

# Night of the Howling Dogs Study Guide

## Night of the Howling Dogs by Graham Salisbury

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# Plot Summary

Dylan bikes to Casey's house to load up his dad's Ford van with the gear their Scout troop will need for their long awaited hike to a secluded beach below Hawaii's famous mountain volcano, Mauna Loa. Casey Bellows is Dylan's best friend and Casey's Dad, a Hilo Police detective and an ex-marine, is the troop's Scoutmaster. Dylan's Dad, we learn, is a big-ship skipper who sails the world's oceans. He's rarely home and because of this Dylan's relations with his father are somewhat strained. Dylan is tall and strong but he wears thick glasses and he fears the other boys may think of him as a sissy. Although he does not know it, this trip to the volcano will provide him with an opportunity to prove in no uncertain terms that he is a man.

They pick up the other lads, Sam, Zach, Tad, Mike and his Dad and Billy, and finally, a new member of the troop, Louie Domingo, a charismatic loner. A streetwise alpha male, Louie refers to Dylan as haole (white boy) and an instant conflict develops between Louie and Dylan, a conflict that will be aggravated and ultimately resolved as the story progresses.

When they disembark at the volcano Dylan spots two dogs, one dark, one white, moving like ghosts through some tall weeds in the distance, an ominous sign that will prove to be significant.

The troop hikes to Halape, a secluded beach where they meet a friendly shark named Fred and a shaman-like paniolo (Hawaiian cowboy) named Masa who tells them about the legend of Fred, the friendly shark, and about the two dogs. The white dog, he informs them, is Pele, a shape-shifting ancient Hawaiian goddess who lives in the volcano. "When she gets angry she shakes the earth," he says, "and the ground opens up and fire comes out." Reverend Paia, the assistant scoutmaster, tells some spooky stories around the campfire, and Dylan again sees the dogs, and this time they are howling. Things are starting to get eerie and Dylan is thoroughly spooked.

Dylan's apprehension is well founded, we learn, because a couple nights later the boys are jarred out of bed by a seven point two earthquake which sets the stage for a tsunami that sweeps away the camp and scatters the troop far and wide. It falls Dylan's and Louie's lot to rescue the others and as they work together against great odds their personal conflict is resolved. "I am going to stop giving you a hard time now," Louie says. "You know why? You got guts, that's why." Then, to top things off, Dylan's Dad arrives in a Coast Guard chopper and the boys are airlifted out. The savage ordeal is over at last, but Dylan, Louie and the others will never forget what they shared at Halape.



# Chapters 1 - 3

## Chapters 1 - 3 Summary

Early morning. Dylan rides his bike to Casey's house. Casey Bellows is Dylan's best pal and today is the day of their Boy Scout troop's hike to Mauna Loa, Hawaii's iconic mountain volcano. Casey's Dad, Mr. Bellows, as the boys are careful to call him, is their scoutmaster. Mr. Bellows is a very macho guy, a Hilo Police detective and an ex-marine who is clean, lean and fit as a boot-camp drill sergeant. "Once a marine, always a marine," he is fond of saying. Dylan's Dad, we learn, is also very manly. He's a big-ship skipper who takes freighters all over the world, and consequently he's not home all that much.

Casey is a tough little guy, a freckle-faced, shaggy-haired redhead who plays eighth grade football. Dylan is taller than Casey, and plenty strong, but he wears thick glasses and can't see a thing without them, so he feels that perhaps he has something to make up for. Dylan's boots are new and stiff, and he's hoping they won't give him blisters.

They pack their camping gear in Casey's Dad's Ford van, along with a quartermaster box that holds everything the troop will need for the outing—a giant cooler and a big cook stove, lanterns, ropes and machetes and first-aid kits. The hikers will consist of eight Scouts, two adult leaders and a driver.

They get underway with Mr. Bellows at the wheel. They pick up the other lads, Sam, Zach, Tad, Mike and his Dad and Billy. Then they drive to a low-rent area in a sort of jungle to pick up Louie Domingo, a new boy who has just joined the troop. Louie is big, rugged, mostly Hawaiian and very charismatic. He's much more streetwise than the other boys, and somewhat contemptuous of the lot. He refers to Dylan as haole (white boy) and an instant conflict develops between Louie and Dylan, a conflict that will be aggravated and ultimately resolved as the story progresses.

## Chapters 1 - 3 Analysis

Young Dylan is getting ready for his Scout troop's hike to the volcano. This trip will be a test of Dylan's manhood, his rite of passage from child to adult. His models are his best friend's Dad, Mr. Bellows, a cop and ex-marine, and his own Dad, a big-ship captain who sails the seven seas. These two models of his are some very macho guys, so young Dylan has a lot to live up to. Dylan is tall and strong but he wears thick glasses and can't see a thing without them, so he considers this something of a handicap. They start off in Mr. Bellows' van and pick up the other troop members, and finally, Louie Domingo, who has recently joined the trip. Louie, although he is the same age as Dylan and the other boys, has obviously already made the all-important transition from boy to man. He's tough, good looking, charismatic and imbued with a lower class sense of the streets and of hardscrabble life that is missing in the other boys, particularly Dylan. Thus



begins an attraction-revulsion syndrome for Dylan with respect to the robust and confident Louie. He is drawn to Louie and at the same time he disapproves of his manners or lack of manners and of the contemptuous way he treats the Dylan and the others. He does not see that Louie's bravado may be a cover up for a sense of social unease he feels due to being a member of the underclass. Thus Louie Domingo is both a shadow figure and a role model for Dylan as the boys start off on their adventure.



# Chapters 4 - 6

## Chapters 4 - 6 Summary

The troop arrives at the destination, high on the slope of Mauna Loa. This will be their jumping off point for the hike to the secluded beach below. A sign reads: Hilina Pali, formed by the downward movement of great sections of the mountainside. An ominous note and a well-founded warning as the reader will discover later on.

The boys gather up their gear and prepare to move out. Then Dylan sees—or thinks he sees—something slinking through a patch of grass and weeds about a quarter of a mile distant. A look with the binoculars confirms the sighting. "Dogs," Dylan says. There are two dogs, one big and dark, the other small and white, moving like ghosts through the vegetation. Another ominous note, which, like the Hilina Pali sign, will prove to be significant.

We learn that Dylan has been elected SPL, Senior Patrol Leader, and that his Dad is proud of his achievement. Alpha male Louie takes this opportunity to refer to Dylan as "Senor Patrol Loser," a sarcastic remark that serves to heighten the rivalry between the two boys. The lads shoulder their packs and start down the Hilina Pali trail. At this juncture we learn that there are two types of lava that they must traverse: pahoehoe and a'a. Pahoepoe is smooth and easy walking. A'a is jagged and sharp. It's like walking on broken glass. Mr. Bellows gives the boys a talk about respect—for one's elders, for one's country, for one's self. The trail is dusty and Dylan removes his glasses and hangs them on a length of fishing line around his neck.

The troop arrives at their destination, Halape, a secret spot frequented only by fishermen. There is a coconut grove and a few rude shelters for sleeping. Below is a gorgeous white sand beach. Dylan's canteen is almost empty and the only water available is "stink water," rainwater that has collected on the corrugated roofs of the shelters. It must be boiled before it becomes safe to drink.

The troop will venture downward to a place called "the crack," a deep fissure in the rocks leading to an emerald pool. But first they set up camp, and Mr. Bellows assigns buddies. "Never go anywhere without your buddy," he advises the boys. They roll out their sleeping bags in the shelters and conk off but are awakened by stinging ants, which they combat with bug spray.

## Chapters 4 - 6 Analysis

As Dylan's troop arrives at the destination, high on the slope of Mauna Loa, a sign warns climbers about downward movements of great sections of the mountain. This is a precursor to the quake that they will experience later on. At this juncture Dylan spots a dog, then two dogs, moving like ghosts through the vegetation some distance away. This is taken also by the boys to be a warning, perhaps of some supernatural event.



We learn that Dylan has been elected SPL, Senior Patrol Leader, and alpha male Louie loses no time in baiting Dylan by calling him, "Senior Patrol Loser." The two adolescent egos are getting ready for a jousting match. As the lads walk the Hilina Pali trail Dylan removes his glasses and hangs them on a length of fishing line around his neck. This gesture too is a precursor because later on the glasses play an important role in the story.

The troop arrives at their destination, Halape, a primitive camp. The only water available is "stink water," rainwater that has collected on the corrugated roofs of the shelters. Stink water must be boiled before it becomes safe to drink, and Dylan is not at all sure he will drink it even then, thirsty though he is. But we have a sense that drinking stink water will be just another part of the toughening up process as the hero makes the transition from boy to man.



# Chapters 7 - 9

## Chapters 7 - 9 Summary

Dylan and Casey go swimming at the beach below the crack. The water is cool and clear, and brackish, half seawater and half spring water. The two discuss Louie's past, how he comes from a broken home and lived for a time in a warehouse, and how Mr. Bellows hopes the Scouts will rehabilitate him.

Tad gets lost. No one can find him. Casey and Dylan go in search of him, ranging over the lava beds. At last they find him, wedged into a crack in the lava. How did he get there? He was hiding from wasps, he explains. They were after a can of peaches he was eating. He finished the can of peaches, but then couldn't get out of the crack because the fit was so tight he couldn't move his arms or legs. The boys manage to get him out of there, but not without incurring a few wasp stings.

Louie arrives with a few sarcastic remarks: "What a laugh you are. You can't even make two stupid boys stay together." Louie and Dylan nearly get into a scrap but swarming wasps break up the would-be fistfight.

That night, around the campfire, Tad's swollen wasp stings are much in evidence, but he's taking it like a man. Louie has a few stings also, and Mr. Bellows apologizes to the boys for failing to warn them about the wasps. He comes up with a jar of Noxema which the boys smear on to take the sting out of their wounds. Louie ruffles Tad's hair and remarks, "We can take it, ah, brah?" Apparently Tad has passed, in Louie's eyes, a test of masculinity, but Dylan has yet to do so.

## Chapters 7 - 9 Analysis

In this chapter group we begin to focus a bit more on Louie, who is both Dylan's idol and his arch rival. We learn about Louie's past, a blighted childhood spent partly in a broken home and partly in an abandoned warehouse, and that Mr. Bellows hopes the Scouts will take the young man. Later one of the boys, Tad, gets lost and after a protracted search Dylan and Casey find him, but not without getting royally stung by a swarm of wasps. This provokes Louie to further rag on Dylan and the two boys almost get into a fistfight but the wasps intervene.

That night, around the campfire, Tad's wasp stings are hurting like the dickens, but he's being a good soldier about it. Mr. Bellows gives the boys some soothing Noxema to put on their wounds to take the sting out of their wounds, and Louie, impressed by Tad's show of courage, ruffles Tad's hair and remarks, "We can take it, ah, brah?" So we see that one of the boys, a most unlikely one, has passed a milestone, at least in Louie's eyes, and that leaves the rest of them, Dylan included, to prove their mettle.





# Chapters 10 - 12

## Chapters 10 - 12 Summary

The boys are sitting around a campfire. Reverend Paia is going to tell them some spooky stories. But Louie, not participating, is obstinately throwing his hunting knife into the trunk of a palm tree. Dylan marvels at Louie's skill and Reverend Paia wants to reprimand Louie but feels it's not his place since Mr. Bellows, not present at the fire, is in charge.

Mr. Bellows returns and orders Louie to join the group around the fire. The Reverend launches into a spooky story about the "night marchers," based on an old Hawaiian legend. The boys are buying into it and they're scared—except for Louie, of course. "Who knows what's going on around us that we can't see?" Dylan thinks. "This place could be crawling with spirits." He looks up at Pu'u Kapukapu and shivers.

That night Dylan is awakened by something crawling on him. He puts on his glasses and grabs his flashlight. Roaches! Roaches the size of his big toe, running for cover, ugly brown critters with slick shiny wings. Casey grabs a can of bug spray and the boys spray moats of insecticide around their sleeping rolls. But later on something wakes Dylan up once again. He gazes up at Pu'u Kapukapu and sees in the distance two dogs silhouetted against the full moon. Is this perhaps yet another omen, a harbinger of what lies ahead?

The next morning Mr. Bellows and the Reverend go on a hike up the coast, taking with them Sam, Billy, Tad and Zach. They're headed for the old Hawaiian heiau the Reverend mentioned in his spooky story of the night marchers. Dylan and Casey yank on their swim shorts and run down to the little beach, leaving Louie and Mike at the campsite. The water is clear and warm, but the boys soon encounter a shark. It's not a big shark, but it behaves strangely, following them as if wanting to be friends, and it has a mysterious hole in its fin. The boys, frightened, haul out on a reef. Louie joins them. He's contemptuous of their fear. Typical haoles!

Now they have to swim back to the beach. And the shark is circling. Louie goes first, naturally. It turns out he's not much of a swimmer, can only dog paddle, but, fearless, he scares the shark off with a splash of his hand. Now Casey and Dylan follow, scared stiff, but they make it to shore.

## Chapters 10 - 12 Analysis

Reverend Paia's spooky stories are setting the stage for the quasi-supernatural event that is to follow, namely the quake and the tsunami. Louie, by not participating in the story circle, is asserting his individuality and demonstrating, with his skillful use of the hunting knife, that he has already crossed the threshold into manhood. When the



Reverend tells a story about the night marchers all the boys except Louie are scared stiff.

.

That night Dylan is awakened by bugs crawling on him, and then a bit later he sees the two dogs once again, eerily silhouetted against a full moon. He takes this to be an omen of things to come, and so with all the foreshadowing that has been going on, the reader has a distinct sense of impending doom.

The next day Dylan and Casey go swimming and encounter a friendly shark with a mysterious hole in its fin. More strange happenings! The two boys are scared, but when Louie joins the boys he makes fun of their fear and calls them typical haoles.

Now the boys have to swim back to the beach. But the shark is circling. Is he getting ready to make a meal of them? Louie, full of confident bravado, jumps in and swims to shore after scaring the shark away with a splash of his hand. Now it's Dylan and Casey's turn. Scared stiff, they swim for shore and fortunately are not approached by the shark. They make it to safety and Louie grudgingly admits that they have shown at least a little bit of moxie.



# Chapters 13 - 15

## Chapters 13 - 15 Summary

Dylan and Casey, thoroughly spooked by their encounter with the mystery shark, decide to swim at the crack where it will be safe and secluded. They're having a nice peaceful swim and—sloop! A rock lands in the water near them. Of course it is Louie, pitching rocks from above, not at them, but merely near them, to give them a scare. More harassment and squabbling follows as the boys square off. Then Dylan spots a man on horseback, high up on the cliff, and behind the man another man leading a packhorse.

"Paniolos?" Casey ventures. (Paniolo: Hawaiian cowboy.) But there aren't any cows around here, Dylan counters. The riders approach, and the boys meet the lead rider, Masa, an affable man of fifty whose skin has been weathered by a lifetime spent outdoors. He explains to the boys that he and the others have come from a distant ranch to try their luck at fishing. Masa is a man of the soil who radiates a sort of folk wisdom. He's Hawaiian and speaks a dialect that sounds natural and appealing. The boys like him right away.

Masa explains calmly that the shark they encountered is named Fred, and has been hanging around for 200 years or more. The boys don't know whether to believe Masa's story or not. The man seems to move from myth to reality with no boundary between. Dylan tells Masa about spotting the mysterious dogs. Masa allows that this was probably a warning of some sort. But when Dylan remarks that one of the dogs was small and white, Masa perks up his ears. "Pele," he murmurs.

That night all gather around the campfire, including Mr. Bellows and Reverend Paia, as well as Masa and his sidekick, Cappy, a round-faced smiley guy. They discuss the significance of the small white dog, and Masa tells the story of Pele, the ancient Hawaiian goddess who lives in a volcano. She may appear to humans from time to time as a beautiful young woman or as a small white dog. "When she gets angry she shakes the earth and the ground opens up and fire comes out." He goes on to say that when you see a small white dog in a desolate place such as Halape, you can be pretty sure a volcano is going to blow. Mr. Bellows, ever pragmatic, objects: "This is legend, not fact." "Oh no," Masa says calmly, "Pele is very present, very real..."

## Chapters 13 - 15 Analysis

In this chapter group we meet a man who is possibly the most interesting character in the book. His name is Masa and he is a Paniolo, a Hawaiian cowboy. He and his pals have journeyed from a distant ranch to do some fishing. Masa is a man of the soil who radiates a sort of folk wisdom. He's an almost shamanistic presence and the boys take to him immediately.



Masa tells the boys about shark they encountered. The shark's name is Fred, and he has lived in this particular location for 200 years or more. Sensing that Masa has an inside track on supernatural happenings, Dylan tells the charismatic Paniolo about the two mysterious dogs that keep popping up. Masa informs them that the dogs are an omen, but he's not sure what it may mean. But when Dylan informs Masa that one of the dogs was small and white, he quickly gets a handle on things and tells the boys that the small white dog is Pele.

Now the question becomes, who is Pele? That night as the boys are gathered around the campfire Masa tells the story of Pele, the ancient Hawaiian goddess who lives in a volcano. Pele is a shape shifter who may appear to humans from time to time as a beautiful young woman or as a small white dog. When Pele gets angry she is capable of shaking the earth or causing a mountain to belch fire, Masa informs the thoroughly spooked lads. And further, when you see a small white dog on the mountain, you can be reasonably sure a volcanic eruption is on the menu. Mr. Bellows tries to pooh pooh the story so as not to frighten the boys by asserting that the Pele tale is pure legend, but Masa assures them that Pele is perfectly real.



# Chapters 16 - 18

## Chapters 16 - 18 Summary

Later that night after he turns in Dylan can't stop thinking about Masa's warning. What if Pele is real, and the small white dog is a warning? Finally he drops off but is awakened by the howling dogs. "This place is really beginning to creep me out," he says. He manages to go back to sleep.

Sometime later Dylan and Casey wake up with a start. The ground under them is rolling! An earthquake. The two pop up and hurry out of the shelter. A horse whinnies and they see two flashlight beams. Mr. Bellows and the Reverend are poking around in the dark checking on everybody. The quake by now has subsided and all is calm. "Just the earth releasing some pressure," Mr. Bellows says. "No damage done." How big do you think it was, Dylan asks. "Not big. Two point five, maybe three."

The boys go back to their shelter and conk off. Time for some much needed sleep.

Then it really hits—the big one. The earth opens up, groans, explodes. Casey and Dylan are thrown around like pebbles. They no longer know which way is up or down. The shelter's walls cave in. Dylan loses his glasses, but finds them again thanks to the fishing cord with which he tied them around his neck earlier on. The boys manage to get out of the collapsing shelter, but the ground is in motion. Boulders are exploding, horses are shrieking. "The earth was sucking me down, down. I tried to scream but nothing came out. Casey bounced into me, and the earth tossed us back up."

Finally the shaking subsides. Casey is badly wounded, a deep cut on his knee. Louie and Mike appear. Zach is lost, they announce. Just as they are congratulating themselves for having survived they feel the earth coming back to life. They're going to get hit again. But this time it's different. The land rolls up and up, then falls, and they fall with it. "Then everything broke apart, sand slipping through cracks, the dirt, the rocks, the coconut grove." Everything is sinking. Then the ocean rushes in. Tsunami!

## Chapters 16 - 18 Analysis

Up to this point the boys and we, the readers, have been inundated with omens and signs of impending disaster. Now the time has come. The devastating night begins when Dylan is awakened by the howling dogs. He's completely creeped out but manages to go back to sleep. But not for long. A bit later he wakes up to find that the ground is shaking. But they learn that it was just a mild tremor, and Mr. Bellows informs that it was around two point five on the Richter Scale, nothing really to worry about.

The boys go back to sleep, but with a false sense of security, because now the Big One hits. The earth opens up and the boys are thrown here and there like straws in the wind. When the shaking finally subsides, Casey is injured and another of the boys, Zach, is

lost. But no sooner have the boys gotten their bearings once again than the earth begins to tremble and the ocean rushes in. Tsunami! What follows is complete chaos and we don't know, until we get to the next chapter, whether the boys will survive.



# Chapters 19 - 21

## Chapters 19 - 21 Summary

Calm has been restored but not everyone is accounted for. Casey, injured, stays behind with Masa while Louie and Dylan, working together at last, go off in search of the missing members of the troop. Dylan has lost his glasses and can hardly see his hand in front of his face, but he toughs it out.

The two come upon Reverend Paia, wedged in a crevice. He's breathing, but his arm is broken. With the Reverend is an unconscious Tad. "He swallowed a lot of ocean, but he's alive." Dylan and Louie carry Tad and the Reverend up to what's left of the camp where Reverend Paia is joined by his son Mike.

Leaving the wounded in the care of Masa and the others, Louie and Dylan strike out in pitch darkness to find Mr. Bellows, Zach, Sam and Masa's friend Lenny. As they head down the trail with Louie in the lead, Louie stumbles upon Dylan's lost glasses! The frames are bent and one lens is cracked, but what the heck. It's a new lease on life for Dylan.

The two plunge on, fearing the worst, as dawn comes up. Presently they come upon Lenny, trapped in a pool, his two broken legs pinioned under rocks. They manage to extricate him and they carry him to a patch of dry sand and plunk him down. Fortunately at this juncture Masa, on horseback, comes along takes Lenny back to camp. Louie and Dylan continue their search for Mr. Bellows, Sam and Zach.

Louie spots two figures far out at sea clinging to an air mattress: Mr. Bellows and one of the boys, they can't tell which. Louie, as noted, is a poor swimmer, so Dylan is elected. Dylan gauges the distance. He figures it's five times farther than he has ever swum. And what about sharks? But no matter. He has to do it. He goes for it, fighting exhaustion, shadowed by a shark, certain he's going to die. Then he sees a hole in the shark's fin. It's Fred! Is Fred guiding him, watching over him perhaps?

Dylan reaches the air mattress, and kicks back to shore with the precious cargo, Mr. Bellows and the boy, who turns out to be Sam.

## Chapters 19 - 21 Analysis

As this chapter group opens we find that the savage tsunami has subsided and Dylan is safe, but some of the lads are missing. Louie and Dylan bond as they go in search of the missing boys. Dylan loses his glasses and though he can hardly see he continues bravely on, intent on rescuing anyone who may have survived.

First Dylan and Louie find Reverend Paia and Tad and get them back to the safety of the camp, then they set out in the darkness in search of Mr. Bellows, Zach and Sam. As



they proceed along the trail Louie miraculously finds Dylan's glasses, cracked and bent, but serviceable, and Dylan is overjoyed.

Presently the boys spot Mr. Bellows and Sam clinging to an air mattress some distance out at sea. Since Louie is—inexplicably—a poor swimmer, it falls to Dylan to go out and fetch them. Dylan is a good swimmer, but the two clinging to the air mattress are way out there, much farther than Dylan has ever swum. And Fred is out there, circling. Is that a good sign? Is Fred watching over them, or is he simply thinking about having a good meal? But there's no time to delay so Dylan plunges in, shark or no shark, reaches the floating air mattress and brings Mr. Bellows and Sam back to the safety of shore.

This, the reader feels pretty certain, is Dylan's passage from boyhood to manhood, especially since his action was mentored by alpha male Louie, who is both Dylan's hero and rival.





# Chapters 22 - 23

## Chapters 22 - 23 Summary

Mr. Bellows and Sam are pretty well battered by the sea and the sun. They're in danger of heatstroke. Louie goes for help while Dylan tries to set Sam up with a makeshift protective shelter. "I managed to get Sam into the crevice and sat him down in a pool of water...I secured the shirts to four pieces of driftwood and jammed the sticks into the cracks between the rocks above the crevice. They made a roof, shading Sam's head and chest.

But Mr. Bellows is still unprotected. What to do? Suddenly Dylan remembers the air mattress. Of course! He finds more sticks and makes a lean-to, propping the limp air mattress up by poking the sticks through the brass rope rings at the corners. "Crawl under this, Mr. Bellows." But the shelter is still not good enough. Dylan goes exploring and finds a sheet of plywood in the wreckage on the beach. With this he at last fashioned a temporary shelter that will effectively shield Sam and the Scoutmaster from the blazing sun. Exhausted, Dylan falls asleep.

"Senior Patrol loser," a voice calls. Dylan wakes up. The voice is Louie's. He's kidding, of course. The two are buddies now, having been through hell together. Mike is with Louie. And Louie has...water! But it's catchment water, stink water. "Is it boiled?" Dylan asks. "Nope," Louie answers. But who cares? It's water! "It felt like liquid silk flowing down my throat. I drank deep. If it made me sick, so what?" Mike and Sam and Mr. Bellows also take a drink of the life saving water.

Refreshed, the boys and Mr. Bellows start out for camp. They are joined by Masa, who informs them that Casey has found Zach. "Scared, but no broken bones." Everyone is now accounted for. A few wounded, but blessedly, no one killed. But now they're running out of water. Not even any stink water is left. Dylan and Louie decide that they must set out to get help.

## Chapters 22 - 23 Analysis

Now the action is slowing in the aftermath of the tsunami and the boys are concerned with mopping up and making sure everyone is safe and sound. Mr. Bellows and Sam are in danger of heatstroke, so Louie goes for help while Dylan sets the two of them up with a makeshift protective shelter.

Presently Louie returns with Mike and calls Dylan "Senior Patrol loser." But he's only kidding because Dylan and Louie are now buddies who have been through the fires together. As if to toast their triumph the two drink some stink water that hasn't even been boiled and find it tastes under the circumstances like liquid silk going down their throats.



Soon they are joined by the Hawaiian cowboy, Masa, who tells them that Casey has found Zach, and that everyone is now present and accounted for. But they're out of water, and Dylan and Louie are elected to go and get help.

So now we have witnessed Dylan's successful rite of passage as approved by his mentor, Louie, the alpha male, and toasted with a triumphant drink of stink water. It remains for the two now to work together to get help for the group.



# Chapters 24 - 27

## Chapters 24 - 27 Summary

Dylan and Louie start out on their grim march. To get to the road they must cross eleven miles of unbroken rock. It will be dark by the time they get there. Will anybody be driving on the road? Was there even a road left. There's nothing to do but march on. They'll find out when they get there.

At first it's easy going. Low bushes, brown grass and weeds. But when they hit the first lava flow the landscape changes to solid black rock. There are two kinds of lava that they'll have to cross: smooth pahoehoe and a'a, like shattered glass. Boots can take it, but it makes hamburger out of bare feet.

When they get to the a'a the boys take off their shirts and tie them around their feet to make raglike t-shirt shoes that look like floppy bandages. After an hour of trudging over the broken glass lava their makeshift shoes look like floppy bloody bandages. Still the lads press on. To take their minds off the pain, they talk about the howling dogs of the previous night. "They were trying to warn us," Louie says. Could be, Dylan thinks. "I was becoming a believer. Spirits, ghosts, howling dogs. It was a strange coincidence, Fred showing up like that and staying with Sam and Mr. Bellows until they were rescued.

Just when the boys think they can't walk another step over the savagely abrasive lava, they hear the roar of an engine. "Chopper!" Louie shouts. Skimming low over the coastline a United States Coast Guard helicopter is thumping toward them, the pulse of its rotors pounding the air. The boys shout and wave. The chopper tilts and descends, setting down on the lava. A guy in an orange flight suit jumps down and behind him, standing in the doorway, Dylan sees—Dad! "Never had that barrel chest and sea-captain's scowl looked so good to me."

The boys are soon loaded aboard the chopper and they zoom to the camp to pick up the others. "How big was the quake?" Louie asks Dylan's Dad. "Seven point two!" Dad replies. They pick up the others and Dylan and Louie say goodbye to Masa. "Louie put his hand on his heart. We'd never forget what we shared here at Halape."

## Chapters 24 - 27 Analysis

Dylan and Louie begin their arduous journey—eleven miles of first smooth and then broken volcanic rock that can make hamburger out of feet. It looks hopeless but the two plod grimly on. The lives of the others back at camp depend on their getting help. Dylan's boyhood is over. He's a man now, and doing a man's job. But what Louie and Dylan are attempting may be too much for even the bravest of men.

Just when it seems that Dylan and Louie can go no further they hear the roar of a chopper. A US Coast Guard helicopter lands and Dylan sees his Dad standing in the



doorway. This is a symbolic moment because Dylan is now united with his estranged father who has spent so much time at sea away from the family, and they are now together, not as father and son, but man to man.

Here the story ends, as Louie and Dylan climb aboard the chopper and they go off to pick up the other survivors. Dylan is now a man, and he and Louie are buddies, and there is every indication that joining the Scout Troop has been a healing experience for Louie. And the whole experience, the night on the mountain, the howling dogs, the savage tsunami and their deliverance, has been an experience they will never forget.



# Characters

## Dylan

The hero-narrator, Dylan is an eighth grader. He's a Boy Scout, and has just been elected Senior Troop Leader. Dylan is tall and strong, but is next to blind without his glasses. As the boys prepare to go on a hike to the lava flow, Dylan knows that he must prove his leadership qualities, no matter what the odds. Dylan represents the typical adolescent boy and is the reader's way into the story, since he personifies many of what we may presume are the young adult reader's traits. In a sense we might think of Dylan as a tragic hero. Since he is tall, strong and smart, but has one flaw, namely his faulty eyesight. It is this defect which makes him seem more human to us, the readers, because he mirrors our own lack of perfection. Dylan is hard-wired to emulate the squeaky clean super masculine role models who figure largely in his life, his dad and his scoutmaster, Mr. Bellows, but during the course of the hike he encounters two other would-be role models who are quite different in that they do not fit the standard mold: Louie Domingo, a boy from the wrong side of the tracks and Masa, a charismatic Hawaiian cowboy.

Louie Domingo may be seen as Dylan's shadow figure, his double, a figure who represents areas of personality that Dylan has suppressed or that have been suppressed due to his upbringing. Louie is much more at home in the natural world than Dylan. We could even go so far as to say that Louie represents the natural man and Dylan the civilized man. Since Dylan is on a course that will lead him from boyhood to manhood, it makes sense for him, and for the readers, to ask, what sort of a man will he be? The answer, if Dylan chooses to incorporate Louie's qualities into his persona-to-be, is a larger and more highly evolved man than either of the boys could have become had they evolved in a sterile environment, so to speak. It is precisely Louie's slovenly, casual and off the wall attitude that Dylan needs to add to his repertoire, and Louie needs to add some of Dylan's structure to his.

Masa, the Hawaiian cowboy, may be seen as Dylan's mentor or co-mentor, along with Mr. Bellows (Dad's "duplicate"). Masa represents the irrational elements which Dylan needs to incorporate. Masa is essentially a shaman, Shamanism is increasingly important in today's world because as the world becomes more and more mechanized and structured, the shaman may represent the last hope of gaining entrance into a world that is hidden from those who dwell in ordinary reality. In the other dimension lurk powers that are both helpful and malevolent. Its rules are not the rules of our world; they are more like the rules that operate in myth and dream. Masa has the key that enables one to enter this world, and this is why it is important for Dylan to absorb and incorporate Masa's qualities in his psyche if he is to be anything like the sort of complete man the 21st century requires.



## Casey Bellows

Dylan's best friend, is a freckle-faced, shaggy-haired redhead. He has a raspy voice. Small in stature, but brave and superficially tough, he plays eighth grade football. We can think of Casey as Dylan's double, although he ranks slightly below Dylan in the all-important adolescent pecking order. He is shorter than Dylan and very able, and entirely devoted to Dylan. We can think of many figures in world literature who have a sidekick such as Casey. Don Quixote's Sancho Panza comes readily to mind, and turning to American Pop we have the Lone Ranger and Tonto. It is significant that Casey's Dad, Mr. Bellows, is the scoutmaster because this gives Casey an edge he would not otherwise have, a sort of pipeline to the world of macho men the boys are seeking to enter.

## Mr. Bellows

Casey's Dad, is the scoutmaster, a Hilo Police detective and an ex-marine who stands six-one and is in great shape. He has a white sidewall military style haircut and sports a Simper Fidelis tattoo on his right forearm. He's a born leader and tries to set a good example for the boys. Mr. Bellows represents the type of man the boys have been conditioned to want to be, but the ordeal of the hike leads the boys, or at least Dylan, to widen his perspective when it comes to selecting a suitable role model. Is Mr. Bellows a suitable role model? On the surface, yes, if you want to become a marine or a police officer. But as events unfold we see, through Dylan's eyes, that Mr. Bellows is perhaps a bit too rigid, too structured, to be an entirely desirable role model. The fact that he is always called "Mr. Bellows" indicates a certain rigidity and lack of empathy. We sense that this man, however courageous and upright, is out of touch with his feelings, that he should loosen up a little bit and stop treating his life and the boy's lives as if they were on a high-risk military mission. What's wrong with having a little fun, the reader feels like asking.

To the casual student of literature it might seem that Mr. Bellows is presented as a double to Dylan's Dad, but this is not the case, because the double in literature incorporates the protagonist's opposing tendencies. The double is a shadow figure. But Mr. Bellows is practically identical to Dad, and thus serves more as a surrogate than a double. Mr. Bellows is Dad's stand in. Dad is absent; he is the absentee father, so Mr. Bellows, Dad's "twin," serves in the story as Dylan's surrogate father.

## Louie Domingo

Louie is a boy from the wrong side of the tracks. Because of the hardscrabble life he has led, he's much more streetwise than the other lads. He's almost pure Hawaiian and is something of a racist, referring to the other boys in the troop as haoles, white boys. At fifteen he is tall, handsome, charismatic, and although new to the troop, he is undeniably the alpha male.



Louie Domingo may be seen as Dylan's shadow figure, his double, a figure who represents areas of personality that Dylan has suppressed or that have been suppressed due to his upbringing. Louie is much more at home in the natural world than Dylan.

## Dad

Dylan's Dad, is a sort of absentee father. A big ship captain, he sails all over the world and is rarely home. Dylan's relations with his Dad are somewhat strained, but he admires him. Dad, as we have noted, is a surrogate to Mr. Bellows, and vice versa. In the story, Mr. Bellows serves as Dylan's surrogate Dad until, at the very end, Dad almost magically appears, to proudly welcome Dylan to the world of adult men.

## Sam

Eleven years old, Sam is the smallest boy in the troop. He is half Chinese and half French. A tough kid despite his diminutive size. He has spiky black hair and a sleepy look. Sam, like Zach and Tad, is not a developed character. He is more or less a plot device and seems excessively flat, little more than a name attached to a few descriptive words. Like the other two flat characters, he has been assigned "defining character traits," such as "tough," and "half French," which serve as a sort of shorthand to give him a sense of life.

## Zach

Twelve years old. Skinny and a bit short on common sense. He easily gets into trouble.

## Masa

Masa is a paniolo, a cowboy, pure Hawaiian, a man of the soil. He radiates a simple folk wisdom and moves easily between the spirit world and the real world without any sense of boundary. An almost shamanistic presence, he is a foil to the relentless pragmatism of Mr. Bellows.

Masa, the Hawaiian cowboy, may be seen as Dylan's mentor or co-mentor, along with Mr. Bellows (Dad's "duplicate"). Masa represents the irrational elements which Dylan needs to incorporate. Masa is essentially a shaman.

## Lenny

Lenny, also a paniolo, is Masa's pal. We don't learn much about him, but like Masa he is a man of the soil. He is good natured, wise, and entirely devoted to Masa.

## **Pele**

Pele, an ancient Hawaiian goddess who lives in a volcano and shakes things up when she gets angry.





## Objects/Places

### The Quartermaster box

The Quartermaster box holds everything the troop will need for the outing—a giant cooler and a big cook stove, lanterns, ropes and machetes and first-aid kits.

### Dylan's glasses

Dylan's glasses, without which he's practically blind. They play a big part in Dylan's journey.

### The wall in Casey's garage

This is where members of the troop as well as the scoutmasters measure and mark their height. Mr. Bellows, the scoutmaster, is tallest, at six foot one.

### Mauna Loa

Mauna Loa, Hawaii's mountain volcano. The troop drives in Mr. Bellows's Ford van to a point high on the mountain's flank in preparation for their hike to the secluded beach below.

### Halape

Halape, a secret spot frequented only by fishermen. There is a coconut grove and a few rude shelters for sleeping. Below is a gorgeous white sand beach.

### The crack

The crack is a deep fissure in the volcanic rock that shelters a pristine hidden pool.

### The Scoutmaster's air mattress

The Scoutmaster's air mattress is used first for sleeping, then as a flotation device that saves Mr. Bellows and Sam from drowning, then, safely back on shore, as a shelter from the sun for the injured man and boy.



## **Dylan's canteen**

Dylan's canteen is filled with fresh water which he carefully hoards because he's unwilling to drink the "stink water" that has collected on the roof of the shelter. Later, when he has been toughened up by the earthquake experience and the fresh water is gone, he drinks stink water from his canteen and declares: "It felt like liquid silk flowing down my throat."

## **The Coast Guard chopper**

The Coast Guard chopper is important because it not only airlifts the troop back to civilization, but also because it is instrumental in reuniting Dylan with his Dad.

## **The Hilina Pali sign**

The Hilina Pali sign atop Mauna Loa that reads: "Hilina Pali—formed by the downward movement of great sections of the mountainside." It's an ominous note, and one to be taken seriously because "downward movement of great sections of the mountainside" is exactly what happens a day later when the earthquake hits.



# Themes

## Coming of age

"Night of the Howling Dogs" is a classic coming of age tale. The adolescent egos are burgeoning and the boys are sparring it out, trying to find their place in the male hierarchy. Mr. Bellows is the alpha male, with Louie not far behind. A natural disaster provides a test of courage for the lads, and for Dylan a sink-or-swim passage to manhood.

## Respect

Respect is a primary theme in the story. Scoutmaster Mr. Bellows, the ex-marine, spells it out when he tells the boys, "Respect for nature, your elders, your country, your team, your parents, yourself and each other." The boys do in fact show great respect for their scoutmaster and the other adults such as the Reverend, and also for the newcomer, Masa. Respect for nature is instilled in them by the catastrophic event in which they are caught up. Respect is the quality that Dylan seeks to elicit from Louie Domingo, his idol/adversary. He wants Louie to respect him, and in the end, by his heroic swim to the distant air mattress, he earns and receives it.

## Racism

Racism is a theme in the book. Louie, the nearly-pure Hawaiian, refers to the other lads as haoles, white boys, perhaps because his disadvantaged background has implanted in him a need to feel superior. His attitude stands out, because several of the other lads are a mixture of Chinese, Filipino and other races, and neither Dylan nor Casey, who are white, would dream of making racist remarks about them.

By placing the racial slurs in the mouth of his ethnic character, Louie Domingo, the author isolates racism as an element of modern life. If the white characters voiced racial slurs we would have something more like the conventional formulaic plot in which the dark-skinned individual is the victim of discrimination. By reversing the field, Salisbury shows us, along with the boys, that underprivileged ethnic people can be every bit as prejudiced as whites who live a moneyed and privileged lifestyle. To Louie's credit, he is halfway kidding as he delivers the racial slurs, just as he is halfway kidding about everything, and this is the result of a somewhat cynical or sardonic attitude which is in turn the product of the hardscrabble life he has been obliged to live. The bottom line is, we, as readers, can understand why Louie, out of his sense of being ostracized and his loner's defensive armor, might make hurtful remarks, but if similar remarks had been delivered by the white boys who really have no ax to grind, we would probably have been uncomfortable with such talk and might have lost respect for Dylan and the other white characters.



## What is man's proper place in the web of life

The double is an important theme in "Night of the Howling Dogs". There are a great many works concerning the theme of the double, a device, in fiction, which enables us to examine and explore the conflicts of the personality. The use of the double, for example, expresses the opposition between good and evil as in Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". In "The Picture of Dorian Gray", by Oscar Wilde, beauty and ugliness are contrasted, the latter due to the passing of time and immoral life. In this novel, the image of a portrait is the extension of the self of the protagonist. In Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein", both characters, Victor Frankenstein and the monster, share the two opposite and complementary sides of the human personality. They are two separate beings, but existing in a relationship of interdependence. In "Night of the Howling Dogs", Louie Domingo, the boy from the wrong side of the tracks, is Dylan's double, and his shadow figure. Louie embodies everything that Dylan has shut out of his consciousness and out of his mode of living because of the repressive nature of his upbringing. He represents the dark side of Dylan's nature, a side of which he is largely unconscious. This is why Dylan is attracted to Louie and at the same time repelled by him. He is, in a sense, looking at his own face in a mirror, which, up until this point, was too dark to reflect an image. Now, as Dylan gazes in the mirror of his relationship with life and with the other boys in his peer group, it is Louie Domingo's image that he sees. He is just beginning to realize that he is larger than he supposed, that he contains more, and that his shadow self must be brought into the light of consciousness if he is to realize his full potential.

It might seem to the casual reader that Casey is Dylan's double, but Casey is too much like Dylan to fulfill the role of embodying Dylan's missing qualities. Casey is rather a role model in miniature, a miniaturized version of Mr. Bellows, who is presented as the primary role model. Mr. Bellows is the man the boys must strive to emulate. Or, at least that's how it seemed before Louie Domingo arrived on the scene. In Louie, both Dylan and the readers see an expanded view of the ideal of masculinity. Louie has a lot more rough edges than Mr. Bellows, and Dylan perceives, as we do, that these rough edges of his make him more imperfect and consequently more human than the picture perfect Mr. Bellows, who, by contrast seems sterile, rigid and unimaginative. Is this the sort of man Dylan wants to become? Or would he rather be more like Louie, rough edges and all? The implication is, as the story ends, that Dylan will incorporate Louie's qualities, blending them with those of Mr. Bellows, to form a persona that incorporates the scoutmaster's best traits but encompasses a wider apprehension of life and a more human aspect.

What is man's proper place in the web of life? This is one of the author's most important themes. As the characters discover, the forces of nature far exceed man's ability to deal with them, to say nothing of man's ability to comprehend the workings of the universe. The first earthquake, for example, is bearable and not terribly out of the ordinary and the boys are comfortable with it, following upon the initial shock. But when the big one hits, compounded by a tsunami, the boys are helpless pawns caught up in the awesome power of nature's might.



The human being, like an animal, a tree or a bird, is part of the web of life and his survival and quality of life depend on working with nature rather than trying to control nature. The fact that Pele is angry should give us cause for reflection. We may infer that the boys are in fact to be sacrificed at the altar of the angry goddess as tribute from a world too busy to propitiate Nature for having offended. But we also feel that the boys have been caught up in a whirlwind of destruction as a warning, and to instill in them a deeper respect for nature than perhaps an earlier generation possessed. That they survive means that they "lived to tell the tale," and will henceforward live in such a way as to not further offend nature and disrespect the natural world.

## Search for your roots

Another primary theme in "Night of the Howling Dogs" is the search for the father. In a passage from "The Power of Myth" mythologist Joseph Campbell speaks of the fundamental role which the search for the father has held in civilization. Campbell maintains that while the mother is "the more immediate parent" and as a "source of one's being," poses no "mystery," the father is not so immediate and, thus, poses a mystery—a mystery mingled with the mystery of one's own being and the "wisdom and mystery of the world."

As an example in world literature, we have Telemachus' search for his father, Odysseus. Telemachus sets out to find his father so that he can either confirm his father's death or survival. He is told to do so by Athena disguised as Mentor. If he hears that his father is still alive, he can wait for at least another 12 months. If he hears that Odysseus is dead, he can mourn his father's death and marry off his mother.

In "Night of the Howling Dogs", Dylan's search for the father is implied rather than acted out. Dad is the classic absentee father, away at sea most of the time. It is not stated directly how his father's chronic absence affects Dylan, but we may suspect that he feels bereft, as did Telemachus. Every boy needs a father, and every boy wants to impress his father. Dylan is no exception. But Dylan's problem is that his father is simply not around. So, when he undertakes the hike, which is a rite of passage, in the company of his mentor, Mr. Bellows, who is serving as his surrogate father, he is actually searching for his real father, Dad, or to be more accurate, for a meaningful relationship with his father.

In a sense, Dylan cannot be reunited with Dad until he has completed the passage from boy to man by passing through the trial of the storm. Only after this baptism by fire does Dad almost magically appear in the helicopter and welcome his son to the world of men. It is important to note that Dad does not in any way solve Dylan's problems, those of helping his mates to survive and of crossing the lava beds to find help. All this Dylan has accomplished on his own without any help from Dad. Dad's appearance is a confirmation. Dylan has passed through the fires, he has made the grad, and Dad is there to confirm and recognize the youngster's achievement.

# Style

## Point of View

"Night of the Howling Dogs" is told via the first person point of view. Dylan is both the hero and the narrator. The first person narrative lends an immediacy to the story that is not possible with the more conventional third person omniscient point of view. This immediacy and point-blank quality is desirable and necessary because we, the readers, need to be in Dylan's shoes if we are to appreciate the seriousness and adventure of this landmark event in the youngster's life, namely his coming of age as he makes the passage from boy to man.

The first person point of view differs from the objective point of view, the third person point of view and the omniscient and limited omniscient point of view in several ways. In a story told through the first person point of view the narrator participates in the action of the story and also tells what is going on as seen through his or her eyes. When reading stories in the first person, we need to realize that what the narrator is recounting might not be the objective truth, for the simple reason that the first person narrator's reportage is subjective rather than objective. We therefore, as readers need question the trustworthiness of the accounting, as well as take into consideration the age, educational level and social status of the narrator. In the objective point of view, by contrast, the author tells what happens without stating more than can be inferred from the story's action and dialogue. The narrator never discloses anything about what the characters think or feel, remaining a detached observer, and he or she, unlike the first person narrator, is not a participant in the story. When it comes to the third person point of view, the narrator likewise does not participate in the action of the story as one of the characters, but lets us know exactly how the characters feel. We learn about the characters through this outside voice. For example, "Dylan felt somewhat uneasy as they set off across the lava flow." Finally, in the omniscient point of view, the narrator knows and reports the inner life of all the characters from a godlike perspective. A well-known example of a novel told through the omniscient point of view is Tolstoy's War and Peace. The omniscient point of view is best and most frequently employed in a novel of epic scale.

## Setting

The setting of the book is the great outdoors, the natural world of Hawaii. It's a breathtakingly beautiful world, magnificent, inspiring, but also dangerous and unpredictable, as the characters learn. The goddess Pele is the symbol of that world in that she is both benevolent and vengeful by turns. She commands respect, and will not tolerate infractions. In this, she personifies the Earth itself and serves as a spokesperson for the Earth when she upbraids humans for their disrespectful treatment of the natural world.



## Language and Meaning

The language of the book is simple enough to be suitable for younger readers. The dialogue is thoroughly artificial in that the usual four-letter words spoken by real life adolescent boys eager to prove their masculinity never cross the lips of the characters. Nor do these lads whose youthful hormones are raging ever speak about s-e-x. Nevertheless, within the context of the squeaky clean, sanitized world in which the characters appear to exist, the dialog works well enough. The use of Hawaiian dialect in the mouths of Louie and Masa lends sparkle and authenticity to the conversations. Exposition is kept to a minimum, and much of what the reader need to know to move the story along is skillfully rendered through dialogue.

The author of *Night of the Howling Dogs* matches sentence structure and paragraphing to his audience. As young people's emotions, intellect, and interests change, a writer's word choice and sentence structure must adjust. Short declarative sentences and frequent paragraph breaks are employed to good advantage, rather than the more complex sentence structure and longer paragraphs that would typically create a more mature voice for older readers.

Salisbury readily embraces immaturity. Dylan and his friends are primarily focused inward at this pivotal time of their lives, with conflicts stemming from that. They're struggling to find out who they are, first and foremost. The author doesn't allow his characters to sound too self-aware by analyzing themselves or others in their dialogue. He lets them judge and act quickly, harshly, and wrongly — and then face the consequences. His characters, once they have crossed this critical watershed from boy to man, will look outward as they try to find their places in the world and realize that their actions have consequences in the grander scheme of life, and he allows them to make those choices for themselves.

## Structure

"*Night of the Howling Dogs*" is comprised of 27 chapters, each approximately eight pages long. Each chapter has a heading such as "Steep Slope to Nowhere" (Chapter 5) that gives the reader an idea of what to expect. The stress is on action with a minimal exposition. A full-on action plot contains a subplot dealing with personal conflicts between the characters. In each of the chapters an incident is presented and resolved, but future developments are also seeded or planted so that we have a forewarning of what we will be dealing with in subsequent chapters. This way, the reader always knows a little more than the characters about what is going to happen.

In this novel there is an organic unity to the relation of the structure of the novel to the composition of each scene within the story. The novel is a sequence of scenes, followed by sequels. Each scene is constructed in the pattern of the novel, with a beginning, a middle and an end. Each element of the scene has the same dramatic purpose as the corresponding element of the story, and it all works together as a cohesive whole.



## Quotes

"Once a marine, always a marine."

"His eyes were the color of copper, unusual for a guy as dark as he was. They gave him a kind of power, like magnets, sucking you in."

"When I told Dad I was the new SPL, he put his hand on my shoulder and said, Now you're talking my language."

"Senior Patrol Leader, take us in."

"This place could be crawling with spirits."

"Watch out tonight when you go out to make shi-shi, ah?"

"The ocean was calling me...Dylan, come swim."

"Small sharks still have sharp teeth. Maybe you don't mind losing your foot, but I do."

"The solid earth turned fluid. It groaned, somewhere far below."

"Pu'u Kapukapu was coming apart, huge chunks of cliff falling away in the darkness."

"I'd walk around this island six times to find them."

"I stepped over pieces of our old lives, stuff strewn everywhere. It looked as if a camping gear factory had exploded."

"Flying out, we huddled like the wounded being evacuated from a war zone."





## Topics for Discussion

Why do you think Dylan is obsessed with Louie Domingo?

Comment on Dylan's relationship with his "absentee" Dad.

Is Louie Domingo a "diamond in the rough?" Comment.

What role do Dylan's glasses play in his journey and what do they symbolize?

What role does Masa play in the troop's coming of age experience?

What message do the howling dogs convey?

Who is Pele, and what is her role in the drama?

What does the book have to say about the forces of nature and about man's place in the web of life?

What is the significance of the hole in the friendly shark's fin?

What qualities does Dylan manifest as he makes the journey from boy to man?