

The Reivers Study Guide

The Reivers by William Faulkner

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Reivers Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Chapter 1.....	6
Chapter 2.....	9
Chapter 3.....	11
Chapter 4.....	14
Chapter 5.....	16
Chapter 6.....	19
Chapter 7.....	21
Chapter 8.....	23
Chapter 9.....	26
Chapter 10.....	29
Chapter 11.....	32
Chapter 12.....	34
Chapter 13.....	37
Characters.....	41
Objects/Places.....	44
Social Sensitivity.....	46
Techniques.....	47
Themes.....	48
Themes/Characters.....	51
Style.....	52
Quotes.....	54
Adaptations.....	56



[Key Questions.....](#) 57

[Topics for Discussion.....](#) 59

[Literary Precedents.....](#) 60

[Related Titles.....](#) 61

[Copyright Information.....](#) 62



Plot Summary

The Reivers, set in the early 1900's in the South, centers on a group of individuals from Jefferson, Mississippi, who are nearly family. Lucius Priest, an eleven-year-old boy, his family's retainer, Boon Hogganback, and Ned McCaslin, the family's black family member and hired help, travel to Memphis in Grandfather's stolen vehicle while Lucius' parents attend a funeral in the North. As Boon and Lucius begin their time at a bordello, however, Ned's decision to trade the vehicle for a horse, intending to race the animal, takes them all on a downward spiral into deceit, lies and corruption.

Through the journey, Lucius learns of racism, sexism, jealousy, corruption, and betrayal. With his friend's guidance, however, Lucius also learns of morality, self-respect, dignity, and honor. *The Reivers* is a beautiful novel, cataloging four days in the life of a young, impressionable boy, through whose journey readers experience both the positive and the negative aspects of simply being alive.

Lucius Priest is an eleven-year-old boy living in virtually rural Jefferson, Mississippi in 1905. When his mother's father passes away, however, Boon Hogganback, the family's retainer, convinces Lucius to assist him in stealing his Grandfather's vehicle for a trip to Memphis while the rest of the family attends a funeral. Lucius, tempted by non-Virtue, silently agrees, and the two set off for the urban city, unwittingly carrying with them the family's black family member and hired hand, Ned McCaslin.

On arriving in Memphis, Ned departs to meet his own people while Boon takes Lucius to a bordello in which his girlfriend, Corrie, is employed. That evening, however, Ned returns with the horrifying news that he has traded the stolen vehicle for a stolen horse, which he plans to race in Parsham. Through the assistance of Miss Reba, the bordello's primary caretaker, Corrie, Boon's girlfriend, her nephew, corrupted Otis, and Sam, Corrie's connection to the railroad, the group smuggle the horse onto a baggage car and arrive in Parsham.

Once there, Ned and Lucius travel the home of Uncle Parsham, a black older gentleman known to Sam, while Boon organizes the horse race. A local officer, Butch, arrives at the house to see the horse, and takes an interest in Corrie which clearly angers Boon. Corrie, determined to quit prostitution after Lucius fights for her honor with Otis, succeeds in struggling against the officer's advances.

The day of the race, Lucius loses the first heat, but is unable to race the second or third, since Ned, Boon, and Lightning, the horse, are taken into custody by Butch and the local constable. Unbeknownst to the constable, Butch is using the situation to force Corrie into a sexual situation with him. While the men are released once Corrie has submitted, Boon winds up back in jail following an attack on Corrie, as well as on Butch.

Back at the racetrack, Ned and Lucius try again to win the race, this time succeeding. However, as they near the exit to the track, they see Grandfather waiting for them. Ned explains that a relative, Bobo, and his involvement caused the entire situation with a



white man to whom he was indebted. In an attempt to spare his relative's future, Ned agreed to steal a horse, and force the horse to run, using a family secret. The secret, learned at the end of the novel, is to feed the horse sardines.

Throughout his journey, Lucius learns much of the world, including the consequences of non-Virtue, as well as the power of racism, sexism, prejudice, and greed. However, through Ned's gentle guidance and Boon's opposite actions, Lucius also learns of honor, Virtue, glory, and humility. Through the eyes of an eleven-year-old boy caught up in the adventure of a lifetime, the novel tells of one group's journey through self-exploration and through the experience of being human in the early portion of the 20th century.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

The Reivers, set in the early 1900's in the South, centers on a group of individuals from Jefferson, Mississippi who are nearly family. Lucius Priest, an eleven-year-old boy, his family's retainer, Boon Hogganback, and Ned McCaslin, the family's black family member and hired help, travel to Memphis in Grandfather's stolen vehicle while Lucius' parents attend a funeral in the North. As Boon and Lucius begin their time at a bordello, however, Ned's decision to trade the vehicle for a horse, intending to race the animal, takes them all on a downward spiral into deceit, lies, and corruption.

Through the journey, Lucius learns of racism, sexism, jealousy, corruption, and betrayal. With his friend's guidance, however, Lucius also learns of morality, self-respect, dignity, and honor. *The Reivers* is a beautiful novel, cataloging four days in the life of a young, impressionable boy, through whose journey readers experience both the positive and the negative aspects of simply being alive.

Lucius Priest, now a grandfather, is speaking to his grandson, recounting an event from his youth. As an 11-year-old boy in the story, Lucius is responsible for collecting the freight bills generated by his father's livery stable for ten cents a week. This particular Saturday, he and his Father, Maury Priest, are sitting in the office when six-foot Boon Hogganback, one of the family's white retainers, leaps into the office. Dodging past Father, Boon attempts to access the bottom drawer of the desk where the livery stable pistol is kept. Father, knocked backwards on his chair, stomps at Boon's hands, and tells him to stop. When Boon asks Father if he will allow Boon to take the pistol to shoot Ludus, Father vehemently says no, and Boon runs out the door. While Father believes the situation to be resolved, Lucius knows it is not, and tells his father Boon has probably gone to borrow black stable worker John Powell's pistol. Leaping to his feet with Lucius behind him, Father runs to the stable, where stable hands John and Luster are helping Gabe, the blacksmith, shoe three of the stable mules.

Father knows that John keeps a pistol in his work jacket, which he purchased from his father when he was only twenty-one years old. While Father knows the existence of the pistol goes against the policy of the stable, he accepts its existence, as do the rest of the staff, including white stable assistant Mr. Ballott, Boon, the Negro drivers, Father, the cleaners, and even Lucius himself. Even Dan Grinnup, an older alcoholic who changed his name from Greiner following his family's demise, knows of the pistol. Lucius knows the unspoken agreement between Father and John is that the day Father has to acknowledge the existence of the pistol is the day he will have to ask John either not to bring the pistol, or to not come back to work.

Boon, however, is already running from the stable with John's pistol in hand. Gabe, the short but well built blacksmith, orders Luster to run and catch Ludus, but John notes that Boon's aim is terrible, and that Ludus is in no danger. Father tells John to call Sheriff Mr.



Hampton, while he, Lucius, and Luster run to the Square to stop Boon. According to Lucius' story, Ludus has recently found a girlfriend who lives six miles from town. The previous Monday as Boon came to relieve Mr. Ballott for the evening, all the teams were in the stable except Ludus'. Ballott told Boon to call when Ludus returned. Shortly thereafter, Ludus had returned to the stable without the team, stating a wheel had broken on the wagon.

According to Ludus, he stopped at Father's house, and Father told him drive the wagon into the pond, so the wheel would swell again against the rim, and so the mules could feed. Ludus stated he was supposed to return and fetch the team in the morning. While John certainly knew this to be a lie, Boon believed the story so did not call Ballott, since Father owns the mules. John, however, walked out the door to the end of the alley, and waited by Ludus' clearly undamaged wagon for him to return. The wagon was loaded with flour, coal oil, and peppermint candy. When Ludus returned, John simply told him to have the team back by the time Ballott came back in the morning.

While Ludus returned the mules before Ballott's arrival, both he and John had neglected to think that Boon might inform Ballott of the evening's events. Ballott sent for Ludus, and fired him. Ludus claimed Boon knew of his borrowing of the team, because he himself asked Ludus to go get a jug of whiskey. Boon denied this, stating that he told Ludus to bring him Uncle Cal Bookwright whiskey on his way back from getting the team, and that instead, Ludus brought him low quality whiskey. Ludus pointed out that Mack Winbush, proprietor of the whiskey, lived eight miles from town, and that he would not have been able to see his girlfriend if he traveled that far. Boon told Ballott that he did not need to pay Ludus a parting wage of two dollars, which was a standard week's pay, since Ludus owed him that for the whiskey he did not provide. Instead, Ludus was simply suspended for a week.

Father, Lucius, and Luster reach the square to stop Boon, but it is too late. Boon has already fired on Ludus five times, but has missed, and has instead grazed a young black woman nearby. Sheriff Hampton leads Luster and another black man to Doctor Peebody's office with the young woman, and is followed by Father, Boon, Ludus, the deputy, and Lucius. Down the hall from the doctor, the men enter the office of Judge Stevens.

Sheriff Hampton tells Boon to buy the young woman a new dress and a bag of candy, and to pay her father ten dollars, which should settle the matter for the family of the young girl. Hampton then tells Boon he is not sure what will settle the matter for him, and listens as Boon explains that Ludus has told Son Thomas, the youngest driver at the stable, that Boon is a "narrow-asted son of a bitch." Ludus claims not to have said this, stating he actually called Boon narrow headed. Judge Stevens points out that the second comment is worse, and Boon emotionally cries out that he, as a white man, should not have to endure such comments from a black man, but that he has no choice, since he cannot argue either statement, nor aim well enough to kill Ludus.

Father stands up abruptly, and tells the Sheriff to bond both men at one hundred dollars each. Father wants the bonds abrogated the minute either man does anything that goes



against Father's wishes. The judge agrees, and Father, Lucius, and Boon leave. As they walk back to the stable, Boon offers Father forty dollars as down payment and two years wages to allow Son Thomas, himself, and Ludus to be locked in an empty stall for an hour with one another. Wearily, Father replies that he will not allow it.

Chapter 1 Analysis

This section introduces many of the characters within the novel, as well as many of the themes used throughout the rest of the story. First, readers are introduced to eleven-year-old Lucius, who works part time for his father's livery stable as freight collector. His father, Maury, sees such work as vital to the building of a young man's character. Employing both white and black workers in 1905, and treating them nearly equally, Maury Priest is clearly a forward thinking individual, and Lucius' kind descriptions of the stable workers clearly shows he is following in his father's footsteps.

Additionally, Boon Hogganbeck, the white assistant stable foreman, is introduced in this section. Boon is clearly an emotional, prejudiced man, shown through his determination to locate a pistol following an insult by a black man, and through his comments pertaining to Ludus. Boon is portrayed in this chapter as a large, tall, white man who is not well educated or respected by the black workers of the stable, and is a retainer of the Priest family. When blacks question his pride and dignity, Boon clearly seeks revenge. Also introduced in this chapter are the remaining stable hands, including John Powell, Ludus, Gabe, Luster, and Mr. Ballott.

This chapter also introduces the theme of racial tension between the white and black populations of 1905, symbolized by the feud between Boon and Ludus, and the level of acceptable violence in the south against blacks, symbolized by the lack of real punishment for Boon following his accidental shooting of the young black girl. The themes in combination with Boon's clearly wild character and Lucius' insight about the world around him foreshadow the adventures of these characters later in the novel.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

After learning of the death of his mother's father, Lucius explains how Boon came to be a retainer of the family. First, Boon does not belong to simply the Priests, but rather to a conglomerate of three families, those of the Priests (including the McCaslins and Edmondses), Major de Spain, and General Compson. The agreement between the families was simply that whoever was nearest to Boon at the time action was required would be the one to perform the action needed. Boon had arrived at Major de Spain's hunting camp twenty miles from Jefferson one day when he was only twelve years old. Knowing that General Compson often got lost while attempting to find the hunting area of the camp, the men had Boon follow Compson to the hunting site to ensure he arrived safely. Thus, Boon had learned how to navigate new territories and had become the combined property, so to speak, of the three hunting families.

On mutual agreement, Boon had later joined the staff of the livery stable. He lived in a decent room at the Commercial Hotel, but it was the purchase of an automobile by Grandfather Priest, a banker, that changed Boon. According to Lucius, his grandfather had purchased an automobile, not because he wanted one, but because the president of a smaller bank had declared that no motorized vehicle could operate within the city limits. This decree followed the construction of a vehicle by Mr. Buffaloe, the local man responsible for the steam power plant.

When Grandfather Priest heard the smaller bank president had made the declaration, he was forced to purchase a vehicle to show his seniority. Grandfather did not want to drive it, and thus gave the responsibility to Boon, who alternately gave rides to members of the family. Washing it every day and caring for it, Boon had taken full responsibility of the vehicle. When Grandfather accidentally spit tobacco out the front window and splashed those in the back, including Grandmother, the family developed a screen to protect them. Grandfather realized the future of the automobile, and told his family that within twenty-five years, no road would be impassible by automobile. Now in May of 1905, Lucius learns of his grandfather's death in Bay St. Louis.

Chapter 2 Analysis

This chapter introduces two primary plot elements, those of the proprietorship of Boon and the history of Grandfather Priest's automobile. Clearly, Boon was abandoned by his true family early in life. Coincidentally, his appearance on the hunting grounds occurred at a time when his services were needed, and thus, Boon found a family and employment. It was through this employment that Boon learned to drive, and learned to care for vehicles.

This chapter foreshadows the theft of Priest's automobile by Boon later in the novel, since it is clear that he loves the car, and knows how to operate it well. Additionally, the death of Lucius' grandfather in another city suggests the possibility that Boon will be left in a position to care for the vehicle in the family's absence.

The story of Grandfather's purchase of the vehicle clearly shows the level of pride within the Priest family, as the purchase was done simply to prove Grandfather Priest's level of seniority within the town. Additionally, Grandmother Priest's reaction to the vehicle, that of fear, as well as disgust at her husband's tobacco chewing symbolizes the position of privileged women in the early 1900's. Women were not independent during this time, but were instead viewed as objects to be cared for.

This chapter also introduces the themes of industrialization, urbanization, and the promise of a motorized America. While Jefferson, the small town Lucius lives in, is clearly fighting the modern age, readers can sense through Grandfather's comments about the future of roads and of the stable that a change is inevitable. This concept of urbanization foreshadows Lucius and Boon's adventures later in the novel, as the small town men travel to Memphis, and experience urban and industrial life.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Lucius is collecting the freight bills the following Saturday when Boon enters the Farmer's Supply quickly, telling Lucius they have to hurry if "they" are to make the twenty-three train. Lucius, confused, asks Boon who needs to take the train, and Boon informs him that his grandfather has passed away in "Jackson or Mobile or wherever it is." When Lucius questions Boon's knowledge of towns, Boon states that wherever it is, be it Jackson, Mobile, or New Orleans, his parents have to make the train. Lucius reflects he should have known Boon had ideas, since he mentioned New Orleans, but did not think anything at the time.

When Lucius arrives at home, he discovers that his mother, father, grandfather, and grandmother are all going to the funeral. As a result, Lucius and his three siblings will stay with the Edmond's outside of town. Boon mentions that this means anyone attached to the automobile will be over three hundred miles away from it. Lucius realizes Boon is attempting to make him an accomplice. Lucius also admits that he is neither ignorant nor innocent in his youth, and that he, like all eleven-year-old young men, has envisioned such a crime long ago. Lucius believes that the apparent innocence of a child is simply a lack of appetite for the fruits of the crime, and that their apparent ignorance is merely their inability to commit the crime alone, which is simply a matter of size.

As the rest of the family enters the automobile for the trip to the train station, Boon mentions that he will need gas on the way back, and suggests that Lucius travel with them so he can assist. Lucius realizes how easy Boon is making the situation for him, and is somewhat resentful. Boon asks how far Lucius thinks the car could travel in ten days, while the family is away, and Lucius responds that Father had said four days. He also mentions that he would not know, and since no one is going to find out, he may never know.

Boon, seeing he is not persuading Lucius, stops the car and allows Lucius to drive. On reflection, Lucius realizes that while at the time he believed Boon bested his good intentions through treachery, he realizes that he was beaten by virtue, in that instead of simply allowing Lucius to steer, Boon actually allows him to drive. Lucius knows, one he has driven, that he is as bent as Boon on stealing the vehicle, and that he is, in reality, far more culpable for the action, since he is smarter than Boon. In short, he is the boss. As he and Boon return to Aunt Callie's for dinner, Lucius finds himself lying easily, claiming the car broke down, and they had to repair it, explaining his lateness. He furthers this lie by stating that he and Boon still have to get gasoline for the vehicle.

Finishing dinner, Lucius leaves to find Ned McCaslin, the family's black coachman and family member. Lucius explains to Ned that he plans to ride out to the McCaslin's with Boon, and then return with him to join Cousin Ike for a fishing trip. Lucius again knows



he is lying profusely, but in his mind, the power of "non-virtue" has not given him enough time to make excuses that sound legitimate. When Lucius finds Cousin Ike, he explains that he plans to stay with Ned.

On returning to Aunt Callie's, Lucius is surprised to find Ned, who is generally not on hand. When Boon finally arrives to pick up the family, Lucius is horrified that Boon has changed clothes, shaved, and is wearing a necktie. Lucius fears that Callie will take notice, and is shamed at his own lack of foresight, realizing now that such an act by Boon was bound to occur. He knows instinctively that they were planning to travel to Memphis, and fears the trip is no longer possible. Further, Lucius is angry at Boon for destroying the tower of lies Lucius himself has created.

However, Callie notices nothing, and as Ned and Boon pack the car, Ned asks if Boon is returning to town before he leaves. Boon asks where Ned believes he is leaving to, and Ned replies he is simply asking if Boon plans to return before leaving to eat supper. Boon tells him not to worry about anyone but himself, and the family leave for the McCaslin's. As they travel, Lucius realizes they cannot really be free until the rest of the family is out of the vehicle. He is also aware that Boon will have to make decisions during this short trip about his true intentions.

Boon asks, to no one in particular, how far they believed the vehicle could travel between the current time and sundown. Callie states that no one will know the answer, since Boon is to lock up the vehicle immediately on returning to town. As Boon begins to ask Lucius a question quietly, Lucius tells him to shut up as he ponders just leaping from the car, forcing Boon to deliver the family and then come back to get him, allowing Lucius to avoid further lies. He realizes, however, that he cannot do this, since such an action would surely result in a quicker notice of his absence than his original plan.

When the family arrives at the house, Boon asks Lucius quietly "Do you want." Lucius knows the time has come for his decision, and as he ponders what lie to tell, "non-virtue" saves him the trouble. Cousin Zachary comes from the house, asking why Lucius is not in town, since Ike has informed him he plans to take Lucius fishing in the morning. Aunt Callie begins yelling, but Lucius tells Zachary he still plans to return to town with Boon. Zachary promises Callie that if Ike does not bring him back on Sunday, Zachary will fetch him on Monday. Back in the car, Boon is in awe of Lucius' ability to work the situation to his advantage.

Boon decides that, to douse any suspicion, he and Lucius should separate and walk around town for a bit. Lucius asks why Boon cannot just lock the car in the garage and return for it later. Boon replies that he has no key to the lock, and is supposed to return the car and lock the garage. Mr. Ballott has been given a key by Grandfather, and is to unlock the garage on the day of the family's return from the funeral. On reaching the carriage house, Boon removes his coat and grip from the loft, places them in the back of the vehicle with a full gasoline can, along with several items needed for the trip. He covers the items with a loose tarp. The two part ways, and Lucius returns to his house, waits, and returns to the carriage house. Boon is already there, and after backing the



vehicle from the garage, he locks the padlock on the door, and the two begin their escape.

Boon informs Lucius that the road is clear until Hurricane Creek, and when Lucius and Boon reach the creek, they are able to negotiate the road well until the second mud hole. Getting out, Boon places a wedge against the back axle as Lucius presses the gas, and forces the car from the hole. As Boon returns to driving, he smells an odor, and, stopping the car, throws back the tarp to find Ned huddled on the floor. Wearing a white shirt, black suit, and hat, Ned states that he wants a trip, as well.

Chapter 3 Analysis

This chapter introduces several themes used throughout the story, as well as develops the characters of Lucius, Ned, and Boon. First, Lucius discusses the elements of virtue and non-virtue throughout the chapter, and notes how non-virtue often wins over the hearts of young boys, since their innocence and ignorance is more prominent than in older individuals. Lucius is tempted to blame Boon for his treachery, but realizes it is, in fact, the power of non-virtue that drives his decisions.

This chapter also introduces the theme of deceit and the consequences of that deceit. Lucius lies to nearly everyone within this chapter in an attempt not to be caught in his and Boon's theft. Telling one individual he is fishing, and telling another he is staying with Ned, Lucius has ensured, to some extent, free passage for himself until early Monday morning. However, Lucius knows that this level of deception will only cause problems in the future.

The character of Lucius is well developed in this chapter, clearly showing his youthful decision making process, and the consequences of his youth. Lucius is determined to steal the vehicle with Boon, but does not intend to create such a web of lies. This character development appears to symbolize the decision-making abilities of all individuals in a position of wants versus needs, another theme within the novel. Lucius wants to travel to Memphis and will stop at seemingly nothing to achieve that goal, clearly symbolizing the moral struggle between right and wrong.

Additionally, the character of Boon is also developed well in this chapter. Through Lucius' descriptions of Boon, readers can sense Boon's deceptive nature, but also his lack of common sense. Boon arrives to pick up the family clearly overdressed, showing this lack of forethought. However, Callie does not even notice the change, symbolizing the lack of notice for hired or owned assistants during this period in history.

There is also much foreshadowing within this chapter. First, the beginning of the chapter clearly suggests Ned will attempt to join the two men, as his statements show his intentions. Additionally, Lucius' comments regarding the future of he and Boon clearly show problems for these characters throughout the story because of their lies and deception. Still further, Boon's discussion of Hurricane Creek foreshadows further road issues later in the novel.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Ned explains that he has more right to a trip than either Boon or Lucius, and the duo agree to take Ned with them. Boon attaches the headlights to the vehicle, consisting of lanterns, and the men drive to Ballenbaugh's. Through the narrative, Lucius explains that Ballenbaugh's has changed hands often, as well as changed purpose, over the years. Now a fishing camp run by an Italian bootlegger, the area has also been a general store, gambling casino, dormitory for freighters, dance hall, and general den of mischief. During the summer of 1865, however, a young minister named Hightower came to the area and converted most of the area. In 1905, Ballenbaugh's is now a small general store with a small loft above for travelers run by an older single woman, Miss Ballenbaugh.

As the three arrive, Miss Ballenbaugh greets them in front, along with the cook and a Negro assistant. She appears to know Boon, and tells the group that they are the thirteenth vehicle to pass the area in two years. Boon realizes the woman and her staff has never traveled in a car, and gives them a short ride. The group then eats supper, and Lucius and Boon retire upstairs to the loft. As the two talk, Boon tells Lucius to just say the word, and they will go back, and Lucius tells him to shut up. As they lay down to sleep, Boon laughingly explains that they will reach Hell Creek in the morning, and that Hell Creek will be nearly impossible to pass.

In the morning, the three rise, eat breakfast, and begin their journey again, reaching Hell Creek a little after ten A.M. The wide valley lay ahead, and Lucius believes the path does not look nearly as difficult as Boon has made him believe. While the path is certainly damp, the holes have been filled with brush tops and limbs by previous travelers, making their passage even easier.

However, shortly, Lucius realizes the path has become a virtual swampland, and Boon and Ned are forced to get out and begin freeing the car out of the mud. Lucius wonders aloud if there is even a bridge over the creek, and Boon replies there is, but as they approach it, Lucius sees what lies between. The path has become "milk-infused coffee," a thick gray mess of mud with very little actual land. To the side of the road are a plow and two mules, with a man seated inside the side cab. Ned believes this is convenient, but Boon angrily explains it is the man who creates the bog. The man then charges travelers to pull them from the bog. The men try to free themselves, but in the end require the man's assistance. The man mentions that prices have doubled since Boon last tried to travel this road. When Boon attempts to pay him four dollars, the man states the price is six, since there are three passengers. When Boon exclaims angrily that Ned is a black man, the man with the plow states that both mules are colorblind.

Chapter 4 Analysis

This chapter contains a historical account of the area surrounding Ballenbaugh's, which adds credibility to the narrative. Additionally, through the narrative, the theme of faith is presented as Hightower converts much of the area to Baptist. Lucius, however, is concerned only with the fine meal presented, and Boon appears only to use the stopover as a reason to show off the vehicle, as well as his knowledge of such machines. The scene in which Boon takes the staff for a ride in a vehicle also again shows the lack of industrialization and urbanization in this small town area.

The conversation between Boon and Lucius in the loft show Boon's own fear of their actions thus far in the novel. By telling Lucius they will turn around and go home if Lucius simply says the word, Boon is clearly making Lucius a coconspirator in the theft. Lucius appears to know this, but is too caught up in the situation, and replies only that Boon is scared. This conversation shows the power of Boon's manipulation, which is a theme used throughout the novel. Boon intentionally forces Lucius to make a conscious choice not to tell Boon to take them all home.

When the three men reach Hell Creek, they find the roadway impassable, as foreshadowed in the previous chapter. Boon, determined not to give in to the extortion of the man with the plow, is eventually forced to do so, symbolizing again the theme of want versus need. Further, the man with the plow symbolizes a common practice in the early 1900's, that of the use of land for monetary gain. By plowing the mud, the farmer ensures a living for himself.

The final scene of this chapter again shows the theme of racism, as Boon's comments referring to Ned show his belief that Ned should not be considered a person, or passenger, since he is black. The man with the plow is willing to see Ned as a person, in order to gain more money for the group's passage. This concept deepens the reader's understanding of the racism present at the time, in that while some, like Boon, see the black men and women as less than people, there are others willing to include them in any venture, as long as there is money involved.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Ned, Boon, and Lucius eat lunch following their conquering of Hell Creek bottom, and Lucius realizes as they pass Iron Bridge that they have come too far to turn back. In his mind, Virtue has given way to Non-virtue completely. As they drive toward Memphis, noting the change in landscape from rural to urban, Boon allows Lucius to drive. Still further along the road, they begin to pass other vehicles, and Lucius realizes there are no spaces between houses and shops, and that they have finally reached industrialized Memphis.

Boon tells Lucius they are staying at a "boarding house" of sorts, and that one of the ladies staying at the house has written Boon to tell him her nephew is visiting, who is near Lucius' own age. When Boon tells Ned the cook at the house can find somewhere for him to stay, Ned replies that he has friends in Memphis, and that all he needs is to know where to meet Boon and Lucius in the morning.

The saloons and neighborhoods seem quiet to Lucius, but Boon states that it is only quiet, because it is Sunday. Pulling up to a larger sized home off a side street, Ned exits the vehicle, promising to be back in the morning. Boon removes the key from the car and gives it, along with his wallet, to Lucius, asking him to watch the items since Boon may "leave them somewhere" on accident.

Reaching the door, Boon and Lucius are met by a younger woman with bright red hair, Miss Reba, who wears huge diamond earrings. Miss Reba immediately chastises Boon for bringing a child, but allows the men to enter. She warns Boon that "Mr. Binford" does not like children in the house, since "they'll be in here soon enough anyhow." She also mentions that the customers are uncomfortable when children are present. Boon tells Lucius to "make manners," and Lucius bows to Miss Reba, surprising her with his proper manners. Miss Reba, surprised, asks Minnie, a black woman nearby, if she noticed Lucius' manners, and Minnie smiles, revealing a gold tooth Lucius is in awe of. Miss Reba tells Boon and Lucius to go wash up as a young, large girl named Miss Corrie, clearly known by Boon, arrives.

While bathing and dressing, Boon tells Lucius that he can learn much on this trip, such as how to drive, how to reach Memphis, and how to escape a mud hole, but that to retain such knowledge, Lucius has to keep that knowledge to himself. Boon also states that Lucius will likely learn of things he has not even thought about, but that to learn, he must not tell anyone. Lucius interprets these remarks accurately by asking if Boon means that he is not to tell mother, Father, or Boss about anything he sees, and Boon agrees. On the way down for dinner, Lucius asks if any men stay at the boarding house and Boon reluctantly notes that only women stay in the house, along with Mr. Binford, but that there is much company after dinner. Boon also reveals that Mr. Binford does not allow "frolicking" on Sundays, but does allow "visits."



Arriving in Miss Reba's room, Boon and Lucius find Miss Reba, Miss Corrie, Mr. Binford, and Otis, Miss Corrie's nephew. Binford acknowledges Boon by name, and asks Lucius if he drinks. Lucius replies that he promised his mother he would not drink, and Binford acidly replies that Lucius obviously didn't promise his mother "not to go whore-hopping with" Boon. The women are angry at Binford's foul language, and Binford replies that since the boys are clearly there for education, they have just learned not to smart off without realizing the consequences.

As the group sits down to dinner, an older woman at the table asks Binford if they were late, knowing that the consequence of lateness is a required twenty-five cent penalty. Binford replies that he is simple teaching the women how to be women, since they "don't know how to quit acting like bitches." Otis suddenly tells the group that Binford is simply in a foul mood, because his horse lost a race that afternoon, and Miss Reba, clearly upset, tells Binford to leave. Lucius learns that Binford is the "landlord," but Lucius knows his true title is something far more sinister. Binford, Lucius learns, keeps the money the women make and deals with all business affairs of the home, as well as continues as Miss Reba's lover. However, Binford has a gambling problem, and now that he has been found out, he has left the home. According to the women, it took several weeks the last time this situation occurred for them to convince Binford to come home.

Suddenly, Miss Reba and the others hear loud yelling from the back yard, and when Minnie investigates, she finds a man yelling for Boon. In the darkness, Lucius sees Ned standing just inside the back fence with a large horse.

Chapter 5 Analysis

The beginning of this chapter describes in detail the transition of the landscape from rural Mississippi to urban Tennessee, symbolizing the vast differences that existed between the two in the early part of the century. As Lucius drives, he notices that children no longer run to see a vehicle, since many have seen countless in their lifetimes. When the men cross the Iron Bridge, Lucius knows there is no turning back, symbolizing the concept of "burning bridges."

This chapter also introduces the idea that Ned is well versed in Memphis as well as cunning, foreshadowing his actions later in the novel. Boon is also clearly not a stranger to the town, nor to the bordello he and Lucius enter. The obvious affection Boon feels for Miss Corrie foreshadows events later in the novel, since readers can infer through the context of the chapter that the women in the home are prostitutes. However, there is also a clear sense of dignity and self-respect among the women, as Miss Reba struggles to maintain an air of decency despite her profession. Mr. Binford, the house pimp, also appears to be dignified, but through his harsh and cruel words shows himself to be highly disrespectful of the women in the house. Additionally, his misuse of the women's money symbolizes the level of abuse and exploitation these women face on a daily basis.

Ned's arrival at the house, with a large horse, is somewhat surprising, but foreshadows events in the next several chapters, as Boon and Lucius learn of Ned's trade of Boss' vehicle for a stolen horse.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Lucius and Boon learn that Ned has traded Grandfather's vehicle for a horse. Ned, oblivious, is staring at the gold tooth in Minnie's mouth, and Lucius understands that Ned feels something far more than Lucius had felt looking at the tooth. Ned states that Boss never wanted a car, and before Lucius even goes to look, Ned tells them the man who traded the horse has already hotwired the vehicle and taken it away. As Ned attempts to persuade Minnie to provide him with her services for the evening, Boon asks where the man lives, intending to persuade the man to return the vehicle.

At this point, Ned tells the group his plan to win back the vehicle, along with any winnings, by entering the horse into a horse race. According to Ned, the man who traded with him knows of a horse that has raced against this animal previously, and won. The man believes the owner of the other horse will be willing to race again. Ned, knowing he has a special talent in driving horses to run, believes he can bet the horse against the automobile, and win both. In a previous situation, Ned's talent allowed him to train a mule to run like a horse, but as Boon points out, this is not a mule.

The group travels outside to see the horse, and Boon begins to speak when Miss Corrie notices Otis has appeared. After sending him to his room, Boon mentions the horse is stolen, and Ned replies that he plans to take the horse to Parsham, the racetrack, immediately following supper. Miss Reba leads the group into the house, telling Minnie to open the door for customers, informing anyone asking for Miss Corrie that she is unavailable. When Boon appears jealous, Miss Reba reminds him Miss Corrie makes a living entertaining. Miss Reba asks Ned to tell her about the planned race, and Ned, appearing to be more in control than with Boon or Lucius, explains that he only needs the women to help him get to Parsham, and to raise money for the race.

Miss Reba asks Corrie to phone a customer she associates with, Sam, who is a flagman for the railroad. Miss Reba believes he can assist them in gaining access to a baggage car on the train to Parsham, allowing Ned to take the stolen horse unnoticed. Boon is jealous, and grabs for Corrie, gripping her buttocks. Corrie is clearly ashamed, and pulls free to phone Sam. As they wait for Corrie to return, Lucius reflects on how non-virtue, armed with Lucius' own innocence and tenderness, took three hours to convince him to assist Boon in car theft, but that non-Virtue, working endlessly in the lives of the women, took merely one half hour.

When Corrie returns to the group, she informs them Sam is coming to help them with the horse. Boon, jealous, attempts to argue, but Corrie and Miss Reba persuade him to relax as Otis enters the room. Lucius realizes something is odd about Otis, but does not realize what might be the issue. Corrie explains that Sam will bring with him a ticket for the train, along with a baggage claim, planks to board up the horse within the baggage car, and a blanket to cover the horse during the walk to the train. Sam and Boon will



walk the horse to the train, with Corrie and Ned walking behind them. Corrie asks Miss Reba to come with the group to the train station.

Chapter 6 Analysis

This chapter introduces the theme of sexuality, and the power of that sexuality on the individuals in the story. Ned is transfixed by the gold tooth in Minnie's mouth in a way Lucius, only 11 years old, cannot yet understand. Boon's fascination, or appetite as Millie states, comes from a natural urge for procreation, whereas Lucius' fascination stems only from awe and wonder. Additionally, Boon's clear jealousy and rage, even at Corrie simply talking on the telephone, shows the power of desire over the emotional state of individuals. Corrie, too, shows this emotional power, as she pulls away from Boon, embarrassed by his advances.

This chapter also again discusses the theme of Virtue and non-Virtue, as Lucius ponders the comparison between himself and the prostitutes of the house. His observation that morality and virtue have similar effects on the two groups but occur in different ways is highly insightful. For Lucius, virtue and morality are simply concepts, driven slowly from his mind by his youthful desire for excitement and adventure. On the other hand, the prostitutes of the house live daily with a lack of morality and virtue, and thus, are quicker to act in accord with non-Virtue.

Further, this chapter also shows the nature of Ned's personality in terms of his associations with others. As Lucius points out, Ned's discussions with Boon are tainted by Boon's status as a privileged retainer. Ned, being simply a black hired man, knows he is not on the same level. However, when conversing with the prostitutes, Ned appears to take control, implying his belief that the women are also simply hired help. Ned clearly feels at ease with the workingwomen, symbolizing the link between members of the same social or racial class in the early 1900's.

As Corrie lays out the plan to take the horse to Parsham, it is clear that these women are quite capable of leading their own lives, symbolizing the position of non-privileged women in this period. While women such as Mother are viewed as objects to be cared for, women such as Corrie and Miss Reba are seen as pioneers, in that they are women capable of fending for themselves. While some may not consider their profession respectable, they are able to dictate their own lives.

Ned's trade of the vehicle for the horse, combined with the knowledge that Ned appears to have a skill with training racehorses foreshadows events later in the novel, as the group races to win Boss' vehicle. Further foreshadowing is indicated by Boon's clear rage and jealousy of Corrie's lovers, as well as through her reactions to his advances and through Lucius' thoughts during those reactions. Readers can sense a coming change in Lucius as he begins to learn about the morals and virtues of those around him, as well as of his own.



Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Sam arrives, and the group leads him to view the horse. Boon is unhappy at having to deal with one of Corrie's callers, and makes a point to belittle Sam. With Corrie between them, Sam and Boon begin to walk with the covered horse toward the depot, with Ned, Lucius, and Otis following a distance behind. Lucius finds he is now able to tell the difference between a regular home and a bordello by the number of lights blazing within. Otis explains that the saloons are closed, because what the owners do not sell on Sunday can always be sold on Monday. With "pugnuckling," he continues, the situation is different, in that the goods are not resalable if a sale is originally missed. Lucius asks for a definition of pugnuckling as Ned chastises Otis for his knowledge and foul language.

The group meets a police officer, but as he knows Sam, the group is allowed to continue. Otis observes the police officer does not take anything in return for allowing their passage, and informs the young boys that this is rare. Otis continues, explaining that he originally desired to be a police officer, due to these types of benefits, but soon realized the position was limited to petty items. Memphis, Otis states, is where the money is and when Ned tells him he will likely end up in prison, Otis simply states that it will not be today. Otis admits to running a peephole show in Arkansas when Corrie was staying there, and Ned attacks him. Otis retreats, calling Ned a nigger, and Lucius knows from his Father and Grandfather that no one should be referred to by race or religion.

Ahead, a man from the railroad meets Sam, Boon, and Corrie, and Lucius again notices the power of non-Virtue. Lucius believes those who work for Virtue often work alone, but notices that those working for non-Virtue, such as in transport of a stolen horse, find themselves graced with numerous volunteers. As the group reaches the baggage car, they notice a twenty-five foot gap between the platform and the car. Boon, Sam, and the man from the railroad force the baggage car forward using crowbars, and Ned, with Lucius' help, coaxes the horse into the car. Then men build a stall around the horse, and feed him while Sam tells Boon to stay with Ned while Sam escorts Corrie back to town. Boon replies that he himself will escort Corrie, and Sam asks if it is safe to leave the horse with "this colored boy." Following a verbal altercation, Sam agrees to allow Boon to escort Corrie, gives Ned his own food and water, and is properly thanked by Ned.

When the group returns to the house and goes to bed, Otis and Lucius retire to a room in the attic. Otis tells Lucius of his extortion of Miss Corrie, whose real name is Everbe Corinthia, in Arkansas, where he charged children five cents and adults a dime to view her sexual excursions through a peephole. Their Aunt Fittie had Corrie in prostitution as early as age twelve. Lucius again notes something is wrong with Otis, and although he realizes the problem is related to his size at age ten, Lucius still cannot truly identify the issue.



Lucius, enraged at Otis' clear disrespect for Corrie, Corrie's willingness to be debased, Fittie's decision to steal Corrie's innocence, and the insensitive individuals who paid to watch, begins to beat Otis ruthlessly. Otis, smaller than Lucius, brings out a switchblade and cuts the hand of Lucius before Boon and Corrie arrive to separate the two boys. Lucius refuses to tell Boon the cause of the argument, and as Corrie cleans his wound, Lucius learns Otis is fifteen years old, explaining why Lucius has felt something was odd about Otis. Later, Corrie returns to Lucius, explaining that she forced Otis to reveal the cause of the fight. Corrie is honored that Lucius was fighting for her honor, and promises him she will not participate in prostitution any longer. Boon tries to coax Corrie into sexual activity, and Lucius sees her actively refuse.

Chapter 7 Analysis

This chapter introduces the true character of Otis, as well as shows the development of morals within Lucius. Otis is fifteen, and knows much of treachery, theft, exploitation, and cunning, symbolizing a selfishness and lack of compassion. His lack of respect for his aunt, and his clear prejudice against Ned only solidify the image of Otis as a conniving young man, whose primary goal is self-serving. When Lucius learns Otis' true age, he understands Otis is also a liar. Boon, too, shows the same traits as he resents assistance from Sam, and attempts to coerce Corrie, despite her clear refusal of affection. Boon, while subtler than Otis, is initially only concerned with his own needs, but over time, accepts Sam's assistance, and the refusal of Corrie, foreshadowing his turn of actions later in the novel.

Lucius, however, has learned at least preliminary morals from his Father and caregivers. These morals are deepened as Lucius finds himself enraged and disgusted at Otis' lack of respect for Corrie. Knowing he wants not only to harm Otis, but also to destroy him, Lucius shows clear moral and virtue throughout this chapter. As Lucius has stated in previous chapters, he is innocent in his knowledge, but as this knowledge is expanded, Lucius is learning to make moral and ethical decisions. Further, now knowing that Corrie is simply a false name, Lucius has unwittingly begun to think of her as Everbe in his mind.

Additionally, Ned shows a true skill with the horse, as he and the other men coax the creature into the baggage car. This foreshadows Ned's later ability to train the horse to run. Further, Otis' obvious search for monetary gain foreshadows his refusal to jockey the horse later in the novel. The horse's disposition, able to be manipulated but also stubborn and headstrong, also foreshadows the abilities of the horse later in the novel.



Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

In the morning, Corrie, Boon, and Lucius arrive at the depot to find Ned, who has already named the horse "Forkid Lightning." Ned asks where Otis is, as he plans to ask Otis to jockey the horse. Corrie promises to fetch him, but Boon, jealous again, believes instead that Corrie is simply wanting to be with Sam. Corrie walks away angrily, and Boon apologetically follows her, making peace with her. Sam, the conductor, and two other train attendants wait for the group, and as Sam helps Ned into the baggage car with the horse, he explains that after he sleeps a bit, he will meet them in Parsham.

Boon and Lucius sleep on the train, waking to arrive in Parsham. Upon exiting the train, Ned, Boon, and Lucius are greeted by a young black boy, Lycurgus, who is waiting for their arrival. Lucius and Ned follow Lycurgus, while Boon goes off to arrange the race. Lucius learns that Sam has arranged for the daytime accommodations of Lycurgus and his family, and Ned explains that if Lucius ever needs something done, he should find a man like Sam. Reaching the house, Lucius sees a very dark black man, with an impeccable white mustache and a white shirt coming toward them, who is introduced as Uncle Parsham. Ned directs Lucius to follow Lycurgus to the house to sleep.

On waking, Ned wraps Lucius' hand tightly, and asks him to help train the horse. When the horse runs, Lucius tells Ned the horse's head seems not to want to run, but his body appears healthy enough. Asking uncle Parsham about the horse's previous races, Parsham informs Ned that the horse simply slowed to a stop in both races. Leaving the horse to rest, the group goes inside to eat, where Lucius falls asleep again.

On waking, Lucius notes that Corrie and Otis have arrived by train, despite the fact that the train generally does not stop in Parsham. Outside, Lucius finds Boon, Corrie, Lycurgus, Ned, Uncle Parsham, Otis, and an oversized man with a badge, Mr. Butch. Butch has Corrie tight in his grip, and tells Lycurgus to bring him two chairs so he and Corrie can "get acquainted" while "Sugar Boy," meaning Boon, takes the others down to the horse. Sensing a problem, Ned offers to fetch the horse, and Butch tells him to keep his mouth shut, stating that the citizens of Parsham "don't take to strange niggers."

Corrie frees herself quickly during the distraction, and grips Lucius' arm, telling him to lead them to the horse. Butch quickly takes Corrie's arm again, and Lucius suddenly fears for the safety of the Parsham's, knowing he and the others may have to fight Butch, clearly an officer of the law, in order to spare Corrie. Lucius finds himself hating them all: Corrie for her position as a victim, Boon for his position as the victimized, the Parsham's for their necessary position under the white men of the law, and himself for having to learn these lessons. Lucius suddenly realizes he is desperately homesick, and knows his innocence has been lost.



Corrie has again freed herself from Butch, who cruelly declares his affinity for struggling women. Ned brings the horse out, and attempts to suggest that Boon take Corrie back to the hotel, but Butch discusses Boon's status as a stranger, and the fact that he may just get them all into trouble. Grinning coldly, he continues to bait Boon, who, with difficulty, manages not to react. When Otis arrives, he demands payment of ten dollars to jockey the horse, which Ned calmly pays. On payment, however, Otis claims he wants twenty. Ned calmly takes back the money, telling Otis he should simply state that he will not jockey the horse. Turning to Lucius, Ned asks him to ride.

With Ned's direction, Lucius rides the horse around the grounds, using a switch only when told to. Without Ned at the end of the track, the horse seems slow, but when the horse sees Ned, he bursts with speed. Ned tells Lucius to cut the horse back to the track, where the horse runs at full power around the track to regain access to Ned. Allowing the horse to run towards Ned, Lucius notes that the only power Ned seems to have is a handful of grass. Butch believes Ned has drugged the horse, and claims he does not care, provided the horse wins the race. Ned, however, insists he has not drugged the horse, but only that he let the horse know he would have to run for his dinner.

After washing down the horse, Lucius prepares to leave with Corrie, who is waiting outside. Ned tells Lucius he will begin to hear people already discussing the upcoming race, as word of mouth spreads rumor.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Throughout this chapter, Sam proves his worth not only as a horse thief, but also as a general human being. From the start, Sam has provided consistent help to Ned, and the group and has even shown a great amount of respect for Ned, which was rare in the early 1900's. With the introduction of Butch, this becomes even clearer. Butch represents the stereotypical police officer and white male of the South during this time frame, as he exploits and manipulates women, shows a lack of respect towards blacks, and attempts several times to bait Boon into an argument. It is clear Butch is a cruel, heartless, evil individual. Sam, on the other hand, while nearly absent in this chapter, has provided transportation, shelter, and civility to Ned, and even to Boon who quite clearly hates him. Sam appears to represent the forward thinking white man of the period, quick to assist others and able to think ahead to provide future needs.

This chapter also provides the realization to the reader that, much like Corrie's, Lucius' innocence has now been lost at an early age. Over the course of only two days, Lucius has been involved in or learned about car theft, prostitution, gambling, horse theft, the transportation of stolen goods, sexual extortion, violence against women, and racism. His life, once innocent and virtually carefree, is now filled with confusing emotions ranging from anger at the status of the members in his party to jealousy and lust. This participation in events throughout the novel foreshadows Lucius' involvement as a jockey in the race, as well as his growth as a man by the end of the novel.



This chapter also shows the immense wit and pride of the black characters within the story. Ned, seeing Corrie handled improperly, uses himself as a weapon to distract Butch. Even when intimidated, Ned does not back down from Butch, but allows him to debase Ned's character, knowing this will appease the white man. Lycurgus, even on the command of the white man, silently refuses all orders, until Parsham gives the same order. Parsham, too, stands in silent contempt as Butch berates his family. This highly charged atmosphere of racism symbolizes the nature of society in the early 1900's, and foreshadows racial problems throughout the remainder of the novel.

It is also clear throughout the chapter that Ned truly is capable of making the horse run well. Readers do not yet understand Ned's abilities, but unlike Butch, do realize the horse has not been doped. This ability within the horse, and within Lucius to drive the horse well, foreshadows the winning of the race. Further, with Otis' refusal to ride, Lucius' own position within the group, that of a jockey, is confirmed.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Lucius, Boon, Corrie, and Butch leave Uncle Parsham's for the hotel, but Corrie convinces the wagon to stop at the doctor's local office to have Lucius' hand examined. A heavy gray haired woman answers the door, and announces that it is the "race horse folks" at the door. As she disappears, Butch walks into the home, uninvited but knowing he is welcome because of his badge. He and Boon walk to the parlor, while Corrie and Lucius enter the doctor's office. After glancing at the wound, the doctor believes it to be healing well, thanks to Corrie's efforts, and suggests simply continuing their current plan of treatment. For payment, the doctor asks Corrie for a handkerchief, and she instead gives him her garter.

Butch is again baiting Boon as Corrie and Lucius exit the office, and Corrie suddenly realizes Otis is not with them. Boon and Butch assume Otis has already gone to the hotel, but when they arrive, Otis is not to be found. Butch leaves the group, and Lucius hopes he is going home to his wife. Boon wonders aloud what Otis has done wrong.

Boon pulls Corrie into the ladies lounge of the hotel, and Lucius stays outside to listen, knowing Corrie now expects this because of her promise to him. Lucius hears Boon asking why Corrie will not service his sexual needs, and Corrie replies that she has quit the business, and plans to obtain regular employment. Corrie runs to her room, and Boon returns to Lucius, swearing about Corrie's decision, believing she has no more right to quit in his presence than Boon has to quit working for Boss. Boon tells Lucius to fetch Corrie for dinner, but Corrie refuses to leave her room.

Corrie does join Lucius and Boon as they meet the train, but Corrie and Boon do not speak. As Miss Reba exits the train with Minnie, she mentions they have had some trouble. Back at the hotel, Miss Reba tells the clerk she expects Minnie to sleep in her room, and asks for a cot. Sitting in the ladies lounge as they wait, Miss Reba tells Minnie to explain the trouble they have had, and Minnie simply smiles, revealing a missing gold tooth. Minnie explains that she went to sleep, only to wake with the tooth missing. The group assumes only Otis would be low enough to steal the tooth.

Miss Reba takes Minnie to their room, while Corrie explains that she hoped for Otis' reform during his visit. As she cries, Boon goes to her, patting her gently and soothing her. The waiter returns, telling the group that Boon's coachman is in the kitchen. Lucius, knowing this must be Ned, runs to the kitchen, and Corrie and Boon follow. The group finds Ned flirting with the dishwasher, a large black woman. Ned tells the group that Otis has been found at the Parsham's farm, where the hunting dogs have treed him. Ned, finding out what he has done, assumes Otis will not be at the farm when he returns, but will instead hide until the race tomorrow, and attempt to sell the tooth at the track. Ned leaves, and Boon, Corrie, and Lucius return to the dining room to meet Miss Reba.



As the group talks, Butch returns, and Lucius knows Butch has thus far only been toying with them. Coming to the table, Butch notes that now there are two "pieces of meat," and again tries to take Corrie away. Corrie tells Miss Reba she has quit the business, and Reba takes Butch outside. When she returns, without Butch, she explains that he is the deputy sheriff of Hardwick, and is not the law in Parsham. Thus, she explains, she informed Butch that if he ever walked in again, she would find the local constable and tell him that Butch registered two whores at the hotel. She then heads to bed, and Boon disappears. Corrie asks Lucius if he has any other clothes, and when he replies that he does not, she offers to wash his only set. Lucius returns to his room, and hands her the clothes through the door.

Lying in bed, Lucius reflects that the group should be planning for the race, but realizes there is no planning to be done. Both Lucius and Lightning will win, or they will not win. When Boon returns to the room, he asks Lucius where his clothing is, and Lucius replies that "Everbe" is washing them. Boon shocked, asks Lucius if Corrie told him her true name, and Lucius replies that she had. The two men fall asleep.

Chapter 9 Analysis

In this chapter, readers again see the themes of deception, as well as abuse of power and a lack of respect or morality. The doctor, seemingly a kind man, reflects back to a time when he owned a handkerchief of a prostitute he visited. Rather than asking Corrie for anything sexual in nature, he merely asks for a piece of property. Butch, however, fully expects the doctor to manipulate Corrie sexually, and does not even warn her of this prior to their visit. This again clearly shows Butch's lack of respect for the women. That theme is further shown as he comes back to the hotel later in the chapter, and calls the women "meat." Butch also clearly uses his power as an officer of the law, entering homes before invited and believing he is above morality.

Otis is also again shown to be a deceiving young man, as first, his disappearance suggests trouble, and his theft of the tooth later proves the group's suspicions. Otis clearly does not have respect for any other human being, but also believes himself to be above moral law. This also foreshadows events later in the novel, when Ned locates Otis and returns the tooth to Minnie.

Even Boon displays a clear lack of understanding and respect for Corrie, at least initially. Boon believes Corrie has no right to stop servicing him sexually, just as he has no right to simply quit working for Boss. He feels that it is his right to have sexual relations with Corrie, just as Boss has a right to order Boon to action. However, later in this chapter as Boon attempts to comfort Corrie, readers can see a slight change in Boon. No longer even attempting to touch Corrie, Boon is simply showing his affection for the young woman, foreshadowing his decision to marry Corrie later in the novel. Boon is humbled at the end of the chapter when he learns Lucius has learned Corrie's true name, when he himself, her long time lover, has not.



This chapter also again shows the pride and strength of the prostitutes in the novel. Miss Reba clearly takes control of nearly all situations, including her evening meal request, the request for Minnie to stay in her room, and of Butch, Otis, and even Boon's behaviors. Miss Reba is a strong character, but can also be understanding, if not kind, in her actions towards her employees and to others. Reba's character symbolizes the independent woman of the early 1900's.

Corrie's character throughout the chapter also symbolizes women in the early 1900's, but differently than Miss Reba. Corrie is determined in her actions, certainly, showing a deep desire for moral change. However, her eagerness to please Lucius, whom she deems her savior, is a clear sign of the dependant nature of her character. While Corrie is striving to become an independent woman, her nature is still that of a woman dependant upon others for her happiness, usefulness, and power. The continued progression of Corrie's change in character foreshadows her position later in the novel as the wife of Boon.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Lucius wakes on the morning of the race, knowing the future of Boon, Ned, and himself ride on the outcome of that race. Boon again shows awe at the revelation to Lucius of Corrie's real name, and tells him to bathe, since she worked tirelessly to provide him with clean clothing. Following a bath, the two men return to the dining room to find it full of men seeking information about the race, as Ned had foretold. Lucius sits down to eat with Boon, Miss Reba, and two men who are discussing the horse with Boon. As Lucius eats, Minnie, dressed in a maid uniform, brings him milk, and Lucius knows Reba has loaned her services to the hotel. Boon explains that Corrie has gone to find Otis, but Lucius knows where she is, and leaves the table to locate the young woman.

Lucius enters the ladies lounge and finds Corrie crying yet again. Lucius tells her Otis is fine, and will turn up eventually. Corrie explains her tears are for Otis' situation, where he never had a chance to turn out well. Corrie tells Lucius she has asked Sam to find her employment in a small town, and Lucius promises to write her. Corrie, needing to be honest, tells Lucius her true name and Lucius explains that he is already aware, but does not understand why she feels her name is improper. After discussing it, Corrie decides that Everbe is the name she will use in her new life.

Boon arrives in the parlor, and takes Lucius to the kitchen where Ned is waiting. Ned explains that he and Lucius will travel to a pasture near the track where Lightning is waiting, while Boon and Sam travel to the track to bet the money. As Lucius and Ned travel by buggy to the pasture, Ned explains he has ensured Otis cannot sell Minnie's gold tooth, and has told Lycurgus to lie if he sees Otis, telling him Ned has located a buyer for twenty-eight dollars. Ned also explains that Lucius is to lose the first race, winning only the second and third. Ned plans to talk to the rider of the other horse as soon as they reach the pasture.

As Ned and Lucius reach the pasture, they find Lycurgus and Uncle Parsham waiting. Ned asks Uncle Parsham about the previous races of Lightning, and Parsham explains that in the first race, the horse led until the final stretch, then fell back. In the second race, the horse stayed a head behind the entire track. Ned tells Lucius to accompany Lycurgus to the stable to view the opposing horse. Arriving at the stable, Lycurgus tells McWillie, the black rider of the other horse, that Coppermine, now named Lightning, is being handled by Boon Hogganbeck rather than by his previous owner, Mr. van Tosch. Lycurgus also tells My Williams, the trainer, that they are looking for either horse, since Boon may have stabled Lightning in the same area. Mr. Williams asks where their buggy is, and Lycurgus explains they are in the pasture.

Mr. Williams allows the boys to see Akron, the opposing horse. Akron is black and much larger than Lightning, but also a very nervous horse. The boys leave and return to the camp, where they find Ned, Uncle Parsham, and cousin Bobo, who left Aunt Tennie's



home three years ago for Memphis. Ned explains that Bobo used to work for the man who owned Lightning. Lucius at first believes this means Bobo knows where the vehicle is hidden, but soon realizes he hopes this is not the case, since this would mean the group could simply go and retrieve it. Lucius feels he needs to race now to justify the criminal activities the group has participated in since they stole the automobile.

Bobo leaves, and the men eat lunch. McWillie suddenly appears from the woods, informing the group that Mr. Williams was afraid they planned to bring in a ringer. Ned tells the young man that he tried to convince Boon to do just that, but to no avail. He also explains that he believes Lightning could win the race, if the rider on the other horse left him far enough behind to scare him into running. When McWillie leaves, Ned explains that he has implanted this idea into McWillie's head to give them a fighting chance at winning, by ensuring Akron never gets too far ahead.

The group head toward the track, and meet with Boon, who is still looking for Ned. Sam helps Lucius onto the horse, and they are led to the starting wire. Ned, however, purposefully lets Lightning go prior to the starting signal, and is disqualified. However, Akron has now run a half-mile without benefit. In the second heat, Akron jumps the starting signal, disqualifying the second race. McWillie, now afraid as well as angry, leads Akron back to the starting wire for the race. On signal, the horses leave the gate, and while Lightning could have won with another twenty feet, he instead loses to McWillie. Lucius sees, in the stands, turmoil, and notices Boon flailing in the crowd, his shirt ripped nearly off.

Ned runs to Lucius, and hands him a tobacco sack filled with a hard lump of material unidentifiable to Lucius. Ned explains that Butch is coming, and soon after, Butch arrives with the local constable. Ned tells Lucius quietly to find Uncle Parsham as soon as possible and stay with him. When the constable arrives, he tells Lucius kindly to jump off the horse, which he does, and places Ned under arrest.

Chapter 10 Analysis

As was foreshadowed, the town of Parsham has come alive with the rumor of the horse race. Since readers are already aware that the horse is stolen, this knowledge foreshadows the capture of Boon and Ned later in the chapter. The arrest was also foreshadowed in chapter 9, as Reba pushes Butch to revenge. Additionally, this chapter introduces the character of Bobo, a seemingly unnecessary character whose importance becomes clear later in the novel.

Readers can also see, in this chapter, Ned's understanding of gentlemanly manipulation. Ned sends Lucius and Lycurgus purposefully to Akron's stable to frighten Mr. Williams into sending McWillie to see their horse, giving Ned a chance to speak with him. While the speech does not seem important in this chapter, it foreshadows events in later chapters, as McWillie recalls Ned's words, and forces his own horse to slow.



This chapter also shows Everbe's resolve at halting her prostitution in favor for gainful employment. Everbe has already asked for Sam's assistance in locating a job, and decides to begin using her given name. Clearly, Lucius' fight for her honor has altered her perspective. Boon, while still clearly upset by the events, states early in the chapter that he quits, indicating he has at least accepted Everbe's decision. Sam, too, has clearly accepted her choice, offering to assist her in locating a respectable position, showing again his role as a gentleman. These events foreshadow Boon's actions later in the novel, as Everbe's decision is revoked to save the men from their fate.

Lucius' revelations about the group's actions since the beginning of their journey show again his maturation as a young adult. From the very first lines in the chapter, Lucius admits that the horse race is the culmination of the group's criminal activities. His revelations about needing to run the race, and not simply locate and retrieve the vehicle also show his belief that the entire trip would be simply make-believe, if the race is not the final culmination. These thoughts, clearly adult in nature, symbolize how Lucius' journey has replaced his innocence with a sense of wisdom, affirmation, and a need for closure.

Finally, the loss of the races by Lightning and Lucius imply to readers that the group has been defeated, and have now lost not only their money, but also the horse and the automobile. Further, the arrest of Boon and Ned leave Lucius alone in unfamiliar lands, unable to return home. However, as Ned presents Lucius with a tobacco sack containing something unknown, readers are led to believe Ned has at least provided for this situation.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Ned questions the officer as to why he is being arrested, exclaiming that even in Mississippi; police tell "niggers" the reasons for their arrest. Butch pulls a letter from his pocket and hands it to Ned, assuming he cannot read. Butch announces to the crowd that the horse is stolen, but that the race has not been cancelled, just delayed. He continues, stating that the first race will stand, and the other two will occur tomorrow. Sam pushes through the crowd, asking which of them are under arrest, and is told by the constable that only Boon and Ned are in custody. Sam states that he is headed to Memphis to find a proper lawyer, and will return in the morning. The constable states that he does not approve of Lucius staying with a family of blacks, and that Lucius should come home with him. Following a brief argument, Ned tells him there is somewhere the law stops, and people start. Understanding, the constable agrees to let Lucius go, and Lucius notes he wears no pistol, nor a badge.

Butch, already prepared to drive the surrey, is stunned to hear that the constable plans to allow Ned to drive the surrey while Butch is left to ride the constable's horse. As they pull away, Lucius finds Uncle Parsham, who tells him Lycurgus has gone to town to find out what happens, and to determine when the next train to Jefferson leaves. Lucius tells Parsham he cannot leave without the others. On the way to the house, Parsham teaches Lucius to drive the mules of the buggy, and asks what Lucius plans to do with the money he earns from his father. Lucius explains to Parsham that he plans to buy a pack of beagles to hunt with, and suddenly begins to cry. Parsham holds him until they reach the house, and instructs him to wash his face.

Inside, the family gathers for dinner, first saying grace. Following dinner, Parsham takes Lucius fishing, leaving Lucius to his own thoughts, which he promptly avoids. Returning, Parsham and Lucius find Lycurgus back at the house with information. Boon is still in jail, while the women are at the hotel with a guard. Sam has traveled back to Memphis with Otis, and made bond for Ned, so he could care for the horse at the stable. Lycurgus has also discovered a train leaving for Jefferson at nine forty, but Lucius repeats that he must wait for the others.

Lucius asks to sleep with Uncle Parsham, and is allowed to do so. Uncle Parsham tells Lucius to get undressed, giving him a clean shirt of Lycurgus' to sleep in for the night. Lucius says his prayers, and Parsham tells him he will take Lucius to town in the morning to see Boon, asking if Lucius will oblige if Boon tells him to go home, and Lucius agrees. As he lay near sleep, Lucius realizes all he wants to do is go home, but is unwilling to quit on his own. On waking, Lucius hears Ned's voice in the yard, and runs to the window to see him with the horse.



Chapter 11 Analysis

This chapter shows clearly the difference between true officers of the law, and those who simply use their position for power. The local constable, wearing no pistol and no badge, is respectful to Ned and the others, while still firm in his directions. Butch, as readers have seen, is neither respectful nor firm, but is instead cruel and prejudiced. This difference symbolizes the difference between those using power as a tool for self-serving ends, and those using power to assist others. When the constable allows Lucius to stay with Parsham, this point is made even more clearly. As Ned points out, the constable's feelings about a white boy staying with blacks is not one of a legal position but of personal belief. Thus, as Ned states, the decision should not be the constable's to make. When the constable agrees, he shows the true nature of his character. Sam, too, shows a sense of respect toward Ned as he bails him from jail.

Further, this chapter also shows readers that while Lucius' maturation has been quickened by his experiences over the last several days, he is still a child, symbolizing the stage of life in which young persons struggle to maintain innocence while learning the true world around them. Lucius believes he is a coward when he realizes he wants to go home, but in reality, Lucius is simply showing signs of maturation, in that he knows he should see the issue through until the end. Clearly, Lucius is becoming more responsible in his actions.

This chapter also shows the clear sense of dignity held by Parsham and his family. From the beginning, Parsham has shown respect toward everyone, and portrays a sense of deep respect for himself and his family. This characteristic is even more obvious as he allows Lucius to cry, stopping him only on returning home. These behaviors foreshadow Boss' comments at the end of the novel that indicate a true gentleman cries, but knows when to do so. Further, the clear faith of the family, shown by the dinner prayers and bedtime prayers symbolizes the sense of faith often found in such close families.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

As Ned eats breakfast and waits for Mary to clean his clothing, he tells Lucius that a white man came this morning to wake him, telling him to take the horse out of town. When Lucius questions why Boon has not been released, Ned attempts to ignore the question, but Uncle Parsham forces Ned to tell the truth, pointing out that Lucius has withstood everything the men have put him through so far, and had to witness Butch's pawing of Everbe since the beginning. Ned finally tells him that Boon has beaten Everbe, and attacked Butch after learning that Everbe slept with Butch to gain freedom for Ned and Lightning. Lucius, appalled that Butch would hit a woman and disappointed that Everbe went against her word to him, refuses to believe the truth. Ned explains that Butch used the constable to imprison Lightning, knowing such an act would force Everbe to sleep with him for the horse's release. Following her submission, Butch convinced the constable to let them go, but Boon immediately went to Everbe, striking her, and then beat Butch badly. The constable, Mr. Poleymus, whose wife suffered a stroke last year and requires constant assistance, came in and ripped the badge from Butch's shirt, hauled them both into cells, and arranged for them to be taken to Hardwick jail. He also arranged for Everbe and Reba to be taken into custody.

Lucius asks Parsham if he can borrow a mule to go to town quickly, and Ned agrees to accompany him. Arriving at the hotel, Lucius finds Boon in the ladies lounge awaiting the trip to Hardwick. Seeing his approach, Boon tells Lucius to watch out as he covers his face and retreats, but Lucius attacks him, having to jump up due to his small size in comparison to Boon. Crying, Lucius continues to attack until Mr. Poleymus pulls him away. Boon yells out to him to go see Everbe, and Lucius screams out that he just wants to go home. Boon asks anyone in the group to take Lucius to the station, but Lucius refuses the trip, telling Boon to shut up.

Boon pleadingly asks Lucius to wait, but Lucius is led away by Poleymus. Lucius attempts to leave, but Poleymus holds him back long enough for Reba and Everbe to pass by. Offering again to take him to the train, Poleymus is surprised to learn Lucius still plans on racing. When they reach Ned waiting beside the hotel, Poleymus asks when Ned plans to send the boy home, and whether he has enough money. Ned replies he has enough, and Poleymus gives Ned two dollars to bet for him on the race. As Ned and Lucius drive to the track, Ned observes that Lucius has been crying again, and Lucius angrily tells him to shut up. Ned tells Lucius that women are not hurt by beatings, because they do not fight back, but instead wait until the man's back is turned before reaching for a knife. In addition, Ned states that to a woman, a black eye or cut mouth is a sign that a man has her on his mind.

Lucius finds himself at the starting gate again next to McWillie. For the first heat, Ned instructs Lucius to think of himself as Ned, since no one knows what will happen during a horse race, and since Ned would be able to judge the situation as it occurred. At the



starting signal, Akron races from the gate three lengths ahead of Lightning. McWillie, recalling Ned's words about Lightning, tries to slow Akron, but instead turns the horse nearly sideways. Lucius cuts Lightning toward the gap between Akron and the inside rail, and on nearing Akron, strikes him with the switch. Akron rears, falling through the gate, but McWillie continues to race the horse from the outside. Pulling to the gate, Akron clears a length ahead of Lightning, but since he is outside the rail, Lightning clears the finish line.

As Lycurgus pulls Lucius and Lightning away, Lucius learns Ned has argued with the judges, since Lightning was the only horse to clear the finish line, but since Akron clearly won the race. Colonel Linscomb and Mr. van Tosch, owner of the track and the horse, persuade the judges to place the heat into escrow, meaning that all bets stand, and the winner of the final heat will take the winnings. Ned returns, instructing Lucius to run Lightning as he had at the open pasture, where he allows the horse to run full length toward Ned, who will be at the final stretch. Again, Lucius sees Ned allowing the horse to smell his hands, and again knows he should recognize the smell, and therefore, Ned's secret to making the horse run. However, before he can identify the scent, he and Lightning are back at the starting gate.

Lightning has a good start, but is again a length behind by the end of the first stretch. As they round the second curve, Lightning sees Ned and bolts for the end of the track, cleanly passing Akron. Lucius and Lightning clear the finish line, and Lightning drives directly for Ned, again burying his muzzle in Ned's palm. Lucius, excited, does not notice the reflection in Ned's voice as he tells Lucius to look out. Ned leads them through the cheering crowd, stopping only when Lucius notices his grandfather, Sam, and Minnie standing at the gate. His grandfather, without inflection, states that he is busy, as are Ned and Lucius, and they will settle things when they get home. Ned asks Lucius for the small tobacco sack, and Lucius locates it, still in his pocket.

Chapter 12 Analysis

This chapter shows clearly the effects of sexual desire on the actions of individuals. Butch uses everyone in the near vicinity to arrest Ned and Boon, thereby capturing Lightning, knowing this is the only power he still has over Everbe. Boon, learning of Everbe's actions with Butch, goes against all moral principles and strikes Everbe, as well as Butch. In both cases, the men's actions were dictated by their desire for Everbe, as well as their affinity for non-virtuous action.

Lucius too acts somewhat immorally, though seemingly for moral ends. Angry at Boon for striking a woman, Lucius seeks him out and beats him. However, unlike Boon, Lucius' actions were driven by a moral desire to defend Everbe, regardless of her actions. In this, readers can see Lucius' own growth as a mature individual throughout the course of his journey. This maturation is further displayed during the horse race, as Lucius' instincts allow him to react to the situation, and win the race.



However, with the appearance of Grandfather, readers are given a sense of dread, knowing the crimes the group has committed since leaving Jefferson. While Grandfather does not seem angry or cold, he is certainly planning to deal with the situation, foreshadowing events later in the novel. Additionally, the appearance of the tobacco sack by Lucius as Minnie is walking away suggests to readers that Ned has in fact recovered Minnie's gold tooth from Otis; a fact confirmed later in the novel.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Lucius, Grandfather, and Colonel Linscomb learn from Reba, Sam, and Everbe that Boon has been returned to jail. The two women and Sam have stopped at the Colonel's on their way to the train to explain that Boon, on his release, immediately attacked Butch again for calling Reba and Everbe "whores." While Reba admires Boon for this, Lucius states simply that he had to do it. Sam gives Lucius two rolls of money, one for Ned, and one for himself, which he refuses, convinced that he and Ned did not do anything for the money. Sam persuades him to take it, stating that he can give it to Uncle Parsham. Minnie smiles, revealing again her gold tooth, and Sam tells Lucius to talk with Everbe. Reba, sensing his reluctance, says he is no different from any other man, asking why he doesn't understand that Everbe truly has quit her prostitution, but felt one more to save the group wouldn't matter.

Lucius goes to Everbe, telling her it is okay, and Everbe says she believed an encounter with Butch was the only way to free Ned, Boon, and Lightning. Reba tells Lucius Everbe has taken a job working for the constable, and Lucius notices Everbe's black eye and puffy lip. They drive away, and Lucius returns to the rose garden, where he finds Ned. As he gives Ned the money, he asks if he will count it, and Ned states he believes Sam has counted it for him. When Lucius pulls out his own roll of money, Ned takes the roll, telling Lucius he is too young to worry about gambling money, and asks what he would like Ned to do with it. Lucius replies he wants the money to go to Uncle Parsham.

Lucius asks Ned how he managed to return Minnie's tooth and Ned replies that Lycurgus was the retriever. He found Otis up a tree and Lycurgus drug him down and tied him to a mule. Lycurgus told Otis he would set him free when he relinquished the tooth. After the mule jumped the fence twice, Otis gave in, and gave the tooth to Lycurgus, who gave it to Ned.

Lucius decides he does not want to make any more decisions, and that he has now quit, realizing the adventure is over. The two men enter the house for dinner with Grandfather, Mr. van Tosch, and Colonel Linscomb. Following dinner, the men retire to the office, where Grandfather asks Ned to tell the story from the beginning. Ned, however, asks if he can speak to Grandfather privately, and Lucius follows. Ned reveals to Grandfather that the trick to making a horse run is a sardine. Grandfather decides to keep the knowledge a family secret, and the men return to the office. Ned explains that Bobo was the cause for the entire adventure. Bobo had gotten into monetary debt with a white man in Memphis, and could not afford to pay.

The white man convinced Bobo he would not only be fired from his position with Mr. van Tosch, but also would go to prison. Bobo, frightened, asked Mr. van Tosch for the money, but was refused. Thus, Bobo decided to steal the horse, but knew the white man would not be satisfied with a horse that could not run. When Ned arrived on Sunday,



Boon was drinking in a saloon, and by Monday, the two had developed the plan to steal the horse, give the white man the automobile, and tell the white man of the horse race, encouraging him to come bet, thereby winning enough to leave the automobile. Ned believed the white man knew enough to realize he would not be able to sell the stolen vehicle easily, whereas the certain horse race would win him enough to cover Bobo's debt, and Ned could win enough to purchase back the automobile.

Mr. van Tosch tells Grandfather that he clearly must either buy Ned, or sell Grandfather the horse to learn the secret of Ned's ability to make horses run. The two men bet, with Grandfather betting Ned's secret against the horse, with the condition that if Ned wins another race, van Tosch is to get the secret and Grandfather can have the horse. If Ned loses, Grandfather is to pay five hundred dollars, choosing to either take the horse or leave it, and van Tosch does not gain the secret.

As a result, Lucius finds himself again riding Lightning in a race against McWillie. Lucius notices that Ned does not present Lightning with the smell of sardines before the race, nor does he give any instruction to Lucius. Ned also does not appear at the finish line, thus ensuring Lightning will lose the race, which he does. When Lucius returns to Ned and Grandfather, Ned admits he did not intend for Lightning to win, because they really do not want to own the horse. This way, Grandfather has his automobile, and is only out four hundred ninety dollars, which Ned believes is a tradeoff for not having to own the horse.

When they return to the Colonel's, Boon is there. He explains that his final confrontation with Butch was a result of Butch calling Boon's "wife" a whore. Grandfather asks if Boon intends to marry Everbe, and Boon looks to Lucius, stating that if an eleven year old boy can stand up for her morals and rights, he can certainly marry her. The following day, the group drives back into Jefferson. Grandfather gives Boon the key to the carriage house, and walks Lucius into Father's home. Lucius is surprised to see that nothing has changed, since he is aware of the changes within himself. Lucius believes that if nothing has changed, the entire trip, including all the deceit, lying, tricking, decisions, and undecided events, then the trip was not worthwhile.

Father takes Lucius to the basement, intending to whip him for his actions. Yet Lucius knows that this action against him is wrong, in that if the only consequence for the four days in Memphis is a beating, Father is not good enough for Lucius. In his eyes, if the balance of his adventure is no more than a whipping with a belt, both of them will be debased. Grandfather, however, comes in and tells Father to go upstairs. Lucius admits to him that he has lied, and begins to cry when his Grandfather admits to knowing of the lies, but also knowing he cannot do anything to ease them for Lucius. Grandfather explains that all Lucius can do is live with the knowledge he has learned over the last four days. When Lucius states that he cannot, Grandfather informs him that a gentleman can always live through anything, taking responsibility for his actions, and accepting his consequences. Grandfather allows Lucius to cry, but reminds him that a gentleman washes his face when he is through, which Lucius does.



Lucius returns to school Monday, and comes home to find Ned on the steps. Ned explains that he won his roll of money by betting on Akron in the final race. When Lucius asks if he has enough to pay Grandfather back, Ned replies that neither he nor Grandfather wish to insult the other. Later that year, Everbe sends for Lucius from across town where she and Boon now live as husband and wife. When Lucius enters, he sees Everbe walking toward a small cradle, and Lucius joins her to view her and Boon's newborn son. Lucius asks the child's name, and Everbe replies his name is Lucius Priest Hogganbeck.

Chapter 13 Analysis

This chapter shows again the effects of sexuality on individuals, yet shows the theme in a different light in terms of Boon's character. Whereas Boon previously allowed jealousy and anger to cloud his judgment, striking Everbe and Butch not out of honor but spite, this chapter finds Boon striking Butch in defense of what is soon to be his wife. Clearly, Boon too has matured through his travels during the novel. While Lucius has learned much from Boon and Ned, Boon too has clearly learned from Lucius about the value of morality and honor.

In turn, Lucius has learned honor from Ned, as shown by his willingness to approach Everbe, even after her retreat to prostitution. Lucius now understands Everbe's position as a woman in the world, and understands that sexual intimacy sometimes seems the only way out of a situation for women such as her. This realization symbolizes not only Lucius' maturation during the novel, but also the plight of women in this time period, as they were seen not as individuals, but objects for pleasure.

This chapter also shows the true breadth of Ned's intelligence, as well as his true nature. Whereas readers previously believed Ned to be cunning, readers can now see the goal of his actions was not self-serving but was instead a needed method to assist his family. In his own way, limited in choice by his race and status in the world, Ned is able to achieve what Bobo alone could not. This revelation symbolizes the true plight of the black man in early 1900, as circumstances and prejudice limit choices, forcing otherwise moral and virtuous men into decisions otherwise unthinkable.

Grandfather's character is also defined in this chapter, showing readers the origin of Lucius' own personality. Grandfather, when tempted, also gambles with his associates, simply for enjoyment. However, Grandfather also steps in when Father is about to punish Lucius, knowing there is no punishment that can satisfy Lucius' need for closure. Instead, Grandfather informs Lucius of his punishment, that of the recollection of lessons learned on this trip, and of his own failings.

In the final scene of the novel, the birth of a new child to Boon and Everbe, named after Lucius himself, symbolizes the birth of the new generation of Priest's, whose dignity, honor, and virtue have throughout the novel shown clearly through even the darkest of actions. This theme of change, shown through the industrialization of Memphis, Lucius' and Boon's own personality changes, and Everbe's decision to alter her lifestyle, is

brought to a final conclusion with the birth of the child. Readers are left with the sense that the positive changes seen throughout the novel will only bring blessing to this close, noble family of Jefferson, Mississippi.



Characters

Lucius Priest

An 11-year-old boy from Jefferson, Mississippi, Lucius has been raised to be fair, nondiscriminatory, and polite. Growing up at the turn of the century, Lucius is filled with the concepts and ideals of rural America. However, when Boon decides to steal the family vehicle, Lucius cannot help but to assist, in that his own passion for non-Virtue is revived. Through his journey to Memphis, Lucius lies, participates in fistfights, hears women abused, and learns much of discrimination, sexism, racism, and heroism. Lucius finds that he himself must learn to make his own decisions about the world around him, and about the characters of those he chooses to associate. While Lucius originally blames the powers of Virtue and Morality for his decisions, he learns by the end of the novel that he himself must face up to and learn from the choices and mistakes he makes.

Boon Hogganback

Boon Hogganback is a retainer of the Priest family, following his informal adoption after being found alone in the woods at age twelve. Boon alternately claims to have nearly full Indian heritage, or claims to have none at all. He is six foot four, two hundred forty pounds, and has the mentality of a child, or so Father Priest believes. Though tough and often drunk, Boon proves to be faithful, brave, and highly unreliable. His actions towards Lucius throughout the novel are brotherly and kind, but his actions and behaviors towards others, such as Corrie, are virtually abusive. In the beginning, Boon, like many other men, sees Corrie simply as a sexual object, but by the end of the novel has learned from Lucius about the powers of respect and dignity, and asks Corrie to marry him. Boon's changes throughout the novel show that even an older man is capable of learning how to live with honor and decency.

Ned McCaslin

Ned is one of the only black family members of the Priest family tree, and is the family's coachman. A quiet, gentle black man, Ned was married four times, and is currently married to Delphine. Slightly balding, thin, and tall, Ned is treated with respect by citizens of the town, but certainly knows of discrimination and racism. When Ned decides to join Boon and Lucius on their trip to Memphis, his actions appears to be rash and unpredictable. When he trades the automobile for a horse, this seems even truer.

However, by the end of the novel, readers learn that Ned's actions are done to save a family member. Throughout the novel, Ned treats other men with respect and a calm disposition. However, Ned's treatment of women in the novel, as he flirts with nearly all black women he meets, even though he is married, shows his disrespect toward women



in general. It is this duality of character that allows readers to understand Ned's character, in that his actions are not done out of malice, but simply out of habit.

Grandfather "Boss" Priest

A nearly unseen character in the novel, Grandfather's presence is felt regardless of his proximity to the characters. Lucius, Ned, and Boon clearly respect Grandfather, but their desire to escape while he attends a funeral is too great to ignore. However, it is Grandfather's sudden appearance at the racetrack near the end of the novel that saves the group from jail and certain demise. Additionally, Grandfather teaches Lucius at the end of the novel about living with mistakes, and learning from them in a gentlemanly fashion.

Everbe Corinthia (Corrie)

Everbe "Corrie" Corinthia is a large, well-built prostitute, working in a bordello in Memphis. As a regular entertainer of Boon, Corrie finds herself caught between her love for Boon and her need for self-preservation. Having led the life of a prostitute since the age of twelve, Corrie knows no other way of life. When Lucius risks his life for her in a fight with her nephew, Corrie realizes that her lifestyle is one of choice, and that she does not have to continue. She promises Lucius she will leave the life of prostitution and seek gainful employment. In the end, her new resolve, along with Boon's new outlook towards women, make it possible for the two individuals to marry.

Miss Reba

Miss Reba is a striking, hard woman who manages the bordello in Memphis. Kind to her workers, but also able to make quick decisions and think on her feet, Miss Reba is a self-sufficient woman who knows how to care for herself and her friends. Often looked to for answers, and seemingly always in control, Miss Reba represents the strong, capable woman of the future. When Reba hears of the stolen horse, she immediately arranges transport for the creature to Parsham. When Butch Lovemaiden abuses Corrie, Reba is quick to threaten the man into silence. Reba's bordello is run with a sense of dignity and honor. It's a difficult task considering the profession of the house residents.

Sam Caldwell

Sam Caldwell is a flagman for the railroad, and a customer of Corrie's. When asked for assistance in transporting the horse, Sam is eager to help, in spite of Boon's clear jealousy. Treating Boon with consistent respect and treating Ned with even more dignity, Sam proves himself a kind, reliable, honest, and caring man whose actions of the behalf of others is consistently genuine. Sam, through Ned, teaches Lucius about goodness and honor.



Otis

The nephew of Corrie, Otis is a fifteen-year-old hellion recently transported to Memphis. Otis is a racist, sexist, cruel individual whose actions throughout the novel show readers the negative side of human beings. Having exploited Corrie throughout her young adult life, Otis feels neither remorse nor pity for his Aunt, but instead is consistently seeking for money making opportunities. His actions include theft of a gold tooth from one of the prostitutes, the betrayal of Mr. Binford, and the cutting of Lucius' hand. Overall, Otis' character represents the common mindset of individuals within the early portion of the 20th century.

Uncle Parsham

Uncle Parsham is a graying black man with a white mustache and a quiet sense of peace and faith. As the man providing living quarters to Lucius, Uncle Parsham treats everyone on his property respectfully, whether or not the individuals deserve such treatment. For example, when Butch Lovemaiden attempts to bully Corrie into having sexual relations, Uncle Parsham, while concerned, does nothing. Knowing Parsham is a man of honor and dignity, readers are able to understand, through this lack of mobility, that Parsham knows he is limited by his race and social status. Forced to accept the life given to him, Parsham makes a clear effort in the novel to teach Lucius how to live honorably.

Butch Lovemaiden

Butch Lovemaiden is a prime example of a racist, egotistical, sexist, hardheaded police officer whose only ambition is self-pleasure. Consistently rude and discriminatory to those around him, Butch forces Corrie, indirectly, to have sexual relations with him after her repeated refusal. Cruel to Ned, and even more so to Uncle Parsham, Butch is clearly against black individuals, and his treatment of women suggests a highly sexist attitude. It is through Butch's actions that Lucius learns of these topics, and of their drastic consequences on the psyche and the spirit.



Objects/Places

Jefferson, Mississippi

The hometown of Lucius Priest, Boon Hogganbeck, and Ned McCaslin, Jefferson symbolizes the rural South during the early 20th century. A quiet town, Jefferson is limited in technology as symbolized by the lack of motor vehicles, and represents the innocence of Lucius Priest.

The Livery

As the primary place of employment for many in the Priest and McCaslin family, the livery stable is the location Ned learned his skills with horses, as well as where Lucius himself learned to ride.

Hell Creek Bottom

Hell Creek bottom is a swampy riverbed, kept moist by a local farmer to trap travelers. The farmer then requires travelers to pay his mule plow to pull their vehicles from the muddy swamp. Ned, Boon, and Lucius find themselves stuck in the bottom, symbolizing the hardships they will face during their adventure to Memphis.

Iron Bridge

The Iron Bridge symbolizes a point of no return for Lucius, Boon, and Ned. Past the bridge are the roadways leading to Memphis, and to cross the bridge represents a crossing from rural Mississippi to urban Tennessee.

"Jack"

Mentioned by many in the novel, the word "jack" denotes cash, or money. Often the source of many actions, "jack" becomes the primary focus of characters such as Butch and Grandfather Priest, as well as Otis.

"Pugnuckling"

Heard first from Otis, "pugnuckling" is a derogatory term for the act of sexual intercourse. Unknown to Lucius, the term becomes a point of contention between Lucius and Otis, as Otis explains his exploitation of Corrie's pugnuckling activities. Lucius, outraged, beats Otis, who cuts Lucius' hand with a small knife. This fight eventually convinces Corrie to stop her life of prostitution.



Memphis, Tennessee

An area of modern industrialization, Memphis represents the corruption and deceit Lucius faces during his travels. Throughout the story, Memphis corrupts the young and foolish coming from the rural south, such as Lucius, Bobo, Ned, Corrie, and even Grandfather. Clearly, Memphis represents the danger of industrialization on the morality of the rural populations.

Parsham

A town near Memphis, Parsham is known for a racetrack, as well as for a horse named Akron, who has beat Forked Lightning previous in a horse race. A place of honor, as well as sexism and racism, Parsham represents the crossing of industrialization and corruption with the rural South and innocence.

Colonel Linscomb's Acreage

The location of the racetrack, the acreage is a luxurious plot of land with a large home and a rose garden. The track, where Lucius learns to accept victory, is near the office of colonel Linscomb, where Lucius learns of defeat and punishment. The acreage appears to symbolize the crossroads of Virtue and non-Virtue.

Uncle Parsham's Home

The place of Lucius' rest prior to the race, the home of Uncle Parsham, as well as his family, represents the purity of faith and honesty, as well as the strong power of honor and self-respect. Within the home, and from Uncle Parsham himself, Lucius learns these powers of self, and uses them to counterbalance his lessons of self-loathing and deceit.

Minnie's Gold Tooth

Admired by both Lucius and Ned, Minnie's gold tooth originally represents false beauty and the appeal of women in the eyes of men. As Otis steals the tooth for monetary gain, and as Ned searches endlessly for it to win Minnie's favor, the tooth becomes a symbol for the lengths individuals will go to in order to serve their own wants and desires.

Social Sensitivity

The Reivers was a popular novel in part because it tells a wonderfully complicated tall tale to a considerable extent in Faulkner's characteristically difficult style and yet is fairly accessible, very funny, and both risqué and wholesome in a sense that American readers tend to like.

Somewhat like Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), this story takes an innocent boy with a sure sense of right and wrong into a wild world of gambling, debauchery, prostitution, horse-racing, political corruption, and rowdiness. His negotiation of these difficulties with his personal sense of honor more or less intact makes for a moral adventure in an immoral world.

At the novel's center is a moral purpose, the passing on of a tradition of moral behavior, of an ideal of the gentleman. As a story of moral education for young people and of coming of age in a complex and puzzling social world, the novel retains relevance and resonance with a time in which social values are a central node of conflict in Western Civilization.

Techniques

Faulkner uses comic techniques that he borrowed and developed from his own regional tradition, southwestern humor. He develops the tall tale, for example, in his story of how the adventurers become stuck at Hell Creek, a series of mud holes faithfully plowed by a local entrepreneur to make the services of his mule team essential for continuing the journey. The complex swapping of car and horse is a tall tale of trading of the kind that appears often in Faulkner and in earlier Southern writers. One of Faulkner's main additions to his tradition is an increased complexity of the comic complications and of subtlety in those characters who must deal with them.

Faulkner raises these complications to such a level that it requires acute moral reasoning to escape them with honor.

Themes

Racism and Prejudice

Throughout the novel, some characters display clearly both actions of racism and prejudice, while others seem to negate those actions through their own acceptance of race. Butch Lovemaiden, for example, is racist in both thought and deed, as he consistently calls the black characters "niggers," referring to them only to question their intelligence, honor, status, honesty, or morality. Even Mr. Poleymus, shown to be a kind and moral man, shows racism as he openly discusses his disapproval of Lucius staying with a black family. On Ned's word, however, Poleymus is able to dampen his racist attitudes in favor of the human right to free choice, showing the ability of some characters to change.

On the other hand, Sam shows a true faith in Ned, a black man, as well as in Uncle Parsham and his family. Sam is true to his word, giving Ned the money he is owed, and consistently helps Ned throughout the novel. Additionally, Grandfather and Father have both taught Lucius never to address a man by race, showing their distaste for prejudice. Therefore, Lucius, who has lived with Ned and other blacks throughout his life, learns only to despise needless racism on his journey. However, he is shown the results of racism and discrimination as Ned is continuously questioned, spoken down to, and abused.

Sexism and the Role of Women

The role of women, as well as sexism against women, plays a highly important role in this novel, as many of the primary characters are prostitutes. Miss Reba, for example, is a strong, independent, fearless woman whose respect is well deserved, as it is her cunningness, wit, and strength that keeps the bordello safe and secure. At the same time, however, Mr. Binford, the pimp and Reba's own lover, treats Reba and the other women badly, calling them "whores," using their money to gamble, and seeming to believe they are less than, simply, because they are women.

Butch Lovemaiden, the deputy sheriff, symbolizes the true breadth of the sexism within the novel. Seeing women as simply "meat," Butch does not even feign respect, but instead refuses to accept no as an answer from Corrie for sex, eventually arresting Ned, Boon, and Lightning to force her into a sexual arrangement. Nearly every sentence uttered by Butch contains disrespectful references to women, and his actions, including forceful physical manipulation and verbal assault, degrade all women within his reach. In addition to Butch, Otis too shows a high disrespect for women, even those within his own family. His exploitation of Corrie, his Aunt, while she performed degrading acts with customers as a forced profession, along with his lack of remorse at such an act, displays his own attitude towards women as simply objects to sell for monetary gain.



Even those characters otherwise thought to be positive show some sexist attitudes. For example, Boon, who claims to love Corrie, beats her for sleeping with Butch, even though she is a prostitute, and even though her actions were done on his behalf. Ned, discussing this beating with Lucius, claims that beating a woman does not hurt her, since it lets her know the man is thinking about her. Such statements and actions show the submissive, secondary role women played in the early part of the 20th century.

It is perhaps only Lucius and Sam who show respect for the women within the novel. Both characters consistently treat the women around them with respect and care, even defending their honor, such as when Lucius fights with Otis to defend Corrie's honor. Sam, throughout the novel, is the hero for the women through his assistance, care, and genuine concern for their well-being. These two characters are the counterpoint to such characters as Butch, and show that while many in this period treated women badly, some were forward thinkers who treated women with respect and dignity.

Virtue vs. Non-Virtue

One of the most significant themes of the novel is the constant battle between the powers of Virtue and non-Virtue. From the beginning, Lucius is torn between doing the right thing and doing what he truly wants to do. Even at 11 years old, Lucius knows that those who act in virtuous ways often act alone, and fight a consistent battle. On the other hand, according to Lucius, those who work on the side of non-Virtue find partners at nearly every turn, and find their battles much simpler. Since non-Virtue is exceptionally tempting for those with innocence and ignorance, Lucius knows he is particularly vulnerable.

It is this constant battle between Virtue and non-Virtue that drives many of the character's actions throughout the novel. Lucius, for example, finds himself talked into stealing the vehicle following Boon's driving lesson, since Boon tempts him with non-Virtue by allowing him to actually drive. Boon is also driven by non-Virtuous ambitions as his theft of the car is done to visit a bordello. Otis, the primary example of a non-Virtuous character, steals a gold tooth from Minnie, steals alcohol, exploits Corrie, uses Ned, and betrays Mr. Binford, all in the name of non-Virtue.

However, intermingled with these constant reminders of immoral behaviors, Ned's actions, seemingly done for non-Virtuous ends, are actually completely Virtuous. Ned's trade of the vehicle for a horse, arrangement of a horse race, and use of Lucius as a jockey, while seemingly immoral, are done to save his family member from harm. Knowing he is limited in options by race and status, Ned acts on the side of non-Virtue to achieve Virtuous results.

Industrialization

Though a background theme, this concept is vital to the core of the novel's plotline. Beginning with a journey from Jefferson, Mississippi, a rural area, to Memphis, Tennessee, Ned, Boon, and Lucius see the gradual changes in landscape, population,



and actions between these two areas. In Jefferson, everyone knows one another, there is only one motor vehicle, the police are friendly to both whites and blacks, and life is led in a leisurely manner. In Memphis, however, even those living with one another appear not to truly know one another, there are plenty of motor vehicles, the police are prejudiced, racist and sexist. Life is fast-paced and filled with peril. Through the eyes of Lucius, the reader is able to see the changes in the world as industrialization commandeers Memphis.

Additionally, the theme of behavioral change because of the exposure to urban life is clear throughout the novel. Lucius, an innocent 11-year-old boy in the beginning, learns much of racism, sexism, honor, extortion, deceit, and morality during the journey. This exposure allows Lucius to develop his own morals and opinions, in spite of those held by his companions. Boon, too, is shown to change and mature during the journey, as his knowledge of women and their needs is increased. After many years of using Corrie as a sexual partner, Boon learns from Lucius that Corrie's honor is of value and that to care for her properly he must marry her. This maturing of characters by the end of the novel shows the power of the human being to adapt and change in response to their experiences.



Themes/Characters

In *The Reivers*, Lucius Priest tells his grandson the story of how he became a man. In 1905, when he was eleven, he was willingly carried off on an escapade from their home in Jefferson to Memphis by Boon Hogganbeck and a Negro, Ned McCaslin, both employees at his family's livery stable.

Boon plans to visit his girl friend, Corrie Everbe, a prostitute at Miss Reba's brothel; he takes Lucius along as a way of justifying his borrowing Lucius's grandfather's car. Soon after their arrival Ned, who accompanies them as a stowaway, trades the car for a "borrowed" race horse as part of a complex plot to extricate a relative from gambling debts. The complications proceed comically, ending with a horse race. By then, Lucius's parents and grandparents have discovered the reivers' whereabouts, and Lucius must face his punishment.

Lucius learns much about the darker side of life, about his own darker side, about his weakness before temptation, and about the consequences of lying and deceiving. He learns about the anguish of making adult decisions, for even at eleven, he is the most responsible adult in his party. He achieves manhood when he learns from his Grandfather that no punishment can take away his shame: "A gentle-man can live through anything. . . . A gentleman accepts the responsibility of his actions and bears the burden of their consequences, even when he did not himself instigate them but only acquiesced to them, didn't say No though he knew he should."

Even though Lucius surrenders to what he calls "Unvirtue" by consenting to the secret trip in violation of explicit and implicit promises to his family, he continues to behave as he has been taught a gentleman does. He keeps his promise to his mother to drink no alcohol. He attacks the corrupt teenager who reveals how Corrie became a prostitute and how he has used her to make money. Because of this noble action, Corrie promises him she will reform, just before Boon gets what he came for. This and other gentlemanly acts lead to persuading Boon to marry Corrie. The moral responsibility at the core of Lucius's values even when he is disobeying his parents helps, by example, to save others from irresponsibility and immorality.

Style

Point of View

Lucius Priest, the 11-year-old main character of the novel, narrates the story using a first person point of view. Lucius' narrative is honest, thoughtful, and innocent, lending credibility to the novel as a whole. His reflections on the characters of the novel, as well as his observations of their behaviors, allow the reader to learn the personalities of those characters well, aiding in the understanding of the major themes within the novel. This first person narrative is necessary in order to lend an authentic feel to the events within the story. As told by a young child, the innocence through which Lucius explains events allows readers to make their own decisions of character values, without narrator bias. Further, since the story is primarily centered on Lucius' journey of maturation and change, this first person narrative is necessary.

Setting

The novel is centered in three primary locations. The first portion of the novel occurs in and around a small, rural town called Jefferson, Mississippi. This setting sets the tone of the novel, as the reader is introduced to small town living and small town behavior patterns. For example, when Boon fires a weapon at another man in town and accidentally strikes a young woman, the local officials simply tell him to pay the woman's father, and buy her a new dress. Further, this small town setting allows the narrator to focus on the history of the area, allowing readers to visualize the town and the surrounding area.

The second portion of the novel occurs in Memphis, Tennessee. Drastically different in atmosphere and action, the bordello in Memphis is a large change for Lucius. Learning for the first time of sex, discrimination, sexism, abuse, and jealousy, this setting allows the narrator to convey a sense of innocence in a non-innocent setting, as well as show the differences between rural Mississippi life and life in a large, urban city.

The final portion of the novel occurs within the town of Parsham, Tennessee, which is another rural town. However, as a suburb of Memphis, Parsham blends some of the aspects of rural living, such as gossip, pride, respect, and a common bond of neighbors, with aspects of urban living, such as racism, sexism, discrimination, and greed. This unique blend of small town living and urban attitudes allows the readers to see the conflicting world in which Lucius finds himself, and is able to discover his own moral path.

Language and Meaning

The novel uses a blend of Standard English and slang language, making the novel easy to read and giving it a feeling of authenticity. While the narrative portions of the novel



are often written in plain, proper English, many of the conversations between the characters use words outside of the normal course of conversation, allowing the reader to sense the race, age, sex, and status of the characters authentically. Additionally, the novel is written in a standard style, clearly distinguishing between characters and periods, making the novel very accessible for all readers.

Structure

The 305-page novel is divided into thirteen chapters of unequal length. Each chapter generally represents a specific event or period, and the chapters are arranged chronologically. Most breaks between chapters represent a specific change in setting or plotline, and often end with foreshadowing of the next chapter. This traditional style allows the novel to flow easily from one event to the next.

The novel covers a time period of six days, but ends with a summary of nine months, in order to present the birth of Corrie's child. Each day is given approximately equal importance within the novel, allowing the narrator to describe completely his surroundings, and the actions and events of each day. This structure also allows the narrator to explore the major themes of the novel in depth.



Quotes

"Because there are some things, some of the hard facts of life, that you don't forget, no matter how old you are. There is a ditch, a chasm; as a boy you crossed it on a footlog. You come creeping and doddering back at thirty-five or forty and the footlog is gone; you may not even remember the footlog but at least you don't step out onto that empty gravity that footlog once spanned." (Lucius Priest, Chapter 1, page 5).

"But some frayed ragtag judgment, some embryo gleam of simple yet-virgin discretion and common sense, persuaded him at least to try me first, to have me by as a kind of hostage. And he didn't need to try, test me first. When grown people speak of the innocence of children, they don't really know what they mean. Pressed, they will go a step further and say, Well, ignorance then. The child is neither. There is no crime which a boy of eleven had not envisioned long ago. His only innocence is, he may not yet be old enough to desire the fruits of it, which is not innocence by appetite, his ignorance is, he does not know how to commit it, which is not ignorance but size." (Lucius Priest, Chapter 3, page 46).

"Because the die was indeed cast now; we looked not back to remorse or regret or might-have-been; if we crossed Rubicon when we crossed the Iron Bridge into another county, when we conquered Hell Creek we locked the portcullis and set the bridge on fire." (Lucius Priest, Chapter 5, page 93).

"Don't it beat all how much a fellow can learn and in what a short time, about something he not only never knowed before, he never even had no idea he would ever want to know it, let alone would find it useful to him for the rest of his life-providing he kept it, never let it get away from him." (Boon Hogganback, Chapter 5, page 103).

"In fact, I rate mules second only to rats in intelligence, the mule followed in order by cats, dogs, and horses last-assuming of course that you accept my definition of intelligence: which is the ability to cope with environment: which means to accept environment yet still retain at least something of personal liberty." (Lucius Priest, Chapter 6, page 121).

"Sam Caldwell," Ned said. "It strikes me that Sam Caldwell is a better name for this kind of horse business than twice some others a man could mentions around here. A little more, and I could be wishing me and you was frequent enough to be permanent. Kindly much obliged." (Ned McCaslin, Chapter 7, page 152).

"I was just eleven, remember. There are things, circumstances, conditions in the world which should not be there but are, and you can't escape them and indeed you would not escape them even if you had the choice, since they too are a part of Motion, of participating in life, being alive. But they should arrive with grace, decency. I was having to learn too much too fast, unassisted; I had nowhere to put it, no receptacle, pigeonhole prepared yet to accept it without pain and lacerations." (Lucius Priest, Chapter 7, page 155).



"Who's he?" he said. "As a general rule, we don't take to strange niggers around here. We don't object though, providing they notify themselves and then keep their mouths shut." (Butch Lovemaiden, Chapter 8, page 173).

"Then it was morning, it was tomorrow: THE day on which I would ride my first actual horse race (and by winning it, set Boon and Ned-me too of course, but then I was safe, immune; I was not only just a child, I was kin to them-free to go home again, not with honor perhaps, not even unscathed, but at least they could go back) toward which all the finagling and dodging and manipulating and scrabbling around (what other crimes subsequent to-all right, consequent to-the simple and really spontaneous and in a way innocent stealing of Grandfather's automobile, I didn't even know) had been leading up to; now it was here." (Lucius Priest, Chapter 10, page 213).

"Because even before he said it, I knew that was exactly what I wanted, what I had been wanting probably ever since yesterday: to go home." (Lucius Priest, Chapter 11, page 251).

"Hitting a woman don't hurt her because a woman don't shove back at a lick like a man do, she just giver to it and then when your back is turned, reaches for the flatiron or the butcher knife. That's why hitting them don't break nothing; all it does is just black her eye or cut her mouf a little. And that aint nothing to a woman. Because why? Because what better sign than a black eye or a cut mouf can a woman want from a man that he got her on his mind?" (Ned McCaslin, Chapter 12, page 263).

"It's too late for me. But it aint too late for you. I'm gonter give you a chance, even if it aint nothing but taking a chance away from you." (Ned McCaslin, Chapter 13, page 282).

"It should have been altered, even if only a little. I don't mean it should have changed of itself, but that I, bringing back to it what the last four days must have changed in me, should have altered it. I mean, if those four days-the lying and deceiving and tricking and decisions and undecisions, and the things I had done and seen and heard and learned that Mother and Father wouldn't have let me do and see and hear and learn-the things I had had to learn that I wasn't even ready for yet, had nowhere to store them nor even anywhere to lay them down; if all that had changed nothing, was the same as if it had never been-nothing smaller or larger or older or wiser or more pitying-then something had been wasted, thrown away, spent for nothing, either it was wrong and false to begin with and should never have existed, or I was wrong or false or weak or anyway not worthy of it." (Lucius Priest, Chapter 13, page 300).

"A gentleman can live through anything. Hr faces anything. A gentleman accepts the responsibility of his actions and bears the burden of their consequences, even when he did not himself instigate them but only acquiesced to them, didn't say No though he knew he should." (Grandfather "Boss" Priest, Chapter 13, page 302).

Adaptations

The Reivers (1969), a well-reviewed and popular film adaptation is faithful to the novel on the whole, although according to Bruce Kavin, it alters Faulkner's ambiguous perspective on the automobile and his skepticism about childhood innocence.



Key Questions

The Reivers can be seen as an opposite to Sanctuary. Lucius contrasts with Temple Drake in that he has a set of values by which he is trying to define himself and to live. He contrasts with most of the characters who have values in Sanctuary in that he understands those values and continues to learn their implications. Good discussion can arise out of taking note of those values and evaluating their adequacy to an adult world where seemingly few people live by moral values.

Although Memphis is a place of corruption in both novels, in The Reivers we see many characters who oppose that corruption and who live upright and meaningful lives. It is interesting to discuss the differing views of this world in the two works and to account for Faulkner's shift from savage tragedy to almost romantic comedy in his treatment of it.

1. When Lucius confesses his various sins and expresses regret, the one for which he is most ashamed is lying.

What are the principle values by which he tries to live? Why does he consider lying the most serious of his failings during his adventure? Why do his father and grandfather decide that whipping him for his failings is not appropriate punishment?

2. How does Lucius's grandfather define a gentleman? What are the new rules Lucius must accept in order to live as an adult gentleman? Where does the authority of these rules come from? Are they to be found in religious scripture or the human heart or both?

3. Who are the other characters in the novel who offer good models for male adulthood that Lucius might learn from? What does each have to teach him?

4. Who are the negative models of adulthood that Lucius does well to reject? Which are the hardest for him to understand as poor models? Why?

5. How ought we to evaluate Ned McCaslin? He causes a good deal of the trouble, but also finds ways out of it.

He is an acute moral reasoner, but is his thinking always to be trusted?

6. This novel has a strong cast of Negro characters. How does Faulkner present them? What positions are they shown to occupy in early twentieth century Southern society? What can we learn from them of Faulkner's views about race and racism?

7. Some readers have seen Corrie Everbe as a sentimentalized "whore with a heart of gold" and Reba Rivers' brothel as too good to be true. Others have seen both as realistically portrayed. How do you evaluate Faulkner's representation of prostitution in this story? How is Corrie's conversion brought about? How convincing is it to you? How should we understand her sleeping with Butch?



8. Think about the many women glimpsed in this novel. What places do they occupy in this world? How does a gentleman behave toward women?

What does the novel suggest about Faulkner's views about women and relations between the genders?

9. While *Sanctuary* (1931) shows a world of despair in which lost people without values or with corrupt values seem to be in control, the world of *The Reivers*, though often disorderly, seems to be finally under the control of people with strong social and moral values. How do you account for this difference? Is Faulkner simply more hopeful? Did the world improve between 1931 and 1961? Or were people better in 1905 than in 1931? What help do the stories provide in considering these questions?

10. In his Nobel Prize Address, Faulkner said that the writer's duty and privilege is "to help man endure by lifting his heart." The writer does this by showing "the human heart in conflict with itself." Explain how Faulkner realizes or fails to realize this purpose in *The Reivers*.



Topics for Discussion

One of the primary themes of the novel is the battle between virtue and non-virtue. Using examples from the text, describe at least three actions representing each side of this battle.

Explain how the novel portrays women in the early 1900's.

Compare the personalities of Boon and Ned. What are their similarities and differences?

Give at least five examples of statements or behaviors of characters in the novel that are racist or discriminatory.

Do you think Boon had a right to be jealous of Corrie's connection to Sam in the beginning of the novel? Why or why not?

Knowing that Ned traded the vehicle and entered the horse race in order to save his relative, do you believe Ned acted morally or immorally? Virtuously or non-Virtuously? Explain your answer.

Do the vast descriptions of the history surrounding Jefferson, Mississippi and the Priest family aid in the understanding of the novel? Why do you believe the author included such detailed descriptions?

Why do you believe Corrie named her child after Lucius?

Does the lack of punishment for Lucius at the end of the novel glorify his actions? Why or why not?

What do you think the author is trying to say about the innocence of children? Use Lucius, Otis, and Corrie's experiences to explain your answer.

Numerous times within the novel, the phrase "twenty three skidoo" is used. What do you think this phrase means?

Literary Precedents

In this book, Faulkner draws upon the entire comic tradition that he admired from Shakespeare and Cervantes to George Washington Harris and Mark Twain. Perhaps the clearest and most often noted precursor of *The Reivers* is Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Though Lucius differs from Huck Finn because he has dependable adult teachers, he is like Huck in that his adventure to the moral margins of society helps him to discover the core values by which he will live, leads him to an increased respect for the moral and intellectual qualities of marginalized African-Americans, and to some extent complicates his views of women.

Finally, unlike Huck, Lucius returns to respectable society after his adventure, better prepared to live an adult life.

Related Titles

Although *The Reivers* shares characters with other works, notably *Boon*, who also appears in *Go Down, Moses* (1942) and other stories, this is Faulkner's only novel that is consistently comic in tone and form. Still, the situations and techniques he uses here are characteristic of his work almost from the beginning. Late in his career, he had used the tall tale extensively in the Snopes novels, *The Hamlet* (1940), *The Town* (1957), and *The Mansion* (1959), but the snowballing absurdity that is typical of his tall tales can be traced back at least as far as *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), for example, when Jason Compson, Jr. chases his niece and her lover around the Mississippi countryside to recover stolen money she has taken from him.

Another novel that seems especially close to this one is *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), which shows an adolescent coming of age in his efforts to be true to his friendship with a black man falsely accused of murder.

Copyright Information

Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults

Editor - Kirk H. Beetz, Ph.D.

Library of Congress
Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults

Includes bibliographical references.

Summary: A multi-volume compilation of analytical essays on and study activities for fiction, nonfiction, and biographies written for young adults.

Includes a short biography for the author of each analyzed work.

1. Young adults—Books and reading. 2. Young adult literature—History and criticism. 3.

Young adult literature—Bio-bibliography. 4. Biography—Bio-bibliography.

[1. Literature—History and criticism. 2. Literature—Bio-bibliography]

I. Beetz, Kirk H., 1952

Z1037.A1G85 1994 028.1'62 94-18048 ISBN 0-933833-32-6

Copyright ©, 1994, by Walton Beacham. All rights to this book are reserved. No part of this work may be used or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or in any information or storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the copyright owner, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information, write the publisher, Beacham Publishing, Inc., 2100 "S" Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

Printed in the United States of America First Printing, November 1994