

# **The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp Study Guide**

**The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp by Kathi Appelt**

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# Plot Summary

The True Blue Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp is the tale of an unlikely mix of characters banded together in their own ways to save their beloved swamp from destruction.

Bingo and J'miah are raccoon brothers who are the new Information Officers of the Swamp Scouts. They arrive at the Information Headquarters and Bingo immediately wants to start climbing trees, while J'miah thinks about his fear of heights. Bingo climbs up a tall pine tree to discover a red flashing star low in the sky that he names Binkle. Meanwhile, 12-year-old Chap Brayburn is mourning his recently deceased Grandpa Audie and wondering how he will ever have enough cash to pay the increasing rent to Sonny Boy Beaucoop, who increased the rent so high that Chap and his mother will be forced to leave their home. Sonny Boy is an extremely greedy landowner who is making plans to sell the swamp to World Champion Gator Wrestler Jaeger Stitch so that she can build a gator wrestling arena.

While in the Information Headquarters, Bingo and J'miah hear the sound of rumbling in the distance. The Brayburn's cat, Sweetums, hears it also and tries to warn whoever he can. Eventually the Scouts hear this noise as well and they know whatever is coming could really hurt the swamp. They decide they need to wake up the Sugar Man to get his help, but they have no clue where he is. In the meantime, Sonny Boy is making plans to kick the Brayburns from their home. He says that he will reconsider and give Chap the entire swamp if Chap brings proof of this elusive creature or if he gets a boat full of cash. Jaeger Stitch is Sonny Boy's business partner and gator wrestling champion with ideas that she is going to open a theme park in the swamp.

As these things are going on, Buzzie and Clydine Farrow, leader of a notorious family of wild hogs, decide that they have a craving for sugar cane. They charge through the swamp lands, destroying everything in their path. The Voice of Intelligence warns Bingo and J'miah about this group during a transmission and they figure out the rumbling sound is coming from them. They decide that they have no choice but to go on an extremely important and dangerous mission, to wake the Sugar Man. The brothers set off to find the Sugar Man but instead run into his personal assistant, the rattlesnake Gertrude. She tells them that they need to get sugar cane to gently coax the Sugar Man into waking so he does not wake up in a nasty mood and throw things. Bingo and J'miah go to the sugar cane fields, but they find none as Chap Brayburn has already taken most of the sugar cane back to the cafe.

The Voice of Intelligence is helpful once again when it instructs the Swamp Scouts to go to the Paradise Pies Café. They steal many pies, but they eat most of them before they can get back to the Sugar Man's lair. They are left with one to give the Sugar Man, but Gertrude eats it. She takes pity on the scouts and wakes the Sugar Man up herself. This is just in the nick of time, since the Farrow Gang has just arrived in the swamp. During all of this, Sonny Boy and Jaeger prepare for the groundbreaking ceremony for the amusement park. Sonny Boy totally disregards Chaps hard work in obtaining the boatload of cash that Sonny Boy asked for. They gather important people from the town



together and begin, but in the swamp something else is going on. The Farrow Gang has invaded the canebrake and is eating all the sugar cane.

Sonny Boy takes the group of people he has assembled down towards the canebrake, but they are stopped by a massive horde of rattlesnakes led by Gertrude. The Sugar Man saves the swamp by grabbing the Farrow Gang and throwing them as hard and as far as he can. Once this is finished the Sugar Man and Chap run into each other and they become friends. Later, Chap searches the forest for some sort of proof that the Sugar Man exists because he knows that just because Jaeger Stitch cannot build in the swamp, that does not mean Sonny Boy will save the swamp from sale to someone else. As he is walking, he finds the 1949 DeSoto that Granpa Audie lost. Chap inspects the car and finds 3 Polaroid pictures inside. Chap knows that the picture Audie had taken of the Sugar Man is just the thing he needs to save the swamp. Chap decides against this, as he feels that Audie was right in saying that any proof of the Sugar Man would only lead to trouble and the possible destruction of the swamp once humans start hovering around wanting to do research or constantly be in the way.

To make matters worse for Sonny Boy, when he gets home, he decides to burn Alouicious' oath and during it he hears the Farrow Gang crash into the ground. He is convinced that the wrath of the Sugar Man is upon him and he wants out of there. Before Sonny Boy leaves the swamp, he signs a document in his own blood giving the entire area to Chap, thereby saving the whole swamp. Bingo and J'miah go out to wish on Binkle for more sugar pies as J'miah has realized that he has gotten over his fear of heights. They go to the cafe, but they see a trap has been set to catch the raccoons so head to the crawdad hole. When they return, they find home almost exactly as they left it. They know that a human has been inside the Information Headquarters and that the pictures were touched. They are mad only for an instant when they see that the human has left something for them. The brothers forgive the human as they see that they got exactly what they wished for, more sugar pies.



# Chapters 1 - 20: The First Night

## Summary

In Chapter 1, raccoon brothers Bingo and J'miah watch from their lookout as their family sets off into the night, leaving the boys at the Scout's Information Headquarters. They know the rules of being Scouts, but they also know that their biggest task - to wake up the Sugar Man - is highly dangerous. The Sugar Man sleeps in an unknown part of their forest and is known to wake up very mean if someone is to get past his pet rattlesnake, Gertrude.

The Sugar Man lives in a swamp in the Bayou Tourterelle many million years ago in Chapter 2. He is much larger than his famous cousins, like the Yeti and Sasquatch, and he is covered in large patches of black moss. J'miah and Bingo remember all of the stories that they grew up hearing from their parents. Although the Sugar Man is asleep, the narrator says that he is still quite dangerous.

Bingo is happy that their parents are gone but J'miah is not in Chapter 3. Bingo tries to act mature, but he feels the same ways as J'miah. For the most part, he is excited and he proceeds to do a little dance on top of an old car.

A lonely old 1949 Sportsman De Soto sits at the edge of the swamp in Chapter 4. It has been there so long that the paint has rusted and has sank into the swamp, becoming a part of it. Vines and moss have gathered on it until it is mainly out of view. No one knows how it got there or how long it has been sitting there. Most animals and people do not even know that it is hiding there. In the long distant past, J'miah and Bingo's ancestors settled in this vehicle to live. One night as storm comes through, lightning hits near the vehicle, which causes the electronics on the dashboard to come on. Lights flash and a voice says something which comes true. Since that day, the car is the Information Headquarters and the new Information Officers start to move in.

A little boy named Chap Brayburn mourns his recently deceased grandfather in Chapter 5. His mother has just received a notice that the landlord, Sonny Boy Beaucoup, has raised the rent and she informs Chap that she is considering leaving the bayou. Chap remembers his Grandpa Audie's stories about various life in the bayou as he holds his grandfather's sketchbook. As Chap looks through Grandpa Audie's book, his mother calls out a saying that Audie used to tell Chap, saddening him even further.

In Chapter 6, Bingo and J'miah settle into the Information Headquarters. They quickly become bored and Bingo decides that he is going to climb one of the pine trees. This gets them to thinking about a great uncle who had climbed up in a tree so high that he was unable to get down quickly when a storm came and he was killed when the tree fell over. J'miah tries to persuade Bingo not to do it and to help him clean out the headquarters, but Bingo does not want to hear about it. Just as Bingo is determined to



climb a tree, J'miah feels more insecure about doing this because he has a secret fear of heights, but he knows Bingo will not be happy until he climbs something.

Chapter 7 is a brief chapter with the noises that an ivory billed woodpecker would make. It also has the noises that a canebrake rattlesnake would make and with a warning that if it is heard then there is danger about.

Bingo sets off to climb one of the pine trees in Chapter 8. J'miah once again tries to stop him with a look, but decides that he must keep to the Scout code and go with him. Just as they are leaving the De Soto, rain begins to fall. Lightning starts coming down and the boys come back inside the car, knowing that they could get a message from the Voice of Intelligence at any moment. After a while of listening to the thunderstorm, a bolt of lightning strikes near the car, turning it on. The message that comes through the dashboard tells the boys that it will only rain for a bit longer and that clear skies are coming. Miraculously, the voice is right and the raccoons set off on what they call "Mission Longleaf".

The back of the Paradise Pie Cafe is also the home of Chap Brayburn and his family in Chapter 9. Chap continues remembering chats he had with his grandfather, especially one in particular about the ivory billed woodpecker. Grandpa Audie said that the actual photo for the bird was lost when he lost his De Soto somewhere in the swamp. Before his death, Grandpa Audie and Chap would sometimes go looking for the old car, in hopes of reclaiming the picture. On one of these walks, Grandpa Audie revealed that at one point in time he met the Sugar Swamp Man in person. When questioned why he would talk about the woodpecker to others and not the Sugar Man, Grandpa replied that if he did no one would believe him and if they did, people would come to tear up the swamp and to him, the swamp was paradise.

In Chapter 10, Chap continues to think about how he will raise enough cash to save his family's home. He falls asleep, not knowing that somewhere in the distance, a strange rumbling sound is going on. Sweetums the cat knows this sound and he decides that he must warn others in the area but knows it will be difficult because the other creatures do not speak his language.

Bingo climbs to the top of a tree while J'miah waits for him at the bottom in Chapter 11. Bingo is able to see for miles around him and can see all of the stars in the sky. He sees a red blinking star right over the horizon and decides to name it Binkle.

Jaeger Stitch is the World Champion Gator Wrestler in Chapter 12. She wants to buy the swamp land from Sonny Boy Beaucoup so that she can build a gator wrestling arena and park. She intends to do this for more fame and fortune and has no care for what swamp life her park will destroy.

In Chapter 13, the ancestor of Sonny Boy Beaucoup, Alouicious Beaucoup, lands with his pirates in Sugar Man Swamp. Finding it a useful hideout, he and his partners spend much time there singing all sorts of songs. One particular song annoys the Sugar Man so much that he wakes up and destroys the pirate hideout. Begging for mercy,



Alouicious tells the Sugar Man that they will never sing that song again and he and his descendants will take care of the swamp forever. The Sugar Man makes Alouicious sign a contract with his own blood, but the current owner, Sonny Boy, has no intentions of honoring this contract.

In Chapter 14, the Swamp Man hears about Audie's death and he mourns his loss as he remembers other creatures that are gone forever as well.

A new invention in 1947 called the Polaroid Land Camera makes it easier for people to take instant pictures in Chapter 15. The camera is small, easy to carry and use, but only 8 photos could be taken at a time. Audie Brayburn had one in 1949 and used it to take a very valuable picture. Unfortunately he lost it along with his car somewhere in the swamp.

J'miah and Bingo hear a strange sound while Bingo is still in the tree in Chapter 16. The tree holding Bingo starts to sway and J'miah worries even more and wants Bingo to hurry up and come down to safety.

In Chapter 17, Bingo decides to get down from the tree as fast as he can as the sound gets louder. They run back to Information Headquarters and hide in the seats. They continue hiding as the sound grows and the boys realize it is also time for them to sleep. Bingo starts to miss his parents and their daily ritual, but he remembers that he is too brave to be worrying about such things. He decides that he must get to the bottom of this noise, so he tells himself that the next mission will be called "Operation Rumble Rumble Rumble". He also decides that next time he climbs a tree to look at the stars, he is going to drag J'miah with him so they can both wish on his new found star, Binkle.

Chap remembers that Grandpa Audie told him to never cut sugar cane without singing a lullaby first in Chapter 18. He also remembers that he has been cutting the sugar cane by himself for a long time since he is so good at it. The narrator goes on to tell the story of how the Sugar Man comes across the sugar cane and wants some, but it is heavily guarded by rattlesnakes. The Sugar Man tries to get some of the cane, but the rattlesnakes keep biting him until he was angry. He throws the snakes up, but the Sugar Man notices that they would be landing in a pit of alligators. He takes pity on the snakes and throws one of the alligators all the way to Oklahoma, causing the other alligators to get scared and run away. Since then, the rattlesnakes let him have as much sugar cane as he wants. The Sugar Man likes this idea, but comes up with a lullaby to get the rattlesnakes to sleep in case they ever change their mind. One of the rattlesnakes, Gertrude, admires the Sugar Man so much that she decides to become his personal assistant.

Chapter 20 closes the first night as Bingo and J'miah settle in to sleep in the Information Headquarters. They think about getting some food, as they have not eaten all night, but since it is nearly dawn and they are too tired to move, they decide against it.



## Analysis

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to brothers Bingo and J'miah, raccoons and members of the swamp's Official Scouts. Bingo and J'miah's parents leave the young raccoons at Information Headquarters, which seems to be the official meeting place of the Scouts. It is not expressly written, but it can be assumed that the boys' parents were also at one time - or are still currently - Scouts themselves. The reader learns that the Scouts are always raccoons and it has been this way since the Sugar Man declared this at the beginning of time. The author lists the primary rules for the Official Scouts. They are a basic set of rules, including how to listen, to observe the world around them, and to take care of one another.

The reader also finds out that these two Scouts are special. Although at this point, the Scout hierarchy is not explained, the Information Officers are a more specialized group. It is the job of the Information Officers to listen to the currently unknown Voice of Intelligence and to awaken the mysterious Sugar Man when trouble rises. The Sugar Man is a mysterious presence in the swamp and it is assumed that he is some god-like protector of the forest. Not much is known about the Sugar man at this point, except for three things: The exact location of Sugar Man's sleeping place is unknown to all of the creatures living in the area; once awoken, the Sugar Man is legendary for his rage, even though no clear examples are given at this point; he also has a pet rattlesnake named Gertrude and it can be guessed that she guards him as he sleeps. The narrator closes the chapter with an ominous statement about how truly dangerous waking the Sugar Man can be. This is a foreshadowing statement by the narrator as the reader is directly addressed about the dangers yet to come.

In Chapter 2, the narrator gives the reader a more in-depth description of the Sugar Man. The novel shifts here from the present to millions of years ago to the beginnings of the Sugar Man and the Bayou Tourterelle, a swamp off of the Gulf of Mexico. The narrator uses comparisons of other imaginary monsters to enhance the visible attributes of the Sugar Man. The reader's understanding of the deep connection between the Sugar Man and the life forms in the swamp begins in this chapter as the Sugar Man is made from various parts of the swamp. This deep and intimate connection is central to the theme of unity throughout the novel. The narrator conveys to the reader an ominous warning that even though the Sugar Man is very old, he still needs to be considered as dangerous if he is awakened unnecessarily.

Chapter 3 brings the reader back to the present as J'miah and Bingo are totally on their own, watching their parents walk further and further away. It is to be guessed that the parents, Little Mama and Daddy-O, are headed back to their home. It can also be guessed that Bingo is the elder of the two siblings as he tries very hard to be brave and stands in a soldier like pose, saluting his parents as they leave. J'miah is open with his emotion as he cries a bit at the thought of missing his mother and father. Bingo thinks that he is too grown to act this way, but the reader knows he is just trying to cover up how he feels as well. This can be seen in two different ways: the first being that Bingo wants to prove that he is mature enough to handle such an important position, or it





could be that he wants to be more of an influence to his younger brother. The chapter ends with Bingo quickly getting over his sadness and doing a dance on top of their headquarters. The narrator introduces the headquarters in a way that the narrator thinks the reader will be surprised that it is a car.

The novel takes a turn in Chapter 4 to discuss the history of the Information Headquarters in its original capacity as a 1949 Chrysler De Soto. The author uses this as a mechanism to inform the reader about the origins of the vehicle and the rise and fall of its popularity. This gives the reader some minor background information on the home of the Swamp Scouts. This also foreshadows the true importance of Headquarters as more information will be revealed over the course of the novel.

The narrator then makes a statement about the resourcefulness of raccoons. Here, the narrator gives a brief history of the beginnings of the Swamp Scouts as a pair of raccoons find the De Soto and make the car their home. The reader is then enlightened on how the Voice of Intelligence went from car radio to the trusted source of all information in the area due to a thunderstorm turning the car on. It is important to realize that the first transmission of the Voice of Intelligence establishes the belief in the raccoons that the voice is never wrong and to always be trusted. It can be surmised that because the information only comes during certain times there becomes the need for a select group of Swamp Scouts known as Information Officers. This is also a foreshadowing tale as the Voice of Intelligence has a more prominent role to play as the novel progresses.

Chapter 5 focuses on the introduction of another major character as well as the development of his subplot. The recent and peculiar death of his grandfather Audie Brayburn provides an emotional catalyst for not only Chap's emotional development, as Chap is determined to show that he is now the man of the house, but it also provides the catalyst of Chap's dilemma as well. With Audie now out of the way, the theme of greed is personified by Sonny Boy Beaucoop, the landlord of Sugar Man Swamp. The narrator mentions that the timing of Audie's death is not very good as it is the event that land owner Sonny Boy Beaucoop needs in order to sell the swamp area, which includes the Brayburns' home and business. In an effort to further illustrate the theme of greed, Sonny Boy is shown as a rather devious person who does not care about the swamp or any of the lives in it. For a long time, Audie was the human protector of the swamp. While Audie lived, he ran his business at the edge of the swamp and told such lively tales of the swamp that there was no way anyone would want to harm it. With Audie's death, there are no obstacles to Sonny Boy making money from the swamp. As long as he can see profits being made, he sees no problem with raising the Brayburns rent so high that they will not be able to afford it. The amount of rent that is due is never truly known, the only reference to it at all constantly throughout the novel is that it is a boatload of cash.

Another item that the reader should taken special notice of is the sketchbook with drawings by Grandpa Audie. It is now a prized possession for Chap as it reminds of his late grandfather. The reader should note that this chapter also focuses on the concept of family as the close relationship between Audie and Chap is starting to be explained



here. The reader also sees the relationship between Chap and his mother as she yells out one of Grandpa Audie's more memorable quotes as Chap is looking at the sketchbook. The quote is "nosotros somos paisanos", meaning we are all from the same soil. This quote is not only useful in terms of defining the theme of family, but it is also integral to the theme of unity as well.

The novel checks back in on J'miah and Bingo in Chapter 6 and highlights their major differences. The two brothers are definite opposites as Bingo quickly becomes bored after their parents have been gone for over an hour as J'miah is spending his time cleaning out the back seat of the De Soto. There is also a physical distinction between them as well, as Bingo has a spot of unruly hair on his head that never stays down. This is the only known physical difference between the two, but it is distinct enough that the reader could easily tell the two raccoons apart.

As J'miah cleans the back of the car, Bingo thinks of a mission that he can do to escape his boredom. He comes up with the brilliant idea to climb one of the highest trees in the area. J'miah immediately does not like this idea and feels that Bingo should be helping out with the cleaning. Bingo thinks of this as a chore and that it could be done anytime. He also feels that it is an important duty to scout the area and that Scouts should be working on missions. As Bingo is saying this, J'miah thinks back to the tales of their Great Uncle Banjo and his death while climbing a tree. The narrator then fills the reader in on how Banjo climbed an extremely tall tree during a thunderstorm. A large wind came through, breaking the top of the tree and causing Great Uncle Banjo to fall to his death. Bingo and J'miah remembers this story as their mother told it to them plenty of times before. Although remembering this story and hearing Bingo wanting to climb trees worries J'miah, Bingo is more determined than ever to prove that he is just like Great Uncle Banjo. Here the reader learns that bingo is more of a daredevil than J'miah. J'miah prefers to do things he finds useful which is annoying to Bingo.

Bingo continues to try to make his case to J'miah, stating they could not be official Scouts without an actual mission to complete. He intently feels that there is a reason he should post a lookout in the trees. It is as if Bingo knows that something is going to come, but he does not know what. J'miah does not want to admit that Bingo is right in saying that they do not know what is truly going on until they look to see what is out there. Here the reader finds the biggest concern with Bingo's wanting to climb the trees. J'miah not only worries for his brother's safety, he is also terrified of heights. He is ashamed of his secret, so he does not reveal to Bingo the true reason he does not want Bingo to go out. Instead, he gives Bingo a look that would usually deter Bingo from doing reckless things, but J'miah knows that this is the one time that the look will not work.

Chapter 7 is an extremely brief chapter as the sounds of two different animals are displayed. The first is the sound of the reclusive ivory billed woodpecker that Grandpa Audie wanted a picture of. This will have the reader assume that this particular bird will be more important as the novel continues. The next sound is much more ominous as it is the sound of a canebrake rattlesnake. The narrator gives the reader important advice



that once this sound is heard danger is nearby and that anyone who hears it should run away quickly.

Bingo decides on the name "Mission Longleaf" for his climb into the trees in Chapter 8. Although J'miah cannot stop him with tactics previously successful at home, Bingo sets off with J'miah reluctantly behind him. J'miah wrestles with the first shown examples of the novel's loyalty theme as one of the most important rules of the Scouts is that they stick by each other no matter what. J'miah knows that if he allows Bingo to go out by himself, J'miah will be violating that rule, something he really does not want to do as he takes being a Scout very seriously. As J'miah ponders his role in Scouts and how he cannot allow Bingo to go out on his own without being a failure.

Due to rain, the boys return to the headquarters in hopes of communication from the Voice of Intelligence. The Voice is described as being very quick, always getting straight to the point of things. In this case, the Voice tells the boys that although it is raining now, they should soon prepare for clear skies. It is a simple message with nothing that was extremely important, but the raccoons know that anytime they hear the Voice, then there must be a reason. To the reader, this message could also mean that there will be a few negative moments in the swamp but a happy outcome will come afterwards. This makes Bingo very happy as he is still determined to climb trees at some point in the night. Bingo is shocked to learn that J'miah wants to come along on this mission as well. J'miah still has reservations about Bingo's climbing but he does not want anything bad to happen to him. As the raccoons head off towards the trees, Bingo is convinced that something more is happening and that he needs to see what is going on. This is yet another clue that major developments are bound to happen within the swamp.

Chapter 9 takes the reader back to the Brayburn house as Chap continues thinking of his grandfather. The reader learns that his home is attached to their business, The Paradise Pie Cafe, and it sits on the edge of Sugar Man Swamp. It is here that the reader learns why the Brayburns live at the edge of the swamp. Grandpa Audie was so obsessed with the ivory billed woodpecker that he decided to stay permanently so that he could see it again. Chap also remembers that Grandpa Audie told him that he took a picture of the bird once and that it is in his old De Soto. This causes the reader to be aware that perhaps the De Soto that is being used as Information Headquarters also happens to be the vehicle that Grandpa Audie was talking about. The reader learns that Grandpa Audie and Chap have been searching for the De Soto for a long time, never realizing that it is hiding in the swamp under a cloak of moss and is the all-important Information Headquarters for the raccoons.

During these walks, Audie's love of nature and his belief that the Sugar Man exists is made very clear as he relates his own encounter with the Sugar Man. Chap did find it strange that his grandfather would only tell him about his encounter. When he asked Audie about this, Audie gave an answer that was easy for Chap to understand. If he was to tell the world about the Sugar Man, then people with bad intentions would come and destroy the swamp and all of the life within it. To further illustrate the need to protect the swamp he recounts the time when people came in search of the Sugar Man and destroyed large parts of the swamp without sighting the Sugar Man. The chapter ends



with Chap thinking about how much his grandfather truly loved the swamp and how much he loves it as well.

Chapter 10 is a transitional chapter, as the first hints that bigger things are on the horizon are mentioned for Chap. All Chap can think of is the fact that he and his mother need to come up with a lot more cash in order to stay in their home. It has become the predominant thought in his head as he is eager to save his family's home and business. He feels that he must be more mature now that Grandpa Audie is gone and provide the means necessary to pay the large sum of rent money that owner Sonny Boy Beaucoup wants. Chap falls asleep thinking of these things, totally unaware of the low rumbling sound in the distance. His cat, Sweetums, is aware and the reader will notice that although it is not mentioned, he knows exactly what is going on. This sound worries him as he knows that trouble is about to happen and that he needs to warn other creatures in the swamp. This will prove to be a problem however, as none of the others speak his language, Catalan.

The rain stops falling in Chapter 11, giving the raccoon brothers the opportunity to finally come out of Information Headquarters. Bingo and J'miah knew that the rain would stop because the Voice of Intelligence had told them so and they also know that the Voice never lies. Bingo is still determined to climb one of the trees and he feels that he now has the perfect opportunity. Since J'miah is so loyal to the Swamp Scout code, he feels that he has only two options. The first one is to climb up the tree with Bingo, but since he has a fear of heights, he quickly dismisses the idea. The second one is to just stand under the tree while Bingo climbs. For J'miah this is a safer option. He can remain true to his duties, let Bingo climb the tree by himself, and he can ensure that no one gets hurt. Exhilarated, Bingo climbs the tree where he makes an important discovery. He sees a low hanging, red star on the horizon. Bingo believes that this star is truly unique and that he must give it an equally unique name. He names it Binkle, since it rhymes with "twinkle" from one of his father's nursery rhymes that Bingo heard when he was younger.

J'miah's constant desire to be loyal and follow the rules of being a Swamp Scout is the main focus on Chapter 11. He has a fear of heights, making climbing the tree with Bingo impossible, but he still wants to prove his loyalty by coming with him to make sure Bingo is safe. The result of this internal struggle is that J'miah agrees to go with him, but he will remain at the bottom of the tree to keep an eye out for things on the ground. This suits Bingo, who climbs the tree and makes an important discovery of a bright red star he names Binkle.

The story deviates from the escapades of the Swamp Scouts to introduce World Gator Wrestling Champion Jaeger Stitch in Chapter 12. She is as greedy and devious as Sonny Boy and is intent on gaining fame and fortune from the development of a world class gator wrestling theme park. The reader will see that narrator clearly dislikes Jaeger's greed and desire to destroy the swamp as "decency" towards the swamp is sarcastically mentioned.



Chapter 13 contains a side story, giving the reader an explanation of how the Beaucoops came to own Sugar Man Swamp over 350 years ago. The tale involves pirate Aloicious Beaucoop using the swamp as a hideout for his crew and treasure. There is a certain sense of unity seen in this as the pirates keep the alligator population down, pleasing the Sugar Man who allows the pirates to stay. The situation turns comical yet dangerous as the men sing an unknown song that the Sugar Man does not like to hear. In retaliation, the irate Sugar Man begins throwing pirates in the air. This goes back to the beginning of the novel where the narrator informs the reader that the Sugar Man likes to throw things when angered.

The result of this provides a key item as it delivers the reason of the main dilemma for the plot from Chap's perspective. In a desperate plea, Aloicious Beaucoop makes a deal that he and his descendants will always take care of the Sugar Man Swamp in exchange for the Sugar Man's mercy. This is a deal that is signed in blood and had been adhered to by all Beaucoop heirs until Sonny Boy, who looks at the deal with a mixture of amusement and disgust. Sonny Boy ignores the family legacy by putting the swamp up for sale. This is especially made possible by forcing the Brayburns to move by raising the rent to an extremely high price, forcing them to consider moving.

Chapter 14 gives the reader a rare glimpse into the thoughts of the Sugar Man. While the Sugar Man is asleep, he continues to keep up with the daily life of the swamp around him. The author does not detail how the Sugar Man is omniscient but he is aware of all of the life that has left the area. He also knows about Audie passing away recently. The reader sees that the Sugar Man was fond of Audie and he mourns his passing.

On a side note, the narrator gives a brief history of the Polaroid camera in Chapter 15. A scientist named Edwin Land first created the Polaroid in 1947. Having the ability to shoot 8 pictures at a time, this camera is a genius invention that is supposed to make taking pictures even easier than before. The most unique trait of the camera is that it has no negatives, so each shot is the only one of its kind. The narrator takes the reader through the process of properly creating a Polaroid picture, from taking the film out of the camera right when the shot is made to applying the tube of liquid to the picture to make it permanent. The narrator indicates that since Polaroid pictures are unique, the owner of one of these cameras should take caution when obtaining extremely rare pictures and store it in an airtight container. This alludes to Audie's picture of the ivory billed woodpecker, since it was taken with a Polaroid and the narrator knows it was lost.

While Chapter 16 is short, it has a great impact on the course of the novel. The brothers hear and feel rumbling from a distance which is set to deliver another key dilemma in the story which will be revealed later.

Chapter 17 is also brief but allows the novel to progress in terms of Bingo and J'miah's role as Swamp Scouts. Their first night is starting to end, but it has been an important night. They know that the rumbles and shakes are not coming from thunderstorms in the area and now must figure out what is the cause of this phenomenon. This chapter also





shows the balance between their bravery and their desire to go back to being safe at home with their parents.

Chapter 18 shows the reader how the Brayburn family gets the sugar cane needed for their fabulous sugar pies. The sugar cane that is grown in the Sugar Man Swamp is an extra special and delicious variety of sugar cane. When Chap was younger, Grandpa Audie taught him a song to sing while he chops down sugar cane. Audie told Chap that it is absolutely necessary to sing this song so he can chop the sugar cane safely. Over time, Chap becomes extremely skilled at chopping down the sugar cane to the point where he becomes the main person in the family that harvests the sugar cane.

The narrator goes back in time at this point to talk about how the Sugar Man first came across the sugar cane. When the world was newly created, the Sugar Man was walking along and he noticed the sugar cane. He became hungry and went to take some of the sugar cane. Unfortunately, the place was also the home to rattlesnakes who did not like for their area to be disturbed. The Sugar Man does not know this so he tries to get some of the sugar cane. The rattlesnakes attack him and bite him until he gets so upset that he picks them up and throws them into the air. As they come down, he notices that a group of hungry alligators are standing by, waiting for the snakes to land near them. In a moment of pity, the Sugar Man grabs one of the alligators and throws him so hard that the narrator states he ended up in Oklahoma. The other alligators get scared and run away. The rattlesnakes are so grateful to the Sugar Man that they tell him he can have sugar cane whenever he wants it. The Sugar Man knows that the rattlesnakes could change their mind at any minute so he comes up with a lullaby to lure the snakes to sleep with. Although it is not known, the reader will speculate that this is the same lullaby that Grandpa Audie tells to Chap when he goes out to cut the sugar cane. One of the rattlesnakes, named Gertrude, is so thankful that she decides to be his personal assistant and to protect the Sugar Man while he sleeps. The narrator makes a foreshadowing note here that states the only way to get to the Sugar Man is through her.

At this point, the narrator deviates from the current storyline to discuss the Sugar Man a little further in depth. This section shows the Sugar Man as a mostly peaceful creature unless he is attacked. In this case, it is the rattlesnakes guarding the sugar cane that cause the Sugar Man to become violent. The Sugar Man is known to throw objects when he is in a rage, which is first exemplified here as he becomes angry and starts throwing the snakes as they are biting him. Just as quickly, however, he takes pity on them and saves them from a pack of alligators nearby. It is evident here that the Sugar Man has a dual nature and that either attitude can be triggered instantly. This gives the impression that while he can be hailed as a hero, he also can be very menacing. In gratitude, the snakes allow the Sugar Man to eat their sugar cane. It is important to note that while the Sugar Man is kind he also does not trust easily. It is here that he develops the lullaby that will eventually be passed down to Grandpa Audie and then to Chap so that the sugar cane can be harvested without fear of an attack.

The narrator explains to the reader that the Sugar Man and the rattlesnakes' agreement happened many centuries ago in Chapter 19. It has also been over 300 centuries ago



that Aloicious signed the blood oath swearing that he and his descendants would always protect the swamp and another 100 years since anyone has actually gone looking for the Sugar Man. Sonny Boy Beaucoop sees that since no one has provided any proof of the Sugar Man, then he must be extinct and that would make the oath null and void. To Sonny Boy, if the contract is invalid, he has the ability to sell off the swamp land and be completely done with it. The reader will know that Grandpa Audie had proof of the Sugar Man, but he could never show it to anyone because he lost the photo. He also only told Chap about it in fear that others would come to the swamp and wreak havoc on the area. The narrator uses this and a statement that the Sugar Man is very much alive but is only seen during emergencies as a foreshadowing statement that the Sugar Man's existence is about to be proven.

In all of the excitement of the evening's events, the Swamp Scouts fall asleep quickly in Chapter 20. They are briefly disrupted by the thought of hunger and that they did not bother to get food the night before. This chapter can be seen as a quick diversion for the reader as it is very short and adds little to the main plot lines.

## Discussion Question 1

What are the duties of the Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp? How do the Scouts make an impact on the swamp community as a whole? What makes the Information Officers so different than the other Scouts?

## Discussion Question 2

What does the statement "Nosotros somos paisanos" mean? Why is this so important to the Brayburns?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Sonny Boy Beaucoop want to sell the swamp? Why has he not been able to sell it?

## Vocabulary

trundle, ordained, eons, denizens, sinuous, conquistador, relegated, knoll, cisterns, crestfallen, unceremoniously, chaparral, consternation, proprietor, chantey, fealty, primeval, extant, exacerbate, perforated, jubilation, sibilant, extant



# Chapters 21 - 36: The Next Morning

## Summary

Chap helps his mother in the Paradise Pies Cafe in Chapter 21. He loves sticking his fingers in the sugar pie batter, but his mother always tells him to get out of it. He pours a cup of coffee for his mother, then stops for a minute to think of Grandpa Audie as he pours coffee into Grandpa Audie's mug to drink for himself. After deciding that he does not like black coffee, he opens the cafe for the day. Soon after Chap opens the cafe, landlord Sonny Boy Beaucoop enters with World Gator Wrestling Champion Jaeger Stitch. They sit at a table and order pies and coffee while pulling out maps and blueprints. The couple mainly ignore Chap as they start to make plans for something big.

Bingo wakes up for a few moments in Chapter 22. He is still hungry, but for him it is still early. Bingo decides that he must have some of the berries growing nearby that are protected by vicious possums, so he decides to go on a secret mission to collect some.

Chap and his mother find out what Sonny Boy and Jaeger Stitch plan to do with the swamp in Chapter 23. Chap worries that the ivory billed woodpecker and the Sugar Man will no longer have a home if the swamp is disturbed. Sonny Boy admits that he does not care what happens to them and informs the family that they will need a boatload of cash in order to save it and their home. Sonny Boy also tells Chap that if he can provide proof that the Sugar Man exists, he will sign over the entire area with a contract signed in blood.

Chapter 24 depicts the tale of Hernando de Soto who sailed to America from Spain in 1539. He is considered quite mean and has a history of raiding local villages in order to get what he wants. When he sets sail for the New World, he also brings a large amount of hogs with him to be raised where he will settle. They are considered to very mean as well and his descendants are even meaner.

Buzz Saw "Buzzie" Farrow and Clydine are two enormous and mean-spirited hogs that are introduced in Chapter 25. As young hogs they are described as being the meanest around, which is a source of pride to their parents. When they get older, they meet and instantly fall in love. Together they have 15 mean-spirited children. When the gang are out destroying fields, they come across a fox who tells them that there is an abundance of sugar cane growing in a nearby swamp. This excites Clydine and the rest of the family so much that they immediately take off to get to it.

Sweetums the cat tries to talk to Chap in Chapter 26. Since he only speaks Catalan, Chap does not understand his words. Chap only thinks that Sweetums wants to get outside to eat the birds, but really Sweetums is trying to warn Chap that there is something wrong in the swamp.





Countryman Jim ends a long day at the local radio station in Chapter 27. He has been asked by Sonny Boy and Jaeger Stitch to start coming up with commercials for the pending gator amusement park. He worries that the Brayburns will be put out of their house and that the swamp life will be destroyed. As his shift ends, he decides he needs to make a visit to the Paradise Pies Café.

In Chapter 28, Bingo goes to the dewberry patch guarded by the possums. There, he stuffs himself to contentment but he also feels bad that did not bring J'miah with him. bingo decides to grab a few berries to bring back to J'miah when he hears an angry voice telling him to stop. This causes Bingo to run out of the patch, but he still has the berries for J'miah in his hand.

Chap tries to think of ways to get a boatload of cash in Chapter 29. As he is getting ready to open the cafe, he turns on the radio and hears Countryman Jim ending his shift. This gives Chap a great idea on how they will increase their customer size so they can get a boatload of cash.

Buzzie, Clydine, and the rest of the Farrow gang are on the move in Chapter 30. They can only focus on their hunger and getting to the sugar cane; they will not stop until they get it.

In Chapter 31, a young Audie Brayburn comes to the Sugar Man Swamp in search of the ivory billed woodpecker he had seen in one of his bird watching books. Audie spends a great deal of time there, to the point where the animals are not afraid of him. They even like to hear him play his harmonica. The animals declare him an Honorary Swamp Critter because he has become so well known in the swamp. As he is putting away a picture of an armadillo, Audie hears the sound of the ivory billed woodpecker and he searches for it. He finds it and takes a picture of it, but just as he is finished a storm begins. He begins searching for his car, but cannot find it because of the heavy rain and darkness.

Audie is lost for hours in the swamp before he finds his car. In the meantime, he is starting to get very sick. He eventually makes his way back to the DeSoto and climbs into the back seat. He puts his pictures in his airtight ammo can and goes to sleep. He is holding his Polaroid camera while he sleeps but the car moved and he accidentally hit the button to take a picture. He wakes up for a moment and notices that he has taken another picture. Without paying much attention, he dries the picture and puts it in the ammo can as well and goes back to sleep.

In Chapter 32, Bingo returns to the Information Headquarters. He thinks that maybe he should share the berries with J'miah but he quickly decides against it and eats the berries himself.

Gertrude wakes up in Chapter 33. She is being bitten by fleas, which she is highly allergic to. She checks on the Sugar Man, who is still peacefully asleep. She then goes out into the bayou to have a bath before coming back into the lair and returning to sleep.



Jaeger Stitch makes their driver stop on the side of the road so she can hop out and fight an alligator in Chapter 34. Sonny Boy is uninterested in such things and stays in the car. He thinks so much about how much money he thinks he will get that he does not notice the rumbling sounds around him. The only person that notices is the driver Leroy, and he is very scared.

The rattlesnakes feel the rumbles that are going through the swamp and they are preparing to defend themselves in Chapter 35.

In Chapter 36, Jaeger finds an alligator to wrestle. She jumps on the back of an alligator, surprising it and she is able to kiss it on the nose before it can even react. Jaeger flips it over and starts rubbing it's stomach to put it to sleep. Satisfied, she returns to the car and the group quickly drives away.

## Analysis

Chapter 21 begins as an emotional look at the bond between Chap and Grandpa Audie as Audie's coffee cup is used by Chap to signify that he is now the man of the house. At this point, almost everything in the cafe and home reminds the boy of his late grandfather. The main dilemma of the novel presents itself even further with the arrival of Sonny Boy Beaucoop and Jaeger Stitch into the cafe. It is clear by the way that Chap's expression has changed that he has a deep dislike of Sonny Boy but he is also worried that Sonny Boy has come to collect the rent, which the Brayburns do not have. Chap controls his emotions and his desire to harm Sonny Boy especially as Sonny Boy insults him while Jaeger does nothing but laugh, showing that she is just as callous as Sonny Boy. The pair order pies as they discuss their business venture. The maps Sonny Boy pulls out and this is the first glimpse the reader gets of the plans and the notion that something quite large is going to be built soon.

Chapter 22 is another deviation chapter that puts the focus on Bingo and further illustrates his love of getting into dangerous situations as he sneaks out of Information Headquarters to steal some berries.

Chap's mother comes into the dining room before Chap has a chance to pour coffee on Sonny Boy in Chapter 23. She looks at all of the blue prints on the table and this is the first chance the Brayburn family has of seeing what is going to be done to the swamp. This infuriates Chap as he thinks about the destruction of his home and the beloved swamp. Chap also thinks that if the swamp is destroyed then the ivory billed woodpecker would have no home and become extinct. Sonny Boy brings the attention back to him when he tells Chap's mother that in order to stay in their home they will have to give Sonny Boy a boatload of cash. It is unknown at this point if Sonny Boy is being literal in wanting a boatload of cash or if it is just a figurative statement for an excessively large amount of money.

The exchange between Chap and Sonny at this point is filled with tension as Sonny Boy ridicules not only Chap for his feelings about the swamp but his own family's legacy.



The idea of the Sugar Man is approached but quickly dismissed by Sonny Boy. As the conversation ends, Sonny Boy cruelly reminds the Brayburns about their rent problems by telling them they will need a boatload of cash in order to stay, but again no actual dollar amount is mentioned. This act of sarcasm is further enhanced by Sonny Boy making a comment about giving the swamp to Chap in exchange for proof of the Sugar Man. To add to the insult, Sonny Boy also says that he will sign the contract in blood. The reader notes that this goes back to the original oath signed by Aloicious Beaucoop in blood. Chap thinks this over for a moment, then decides that Sonny Boy's offer is serious and that somehow he can provide proof although he does not know how. He shocks Sonny Boy by yelling that he will do it as Sonny Boy leaves the cafe. This moment gives Chap the catalyst he needs to develop his own plot in the story.

Chapter 24 is another deviation from the primary course of the novel. The narrator tells the tale of Hernando de Soto, a famous explorer who came from Spain to America in 1539. 200 hogs have been brought with de Soto to raise in the new country. The narrator describes de Soto as someone with a mean temper who did not bathe often. De Soto is known for destroying towns and anything in his way to get what he wants. When the ships arrive in the New World, many of the hogs escape and form their own groups. The narrator claims that they are just as mean as de Soto. The narrator also alludes to the fact that the descendants of these hogs still exist and gives the foreshadowing statement that the reader will find out more about these descendants very soon.

The reader gets a first look at the Farrow Gang in Chapter 25. The chapter describes how Buzzie and Clydine met and went on to have 15 children who are as nasty as their parents. Some of their previous misdeeds are highlighted in this chapter as well as how they gained knowledge of the sugar cane located in Sugar Man Swamp. It also establishes the motive for the Farrow Gang to attack the Sugar Man Swamp and adds the main dilemma to the Swamp Scout's story line.

Chap's cat, Sweetums, goes to Chap wanting to talk to him in Chapter 26. Sweetums' desire to communicate with humans is humorously highlighted in this chapter with an example of how he tries to talk to Chap about his cleanliness. The ability to understand Sweetums is seen as difficult as humans can only hear him meow and not the words that he is forming. This is the cause of quite a lot of frustration for Sweetums, but he will still continue to try.

Radio host Countryman Jim is introduced to the reader in Chapter 27. He is the late night host for KSUG and was a good friend of Grandpa Audie's. The author informs the reader that Jim and Audie were very close as they used to share their stories and love of the swamp. Jim faces a dilemma of his own as he has been commissioned to make commercials for Sonny Boy and Jaeger Stitch, but he also feels a deep loyalty to the Brayburns and to the swamp. As he deals with this, he understands that the repercussions of this would mean that the Brayburns would be put out of their home but he has no clue as how to help them. As his shift ends, he signs off with his usual howl and he decides to head to the cafe.



Chapter 28 diverts the reader's attention back to the Swamp Scouts as Bingo decides to go on berry hunting mission. "Operation Dewberry" takes Bingo to a nearby dewberry patch. No pertinent information related to the main plot is revealed here as Bingo fills his stomach with berries. This chapter can be seen as mainly a way to check in on the Swamp Scouts for a brief moment in comparison with the actions that are taking place with the story's other protagonists.

Chap focuses on his problems with paying the rent in Chapter 29. He thinks about how he will come up with a boatload of cash in time to save his home and the swamp but he is worried that he cannot do it. The cafe only has a modest number of regular customers and Chap knows that it will still not be enough. He turns on the radio and listens to Countryman Jim sign off with him saying have a good idea and a good morning. This sparks an idea in Chap. He realizes that they must do something to increase the amount of customers that come into the cafe. At this point, Chap does not know how to get more customers, but he is content with knowing that he is at least beginning to put things together to get his boatload of cash.

Chapter 30 checks in on Clydine and Buzzie as they travel with their children. They are all extremely hungry and cannot focus on anything else. The narrator makes sure that the reader understands that the Farrow Gang is extremely wild and that many people thought they were Russian boars. The truth is that they are not, they are the descendants of the hogs de Soto brought with him from Spain. The narrator states no one should care where they came from, all anyone needs to know is that these hogs are extremely wild and incredibly hungry.

In Chapter 31, Audie's past is revealed as he leaves his home in Houston to come to Sugar Man Swamp in search of the ivory billed woodpecker. The reader sees that Audie has had a love of nature from a very young age. He brings with him his Polaroid camera, an ammo can to put the pictures in, his sketchbook, his harmonica and his binoculars. He is amazed at the beauty of the swamp as he sets up his camp. The animals are all wary of Audie at first, but they grow to love him as well. They especially love his harmonica playing and the fact that he is not there to hurt them. Eventually, he is considered an Honorary Swamp Critter.

One afternoon, Audie takes a picture of an armadillo. He is excited about this picture since it came out perfectly. As he is putting it in the ammo can, he hears a sound that he recognizes could only come from the elusive ivory billed woodpecker. Audie is intent on getting a picture of this bird, so he walks through the swamp for what seems like hours. As the sun is starting to go down, Audie finally sees the ivory billed woodpecker. He takes a picture of the bird and is so proud of himself that he does not notice what is happening around him. As soon as he puts away his picture in the ammo can, rain begins to pour on him. The rain causes him to lose his tracks back to the Desoto, so he once again is wandering around in the swamp. During this time, Audie begins to realize that he is starting to get sick. His throat aches, he is extremely feverish, and his nose is stuffy. As he walks, he puts a flash bulb into his Polaroid camera just in case he has a chance to see the woodpecker again. He continues to search the swamp for his car and he finds it after a good deal of time is spent in the rain and the mud.



When Audie gets into the car, he is so tired that he can do nothing more than climb into the back seat and fall asleep still holding his camera. By this time, Audie is extremely sick and not really aware of what is going on around him. For some unknown reason, the car starts to move back and forth, seemingly on its own. At one point, there is a slight bump, which causes Audie to hit the camera's button. Inadvertently Audie takes a picture, which causes Audie to wake up for a moment. He realizes that he has taken a picture and he tries to look at it. Since it is dark out, he cannot make out the image in the picture very well, so he thinks he has just got a picture of a raccoon or some other furry animal. Audie manages to finalize his picture and then instinctively, he puts the picture in the ammo can with the others he had taken during the day. Then Audie, in a feverish and hazy state drifts off again into a deep sleep.

Chapter 32 is a slightly comical look at how greed can sometimes come before loyalty or family as Bingo considers sharing his berries with J'miah. Although the chapter does not lend any significant detail to the novel as a whole, it shows the relationship between Bingo and J'miah from Bingo's point of view as well as Bingo's sense of duty to the Swamp Scouts.

Chapter 33 gives the reader a more close up look at Gertrude, the gigantic rattlesnake bodyguard and personal assistant of the Sugar Man. It is revealed here that she is extremely allergic to fleas, which have woken her up. She is jealous of the fact that the Sugar Man is still peacefully sleeping and is never bothered by fleas. In order to relieve her itchiness, she slides out of the lair and bathes in the bayou. Once she feels better and has eaten her fill of bullfrogs, she returns to the lair and falls back to sleep.

Jaeger Stitch badly wants to fight someone or something in Chapter 34. She fights off the impulse to fight Sonny Boy as they are being driven around because she knows that without him she cannot have her gator wrestling center. On a whim, she demands that their driver, a young college student named Leroy, stops the car immediately. Leroy stops on the side of the road and Jaeger eagerly jumps out of the car. This confuses and slightly irritates Sonny Boy. He decides not to follow her as he has no interest in getting himself dirty just for the sake of chasing her through the swamp while she wrestles alligators. The reader sees that Sonny Boy has no interest in Jaeger for any other purpose than the money he can get from her. It is also known that he has no real interest in anyone as he cannot remember Leroy's name. The only thing that is on his mind is the large amounts of money that he will gain if Jaeger's plan is successful. Sonny Boy is so wrapped up in this that he pays no attention to the ominous rumbling sound that is lightly shaking the car. The reader notices that Leroy is the only one who can feel this. Although Leroy has no clue what is causing this, it is quite clear that this is making him nervous.

In Chapter 35, the rattlesnakes begin to notice the rumbles. They as well do not know what is causing the rumbles and are starting to become very concerned. They immediately become defensive and are ready to attack whatever is coming their way. The reader sees that the rattlesnakes have the ability to be quite vicious when they are needed to be.



Chapter 36 shows Jaeger Stitch actually wrestling an unsuspecting alligator. After she finds a decent sized alligator, she hops onto its back to surprise it. The alligator does not have any chance to move as she grabs and pulls up its nose. She then does her signature move, she kisses the alligator on its snout. She then flips it onto its stomach and rubs until the alligator falls asleep. The reader sees that Jaeger must be incredibly strong to do these things so quickly. Once she is done, she is satisfied and returns to the vehicle. In a playful mood, Jaeger Stitch runs her hand through Sonny Boy's hair, which disgusts him. Since Jaeger Stitch now feels better, the trio continue on their way down the road.

## Discussion Question 1

What does Sonny Boy want from the Brayburns in order to keep their home? How will they come up with the money needed? Is there anything else that Sonny Boy will take in exchange for the swamp area?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Audie come to Sugar Man Swamp? Could he have gone anywhere else?

## Discussion Question 3

What is causing the rumbling throughout the swamp? Describe the Farrow Gang. Why are they so intent on coming to the Sugar Man Swamp? Is there any way to stop them?

## Vocabulary

dollop, prodigious, chicory, guffaws, sauntered, assuage, ravenous, coffers, slake, conundrum





# Chapters 37 - 43: The Next Night

## Summary

Both alligators and wild hogs are plentiful in Chapter 37. Hogs prefer to travel by night and when they travel in large groups, they are called "sounders".

The Swamp Scouts are awake in Chapter 38. They head to Crawdad Lane to gather crawfish for their breakfast before going out on their next mission. Once they are stuffed, they hear and feel the rumblings throughout the swamp. Just as they start to think what could be causing the rumbling, a storm breaks out. Bingo and J'miah head back to Information Headquarters as lightning is striking. The lightning hits close enough that Bingo and J'miah receive another message from the Voice of Intelligence. This time it says that fishing will be good and then he gives the raccoons horrible news. It informs the scouts that a large group of hogs are descending upon Sugar Man Swamp. They know this group to be the Farrow Gang. In that instant, both of them know that they have no choice but to wake up the Sugar Man.

Countryman Jim begins work on a commercial for the Paradies Pies Café in Chapter 39. He begins to miss Audie and their time together. Jim spends the rest of his night listening as other calls come in with tales and secrets of their own. He concludes his broadcast with his usual howl and he listens to one more song. As the song ends, he gets a brilliant idea and starts writing it down to make the beginnings of a new commercial.

Bingo and J'miah have no clue how to wake up the Sugar Man in Chapter 40. They decide to wait until daytime to look for the Sugar Man, so in the meantime J'miah continues to work on cleaning up headquarters. As J'miah cleans, Bingo exercises and stays out of the way. J'miah tries to clean out under the back seat, but has a hard time getting a strange object. Bingo comes over to help him and they find a box. The box contains the long lost pictures of the armadillo that Audie took and lost in 1949. The boys see these pictures as art and put them on the dashboard to look at.

In Chapter 41 the rain is so heavy that the DeSoto starts floating through the bayou. Audie has contracted a serious case of swamp flu and has no clue what is going on. Because the Swamp Scouts of that time are worried about Audie, since he is an Honorary Swamp Critter, they keep a watch over him as he sleeps. The narrator says that not much else known about what happens to the car, except that it ended up on a small hill safely. Audie wakes up and tries to start the car but the engine is flooded. He ends up hiding his ammo can under the seat and leaving the car. He wanders out to the highway where a driver sees him and takes him to the hospital. Some time later, Audie goes searching for his DeSoto but he never finds it again.

Gertrude is awakened again by fleas in Chapter 42. She exits the lair to scratch, but she scratches so hard that she sheds her skin. She wants the Sugar Man to wake up and



notice her new and prettier skin, but he does not. She knows that only two things will wake him up, sugar cane or her biting him. She figures that he will be upset if she bites him, so she looks in her cupboard for sugar cane instead. She cannot find any sugar cane, so she decides to call a snapping turtle courier service but they do not come. Instead, the snapping turtles are in hiding from the rumbling and shaking of the swamp.

The Farrow Gang travel all night in Chapter 43 and they decide to take a rest. They find a nice creek nearby and they torment all of the other creatures in the area until they leave. The only thing that is left are the mosquitoes. The mosquitoes begin biting all of the gang until it makes all of the hogs mad. They need mud in order to soothe their skin and to coat themselves so the mosquitoes can no longer bite. They wind up destroying the creek by tramping through it so much that there is only a mud hole left. They get so covered in mud that the mosquitoes no longer have the ability to bite them, which pleases the hogs.

## Analysis

Chapter 37 describes the amount of alligators and wild hogs with an emphasis on the hogs' habitat and preferred method of traveling. The narrator does this to inform the reader of the lifestyle of the Farrow Gang, the other set of main protagonists in the novel.

Chapter 38 details the rising action of the Swamp Scouts' plot as through the course of the night the raccoon brothers face a flurry of activity. As they eat, they once again hear the mysterious rumbling noises but just as they are about to investigate those, rain happens. It is to be remembered that the first duty of an Information Officer is to observe any messages given by the Voice of Intelligence, so they head back to the Headquarters to receive the shocking news that a pack of wild hogs are on the way to the swamp. This revelation is revealed to be the main dilemma of the Swamp Scouts. To show how the Swamp Scouts know about these hogs, the author informs the reader that creatures from other swamps have been using the Sugar Man Swamp as a safe haven as their own homes have been destroyed by the Farrow Gang. For Bingo and J'miah, their mission is now clear as they know they must wake up the Sugar Man, fulfilling their second main duty as Swamp Scouts.

It is after midnight at the local radio station in Chapter 39. Countryman Jim has spent most of the evening so far thinking about the request that Chap Brayburn made to him the previous morning when he came in for his daily sugar pies. Chap asked for a commercial to be made for the café, in hopes that extra advertising will bring in extra customers. Jim wants to make an extra special commercial for the Brayburns, but he is having trouble coming up with any good ideas. He really wants to help the family plus he really does not like the idea of Sonny Boy's plan to destroy the swamp.

Countryman Jim struggles to come up with a good advertisement for the Paradise Pies Cafe. Chap came up with the idea to place commercials on the radio in the hopes that it will generate more business for the cafe. It is clear that Jim wants to make a commercial





that is extra special for the cafe since it is clear that it may be one of the only things that can save the Brayburns. Jim does this out of the friendship that he shares with the family, but he also does it because he has a serious dislike for Sonny Boy Beaucoop and his ideas of destroying the swamp.

As Jim tries to come up with a good plan he looks at the clock. It is here that he realizes that it is the usual time that Audie would call him to keep him company during the night and share swamp stories. The reader can see how much Jim misses his old friend. The narrator goes on to say that Audie is not the only one to call him late at night. Jim provides other people in the community the ability to get things off of their chest that they would not normally say in public. The reader is informed that Jim's signature shift ending howl was caused by all of these calls. For Jim, he feels better using this howl as he does not want to give away any secrets, but he feels that he must make some sort of acknowledgement of them. As his shift ends, he hears a tune on the radio. Inspired by it, the chapter closes with Jim having found an idea for a great commercial

Chapter 39 introduces a minor, yet extremely helpful character. Countryman Jim is a radio announcer as well as a good friend of the Brayburn family. Jim has a love of the swamp and nature that matched Grandpa Audie and in the past the pair spent a great deal of time telling swamp stories to each other. In his desire to aid the Brayburns during their time of need, Jim is in the midst of creating a commercial that will generate business for the cafe. The request for this commercial was made the previous day by Chap, as he had an epiphany that if more people know about the cafe and how good the pies are the Brayburns can make enough money to save their home. Jim's desire not only comes from his desire to help his friends, but because of his dislike of greedy people like Sonny Boy Beaucoop. The development of the commercials aids in setting up the rising action of the Brayburn plot in their hopes to earn the "boatload of cash" that they need. As a side note, the narrator gives a backstory on the loud howl Jim always gives at the end of one of his broadcasts. The howl is used by Jim to cope with the sometimes confidential information that people call in with late in the night. The narrator makes specific mention of this howl as it is the same howl that will be heard later on during a message from the Voice of Intelligence for the Swamp Scouts later on.

Chapter 40 comes with a big discovery in the Information Headquarters. Bingo and J'miah are safely hiding out from the constant rumbling throughout the swamp, especially since now they know that the Farrow Gang is on the move and are the ones responsible for the noise. Once again, the differences between the brothers are on display again as J'miah cleans and Bingo exercises and watches. Although there are distinct differences between the brothers, both of their minds are focused on their mission of waking the Sugar Man. While J'miah cleans, he makes an important discovery of a box underneath a seat. J'miah does not know what this object is, but his curiosity guides him to stick his hand inside. The object inside is foreign to J'miah and by this time Bingo has taken an interest in things as well. The foreign object is a curious find for Bingo and J'miah. It is a picture of an armadillo and the reader will remember that Audie had a picture of an armadillo in an airtight can that he lost in a car in the swamp. The reader will realize that the Information Headquarters is really Audie's lost car. The raccoons do not pull the other photos out of the box at this point in time, but



J'miah considers this picture as art. Because they enjoy this picture and they are happy with their discovery, the brothers put the picture on the dashboard of the DeSoto to give the area a bit of decoration and a more home-like feel.

Chapter 41 is another look into Audie's past and how he actually loses the De Soto many years ago. The details are not fully known to the narrator, therefore much of the chapter is speculation in terms of how the De Soto is saved from being sunk into the swamp. All that is known is that the car is placed on a hillside with a very ill Audie inside. The distant relations of Bingo and J'miah are also mentioned as they are the Swamp Scouts who have been watching Audie since his arrival in the swamp. It is noted here that Audie has become a cherished member of the swamp for his musical abilities with his harmonica. For this he has been dubbed an Honorary Swamp Creature, unbeknownst to him. It is because of this title that the early Swamp Scouts are willing to get help for Audie when the car is floating down the river. A key twist in the overall novel is also given in this section. As Audie is sick, he is unaware of his surroundings and his own actions. As he sleeps and the car floats, the camera drops out of his hand, taking a picture as it lands. Audie barely notices this picture, for him at the time the picture just looks like a raccoon, but this picture is the most important item in the novel as it is a picture of the Sugar Man himself.

Once Audie is safe and awake, he is still incredibly ill. He manages to secure his pictures as his prized possessions and he leaves the car in search of help. The narrator says that Audie walks out to the highway and is successful in getting to a local hospital as he is now dangerously ill. Unfortunately, because Audie has no clue where the car has been placed, he has no recollection of its whereabouts. This is especially important as the missing De Soto transforms over the years to the Swamp Scouts Information Headquarters. This is the beginning of how the Swamp Scouts and the Brayburn story lines intersect without the knowledge of the actual characters.

In Chapter 42, Gertrude wakes up again because she is so bothered by the fleas. She ventures out again to scratch herself against a tree, but she does it so hard that she sheds her skin. She is exceptionally proud of this new and shinier skin. She wants to be admired for it, but the only other creature in the area is the Sugar Man. Gertrude tries to gently wake the Sugar Man so that he can tell her how she looks, but it is useless. Gertrude knows that she could bite the Sugar Man and wake him, but she also knows that if she were to do that, he will be extremely upset. The other way that Gertrude knows how to wake the Sugar Man is to present him with some sugar cane. The Sugar Man has an intense love of sugar cane, so the reader can see that it would be far more pleasant to wake him in this manner. Gertrude goes to her cupboard to look for some sugar cane but cannot find any. This disappoints her for only a moment, as she decides to call upon the local snapping turtles. They run a delivery service and it is shown that Gertrude has used them many times before. This time, however, there are not snapping turtles around. Gertrude has not seen any recently and she is clueless as to why that is. The reader gets the view that the snapping turtles are actually in hiding. They have heard and felt the rumbles going through the swamp and they are as scared as everything else that has experienced the rumbles.



The narrator checks in on the Farrow Gang in Chapter 43. All 17 hogs are highly determined to make it to the canebrake in the swamp. They have traveled all night and are within another day or two march to their destination. They have no signs of slowing their pace, but since it is daybreak and they are nocturnal, they decide to sleep. They find a nearby creek and terrorize all of the life there so that they can have the place all by themselves. They have no care about the other creatures residing in the area which shows their selfish and cruel nature. As they begin to fall asleep, mosquitoes descend on them, making their naps less than peaceful. The reader sees that the mosquitoes are the only things that can really bother the Farrow Gang. The mosquitoes bite the gang so much that they are in desperate need of mud to coat themselves with. With that, all of the hogs tramp around the creek until it is just one big mud hole. This satisfies the gang and they roll around happily until they are absolutely covered in mud and the mosquitoes are forced to move on. This calms the group, but the narrator notes that this happy feeling is only temporary.

## Discussion Question 1

How do the Swamp Scouts find out that a group of wild hogs are headed towards the swamp? How do they know that it is the Farrow Gang?

## Discussion Question 2

What happens when J'miah decides to clean the Information Headquarters? What important discovery is made? How do the brothers view this discovery?

## Discussion Question 3

How does Audie lose his DeSoto? How did the Swamp Scouts help Audie?

## Vocabulary

porcine, dastardly, blithely, sounders, industriousness, consolation, deterrent, marauding



# Chapters 44 - 49: The Second Day

## Summary

A man named Steve comes to the cafe in Chapter 44. He has some sugar pies and thinks they are delicious. He tells Chap that he has no clue how he got there or how to get out of the area. Chap draws him a map before Steve leaves so that he can find the highway again. After Steve leaves, Chap realizes that Steve has left his cell phone on the table but he knows that Steve will eventually return for it. Chap then goes to pour his mother another cup of coffee and he thinks of his father. He knows that his mother misses his dad, who was killed in an accident shortly after Chap is born. Chap's mother counts the morning's money and worries that there will not be enough to fill any boat so the rent will be paid. As his mother sits at the table, Chap once again pours himself a cup of black coffee wondering how much longer will it take for him to be a man. As Chap tries to drink his coffee, he looks at the bird on the cup. He goes into his room and gets out Audie's sketchbook and looks through the pictures. He reminisces about what Audie used to say about each picture when he sees a picture that he had forgotten about. It is a drawing of the Sugar Man dated 1949. Chap takes this to his mother and informs her that there is proof that the Sugar Man exists, but his mother calmly explains that the picture is too old and that the Sugar Man has not been sighted by anyone ever since then.

The DeSoto is an extremely beautiful and smooth riding car in Chapter 45. It handles so nicely that this feature is the subject of many advertisements.

In Chapter 46, Countryman Jim finishes the commercial he has written and heads over to the cafe to show Chap and his mother. Chap heads out to the canebrake to gather more sugar cane for his mother pies. He is successful in gathering a large quantity of sugar cane before he is forced to leave by the rattlesnakes. When he returns, Countryman Jim is there but Chap comes up with another way to advertise by creating signs to put everywhere.

Bingo and J'miah venture out into the daylight in Chapter 47. They adjust quickly to being out in the morning and they head for the darkest parts of the swamp. Once they reach an incredibly dark part of the swamp, they stop. Next thing they know, they hear the hiss of a rattlesnake and they see the giant rattlesnake, Gertrude.

Gertrude wants the Swamp Scouts to admire her new skin in Chapter 48. Once they have done this, they tell Gertrude that they need to wake up the Sugar Man because the swamp is about to be attacked. Gertrude informs the boys that she is out of sugar cane, which is the best way to calmly wake the Sugar Man. Bingo and J'miah immediately set off for the canebrake, but once they get there, they are forced to make a hasty retreat as they are about to be attacked by the rattlesnakes guarding the area.



Chap and his mother approve of Countryman Jim's commercial in Chapter 49. Chap also discusses the signs with his mother and Jim and both think it is a great idea. Together, they make three signs directing drivers to the cafe. After Jim leaves, Chap and his mother start making pies in anticipation of the next day's business. Once that is complete, Chap moves his small boat onto the porch so he can fill it with cash. Chap's cat Sweetums comes out and hops into the boat with Chap as he tries to tell Chap that there is dangerous rumbling going on, but Chap disregards him. Sweetums gets offended by Chap's ignoring him and Sweetums goes inside to hide.

## Analysis

Chapter 44 is a scene in the cafe, originating with a customer named Steve. He has no actual major role in the series of events, however his mention that the place is hard to find from the nearby highway and the misplacing of his cell phone are major contributors to the events to come. There is a brief mention of Chap's father, but this is only to show the importance of the coffee mug that Chap's mother drinks from as she sits in the dining room. No mention is made afterwards of Chap's father as Audie is the main form of male support for Chap. As Chap's mother drinks from this mug, the fears of losing the family home and business are visible on her face, causing Chap to worry more about their predicament. As he is focusing on these things, Chap looks at his grandfather's coffee mug and is suddenly filled with hope as he thinks about the sketchbook of Audie's and the sketch of the Sugar Man should be all he needs to save the swamp. This passage shows Chap's determination to use any means necessary to save the swamp and his disappointment once he is reminded that some of those methods will not work. At times, this is disheartening for Chap, especially as he is reminded that the sketchbook will not be seen as a reliable source of proof of the Sugar Man's existence and that even if he does exist, no one has seen him for many years.

Chapter 45 is an extremely short chapter depicting the body and handling style of the 1949 DeSoto. The body of the vehicle has a "rocket" style and the front of it looks like a waterfall or a smile. The narrator attributes its smooth handling to the type of transmission that is in the car. The reader sees that the smooth ride of the car has been the subject of many advertisements for the car. Although this chapter is not seen as a largely informative chapter, there is a subtle detail in the car's description that is worth noting as this detail will make a large contribution to the story later on.

Countryman Jim is working on his commercial for the cafe in Chapter 46. He is pleased with the work he has done, and he heads out to the cafe to share it with Chap and his mother hoping for their approval as well. At the cafe, Chap is so disappointed and mad about how things are turning out that it is very evident to his mother. In order to keep Chap's mind off of things, she sends him down to the canebrake to harvest some sugar cane. Chap is happy with this assignment as it will give him the ability to relieve some of his tension. Chap feels more like a man as he enters the canebrake and sings his lullaby so he can chop the sugar cane. Chap recalls that he has used his machete for not only cutting sugar cane but for cutting down vines and branches in the swamp as well during his and Audie's afternoon walks to find his old car. Chap takes a moment to



consider where the DeSoto may be, but he is interrupted in his thoughts as the sound of rattlesnakes gets closer. The reader recognizes this as time for Chap to get out of the canebrake as quick as he can as the lullaby has worn off. Chap hurriedly heads back to the house, proud that he has done a man's job, but his mother playfully ruins it by dabbing flour on his face. This shows the loving and playful relationship between mother and son and how it is hard to keep down this feeling even in the face of adversity. As Countryman Jim enters the cafe, Chap becomes more enthused. He is confident that the family's closest friend has come up with a great advertisement that will hopefully save their home. Before Jim can give the Brayburns a sample of the new commercial, Chap comes up with yet another brilliant idea. He is sure that if he makes signs to put everywhere, then people will be more curious about the cafe and they will stop by to visit. The signs could direct potential customers to the cafe and there will be less opportunities for people to get lost. This entire scene could be seen as an epiphany as Chap is devising new ways to save the cafe.

The journey of the Swamp Scouts to find the Sugar Man begins in Chapter 47. As the raccoons go further into the swamp, the scenery changes to eerily dark and quiet. The home of the Sugar Man is unknown to anyone in the swamp, but it is common knowledge for the creatures of the swamp that the Sugar Man lives in the deepest and darkest section of it. It is through sheer intuition and good luck that the Swamp Scouts seem to be going in the correct direction. Their efforts are rewarded by a sound that is familiar to the Swamp Scouts. It is the sound of a large rattlesnake, and both the Swamp Scouts and the rattlesnakes recognize each other instantly. This is the first interaction between the raccoons and the Sugar Man's assistant, Gertrude, who looks to be happy to see them.

Bingo and J'miah seem terrified of Gertrude in Chapter 48. Gertrude tells them that she has been waiting for someone to come visit her and that she is lucky that she has run into them. Bingo and J'miah are convinced that she is happy because she means to eat the two of them, but Gertrude assures them that she does not eat furry creatures. This revelation relieves the Scouts a little bit, but they are curious to know why she has been waiting for someone to come by. Gertrude answers that she needs someone to look at her new skin and to get their opinion. This shows that Gertrude has the tendency to be vain about her looks. The raccoons are quick to compliment Gertrude on her fine skin, in hopes that she does not change her mind and decides to eat them. After they finish discussing Gertrude's skin, she is curious as to why the brothers have come so far into the swamp. Quickly, Bingo and J'miah recount the last few days and all of the rumbling that has gone on in the swamp. Gertrude suggests that the boys get sugar cane to wake the Sugar Man. This helps Gertrude as she was unable to find the snapping turtles previously, plus it gets the Sugar Man to wake up for the raccoons. Gertrude explains that she does not have any and the boys are slightly disgruntled to learn that they will have to go to the canebrake themselves to procure the sugar cane. They know they have no choice in this, so they scamper off back towards the light part of the swamp because this has now become a matter of urgency. Once they get to the canebrake, they are immediately stopped by a horde of rattlesnakes. The brothers are now petrified with so many of the snakes ready to reach out and bite them. They do not know of the Sugar Man's lullaby and have no chance of survival if they stick around.





Just before the snakes can strike, the Swamp Scouts make the hastiest retreat possible.

Chapter 49 shows the beginnings of preparations to open the cafe with the new advertising, including the use of signs pointing potential customers in the right direction. There is a deep sense of hope felt by the Brayburns and Countryman Jim. If the marketing ploy is successful, the Brayburns have the possibility of saving their home and business by generating the "boatload of cash" they need. If the plans fail, then everything they have worked for will be for nothing and they will have to leave their home. Everyone knows that the stakes are high, but they are confident that things are looking up.

Once Chap completes his work with the pies, he goes outside to his boat. He drags it up onto the porch so he can fill it with all of the money he hopes to receive the next day. In order to estimate how filled the boat will be, Chap tears up a piece of paper the same size as a dollar bill and puts in the boat. Chap at this point understands that is going to take a large amount of bills to load the boat and save his home. This does not discourage him though. There is a visible amount of Chap's determination and positive energy as he tells himself that the area can be saved. Chap is sitting in the boat when Sweetums jumps into his lap. Chap does not mind Sweetums sitting with him, but Sweetums has come with a purpose. He tries to tell Chap that danger is coming and that there is a strange rumbling, but Chap disregards him. All Chap can hear is Sweetums meowing, not Sweetums' warning. This is another instance of Sweetums' good intentions being marred by a communication misunderstanding. Chap thinks that the rumbling is just an oncoming thunderstorm and is unaware of the true danger that the swamp is in. Sweetums continues to try to get Chap to understand what he is trying to say, but eventually he gets offended from Chap ignoring him and he goes to hide under the bed. Chap gets up as well and heads inside to shower and head to bed as he believes that the next day will be an intensely busy one.

## Discussion Question 1

What other marketing tools does Chap want to use to get more customers into the cafe? How does the reader know that these will work?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Gertrude want the Sugar Man to wake up? How can she wake him up? Why is she so excited when the Swamp Scouts arrive?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Sweetums jump into the boat with Chap? How is Sweetums' warning received?

## Vocabulary

renditions, fauna, machete, forays, wane procure, effusive, deter





# Chapters 50 - 65: The Third Night

## Summary

The raccoons arrive safely back at Information Headquarters in Chapter 50. Bingo wishes for all sorts of things before he remembers that he has recently discovered a star he can wish on. Bingo wants to climb another tree so that he can make a wish on Binkle that things will turn out all right. J'miah reluctantly follows Bingo once again to a tree and Bingo climbs up. He sees the red blinking star that he calls Binkle and he makes a wish on it. Bingo wishes for sugar cane so he can wake up the Sugar Man. Once he is finished, he descends from the tree and he and J'miah head back to Headquarters.

Sonny Boy and Jaeger Stitch sit at the Beaucoop mansion drinking mint juleps in Chapter 52. Sonny Boy reveals a plan to hold a groundbreaking ceremony and invite his political and rich friends. Jaeger Stitch enjoys this plan and she hopes she can use it to gain more fame and fortune for herself. Sonny makes a list of people to invite, including the mayor and Jaeger becomes so happy she could kiss him. Instead she takes her glass and throws it across the porch to show how happy she is.

The narrator announces that the only reason Jaeger Stitch and Sonny Boy Beaucoop met a while back is because of a bad roll of dice at a casino in New Orleans in Chapter 52.

In Chapter 53, Sonny Boy sits in his family house all alone. He strolls through the house, avoiding the library where the painting of Aloicious Beaucoop and the original blood oath sit. He has tried to cover up the painting several times, but to no avail. He heads to the study where he looks at the stuffed animals and birds collected over the years. Sonny Boy gazes at one particular bird. He realizes that this is the elusive ivory billed woodpecker and the tag on it says that it was caught by his father in 1949. Sonny Boy knows that this may be the same bird that Audie had seen that same year.

Quenton Beaucoop was the father of Sonny Boy and an avid bird hunter. He did not have much feeling for Sonny Boy and the feeling was mutual. One day, he went out with his dogs to go look for birds, but he unfortunately died in a tree. Sonny Boy's mother packed him up shortly after and have been living in Houston ever since. Sonny Boy realizes that if there are more birds like this one in the swamp, he will lose the deal to create the gator amusement park. The thought of this is irritating to Sonny Boy and he ends up throwing and breaking his own glass.

Gertrude wakes once again in Chapter 54. For some reason, she knows that Quenton Beaucoop's death certificate says that he died of a heart attack, but she knows the truth. She knows that Quenton was killed because of the Sugar Man's anger.



J'miah thinks about the wish he made to be able to climb a tree in Chapter 55. He is sad that no real results have come from the days adventure on top of the feeling that he is hungry. He is not able to go out as it has started raining and he must stay in the DeSoto in case the Voice of Intelligence has a message. Thinking that he can find more art in the box under the seat, J'miah sticks his arm in the box. After many tries, he is successful as he pulls out a shiny, flat, odd looking object. As J'miah tries to find out what it is, he sneezes near it and it makes a weird sound.

Chapter 56 describes the Hohner Marine Band Harmonica. Many famous musicians play this kind of harmonica, but the first was Snooky Pryor. In 1949 Audie buys one of these harmonicas so that he can play like Snooky Pryor, but he somehow loses it along with his other items in the Sugar Man Swamp.

Bingo and J'miah argue over the musical instrument in Chapter 57. They have to end this argument quickly as lightning strikes near the Headquarters. They receive a message from the Voice of Intelligence telling them to go to the Paradise Pies Cafe for sugar pies. Bingo becomes aware that their mission is to go there to steal some pies and that these will finally wake the Sugar Man.

Chap is also listening to the radio in Chapter 58. He enjoys hearing the commercial that Countryman Jim has made for the cafe. Chap is confident that this ad will bring in many customers. Sweetums continues to attempt telling Chap about the oncoming danger but Chap falls asleep.

The Farrow Gang stops to rest in Chapter 59. Clydine and Buzzie are tired of hearing the children ask how much longer will it take to get to the sugar cane. Buzzie tries to help make the situation better by preparing a mud area for the family to play in. Clydine destroys a tree with her head in an effort to relax. The whole family spends time playing in the mud together until one of the children slips up and asks again about how much longer will the trip take.

The rumbling increases in Chapter 60. The raccoon brothers find their way to the Paradise Pies Cafe with the help of a friendly skunk. They are successful in sneaking into the cafe, and the sight of all of the sugar pies makes the boys pretty hungry. They come to their senses when they discover that they are not alone in the cafe.

Sweetums hears noises and wakes up in Chapter 61. He goes near the kitchen to see who is there, and he notices Bingo and J'miah. Sweetums believes that the house is being robbed, but instead of defending himself and the cafe, Sweetums takes off running to his hiding spot under the bed. He meows trying to wake the Brayburns but it is of no use since they are fast asleep.

The Swamp Scouts are successful in their mission to steal pies in Chapter 62. They take as many as they can carry and climb out the window they used to come in with and head back to the swamp.

Sweetums refuses to come out of his hiding spot in Chapter 63. He is so scared that he cannot think of anything else and will not move for any reason, even though he has to



use his litter box. Sweetums tells himself he will just have to wait till later because there is no way he is going to leave where he feels the safest.

All sorts of people call Countryman Jim asking about the cafe after they hear his commercial. Jim answers the phones most of the evening and cannot get anything else done. After the phone calls die down, he receives an extra call. It is from Sonny Boy and he wants Jim to inform the public about the groundbreaking ceremony for the new theme park. Jim tells Sonny Boy that he will do it, but secretly he intends to do the opposite.

The Swamp Scouts have so many pies they cannot eat them all in Chapter 65. To alleviate this problem they eat a few pies but soon realize that there is only one left. It will have to be enough to wake the Sugar Man and make him happy. With that, the brothers head off once again to the Sugar Man's lair.

## Analysis

Bingo and J'miah safely escape from the rattlesnakes in Chapter 50. They feel very safe and secure in the Information Headquarters but Bingo is filled with remorse. He feels that nothing has been accomplished during the day and he begins making all kinds of wishes. He knows that mere wishing does not change anything but he wants to save the swamp so badly that he does not know what else to do. All of a sudden, an idea hits him. The reader will note that on the first night of being a Swamp Scout, Bingo discovered a star and named it Binkle. Bingo informs J'miah that he is going to climb another tree in hopes of seeing this star. J'miah is still reluctant to follow along with this plan, but he still remembers that his duty as a Swamp Scout is to stick with his partner. Together, they go out to the tree but they take a longer route because they are both afraid that the rattlesnakes are nearby. Even though Bingo is tired and sore, he is excited to be climbing a tree again. J'miah patiently waits for Bingo and watches the area for rattlesnakes. Once Bingo climbs to the top of the tree he is elated to find that Binkle is in the sky. He tries to recall the rhyme that his father taught him about wishing on stars. Suddenly the rhyme comes to him and he makes his wish. Of all the things he wants to wish for, he wishes for sugar cane. He knows that the sugar cane is of the highest priority. In order to wake the Sugar Man, he must have sugar cane and without him the Farrow Gang can destroy the swamp. Bingo does not know if his wish will be fulfilled or not, but at this point he feels immensely better that he has at least made the attempt to get it filled.

The actual relationship between Sonny Boy and Jaeger is glanced at in Chapter 51. There is no large amount of actual friendship between the two, the only thing that bonds them together is their intense greed and deviousness. Both of them have their reasons that they are in this partnership, but it is Jaeger who has the disadvantage of having to be nice as it is Sonny Boy who holds all of the financial power and the real estate.

Sonny Boy devises a plan to gain more local interest in the amusement park. He figures if he and Jaeger hold a groundbreaking ceremony in the swamp, people will be intrigued



and he can gather more business. He reveals his plan to Jaeger, Jaeger is ecstatic about this notion. She feels that she can gain more fame by being seen with people who are well respected in the community and get more advantages for herself. For a brief instance, there is a slight attraction to Sonny Boy by Jaeger, but it is only because he has the ability to provide her with money and opportunities.

Chapter 52 is another extremely short chapter where the narrator throws in a small bit of information about how Jaeger Stich and Sonny Boy Beaucoop got together in the first place. The narrator hints that it is because they met while rolling dice in a casino in New Orleans. This chapter makes the reader hopeful that the story behind their relationship will be revealed later in the novel.

Chapter 53 focuses solely on Sonny Boy and gives a bit of his back story after Jaeger Stich leaves the mansion. The Beaucoop mansion itself is described as being filled with antiques, some of which Sonny Boy views as worthless. He actually prefers to not be in this house, but while he is there, he sits in the small study instead of the main library. The main library makes Sonny Boy extremely uncomfortable, to the point he cannot even walk into the room. In the main library, the portrait of Aloicious Beaucoop hangs over the fireplace. This is an ominous sight, especially since it cannot be moved from the wall, despite all of Sonny Boy's efforts as he feels that the painting is watching him.

Actually, Sonny Boy prefers the much smaller study rather than the library. In this room is a collection of rare things that have been passed down throughout the ages, especially stuffed birds and animals. Previously, Sonny Boy did not like this collection, but now he finds himself oddly admiring it. As he is glancing at each specimen, his eyes fall upon on one particular bird. It has a bright red head, massive black feathers and white smaller feathers. The reader and Sonny Boy instantly recognize this as the ivory billed woodpecker. The tag on the bird says that it was collected by Quenton Beaucoop in 1949. This is a coincidence as the narrator recalls that Audie once saw a bird with the exact description in 1949 as well, leaving the question over whether this is the same bird or not.

The chapter then goes on to describe Quenton Beaucoop, Sonny Boy's father. There is no real physical description of the man, but the reader is given the impression that he was just as careless as Sonny Boy. Quenton went bird watching with his dogs one day, but a while later his dogs come back without him. A few days go by and Quenton is found dead in a tree. The official cause of death is that he suffered a heart attack, but the reader is left to wonder the truth. After Quenton's death, Sonny Boy's mother moves the family to Houston and Sonny Boy likes living here better. Sonny Boy does not have any fond memories of his father, Quenton is shown to prefer his hunting dogs rather than Sonny Boy. This is fine with Sonny Boy and the reader can see that Quenton may not have been a pleasant man to live with.

Sonny Boy refills his brandy glass and continues to look at the bird. Although this bird proves that the ivory billed woodpeckers lived in the swamp at one time, Sonny Boy realizes that they are probably all gone currently. He also is aware of the fact that if an ivory billed woodpecker is spotted somewhere in the swamp, the plans that he and



Jaeger have will be doomed. All sorts of bird enthusiasts and others will make so much trouble for Sonny Boy because he will be destroying a rare creature's habitat that he will be forced to cancel the amusement park. This makes him extremely nervous then angry enough to throw his own glass against the wall shattering it.

Chapter 54 shows Gertrude waking up for a moment as if she knows that Sonny Boy is thinking of her father. This is a chapter that in ways connects the story lines of the Swamp Scouts to the Brayburns.. Gertrude knows the truth about what really happened to Quenton Beaucoop. She knows that he supposedly died of a heart attack, but she also knows it really was because he incurred the wrath of the Sugar Man although there is no description of this event.

Bingo and J'miah return to the DeSoto after Bingo makes his wish in Chapter 55. Unbeknownst to Bingo, J'miah has made of wish of his own although J'miah does not know if it will come true since he did not actually see the star. His wish is that he could be a bit more brave and be able to actually climb a tree. To try to get his mind off of his problem, he stares at the picture of the armadillo on the dashboard. Looking at this picture somehow makes J'miah a bit calmer. He tries to get his mind off of the mission at hand but he is depressed that they are unable to find sugar cane. This also makes him think that he is hungry, especially since the raccoons have been far too busy to stop and think about food. Just as he decides to go in search of food, rain starts falling, forcing him to stay inside. Usually, rain does not bother him, but with rain there is sometimes lightning so he has to stay close in case a message from the Voice of Intelligence comes through.

To get his mind off of his hunger, J'miah investigates the box under the seat a bit more. He is able to reopen the box and he sticks his arm in as far as it will go. He grabs a hold of something smooth and tries his best to get it out. After much effort, he yanks this flat, cold object out and he examines it. J'miah notices the look of this item and that it is flat, shiny, and smooth with holes on its sides. It has obviously been in the box for a very long time according to how it smells. It is inedible and as he tries to bite it, dust goes up his nose, causing him to sneeze. The sneeze blows into the item where it makes a weird sound and J'miah is happy that he has a discovery of his own.

Chapter 56 gives the reader a short description of the Hohner Marine Band Harmonica. This harmonica has been used by several famous musicians throughout the years, but the first to play this is a man named Snooky Pryor. Pryor is one of Audie's favorite musicians and he inspires Audie to learn how to play harmonica. In 1949, Audie purchases one of these in Houston. The last time he sees it is before he loses it in the swamp.

J'miah is enthused when he finds out that the mysterious object is a musical instrument in Chapter 57. He is elated that he has been able to find fine things for their home such as art and now music. Just as J'miah is relishing his recent discoveries, Bingo comes and takes the instrument out of J'miah's hands. The usual sibling squabble begins and it does not end until the brothers are startled by the sound of lightning. At this point, the



argument must stop as they must remember their duties as Swamp Scouts and listen for any incoming messages from the Voice of Intelligence.

Surprisingly, they do not have to wait long until a new message comes in. The Voice of Intelligence instructs the Swamp Scouts to head to the Paradise Pies Cafe for sugar pies. At first, the brothers have no idea what this message means. They know that the Voice of Intelligence can always be relied on, as it has always given correct information, but they are aware that they have no clue what this Paradise Pies Cafe is. Suddenly, Bingo understands the meaning of the message. The voice says that the pies in the cafe are made out of sugar cane. Since sugar cane is just the thing the Sugar Man needs, the pies could quite possibly wake him up. This is just the information Bingo and J'miah need for their quest to obtain sugar cane for the Sugar Man. The brothers are pleased and excited that now they have a new direction in their mission.

Chap and Sweetums lie in bed listening to the radio in Chapter 58. Chap hears the commercial that was made by Countryman Jim and he is hopeful that people will hear it and come to the cafe the next day. Chap envisions a cafe full of people which will help him save his home. As Chap falls asleep, Sweetums strains to tell Chap that he needs to talk to Chap, but Chap is not paying any attention to Sweetums. Instead, Chap pulls up the covers, rolls over, and falls asleep.

Chapter 59 takes the reader back to the Farrow Gang and their progress at travelling towards the swamp. The young hogs are driving Clydine and Buzzie crazy by constantly asking how much longer they will have to travel. Everyone is becoming agitated as the trip seems to be taking the group some time. Clydine reassures her children that the trip will not take much longer, but she is just as angry as they are. The reader can see that the group is overly impatient to get to the canebrake and that their hunger is causing them to become even more dangerous although they have only been travelling for a few hours. Out of boredom, the children begin chanting their question, which causes Clydine to become insane with fury. She does not like singing and she, like most parents, hates being questioned on the time it takes to get to a certain destination.

In order to diffuse the situation, Buzzie calmly suggests that the family spend some time cooling off in the mud. This makes the children happy but Clydine is still very upset. She goes to pound her head into a tree to relieve her frustrations, but the tree is destroyed in the process. Buzzie admires the work that Clydine has done and is impressed with the damage done to the tree. This soothes Clydine's rage for a while and the entire family take a break to enjoy some family bonding time in the mud. The only thing that ruins it is when the youngest child asks when will they arrive at the sugar cane one more time.

As the Farrow Gang is getting closer, Bingo and J'miah know that they have little time to wake the Sugar Man in Chapter 60. They head off to the paradise Pies Cafe, but once they figure out they have no clue where it is, they have to stop and ask for directions for a skunk passing by. The skunk lets the brothers know where the cafe is and the raccoons are grateful for its help. The reader discovers that the DeSoto and the cafe are a very short distance apart, which makes things convenient for the Swamp Scouts.





They do not recognize the cafe just on sight, the amazing smells coming from the cafe intrigue the brothers and draws them closer.

Once the Brayburns turn off the lights to go to sleep, the brothers jump into action. This is complicated by the fact that the pies smell so delicious that they cannot take their minds off of them. They eventually snap out of their pie eating dreams to focus on the task ahead. They are aware that defeating the Farrow Gang and saving their home depends on this one crucial mission. The narrator points out that these pies are only a substitute for actual sugar cane since Bingo and J'miah are unable to get by the rattlesnakes in the canebrake. This does not matter to the scouts as they believe that these pies will do the trick in waking up the Sugar Man. The window into the cafe is slightly open, giving the raccoons the opportunity to slide inside. Once there, the boys are amazed at the amount of pies waiting to be eaten. They take a moment to adjust to their new surroundings, but the reader is alerted to the fact that the Swamp Scouts are not alone.

Sweetums is awakened to a strange noise in Chapter 61. He knows that rats would not be so bold as to invade the cafe, but he is curious to know who is trying to sneak in. As he heads towards the kitchen, Sweetums' senses of smell and hearing are heightened as he tries to discover who is there. As he looks into the kitchen the cat looks directly at Bingo and J'miah and they look back at him as well. Sweetums deduces that they are robbers, but instead of attacking the raccoons, Sweetums quickly retreats. This shows that Sweetums can be scared at the slightest notion of things although he should be able to defend himself if necessary. Sweetums runs back into Chaps room and hides in his usual spot under the bed. Sweetums is under the opinion that the humans are the ones whose job it is to defend the home and that he should not get himself involved. He meows loudly trying to tell the Brayburns that they are being robbed but to no avail. Chap and his mother are so tired from the long day they had that they are hopelessly asleep.

The mission to steal pies is a success in Chapter 62. The brothers have an undetermined amount of pies that they shove out the window and make a stealthy retreat. They are jubilant that their mission has gone so well and quickly as they run with their little treasure back to the swamp.

The author shows just how much of a scared cat Sweetums is in Chapter 63. Sweetums is so scared by the situation at hand that he cannot close his eyes or focus on anything else. He refuses to move for any purpose no matter how important. Sweetums will not even come out to use the litter box. Instead, he decides to hold off on that, thinking he will just have to wait until he feels a bit safer. Sweetums wonders what other bad thing is going to happen as he sits and waits for sunrise.

Interest in the cafe is on the rise in Chapter 64. All night long, Countryman Jim takes questions from listeners calling in asking about the cafe. He gives people information on the hours, directions, even what kind of coffee the cafe uses. Jim is eager that so many people have taken the time out to show their curiosity about the cafe. He dreams that all of this interest will result in a large gathering at the cafe in the morning and lots of



money will be made. He is so busy taking these calls that he has little time for anything else. A while later, the phones get quiet as people have gone to sleep. The phone rings one more time and Jim thinks it is someone else with a question about the cafe. He is disappointed to learn that Sonny Boy is on the other side of the call. Sonny Boy instructs Jim to inform his listeners that there will be a groundbreaking ceremony for the Gator World Wrestling Arena and Theme Park scheduled for the day after tomorrow. Jim assures Sonny Boy that he would let the public know about this, but Jim has no intention of doing this. He knows that he cannot keep people from finding out, as he and the reader are sure that people will find this out other ways. Jim is determined to keep this information under wraps for as long as possible to try to hold Sonny Boy off for just a while longer.

Bingo and J'miah are back in the DeSoto with their stolen sugar pies in Chapter 65. Once they find out how many pies they actually have, they figure that they have too many to take to the Sugar Man. To help alleviate this predicament, they eat a few of the pies. They are so hungry that they do not take note of just how many pies they are eating. Bingo is the first to notice that something is not right. He searches the area looking for more pies but cannot find more than just one. To make matters worse, the rumbling has gotten closer and louder. The raccoons know that they have to hurry up and wake the Sugar Man before the swamp is destroyed. Bingo decides against going back to the cafe for more pies as the sun is rising and he does not want to risk getting caught. J'miah is so nervous about their situation that he cleans whatever he can and looks at the armadillo picture on the dashboard. The brothers know that one pie will have to do the trick in waking up the Sugar Man so they take the lone pie and they start off towards the Sugar Man.

## Discussion Question 1

Why is Sonny Boy nervous about being in the library? How does Sonny Boy try to cover the painting of Aloicious? Why could this be considered a supernatural occurrence?

## Discussion Question 2

What message does the Voice of Intelligence give to the Swamp Scouts? How does this help them in their mission?

## Discussion Question 3

Why does Sonny Boy call Countryman Jim? What is Countryman Jim's reaction? Will this affect how the public hears Sonny Boy's news?



## Vocabulary

wafted, pinnacle, dignitaries, milieu, tomes, austere, reverie, insidious, perilously, phalanx



# Chapters 66 - 75: The Third Day

## Summary

Chap wakes up at 4:30 in the morning to start his day in Chapter 66. He notices that something is not right in the kitchen and he goes to examine it further. Upon his completion, Chap declares that some creature has broken into the kitchen. He looks everything over and determines that some of the sugar pies that were fried the day before are missing.

Chap weighs his options for stopping any more pie thefts in Chapter 67. He knows that raccoons have stolen less than a dozen pies, but he does not want to hurt them. He comes up with a way to trap them in a cage so he can set them free. As Chap is planning how to do this his mother calls him into the dining room. They look out the front door and they unexpectedly find a mass of people waiting for them to open. The cafe opens and the commercial and signs are considered a large success.

The origin of the sugar cane plant growing in the Bayou Tourterelle is not known in Chapter 68. It is not from the Texas area and may have arrived there by bird or someone passing through. All that is known is that Clydine is on the hunt for it.

The Swamp Scouts hurry to wake up the Sugar Man in Chapter 69. They are running out of time as the Farrow Gang gets closer. Bingo takes a moment to worry about what should he and J'miah do after they wake the Sugar Man, especially if he is a nasty mood.

The Farrow Gang is now travelling during the day in Chapter 70. The Farrow children are getting on Buzzie's nerves and Clydine is getting angrier. In order to placate his complaining family, Buzzie takes them to a large mound of hay, which they destroy just for fun and they are made happier by this.

Money is flowing in quickly and the pies sell out of the cafe in Chapter 71. Chap continues to work but he imagines finding the DeSoto and the evidence of the existence of the Sugar Man. He is sent out to chop more sugar cane where he finds the prints of two raccoons. Chap guesses that these prints belong to the same raccoons that robbed him earlier and he feels a bit sorry for him.

Chapter 72 is a description of the Hummer owned by Sonny Boy Beaucoop and driven by his chauffeur Leroy. It is considerably larger than the DeSoto in weight, length and width and is one massive vehicle.

Sonny Boy invites a group of the area's most influential people to the groundbreaking ceremony in Chapter 73. He makes a joke that everyone should stop by the cafe for some pies either before or after the ceremony. Jaeger finds this funny and for a moment, she wants to kiss him again, but still would rather kiss an alligator. This is just fine with Sonny Boy as he would rather kiss the non-existent Sugar Man. Sonny Boy



stops to think about the Sugar Man, and then his father, the woodpecker and Audie Brayburn and he tells himself that they are all long gone memories.

The narrator lets the reader know that the Sugar Man is still thinking about Audie Brayburn and so is his family in Chapter 74.

In 1949, Audie Brayburn meets the Sugar Man face-to-face in Chapter 75. The Sugar Man is at the canebrake eating sugar cane when Audie walks up on him. The Sugar Man is so surprised that he begins choking on a piece of sugar cane, but Audie quickly saves him by hitting him on the back with a large tree branch. From there, a friendship begins as the two talk and eat sugar cane. Audie learns the lullaby that is used to get the rattlesnakes to sleep then the Sugar Man goes home for a nap. A few days later, the Swamp Scouts rush into the Sugar Man's lair because Audie is sick and in danger from the storm. The Sugar Man returns Audie's favor by moving the DeSoto to a safer place. As the Sugar Man looks in the car, Audie's camera accidentally goes off, but the Sugar Man is just happy that he is there to help his new friend. Currently, Bingo and J'miah arrive at the Sugar Man's lair and present him with the last of the sugar pies in hopes that he wakes up in time to help them against the Farrow Gang.

## Analysis

Chap is excited about the day ahead in Chapter 66. It is 4:30 a.m. and Chap listens to the rest of Countryman Jim's broadcast as he prepares for the busy day ahead. As he is preparing the morning coffee, he notices strange marks on the windowsill. They are paw prints and Chap sees that the screen to the window is missing as well. This alerts Chap to the fact that something has been in the kitchen. He takes a quick inventory of all of the items around. Everything is as it should be for the most part, but what catches Chap's eyes is the amount of sugar pies. He knows that the previous day they made many more than what is sitting on the counters. In this moment, Chap figures out that whatever came through the window has robbed him. This is another instance where the story lines of the Swamp Scouts and Chap Brayburn make a connection which aids the flow of the novel.

It is unclear how Chap knows the exact identity of the pie thieves in Chapter 67. He is very angry that the raccoons have stolen from them and he wants revenge. He knows that it is wrong to want to hurt the raccoons as he remembers that Audie told him once that he and Chap are actually trespassing on the animals' land, and this reminder soothes Chap for an instant. As Chap remembers Audie's words, a vision of the drawing Audie made of a raccoon playing his harmonica comes to Chap's mind. This mental image provides a bit of ironic humor because of J'miah's discovery in a previous chapter. Chap is very anxious to begin the day as it is a pivotal point in the salvation of the cafe and home as he finishes his coffee and begins what could be the biggest day of his life.

Chap ponders how he will stop the raccoons from stealing again. As he is considering his options, a he comes up with a brilliant plan. Sometime before, Audie had trapped a



bobcat using a large harmless trap and set it free somewhere in the bayou. This scene is a slight deviation showing a flashback of Audie's desire to not hurt any of the animals of the swamp when they become pests. This flashback inspires Chap to use Audie's same methods, but his thoughts are broken as he and his mother are shocked to find the large gathering of people outside of the cafe. This proves that Chap's marketing strategies have worked and that there is a good chance that the cafe will be saved.

The origin of the sugar cane plant is discussed in Chapter 68. This kind of sugar cane that is grown in the Bayou Tourterelle is also called muscovado. It is extremely sweet and considered by the narrator as better than any other kind of sugar. It is guessed that the sugar cane came to be in this bayou from a bird accidentally dropping a seed or from an adventurer who just happened to plant it there. All that is actually known is that it is a unique shade of brown and that the taste is scrumptious. The taste is all Clydine cares to know about the sugar cane and she will not stop until she gets some.

Bingo and J'miah race towards the Sugar Man's lair in Chapter 69. Daylight is fading fast and they know that they need to wake the Sugar Man immediately as night falls and the Farrow Gang will soon be getting closer. Bingo wonders what will happen once the Sugar Man is awakened. The reader is reminded that the Sugar Man can sometimes wake up in a nasty temper and cause damage himself. For Bingo and J'miah, they have only one order which is to wake the Sugar Man. They do not know what they are supposed to do afterwards in terms of aiding him or how to calm him if he is upset.

Buzzie has a hard time of keeping his family happy in Chapter 70. To get to the canebrake quicker, the Farrow Gang is now travelling during the daylight. Buzzie's entire family, including Clydine, are griping about even the littlest things. This is getting on Buzzie's nerves very badly. He just wants to hurry up and get to the canebrake so that everyone will be satisfied. He keeps telling everyone that they are almost there in hopes that they will believe him and calm themselves. This does not work and the complaints continue. Buzzie spots a large hill of hay nearby and he takes the group to it. He yells for them all to attack and they waste no time in destroying the hill, which settles them down so that they can continue on their journey.

Chap is tickled that the money is flowing in so quickly in Chapter 71. He is sure that the cafe will earn enough money to fill the boat and that Sonny Boy will keep his word and the Brayburns can stay in their home. Chap keeps in the back of his mind that in order to truly save the entire swamp, he needs actual proof of the Sugar Man. He has the drawing of the Sugar Man, but he knows that will not be enough to provide hard evidence. Chap is reminded of all the times he and Audie went to look for the DeSoto in the swamp. Audie once told him that the hood ornament lights up when the car is turned on, which is a foreshadowing clue for the reader that this will be important sometime later. Chap still wants to find the Desoto, not just for himself but as a way to honor his late grandfather.

The cafe sells so many pies that they completely run out of them and the sugar cane to make them. Chap heads down to the canebrake to chop some more and he knows that he only has a limited amount of time. The reader learns that the lullaby used by Chap



and Audie can only be sung one time a day although how Audie came by this knowledge is unclear. As Chap picks up a bundle of sugar cane, he notices two familiar tracks in the mud. Chap recognizes them as belonging to raccoons and he considers these tracks to belong to the same raccoons that robbed the cafe. Chap guesses that these raccoons came to the canebrake first but were apprehended by the rattlesnakes, so they had to find sugar cane in the only other place they could find, which is the cafe. Chap sympathizes with them for about a minute, but he still intends on putting out traps later since he is convinced that they will return.

The narrator once again interjects with information that is mildly relevant to the main story as a comparison is made between the DeSoto and the Hummer owned by Sonny Boy Beaucoop. The Hummer is over 8,000 pounds heavier than the DeSoto. The narrator states that a vehicle expert calculates that the Hummer is also considerably wider than the DeSoto as well. Another clear distinction between the both cars is that the Hummer has the interior of a party room and the capacity to comfortably fit 24 people, while the DeSoto does not have these options. The reader can visualize the dimensions of both vehicles and see that there is quite a bit of difference between the two.

Since the Hummer fits 24 people, Sonny Boy invites 22 of his richest and most influential associates to come to the groundbreaking ceremony with him and Jaeger Stitch in Chapter 73. They will have a lunch party at the Beaucoop mansion first, then party their way to the canebrake area of the bayou to commence the ceremony. Since the canebrake is near the cafe, the reader knows that anyone attending the groundbreaking will have to walk by the cafe. Sonny gets a laugh as he jokes that the group should stop by the cafe at some point. This is a cruel joke as Sonny has nothing but disdain for the cafe. Jaeger has another fleeting moment where she wants to kiss Sonny Boy but that is replaced by the desire to hurry up and get to the ceremony where she can impress everyone with kissing an alligator. Sonny Boy is perfectly fine with Jaeger not kissing him and the reader can see that he clearly dislikes this woman. As his thoughts give way to his preference of kissing the Sugar Man rather than Jaeger, he also contemplates the memories of the woodpecker, his father, and Audie. Sonny Boy shrugs off all of these as he cheers himself up with the fact that they are all now gone and are just memories.

Chapter 74 shows the feelings that the Sugar Man has for Audie Brayburn. Even though Sonny Boy dismisses Audie's memory, the people who loved him the most still think about him continuously. This includes the Sugar Man. This minuscule chapter lets the reader know that the Sugar Man does have feelings and it is a hint that there is more to the story between Audie and the Sugar Man.

Chapter 75 is the real story between Audie Brayburn and the Sugar Man in 1949. The Sugar Man just happens to wake up on his own accord and goes down to the canebrake to get something to eat. He sits there with Gertrude in peace and quiet until he hears a melody from nearby. He looks up from what he is doing and there is Audie Brayburn, playing his harmonica. The Sugar Man prefers Audie's music to that of the pirates he endured many years before. Audie says a friendly hello to the Sugar Man and



it is evident that Audie is not afraid of the Sugar Man like other people would be. This catches the Sugar Man off guard and he begins choking on a piece of sugar cane. Audie quickly comes to the rescue and smacks the Sugar Man's back to get the piece of sugar cane dislodged from his throat. Gertrude prepares to defend her best friend but the Sugar Man stops her before she bites Audie and is thankful for Audie's help. The pair sit down and spend the rest of the afternoon eating sugar cane and getting to know each other better. It is here that the reader becomes aware of where Audie learns the lullaby that enables him and Chap to successfully harvest sugar cane.

At the end of the afternoon, the Sugar Man gets tired and goes home after telling Audie good luck in finding the ivory billed woodpecker. Gertrude and the Sugar Man happily fall asleep with the knowledge that Audie is a good friend. In the meantime, the Swamp Scouts of this time keep a close watch on Audie. When Audie gets sick and the rain comes, they want to help Audie. They know that Audie is in danger from the car floating away and sinking so they try as hard as they can to get his attention. This is to no avail as Audie is sleeping deeply and he hears none of it. The Swamp Scouts know that the only way Audie can be saved is to find the Sugar Man.

The Sugar Man is alarmed when the Scouts wake him up and tell him what is going on. He hurries to Audie's car and grabs it to keep it from floating away. Then he gently pushes it out of the water so it can sit on a hill to keep it out of harm's way. To make sure that Audie is alright, the Sugar Man peeks inside the car. He is taken by surprise when a mysterious flash of light occurs from inside, but overall he is pleased that he has been able to help his friend.

The narrator then brings the story back to the current times as the reader learns that the Sugar Man has been sleeping longer and that he has become more difficult to wake up. Bingo and J'miah arrive with their one sugar pie and they pray that the Sugar Man is able to wake up. The Farrow Gang is almost to the swamp and they desperately need the Sugar Man's help.

## Discussion Question 1

What is Chap's reaction to seeing pies missing from the cafe? How does he know that raccoons were there? How does he intend to stop them?

## Discussion Question 2

What is the town's reaction to the commercials and signs? How does this affect the cafe?

## Discussion Question 3

How do the Sugar Man and Audie become friends?



## Vocabulary

irascible, porcine, cache, mosey, knoll, conquistadors



# Chapters 76 - 82: The Fourth Night

## Summary

In Chapter 76 Gertrude is again awakened by fleas as the rumbling sound is more evident. The biting of the fleas makes Gertrude so angry that she is about to bite anything or anyone she sees.

The Farrow Gang causes widespread destruction in Chapter 77. After destroying the hay, they mess up another water area to make a mud pit for themselves before heading to a pecan tree and smashing it to pieces.

The Swamp Scouts look for Gertrude who has gone missing in Chapter 78. Bingo climbs to the top of a magnolia tree hoping to find her somewhere around the swamp. J'miah waits at the bottom of the tree holding the pie and looking around. Since Bingo is so high up he can see all that is going on, even right below him. As he looks down, he spots Gertrude as she sneaks up on J'miah. Bingo yells for J'miah to climb the tree and J'miah throws the pie as he gets up the tree as fast as he can. Surprisingly, Gertrude eats the pie, much to the dismay of the raccoons.

Chap sets the trap for the raccoons in Chapter 79. He gives it a quick wash so that it is clean and puts some cat food into it, hoping to attract the raccoons. Now he knows his pies will be protected from theft.

The fleas stop biting Gertrude and she is now happy but ashamed of herself in Chapter 80. As she gets ready to desert the Swamp Scouts, she feels the rumbling through the swamp and asks about what is happening. The Swamp Scouts remind her that a pack of wild hogs are on the way to the canebrake which causes Gertrude to go into action. She tells the Scouts to follow her and that she will have to bite the Sugar Man to wake him up. Although they still do not trust Gertrude, Bingo and J'miah follow her into the cave.

Bingo and J'miah come face-to-face with the Sugar Man in Chapter 81. Gertrude warns them that the Sugar Man has the potential to be cranky when she wakes him up with snake bites. As she says this she burps a couple of times. Surprisingly, she does not need to bite the Sugar Man as he wakes himself up after smelling the sugar on Gertrude's breath. The Sugar Man looks at the Scouts standing there and asks if there is an emergency. Before they can say anything, the ground rumbles again.

In Chapter 82, the Farrow Gang is just a short run away from the sugar cane. Clydine is the first to be able to smell the sugar cane nearby. They become a very excited group and they start screaming loudly as they charge towards the canebrake.



## Analysis

Chapter 76 shows that Gertrude is getting angrier as the fleas continue to bite her. At this point, the narrator informs the reader that she is about to strike out at anyone she sees, even if they have fur. This goes back to her original statement that she prefers not to bite anything with fur. The reader should also note that the rumbling is also more apparent throughout the swamp.

The narrator looks in on the Farrow Gang once again shortly after they annihilate the hay bale from a previous chapter in Chapter 77. Now that the family is content for the most part, the need to destroy things becomes clearer to them. They are still hungry for the sugar cane, but they take a while to stop and enjoy themselves some more. After rolling around in a mud pit for a good bit of time, they head to a pecan tree next to the pit and together they destroy it within minutes. Now they are ready to resume their journey and get straight to the sugarcane.

Bingo and J'miah do not trust Gertrude in Chapter 78. Their mistrust causes them to begin searching for Gertrude as they do not want to be surprised by her. As Bingo climbs the tree, hoping for a bird's eye view, J'miah remembers his fear of climbing and opts to continue the search on the ground. There is a brief moment of fear as Bingo spots Gertrude sliding up behind J'miah. As Bingo yells for his brother to watch out, an unfortunate case of panic sets in, causing J'miah to accidentally throw the pie in the air. The only thing that this accomplishes is it cures J'miah's fear of heights as he scrambles up the tree. The tossed pie is caught in Gertrude's mouth before anyone can even think about it, she swallows it whole to the dismay of the Swamp Scouts. This does not seem to affect Gertrude as all she can say is "Oops." This provides a miniature dilemma for the scouts as now they have nothing to give to the Sugar Man to wake him up.

Chapter 79 shows Chap setting the trap for Bingo and J'miah. There is only one trap for the both of them, but Chap hopes he can successfully catch one at a time. Since the last time the trap was used on a bobcat, Chap cleans the cage to get rid of any scents left behind. He then fills it with some of Sweetums' cat food thinking that the food will help attract the raccoons. Once this is set, Chap is pleased with himself. He knows that he is doing the right thing in protecting his pies all the while making sure that the raccoons are not harmed.

Gertrude is ashamed that she ate Bingo and J'miah's sugar pie in Chapter 80. The upside to Gertrude eating the pie is that the fleas stopped biting her but the down side is that it was the only pie that Bingo and J'miah had. They are furious with her for eating the only thing that could have awakened the Sugar Man. Secretly, she was rather happy she was able to eat the pie as she now has relief from being tormented all the time by fleas. Her remorse quickly subsides as she is about to retreat back into the lair without aiding the Swamp Scouts any further. This is interrupted as the rumbling has now come to this part of the swamp, causing Gertrude to quickly change her mind and declare that the Sugar Man must be awakened at once. The Swamp Scouts are relieved that she is going to help them. Gertrude reveals that she will just bite the Sugar Man and hope that



he is not in too cranky of a mood. Although the boys still do not trust her, they have no choice but to enter the lair with her. As they enter the home of the Sugar Man, the reader comes to know that this is one of the rarest moments in the role of a Swamp Scout.

The Official Swamp Scouts finally fulfill their duty in Chapter 81. They enter the lair with Gertrude and are amazed at the sheer size and look of the Sugar Man as he sleeps. Gertrude explains to the boys that she will wake him up with a bite, but they should be warned that he has the tendency to be mad when awakened in this manner. Bingo and J'miah are scared that the Sugar Man will lash out at them as Gertrude says this, but they know they have no other choice. Gertrude gets close to the Sugar Man's nose but before she can strike she burps right in the Sugar Man's face. She accidentally does it again and the Sugar Man stirs. He recognizes the smell of sugar on Gertrude's breath. This causes him to gradually wake himself up and the reader notes the the Sugar Man is in a more pleasant mood than if Gertrude was to actually bite him. The reader also learns that the Sugar Man has slept for over 60 years, making the last time he was awake to be somewhere around 1949 when Audie had met him. As he slowly comes awake he notices the Swamp Scouts standing next to him. The Sugar Man knows that the only time the Swamp Scouts actually come to his lair is when there is danger in the swamp. He asks the boys what the problem is, but before they can say anything the ground shakes.

The Farrow Gang is incredibly close to the canebrake in Chapter 82. They can actually smell the sugar cane nearby and this heightens their excitement. As they gear up to charge the canebrake, their screams get louder and they begin to run faster. All 17 of them are now fully prepared to take over the sugar cane for themselves, no matter what damage is caused.

## Discussion Question 1

Why is Gertrude irritated enough to bite furry creatures? Would she really have bitten J'miah?

## Discussion Question 2

Why does Chap set a trap for the raccons? Could he do anything else to prevent the pies from being stolen?

## Discussion Question 3

How does Gertrude intend to wake the Sugar Man? What would be the outcome if she did it her way? How does it really happen?

## Vocabulary

pervasive, bedlam, conundrum, predicament, gullet, euphoria, sucrose



# Chapter 83 - 97: The Fourth Day

## Summary

Jaeger Stitch needs an alligator to wrestle as part of her demonstration in Chapter 83. She directs Leroy on where to go and where to park the Hummer while she scopes out the perfect wrestling opponent. Once Leroy is able to stop, he sits in the car but is told to get out of it. Next Jaeger requires Leroy's assistance in actually capturing the alligator. She demands that Leroy dangle a chicken tied to a rope over the water. She has Leroy tease the alligator with this until she is able to get it into the trailer. He gets so terrified of the alligator that he jumps in the Hummer and takes off, and it looks like he has left Jaeger behind. Suddenly, she slides down the windshield and is happily hanging onto the hood of the Hummer.

In Chapter 84, Sonny Boy has personalized and gold-plated shovels made for the officials who are attending the groundbreaking ceremony. He wants the people to have something to mark the occasion with, but this just reminds him of the ivory billed woodpecker in the study and of his father. Sonny Boy begins to have doubts about demolishing the swamp and possibly be retaliated against. As soon as he sees Jaeger all of those thoughts are gone, as he tells himself that he is absolutely going to move forward.

Countryman Jim comes over to help Chap and his mother in Chapter 85. The boat is getting pretty filled with cash and this pleases Chap. Pies are going so fast that they cannot keep up with them. Sonny Boy orders 24 sugar pies to be ready in time for the groundbreaking ceremony. Jim reveals that there was an announcement made previously about the ceremony for the gator amusement park. Chap's mother holds her head up high as she prepares the pies and gets Chap to finish his work. To simmer down from being mad, Chap goes out to check his trap. Inside is a very aggressive possum instead of one of the raccoons he wanted to catch. He then asks himself how much worse can his day get.

The alligator is poked and prodded with a stick until Jaeger lets him out in the back to wrestle him in Chapter 86. Jaeger is able to pin it, clamp its mouth shut and then kiss it. The crowd is extremely satisfied and they can't wait to see more of what Jaeger has to offer with this amusement park. Everyone begins heading out to the ceremony, but the alligator is so tired from the day's adventure that he hides out in a bed of flowers.

The Sugar Man is out and on the move in Chapter 87. He carries the Swamp Scouts on his shoulders as he lumbers through the swamp, headed toward the rumbling and the sugar cane. Gertrude is with them as Bingo and J'miah beg the Sugar Man to hurry.

Sweetums tries one more time to tell Chap about the rumbling noise in Chapter 88. The cafe is going crazy with the amount of activity going on, but Sweetums tries to yell out





that there is something wrong outside, but no one is paying attention to him. Sweetums give up and heads to the place he thinks is safest, Chaps closet.

The ground breaking ceremony begins in the cafe in Chapter 89. All of the important people who were invited are there and they settle in for some sugar pies. Chap comes up with an idea to be as kind as he can for the moment until he finds the right time for something else. Sonny Boy tries to offer him an extra bit of money as a way to pay him off, but Chap continues smiling and refuses it.

Sonny Boy is forced to laugh off Chap's refusal in Chapter 90. As the group is preparing to leave, Chap pulls his boat in front of them telling them all that he and Sonny Boy had a deal. Sonny Boy ridicules Chap and says that he had no intention of ever taking any money and that even if he did, the small boatload would still not be enough. He also mocks Chap about his offer of giving him the swamp if Chap proves the Sugar Man exists. Sonny Boy continues laughing as he kicks Chap's boat over and heads down to the canebrake with the others. Chap takes a moment to look at the damage Sonny Boy has caused when a vision strikes him. The ceremony crowd are headed towards the canebrake and they have no clue about the rattlesnakes that lie within. Chap tries to warn them, but Sonny Boy ignores him and they keep right on going.

Sweetums sheds his fur as he is hiding out in Chap's closet in Chapter 91.

As Sonny Boy gets pricked with thorns in Chapter 92, he thinks about the wrath of the Sugar Man and becomes paranoid that the Sugar Man will be out to get him. He even gets a bit scared that how he treated Chap will count against him somehow. He worries so much that he has to stop himself by thinking about when he gets home he is burning Alouicious' original oath and the woodpecker so they can no longer make him think of these things. Sonny Boy is snapped back to reality as people are screaming all around and running past. They yell that there are snakes and it is true. There is a large group of rattlesnakes waiting in the canebrake and they are led by Gertrude.

The Farrow Gang finally arrive in the canebrake themselves in Chapter 93. Since the rattlesnakes are busy chasing humans, this gives the hogs free reign to trample about and eat as much as they please. The Sugar Man is instantly enraged when he sees how the gang is treating the canebrake. Before anyone knows what is happening, Buzzie is flying through the air wondering what is going on. Clydine and the rest of the family follow Buzzie into the air very shortly after.

People push and shove each other trying to get into the Hummer in Chapter 94. Somehow they are all able to get in, but the vehicle does not move. Jaeger gets out and kicks it, causing it to start moving.

In Chapter 95, there was no one among the group of important rich people that can say they were a witness to the Sugar Man tossing the hogs in the air.

Chap races home to the canebrake in Chapter 96. Everyone else is trying to get out of the area but Chap is trying to get down there to sing the lullaby and calm the rattlesnakes. Chap sees firsthand the damage caused by the Farrow Gang as he gets



to the canebrake and sees that there is nothing left of it. He also gets to meet the Sugar Man and Gertrude for the first time. The Sugar Man takes a look at him and recognizes Chap as the grandson of Audie Brayburn. The Sugar Man repeats an old saying that Chap learned from his grandpa, "nosotros somos paisionos". In that moment, the pair become friends and Chap's heartache over losing his grandpa lessens.

Chap goes home and the Sugar Man and Gertrude decide that it is time to go back to sleep in Chapter 97. The Sugar Man is satisfied that the swamp is in no longer in danger and Gertrude agrees that the emergency is over. The Sugar Man congratulates the Swamp Scouts on helping to save the swamp and they bid them a fond farewell as they head back to their lair to take another nap.

## Analysis

Chapter 83 shows Jaeger Stitch in action as she prepares herself for the groundbreaking ceremony. She wants to impress the crowd and enlists the aid of Leroy to do this. Not much is known about Leroy as he is only a supplemental character, but it is clear that he is a very nervous man and someone who can be ordered about easily. Jaeger has no care for Leroy's safety as she puts him in danger by trying to catch an alligator. This carelessness is a prime example of how Jaeger feels about other people and her selfishness. Jaeger's excitement and ruthless nature has taken over in this brief yet comical adventure as she is successful in getting the specimen she needs.

Sonny Boy is excited about the groundbreaking that he buys gold plated ceremonial shovels in Chapter 84. Sonny Boy is so jubilant that he even has each person's name engraved on their shovel. Soon this perky feeling wears off and Sonny Boy is reminded of the ivory billed woodpecker. He has a dark feeling pass over him as he reminds himself that his dad died shortly after mounting the bird. This shows that Sonny Boy is absolutely worried that he will meet the same fate as his father. This also shows that Sonny Boy knows what he is doing is wrong but he is so selfish that he will not stop it. As Jaeger comes barreling on top of the Hummer, Sonny Boy is resigned to the fact that there is no going back on his plans. The narrator provides a brief glimpse into Sonny Boy's thoughts of turning back before something happens but he quickly puts them out of his head.

The cafe is bustling with activity in Chapter 85. Countryman Jim comes over after he is done at the radio station to help the Brayburns. Towards closing time, Chap's mother gets a call. The reader cannot tell who it is at this point, but when Chap's mother says that she can make 24 pies available later that day, the exact number of people attending Sonny Boy's groundbreaking ceremony. The mother even calls Sonny Boy by name, and Chap is incensed. Chap finally finds out just how wicked Sonny boy Beaucoop truly is. The pies are for his associates and they are coming to the Paradise Pies Cafe to eat then have a groundbreaking ceremony. Chap wonders how this can be and Jim admits that there was an advertisement that has circulated about it. In this moment, Chap is fully cognizant of the fact that Sonny Boy Beaucoop never intended on letting him and



his mother stay in their home no matter how hard they worked. This is just another example of Sonny Boy's heartless behavior.

Chap's mother keeps her comments and emotions in check as she shakes off her shock and calmly directs Chap to start making more coffee. This nonchalant attitude of his mother's further aggravates Chap, but he does not know how truly frightened she is on the inside. Chap wants to be left alone by everything and everyone for a few minutes to assess what is going on. He feels betrayed and used because now all of his efforts to save the place are for nothing. Chap then checks the raccoon trap outside and is surprised to see movement in it. He gets closer to it but is disheartened to find that it is only a possum. Chap lets the possum go, all the while wondering how much worse can his day get.

Jaeger's trapped alligator is the slightly humorous focus of Chapter 86. Jaeger's skills are displayed as she puts on a small demonstration for the ceremony guests. The guests are all amazed at Jaeger's style, which she feels will secure her ideas of fame and fortune. There is a comical description of how Jaeger is able to defeat the alligator quickly and how she uses her signature move of kissing the alligator on the snout as a way of further adding to the drama.

The Sugar Man is actually awake in Chapter 87. Although he is large, he still moves seriously slow since this is the first time he has been awake in many years. Riding on top of the Sugar Man's shoulders is a completely new experience for the Swamp Scouts. Even J'miah, who is afraid of heights, is enjoying this time. The only thing that is wrong with it is that it is taking so long to get there. Gertrude slides ahead of the group and they continue on their way to the canebrake.

At the cafe, things are getting even crazier as the Brayburns and Coyote Jim work diligently to fill all of the orders in Chapter 88. Sweetums is also hard at work. The rumbling is so bad at this point that it is shaking the walls in the Brayburn house. Sweetums is still a cowardly cat and will do anything to get out of the situation. He feels that he did his best in trying to make the humans understand what is about to happen. He gives up and goes to the safest place he can think of to hide, Chap's closet.

The groundbreaking ceremony is about to begin in Chapter 89. The cafe fills with all of the important friends of Sonny Boy Beaucoop and Chap notices that none of them are actually dressed to go into a muddy swamp. This shows the reader that these people are immensely rich and that they probably do not know what it is like to go into a swamp. The group settle in to eat pies before heading down to the canebrake to begin. Chap does not want Sonny Boy in their cafe, much less does he want to actually serve him and his people. Chap feels small, lost, and alone as he is forced to cater to these people but he has a strategy that may work in his favor. He still has one trick up his sleeve and he is quite confident that it will work. Chap is devious as he throws a smile on his face and pretends to be joyous as he serves the crowd. Sonny Boy is not being very kind but rather mocking when he tries to loudly offer Chap a large sum of money for the cafe's services. This does not work as Chap continues to smile but declines



Sonny Boy's money. To not show how irritated he is Sonny Boy laughs this off and tells the people that it is time to head to the canebrake.

Chap figures out a way for Sonny Boy to finally notice him in Chapter 90. As the committee leave for the canebrake, Chap pulls his boat out in front of them. He explains that he and Sonny Boy had a deal and that his boat is now full of money, so his home should be saved. Sonny Boy is quite amused by this as people ask him if this is true. Sonny Boy goes back on his word and tells Chap that he meant that Chap needed a big boat and this was never going to be enough in the first place. Chap is so humiliated and hurt that all of his hard efforts have gone to waste. The people around him start laughing as well, since they thought it was just a joke. Sonny Boy kicks the boat over, sending most of the dollar bills flying everywhere as he tells the group that they are headed out.

Chap tries to console himself as the group walks past him. He feels more lost and alone now than since Grandpa Audie died. As Chap tries to recollect himself, he realizes an important yet dangerous thing. Those people are headed towards the canebrake. The canebrake is full of rattlesnakes. Those rattlesnakes will bite anything and anyone in their path. Chap sees this as an awfully dangerous situation. Instead of just letting the people find that out for themselves, he yells after them to come back, but they do not. Sonny Boy completely ignores Chap and they all keep right on the path.

In Chapter 91 the narrator takes a brief yet irrelevant look at Sweetums as he hides in Chap's closet. By this time he is so scared of all of the rumbling going on that he has shed his fur and that he looks scary himself.

Sonny Boy wears the wrong socks to the canebrake in Chapter 92. His socks are thin and flimsy as Sonny Boy continuously gets stuck by thorns as he walks on the path to the canebrake. Seeing the blood from these thorn pricks keeps reminding him of the deal that Alouicious made with the Sugar Man. By this time, Sonny Boy has become paranoid that the Sugar Man is out to get him for disobeying the pact. In fact, the reader sees that Sonny Boy is almost apologetic about making such fun of Chap and his situation because he is so afraid of the Sugar Man. Sonny Boy recalls the vow he made to Chap earlier in the novel that if he was to find proof of the Sugar Man then Sonny Boy would sign a deal in his own blood giving the swamp to Chap. To help settle the uneasy feeling Sonny Boy has, he plans to destroy the oath made by Aloicious to prove that there are no repercussions for his actions. His mind is snapped back into the current events as people come running and screaming towards him. It turns out that they should have listened to Chap when he tried to warn them. Led by Gertrude, a multitude of rattlesnakes prepare to defend their home against the human invaders, causing a chaotic scene.

The Farrow Gang meet the wrath of the Sugar Man in Chapter 93. The rattlesnakes are usually unafraid of anything or anyone but the Farrow prove to be the exception to the rule. Even Gertrude is afraid of these hogs. The rattlesnakes sneak out of the canebrake because they are so scared, but it does give them the perfect opportunity to chase humans on the other side of the canebrake as well. The Farrow trample everything in the canebrake, leaving nothing standing or uneaten. This infuriates the



Sugar Man to a level that has not been seen in ages and he reaches for the first hog he can find. A shocked Buzzie starts flying through the air, wondering what is happening. It is said that he was thrown in the air so high that he started drifting into outer space. Buzzie is not alone in being thrown as next Clydine and the rest of her overgrown and uncivil family are tossed into space right after him.

The narrator takes a break from the swamp action to find out how the ceremony attendees are faring in Chapter 94. They are shoving each other and acting quite uncivil to each other, trying to get into the Hummer and away from the rattlesnakes. The narrator points out that this Hummer is no longer a vehicle that is made to withstand stressful situations. It is for leisurely activities only, not insane getaways. For some unknown reason, once Leroy gets in, and starts it, the vehicle will not move. Everyone is frantic as they are still in danger. Jaeger jumps out and kicks it in frustration. This is all it takes to get the hummer moving again and they speed away.

The narrator wants the reader to know that while the important business people are busy, none of them saw the hogs falling from the sky nor did they see the Sugar Man's nasty temper in Chapter 95. This is another short chapter but it lets the reader know that although people could have seen the Sugar Man and what he is doing, they did not.

Chapter 96 is a pivotal chapter. Chap races to the canebrake but finds it destroyed. Standing and surveying the damage are the Sugar Man and Gertrude. Chap is amazed that he finally gets to meet the main subject of all of his grandpa's stories. The Sugar Man looks up and spots Chap. The boy looks familiar and the Sugar Man takes a moment to figure out who he is. He knows that the boy reminds him of someone he cared for and then it comes to him. This boy is the grandson of his old friend, Audie Brayburn. The Sugar Man recites the same saying that Audie used to tell him, that they all come from the same soil. This gives Chap some peace and he feels that the sadness over Grandpa Audie's death is somehow lessened. This moment instantly bonds the Sugar Man and Chap as friends.

Chap and the Sugar Man spend time together in Chapter 97. They both have common interests, they love the swamp and they love and miss Audie. Chap leaves to head back home and the Sugar Man and Gertrude continue to sit in the canebrake eating their fill of sugar cane. After the Sugar Man is full, he declares that he has become tired again and wants to sleep for a while. Gertrude thinks this is a great idea as she has become tired. In all of this time Bingo and J'miah have stayed silently in the tree. They have watched everything go on and at this point the Sugar Man turns his focus to them. The Sugar Man congratulates them on a job well done as they have performed the ultimate Swamp Scout duty of helping to save the swamp. They are so proud of themselves and the Sugar Man that they salute him. Gertrude tells the Sugar Man that it is finally time to go home and the Sugar Man agrees with her. They stride off towards their home as their work is now done. It is unknown how long the Sugar Man will sleep this time, but this is the resolution to the story line involving the Sugar Man and Gertrude, and is also the resolution of the dilemma for the Swamp Scouts.



## Discussion Question 1

Describe the groundbreaking ceremony. Is there any interest in the gator wrestling theme park? Why?

## Discussion Question 2

How does Chap and his mother find out that Sonny Boy has no intention of honoring their deal? What should Chap do to try to prevent this?

## Discussion Question 3

How does the groundbreaking ceremony fall apart? What is Chap's reaction to this?

## Vocabulary

transgression, duped, primeval, provocation, ovation, dexterous, expedient, chiding, picayune





# Chapter 98: The Last Night

## Summary

After Bingo and J'miah say their farewells to Gertrude and the Sugar Man, they head back to the DeSoto. J'miah wants to take a nap but he also wants to look at one more thing. He goes back to the box underneath the seat and sticks his paw inside. He is surprised to find that there is something else inside. After a bit of effort, he is able to pull out two more pictures. The first is of a bird and the second one is the long lost picture of the Sugar Man. They put the other two pictures up on the dashboard besides the first one. Bingo then tells J'miah that he wants J'miah to come with him to climb a tree. Before J'miah agrees, he dusts off the hood ornament of the DeSoto and then he is ready to go. Bingo takes him to the top of a tree and introduces him to Binkle. They wish for more pies and head off towards the cafe. They spot the trap that Chap has set and decide to stay away from there and go hunt crawdads instead.

## Analysis

In Chapter 98, the Swamp Scouts walk back to the DeSoto after saying goodbye to the Sugar Man and Gertrude thus concluding the Sugar Man and Gertrude's roles in the novel. Although tired, the Swamp Scouts still have their roles to play in the overall course of events. J'miah remains curious about the box and what else could be inside of it. The discovery of the photos of the woodpecker and the Sugar Man are crucial as these are the items that Chap has been desperately searching for. Unaware of their true importance, this discovery is a pleasant find for the Swamp Scouts as they become new pieces of artwork.

J'miah's growth as a character is very apparent as he accepts Bingo's invitation to climb a tree. He has overcome many obstacles on his path to becoming a braver Swamp Scout and he has lost his intense fear of heights. This progress delights J'miah as for the first time he is able to see all of the stars in the sky. This is also the first chance that J'miah has been able to see Binkle for himself and J'miah finds himself sharing Bingo's love of climbing. Once down from the tree, there is an intersection between the Swamp Scout's and Chap's stories again as they go back to the Paradise Pies Cafe in search of food, but this is quickly stopped as they recognize that Chap has set a trap for them.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does J'miah want to look in the box again? What does he find? How does he react?



## Discussion Question 2

What does Bingo want to do now that they are back at Headquarters? How does J'miah feel about that?

## Discussion Question 3

How does J'miah react to being in the tree? What do the brothers wish for?

## Vocabulary

Meandered, procurement, unwitting, intervention, skedaddle,



# Chapters 99 - 104: The Last Day

## Summary

In Chapter 99 Chap is wide awake and wants something to do. He has not told anyone of his meeting with the Sugar Man, but he does not think that Sonny Boy will want to build the theme park in the swamp now. He knows that Sonny Boy will try to sell the swamp anyways to someone else, so Chap knows he must act quickly. He knows that Steve's cell phone is still sitting in the cafe. He grabs it, the machete, his boots, and his flashlight as he heads out to search one more time for any kind of proof of the Sugar Man. As he gets out the door, he spots two raccoons sitting in the yard, but they run away.

In Chapter 100, Chap searches the canebrake for anything he could find of the Sugar Man's. He finds the Sugar Man's footprints but when he goes to take a picture with Steve's phone, it goes dead. He heads west since he does not want to go home for a while and just walks around. Suddenly he finds he is going uphill but he knows he will have to return to home soon. Just as he is turning around the sun starts to rise. The small rays of sun shine on something metallic and Chap goes to investigate the surrounding brush. He clears away the brush and there is Audie's 1949 DeSoto. Chap gets the door open and looks around. He comes to learn that this is the home of raccoons, but he is blown over by the fact that three pristine Polaroid pictures sit on the dashboard. He realizes that the pictures could quite possibly save the forest.

Jaeger Stitch leaves the bayou in Chapter 101. Sonny Boy returns to his home where he has Leroy make a fire in the front yard. Sonny Boy puts the stuffed woodpecker and Alouicious' oath into the fire and watches them burn. Leroy and Sonny Boy both hear loud booms. Leroy looks up and sees pigs falling from the sky. One even comes through the porch roof of the Beaucoop mansion. This horrifies Leroy and he takes off, leaving Sonny Boy all to himself. In a fit of terror, Sonny Boy creates his own deed and signs it in blood stating that he gives the entire swamp to Chap. He puts it where everyone can see it and he takes off to the Arizona desert to live permanently.

Buzzie and Clydine make it back to the ground in Chapter 102. They leave Texas and head for Arkansas where they become mascots for various football teams. The entire Farrow Gang decide that they will never eat sugar again.

In Chapter 103, Bingo and J'miah go home to the Information Headquarters to go to sleep. They notice that someone has tampered with their home and they are upset. They quickly become happy again when they see that the intruder left two sugar pies, which fulfills the wish they made on Binkle.

Chap decides to leave the pictures right where they are in Chapter 104. He realizes that if he was to show the world the picture of the Sugar Man then Audie's words about people coming to destroy the swamp would come true. Chap believes that this is



paradise and leaves the car just like he left it with the exception of putting two sugar pies near the pictures. Then he walks home happily.

## Analysis

Chap has a lot on his mind and is wide awake in Chapter 99. He has had a busy day and is going over it in his mind. He realizes that Sonny Boy will lose interest in building the gator wrestling park in the swamp now, but there is still the possibility that it could still be sold. The only option Chap feels he has is to try to find his way to the Sugar Man's lair and sneak a picture of him, but unfortunately he does not own a camera. Chap wishes that he could find Audie's DeSoto and the pictures that are inside so he does not have to disturb the Sugar Man, but he also feels out of options. The only other choice is to try to use the sketch made by Audie in 1949, but he knows that this is impossible. Since it is only a sketch, people could claim that Audie just sketched something from his imagination. As he wrestles with these thoughts, Chap comes to the realization that there is a way he can take a picture of the Sugar Man. He remembers that Steve left his cell phone in the cafe and that it has a camera feature on it. Chap finds this to be the perfect answer to his dilemma and so he sneaks out of the house. Chap grabs some supplies and the cell phone and he sneakily makes his way out of the house. Once outside, he spies two raccoons waiting in the front yard. Chap knows that it is his two pie thieves that have come back for more pies. Chap accidentally scares them and they take off into the bayou.

Chapter 99 sees the end of Sonny Boy's interest in the gator park.

Chapter 100 examines the canebrake and all the damage done to it. The area has been completely ruined by the Farrow Gang and all that is left are broken branches and footprints. As Chap goes to take a picture of the Sugar Man's footprints, the camera dies. This was his one and only chance to obtain solid proof of the Sugar Man's existence but since the phone has not been charged in a while, the phone is dead. Chap is now angry that he will not be able to get his picture and now definitely has no proof. Since he does not want to go home just yet, he decides to venture a bit further into the swamp.

The stories that Audie told Chap long ago become useful once again with the discovery of Audie's De Soto. It is also fortuitous that J'miah cleaned off the hood ornament before leaving Headquarters, or else Chap would have probably walked right by the car as he and Audie had several times before. For Chap this is a miracle as he believes that the proof of the Sugar Man's existence must still be in the car. The car is difficult to open as it has been many years since the doors have been opened, but Chap is successful after a short bit of effort. At this point there is the final proof that the De Soto actually is the Swamp Scout's Information Headquarters further combining the story lines of Chap and the raccoon brothers with Chap seeing their paw prints all over the car. Chap is a bit mesmerized that a lot of care has been taken in the organization of the interior and he comes to the realization that the two raccoons he keeps seeing must live here, but he



does not know how important this place is to the raccoons. He is shown wrestling with the dilemma of taking the pictures as proof that the Sugar Man exists.

Sonny Boy makes it safely home in Chapter 101 as this is the final point in his story. In his anger, he orders Leroy to build a fire so he can burn the Beaucoop family oath and Aloicious's painting, hoping to be free of them. Seen as perhaps a supernatural response, loud booms sound through the area petrifying Leroy and Sonny Boy. Hogs are falling through the sky and one falls through the porch roof. This is all Leroy needs to see and he flees as quick as he can. Sonny Boy is in a state of shock and cannot move for a moment. He realizes that this is the revenge of the Sugar Man for disregarding the original oath. In his mind, he envisions his late father telling him to get out of the area or he will be the next casualty. This is all Sonny Boy needs to snap himself back to life and he hastily creates a new oath. This one gives the entire Sugar Man Swamp to Chap Brayburn for free and to seal the deal, Sonny Boy signs this in blood. He puts this on the door and takes off as fast as he can get away. The narrator states that the last time anyone heard from him Sonny Boy is living in Arizona and has no intentions of ever returning to the area.

The fate of the Farrow Gang is revealed in a short description of what happens to them after they land back on Earth in Chapter 102. Once they land back on earth, they are immediately remorseful for eating so much sugar cane. The family is shown in a different lifestyle as they give up their previous livelihood of destruction as they spend their time working as mascots for local football teams. As a surprise ending the gang vows never to eat sugar cane again.

When the brothers return to the DeSoto in Chapter 103, they automatically know that someone has meddled with Information Headquarters. They scan the area and realize that the intruder was a human. They are thankful that nothing has been taken from their home. The one thing that makes them the happiest though, is the sight of two sugar pies sitting on the dashboard. They are happy as they feel that Binkle has granted their wish and that all is now well.

Chapter 104 takes the reader back to Chap's time in the DeSoto before the raccoons return. He knows if he takes the picture of the Sugar Man, the swamp will be saved. He really wants to take this picture with him, but he also is aware that if he is to show this to anyone, then the swamp will be destroyed anyways. People from all around will come in search of the Sugar Man and that will cause chaos in the swamp. Chap does not know yet that the swamp has already been given to him by Sonny Boy. Instead, Chap puts the picture of the Sugar Man back on the dashboard like J'miah had it in the first place. With a clear conscience and a happy heart, Chap walks away knowing that his home is paradise.

## Discussion Question 1

Why does Chap go for a walk in the middle of the night? What does he find while he is out? How does this affect his quest to save the swamp?



## Discussion Question 2

What happens to Sonny Boy? Why does he feel like the Sugar Man is out to get him?

## Discussion Question 3

How do things change overall for Bingo and J'miah? How do they feel they fulfilled their duties as Swamp Scouts?

## Vocabulary

discernible, plethora, vamoose, recourse, dervish, gravitational



# Characters

## Bingo

Bingo is one of the main characters of the novel. He is a raccoon and therefore one of the Official Scouts. He and his brother have a special assignment in the group, they are the Information Officers. It is their task to wake up the Sugar Man when their swamp is endangered. Bingo looks exactly like J'miah except for a patch of hair that constantly stands up. Like his Great Uncle Banjo, Bingo is a determined tree climber. The first time he climbs to the top of a tree, he spots a red blinking star and decides to name it Binkle.

Bingo and his brother are able to get to the home of the Sugar Man. Once they try to find his lair, they are instructed to find sugar cane to wake the Sugar Man. Unable to do so, Bingo goes back to Binkle and makes a wish to find sugar cane. His wish is fulfilled when the Voice of Intelligence instructs them to go to the Paradise Pies Cafe for sugar pies. They steal the pies to feed the Sugar Man after Gertrude tells them that it is the only way to wake him up. He later wishes on his star, Binkle, to have more sugar pies. This is fulfilled when Chap brings sugar pies as a way to thank Bingo and J'miah for their roles in saving the swamp.

## J'miah

J'miah is the younger brother of the raccoon Bingo. He is a practical raccoon and always puts his duties as a Scout first. J'miah is extremely terrified of heights but he waits and watches as Bingo climbs trees. J'miah is an avid cleaner. He makes it his first priority to totally clean Information Headquarters. When the Farrow Gang makes its approach to the swamp, J'miah goes with Bingo to search for the Sugar Man. He and Bingo try to find sugar cane in the canebrake but are unsuccessful. While cleaning after a run in with the rattlesnakes, J'miah finds Audie's ammo can. Inside he finds a picture of an armadillo and he considers it art. He hangs this picture up on the dashboard of the DeSoto. Next, they are aided by the Voice of Intelligence to go to the Paradise Pies Cafe to acquire sugar pies. Later, he finds a harmonica and enjoys playing it. J'miah is able to get over his fear of heights when Gertrude sneaks up on him and scares him enough to climb a tree without thinking about it. He and his brother Bingo are able to fulfill their duties as Swamp Scouts as they get help from the Sugar Man when the Farrow Gang invades the swamp.

## Chap Brayburn

One of the main heroes of the novel, Chap Brayburn is a 12-year-old boy and the grandson of Audie Brayburn. His full name is Chaparral, after the roadrunner because the roadrunner is known to be an extremely loyal bird. The author states that Chap is also incredibly tall for a boy of his age. He has lived at the Paradise Pie Café with his mother and Grandpa Audie since his mother moved them in after his father was killed in





an accident. He has an intense love of the swamp like his grandfather and he will do anything he has to do to save it. He is told by the landlord, Sonny Boy Beaucoop, that the only way Chap can save his home and the swamp is to come up with a boatload of cash or proof of the Sugar Man. Chap comes up with the idea to make a commercial and he gets the help of disc jockey Countryman Jim to do that and to make some signs showing where the cafe is.

Chap is the main one who chops down sugar cane in the swamp. He was taught how to use a machete and to sing a lullaby to put the rattlesnakes to sleep by Grandpa Audie. Chap becomes aware that raccoons are responsible for stealing a few pies in the cafe. He sets a trap for them but is unsuccessful in catching them. When the groundbreaking ceremony is ruined by the rattlesnakes, Chap goes to the canebrake to calm the rattlesnakes, but he runs into the Sugar Man instead where they ignite a new friendship.

Later that evening, Chap goes in search for the Sugar Man again so that he can provide proof the he exists. Instead, Chap ends up finding his Grandpa Audie's long lost DeSoto. Chap becomes aware that this is the home of the raccoons that were at the cafe. He also finds that the raccoons are using Grandpa Audie's Polaroids as art. Chap faces the decision to take the picture of the Sugar Man back to prove his existence or to leave it there. Chap decides to leave the picture there, as the swamp is his paradise and he does not want it destroyed by people who would go looking for the Sugar Man. The reader also learns that Sonny Boy actually gives the swamp to Chap anyways, as Sonny Boy is convinced that the wild hogs falling to the ground is the Sugar Man's retribution for being so mean to Chap and for disregarding his family's oath.

## **Grandpa Audie Brayburn**

Grandpa Audie was the grandfather of Chap Brayburn. A long time ago, he took a Polaroid picture of an extremely rare ivory billed woodpecker but he lost it when he lost his 1949 De Soto. He also is the only person to ever take a picture of the Sugar Swamp Man. After he lost these pictures, he decided to make a sketchbook of all the things he saw in the swamp. He did not make a picture of the Sugar Man, because he felt that if anyone was to find out about him, the swamp would be destroyed and the Sugar Man would be hurt or killed. Audie loved the swamp and would do nothing that would put it in jeopardy. For him, the swamp was paradise and, therefore, sacred. Grandpa Audie passed on his love of the swamp to his grandson Chap as well as how to cut the sugar cane needed for the cafe's sugar pies. He passed away prior to the start of the novel, which paves the way for Sonny Boy Beaucoop to sell the swamp and therefore create the main dilemma of the novel.

## **Sonny Boy Beaucoup**

Sonny Boy Beaucoup is the current owner of the Sugar Man Swamp and one of the main antagonists of the novel. Sonny Boy is seen as short, always wearing a blue suit and thin socks, with light hair and a face full of freckles. The author makes it clear that



although Sonny Boy is an adult, to Chap he does not quite look like one. He is the descendent of Alouicious Beaucoup and is thereby bound to protect the swamp and its inhabitants. Sonny is extremely greedy and has no intention of saving the swamp. He lives in Houston and has no desire to be anywhere around the swamp. He totally disregard's Alouicious' oath and suggests that the Sugar Man is not real. Instead, he sells off most of the area to Jaeger Stitch for an alligator wrestling arena. He tells the Brayburn family that they must pay a higher rent or move since he plans on selling the area. He has no kindness in him and does not care that he will leave the Brayburns homeless.

Sonny Boy invites many influential people to the groundbreaking ceremony for the gator amusement park. Before the conduct the ceremony, he takes the people to the cafe to eat sugar pies. He tries to make himself look generous when he offers Chap and his mother more money, but it is evident that he is just humoring the family. When Chap in turn presents Sonny Boy with a small boatload of cash, Sonny Boy ridicules him and kicks the boat over before heading down to the canebrake. Halfway there, Sonny is forced to turn back as the rest of the people are screaming towards him as they are chased by the rattlesnakes. He rushes home and grabs his father's stuffed woodpecker and Alouicious' deed and sets them both on fire. As the two items burn, he hears the Farrow Gang hitting the ground and he knows that this is the Sugar Man's wrath against him. In a rush, Sonny Boy signs a new oath in blood and sticks it to the front door of the mansion before leaving the area. The oath gives the entire Sugar Man Swamp to Chap Brayburn for free. Afterwards, Sonny Boy moves to a desert in Arizona and vows never to return.

## Sugar Man

The Sugar Man is an extremely large creature who lives in the swamp. He is described as having black fur all over his body, large palm tree leaf hands, and is the cousin of other legendary creatures like Sasquatch and the Yeti. The Sugar Man's age is unknown, but the author states that he has been around since the dawn of time. He sleeps in an unknown part of the swamp protected by his giant rattlesnake companion, Gertrude. He has a nasty attitude when he is awakened and has a preference of throwing things when angry. Audie and the Sugar Man become friends sometime later as Audie Saves the Sugar Man from choking on a sugar cane. The Sugar Man teaches Audie the lullaby to put the rattlesnakes to sleep. Grandpa Audie was able to take a picture of him once, when Audie was stuck in his De Soto during a rain storm. When Audie passes away, the Sugar Man mourns his passing. After the Sugar Man gets rid of the Farrow Gang, the Sugar Man spots Chap in the swamp and recognizes him as Audie's grandson. A new friendship emerges and the Sugar Man goes joyfully goes back to sleep with his beloved sidekick, Gertrude.



## Jaeger Stitch

Jaeger Stitch is the Northern Hemisphere World Gator Wrestling Champion. She is described as having incredibly strong arms and a short thick neck. Jaeger Stitch is the business partner of Sonny Boy Beaucoop. She plans to buy the Sugar Man Swamp to destroy it and build a gator wrestling center and amusement park. She is so convinced that this will be successful that she is planning on filming reality shows there as well. Her signature move is to jump on a alligator's back, grab it's nose and kiss it. Although she does not like Sonny, the reader sees that she is strangely attracted to him, possibly only for his wealth. She attends the groundbreaking ceremony and is also chased by rattlesnakes. Since the area is considered unusable, Jaeger abandons the plans for the amusement park and heads to South America to continue wrestling alligators.

## Gertrude

Gertrude is the gigantic canebrake rattlesnake, *crotalus horridus giganticus*, that protects the Sugar Man while he sleeps. She is awakened by fleas biting her as she is allergic to them. The itching is so intense that she sheds her skin into a much nicer one and wants everyone to acknowledge it, proving that she is a bit vain. She does not like to eat anything with fur and she tells Bingo and J'miah the way to wake up the Sugar Man. Gertrude tells the boys that the Sugar Man loves sugarcane, but since there is none around, the boys are forced to go to Paradise Pies Cafe and steal some of the sugar pies. When they return to Gertrude, instead of giving them to Sugar Man, she eats the one remaining pie herself. To help the Scouts out, she goes to bite the Sugar Man on the nose to wake him. She does not need to because when she burps, the Sugar Man smells the sugar cane on her breath. She leads her fellow rattlesnakes in the charge against the groundbreaking ceremony attendees. Once the Sugar Man defeats the Farrow Gang, she returns to the lair with the Sugar Man to take a nap.

## Farrow Gang

The Farrow Gang is a pack of wild hogs that trample through the Bayou Tourterelle, destroying everything they see. Led by Buzz Saw "Buzzie" Farrow and his wife Clydine, the group contains all 15 of their evil children. They are known far and wide for their viciousness and desire to cause mayhem throughout the land. The pack hears of the Sugar Man Swamp through an injured fox and they decide they must go there in search of delicious sugar cane. They travel mainly by night and they are so loud that they are the ones causing the strange rumbling all over the swamp. They arrive at the canebrake and trample and eat everything within it. The Sugar Man comes to the rescue and he tosses them all almost into outer space. The family lands after a good bit of time in the air and they conclude that they will never eat a piece of sugarcane ever again. The gang moves on to Arkansas where they become mascots for various high school and college football teams.



## Country Man Jim

Countryman Jim is the local radio disc jockey who works the night shift and always ends his broadcasts with a playful howl. Jim was a friend of Grandpa Audie's who wants to help Chap and his mother keep their home. He comes up with the promotion that fills the Paradise Pies Cafe with people so the Brayburns can earn a "boatload of cash". He does this to help his late friend and because he loves the swamp as well. When he is instructed to tell the public about the groundbreaking ceremony, Jim is hesitant and decides not to do so to keep it a secret for as long as possible. When the cafe is filled with people, Jim comes over and helps the Brayburns make more pies.

## Sweetums

Sweetums is the large ginger cat belonging to Chap Brayburn. Sweetums is the first in the Brayburn house to notice that there is something not quite right going on in the swamp. He wants to warn the other creatures, but since he only speaks Catalan and none of the others do, he finds his task extremely difficult. Sweetums is the first to discover the Swamp Scouts stealing the pies in the cafe. He is such a coward that he hides out under Chap's bed, wanting the humans to take care of the problem.



# Symbols and Symbolism

## 1949 DeSoto

The 1949 DeSoto was once owned by Audie Brayburn but lost shortly after he came to the swamp. Audie was camping in the swamp when he caught a fever and a storm came through. The car floated to a small hill, and Audie got out of the car, leaving everything in it. When Audie returned, he could not find the car and had been searching for it ever since. It currently sits in the swamp, completely rusted and covered in moss and is being used by the Official Scouts of Sugar Man Swamp as the Information Headquarters. Chap eventually finds the vehicles and the pictures within, something Audie was not able to do before he died.

## Sketchbook

The sketchbook is a leather bound book of pictures of the wildlife in Sugar Man Swamp that Audie Brayburn made after losing his Polaroid picture of the elusive ivory billed woodpecker. Some of the pictures inside are comical, like one of a raccoon holding a harmonica. There is also a drawing of the Sugar Man which is dated 1949. At the very end of the book there has been kept blank so that Audie can find the woodpecker again and draw him. After Audie's death, Chap keeps this book as a memento and he hopes that one day he can find the ivory billed woodpecker so that he can complete his grandfather's work.

## Ivory Billed Woodpecker

The ivory billed woodpecker is an extremely rare bird residing in Sugar Man Swamp. Audie Brayburn took a Polaroid picture of this bird once, but lost it when he lost his car. Ever since then, Audie was determined to find the bird again for his sketchbook. The woodpecker, or IWBO as he is referred to by others, is large for a woodpecker with powerful black wings, a white body and a red head. The IWBO has been considered extinct for a long time, but Audie was determined to prove it exists. Audie passes away before he could do this, but his grandson Chap carries on Audie's determination to see if the bird exists. The reader learns that at one point in time, Quenton Beaucoop caught and stuffed a male ivory billed woodpecker and the label on the jar is 1949, which can be guess was the same bird that Audie had seen out in the swamp. After the swamp is saved and turned over to Chap, he hopes that the woodpeckers will come back to live in safety in the swamp.

## Sugar Cane

Sugar cane, or muscavado, grows abundantly in Sugar Man Swamp. It has always been guarded by vicious canebrake rattlesnakes. The Sugar Man loves to eat this and



goes in search of it when he is awake. In order to get to the sugar cane and avoid the snakes, a lullaby must be sung to lure the rattlesnakes to sleep. Chap's grandfather taught him this lullaby so that he can cut down the cane to be made into sugar pies without being bitten. The Farrows gang, led by Buzzie and Clydine, rampage through the swamp when they get a craving for this sugar.

## Sugar Pies

Chap Brayburn's mother makes sugar pies as the signature item for the Paradise Pie Café. Chap uses these to earn the money to fill his small boat so that he can pay Sonny Boy Beaucoop the large amount of rent that is due. Bingo and J'miah steal a few of these sugar pies to give to the Sugar Man to wake him up when the forest is in danger. The brothers eat most of the pies, leaving only one left. They return to the Sugar Man's lair to give him the pie, but Gertrude eats it instead. After the swamp is saved Chap leaves sugar pies on the dashboard of the De Soto as a way of saying thanks to the Swamp Scouts because he was able to find the picture of the ivory billed woodpecker.

## Polaroid Pictures

When Grandpa Audie was camping in Sugar Man Swamp, he took Polaroid pictures of the Sugar Man and the elusive ivory billed woodpecker as well as an armadillo. Unfortunately, Audie loses these photos when he gets sick and abandons his car in the swamp after a storm. These pictures are lost until Bingo and J'miah find them under the seat in the De Soto. They consider these pictures art and put them up on the dashboard. Chap stumbles upon the DeSoto and sees the photos thinking he can use them as proof of the existence of the ivory billed woodpecker and the Sugar Man. With these, he can save his home and the swamp from destruction by Sonny Boy Beaucoop and Jaeger Stitch. Chap leaves all three pictures with the scouts and decides not to use them but to let the raccoons keep them.

## Boatload of Cash

Sonny Boy Beaucoop makes a joking offer that he would give the swamp and the cafe completely to Chap if he comes up with a boatload of cash. Chap decide this offer is serious so he sets out to fill his small boat full of cash. Chap enlists the help of local radio personality Countryman Jim to make a commercial and some signs to get more customers into the cafe. The next day, so many people come to buy pies that they are able to fill up Chap's small two-person boat. When Sonny Boy, Jaeger Stitch, and other important people come to hold a groundbreaking ceremony nearby, Chap presents Sonny Boy with this boat in hopes that Sonny Boy will honor his deal. Unfortunately, Sonny Boy not only says he has no intention of honoring their deal, but he also tips the boat over, causing the money to fly out all over the place.



## Voice of Intelligence

The Voice of Intelligence is a voice that comes from the dashboard of the Information Headquarters shortly after lightning strikes nearby. This voice is highly respected by the Swamp Scouts and the Information Officers' special duty is to do whatever the voice says. The author states that the Voice of Intelligence has always given sound advice and has never lied to the Scouts. The voice is the one that informs the Swamp Scouts that the Farrow Gang is on their way to the swamp. It is extremely helpful when Bingo and J'miah search for sugar cane and the voice guides them to the Paradise Pies Cafe, where they steal sugar pies to help wake up the Sugar Man. The reader is informed that this voice is actually part of a radio broadcast by local disc jockey Countryman Jim.

## Blood Oath

When pirate Aloicious Beaucoop comes to Sugar Man Swamp, he and his crew are happy there as they can live in peace and hide their treasure. The Sugar Man does not mind the pirates being there until they start singing. One song in particular rubs the Sugar Man the wrong way so badly that he storms through the area throwing pirates all around. Aloicious is one of the few pirates left and he begs for mercy. The Sugar Man takes pity on him and Aloicious signs an oath in his own blood that he and his descendants will always protect the swamp and that the song will never be sung again. For over 300 years, anytime a Beaucoop inherits the land, they must look at the oath and promise to honor it. When Sonny Boy inherits the area, he totally disregards the oath and is determined to sell the area. After Sonny Boy returns to the family home after the groundbreaking ceremony is ruined, Sonny Boy hurriedly destroys the document in a bonfire so that he can finally move on from his legacy. When the Farrow Gang arrives in the swamp and the Swamp Man awakens to get rid of them, Sonny sees hogs flying through the air and is terrified. He thinks that the Sugar Man has come to get revenge on him for not honoring the oath. As Sonny Boy is quick to flee, he signs another oath in blood, this one giving Chap Brayburn the entire Sugar Man Swamp which saves the Brayburns from being put out of their home.

## Binkle

When Bingo climbs his first tree as an Information Officer, he notices a red pulsating star near the horizon. Bingo thinks this star is beautiful and special. He decides to name this star "binkle", after a lullaby sung by his father. When the boys cannot find sugar cane, Bingo goes to make a wish on Binkle that they can find some in any form. The wish is fulfilled when the Voice of Intelligence instructs them to go to the Paradise Pies Cafe for sugar pies. J'miah also makes a wish on Binkle that he can get over his fear of heights. His wish is granted when Gertrude scares him into running up a tree without stopping to think about it. After the Farrow Gang is defeated, Bingo and J'miah make one final wish for sugar pies. This becomes fulfilled when Chap returns to the DeSoto and puts two sugar pies on the dashboard as his way of saying thanks to the Swamp Scouts for helping him save the swamp.





## Harmonica

The Hohner Marine Band Harmonica was bought by Audie in 1949 and he takes it with him to the Sugar Man Swamp. The creatures love listening to his songs and even the Sugar Man is pleased with this sound. When Audie meets the Sugar Man face to face, Audie plays the harmonica while the Sugar Man sings. Audie loses the harmonica after he gets sick and abandons his DeSoto. J'miah finds it many years later, stuck in the ammo can along with Audie's precious pictures. J'miah keeps the harmonica and learns how to play it.



# Settings

## Sugar Man Swamp

The Sugar Man Swamp is a large swamp area in the Bayou Tourterelle and the main setting of the novel. The mythical Sugar Man resides in the deepest part of the swamp with his personal assistant, the rattlesnake Gertrude. The swamp is also watched by the raccoons as the Official Sugar Swamp Scouts. The entire swamp has been passed down through generations of Beaucoops, starting with the pirate captain Aloicious Beaucoop. He signed a contract in blood that he and all of his descendants would do whatever it takes to protect the swamp in exchange for the ability to live there peacefully. This arrangement is destroyed when current Beaucoop heir, Sonny Boy, decides that he would rather have money than the swamp so he decides to sell it to World Gator Wrestling Champion Jaeger Stitch. Jaeger Stitch wants to buy the land so that she can build an international wrestling gator center. She is convinced that she will get rich and famous opening such a place to the public.

The Swamp is not only home to the raccoons and the Sugar Man, but also to an extremely rare ivory billed woodpecker. Grandpa Audie took a picture of this elusive bird once, but lost the photo and had been searching for it ever since. His photo is actually in the De Soto that he abandoned in the swamp. The swamp is also the growing spot of the delicious sugar cane that is used in the pies made at the Paradise Pies Cafe. The sugar cane is protected by canebrake rattlesnakes and the only way to get to it is to sing a lullaby. The Farrow Gang comes in search of the sugar cane, which causes the destruction of quite a bit in their path. This causes the Swamp Scouts to wake the Sugar Man so their home can be saved. Once the Sugar Man is awakened, he throws the Farrow Gang in the air as hard as he can. People from all around, including Sonny Boy, can see these hogs in the sky and he is immediately terrified. He writes his own oath in blood finally giving the entire swamp to Chap Brayburn for no money at all.

## Bayou Tourterelle

The Bayou Tourterelle is the home of the Sugar Man Swamp. Located in Texas, it feeds into the Gulf of Mexico and has been in existence for thousands of years. It is a large area containing the Sugar Man Swamp. The Farrow Gang comes through here and they destroy everything in their path to get to the Sugar Man Swamp and the sugar cane growing there.

## Paradise Pies Café

Paradise Pies Café is the small business and residence of the Brayburn family. It is located at the edge of the swamp off of Beaten Track Road and is part of the entire area owned by Sonny Boy Beaucoop. The place is a favorite spot of locals who like to come by and sip coffee and eat sugar pies while swapping stories. The place becomes in



danger of being taken away from the Brayburns after the death of Grandpa Audie when Sonny Boy raises the rent so high that the family does not think they can afford it. Countryman Jim and Chap come up with an awesome marketing ploy to gather up the "boatload of cash" that is needed to save the cafe by using commercials and signs. When Bingo and J'miah find that they cannot get any sugar cane to wake the Sugar Man, they are instructed by the Voice of Intelligence to go to the cafe where they steal a few pies. The cafe is saved when the Sugar Man throws the Farrow Gang into the air, scaring Sonny Boy so badly that he signs the place and the swamp in its entirety over to Chap.

## Information Headquarters

The Information Headquarters sits on a small hill in the swamp, making it perfect as the central location of the Swamp Scouts. Unknown to the Scouts, this is really the 1949 De Soto that Grandpa Audie abandoned many years ago. Over the years, this has become the residence of the Information Officers, and the positions are held by Bingo and his brother J'miah. This is also the home of the Voice of Intelligence and it is the job of the Information Officers to listen to it when it has a message. A message is received when lightning strikes near the Headquarters and the dashboard turns itself on. Over time, Bingo and J'miah are able to use this voice to find the Sugar Man and wake him up, therefore saving the swamp from destruction by the Farrow Gang. As Chap is searching, he comes across the Headquarters and comes to recognize this as the car that Grandpa Audie lost years ago. Inside, he finds the picture of the ivory billed woodpecker and the Sugar Man. Chap takes these pictures, but he comes back later to put the picture of the Sugar Man back inside and to place 2 sugar pies on the dashboard to thank the Swamp Scouts.

## Canebrake

The canebrake of the Sugar Man Swamp is where the delicious sugar cane grows. It is also guarded by large rattlesnakes who attack if their sugar cane is disturbed. In order to successfully get any sugar cane, a lullaby must be sung so that the rattlesnakes will fall asleep. The Sugar Man comes up with this song and somehow Grandpa Audie learns it and teaches it to Chap. Chap is very handy at chopping down the sugar cane here. When Bingo and J'miah need to get some sugar cane to wake up the Sugar Man, they find that it has already been harvested by Chap. This is also where the notorious Farrow Gang is headed. They were instructed to go there be a wounded fox and they want the sugar cane all to themselves. Once they arrive, they destroy most of the canebrake as they gobble up the sugar cane, but the Swamp Man has faith that it will grow back soon.



# Themes and Motifs

## Protection of Nature

The whole essence in the novel is about nature as the area of the swamp is in danger. Not only is the swamp in danger from a pending sale for corporate development, but it is also in danger from a pack of wild hogs who are known for destruction. The Swamp Scouts are the official lookouts for the swamp. It is their duty to note any sorts of dangers that come from whether it be other animals or humans. In cases of emergency, they are directed to wake the Sugar Man, the official protector of the swamp. It is said that anything that hurts the swamp will incur his wrath. He is known to throw things and have a really nasty attitude. When the Farrow Gang come to the canebrake, the Swamp Man is awakened by Bingo and J'miah and the Swamp Man is able to immediately get rid of them. Unfortunately most of the canebrake is destroyed but the Sugar Man has faith that it will grow back better than before.

Usually the rattlesnakes guard their beloved sugar cane. They bite anyone that comes near it with the exception of the Sugar Man. He is able to come and go as much as he pleases from the canebrake, but just in case that ever changes, he has a lullaby that he uses to get the rattlesnakes to sleep. The Sugar Man then teaches this to Audie after they become friends and Audie is able to run a successful pie shop using the sugar cane from this location. Audie then passes it down to his grandson Chap and he is able to harvest sugar cane as well. Audie enjoys taking pictures and sketchbook drawings of the life in the swamp as they are incredibly intriguing to him.

Even humans engage in protecting the nature around them. When Audie comes to Sugar Man Swamp in 1949, he is very careful not to harm any of the local wildlife or plants in the area. For this and his harmonica playing, he is made an Honorary Swamp Critter. For Audie this swamp is paradise and he pledges to do all he can to keep it that way. His grandson Chap also shares this love of the swamp and when Sonny Boy demands proof of the Sugar Man in order to save it, Chap makes this one of his first priorities. Once Chap has the proof however, he does not use it. He remembers Audie's words that if proof of the Sugar man did exist then people would stop at nothing to get a look at him and it could possibly harm the swamp. Chap does not want this, so he puts the proof right back where he finds it.

Sonny Boy Beaucoop and Jaeger Stitch have no desire to protect any kind of nature around them. They have teamed together to destroy the swamp so they can build a world class gator center and theme park. They do not care for the lives that this venture will destroy. All they care about is the money that this business will bring in. Jaeger Stitch has no local ties to the land and only wants to win fame and fortune for her efforts. She is using Sonny's money and land to make this possible. When the rattlesnakes attack defending their home, Jaeger gives up and moves down to South American to wrestle gators.



Sonny Boy, on the other hand, does have ties to the area. He is a Beaucoop heir and part of a legacy of Beaucoops that have pledged to protect the forest. This goes all the way back 399 years to Alouicious Beaucoop who drew up a deal in blood that he and his descendants would always take care of the swamp. Sonny disregards this thinking that money is more important than maintaining the beauty and sanctity of the swamp. He is proven that he is wrong when the Sugar Man throws the Farrow Gang into the air. One of them lands on Sonny Boy's porch and he believes that this is a sign that he has done wrong by the Sugar Man and must repent. To do so, Sonny Boy writes his own pledge giving Chap the swamp and he knows that Chap will always protect the swamp much better than he ever could.

Of course, Sonny Boy is not the first Beaucoop to dishonor the deal between the Sugar Man and the Beaucoops. His father, Quenton, shot and stuffed a rare male ivory billed woodpecker in 1949. Although the medical records say that he died of a heart attack, people found it strange that he happened to be high up in a tree when he died. Gertrude claims that she knows the truth and that it was because the Sugar Man was out protecting his home and one of the lives in it. This shows that the Sugar Man has no mercy for anyone that would try to harm any kind of life within the swamp.

## Good Versus Evil

The theme of good versus evil is a classic theme where the opposing sides both feel they are in the right to achieve their goals. In this case, the good is symbolized in the Swamp Scouts, the Sugar Man, Gertrude, and the Brayburns. Evil is represented by Sonny Boy Beaucoop, Jaeger Stitch, and the Farrows Gang. Both sides see that the swamp is valuable and will do whatever it takes to make sure the swamp is theirs. There are two separate conflicts that occur in the story. Both dilemmas are not violent or gruesome, they are more of a battle of wits and wills as each group wants to use the swamp for their own purposes.

The first conflict within the novel is between the raccoons, aided by the Sugar Man and the Farrows Gang. The raccoons have been the Official Scout of Sugar Man Swamp since the beginning of time when the Sugar Man first asked them to do this service. They are to keep their eyes and noses on the swamp and to wake him up in case of trouble. The Swamp Man is the overall protector of the swamp but has a bad habit of throwing large things when he is put in a nasty mood. Raccoon brothers Bingo and J'miah are the official Information Officers of the Scouts and it is their mission to wake the Sugar Man when they hear something large and dangerous entering the swamp. They know that this is a dangerous task but they also know that their swamp could be destroyed by whatever is coming their way. They want to protect their home and be the best Scouts that they can be, so they will wake the Sugar Man at all costs. The reader will find out that it is the Farrow Gang, a family of hogs that are direct descendants of the hogs Hernan De Soto brought to America. The gang, led by Buzzie and his wife Claudine, are extremely dangerous as they destroy anything in their path. They are intent on getting into the swamp and eating all of the sugarcane growing there. They are the ones making a rumbling sound heard throughout the swamp that scares Bingo and J'miah.



As the Farrow Gang get closer, Bingo and J'miah make the decision to wake the Sugar Man. Aided by the Sugar Man's personal assistant, Gertrude, the brothers are able to wake the Sugar Man up just in the nick of time. He has heard of this gang before and he knows exactly how dangerous they are. He is able to defeat the Farrow Gang quickly by throwing them all into the air so they will land far away from the swamp.

While Bingo and J'miah are facing their own dilemma, young Chap Brayburn has become the "man of the house" after his Grandpa Audie passes away. Grandpa Audie was the only person capable of stopping Sonny Boy Beaucoop from selling the Sugar Man Swamp and all of the surrounding property, including the Brayburn family business and home. Sonny Boy wants to sell the area to Jaeger Stitch so she can destroy the swamp and build a large amusement park. Chap has only two options to save the swamp: to come up with the proof that either the ivory billed woodpecker or Sugar Man exists or to come up with a boatload of cash. The first idea proves to be difficult. Grandpa Audie had taken pictures of both the woodpecker and the Sugar Man, but they had been lost in the swamp for many years.

The only other option available to him is to get enough cash together to fill his boat. Chap is extremely determined to do this. At first he does not know how, but he devises a brilliant plan to create a commercial to play on the local radio station. He receives help from family friend and local disc jockey Countryman Jim. He comes up with a commercial telling interested people all about the delicious sugar pies at the Paradise Pies Cafe. Jim also assists Chap in making signs giving people the directions to the cafe. This plan is successful as the next day, so many people turn up before the place opens that they soon run out of pies.

A few days later, Sonny Boy and Jaeger Stitch show up with a group of people to hold a groundbreaking ceremony at the canebrake. It is revealed here that Sonny Boy is truly a villain and has no intention of letting the Brayburns stay on the property. As a sign of sheer meanness, Sonny Boy kicks the boat of money over, sending cash flying everywhere. Chap feels defeated after Sonny Boy does this and goes to conduct the groundbreaking ceremony. In a show of good, Chap remembers the rattlesnakes and tries to warn Sonny Boy but he refuses to listen. This causes an attack by the rattlesnakes on the people and the plans to build an amusement park in the swamp are cancelled.

## Family

The concept of family is very important throughout the novel. First the author shows the relationship between raccoon brothers Bingo and J'miah. They look almost exactly alike, but Bingo has a tuft of hair on his head that constantly sticks up. Although no ages are given, the reader can assume that they are very close in age. When they are dropped off at Information Headquarters by their parents, J'miah immediately misses them as they walk away. Bingo is a bit different as he tries to hide his feelings for his parents and covers up his sniffles. To him, to openly show emotion like that is not very brave, although the reader can see that he loves his parents very much.





When Bingo wants to climb the pine trees, J'miah worries about him. He also recalls the story of their Great Uncle Banjo and how he met his death while climbing a tree during a wind storm. This causes J'miah to worry more about his brother and he does not think Bingo should be climbing any trees. Although he worries, J'miah decides to accompany his brother to the tree and wait for him at the bottom. This way, he is supporting his brother and looking out for his safety yet not actually climbing the tree himself. J'miah waits for him down below to make sure he does not get hurt. Later in the novel, Bingo inadvertently helps J'miah get over his fear. When Gertrude sneaks up behind J'miah Bingo yells for him to climb up and J'miah does so without thinking.

Family is also important to the Brayburns. They are recently mourning the loss of patriarch Audie who originally came to the swamp in 1949. Audie and Chap were very close as Audie teaches him everything he knows about the swamp. It is through Audie and Chaps long walks and Audie's love of telling stories that Chap loves the swamp as much as Audie did. All throughout the novel, there are instances when Chap thinks back to one of Audie's stories and the reader can feel how much he misses his grandfather. Chap never knew his father so Audie stepped in and filled that role for Chap.

With Audie gone, Chap becomes the man of the house and he believes that he must care for his mother. Chap and his mother also have a special relationship. They are now the only family that they each have and their relationship is seen to be very good. Chap's mother has a secret way of telling Chap how much she cares for him. She always takes her finger and dabs some flour on his nose or his cheek. This way, Chap can physically see that his mother cares for him greatly. Chap does not want his mother to constantly worry about the money that is needed to pay Sonny Boy. He takes it upon himself to search for clues of the Sugar Man and does not involve his mother as she tries to take care of things at home.

The meaning of family is also central to the Beaucoop storyline as well. For over 300 years the Beaucoop family have been the owners and guardians of Sugar Man Swamp. This goes back to their ancestor, Alouicious, a pirate who settles in the swamp and makes a deal signed in blood to always protect the area. Each Beaucoop is destined to keep this promise or they will incur the wrath of the Sugar Man. Everyone has done this up until Sonny Boy and his father Quenton. The novel shows that Quenton has no care for Sonny or anyone else and that is a trait that has been passed on to Sonny. Quenton supposedly died of a heart attack, but it is written that he incurred the wrath of the Sugar Man for killing an extremely rare woodpecker. Sonny totally disregards the family oath and winds up incurring the wrath of the Sugar Man himself. As Sonny Boy is forced to leave the family mansion, his last thoughts are of his father warning him to get away from the place or else Sonny Boy will end up just like him. This works and Sonny Boy flees, vowing to never return.

Even the Farrow Gang shares a sense of family. They travel in a pack, or "sunder", and they all have the same goal. They want to get to the sugar cane as fast as they can as they are all deliriously hungry. They share the same desire to destroy whatever comes in their way and they have the same mean temper. They rejoice in wallowing in mud pits and together they are seen as an incredibly destructive force. After they land





from being thrown around by the Sugar Man, the entire family moves to Arkansas and they make a collective vow to never touch sugar again.

## Responsibility

The sense of responsibility is found in all of the characters within the novel. Each one feels their sense of responsibility differently, but most of them do all that it takes to carry it out. The Swamp Scouts have a duty to their swamp and each other. Their rules are quite simple: keep your eyes open, keep your nose to the air, keep your ears to the ground, be true to each other and be good. The Swamp Scouts are given the task of watching over the swamp and to note anything of importance going on. The Scouts with the biggest responsibilities are the Information Officers, whose other duties include listening to the Voice of Intelligence and to wake the Sugar Man when necessary.

Brothers Bingo and J'miah are the Information Officers of the Swamp Scouts. Although this is new for them, they feel an exceptional pride when it comes to their job. Bingo is so enthusiastic about being a Swamp Scout that he wants to climb the highest tree around so that he can observe the swamp in a different way. This in turn causes his brother J'miah to worry about Bingo's safety and because he takes the Swamp Scout's pledge to be loyal to one another seriously, he decides to go along with his brother to wait at the bottom of the tree and to make sure Bingo does not get hurt. This shows that J'miah's sense of responsibility is far greater than his fears and that he will rise to the occasion anytime there is a duty to be performed.

When the boys hear a strange rumble far off in the distance, they immediately know that it is time to fulfill their main responsibility as Information Officers. The Swamp Man must be awakened whenever there is a threat to the swamp. The Scouts do not know where the Swamp Man is or how to wake him up, but they know that they must do this to protect their home. They do eventually find the Sugar Man through his assistant Gertrude. They are scared at first to be around her, but she proves to be quite an ally as she is able to wake the Sugar Man.

Gertrude's main responsibility is to guard the Sugar Man while he sleeps. She came to be with him when she became enamored with him the first time he came to the canebrake. She has been his loyal protector ever since. Gertrude is the one who tells the Swamp Scouts to get sugar cane for the Sugar Man. Unfortunately she eats the only source of sugar cane. In order to make up for it, she goes to bite the Sugar Man, but the scent of sugar on her breath is just what the Sugar Man needs to wake up. She is fiercely protective of the Sugar Man. When Audie hits the Sugar Man on his back to stop him from choking, Gertrude prepares to bite Audie until the Sugar Man convinces her that everything is okay.

Another character who lives up to his responsibilities is Chap Brayburn. When his Grandpa Audie passes away, people in the area jokingly tell Chap that he is now the man of the house. Chap takes this seriously as he knows that his family cafe and home are about to be taken away by the landlord, Sonny Boy Beaucoop. When Sonny Boy



comes to the cafe to announce his plans with Jaeger Stitch, Sonny Boy makes the mistake of saying Chap the only way he can save his home is to give him a boatload of cash. Sonny Boy does not know that Chap takes this is a serious challenge. Chap then sets out to figure out ways to accomplish this and comes up with the idea of having Countryman Jim, the local radio host, come up with a commercial to attract more customers.

Chap does not ever give up even when things look their darkest. His sense of responsibility as the man of the house constantly takes over him and makes him push further. It is this sense of responsibility that causes him to get up even after he realizes that the swamp will still be sold and search the swamp for traces of the Sugar Man. It also gives him the courage and the drive to continue searching the swamp. This sense of responsibility pays off as Chap is able to do something that seemed impossible for a long time. He is able to locate the 1949 DeSoto and the pictures Audie had taken that prove the existence of the ivory billed woodpecker and the Sugar Man.

## Loyalty

The Official Swamp Scouts have some simple rules, but one of the most important rule is that they stick with each other. All throughout the novel, Bingo and J'miah often have selfish thoughts or desires. The one thing that keeps them from being constantly selfish is the fact that they adhere to the rules of being an Official Swamp Scout. They feel that if they are selfish, then they are disobeying the rule to stay true to each other. When Bingo wants to go climbing in the tree at the beginning of the novel, J'miah is determined not to go. For him, this task seems frivolous and dangerous. He tries to stop Bingo from going, but when Bingo makes his determination clear, J'miah reluctantly follows. J'miah does not want to, as he is extremely afraid of heights, but he feels that he must because if Bingo was to fall and hurt himself, then J'miah is not honoring his oath to stick by his fellow Scout.

There is also a deep loyalty between the Swamp Scouts and the Sugar Man. At the beginning of time, when the Sugar Man first came to the Bayou Tourterelle, the Sugar Man declared the raccoons to be the Official Swamp Scouts. They are the ones who inform the Sugar Man of any danger to the area and they keep a watch on all life in the area. In this way they are being loyal to their family and their neighbors in making sure the area stays safe.

The giant rattlesnake Gertrude is also someone who is considered as very loyal. When the Sugar Man first comes to the canebrake, she becomes insanely loyal to him. She follows him home and has been living with him ever since. The narrator says that no one can get to the Sugar Man except through Gertrude and this is seen as true. When Audie tries to help the Sugar Man as he is choking, Gertrude prepares to defend the Sugar Man because she thinks Audie is hurting him. Gertrude is the first one to wake up in the dark lair where she and the Sugar Man sleep and she is the first one that Bingo and J'miah see when they come with news of an emergency.



Even minor characters like Countryman Jim and Sweetums show their loyalty. When Sweetums first hears the rumblings through the swamps, he is determined to let the humans in his life know that there is danger coming. He only speaks Catalan, so this task proves impossible as no one understands him. Each time he hears rumbling he tries to get the message out, nothing happens except that everyone misinterprets him and thinks he wants food or to go outside. Although Sweetums is a coward and prefers hiding in the closet or under the bed, when Bingo and J'miah come to steal the pies, Sweetums goes to investigate. Although he is scared, he tries to wake up the humans, but his cries go unheard as the Brayburns are sleeping soundly.

Countryman Jim was a good friend of Audie's and when Audie passed away, Jim felt like it should be his duty to help the family wherever he can. Jim still comes by the cafe for his usual coffee and sugar pies and even though he misses the conversations he had with Audie, he enjoys spending time with the rest of the Brayburn family just as well. Chap is able to come to him when he decides that a commercial should be made to get more customers in the cafe. Jim writes an incredible commercial for the cafe and even sticks around one afternoon to help make signs. As these are successful and the cafe is loaded with people, Jim rushes over after getting off the air for the day and he helps to make sure there are enough pies to go around. Jim also helps Chap and his mother pick up all of the money from the boat that Sonny Boy kicks over.

On the other hand, there is no loyalty shown between Sonny Boy Beaucoop and Jaeger Stitch. They are only partners for financial purposes and this fact is clear to them as well as the reader. They both have dreams of securing large financial gains and so they will use each other to get to that purpose, no matter how much they dislike each other. They are opposites in all ways except for their greed. Jaeger prefers getting her hands dirty and is unrefined, but Sonny is seen as someone who does not like to inconvenience himself for anything but the finest things in life. Jaeger is impressed by Sonny Boy's long list of financial and influential contacts. Sonny Boy is not impressed by much with Jaeger except for her ruthlessness and her greed. In this way, The reader can see the slight bond between them built on this greed, but nothing else.

## Communication FINISH

Communication comes in various aspects throughout the novel. It may not be readily understood or the source definitively known, but it lends a sense of not only unity but urgency as well. The main example of this urgency is the attempts at communication made by Sweetums the cat. Usually this cat is not bothered by trivial things, but once he starts hearing and feeling the rumbling in the swamp, Sweetums knows that something is not right and someone has to be warned. Sweetums tries to tell Chap on several occasions that something is wrong in the swamp. Since Sweetums only speaks his native tongue of Catalan, his warnings only come off as meowing and trying to get attention. This is extremely frustrating for Sweetums as he feels that he is trying to do the right thing but no one is paying attention to him.



To prove that the use of communication is more than just the ability to speak and understand another individual's words, the author cleverly uses song as a way of communication. The lullaby that Chap sings as he is harvesting sugar cane has been passed down from the Sugar Man to Audie, then on to Chap. It was created when the Sugar Man first came upon the canebrake and it is used to lure the rattlesnakes into sleep. The rattlesnakes are fiercely protective of their area and although they allow the Sugar Man to come and eat what he likes, the Sugar Man knows that he cannot trust their words that he will not be attacked. Without this song, there would be no way to make the pies sold in the cafe. The words to the song are only partially given as Chap sings this one afternoon as he is harvesting sugar cane. It is a fairly simple song and is successful at putting the rattlesnakes to sleep just long enough to harvest a small batch of sugar cane. During the groundbreaking ceremony, Chap remembers at the last moment that Sonny Boy is taking his guests down to the cane brake. In an attempt to save the guests from being attacked, Chap rushes to sing the lullaby but he is too late and the guests scatter as the rattlesnakes chase them.

Another way song is used is the sea shanty that is sung by the pirates hiding out with Aloicious Beaucoop in the swamp. At first, the Sugar Man did not mind the men's singing, but one song in particular completely angers the Sugar Man after a while. This causes a humorous scene in which the Sugar Man throws pirates in the air, giving the reader a first hand look at the wrath of the Sugar Man. Aloicious becomes terrified of the Sugar Man and begs him for mercy. The Sugar Man decides that he will take pity on Aloicious on once condition, that Aloicious signs an oath in blood that he and his ancestors will always protect the swamp and that the song in question will never be sang again. This oath is strictly adhered to by all of the Beaucoop heirs, until Sonny Boy, who totally disregards the oath and has plans on selling the swamp, setting up a major dilemma within the story.

One of the main duties of Bingo and J'miah is to keep a constant watch on the weather in case of lightning strikes. If lightning strikes close to the Headquarters, there is a possibility that a message from the Voice of Intelligence will come through. The scouts do not know the actual identity of the voice, but they do know that the voice is never wrong. The Voice of Intelligence is very helpful to the scouts as they complete their quest. First, they inform the scouts that the menace heard rumbling through the swamp is a pack of ferocious wild hogs. Bingo and J'miah know this pack to be the Farrow Gang, the main protagonists of the novel. The Voice is also helpful in finding a way to get sugar cane for the Sugar Man by informing the scouts that sugar cane pies are sold at the Paradise Pies Cafe. There are other messages as well, including one that states rain will come in the evening but will clear out quickly. Bingo finds this message helpful as he plans on going fishing later in the evening.

Unknown to the Swamp Scouts, the Voice of Intelligence is actually radio personality Countryman Jim at the local radio station during his nightly broadcasts. Jim is a close friend of the Brayburn family and he has an intense love of the swamp he shared with Grandpa Audie and now shares with Chap. When Chap gets the idea to advertise for the cafe, he goes to Jim for some help. Jim comes up with a perfect commercial to use, which turns out to be a success as the morning after the commercial is first aired,



swarms of people come to the cafe. Jim also helps Chap paint the signs giving people the right directions to find the cafe, since a previous customer gave Chap the idea. The advertising for the cafe is a good form of communication as there does not seem to be an previous attempts at getting the word out to potential customers that the cafe exists. Previously, the cafe received few guests that knew where the cafe is located or that it even exists.

Wishing on stars is a more abstract form of communication between the raccoons and Binkle, the star Bingo discovered during his first tree climb. Although Binkle is really just the blinking red light on top of a radio tower, Bingo believes wholeheartedly in it as he wishes for some sugar cane to wake the Sugar Man up with. His wish is granted however, as they are miraculously given a message from the Voice of Intelligence, telling them to go to the cafe for sugar pies. Unknown to Bingo, J'miah also makes a wish on Binkle, although J'miah stays at the bottom of the tree and cannot see it. J'miah wishes that he could find a way to cure his fear of heights and he is successful as he scurries up a tree in a panic to avoid being attacked by Gertrude. Towards the end of the novel, after the major conflict has been resolved, Bingo and J'miah climb up a tree to make one more wish on Binkle. They wish to have more of the cafe's delicious sugar pies but are unable to obtain them since Chap has set out traps around the cafe. Once again, their wish is wonderfully granted as Chap leaves 2 pies on the Headquarters dashboard as a way of showing his happiness over finding the lost De Soto.



# Styles

## Point of View

The novel is told in the third point of view by an unknown narrator. The narrator has an omniscient view of all actions, dialogue, and thoughts occurring in the novel. The narrator begins with the focus on raccoons Bingo and J'miah as they begin their time as the Information Officers of the Swamp Scouts. The narrator often skips between the storylines of all of the other central characters. This is a key maneuver that shows the reader how the characters are connected even though there are two separate storylines occurring within the novel. There are also additional chapters where the narrator goes slightly off the subject to discuss an important yet small part of the plot. An example of this deviation is Chapter 15 where the narrator discusses the invention and proper use of Polaroid cameras. This chapter is used to allude to the fact that Grandpa Audie once had such a camera but he ended up losing it in the swamp. Chapter 24 also deviates from the main course of the novel to discuss Hernando de Soto and the fact that he brought hogs with him from Spain to the New World. This sets the reader up to know that his descendants are as mean as de Soto and are still in the area. The reader finds out later on that these descendants are the Farrow Gang and are one of the main antagonists of the novel.

## Language and Meaning

The story is told in the third person and the actions are described in the past tense as if the story happened recently. The narration is casually conversational, as if the narrator is telling the story directly to the reader. Various bits of humorous slang are used throughout the novel to further enhance this casualness. Although the setting is in the bayou, there is no actual territorial dialect or drawl within the dialogues. Conversations between the characters is kept to a minimum; there is more action and description in the novel than there is dialogue. The reader should take note that the author also includes animal sounds when talking of certain animals. Chapter 7 is totally devoted to the sounds that an ivory billed woodpecker and canebrake rattlesnakes would make. The reader also notes that the author details the rattlesnakes' bite as snip-snap-zip-zap in several instances where the rattlesnakes are mentioned. The reader should also note that the writer also uses sounds to enhance the reader's visualization of actions being performed, such as the cutting of the sugar cane and the rumbling through the swamp. The language of the novel is easy to understand. There are no overly large words for a reader to comprehend, nor are there any terms that would relate to a particular industry or trade. There are a few exceptions to this that the reader will find in the vocabulary sections, but these words are not complicated. With this noted, the novel is appropriate for middle school aged children or advanced readers in elementary.



## Structure

The novel is broken up into 103 chapters of varying length. Some of the chapters are less than a few sentences strung together, while others are several pages in length. These chapters are then placed into groups with a varied amount of chapters within each group. The groups are divided up and named as the time length of the novel. The group names do not deviate from the current events, but throughout each chapter, there are a few chapters that delve into the history of the swamp, times recently before Grandpa Audie's death, and other chapters that only lend supplemental information.

The first group titled "The First Night" depicts the beginning motions of the novel, including the introduction of the central characters, It is comprised of 20 chapters that inform the reader of the main dilemma of the novel where the swamp is to be sold and turned into an international gator wrestling center. Chapters 21 - 36 are called "The Next Morning" and shows the main dilemma facing the Brayburn family as they are informed of Sonny Boy Beaucoop and Jaeger Stitch's plans to demolish the swamp and put in an amusement park. Chapters 37 - 43 are called "The Next Night". These chapters delve deeper into the dilemma with the Swamp Scouts and their resolution to wake the Sugar Man. This is also the where the reader gets a first glimpse at his bodyguard, Gertrude. Another key element in this segment covers how Audie lost his 1949 DeSoto causing it to become the Swamp Scouts' Information Headquarters.

The section entitled "The Second Day" covers Chapters 44 - 49. Chap and his friend Countryman Jim come up with ways to market the Paradise Pies Cafe. Bingo and J'miah meet Gertrude and she tells them how to wake the Sugar Man. Chapters 51 - 65 are "The Second Night" where Bingo and J'miah have no choice but to sneak into the cafe and steal pies. Also, more detail is given of Sonny Boy Beaucoop's life and a better look at his plans. Chapters 66 - 75 are labeled "The Third Day". shows the novel heading towards its climax. Sonny Boy and Jaeger Stitch prepare for the groundbreaking ceremony for the theme park. Chap is able to start filling up his boat with money from more customers coming into the cafe and the Swamp Scouts are getting closer to their goal of waking the Sugar Man.

"The Fourth Night" occurs between Chapters 76 and 82. The Swamp Scouts meet the Sugar Man for the first time. Chap learns that Sonny Boy still intends to sell the property and not accept his boatload of cash. It is also in these chapters that the Farrow Gang gets incredibly close to their sugary destination. The Farrow Gang actually arrives at the canebrake and destroys it before being tossed out of the swamp by the Sugar Man in the Chapters 83 - 97 labeled "The Fourth Day". Chapter 98 is the only chapter in the section labeled "The Last Night". In this chapter, everyone says goodbye to the Sugar Man and Gertrude as they head home to go back to sleep for a while. Finally, in "The Last Day", which is Chapters 99 - 104, Chap finally finds Audie's lost DeSoto and the pictures of the ivory billed woodpecker and the Sugar Man inside. Sonny Boy is scared out of his mind as he thinks the Sugar Man is out to get him and he signs the swamp over to Chap for free. J'miah finally feels free of his fear of heights and with his brother



they climb a tree to wish on their star for more sugar pies which they receive on the dashboard of Information Headquarters as a present from Chap.



## Quotes

We are fellow countrymen. We come from the same soil.

-- Narrator (Chapter 5 paragraph 17)

**Importance:** This quote shows the importance of one of the central themes of the novel, unity. Grandpa Audie uses the phrase "Nosotros somos paisanos" to signify that every living creature in the swamp is connected to each other in some form. This is greatly proved by the fact that the raccoons had a great deal of help from the Brayburns who made the pies that would help wake up the Sugar Man. The Sugar Man is awakened and throws the Farrow Gang so that Sonny Boy Beaucoop is scared into leaving the swamp to the Brayburns. The raccoons inadvertently lead Chap Brayburn back to Grandpa Audie's old car and to the pictures he lost long ago.

Sonny Boy Beaucoop didn't give a flip about ivory-billed woodpeckers or Audie Brayburn and his crazy stories.

-- Narrator (Chapter 13 paragraph 22)

**Importance:** This quote shows that Sonny boy does not care about the swamp or its inhabitants. It also shows that Audie was an adversary of Sonny's as Audie loved the swamp and wanted to make sure it was protected for the woodpecker and Sonny would rather make money from the area instead of preserving the wildlife. This shows the reader that Sonny truly is greedy and has no patience for anyone that would try to get in his way.

Lost them all in the Sugar Man Swamp, which, even though it was a good place to hide, was not a good place to lose something.

-- Narrator (Chapter 15 paragraph 5)

**Importance:** This shows that the swamp has its uses but not for lost items. Audie's car and photos have been lost for many years. This lets the reader know that it will not be easy to find the photos that Chap needs to prove the existence of the ivory billed woodpecker and the Sugar Swamp Man in order to save his home and the swamp.

So if you want to do business with the Sugar Man, well, you have to deal with Gertrude first.

-- Narrator (Chapter 18 paragraph 22)

**Importance:** This shows that Gertrude is the Sugar Man's personal assistant and bodyguard. She protects him while he sleeps hidden away in the swamp and cares for him greatly. The reader should note that she is an overly protective rattlesnake and therefore extremely dangerous. Anyone who has to deal with either her or the Sugar Man should be very careful.

He knew that no one would take him seriously if he claimed to have seen the ivory billed woodpecker without proof. The photograph was his proof.



-- Narrator (Chapter 31 paragraph 22)

**Importance:** The ivory billed woodpecker is an extremely rare bird that Audie found in his youth. He took a picture of it because he wanted to show the world that such a bird truly does exist. Audie knows that if he was just to tell people about the bird, they would not believe him. This is a statement hinting that the photo will be extremely valuable sometime later in the novel.

So Audie, still spacey from his flu, stuffed his ammo can with its one-of-a-kind photos underneath the passenger seat, stumbled out of the car, and weakly tramped his way to the highway, where a passing motorist spied him and rushed him to the hospital in Port Arthur.

-- Narrator (Chapter 41 paragraph 8)

**Importance:** This is extremely important as the reader learns how Audie lost his 1949 DeSoto in the swamp, and the pictures along with it. This also sets the reader up to know that the Information Headquarters of the Swamp Scouts is the DeSoto that Audie spent the rest of his life looking for.

For his part, Sonny Boy knew that Jaeger had evil designs on him, but he also knew that he was Mr. Moneybags, the source of funding for her road-show attraction. He knew that as long as he controlled the purse strings, he was safe.

-- Narrator (Chapter 51 paragraph 5)

**Importance:** This shows the reader that Sonny Boy and Jaeger Stitch have no real allegiance to each other. They are only bonded together in hopes of making a large financial gain with the development of the amusement park. This also shows that Sonny Boy and Jaeger Stitch are actually alike although they do not see it. They are both exceptionally greedy and have no cares about anyone else.

There is the sugar that comes from corn. But the wild sugarcane that grows along the banks of the Bayou Tourterelle is the finest sugar of all.

-- Narrator (Chapter 68 paragraph 1)

**Importance:** The quote lets the reader know that the sugar cane grown in this area is considered very delicious and should be considered highly sought after. The sugar cane in this region is one of few things that can wake the Sugar Man and is the reason that the Farrow Gang comes to the swamp. The sugar cane is also used in the pies made at the Paradise Pies Cafe.

Those biting fleas made her want to bite something, maybe even something furry.

-- Narrator (Chapter 76 paragraph 4)

**Importance:** Gertrude states in previous chapters that she does not like to bite anything with fur, as the fur always messes with her teeth. At this point fleas are bothering her so badly that she becomes highly irritated and is ready to bite anyone who gets close



enough to her. This is a foreshadowing statement that Gertrude is going to be more than willing to fight the Farrow Gang once they get to the swamp.

Chap realized right then that Sonny Boy and Jaeger had simply been playing a cruel joke on them. All that work, all the bills he and his mom had set inside the boat? They had never even had a chance.

-- Narrator (Chapter 85 paragraph 16)

**Importance:** This shows the reader that Sonny Boy had always intended to double cross the Brayburns. No matter how hard they worked to get the money to fill the boat it was never going to be enough to satisfy him and he was going to evict them either which way.

He might have lost, but he was not a loser. He was not going to let Sonny Boy Beaucoop, with his stupid socks, know that he Audie Brayburn's grandson had been bested.

-- Narrator (Chapter 89 paragraph 6)

**Importance:** The shows the reader the raw determination that Chap has in making things work out his way. He knows that Sonny Boy double crossed him, but Chap is not going to take it lying down. Chap intends to fight until the very end for his home, and he intends on doing it like a man.

Something about the boy reminded him of someone he had met long ago. Someone he counted as a friend. Someone he missed.

-- Narrator (Chapter 96 paragraph 4)

**Importance:** The Sugar Man recognizes Chap as Audie Brayburn's grandson. This shows that the Sugar Man always held his friendship with Audie in a very high light and that the Sugar Man misses his old friend. He is happy to meet Chap, as they both loved Audie and Chap has inherited Audie's love of the swamp.