperman realizes this is an opportunity to cut the price of the Gull Reef Club in half.

## Hippolyte Lamartine Analysis

The utter unpredictability of life on Amerigo continues to amaze and astound Norman Paperman. Through the character of Hippolyte Lamartine, the reader can see how the intertwining of good and evil is at the core of each personality. Hippolyte may or may not have hacked off a policeman's head, and may or may not have escaped from the mental hospital in Guadeloupe, and he may or may not be a human timebomb waiting to explode into a frenzy of machete murders. However, he is also obviously a highly skilled and efficient repair and maintenance man who knows how to get the job done well and not too expensively.

Thor, the former manager of the Gull Reef Club upon whom Norman depended at first, is revealed by his former lover Amy Ball to be a cold-hearted manipulator. Iris Tramm tantalizes Norman and then agrees to a sexual encounter with him, after weeks of filtration. Most of the island old-timers take these melodramas in stride, having seen so many different personalities come and go on Kinja through the years. However, Paperman, as a newcomer, is dazzled by the scenery, puzzled by the folkways, and bamboozled by the languages and dialects spoken on the island. There is a dramatic tension between Norman's boy scout yearnings that could get him into big trouble and the pending arrival of his wife from New York, when he will once again have to behave in an ostensibly middle class, family-man way.



# Dingley Dell

## Dingley Dell Summary

Iris and Norman set out in a swift catamaran for Big Dog Island for their idyllic tryst on the secluded beach surrounded by lush vegetation called Dingley Dell. With good weather and a stiff breeze, their spirits soar as the craft skims merrily over the waves. However, when they come about, the boat becomes difficult to manage and Iris—the more experienced sailor—is unable to make much progress toward shore. When she tries to come about once more, the boom swings around and strikes her head. Swearing, she tells Norman they're returning to Amerigo and to the beach in front of her cabin, where they stop and unload their gear, weary, hungry and soaked in salt water. Amid a flurry of flirtatious gestures and words, the two decide to get cleaned up and go to dinner at Hogan's Fancy, another resort that offers French cuisine.

As they catch up on local gossip, Iris and Norman watch one of the legendary green sunsets much discussed in the Caribbean. Chunky Collins, owner of Hogan's Fancy, drops by to tell them he's sold the resort and is moving to California where he looks forward to tradesmen who are skilled and competent, a modicum of law and order, and citizens who are mostly white. Noting Collins' racial slur, they discuss leaving and going somewhere else to eat but decide to stay and enjoy their meal. The mood turns increasingly romantic as they recite poetry to each other over dinner, and then decide to go to a friend's party for coffee. Then Iris takes him barhopping in Kinja, where they stop at a gay bar, then head home. Afterwards they return to her cottage and make love to sentimental old records. Iris punctures the romantic mood when she tells Paperman she is Governor Sanders' mistress. He is genuinely shocked to hear it from her lips. Iris begins to get tipsy, and Norman takes away her drink and pours it down the sink. She gets irritated and orders him to leave.

## Dingley Dell Analysis

Iris Tramm's alcoholic behavior begins to get even more pronounced as well as unpredictable. After the disappointment of not making it to Dingley Dell, Iris and Norman try to recover their amatory momentum but flail and fail. Neither a lavish meal nor a round of barhopping in Kinja stokes the romantic fires, and Iris throws out her relationship with Alton Sanders like a hot burning ember. This dance of intimacy finally ends in a bout of lovemaking that Norman finds sweet and too short. Their evening ends with Iris stiffly indifferent to Norman because he has encroached on her drinking space.



# The Return of Atlas

## The Return of Atlas Summary

Norman Paperman and frogman Bob Cohn go to meet Henny Paperman, Lester Atlas, Hazel Paperman and Sheldon Klug at the airport as they arrive on the same plane that's supposed to be carrying a shipment of 200 chateaubriand steaks for the big holiday party at the Gull Reef Inn. As they await the arrival of the plane, Paperman and Cohn discuss Iris Tramm; the frogman says he's nothing more than someone for the actress to tell her troubles to and confirms her long-standing affair with Sanders—A California Republican who is also an ambitious politician unwilling to leave his wife or career for Iris. When the New Yorkers arrive, Atlas thunders in a voice that even in mid-range has the volume of a tobacco auctioneer asking if there's a bar in the airport, which there isn't. Hazel emerges from the plane mugging and waving like a celebrity and Paperman is glad to see his wife at last. Sheldon (The Sending) Klug arrives like a beast of burden, carrying coats, cameras, a typewriter and make-up bags.

Paperman inquires about his shipment of frozen meat, and is directed by the air cargo manager to a shady spot near the runway where his cargo has been unloaded. He and Cohn find eight cardboard cartons bound with loose wire, sitting on the cargo desk, oozing blood. The labels indicate they are chicken necks and wings destined for Barbados. Paperman, Cohn and Atlas storm into the air cargo manager's office and ask him to find the errant steaks, bring them back to Amerigo and correct the error. When the agent hesitates, Lester Atlas booms that he has powerful friends in Washington, D.C. and will get a full-scale investigation of airport operations within a week if the agent doesn't do something—fast. Atlas stands over the agent while he makes the necessary calls.

Back at the Gull Reef Club, the group has lunch together and Sheldon says he wants to do some underwater sightseeing with Cohn, and asks where he can stay. Paperman directs him to Casa Encantada, where he finds lodging. Henny tells her husband she loves the newly remodeled rooms but is afraid of the funny little Frenchman who always carries a machete—Hippolyte Lamartine. Meanwhile, Lester Atlas and Norman Paperman meet with three bankers who have arranged the auction for Crab Creek Cove—the distressed housing development abandoned just after its completion. Atlas is excited at the prospect of making a half-million-dollar profit from the sales of the cleaned-up, redecorated houses. When he returns to the club, he finds his wife asleep—or, passed out—on the bed and a note telling him to wake her up to talk.

When he rouses her, Henny tells Norman she's concerned about Iris Tramm's isolation and drinking. She says they had a couple of drinks and Iris was nearly incoherent. When he visits her cottage, Norman finds Iris awake and functional, albeit a little tipsy. He invites her to join them for dinner, but she says she won't be able to eat and apologizes for putting him on the defensive the night before, after they made love. Paperman sees Iris as a "sad, worn stranger," turns and leaves.





## The Return of Atlas Analysis

Like a rampaging rhino, Lester Atlas roars into Amerigo and once again jangles Paperman's nerves—but his force as a mover and shaker is undeniable and he usually gets his way. Paperman accepts that Atlas, with all his crude ways, is a good person to have in his corner as they try to negotiate business dealings on the island. The planeload of Paperman's wife, Henny, plus his daughter Hazel and her boyfriend (The Sending) with Lester Atlas is an occasion for mixed emotions on the part of the neophyte hotel operator. Watching Lester Atlas in action as he cajoles, threatens, charms and bullies other business people to get his way, Paperman begins to suspect that he may not have the rhinoceros-tough skin necessary for business success in the Caribbean.

Despite the fact Iris and Norman finally make love, it seems to only separate them from each other because of his awareness that she is the mistress of Governor Sanders. Afterwards, Iris's drinking becomes more out of control and apparent to others, including Norman's wife Henny Paperman.



# The Sending Goes Down

## The Sending Goes Down Summary

Fat, white and out of shape, Sheldon Klug goes for an aqualung dive with frogman Bob Cohn and other Navy divers. Paperman, with his wife and daughter, watches from the beach as the divers go down, then surface with frantic cries about The Sending. They go down again and pull him off a reef where he's become entangled at a depth of 65 feet, drag him ashore, and perform lifesaving techniques on him. After a few minutes, Klug sputters water out of his mouth and comes back to consciousness protesting that he's all right. The divers give him a quick shot of brandy, then put him in the Gull Reef Club's Land Rover and race off to the hospital for fear he might have suffered brain damage.

When they return to the Gull Reef Club, Paperman notices an atmosphere of extreme tension among his staff because Lester Atlas has fired Hippolyte. Paperman, gasping for air, demands an explanation. Atlas says he got fed up with Hippolyte's appearance, told him to put on some shoes, take off his hat and stop carrying his machete everywhere. Hippolyte responds with a stream of indecipherable profanity, and swings the blade at Atlas before leaving. Reeling from shock, Paperman asks Sheila if she can help him get Hippolyte back but she responds quite clearly that there is no reason to even ask Hippolyte to return until Atlas has left. Hippolyte, she says, "talk plenty fonny" before he left and was enraged. Paperman has a talk with Atlas in which he angrily asserts his sole right to manage the Gull Reef Club as he sees fit.

Paperman then assures Sheila that, although the "fot porson" (Lester Atlas) will be around for two weeks, he won't interfere any more in the operations of the club. In truth, all the problems and breakdowns that Hippolyte was hired to fix, have been fixed, and Paperman prays once again for a time of peace. Among the worries that nag his mind is the state of Iris Tramm's declining health. For nearly a week, she disappears into her cottage and doesn't allow any food or housecleaning staff inside; telephone calls from the governor go unanswered. Finally, Norman calls Sanders and asks to discuss her situation with him. Sanders tells Paperman that he once suggested Iris go back to her parents in San Diego, as did Norman, and that she went into a black mood similar to this one and that things between them haven't been the same since, although he loves her.

Sheldon Klug is administered a standard IQ test at the hospital where he's recovering and, out of spite, does his best to give goofy responses. The result is that he scores low, about average for Kinjans who are mentally disturbed. This means the hospital will not consider releasing him until after he undergoes electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), or shock treatments, which he refuses. Hazel is irate and goes scuba diving with Bob Cohn. Paperman, meanwhile, runs into one of the bankers handling the Crab Cove sale and informs him that Lester Atlas' bid has succeeded. When Paperman looks for Atlas, he is passed out in the bar and he shakes him into consciousness to tell him the news.



Atlas is pleased that he has out-bid the second-place bidder by just \$2,500, and says he's more pleased by that than by the sale that he says he really doesn't need anyway. However, true to form, Atlas vows to make a killing at Crab Cove as he slams his fist down on the table.

## The Sending Goes Down Analysis

Paperman becomes more deeply enmeshed in the delicate threads of reality that comprise life on Amerigo as he asserts himself in a fit of anger directed at Lester Atlas for having fired Hippolyte Lamartine—his only salvation as things start to go wrong at the Gull Reef Club. Although he knows how precarious survival can be on the island, Paperman now has his while life riding on the outcome and he becomes desperately serious about his business venture in a way that wasn't possible when he first arrived. Laughing at the natives and their peculiar folkways is no longer a source of amusement for Paperman, any more than idly speculating on how Iris Tramm could go from the silver screen to a small cottage in the Caribbean. Norman Paperman is fully invested in the island, and to that extent also fully invested in its chaos and madness. He's aware that at any moment things could all come crashing down on him—perhaps from some mechanical failure or water shortage, or perhaps from the worst possible scenario that Hippolyte would come rampaging through his club, machete swinging, seeking revenge on Lester Atlas.



# The Tilson Party

## The Tilson Party Summary

Two days after Christmas, and after weeks of planning, the dinner party for 200 people contracted by Tom Tilson starts to get underway at the Gull Reef Club. Church Wagner, the bartender, has organized another beach party free for guests of the hotel at the nearby Lovers Beach complete with complementary steaks, drinks, and a dramatic leap of Navy parachutists. The club has become a Cecil B. DeMille production as hordes of sweating black laborers haul great quantities of food and drink to the sandy beach for the barbeque, and Sheila the cook oversees both the beach party for guests as well as the special Tilson dinner party. As things get revved up, Tilson pulls Paperman aside and tells him that Church has infected at least six schoolgirls out of seven in an informal group known as the Sand Witches with gonorrhoea. Paperman notices that Church is missing from the club, and there have been several calls from the hospital for him. He appoints Lester Atlas substitute bartender and tries to calm his sense of dread that some catastrophe is about to occur at the party.

As the hotel guests gather for a beach bash, the Navy frogmen leap from an airplane some 10,000 feet above and release colored smoke streams as they free fall until opening their bright parachutes. Everyone gasps appropriately, as they come down, one at a time, and walk up the beach in search of food and drink. Henny Paperman expresses pleasure that Hazel has taken an interest in Bob Cohn, the frogman, since The Sending has been sent back to New York. Iris Tramm appears, splendidly dressed and inebriated, around 10 p.m. and goes off with Governor Sanders to get something to eat. Amy Ball, former owner of the Gull Reef Club, introduces Paperman to her new British friend and business partner who hopes to start a new Caribbean airline service; Hazel Paperman dances wildly with a group of people; and Lester Atlas sulks over his failed Montana mine deal. Generally, everyone is having a good time at both parties.

## The Tilson Party Analysis

The party mood that pervades the Gull Reef Club, set against a background of lingering paranoia on the part of Norman Paperman, serves in this chapter as a set-up to another comic catastrophe to come in the following chapter.



# Return of Hippolyte

## Return of Hippolyte Summary

As the two parties at the Gull Reef Club reach a crescendo, Sheila calls Paperman to the beach where a straw hat can be seen offshore. They determine that it's Hippolyte, swimming in the midnight darkness to the resort. On the rocky shore, Paperman awaits the Frenchman in the moonlight, until he emerges wet and dripping, machete in hand, hat on his head. Hippolyte tells Paperman he's come to retrieve his clock that he left in the gardening shed before being fired by Lester Atlas, and that he's been experiencing headaches for which he received an injection at the hospital. Paperman follows Hippolyte to the gardening shed. They knock on the door and awaken Millard, another employee. As Millard and Paperman are talking at the door, Hippolyte slips away and disappears. Alarmed, Paperman races off to the party to find Lieutenant Woods, commander of the skydiving team of frogmen. After a quick huddle, the five Navy men set out in different directions to try to apprehend Hippolyte without panicking the guests.

Iris Tramm passes out in an alcoholic stupor, and Paperman and Sanders carry her back to her cottage. They unleash her dog, Meadows, inside the cottage for her protection and return to the party. Unable to locate Hippolyte, the frogmen ask Paperman if he knows where he might be hiding and he suggests the crawl space under the hotel where the water pump is located. The Navy men assure Norman that they'll find Hippolyte, and urge him to return to the party, which he does unenthusiastically. Paperman notices that Esmée looks strained, as if ready to deliver her child and calls Dr. Pullman from his dinner table to give her a quick exam. As the Navy frogmen search the bushes, Paperman hears Meadows barking loudly, and directs them to Iris's cottage. As they approach, Hippolyte rushes out from the darkness, growling, machete in hand and Meadows snarls as he leaps toward his back. However, Hippolyte swings around and gives the dog a gash, and Meadows falls whimpering to the ground as the frogmen and Paperman pile on top of the hapless Frenchman.

Paperman directs one of his staff to take the dog directly to the veterinarian, and enters Iris' cottage where he finds her still passed out oblivious to the commotion outside. He wipes her sweaty forehead with a damp towel, and then goes back outside in time to see Hippolyte, surrounded by Navy frogmen, in the gondola with Meadows, headed toward town. Paperman encounters Pullman, who says he sent Esmée by taxi to the hospital where she delivered her son on the floor of the admissions room. Paperman relaxes and finds Henny, who chides him for his frantic disappearances and reappearances—clueless to what's been going on behind the party scene.

## Return of Hippolyte Analysis

Paperman's worst fears come true—and he survives. In a comic crescendo, practically everything that could go wrong does so in the midst of one of the biggest bashes Kinja



can recall. Nervous, high-strung Norman Paperman rushes back and forth as these crises unfold, stamping out brush fires everywhere before they can become full-blown forest fires, to the general unawareness of partygoers. As one of Paperman's friends points out at the conclusion of the evening, he's met every challenge the Caribbean can throw at him and things will never be that tough again. Norman feels good about himself, and is relaxed as he reconnects with his wife who has been pushed to the periphery of his life.



# Carnival Is Very Sweet

## Carnival Is Very Sweet Summary

The morning after the big bash, Paperman stops by the bar where Hassim, the gay bartender, is holding an animated conversation with a sailor who is sipping a beer and observing the unwritten Kinjan rule that sailors are off-limits to island gays. The sailor proudly shows off a gold watch he's bought for his mother. A policeman from Amerigo shows up to write a report concerning Hippolyte and the events of the previous evening, and gets into an alcohol-fueled scuffle with the belligerent sailor. Hassim, overcome with emotion, rushes into the fray to protect the sailor. The policeman draws his service revolver, fires two shots, one of which strikes Hassim in the chest. The bartender drops to the floor, dead. Paperman calls the police station and the police chief arrives, takes a report of the shooting, and leaves with the rookie cop in custody.

Within minutes, the bar is cleaned up and opened as guests rush in for their morning hair of the dog. Despite a few rumbles about a shooting, no one seems overly concerned. Iris Tramm appears, sober but shaken, and asks about her dog. Paperman gives her a reassuring report of Meadows' condition, and she turns to go and retrieve her pet but turns back when she realizes that carnival celebrations will block her from getting her car out of the garage. She asks to use the Gull Reef Club Land Rover, but Paperman says he'll drive her in a few minutes. Impatiently, she demands and gets the keys and drives off. Shortly afterwards, Paperman gets a phone call from the police chief informing him that Iris has been in a bad accident in the Land Rover: she's slammed into the back of a stopped taxicab and gone through the windshield, suffering severe head injuries.

Amid the gathering throngs of Carnival merry-makers, Paperman fights his way into the hospital where Iris lies sweating and heavily drugged. She recognizes Paperman, smiles and apologizes for the accident. He takes her hand and kisses it tenderly. Then he asks the hospital to move her to a private room at his expense, and says he must leave to find Governor Sanders and tell him about the accident but will soon return to check on Iris. When Paperman and Sanders return to the hospital, they learn that Iris has suffered a massive cerebral hemorrhage and died. Sanders breaks down and sobs. Paperman returns to the Gull Reef Club where he finds his wife and daughter on the beach, and fills them in on the two deaths. Lionel, a friend and businessman, is with Henny and Hazel on the beach, and Paperman spontaneously asks if he'd like to buy the resort for \$30,000—enough to pay off the loans and recover his investment.

Paperman tells his wife and daughter that the two deaths have made him realize that he's tired of Amerigo and wants to return to New York. After some reluctance, Lionel offers to buy the Gull Reef Club, and the Papermans accept his offer, telling him to work out the details with Lester Atlas. They book a flight on a plane leaving that day at 4 p.m., and leave Hazel in the care of frogman Bob Cohn. On the return flight, Henny asks Norman if Iris picked out the bracelet he gave her. He admits that's true, and confesses



that he liked Iris a lot. Henny goes into one of her jealous rages, but stops short. They decide they're grateful that they still have an apartment in New York they can call home.

## **Carnival Is Very Sweet Analysis**

With the back-to-back deaths of Hassim and Iris, Paperman is jolted into facing the reality that the Gull Reef Club and the Caribbean aren't for him. The sense of humor that sustains him through some of the most difficult times fails with the death of Iris and his realization that his wife, Henny, still loves him and they can pick up their lives again in New York City. Paperman realizes that he's a real New Yorker and can't be happy anywhere else, even with the traffic jams, bad air, cold winters, and bruising crowds. The carnival of topsy-turvy emotions that has characterized Norman's epic in Amerigo ends as he finally returns to reality and to a kind of sanity he never knew on the island.





# Characters

## Norman Paperman

A New York Jew, Norman Paperman is a classic Type A personality: high-strung, anxious, unable to relax, slightly paranoid. Paperman has had a heart attack after a long career as a Broadway publicity agent, perhaps the result of his guilt over having had affairs with numerous actresses as well as his high-pressure lifestyle. He envisions the Caribbean as a peaceful paradise where he can relax and let his New York-based anxieties dissipate in the tropical breezes. When he buys the Gull Reef Club on the island of Amerigo (formerly known as Kinja), Paperman expects a nice quiet life where he and his wife Henny can retire and heal themselves and their marriage. What he encounters, instead, is a nonstop carnival of chaos and madness that pushes him to the point where he fears another heart attack. The resulting conflicts between Paperman's anxious personality and the multiple crises he faces in the laid-back island culture as he tries to operate the resort are at times horrifying and blood pressure boosting.

## Lester Atlas

The ying to Norman Paperman's yang, Lester Atlas is an extroverted, cigar-chomping, thick-skinned businessman of dubious character who generously helps to arrange financing for his friend to buy the Gull Reef Club. Henrietta (Henny) Paperman, the press agent's wife, once worked for Atlas and their friendship continued because of Atlas' interest in show business and the fast society of New York. Profiled in Time magazine, as much for his corporate misdeeds as for his success, Atlas is proud of the publicity and seemingly impervious to its negative impact while Paperman tries to distance himself from his cloddish friend. Atlas trades partly on this notoriety in dealing with bankers in Amerigo who loan Paperman the funds to purchase the resort. Atlas is a skirt-chasing drunkard who hopes to buy or build his own resort on the island, and recruits Paperman and his wife as his local real estate scouts. Atlas seems the very archetype of the American business hustler. Paperman has conflicting feelings about Atlas: he appreciates his desire to help him get established in a new business, but is offended by his mannerisms and sometimes thinks of him as a callous rhinoceros.

## Iris Tramm

A beautiful blonde in her late 30s, Iris Tramm lives alone in a bungalow at the Gull Reef Club. Something about her regal bearing—in addition to her radiant beauty—captures Norman Paperman's interest and he realizes that she is the former movie star known as Janet West. Iris has had three husbands and made two suicide attempts. They strike up a friendship that Norman tries to fan into a romance, but Iris always manages to escape his clutches. Paperman notices also that Iris can drink like a fish and often when she's in her cups, her mood turns black and ugly. Iris is usually a warm-hearted, good-natured



friend, but on one occasion when drunk she delivers an anti-semitic attack on Norman. At one point, he suggests that she give Alcoholics Anonymous a try but Iris says she's not interested because she's able to control her drinking and limit it to one or two. In a teasing sort of way, Iris lets Paperman know she might be available but the fact he's married is a major drawback for both of them. Iris is planning to leave Amerigo and return to her hometown of San Diego when she meets Paperman.

## **Christophine Buckley**

Christophine Buckley is a large, sensuous black Kinjan woman who is in charge of the Immigration Office. Her manner is brusque and officious, and she hounds Norman Paperman incessantly about the status of one employee of the Gull Reef Club—the pregnant Esmée—who is from Nevis and thus an alien, as well as all the other workers who are not citizens. Paperman tries to get Gov. Alton Sanders to intervene on his behalf, but he points out that his is a federal office with no jurisdiction over the local Immigration Office. She relents somewhat when Paperman points out to her that the father of Esmée's child is a native Kinjan who works for the government and thus she does not need to be deported.

## **Governor Alton Sanders**

An American born and educated black man, Alton Sanders has assumed the mantle of governor of the island of Amerigo because of political connections on the U.S. mainland. He is mostly a ceremonial figure on hand to meet and greet VIP visitors to the island, and is clearly not accepted by the natives as one of their own. Although he commands a degree of respect because of his position, Sanders is on the island but not of the island. A somewhat dull character, Sanders' primary interest, outside of holding on to his job, is his extra-marital affair with Iris Tramm, the former movie star known as Janet West. Sanders is a mild-mannered bureaucrat seemingly interested only in advancing his political career with as little work as possible.

## **Hippolyte Lamartine**

A short but powerfully-built West Indian Frenchman from the island of Guadeloupe, Hippolyte makes his presence known to the reader through foreshadowing and oblique references by other characters before he actually appears in the narrative. Hippolyte had worked for the former owner of the Gull Reef Club before Norman Paperman purchases it, but was fired and replaced by the able and amiable Gilbert as all-purpose maintenance man. Hippolyte left the island of Amerigo after allegedly chopping off a policeman's head with his machete and was placed in a mental hospital. When he reappears on the island of Amerigo, the speculation is that he either was released or escaped from the mental institution. After Gilbert resigns because of some unintentional slight by Paperman, the new proprietor goes in search of Hippolyte and hires him back at the club. He returns to the club and does an excellent job until he is fired again by



Lester Atlas. This pushes Hippolyte over the edge and he returns to the club looking for Atlas, machete in hand.

## Church Wagner

A sallow, bearded college student who is probably a forerunner of the Beat generation, Wagner is a mild mannered, efficient worker who also happens to be, in Paperman's own words, "a sex fiend." Wagner is caught "in flagrante delicto" with one of the maids at the Gull Reef Inn, for which he receives a serious reprimand from Paperman. Later, several maids resign as they have come down with gonorrhea after having sex with Wagner, and his sexual adventuring becomes a real concern for the survival of the resort. Wagner can't seem to understand why his behavior causes such a fuss and is rather indifferent to Paperman's anguish.

## Sheldon Klug

Nicknamed "The Sending" by Norman and Henny Paperman, Sheldon Klug is an arrogant, self-absorbed college English instructor who is the current boyfriend of Hazel Paperman, their 19-year-old daughter. He earned the nickname because Norman's mother, on first meeting him, described him as "onshikkeness," a Yiddish word that translates as a curse, a burden, an albatross around one's neck. Handsome but overweight and bearded, Sheldon seems the embodiment of everything the older generation loathes—a kind of useless passivity combined with a quick word of condemnation of the world and the adults who populate it. The Papermans also are irritated with Sheldon for having an openly sexual relationship with their daughter without ever mentioning marriage.

## Mrs. Amy Ball

A widowed Englishwoman, Mrs. Amy Ball is the former owner of the Gull Reef Club who sells it to Norman Paperman. At a party where they meet again, Mrs. Ball reveals that she and Thor, the former bartender/manager, had been lovers and that she bought a large yacht for his pleasure. Soon afterwards, Thor lost interest in her and took off in the boat for a trip around the world.

## Bob Cohn

Bob Cohn is the superficially macho Navy frogman who teaches Iris Tramm how to scuba dive and falls in love with her. At first repelled by Cohn, Norman Paperman comes to know him as a real intellectual—a cool, existentialist anti-hero of the type often portrayed in films by Humphrey Bogart.



# Objects/Places

## Amerigo

Formerly known as Kinja, the island of Amerigo passed into United States' hands after being owned by a string of European nations. Its population is roughly 95 percent black, with a scattering of wealthy Americans and successful islanders who are known as "the hill people." Although it has a veneer of civilization with roads, telephones, and electricity, just below the surface is an unpredictable atavism that produces violence, indifference to the North American work ethic, and madness. Amerigo's white population is an oddball collection of hermits, drunks, dreamers and debauchers. In the period of this novel, Americans are beginning to "discover" Amerigo and coming in increasing numbers as tourists and as opportunists hoping to profit from its popularity.

## Guadeloupe

A French island near to Amerigo, Guadeloupe is where Hippolyte Lamartine goes for psychiatric treatment. The island has the only mental hospital close to Amerigo because building such a facility on Kinja would have raised the thorny political question of who should be inside, and who should be outside. Guadeloupe is also where some employees of the Gull Reef Club came from.

## Gull Reef Club

The Gull Reef Club is the resort purchased by Norman Paperman, with the help of his friend Lester Atlas, from Mrs. Amy Ball. It is located on a reef in the middle of the Amerigo harbor, and is reached by gondola or small boat. Paperman and his wife are mortgaged to their eyeballs by the purchase, and Paperman tries to increase his income by remodeling a part of the resort to add more guest rooms. In its precarious state of maintenance and revolving door of employees, the Gull Reef Club could serve as a metaphor for the island of Amerigo.

## New York City

The Big Apple is Norman Paperman's hometown, where he's worked for decades as a Broadway press agent before deciding in middle age to "drop out," purchase a Caribbean resort, and live a presumably simpler life. In many ways, he remains a New Yorker displaced on a mostly-black island, unable to comprehend much of what goes on around him. However, he cuts his ties with New York by selling his business and his home and is determined to make it in the tropics, partly because he couldn't stand the embarrassment of returning to New York if he should fail in Amerigo.



## The cistern

Crucial to the fresh water supply of all West Indians is the cistern, a large concrete tank below the building structure that collects rainwater runoff from the roof. These generally work well, except in periods of extreme drought, when barged water from other island must be purchased and delivered by pump trucks, or whenever there is a significant earthquake that can crack or rupture the concrete walls. Both of these eventualities befall the Gull Reef Club during Norman Paperman's tenure as owner.

## Machete

The machete is a long-bladed saber designed for hacking through thick jungle undergrowth, and virtually indispensable for any kind of gardening or landscaping in the tropics. Hippolyte Lamartine carries his machete with him everywhere, and sharpens his "cutlash" with a stone whenever he is resting. The fact that he has been accused of chopping off a man's head makes this a particularly alarming trait.

## Catamaran

A catamaran is a two-hulled sailboat noted for its speed and stability. Church Wagner, the bartender at the Gull Reef Club, commutes to his job in a small catamaran and Iris Tramm, the former movie actress, also is an accomplished catamaran sailor.

## The Thousand Steps

Aptly named, the Thousand Steps is an area where many native islanders live, including some who work for Norman Paperman at the Gull Reef Club. He has occasion several times to trek up the gigantic stone stairwell that winds from the center of town in Amerigo to the hills above, which are usually covered with lizards by the millions that skitter and slither as he progresses.

## Dingley Dell

Dingley Dell is a secluded beach surrounded by thick vegetation on a remote corner of Big Dog Island, just off the coast of Amerigo. Iris Tramm and Norman Paperman start to sail there for an assignation, but fail to get there.

## Broadstairs

Broadstairs is a lavish mansion owned by Bunny Campbell, one of the wealthy elite residents of Amerigo who invites Norman Paperman to her home for dinner. A relative newcomer to the island, Paperman is puzzled as to why he should be invited. Then he encounters a tipsy Amy Ball, former owner of the Gull Reef Club, who tells him she'd be



willing to accept just \$10,000 in cash right away in exchange for the promissory note that requires Paperman to pay some \$50,000 for purchase of the resort.



# Themes

## Fantasy vs. Reality

Norman Paperman leaves the fantasy world of Broadway to pursue a different fantasy—the perfect island paradise where healing and effortless joy await. As he struggles with the daily, and even hourly, crises at the Gull Reef Club, it slowly begins to dawn on him that perhaps Amerigo is not the idyllic place he imagines when he purchases the resort. He is jarred into a painful reality by a failing water supply, an earthquake-shattered cistern, electricity that goes on and off randomly, unreliable workers who disappear and then reappear without explanation, non-functional telephone lines, fickle guests who abandon the club in the middle of major remodeling, and a homicidal madman roaming the premises with a machete in his hand. Having suffered a heart attack in the high-pressure world of New York public relations, Paperman fears that his second coronary is just around the corner.

Another of Paperman's fantasies involves Iris Tramm. The mysterious and alluring 30-something woman who lives in a bungalow at the Gull Reef Club becomes doubly intriguing when Paperman correctly guesses that she is the former movie star known as Janet West. With his wife and daughter still in New York City, Paperman pursues this fantasy of the blonde island goddess but she brushes him off at every turn that only increases his ardor. Sympathetic to his business troubles, she volunteers to help in the office when one of his key employees walks off the job, which further endears her to him. As he gets to know her, Paperman finds that Iris is a real alcoholic with a cynical core who plans to flee Amerigo and return to San Diego. His illusions about her are further stripped away when he learns that she moved to the island to be close to her married lover who happens to be the governor.

The island reality beneath Paperman's fantasies is that of a quite primitive society, little touched by the conventions or inventions of the modern, technological age. The strongest force of island life is not the drive for money or power, for social status or intellectual achievement, but the life force with all of its messy and chaotic manifestations. Another reality is a kind of tribal culture among the natives that Paperman can't understand, with the result that he offends some natives and mystifies others which only adds to his growing—and comical—sense of panic. When he returns to New York with his wife, he also returns to the familiar fantasy world of Broadway that he understands better than his Caribbean island fantasy that never quite works out.

## Sanity vs. Insanity

Handyman Hippolyte Lamartine, who Norman Paperman hires to repair his shattered cistern and finish other work at the Gull Reef Club, is described by other natives as "fonny," but he does good work until he becomes enraged when he is summarily dismissed by the visiting Lester Atlas and returns one night to seek revenge with his





machete. The rumor is that Hippolyte was sent to a mental institution on another island after he chopped off a policeman's head, and returned to Amerigo after either being discharged or escaping. As Paperman frantically tries to find Hippolyte in the darkness as a party roars at his club, he asks why Amerigo doesn't have its own mental hospital. The answer is that such a project would raise the tricky political question of who should be inside and who should be outside.

The issue of sanity runs comically through "Don't Stop the Carnival," and local attitudes toward it are reflected in the lyrics of a popular Calypso song: "Carnival is very sweet, Please don't stop de carnival." In other words, practically every idiosyncrasy is tolerated so long as it's in the spirit of a celebration. The reader soon learns that this lighthearted attitude toward the world is an effective coping mechanism for islanders. Those who can cultivate and maintain it seem to be able to hold onto their sanity. Those who insist on trying to fit island life and islanders into their notions of how things should be often go off the deep end, or simply leave.

Perhaps the origin of this attitude is the slave trade that first brought Africans to the West Indies, where they were sorted, put to work on island plantations, then sold and shipped elsewhere as commodities like rum or sugar cane. Perhaps the carnival mentality developed as a way to counter-balance the terrors of slavery and became a powerful means of maintaining one's sanity. However, inherent in this native culture is a passive-aggressive contempt for the whites and a thinly-veiled pleasure in frustrating and sabotaging the goals and ambitions of "continentals," or those from outside the Caribbean like Norman Paperman, the hotel proprietor.

## Racism

The subtext to practically every transaction between black Kinjans and white settlers—whether American or European—is the dynamic tension of race. In many ways, the residents of Amerigo seem to enjoy playing dumb to the powerful whites who run, or think they run, the island. Their peculiarities of speech and behavior confound "Continental" such as Norman Paperman and cause them consternation and anguish. The natives, on the other hand, seem genuinely not to care what the whites think of them and to enjoy using their culture and folkways to keep the whites in their place. A telling example is the scene when Governor Sanders, an American black with very light skin, visits a beach with his ebony black visitors from Chad while Iris Tramm and Norman Paperman are having a picnic. The two try to act as if they're only casual acquaintances, but Iris throws a beer can in their direction when they leave, angered that they act "superior" to whites.

Later, while drunk, Iris Tramm unleashes an anti-semitic tirade against Paperman who pretends to be unfazed by her words but demands that she stop. One of Paperman's best employees who comes with the purchase of the resort, a native Kinjan who wanted to be the bartender, resigns because he is racially offended when Paperman makes a young white man bartender. Racism is interwoven with the politics of the island, as powerful black legislators give good jobs to their friends and family; Continentals and





those of white complexion are never given serious consideration for such jobs. Yet the power elite of the island are the "hill people," wealthy white people with fine homes on the mountaintops. Because of the tenuous power balance between whites and blacks, covered with a thin veneer of pleasantness, many decisions about who gets and keeps political power are made in a passive-aggressive way.

# Style

## Point of View

The point of view in this novel is that of the omniscient narrator, probably the most common stylistic device in the traditional novel. Other authors, such as James Joyce, have experimented with unusual points of view such as the subconscious interior monologue of Molly Bloom in "Ulysses," or the intersecting streams of consciousness of several characters in William Faulkner's "As I Lay Dying." However, the reader senses that the voice within this narrative that is most directly that of the author is from Norman Paperman—who, like Herman Wouk—is a middle class, middle-aged New York Jewish man. Most of the events that unfold are seen and interpreted through the lens of Norman Paperman's personality, although many of the characters have very strong identities of their own.

The sensibilities of a middle class American form the touchstone by which other characters' motivations and actions are understood. For example, the surly but highly competent maintenance man Hippolyte Lamartine who has a history of mental and criminal problems, is explained as a product of close genetic inbreeding among a small colony of French settlers in one part of the island—something foreign to the American middle class. The sexual behavior of Kinjan and other Caribbean natives is depicted against the backdrop of traditional middle class Jewish values. Paperman seems excited and enticed by these alternative lifestyles but somewhat intimidated, especially as he tries to reach out to the faded alcoholic movie actress Iris Tramm who seems to fit into no one else's conventional code of morality or behavior.

## Setting

The setting of "Don't Stop the Carnival" is contemporary, which in this case means the Caribbean of the mid-1960s. Although Wouk calls his fictional island Amerigo, it is transparently a satirical presentation of St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands where he lived while writing this book. It was commonly understood, and even reported upon in the island press, that Wouk's novel was based on his experiences in St. Thomas. As was the case with Thomas Wolfe's "Look Homeward, Angel" when local residents of Asheville, N.C. thought they saw themselves portrayed in fictional characters of Altamont, residents of St. Thomas were convinced they could find real life parallels to many of the characters in "Don't Stop the Carnival."

The geographic setting is complemented by the cultural setting, which is generic Calypso culture in which practically none of the attitudes and values of white Americans pertain. Native Kinjans, like native Thomians, have a quite ambivalent attitude toward Continentals. They love the money that white Americans and Europeans spend as tourists on hotels, restaurants, taxicabs, and all the other plethora of visitor services, such as scuba diving trips. However, they also still fester with a bitter distrust of whites



that dates to the centuries of mistreatment under slavery, when the Caribbean was the major hub for importing slaves from Africa to America and Europe.

The clash of native culture and values with those of the Continentals makes for some jarringly funny moments when the two different worlds come into sharp contrast.

## Language and Meaning

Wouk has a sharp ear for the spoken word. His renderings of Calypso speech patterns are flawless, as are his renderings of Jewish figures of speech. Generally, the language in "Don't Stop the Carnival" is straightforward narrative English, with none of the modern devices often employed by novelists such as flash-forward, flashback or stream of consciousness. When he depicts Calypso speech patterns, Wouk is especially sensitive to provide phonetic spellings so the reader can "hear" and decipher that speech. Because Calypso speech is a patois that reflects the many centuries of dominance under various European overlords, plus a vivid collection of African words and phrases, it is itself an important part of Caribbean culture and Wouk presents it as such. The lilting speech of Caribbean native islanders is colorful, communicative and often befuddling to Continentals, and thus it becomes the focal point for much of the humor that arises in this novel.

## Structure

Description



## Quotes

"Time's story of Lester's stock fight depicted an operator who used any means short of crime to win votes: cash, cajolery, girls, threats, financial squeezes, and if necessary, his fists; an opposing lawyer at a rough meeting had called him a dirty name and Lester had knocked him unconscious." (Chapter 1, pg. 17)

"The banker held his dignity, but he too was laughing. 'Mistuh Ot-loss, you have done business before in the Caribbe-an?'" (Chapter 1, pg. 19)

"Norman [Paperman] was an almost habitual philanderer; but since his heart attack he had behaved himself, mainly for medical reasons." (Chapter 1, pg. 26)

"Signal Mountain. The people here are known as the hill crowd—shop owners, the old plantation families, reetired rich folks, retired military, homo couples, assorted drunks living on trust funds. Mostly white, but there are some leading old colored families." (Chapter 2, pg. 45)

"Henny loved Amerigo, from the moment she first saw its green hills in the mornhing sun through the windows of the bouncing inter-islands airplace. And Paperman's fear that, on second look, the enchanted island would prove a tawdry, hot stupid little backwoods; that his infatuation with it had been a dream of a night and a sayt, woven of rainbows, moonbeams, wine, frangipani, and the bright glances of Iris Tramm—this, too,m proved groundless." (Chapter 4, pg. 73)

"They heard Atlas roaring somewhere around a far turn of a corridor in the terminal quite a while before they saw him. He came steam-rolling through the wet ill-humored crowd in a tweedy cape and a plaid hat, evidently modeled on the costume of Henry Higgins in the opening scene of "My Fair Lady," ridiculous beyond words on his whale shape. He was drunki, merry and unwearied, though his eyes were completely bloodshot and the flesh under his eyes hung in frightening blue bags." (Chapter 4, pg. 101)

"Lester Atlas was not a vague man. He acted, it was obvious, on a clear hard rule: never part unnecessarily with a dollar. In arranging thie deal, he had put Norman into the hotel business. He had done it without parting with a dollar. He had even managed to make Norman pay for the new rooms by selling his client list. The \$5,000 Noirman was getting back now was only his own desperately obtained money that has covered the check; he was just borrowing it again from the bank. All this was true, yet who could say that Atlas has not kept his word.

'Lester,' he said after a long time, in a strained voice. 'This isn't what I expected.' Atlas was looking straight at him. 'What did you expect, Norman" Charity?'" (Chapter 4, pg. 107)

"Virgil munched, smiling in Paperman's direction but looking out to sea. 'Fuh, I can work day and night.'

'No, no. I can't let you work two shifts. I have to talk to Gilbert. Take me ashore. Where



is he?'

'Fuh, I favin' money to buy teef. I'll work both fiffs. I be glad to." Virgil's talk—like Old English printing, all f's for s's—made Paperman's head ache. The news about Gilbert was a reeling blow. He now heard the thudding of many feet, and turned to see Akers and his gang of workers marching toward the pier." (Chapter 6, pg. 164)

"So Norman, after a few more angry jiggles, trudged to the pier and went over in the gondola. Let Virgil work the day shift for the time being, he thought. He had more urgent things to straighten out before he could even attend to such matters as brushing his teeth, shaving, changing out of last night's slothes, and eating something." (Chapter 6, pg. 165)

"Who goes out to these godforsaken fringe places to try and scratch a living?" Tilson said. "With the biggest boom of the century going on in the States? Freaks, frauds, fools and failures." He gave Paperman a snarling grin. "Present company excluded, to be sure. I've lived on tropical islands most of my life. Ninety percent of the mainlanders who come in are lonies of one kind or another, and they nearly all blow sooner or later—if they don't die of the booze." (Chapter 6, pg. 182)

Lionel [was] delighted over the waterfront—the red fort, the arcades, the Vespucci statue amid its pink-and-purple bougainvillea, the native schooners. The gondola, said Lionel, was marvelous, and as for Virgil, he swas more picturesque than the beefeaters in the Tower of London. "Tell me, gondolier, can you sing Venetian songs?" he asked, as they were rowing across.

"Fongf? No, fuh, I can fing no fongf," Virgil said, smiling toward a spot about seven feet to the lest of Lionel. "But I work two fiff."

"He does what" Lionel said to Paperman. "Oh! Fantastic ' Works two shifts.' How about that?" Chapter 8, pg. 205)

"He had become honest enough with himself in these harsh weeks to see his move to the Caribbean as an eccentric impulse of middle age, a daydream which would have faded harmlessly if not for the misleading encouragement of Lester Atlas. But he was in it now, and it was too late to make himself over. He might never be much of anything, but he was what he was and now he had to master the Gull Reef Club. What was the alternative to piling risk on rock?" (Chapter 8, pg. 205)

"Feela did fay I fould clean the bayfinth, fuh."

"What? Hey? Bayfins? What on earth are you talking about?"

"Bayfinth, fuh. Bayfinth for water."

"Oh, basins?"

"Yeffuh. Bayfinth. Fikty of dem. I did have to crawl in de fellar and pull out de pailth and the bayfinth. De bayfinth awful rufty. Feela fay fine 'em up." (Chapter 9, pg. 223)

"Hippolyte Lamartine was a broad-shouldered fattish fellow, perhaps 5-feet-9, with a round, pale, red-patched and somewhat scaly face, and thick straight hair growing low on his forehead, He always ware a heavy khaki shirt buttoned to the throat and wrists, khaki pants, and a high-crowned straw hat with an enormous ragged brim turned down



in front. He went barefoot. His feet and toenails looked horny as a beast's. He had small brown eyes close together, and his face was set in a puzzled squint, with deep worry lines on the forehead converging to the bridge of his thick short nose. His mouth was a line, pulled down at the corners, the lips out of sight. When he spoke, which was not often, he disclosed irregular dirty teeth. He always carried a long curved machete with a reed wooden handle, which he called a 'cutlash.'" (Chapter 11, pg. 252)

"The thing is, they've never built an insane asylum here.' Tilson poured the rest of his rum and tonic down his throat in one gesture. 'I guess they didn't want to get into the ticklish question of who goes in the nut house. That would be a hell of a hot potato on this island.'" (Chapter 11, pg 259)

"You know the thing to do, Norm? Furnish half of them. Get some smart faggot down from New York, you know, to fuill them with that stylish crap from Japan and Denmark that comes in here duty-free. Then you got class. Norm, think! We're talking about a profit of a half million dollars here, I swear. All we need is a selling job." (Chapter 13, pg. 310)

"Mistuh Pape'mon, tell me one ting. Who the fot porson? He make so much confusion ron' hyah, we ain' goin' be able do nuttin'. De fot porson he hoross Hippolyte. Hippolyte sau he goin' away, he don' want to kill the fot porson. You know dat?" (Chapter 14, pg. 325)

"What hit Paperman so hard was the dark reminder, on this tense morning, that life in Kinja teetered always between the dreadful and the ridiculous. The episode with Church Wagner, far from being curious, was an abrupt return to normality. It struck Paperman as a harbinger of evil things. He had never forgotten—though he had tried to bury out of mind—Tom Tilson's warning that sooner or later the island was going to throw a catastrophic surprise at him. This haunting fear for weeks had been that this fatal surprise was going to erupt out of the dinner party. Church Wagner's defection, coming just at this moment, seemed an ominous, absurd, utterly Kinjan prelude." (Chapter 15, pg. 341)

"Tears were starting from her eyes, but she spoke lightly, almost gaily. 'You made the place into one hell of a good hotel, Norman. You really did that, you know honey. And nothing's lost, nothing. Isn't it good that we didn't give up the apartment, baby, after all? We can just go home.'" (Chapter 17. pg. 395)



## Topics for Discussion

Although Lester Atlas claims to be Norman Paperman's friend, Paperman at times recoils from him. How does Paperman really feel about Atlas? What are Atlas' real motives for helping Paperman buy the Gull Reef Club?

Iris Tramm has already ended her career as a movie actress as well as her marriage, and made two suicide attempts when Norman Paperman meets her. Does her behavior seem to indicate suicidal tendencies?

Why does Norman Paperman want to buy the Gull Reef Club and move to the Caribbean. Is it just simply a case of midlife crisis, or are there other factors involved?

Why is it the case, as one of Paperman's friends points out, that the island is full of "frauds, fakes, failures and freaks?" Is it because the island offers a safe hiding place, or because of its tolerant culture—or both?

After Paperman becomes enamored of Iris Tramm, he discovers that she's been carrying on a long-term affair with the married Gov. Alton Sanders. How does this affect their relationship?

Henny Paperman, Norman's wife, is aware that he's long been a philanderer and yet she does not divorce him. Why is this the case, and what kind of relationship do the two have?

How is it that Hippolyte Lamartine, the mumbling Frenchman who's been released from a mental hospital in Guadaloupe, can work so effectively to perform the repairs and maintenance needed at Gull Reef Club? Is he the closest thing to a hero—or antihero—in the novel?

Is Sheldon Klug ("The Sending") exploiting his age and position of power as a teacher to have a sexual relationship with Hazel Paperman, or is he just too confused and out of touch with reality to be aware of what he's doing?

What keeps Norman Paperman from considering seriously sale of the Gull Reef Club and returning to New York City when he becomes overwhelmed with one crisis after another?

Does it seem that anyone who comes to Amerigo with dreams of paradise, a life of ease and comfort, and simple joy in the surroundings of nature is satisfied? Or has the island become a place for the greedy to exploit opportunities to make money from its natural beauty and poverty-stricken natives?

When Iris Tramm and Norman Paperman make love at last, it is a bittersweet experience. What does that experience mean for each of them?