

# **A Land Remembered Study Guide**

**A Land Remembered by Patrick D. Smith**

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# Plot Summary

A Land Remembered by Patrick D. Smith is the story of the MacIvey family whose history is recounted over a hundred-year span. The family founder, Tobias MacIvey, leaves pre-Civil War Georgia for Florida in search of a better life for his wife, Emma, and son, Zech, and ekes out a living for many years until he discovers an abundant life rounding up and selling cattle.

Tobias, Emma and Zech spend many years living in the Florida scrub country eating what little food Tobias can kill until Tobias finds a cow in a swamp and pens it in the hopes of finding more and selling them. Tobias is befriended by Keith Tiger, a Seminole Indian, who advises Tobias in how to graze cattle to fatten them up for market. Tobias then helps Skillit, a black man hiding out from vengeful slave haters, and Skillit helps Tobias and Zech increase their cattle count.

The MacIvey family spends many years driving cattle to market in Punta Rassa, Florida, and the tradition is carried on when Zech marries a girl named Glenda. Zech is torn, though, by his love for a Seminole Indian woman named Tawanda Cypress and maintains a long-term intimate relationship with Tawanda even though years pass between their visits. Zech eventually has two sons; Sol, whose mother is Glenda and Toby Cypress, whose mother is Tawanda.

After Tobias and Emma die, Zech becomes the head of the family carrying on not only the family's cattle business but also Tobias' fledgling orange groves. The family prospers and Zech purchases hundreds of thousands of acres of unspoiled Florida land for preservation not only for cattle grazing but also to keep the landscape untouched by outside influences.

Zech and Glenda each die in freak accidents and their son Sol is left to manage the MacIvey businesses but Sol leaves the homestead in search of a different kind of life. Sol eventually settles on some land near Miami and establishes a produce company, a real estate business and a bank.

Sol seeks out his half-brother, Toby Cypress, and the two men find that they are at cross purposes in life; Sol with business and land development; and Toby with preserving the land for the benefit of the native people and the wildlife who inhabit it. Sol's drive and ambition blind him to Toby's point of view until Sol witnesses his own home devastated by the greed and insensitivities of other men.

At the end of his life, Sol makes peace with Toby Cypress, establishing nature preserves in southern Florida and relinquishing the ties to his old life before dying in the MacIvey cabin in Punta Rassa, Florida in 1968.



# Chapters 1, 2 and 3

## Chapters 1, 2 and 3 Summary

A Land Remembered by Patrick D. Smith is the story of the MacIvey family whose history is recounted over a hundred-year span. The family founder, Tobias MacIvey, leaves pre-Civil War Georgia for Florida in search of a better life for his wife, Emma, and son, Zech, and ekes out a living for many years until he discovers an abundant life rounding up and selling cattle.

The story begins in Miami, Florida, in 1968 as an elderly man named Solomon MacIvey rides in his chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce. Solomon is taking a trip around the city to see highlights of his prosperous real estate career including the La Florida high rise hotel with the letters MCI at the top. Solomon is disgusted with the vulgar displays of gaudy buildings and how the land has been overridden by tourists and real estate ventures including his own.

Eventually Solomon instructs his driver to leave town and the car heads toward the Everglades and the Big Cypress Swamp. The car rolls to a stop and Solomon emerges near a Seminole Indian village where he finds a friend from long ago, Toby Cypress. The two old men have not seen each other for many years and Solomon asks Toby Cypress to accompany him to the MacIvey homestead to live out the rest of their lives. Toby knows that Solomon is going home to die but Toby must remain in the Seminole village where he too will die soon.

Solomon tells Toby that Solomon is not proud of the real estate ventures of his past which have destroyed the natural environment and that Solomon has willed all of his remaining thousands of acres of land to be maintained as nature preserves. The two old men part and Solomon's car eventually reaches a cabin made of cypress wood sitting in the middle of a forest on the western coast of Florida.

Solomon tells his driver that Solomon has established a trust fund for the driver and also gives the Rolls Royce to the man. Solomon instructs his driver to bring supplies once a week and the driver leaves Solomon alone in the cabin.

The story then reverts in time to 1863 when a man named Tobias MacIvey and his six-year-old son, Zech, explore the hog-eaten remains of their garden near their primitive home in the scrub country of the northern Florida prairie region. Tobias is thirty-years-old and had moved to this area of Florida from Georgia five years ago. Tobias has failed as a farmer in the Georgia clay and brings his wife Emma and son Zech to Florida to start a new life. Rumors of an imminent civil war also drive the small family to the unpopulated scrub area.

The small family nearly starves to death during their first two years in Florida, eating squirrels, coons, snakes and what little greens they can manage to grow. It is not until



their second year that Tobias can begin to build a primitive house so that the family will not have to live in a lean-to covered with palmetto leaves. Construction of the house takes a year and then Tobias begins to build furniture for the interior. Tobias learns that wild cows graze in an area twenty miles away but realizes that he cannot round them up without a horse and some dogs, none of which he has.

One day Tobias is splitting cypress wood in the forest in order to make a pen to keep cows and he is approached by two Indian men and an Indian woman. These are the first Seminole Indians Tobias has seen since moving to Florida and the encounter is awkward until Tobias introduces himself and learns that the Indians are being pursued by white men who want to kill the Indians for killing a calf. Tobias learns that the men's names are Keith Tiger and Bird Jumper and the woman is Keith Tiger's wife, Lillie.

Tobias leads the Indians to his home for food and safety and just as they arrive at the house the men in pursuit appear on horseback and begin to whip the Indians huddled together on the ground. When the attack dogs begin to maul the Indians, Tobias shoots one of the dogs which prompts angry remarks from the men who eventually retreat from Tobias' home.

Keith Tiger explains to Tobias that he, Bird Jumper and Lillie have been walking back to Florida from Oklahoma where they had been at an Indian reservation. The Seminole Indian home is near the Florida Everglades in a place called Pay-Hay-Okee. Tobias apologizes for not being able to send any food with the Indians for the rest of their journey but the lack of a horse and dogs prevents Tobias from rounding up cattle for food and selling. Keith Tiger is grateful for Tobias' kindness and vows undying friendship before the Indians leave to complete the trip home.

## Chapters 1, 2 and 3 Analysis

The author uses the literary technique of flashbacks in this novel. A flashback means that the author goes back in time to tell about events which have occurred in the past in order to bring the reader up to date and to help understand the events which have occurred to make the current situation relevant. The story opens during 1968 with the establishment of Solomon MacIvey's distaste for a Florida which he feels has destroyed the natural beauty and ecological system of nature. Then the author begins the story of Solomon's grandfather, Tobias, and the rest of the novel is a flashback of Solomon's family's story and the resulting events which lead up to the point in 1968 when Solomon returns to the MacIvey home to spend the rest of his days.



# Chapters 4, 5 and 6

## Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Summary

Early one morning Tobias guides his oxen-pulled wagon to the trading post in the marsh area of the St. Johns River. Tobias wants to trade some coon skins for supplies but the proprietor informs Tobias that Rebel soldiers had purchased everything in the store last week. The prospect of receiving any items such as flour, bacon, salt or cornmeal is slim because Federal troops are intercepting all ships bound for the South. The proprietor does have some gunpowder that Tobias can have in order to kill wild animals for food for his family.

The proprietor also tells Tobias about a Cow Cavalry in which local men are forced to protect the wild cattle from raiding Federal soldiers. Tobias decides to not tell Emma and Zech about the desperate circumstances related to the war and says only that the trading post should be better stocked soon.

One day when Tobias and Zech are hunting they come upon a bull which Tobias kills and ultimately hangs in the smokehouse for preservation. That night Emma prepares a meal of beef roast, the first beef Zech has ever eaten. Emma and Zech fall asleep easily with their stomachs full but Tobias cannot sleep, haunted by the sound of wolves and the threat of the Cow Cavalry coming to recruit him for their efforts.

At the end of summer, Tobias finishes a pen in which he hopes to one day keep cattle and also makes another trip to the trading post and is again met with no supplies for trade other than gunpowder. When Tobias returns home he is approached by a man named Henry Addler, a state marshal rounding up men for the Cow Cavalry. Tobias is forced to leave with Addler to help drive cattle to Georgia for the Confederate troops. Three days later Henry and Tobias reach the other five men called drovers who will drive the cattle out of Florida and across the St. Marys Rivers.

Tobias is issued a horse and the slow movement northward begins. The cattle drive is slow so that the cows may graze as they go and fatten up instead of being pushed quickly which will cause the cattle to lose too much weight. The cattle drive is met with brutal weather extremes and nightly threat of wolves but the men are not allowed to leave the drive under penalty of being shot.

At home Emma and Zech have to fight off and kill a bear which is drawn to the smell of the fresh beef in the smokehouse.

After two weeks on the cattle drive, Tobias is allowed to return home but he must relinquish his horse and make the journey on foot. Tobias is pleased to receive fourteen dollars for the trip, the first cash he has had for a very long time. Eight days later Tobias arrives home and praises Emma and Zech for the way they handled the bear incident



while he was gone. Zech is thrilled with the whip Tobias has kept from the cattle drive and practices cracking it as Emma cooks supper.

## Chapters 4, 5 and 6 Analysis

Tobias and his family live an isolated, self-sustaining life in the interior scrub country of Florida until the Cow Cavalry interrupts their existence. Tobias witnesses not only the threat of wolves every night but also the dynamic of people who are starving with no hope of resources during the Civil War. While Tobias' life is difficult, he would rather eke out a living the way he has been than join in the life that is happening in the world at large. This intrusion from the outside world is both invasive but also positive as it provides Tobias with a little bit of money and a whip, both things which will help Tobias build his cattle business.



# Chapters 7, 8 and 9

## Chapters 7, 8 and 9 Summary

The family continues to exist on coons and squirrels that Tobias kills and the flour ground from cattails. Tobias is once again approached by a Confederate recruiter, this one looking for men to cut logs and split rails for fortifications against the Federal army. Once more Tobias is forced to leave Emma and Zech and follows the officer into the woods. After a few weeks of heavy work, the logging crew is approached by charging Federal soldiers forcing the crew members to scatter into the woods. Tobias hides until the battle is over and takes a pistol, a rifle, a knife and some canned beef from the saddlebag of a dead Union soldier. Tobias then mounts the dead soldier's horse and heads home.

Tobias arrives home to find that his house, barn and smokehouse have been burned to the ground by Confederate soldiers. The soldiers have also killed and eaten one of Tobias' oxen and took the other one with them. Emma and Zech have been hiding in the woods for a week in fear that the soldiers will return. Zech is pleased to tell Tobias that he saved the whip from the Yankees although the soldiers have taken almost everything else of any value. Tobias is so enraged by this devastation to his home that he vows to kill anyone who ever tries anything like this again and determines to move his family further south into Florida.

Heading directly south, the family encounters thick, growth-covered ground unfit for travel and must backtrack and head east to the St. Johns River and follow that south.

The MacIveys eventually settle six months later near the Kissimmee River in south central Florida where their attempts to round up cows are thwarted because Tobias' army horse is not trained in cattle round ups. Tobias manages to corral one cow and brands it with the letters MCI to indicate MacIvey property. Tobias still wishes for a more suitable horse and some dogs which would make the cattle round up process much easier.

Tobias has built a home of cypress wood in an isolated hammock area fifty miles away from the nearest trading post at Fort Capron. Tobias had bought a branding iron at the trading post in anticipation of a burgeoning cattle business. Each time Tobias goes to the trading post he asks for a Dutch oven for Emma but the proprietor never has that type of cooking pot available. Tobias regrets that he cannot provide the only thing that Emma requests in the hard life they share and promises to provide better for her in the future.

One day Tobias ventures to another trading post near Ft. Pierce and trades coon skins for more gunpowder which is the only thing the proprietor has available. On his way home Tobias makes camp in the woods and is shocked by the appearance of Keith Tiger and two other Indians who remember Tobias from his kindness toward them a few





years ago. The Indians prepare food for a meal and trade some highly coveted flour for bullets the Indians need to kill wild game.

Keith Tiger reminds Tobias that Tobias needs a marshtackie, a small horse bred in Florida, in order to successfully round up cows. Keith Tiger also tells Tobias that he should not keep any rounded up cows in a pen because the cows must graze on prairie grass in the summer and woodland vegetation in the winter in order to gain weight. Tobias realizes that if he chooses to round up cattle for his livelihood he must follow the cows wherever their grazing takes them instead of attempting to corral the cattle at his homestead.

## **Chapters 7, 8 and 9 Analysis**

This section further strengthens the symbiotic relationship the MacIvey family will share with Keith Tiger and the Seminole Indians. Because of Tobias' kindness to the Indians a few years ago, the Indians forge a bond of trust with Tobias. Their encounter in the woods allows the Indians to provide food and advice which will alter the course of Tobias' life both in the short- and long-term. It is important to note that Tobias is a man of integrity and fairness whose friendship with the Indians comes at a time when Indians are being rounded up and sent to reservations in the Western states of America. These characteristics mark Tobias as a man of honor and a rarity for the times.



# Chapters 10, 11 and 12

## Chapters 10, 11 and 12 Summary

When Tobias arrives home, he and Zech release their single cow from the pen for better grazing and soon encounter a bull in the nearby woods and cannot catch it for branding despite valiant efforts. A month later Zech is delighted to find a black marshtackie in the cow pen and two dogs tied up close by. Tobias surmises that the Seminole Indians have brought the animals in repayment for Tobias' kindness toward them. Tobias names the horse Ishmael in honor of the story about the Ishmaelites that Keith Tiger had told him at one time and Zech names the dogs Nip and Tuck.

Nip and Tuck are very helpful in rounding up the bull which has eluded Tobias. He is now able to corral the bull and mark it with the MacIvey brand. Ishmael, too, is proving invaluable in rounding up cows with an instinctive nature for the job.

One day Nip and Tuck growl incessantly at what Tobias thinks must be an animal they have trapped in a bush but Tobias is startled to find that the dogs have cornered a big black man cowering in the palmetto leaves. The man tells Tobias that his name is Skillit and that he has been drifting for a year making his way southward from Tallahassee. Tobias and Emma invite Skillit to stay with them and Skillit is grateful for the home.

With Skillit's help, Tobias and Zech are able to dramatically increase the number of cows they can brand each day and their dreams of making money by selling the cows grow daily. A passing riverboat captain also tells Tobias that there is money to be made in gator hides so Tobias, Zech and Skillit try this new venture. The trio has no experience in this dangerous pursuit and their only attempt at killing a gator results in Skillit being violently bitten by an alligator. Tobias declares the end of alligator hunting and resolves to stick to herding cows and shooting coons, deer and other wild animals.

## Chapters 10, 11 and 12 Analysis

It is important to note the time period of this section is 1866, a year after the end of the Civil War. Even though Skillit is technically a free man, he is still living like a hunted animal and expects that Tobias will shoot him or turn the dogs on him. The fact that Tobias does not harm Skillit and actually invites Skillit to live with his family is a testament to Tobias' character. It is expected that as a Southern white man Tobias will harbor feelings of hatred toward former slaves but Tobias sees all men equally probably because Tobias has had a hard life himself and extends compassion to others in dire circumstances. It is also important to note that Tobias' own circumstances are improving with his good deeds, a trend that will continue throughout the novel.



# Chapters 13, 14, 15 and 16

## Chapters 13, 14, 15 and 16 Summary

By the spring of 1867, Tobias has one hundred forty-eight branded cows that he, Zech, Emma and Skillit drive southward toward the prairie for summer grazing. During the days, the men drive the cattle while Emma cooks the meals. At night Tobias and Skillit take turns watching the herd while Zech and Emma sleep. After a month on the cattle drive, Tobias finds a trading post where Tobias learns that people make money selling oranges, an intriguing idea for Tobias. Tobias also learns that cattle are being purchased for twelve dollars a head for shipment to Cuba at a place called Punta Rassa south of Fort Myers on the west coast of Florida.

On the way to Punta Rassa, the MacIveys encounter a terrific storm which rages all through the night. All the food and supplies in the MacIvey's wagon are ruined and the cows scatter. Emma questions whether this is a sign from God that the cows should not be herded but Tobias defiantly determines to start over.

By the next spring the MacIvey cattle operation is bigger than the year before and the family makes plans to drive the herd to Punta Rassa to sell the cows and buy much-needed supplies. Tobias makes the day-long trip to Kissimmee to hire men to help out on the drive to Punta Rassa. Tobias finds two men, Frog and Bonzo, who seem a bit scruffy and wild but are interested in the job prospect and follow Tobias home for preparations for the trip.

During the cattle drive Tobias is approached by a man named Sam Lowry who asks if Tobias will drive his cattle to market too. Tobias agrees and promises to return with Sam's money on the way back home.

One night Tobias is awakened by the sound of cracking whips, a sign that the men guarding the cattle need help. Tobias rides out to where the cattle are grazing and learns that a pack of wolves threatens the herd. The men lunge at the wolves with lighted torches and manage to keep the wolves at bay and losing only thirty cows which break loose from the herd. Later that morning the men find the escaped cows drowned in a sinkhole.

The party continues westward for another week and then encounters an impassable swamp predicating Tobias' backtracking to find another passage. Tobias meets a very old man who warns Tobias that the swamp area would mean certain death for anyone trying to cross it and advises Tobias to turn around and go back the way they came. On the third day of the backtracking route, the party is attacked by alligators which kill several cows and almost kill Tuck but Zech is able to intervene and save the dog.

Finally the crew exits the swamp area and can once again turn westward across the prairie. Tobias is met by a man named Windell Lykes who asks Tobias to take his cattle



to market just as Tobias had done for Sam Lowry. As the idea of Punta Rassa comes closer, Tobias hopes that the man at the trading post has not given Tobias false information about being able to sell cows there. Tobias goes to sleep with a mix of hope and anxiety filling his thoughts.

## **Chapters 13, 14, 15 and 16 Analysis**

The author uses figurative language in the book to help break up the monotony of the MacIvey family's struggles and their tedious treks to sell their cattle. For example, when describing how Nip and Tuck kill one of the attacking wolves, the author writes, "...the dogs ripped its throat open. It stumbled back into the woods, leaving a trail of hot blood, falling and then scrambling forward, howling again as its life rapidly poured out onto the ground," Chapter 16, p. 112. Obviously a person cannot witness life pouring onto the ground but this is a well-crafted way of saying that the wolf is bleeding to death. In another instance, the author writes, "Spanish moss swayed from limbs like blobs of cotton and absorbed the moonbeams..." Chapter 16, p. 124. In this instance the author paints a romantic vision of the moss hanging from cypress trees on a moonlit night.



# Chapters 17, 18 and 19

## Chapters 17, 18 and 19 Summary

The next morning Tobias and his party reach Punta Rassa which is in stark contrast to the exotic destination evoked by the town's name. Tobias locates Cap'n Hendry, the man who buys cattle and sells eight hundred sixty five cows at sixteen dollars per head. Tobias, almost faint at the amount, takes an advance and takes his crew to the only restaurant in town for a good meal. After lunch, the crew heads to the general store to buy new clothes, boots and hats.

When Tobias returns to Cap'n Hendry's office to retrieve his money, Tobias learns that Cap'n Hendry wants to race his horse against any takers for the prize of a piece of land nearby. Zech takes the challenge and the smaller Ishmael easily upsets Cap'n Hendry's big horse.

Tobias surprises Emma with a new cooking stove and pays Skillit, Frog and Bonzo for their work. Tobias is paid in gold doubloons which Tobias pours into a trunk which is then loaded into the wagon for the trip home. Frog and Bonzo decide to stay on for the next cattle drive and promise to meet the MacIveys at their home after they take a few days off for rest and recreation in town.

In the spring of 1875 the MacIvey home has grown by three rooms, one of which now holds two steamer trunks of gold doubloons. Frog and Bonzo now have a cabin and Skillit has added a room to his cabin too. Tobias still herds cows but has also planted three acres of orange trees which have subsequently been eaten by his cows. Emma solves Tobias' orange tree problem and advises Tobias to buy taller trees so the cows cannot eat them. Tobias dispatches Skillit to Fort Pierce to buy more orange trees. Skillit is glad to make the trip because there is a matter he would like to attend to while at Fort Pierce but will not tell Tobias the nature of his errand.

Zech, Frog and Bonzo are rounding up a herd of cows into a pen where they will be held until the cattle drive tomorrow. Frog suggests that the three of them go to Fort Drum for some fun that night and both Bonzo and Zech agree although Zech is apprehensive about what may happen to the cows during their absence.

In Fort Drum, the men attend a frolic where Zech meets Glenda Turner, the daughter of the trading post proprietor. Zech has never attended a dance before and does not have the appropriate clothes and does not know how to do any of the dances. Nevertheless, Glenda is smitten with Zech and him with her and Zech promises to return to Fort Drum as soon as possible to see Glenda again.

When Frog, Bonzo and Zech return to the corral, they see that the cows are missing. The next morning the men follow the cows' trail which leads into a palmetto-dense area where they are accosted by bushwhackers who kill Tuck and wound Nip so badly that



Frog has to shoot him. The three men quickly bury the dogs and depart the area as soon as they can.

Tobias is amazingly calm when he hears the news of the missing cows and is grateful that none of his men had been killed by the bushwhackers. Tobias attempts to console Zech for the loss of his dogs by telling Zech that death is a natural part of life, something that Zech will experience many times living in the wilderness.

Later that night, Zech confides in Emma about meeting Glenda at the frolic and Emma shares some advice on how a young man should treat a lady. Emma also warns Zech to not wait too long to seek out Glenda again because life in the wilderness is hard and good women are scarce.

The next day Skillit arrives at the MacIvey homestead bearing a wagonload of orange trees and a new bride named Pearlie Mae. At last Tobias understands that Skillit's secret errand had been to find a wife. Tobias and Emma welcome Pearlie Mae to the MacIvey homestead and Emma is especially grateful to finally have some female companionship.

During the next cattle drive the MacIvey crew endures intense heat and parched ground as well as a massive mosquito attack. Once more Tobias' herd is scattered and the cows are weak from the mosquito attack but eventually they move past the infested swamp area into a region of green grass and clear skies.

## **Chapters 17, 18 and 19 Analysis**

The author provides some relief for the reader as Tobias' fortunes begin to change and life becomes a little easier. Tobias is able to sell his cows and receives an unfathomable sum of money which he keeps in storage chests in his house. This change in fortune changes Tobias' personality too as he transitions from an anxiety-ridden man to one who calmly accepts bad news and is better able to project next steps in the family's future. This section is also a turning point in Emma's character too as her feminine side emerges when she is able to share some female advice about relationships with Zech and her outlook changes with the arrival of Pearlie Mae.



# Chapters 20, 21 and 22

## Chapters 20, 21 and 22 Summary

On the next cattle drive, the MacIvey crew is approached by two young Seminole Indian boys looking for Tobias. The boys introduce themselves as Willie Cypress and James Tiger, Keith Tiger's grandson. Keith Tiger has sent Willie and James to buy some cows for the starving Seminole Indians in their tribe. Tobias gives the boys twelve cows but will not accept any money for them out of respect for his friendship with Keith Tiger.

Zech is curious why James and Willie have traveled so far to get cows from Tobias when it is relatively easy to round up cows from the swamps. James tells Zech that Indians are not allowed to round up cows anymore and risk bodily harm if they are found with cows, even those with no marks on them. It is better if the boys have cows with Tobias' brand on them which indicates that the boys got the cows legitimately. Zech offers to help drive the cows to the Seminole village but the boys think they can manage on their own and leave the MacIveys the next day.

While in Punta Rassa Tobias buys new rifles and plenty of ammunition for everyone in his crew. Tobias is startled to see some cows with his brand mixed in with others in a pen and inquires about how the cows got there. Tobias learns that the cows are the ones Tobias had given to James and Willie and that some cowboys assumed the Indian boys had stolen the cattle and hanged James and Willie. Tobias roars in anger and beats the killers with his whip until Skillit stops the violence. Tobias orders that the cows be separated from the herd so that he and Zech can drive the cattle to the Seminole village themselves.

Zech and Tobias set out the next morning at a quicker pace than their usual herding speed because of the desperate need of the Seminoles. Zech notices over the trip that Tobias seems more tired than usual and slumps in his saddle as if in pain for much of the trip. After riding four days, Zech makes Tobias rest for a few days before continuing the trip southward. Unbeknownst to Zech and Tobias, they enter a jungle-like area called the custard-apple forest with tangled branches, vines and overhanging leaves blocking out the sun.

Tobias and Zech are unable to find an exit route from the forest and spend three days there until they are approached by a Seminole named Tony Cypress, Willie Cypress' father, who has come to lead the MacIveys to safety.

The next morning Tony Cypress leads Tobias and Zech to the Seminole village where they see several chickees, open-sided huts made from cypress poles and palmetto leaves. Keith Tiger is pleased to see Tobias once again and Tobias reluctantly tells Keith Tiger and Tony Cypress about the deaths of James Tiger and Willie Cypress. Tobias pledges that he will kill the men who killed the Indian boys if he ever encounters them again.



While at the Seminole village Tobias collapses with malaria and stays under the care of the medicine man for several weeks. While waiting for Tobias to recover, Zech becomes familiar with life in the village and meets and falls in love with Willie Cypress' sister, Tawanda. Tawanda shows Zech the great marsh Everglades area known as Pay-Hay-Okee and called River of Grass by the Indians.

Zech and Tawanda enter into an intimate relationship and Zech is conflicted by his feelings for both Tawanda and Glenda. After a week under the care of the medicine man, Tobias has gathered enough strength to make the trip home and Tobias and Zech reach Fort Drum a week later. Zech learns that he will not see Glenda on this trip because she is living in Jacksonville in order to attend school. Glenda's father invites Zech to return for the Christmas frolic and then Zech and Tobias return home a few hours later.

A few days before Christmas Zech heads to Fort Drum in order to buy some gifts and then attend the Christmas frolic where he hopes to see Glenda again. Zech does see Glenda at the frolic and by the end of the evening the couple has promised to go steady and Zech promises to return to Fort Drum as soon as possible. When Zech arrives home he talks to Emma about his feelings for both Glenda and Tawanda and Emma counsels Zech not to lead on one of the girls if there is no future for her with Zech.

## **Chapters 20, 21 and 22 Analysis**

The author uses symbolism in this section when Tobias and Zech become entangled in the custard apple forest. The impassable forest serves as a symbolic rite of passage for both men who will soon undergo physical and emotional changes. Typically a rite of passage in literature is an occurrence where a character enters into an unknown area from which there is little chance of escape because the character is not equipped to manage the circumstances. These are life-altering events as will soon be seen with Tobias' physical decline due to malaria and Zech's emotional turmoil over the two women he loves.





# Chapters 23, 24 and 25

## Chapters 23, 24 and 25 Summary

In February 1880 Tobias is thrilled to see that his orange trees are finally blooming thanks to Emma's suggestion that Tobias plant taller trees so the cows cannot eat them. Zech and Glenda have set a wedding date for the last week in February and the MacIvey family, including Skillit, Pearlie Mae and their babies, are excited about the upcoming event.

Zech has a private conversation with Emma to tell her that he plans to formally purchase the land that Tobias has been living and working on for so many years. Zech is afraid that someone could come in at any time and take away Tobias' land and Zech wants to prevent that from happening. Zech also wants to expand the MacIvey property too and Emma agrees with Zech's plan which will be kept secret from Tobias. Zech initially buys twenty thousand acres with plans for more expansion in the future.

A short time before the wedding, Zech shops for wedding clothes at the mercantile and also purchases a suit for Tobias and a dress for Emma, the first new dress clothes they have had in a long time.

Finally the wedding day arrives and Tobias cannot tolerate wearing his new suit but Emma adores her new blue dress and the MacIveys make the trip to Fort Drum. After the wedding, Zech and Glenda spend their honeymoon in the wilderness instead of taking a trip to Jacksonville paid for by Glenda's father.

In May the MacIveys experience a rash of slaughtered cows left by anonymous attackers and Zech wants to track down the criminals but Tobias advises caution for the time being. Emma is thrilled to have Glenda at the homestead for more female companionship and Glenda helps with the cooking for the entire family while also tending to the small cabin she shares with Zech. Glenda tells Emma that Glenda is pregnant but wishes to keep it a secret from Zech for a little while longer and Emma reluctantly agrees.

## Chapters 23, 24 and 25 Analysis

The author uses the literary device of foreshadowing in this section. Foreshadowing means that the author drops hints about the plot line to come. In this circumstance, the foreshadowing comes when the author writes about Tobias' wish for calm when Zech wants to ride after the men slaughtering the MacIvey cattle. Tobias tells Zech that there is no need to go in pursuit of the bushwhackers who will sooner or later come to the MacIveys. This is a prophetic statement as will soon be evidenced by the events to come as the novel, and the MacIveys, transition into another phase.



# Chapters 26, 27 and 28

## Chapters 26, 27 and 28 Summary

Glenda joins the MacIvey crew on their next cattle drive and experiences the rugged life of the wilderness including the threat of wolves and snakes along the way. The crew encounters an obstacle when they are blocked from crossing prairie land that is owned by someone who prohibits trespassing. Once again Zech is irate at this insult but Emma advises caution in order to prevent a war and the MacIveys move their cows in another direction. When the group finally reaches market this time they have a little over two thousand cows.

With the growing family and the frequent trips to Punta Rassa, the MacIveys decide to build a cabin on the land Zech had won there during a horse race with Cap'n Hendry's horse a few years ago. On the return trip from Punta Rassa, the MacIvey crew is attacked by bushwhackers hiding in the woods and Glenda's horse is shot, trapping Glenda underneath him. Glenda suffers a miscarriage and is forced to reveal the news of her pregnancy to Zech who is both startled and saddened. Zech's grief grows because his beloved horse, Ishmael, has also been shot and killed. The family rests for two days before continuing the trip homeward.

At the end of October Zech makes a trip south to find new marshtackies for both Glenda and himself and begins to think about Tawanda. As Zech approaches the Seminole Indian region he gets lost but is met by an Indian who leads Zech to the Seminole village where Keith Tiger warmly greets Zech. Zech spends time with Tawanda and tells Tawanda of his marriage to Glenda. Tawanda, still in love with Zech and unfazed by the rules of the white man's world, rekindles the couple's intimate relationship and Zech reluctantly leaves the village with the new marshtackies.

Zech and Glenda have a son named Solomon in March of 1883 and the MacIveys are thrilled to add to their family. The men head out on another cattle drive and once more are thwarted by other men claiming rights to the grazing land. Tobias is furious but turns his herd around realizing that he cannot fight one hundred fifty men blocking his progress.

## Chapters 26, 27 and 28 Analysis

The author structures the book sequentially but there are gaps of time, sometimes several years, between successive chapters. For example, in this section, Zech has an intimate relationship with Tawanda at the end of one chapter and the next chapter begins with the birth of Zech and Glenda's son, Solomon. The author asks the reader to make leaps in the plot line and fill in some activities that are not addressed by the author himself. This technique also occurs on occasion within each chapter when the sequence of events is more sporadic.



# Chapters 29, 30 and 31

## Chapters 29, 30 and 31 Summary

By 1888 the MacIveys are doing only one cattle drive every two years and keep their cows on land they own in order to avoid any further altercations. Tobias puts his energy into growing the orange business but Zech is intent on increasing the cattle business and buying even more land for the MacIvey family. Glenda has suffered two more miscarriages while Skillit and Pearlie Mae now have five children.

One day Skillit surprises Tobias by telling him that Skillit is leaving the MacIveys in order to start his own homestead and farm for his own family. Skillit is torn by leaving the MacIveys after twenty years but knows that he must establish a legacy to leave his own children. Both families are sad at the parting but understand Skillit's need to move on with his own life.

By 1892 Tobias has hired a new drover named Lester to replace Skillit. Sol is now nine years old and enjoys riding his horse, hopeful that he can go on a cattle drive soon. Tobias still suffers bouts of malaria but refuses to stay home on the next cattle drive despite Emma's better judgment.

The MacIvey crew encounters armed riders who tell Tobias that no grazing is allowed on the land up ahead because crews are drilling for phosphate. Tobias complies and falls asleep that night wondering what will happen when all the land is purchased and men are willing to shoot to guard it.

By the time the MacIvey crew reaches Punta Rassa they have over two thousand cows which are sold for twenty dollars each. Tobias still takes his payment in gold doubloons and keeps the coins in storage lockers in the house. Zech leaves the rest of the crew in Punta Rassa and heads south to buy land near Okeechobee. Zech completes a purchase of sixty thousand acres which cost fifteen cents an acre, an amount which startles the unassuming land clerk who processes the paperwork.

On the way home Zech realizes that he is not more than twenty miles away from the Seminole village and his thoughts turn to Tawanda. Zech decides to visit the village and finds Tawanda who is very pleased to see Zech because she thought she would never see him again. While there Zech learns that he and Tawanda have a son named Toby Cypress and Zech tells Tawanda about Sol, his son with Glenda. Zech and Toby are both glad to spend time with each other and Toby can now boast to the other boys that his father has finally come to see him.

Before Zech leaves the village to return home Tawanda cautions him about a band of bushwhackers who steal cattle and take people, both Indian and white, for slaves to work. Zech gives Toby a rifle and a knife to remember Zech by and heads north toward Punta Rassa where Glenda and the rest of the family are waiting.



## Chapters 29, 30 and 31 Analysis

The author introduces the topic of environmentalism and land rights in this section and the subject will become increasingly important as the novel progresses. As Zech is now the father of a young boy, his thoughts are focused on the future for not only his family but for all those who try to make a living in Florida. The issues related to the vanishing prairie and people buying up land seem to close in on Zech who remembers the territory as untouched during his childhood. Fortunately the MacIveys own much of their own land which benefits them now but real estate and land development issues will become an increasing burden on the land and the MacIvey lineage as the novel comes to a close.



## Chapters 32, 33 and 34

### Chapters 32, 33 and 34 Summary

The trip from Punta Rassa back home is slower this time because the MacIveys take time to let Tobias rest more often than usual. Emma watches over her husband knowing that he is getting older and that the malaria has left him in precarious health. One day Emma collapses while gathering berries and dies soon after Tobias witnesses her fall. Tobias insists that Emma be buried at home so the MacIveys make the solemn trip back to their homestead.

Tobias grieves for his wife for a year showing little or no interest even in his orange trees. Zech, Glenda and Sol move into the big house to help take care of Tobias and Glenda assumes Emma's household duties and cooks for the crew.

A few days after Christmas a winter storm complete with ice and blinding snow arrives and Tobias feels sure that his orange trees must be dead but a month later new signs of growth appear on the trees, reviving the lagging atmosphere in the MacIvey house. A few weeks later another winter storm arrives and Tobias defiantly keeps watch with blazing torches in the orange grove trying to keep at least one of the fragile trees alive. Tobias collapses in the orange grove and dies soon after from pneumonia and complications from malaria.

Because the storm has ruined the family's crops, Zech must leave immediately for Fort Drum to purchase whatever provisions Glenda's father may have at his store. Zech learns that most orange growers have been devastated by the storms and Zech is able to buy only a small amount of provisions.

A few weeks later Zech is surprised to see Keith Tiger and a caravan of Seminole Indians who have come to pay respects to Tobias. Zech learns from Keith Tiger that Tawanda had died in childbirth a few years ago and Zech silently understands that the child had been his. Zech is overcome with grief at the thought of bringing death to a woman he loved but Keith Tiger consoles Zech by telling him that Tawanda had completely accepted her relationship with Zech and all resulting complications.

### Chapters 32, 33 and 34 Analysis

This section represents major transitions in the MacIvey family especially for Zech. Over the course of a few weeks Zech loses his parents and the Indian woman he loved. The author, who writes repeatedly in the novel about the cycle of nature, intends the reader to understand that these deaths are a normal part of life, and seem even more so because the characters lived so close to nature all their lives. These transitions now mean that Zech is the head of the MacIvey family and his decisions will further brand the MacIvey name on the Florida landscape.



# Chapters 35, 36 and 37

## Chapters 35, 36 and 37 Summary

In the summer Zech, Glenda and Sol make the trip to Fort Pierce to buy orange trees to replenish the crops lost in the winter storm. The trip is illuminating as the family witnesses the progress of the railroad down Florida's east coast and decides to stay a few days in Palm Beach, the first vacation they have ever had. Zech is uncomfortable with so many people around and does not share in Glenda's delight in looking in store windows. Glenda would like to stay at the elegant Royal Poinciana Hotel but Zech, even though he can easily afford it, cannot rent a room because he does not fit the image of the hotel's wealthy guests.

Zech is glad to leave Palm Beach and the family finally reaches Fort Dallas where Zech purchases eight thousand orange trees with an arrangement to buy more every month. While in the area, Zech buys some of the local land and Sol purchases his first piece of land in Dade County near what will become the city of Miami.

In the spring of 1896, Zech loses a corral filled with cows to, he thinks, the cattle rustlers Tawanda had told him about at one time. Zech has reached his limit with these rustlers wreaking havoc and develops a plan to catch the men and make them pay for their crimes. Zech sends Frog to Punta Rassa to hire six men to accompany the MacIveys on this trip and Frog returns with men willing to kill for money. The MacIvey crew finds the hideout of the rustlers, surrounds it and engages in a gun battle with the opposing men. Zech sustains a bullet wound to his ankle but his crew prevails, shooting or hanging all the rustlers.

Zech makes it home in extreme pain and the local doctor cannot remove the bullet embedded in Zech's bone and advises either amputation or a trip to Atlanta or Jacksonville to find a specialist. Zech has no interest in either of these options and declares that Sol will accompany Zech to the Seminole Indian village to seek the advice of the medicine man.

Fortunately the medicine man is able to remove the bullet in Zech's ankle by biting the bullet tip and extracting it with his teeth. Zech will probably have a limp but he will walk again thanks to the medicine man's unusual tactics. While at the Seminole village, Sol learns that he has a half-brother, Toby Cypress, and Sol promises Zech that he will never tell anyone about Zech's son with Tawanda. By the time Zech and Sol have to leave the village, Sol and Toby have become good friends and hope to see each other again.

In March of 1898 Glenda is killed when a bull escapes Zech's attempts to brand it and gores Glenda in the stomach. Zech is inconsolable in his grief and advises Sol to never get too close to a woman because it hurts too badly when she is gone. Frog is also



wounded in the bull attack and dies soon after so Zech makes the trip to Fort Drum to inform Glenda's parents about her death and to hire someone to replace Frog.

## **Chapters 35, 36 and 37 Analysis**

Zech is the last of a dying breed of men more comfortable in the wilderness than in the city. Glenda had been Zech's only connection with the complications of city life and that link vanishes with Glenda's death. It is up to Sol now to carry on the MacIvey fortitude into a world which Zech neither likes nor understands. Conversely, Sol is having his own personal revelations about the life he wants to lead after learning about his father's other life with Tawanda and Toby.



# Chapters 38, 39, 40 and 41

## Chapters 38, 39, 40 and 41 Summary

In the summer of 1905 Zech is killed while trying to ride his horse through a creek during a rainstorm. Zech's horse falls in the mud and Zech cannot disentangle his lame foot from the stirrup causing him to drown.

In 1908 Sol leaves the MacIvey homestead in the care of a new trail boss and leaves to find a different life for himself. Sol can bear the loneliness of the wilderness life but cannot live with the memories of all his family members who used to live here and are now gone.

By 1911 Sol clears some MacIvey land to launch the MacIvey Produce Company in south Florida, supplying businesses in Palm Beach, Miami, Fort Lauderdale and other regional cities as well as businesses in Chicago, New York and Boston.

One day Sol makes a trip to the Seminole village to see Keith Tiger but learns that Keith died five years ago. Sol spends time with Toby and informs Toby about Zech's death six years ago. Toby also shows Sol the headstone that Zech had had delivered for Tawanda's grave. Toby is outraged when he finds out that Sol has been clearing the nearby land for his produce business when it should be left in its original state for the native people, animals and birds. Toby also tells Sol that Zech had purchased the custard apple forest so that no one else could ever alter it. Sol feels that Toby is naïve about the land development and Toby calls Sol a traitor for his actions. Sol leaves Toby on bad terms but silently vows to make peace with Toby one day.

The next day Sol goes to West Palm Beach and meets a waitress named Bonnie O'Neil who, disenchanted with her life living with an abusive father, accepts Sol's offer to live at his home with him.

Seven years later, Bonnie and Sol have fallen in love but remain unmarried because of Sol's unwillingness to fully commit to any woman. One day Bonnie accompanies Sol to the old MacIvey homestead to find that the caretaker has bulldozed some of the land including the area where his grandparents and parents had been buried. Sol's guilt for not remaining and watching over the homestead is overwhelming and he now understands Toby Cypress' outrage over his native land being destroyed.

## Chapters 38, 39, 40 and 41 Analysis

Ironically, Sol learns the painful lesson that Toby Cypress learned about losing your home due to the insensitivity of others. This will be a turning point in Sol's life and he becomes more emotionally aware of others although he will not marry Bonnie due to his father telling him to never get too attached to a woman because it hurts too badly when



she leaves. These two pulls on Sol's sensibilities have him conflicted about his emotional investments and his future as a businessman.



# Chapters 42, 43, 44 and 45

## Chapters 42, 43, 44 and 45 Summary

By 1924 Sol watches in horror as the MacIvey land in southern Florida becomes sandwiched in between huge real estate developments. Eventually, though, Sol gets caught up in the burgeoning residential real estate market and establishes the MacIvey Real Estate and Development Company. Sol is repulsed by the rush of people wanting to purchase both residential and commercial property but he cannot resist the opportunity to profit from the real estate boom. Sol and Bonnie build a huge home in Miami which includes a bank vault where Sol stores his money, still not trusting in banks.

In September of 1928 Bonnie is killed in a flood while she and Sol are visiting their Okeechobee home. Sol learns later that two thousand people had been killed in the hurricane that claimed Bonnie.

By 1954 Sol heads the MacIvey State Bank in Miami, having established it after the stock market crash in 1929. His MacIvey Developing Company has bought huge amounts of land both up the Florida coast and inward and Sol finally builds a mansion on Key Biscayne. In 1952 Sol builds the exclusive La Florida hotel in Miami Beach but becomes a recluse, preferring his memories to the reality of his life.

It is now 1968 and the story has come full circle and Sol dies alone in the old MacIvey cabin in Punta Rasa.

## Chapters 42, 43, 44 and 45 Analysis

The author finishes Sol's flashback, which has included not only his own life but that of his parents and grandparents. Sol has engaged in the emerging business world in an attempt to find out if there is a better life than that lived by his family but in the end realizes that his ancestral roots are a stronger pull than even all the money he has amassed and Sol chooses to live out the few remaining days of his life where it began, in the primitive MacIvey cabin in Punta Rasa.



# Characters

## Tobias Maclvey

Tobias Maclvey is the patriarch of the Maclvey family which begins as dirt poor people living in the Florida wilderness and grows to real estate magnate status and extreme wealth. Tobias is thirty-years-old when he moves his wife Emma and their infant son Zech from Georgia to Florida in the year preceding the outbreak of the Civil War. Tobias ekes out a living for his family despite major losses and difficulties yet manages to retain his sense of decency and befriends Seminole Indians and an ex-slave running for his life. Tobias' sense of fairness and integrity earns him a lifelong reputation as a good and decent man yet he feels that he has failed to meet the needs of his uncomplaining wife Emma. Coming into the Florida wilderness when he does instills in Tobias a sense of preserving the land and the wildlife that inhabit it. Tobias' belief that a man should take only what he needs for today is in conflict with encroaching settlers who constantly threaten not only Tobias' cattle business but the land itself. Tobias' great strengths lie in his unrelenting perseverance to make a better life for his family and in his sense of honor and dignity when dealing with other people, especially the Seminoles and Negroes persecuted by white men of the time.

## Emma Maclvey

Emma Maclvey is the wife of Tobias Maclvey who accompanies her young husband and their infant to Florida to escape the encroaching Civil War in Georgia. Emma is of sturdy stock both physically and emotionally and stands up admirably to the hardships of primitive life in the Florida scrub country. Able to fend off wild animals as deftly as she grinds cattails to make flour for biscuits, Emma is the silent strength behind the Maclvey family and resulting destiny. Emma never complains about anything in her very trying life, even when deserting Confederate soldiers burn her shanty and steal all the family's food. Emma is unrelenting in her support of her husband and his efforts to make a life in the wilderness and even accompanies the Maclvey crew as cook on long, arduous cattle drives. Being so isolated in the inner wilderness of Florida, Emma does not live the traditional life of a wife and mother, working as hard as the men with no social contact with other women. Emma is pleased when Skillit and Zech marry so that she finally has some female companionship at the homestead. With ramrod strength, Emma supports the family's enterprises but also cautions her husband when his tendencies lean toward extremes and Tobias is profoundly aggrieved at her death, leaving him at a loss for love and a moral compass.

## Zech Maclvey

Zech Maclvey is the son of Tobias and Emma Maclvey and is brought to Florida from Georgia during the days leading up to the Civil War. Zech adores his father and



emulates him as soon as he is able to accompany his father into the woods to shoot animals for food. Zech has a special love for animals, especially his dogs, Nip and Tuck, and his marshtackie, Ishmael. As a child of the wilderness, Zech has little experience with the outside world with the exception of the cattle drives which lead them to markets and trading posts in the coastal cities. As a young man, Zech falls in love with two women; Glenda, a red-haired beauty and daughter of a merchant; and Tawanda, a beautiful Seminole Indian girl. Zech's mother advises Zech not to wait too long to choose a wife because the pool of women is small in this part of the country and Zech chooses Glenda although he continues a long-term but sporadic intimate relationship with Tawanda. Zech has two children; Solomon with his wife, Glenda, and Toby Cypress with Tawanda. Toby is nearly ten-years-old before Zech becomes aware of him and he tries to take care of him the best he can despite his living in a different world hundreds of miles away. Zech is like his father in that he is a man of integrity but Zech has more vision for the future and secures the family's position by purchasing thousands of acres of unspoiled Florida land.

## **Glenda Turner MacIvey**

Glenda Turner is the daughter of a store proprietor in Fort Drum, Florida, who meets Zech at a frolic. The two fall in love, marrying a short time later. Glenda suffers a miscarriage early in the couple's marriage but bears a healthy son, Solomon, a few years later. Although Glenda has a more privileged background than Zech's, she completely plunges herself into the MacIvey lifestyle of driving cattle and raising orange crops.

## **Solomon MacIvey**

Solomon MacIvey is the son of Zech and Glenda MacIvey who follows in the family business of driving cattle and growing oranges. Since Glenda is able to educate Solomon, a benefit Zech never had, Solomon is able to venture out and follow a different path from his relatives after their deaths. Solomon ultimately amasses great wealth from his businesses including a produce company, a real estate development company and a bank. At the end of his life, Solomon is able to see the devastation done to the Florida wilderness and repents, giving away much of his land and turning his back on the outside world that pulled him away from his core values.

## **Skillit**

Skillit is a huge black man whom Tobias and Zech find cowering in palmetto bushes one day while out hunting. Even though the Civil War is over, Skillit is still on the run from men who do not believe that ex-slaves should be able to work or own property. Tobias gives Skillit a job helping with the cattle business and essentially adopts Skillit into the MacIvey family, even letting Skillit take the MacIvey name.



## **Toby Cypress**

Toby Cypress is the son of Zech and Tawanda, a Seminole Indian woman. As Zech visits the Seminole village so infrequently, Toby is nearly ten years old before he meets his father for the first time. Toby bears no ill will toward Zech for not being more available to him and treasures what little time they do have. Toby and Solomon, Zech's other son, become friends and remain in contact until the end of their lives.

## **Keith Tiger**

Keith Tiger first meets the MacIvey family when he is running from white men who intend to kill him for killing an unmarked calf. Tobias comes to Keith Tiger's rescue and the two men and their families are bound by friendship for the rest of their lives.

## **Henry Addler**

Henry Addler is the state marshal working under the governor's authority to round up men to drive cattle northward to feed the Confederate army troops.

## **Drover or Cracker**

A drover or cracker is a person who rounds up and drives cattle or other animals across distances. Tobias first becomes a drover when recruited for the Confederate Cow Cavalry and then spends his life moving cattle from the inland portions of Florida to the coast for sale.

## **Ishmael**

Ishmael is the black mareshead given to Tobias by the Seminole Indians. Tobias gives the horse the name of Ishmael because of the story Keith Tiger had shared with Tobias about the Ishmaelites.

## **Nip and Tuck**

Nip and Tuck are the wolf-like dogs given to Tobias by the Seminole Indians as an aid in rounding up cattle.

## **Frog and Bonzo**

Tobias hires Frog and Bonzo, two drifters he finds in Kissimmee, to help with the cattle herding. Both men stay with the MacIvey family for the rest of their lives.



## **Cap'n Hendry**

Cap'n Hendry is the man who buys Tobias' cattle at the market in Punta Rassa.

## **Pearlie Mae**

Pearlie Mae is the woman Skillit marries and brings home to the MacIvey homestead.

## **Willie Cypress and James Tiger**

Willie Cypress and James Tiger are Seminole Indian boys who come to Tobias to purchase cows for the starving Seminoles. The boys are hanged by white men who assume the boys have stolen the cows given to them by Tobias as a gesture of goodwill toward the Seminoles.

## **Tawanda Cypress**

Tawanda Cypress is the Seminole Indian girl who falls in love with Zech, has their child, Toby, and dies in childbirth with their second child.

## **Lester**

Lester is the drover hired by Tobias to replace Skillit when Skillit leaves to build a farm for his own family.

## **Bonnie O'Neill**

Bonnie meets Solomon MacIvey when she is working as a waitress in West Palm Beach. She accompanies Solomon to his Okeechobee home and the couple falls in love but never marries by the time Bonnie is killed in a hurricane in 1928.



## Objects/Places

### Miami, Florida

Miami is a metropolitan city in southeastern Florida famous for its beaches and mix of ethnic cultures.

### Everglades

The Everglades is a swampy wetlands area in the region of the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee in south central Florida.

### Big Cypress Swamp

The Big Cypress Swamp is the area inhabited by the Seminole Indians in southern Florida.

### Pay-Hay-Okee

Pay-Hay-Okee (River of Grass) is the great marsh Everglades area near the Seminole Indian village located in southern Florida.

### St. Johns River

The St. Johns River runs southward parallel to the east coast of Florida.

### Hammock

A hammock is an isolated area typically overgrown with vegetation. Tobias builds the MacIvey Kissimmee River home in a hammock in this isolated area.

### Marshtackie

A marshtackie is a small horse bred in Florida whose small size provides the ultimate agility for rounding up cattle.

### Punta Rassa

Punta Rassa is on the west coast of Florida south of Fort Myers and is the location where Tobias sells his cattle. The MacIvey family builds a house there since they come



to the town so often. Punta Rassa is a shipping town and has no architectural or cultural charm.

## **Kissimmee**

Kissimmee is a town in central Florida where Tobias finds Frog and Bonzo and hires them to help with cattle drives to Punta Rassa.

## **Fort Pierce**

Fort Pierce is a town on the east coast of Florida north of Palm Beach and the site where Tobias buys his orange trees.

## **Dobloons**

Dobloons are Spanish coins and the form of currency preferred by Tobias and kept in storage chests at the homestead, a practice followed by Zech.

## **Custard-apple forest**

The custard-apple forest is a jungle-like area near Lake Okeechobee and the Seminole Indian village in southern Florida.

## **Chickee**

A chickee is an open-sided hut constructed of cypress poles, palmetto leaves and bear grass used as homes by the Seminole Indians.

## **Palm Beach**

Palm Beach is a city on the east coast of Florida known for its wealthy residents and an elegant destination for tourists.

## **Royal Poinciana Hotel**

The Royal Poinciana Hotel in Palm Beach denies Zech a room because he does not fit the image of the upscale hotel's typical hotel guests.





# Themes

## Man vs. Nature

The classic struggle of man versus nature is the prevalent theme of this book. Tobias is a farmer who leaves his used-up Georgia clay to move to the wilderness of Florida to start a new life. This virtually unsettled area of scrub land resists almost all of Tobias' efforts to take root and establish a home for his family. Even the act of eating is a ritual of conquest over elusive animals and vegetables destroyed by weather or invasive animals. In the early days of the MacIvey family's settlement, they are shielded from the elements only by shanties crudely fashioned by cypress poles and palmetto leaves. Eventually the family builds more suitable housing but it is destroyed, forcing them further south into even more unsettled wilderness where they encounter swamps, jungle-like forests and destructive swarms of mosquitoes. Due to the story's location in southern Florida, the family is especially vulnerable to devastating storms and hurricanes and many deaths and tragedies occur during or soon after water disasters. Despite it all, the MacIveys persevere and take care of each other while building a life which, while brutally hard, is preferable to the life they left.

## Integrity

At the core of the MacIvey family is a commitment to integrity and relating honorably with each other and with those they encounter. Since Tobias comes of age in the South during the period just prior to the Civil War, it would be expected that he would be prejudiced against the Negroes and Indians he encounters but just the reverse is true. Tobias views each man as his own person regardless of skin color and takes the ex-slave Skillit into his family and maintains a long-standing honorable relationship with Keith Tiger and the Seminole Indians. Tobias has a set of core values and he does not mind metering out justice when that code has been violated. However, in most cases Tobias is a kind, mild-mannered man who wants to live peacefully with all men. This somewhat naïve stance might work to Tobias' detriment because he does not believe in buying land that should belong to everyone but Zech is able to envision the future and purchases the land to maintain its integrity from those wanting to encroach upon it. By the end of the story, Solomon's greed gets the better of him and he profits greatly by developing his family's land, an act which distresses him and causes him to repent and give back land and money to those who will protect it, the final honorable act of an honorable family.

## Environmentalism

When Tobias carves a life out of the Florida wilderness he takes only what he and his family have need for immediately. It is part of Tobias' code that a man should take only what he needs to survive for the day leaving the rest for someone else who may come



along and need some too. This innate sense of preserving nature drives Tobias and his son, Zech, but clashes with the personal and business sensibilities of Zech's son, Solomon. Solomon reveres his family and their love of the land but he also has other interests, eventually selling much of the Maclvey land in real estate speculation. Throughout the novel, the presence of the Seminole Indians and their reverence for nature serves as a moral and ethical compass guiding Tobias and Zech. In Solomon's world of developing real estate to make money, he does not understand the significance of what he has done until an encounter with his half-brother, Toby Cypress, who scolds Solomon for his indifference to the destruction he has funded. At the end of his life, Solomon realizes the damage he has done not only to the land but to the memory of his parents and grandparents by using their precious land for financial gain. Solomon apologizes for what he has done and gives back land in the form of a nature preserve and dies hoping that his ignorance and greed have not paid too detrimental a part in the ruination of the natural environment.



# Style

## Point of View

The novel is written in the third person omniscient point of view which means that the story is told by an unidentified person who is not a part of the plot line. In this perspective the story is told as it unfolds as a retelling of events with little or no insight into the characters' thoughts or feelings. In an omniscient point of view there are events and consequences that even the main characters have no knowledge of and which may or may not have direct bearing on the plot line. This point of view allows the author to move from character to character and setting to setting with little or no regard for continuity or dialogue precision. As an all-seeing and all-knowing perspective, the third person omniscient point of view essentially provides an overall view of the story and provides some dramatic effect as opposed to just presenting the facts. This point of view is in contrast to first person narrative point of view where a main character tells his or her story from a very focused and personal point of view. The point of view chosen by this author to provide an expansive view of the story mirrors the vast landscape traveled by the MacIvey family over the period of one hundred years.

## Setting

The entire novel takes place in the state of Florida from the years 1858 to 1968. The story begins in the early MacIvey settlement area in northern Florida and covers the expanse of the state all the way to Miami and finally to the novel's conclusion in Punta Rassa on the west coast. Tobias treks the Florida scrub country learning to know it intimately and ventures occasionally to trading posts located on the state's east and west coasts. The family moves further south to the Kissimmee River area where they build the homestead from which they will drive cattle and grow oranges. The cattle drives are made south across prairie lands where the cattle can graze and finally west to Punta Rassa to market. Even further south sits the Seminole Indian village on the edge of the Everglades called Pay-Hay-Okee by the Indians. Along the way, the MacIveys encounter swamps, jungle-like forests and scorched prairies. Zech and Solomon buy land near Miami and Solomon becomes a real estate magnate in Miami with properties extending up to Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale. The novel ends with Solomon preparing to die in a long-abandoned cabin built by the MacIvey family during their cattle driving days in Punta Rassa.

## Language and Meaning

The author develops characters consistent with their geography and economic status. Tobias and Emma are poor uneducated people and speak imperfect English with Southern colloquialisms inserted. For example, a typical passage from Tobias is "They ain't likely to come into the scrub, unless they get a hankering for coon meat. But I'll



keep an eye out, and I rightly thank you for the warning. I'll be back afore long," Chapter 4, p. 25. As a former slave, Skillit has a language style all his own that includes statements like this: "'I sho' would, missus. I'd be right proud to et another bowl. You be's a fine cook, a fine one,'" Chapter 11, p. 75. As the family grows, Zech marries an educated girl named Glenda whose verbal skills are more refined than the Maclveys. The author also provides the Seminole Indians with a distinct voice as in this example of Keith Tiger: "'It is a horse left behind by the Spanish soldiers. It is small and runty but very strong and big of heart. My people used the marshtackie back in the days before the white men told us we could no longer herd cattle,'" Chapter 3, p. 22.

By the time Solomon has taken over the Maclvey name, he is more educated than his father or grandfather and speaks with more eloquence than his relatives but is also able to speak directly with his half-brother, Toby Cypress, in a way that is comfortable with both of them.

## Structure

The book is structured into forty-five chapters covering the expanse of one hundred and ten years of the Maclvey family. The book begins in 1968 as Solomon reviews his life and moves to the family's Punta Rassa cabin to die. The majority of the story is a flashback into the history of the establishment of the Maclvey family beginning with Tobias and then ending with the last chapter coming full circle describing Solomon's death at the cabin. Some of the chapters have dates attached to them to provide some point of reference for the plot line but some chapters do not have any descriptions at all. Within most of the chapters the author provides plot and scenery description as well as passages of dialogue that are relevant to the time period. The author tends to write with large gaps in the plot line so this reference to time is very welcome. For example, in one scene Zech leaves Tawanda to return home to Glenda and the next scene is a few years later at the birth of Zech and Glenda's son, Solomon. In some cases the author provides minute detail on events and scenery but this sometimes disjointed structure can be distracting to the reader.



## Quotes

"'There is no more Punta Rassa as you knew it,' Toby Cypress said, his eyes reflecting sadness. 'It is all gone, Sol, just as Lake Okeechobee as we once knew it is gone, and the custard-apple forest is gone, and the balk cypress trees are gone. You are trying to capture the fog, and no one can do that,'" Chapter 1, p. 6.

"Tobias MacIvey was thirty years old and had been in the Florida scrub for five years. He had come south out of Georgia in 1858. In his horse-drawn wagon there was a sack of corn and a sack of sweet potatoes, a few packets of seeds, a shotgun and a few shells, a frying pan, several pewter dishes and forks, and a cast-iron pot. There were also the tools he would need to clear the land and build a house: two chopping axes, a broadaxe foot adz, crosscut saw, auger bite, a fro and drawing knife," Chapter 2, p. 13.

"'What you need is a marshtackie,' Tiger said. 'It is a horse left behind by the Spanish soldiers. It is small and runty but very strong and big of heart. It can run all day, and it can take you to places in the swamps where no other horse can go. My people used the marshtackie back in the days before the white men told us we could no longer herd cattle. There are some of them still left in the swamps and woods. Perhaps you can catch one for yourself,'" Chapter 3, p. 22.

"Tobias sat down beside her and put his hand on hers. 'Zech needs a companion out here, Emma, and I know you would like another baby. But it just ain't the right time now. Things is too hard for us, and I can't hardly feed what we got, much less another one. It will be better soon. Someday there'll be a whole flock of MacIveys. You'll see,'" Chapter 5, p. 32.

"'We'll move 'em along an old military road as far as we can and try to keep 'em out of the woods. If one goes off into the woods, go after him right away. And don't try to push them. Just let 'em walk along as slow as they want, and eat. Last time we pushed a herd too fast the cows lost a hundred and fifty pounds apiece time we got to Georgia. An extra hundred and fifty pounds per cow will feed a lot of men. So let 'em go slow. And just remember one thing. These are wild swamp cows. They didn't come out of somebody's barn. They ain't used to being drove, and they spook easy. If one goes, they all go. They can take off like thunder and stomp a man and a horse as flat as a pancake before you know what's happening. So be careful,'" Chapter 6, p. 38.

"Tobias removed a pistol and scabbard from the soldier's side, and then he unfastened the ammunition belt and put it in one saddlebag. There was also a rifle strapped to the saddle. He said, 'I might as well take all of this, fellow, but I want you to understand I ain't stealing from the dead. It ain't no use to you any more, and it will be a godsend for me out in the scrub. I won't bury you, 'cause they'll find you sooner or later and send



you back home. And I know you'd rather be with your folks than here in these woods.' He then searched the other saddlebag and found a knife and several tins of beef. He opened one can and ate ravenously, washing it down with water from the soldier's canteen. Then he mounted the horse and rode south," Chapter 7, p. 51.

"He went back outside and down to the garden, studying the plants that had broken through the rich soil, hoping that wild hogs would not raid him constantly as they had in the scrub. He also thought of the hardships his family had endured during those years in the scrub and on the trip here. Zech was eight years old now and had never tasted an apple or eaten a piece of sugar candy. There had been no jackknife to play with and no kite to fly and no whistle to blow. He felt a sudden urgency to do something for both Emma and Zech, to somehow better their lives. If he did not hurry, the void would become too big for him to ever fill," Chapter 8, p. 58.

"This is true. There were times when my people had herds that stretched as far as the eye could see, and we followed them everywhere. Those who wandered with the herds were called Ishmaelites by the white soldiers. I do not know what the word means, but I think it is something bad. They did not say this of those who stayed in the villages and farmed, only those who wandered the land. But if you do not wish to follow the herd, it is best that you stay home and grow pumpkins," Chapter 9, p. 65.

"When the war ended they said all us niggers was free, and we could do whatever we wanted. Some folks went up North, and some stayed where they was. I claimed me a little piece of land and built me a cabin on it, and then I started to farm. Had a fine garden. Wad'n long after that that some men come to the house one night. Said they didn't want no nigger building' a house or runnin' a farm. They was all dressed in white sheets and had hoods over their faces. I told them I was supposed to be free and I didn't see how a garden could hurt nobody. They rawhided me good, whapped me like I ain't never been whapped befo'; then they tromped down my garden with their horses, and set fire to the cabin. Ever since then I been driftin' south, sleepin' wherever I could, and stealin' chickens when I could find one. I guess someday I got to find me a place and stop," Chapter 11, p. 76.

"He also wondered if he were being foolish, taking the advice of an Indian he really hardly knew, leaving the relative safety of his hidden hammock and following cattle into the unknown. But the cows did not grow in the swamp, and even the boatmen didn't want them. Out here there was grass to fatten them and ready them for market, and they would be worth something someday. He did not want to go on forever skinning coons and killing deer and growing just enough vegetables to survive. And this was apparently the only way out of the trap," Chapter 13, p. 87.

"During the ride back to join the herd his mind was calculating figures. Four dollars a head for one hundred forty-eight cows was more money than he had ever seen or hoped to see. With that he could buy Emma a wood stove instead of a Dutch oven. And many other things too. But twelve dollars a head boggled his imagination and was



beyond comprehension. And all that additional money just to drive the cattle over to a place called Punta Rassa, a thing he and Zech and Skillit could do easily. He could see visions of someday soon hiring drovers and moving herds ten times as large as his present one, masses of cows all cutting a trail to Punta Rassa," Chapter 13, p. 90.

"We're all going to be hungry before we get out of this. Our bellies has rumbled before and we got through it, and we'll do it again. Soon as the water goes down we'll start out of here. It's going to take more than a storm to keep me from Punta Rassa. And that's the God's truth, so help me. We're going to see Punta Rassa," Chapter 14, p. 95.

"All my life when I tried to do something worth anything I never made it, not here or back in Georgia. It was the same with my daddy, and he finally gave up and quit trying. When he did, it killed my mamma, just as sure as those 'gators killed the cows back in the swamp. And it was just as awful to see. Then it got Daddy too. We almost make it in the scrub, me and you and Zech; then somebody comes along and burns it all for no reason. Ever time I try, it seems somebody burns it or floods it or kills it. Maybe this time the Lord won't throw a roadblock in front of me. But if He does, I'll just stumble over it and try again. I'm not ready to give up yet, and I ain't going to quit no matter what happens tomorrow morning," Chapter 16, p. 125.

"I never thought somethin' like this would ever happen to me. I's worked all my life like a mule and never got a penny fo' it, and I gave up hopin' a long time ago. When you found me hid in them bushes I hadn't had nothin' to et for a week but roots and berries. Now I got a belly full of fried chicken, a new pair of britches and boots, and a sack full of gold. Lawd God, Mistuh Tobias, you's the best white folks they's ever been!" Chapter 17, p. 141.

"Zech and Tobias sat on the edge of the stoop while the horses were led away. Tobias said, 'Son, I know you're hurtin' now, hurtin' real bad. I've felt the pain myself, and I know how it is. But don't grieve too long for Nip and Tuck. Let it go soon. What you just seen and been through will come again and again. This whole wilderness is built on such as that, and it's going to get worse before it gets better, if it ever does. You've got to learn to take the bad as well as the good, no matter what comes along. Don't go on hurtin' too long," Chapter 18, p. 159 .

"Zech, if you like her, don't stay away too long. Flowers has a way of being plucked by someone, and there's not many nice ones out here in the wilderness. They don't stay in bloom forever.' 'Maybe I can go back there after the drive. If I can find the time, I'll go.' 'You best make the time. Cows won't ever smell good like flowers. Someday you'll know that," Chapter 18, p. 161.

"We been through worse than this,' Skillit said, 'and come out of it on our feet. And I don't think the Lord would turn skeeters loose on a bunch of pore cows. It must 'a been the devil instead.' 'Somebody did, and the Book says everthing is the work of the Lord. If it is, I hope He gets done soon with punishing us. I don't even know what we done to make Him so mad.' 'I don't either,' Skillit said, 'but I knows one thing. The Lord ain't





going to help us round up the cows. We'll have to see to it ourselves," Chapter 19, p. 172.

"When they returned to camp Zech lay on his blanket wide awake, thinking of the things James Tiger told him, wondering why anyone would kill an Indian over a few scrub cows when they were numerous everywhere. He could also not comprehend some people denying the Indians the right to even own a cow. None of it made sense to him, and he felt a deep sympathy for James Tiger and Willie Cypress and all the others who suffered hunger because of what he could only see as gross stupidity and greed. Even the animals were willing to share if it meant survival for all," Chapter 20, p. 177.

"'You know my name,' Tobias said calmly. 'It's Maclvey. And if you're interested, I live over on the Kissimmee. You're welcome to come to my place anytime you want to, but if I ever lay eyes on you again I'll kill you on sight. That's a promise, not a threat. Just keep that in mind next time you decide to lynch a couple of boys, or come looking for me.' With that he mounted and rode to the wagon," Chapter 20, p. 180.

"'We have grown used to them,' Tiger responded. 'There are many things we have been forced to learn since hiding here in the swamp. When our people lived on the land that is not Tallahassee, the soil there grew corn and beans and squash and pumpkins in abundance. Here things do not grow so well. It is the same with hunting. When there is no rain the swamp dries up and animals go elsewhere, and when there is great rain it floods, also driving them away or drowning them. There is always something facing us we must overcome. It has been difficult, but we have survived,'" Chapter 21, p. 191.

"For a moment Zech hesitated, feeling the urge to walk backward to the door and run for Ishmael, then retreat to the prairie where he belonged. Had he known about Christmas frolics he could have purchased suitable clothes somewhere, but no one told him. He had never seen his father in a suit or his mother in a blue dress with lace, and because of this he blamed them for his present situation and felt anger at them for allowing him to come to the frolic dressed as he was. Then it came to him they wouldn't know either. Perhaps they once did, but that was too long ago in the past. In his memory he knew there had been no Christmas frolic in Florida for his mother and father and none now, and the sudden anger at them for something beyond their knowledge shamed him," Chapter 22, p. 208.

"Zech suddenly realized something he should have known all along: there is more to life and survival than frolics or black suits or bowls full of punch. The Kissimmee and the Caloosahatchie and all the prairies and swamps between are not Jacksonville with its parks and cafes and theaters, and never will be; and someone must round up the cows and blaze the trails and fight the wolves and bears and plant the orange trees like his father had done. He was schooled not in reading and writing but in survival, and this was not something he should be ashamed of. His teachers were the best, and he loved them for it. He vowed never again to make excuses to himself or to anyone for what he was or who he was. He was a Maclvey, and proud of it," Chapter 22, p. 214.





"Three more times Tobias had replanted the orange trees and expanded the plot, and now there were one hundred acres inside the fenced area. He said to the assemblage, 'We gone have enough to fill a whole schooner at Fort Pierce! It'll take ten wagons to haul 'em there. That's what the future is—oranges! We don't need to round 'em up or brand 'em or do nothing' but pluck 'em off the trees!'" Chapter 23, p. 217.

"Zech came from the land office smiling, clutching the deed firmly as if it might fly away. The title was in three names, his and Tobias and Emma, and later he would add Glenda's name after she became a MacIvey. He unhitched the horse and drove the buckboard down the street, overwhelmed by the fact they were now landowners. He felt like shouting it for all to hear, MacIvey land, cattle and oranges. They were no longer squatters but rightful owners, free and clear with no debt owed," Chapter 23, p. 219.

"Here things were happening, things beyond human control; and there was no house to take refuge in for protection, no doors to lock or windows to close. It was them against nature, winner take all, and the reality of it both frightened and enchanted her. She was beginning to respect Tobias and Emma and Zech even more for having survived a lifetime of this, facing it again and again without trepidation, then coming back for more," Chapter 26, p. 238.

"Two days later they chose the name Solomon because Zech had been reading the Bible and discovered that Solomon, son of David and king of Israel and Judah, was noted for his wisdom. Sol, as they would call him, would be a very wise man indeed, since he would be the first MacIvey to have his own private tutor from birth. Glenda would give him knowledge beyond all things Zech and his father could ever know, and he would be the one to build a MacIvey temple rather than a frontier house made of rough cypress long since turned black by exposure to the elements," Chapter 28, p. 256.

"One night as Zech listened apprehensively to the lonesome cry of a wolf, realizing it was a harmless lone voice and not a pack, he wondered what the future held for old adversaries like wolves and bears and for all the other creatures that depended on the land for survival. He remembered that night years ago when he had witnessed the ritual of animals peacefully sharing the life-giving water, some inborn instinct telling them they must share and conserve to survive. Perhaps animals are smarter than men, he thought, taking only what they need to live today, leaving something for tomorrow. Even the hated wolf kills only for food and only for immediate need. It is man who will eventually perish as he destroys the land and all that it offers, taking the animals down with him," Chapter 30, p. 270.

"As he made his way back to the trading post there was no prolonged guilt as there was the last time he had been with Tawanda. He knew now that fate had given him two lives and two families, and he accepted it without question. As Tawanda said to him, the two worlds would never come together; yet they were there," Chapter 31, p. 283.



"Tobias turned to him and said, 'You know something, Zech. It was your mamma who held this family together when times was roughest. Hadden been for her you and me would 'a probably starved. She could cook pine tree roots good enough to keep a man alive. And I never did nothin' for her. With all the gold in them trunks I could 'a bought her fancy dresses and shoes and such as a woman likes, but all I ever gave her was that goddam cook stove. And now it's too late to do anything. I waited too long,'" Chapter 32, p. 290.

"When he returned to the house he sat at the table, silent again until Glenda joined him. He said to her, 'It's down to just you and me and Sol now, and from what I've seen out there so far, we're back to where this family was twenty-five years ago. I hope there's a few rabbits and coons still alive, 'cause it might be all that's left to eat. We'll have to grub for it again, Glenda, and it's going to be a long time before we get over this,'" Chapter 33, p. 307.

"The man put his hand on Zech's shoulder and said, 'Do not feel this way. We do not hold you responsible, and we have no hate for you in our hearts. You did not force yourself on Tawanda. She accepted you willingly. You did only what she wanted you to do. You made her happy, and we thank you for this, not hate you. This may seem strange to you, but it is our way. Tawanda died happy, and that is what counts most. We believe that one who dies in sadness can never rest easy in the afterlife that comes to all of us,'" Chapter 34, p. 313.

"Sol, don't ever get yourself tied up with a woman. It's like owning dogs. You get to liking them, and it hurts powerful when they go away. And they all go away. If you get to lovin' a woman too much, it'll bring pain and sorrow when she leaves you. It's done hurt me twice, and the pain of it is pure awful. It'll never go away. Don't let it happen to you,'" Chapter 37, p. 353.

"It is not just swamp!' Toby responded harshly. 'It is God you are killing. He put the land here for all creatures to enjoy, and you are destroying it. When you destroy the land you destroy God. Do you not know this? Go now and stand in the middle of your fields. Count the deer you see, and the alligators, and the fish, and the birds. Count them, Sol, and then tell me how many are still there. You have crushed them with your damned machines, and if you do not stop what you are doing, there will soon be no more! They will be gone forever!'" Chapter 40, p. 370.

"He brushed his eyes and said, 'They'll never forgive me for this, Bonnie, and I know I won't forgive myself. All they left behind is gone now, and regrets won't bring it back. Toby knew this, and now I do too. Toby was right and I was wrong, but it's done now, and what's done can't be undone. I guess nothing in this whole damned stinking world lasts forever,'" Chapter 41, p. 383.



"When I first started out alone after my pappa died, I didn't know what I was doing, and I thought I was doing the right thing. But you sons a' bitches knew, and you did it deliberate. That's the only thing that marks me from you. The catchword with me is stupidity. With you it's greed. More is better, bigger is better. Well, you bastards are too stupid to know there soon won't be no more. Else you haven't been here long enough to remember," Chapter 44, p. 401.



## Topics for Discussion

Most people probably have perceptions of Florida as the home of theme parks and vacation spots. How has your idea of Florida changed since reading this book?

The MacIvey family remains isolated from the world through many major events in U.S. and world history from the period ranging from 1858-1968. Discuss some of the events that took place while the MacIveys are intentionally insular.

The topic of environmentalism, especially in some endangered areas of Florida, is a critical one today. Discuss how people like the MacIveys both hurt and helped the Florida environment.

Imagine that you are the MacIveys and have no house, kitchen, bathroom or bed. What would your life be like?

Compare and contrast the MacIveys extremely limited communications with the outside world with the instant communication of today's world.

What do you think Tobias, Zech and Solomon MacIvey would think of Florida today? What would surprise them the most? What would they find the same?

Tobias is a man with no prejudices in a time when it is most advantageous to have them. Why do you think Tobias acts so kindly toward people of other races and nationalities? What lessons can people today learn from Tobias?