

Tourist Season Study Guide

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Plot Summary

In this comic mystery novel a newspaper reporter turned private eye matches wits against

a reporter he once worked with, a wanna-be Cuban terrorist, a black former Miami Dolphin football player, and a Seminole Indian trying to make amends for the demise of his ancestors and homelands. The overall goal of the bad guys is to cause tourism in the Miami area to be so dangerous that people will leave the area en masse and allow it to return to the wilderness it was before development, thus allowing the animals and birds to take back the land that was once their natural habitat.

When a Shriner from Illinois disappears while attending a convention in Miami almost no one except his wife and a few other Shriners notice. However, when the president of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, B. D. "Sparky" Parker, ends up drowned in a suitcase with his legs cut off almost everyone notices. It is especially peculiar when the coroner discovers he has been slathered in coconut tanning oil and has a souvenir rubber alligator stuffed down his throat. It also does not go unnoticed that he was wearing a suit when he disappeared, but when he is found he has on a Jimmy Buffet t-shirt and Bermuda shorts.

A man named Brian Keyes is hired to find the killer when a Cuban is mistakenly jailed for the murder. Keyes has a background as a newspaper reporter so he has contacts with the paper and the police department. As he begins his investigation the man he was to represent kills himself in jail, and the newspapers all close the case immediately as tourist season is just beginning and they want to end any hint of violence.

However, Keyes is convinced the wrong man was jailed and begins to look into the case further. He notices an article in the paper about a young woman from Canada being kidnapped and wonders if there is any connection.

At about the same time a reporter Keyes once worked with disappears, and Keyes' old boss from the newspaper hires him to find the man, a popular writer named Skip Wiley. Wiley has gotten a bit eccentric in the last few months and it is felt he is just off sulking somewhere.

Killings and unusual events begin to happen to tourists, but the chamber of commerce tries to get the police to play them down so as not to create bad publicity for the community. When a helicopter drops live snakes onto an ocean liner full of tourists and travel writers, the story begins to make news all over the U.S. Then a plot is uncovered to kidnap the queen of the Orange Bowl, and the police must respond with unprecedented force. The reason for the killings and kidnapping of tourists is suspected to be a terrorist plot to ruin the tourist business and thus make people leave the area and let it go back to the animals and birds that were displaced when the Miami area was developed for tourists. Skip Wiley and three other men become the suspects as the police and Brian Keyes try to outsmart the terrorists.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

In this comic mystery novel a newspaper reporter turned private eye matches wits against

a reporter he once worked with, a wanna-be Cuban terrorist, a black former Miami Dolphin football player, and a Seminole Indian trying to make amends for the demise of his ancestors and homelands. The overall goal of the bad guys is to cause tourism in the Miami area to be so dangerous that people will leave the area en masse and allow it to return to the wilderness it was before development, thus allowing the animals and birds to take back the land that was once their natural habitat.

A Shriner from Evanston, Illinois, named Ted Bellamy goes to Miami to attend a convention. The next morning he goes swimming with his wife, Nell, but he has a horrible hangover so he is not thrilled with the idea. While in the water he gets tangled up with a poisonous jellyfish and is stung severely, so his wife calls two lifeguards to give him first aid. They decide he needs additional treatment, so they take him off to a first aid station. Nell notices the men don't look like the tanned lifeguards she expected, but she doesn't think too much more about it until later.

When Ted doesn't return and Nell cannot find him, she calls the police. However, they are busy looking for a man named Sparky Harper who is also missing. Sparky is more important than a touring Shriner, so they are not too enthused about looking for Ted. Sparky is one of the most important men in Florida, being the president of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. As a result, Nell enlists the Shriners to search for her husband, which they do on their parade motorcycles, mini cars, and on foot. When they find Ted's Shriner fez on the beach, they assume he went swimming again and drowned, so they hold a brief prayer service on the beach.

In the meantime, a young boy waterskiing hits a red Samsonite suitcase floating just under the surface of the ocean. When the boys retrieve it, they find a small dead man crammed into it, and immediately recognize Sparky Harper. When the medical examiner pries the body from the suitcase, he finds that Sparky's legs have been cut off just below the knees, and he has a small toy rubber alligator stuck in his throat. It still has the price tag on its tail reading "seventy-nine cents".

Chapter 1 Analysis

Dates and time are given to place the events that unfold, and the opening scene relates two instances of terrorism: one, the disappearance of a vacationing Shriner, the other the murder of the local president of the Chamber of Commerce. The setting is Miami, Florida.

While the story begins as a murder mystery, it has a light-hearted style which disallows much grieving for any of the characters introduced so far. In fact, there are a number of witty remarks, and the circumstances of the disappearance and death of at least one person in the first chapter are given circumstances which evoke a slight giggle from the reader.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

A newspaper reporter named Ricky Bloodworth is assigned to report on the murder of Sparky Harper. He is trying to make a name for himself and has tried unusual things such as wearing a Panama hat, silk vests, and other outlandish attire. He is actually only known for drinking copious amounts of 7-up and constantly drumming pencils on his desk.

While the two are arguing over the best way to report the story, they find that the story is old as the police think they have already caught the murderer.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The environment of the news room where the story of Sparky Harper's murder is being written is described and Skip Wiley is introduced. He is a difficult person to work with, but one of great talent and experience.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Brian Keyes is assigned from the public defenders office to represent Ernesto Cabal who is accused of the murder of Sparky Harper. Keyes looks more adolescent than he is, and he often has difficulty demanding the respect he feels he is entitled to. Ernesto is proud to have been in this country for sixteen years and to speak English.

He explains to Keyes that he was driving a car and was picked up on a routine traffic stop and then charged with the murder of Sparky. Keyes can tell by the way Ernesto acts that he is familiar with the jail. Ernesto says he bought the new Oldsmobile he was driving from a large black man who had thick arms and wore gold chains and Carrera glasses. He got it for two hundred dollars, and had an idea it was stolen, but he hadn't gotten around to selling it when he was picked up.

When Keyes goes to the Miami *Sun* he talks with his old friend Al Garcia. Garcia knows all about Keyes, including his reputation for not being able to stomach violent deaths, but they still exchange information at times. This time Keyes tells him that the guy they have charged with killing Sparky bought the car that disappeared after his murder. Garcia is reluctant to talk about it since it is such a big case, but does show Keyes a letter the paper received which indicates that the murder was the act of a "powerful new underclass," and that a third death is not far away. It is signed by the "*Comandante, Las Noches de Diciembre.*" Both men question the meaning of the third murder, and wonder who the second one was. Garcia feels it is a hoax and plans to throw the letter away.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The character of Brian Keyes is developed more fully as a man with a great deal of experience and a good reputation, but generally under appreciated. He is trustworthy and has a number of contacts that help him with facts on various occasions.

He is more open-minded than some of the others involved on the murder case, and not so quick to solve it just to satisfy the publi.

A letter to the Miami *Sun* is used to show a possible alternate reason than theft for Sparky's murder, and suggests that the police don't want to have to look at alternatives to their theory of Ernesto Cabal being the murderer.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Skip Wiley's managing editor, Cab Mulcahy, tells him that he has misrepresented the facts in the Sparky Harper murder case, and that there was no sexual torture and that other things in his story are untrue. He also says that his description of Ernesto Cabal and view that he is no doubt the killer are unethical at the very least. Wiley admits that, but says the story was done to represent the mayhem in the streets of Miami. Mulchay tells him he has read his columns for the last four months, and has given them to a psychiatrist to analyze, and when he talked to the psychiatrist again he was told that Keyes appears to have some sort of illness. Mulchay tells Keyes the only way he can keep his job is for him to see the psychiatrist, get an intern to help with his column, and let Mulchay proof every word he writes before it gets published. He also tells him that he is not to write anything more about the Sparkey Harper murder case.

Brian goes to the coroner's office and studies the autopsy and some of the slides of Sparky's body. Dr. Allen agrees with Keyes that Ernesto Cabal is not the killer, and also notes that it appears that Sparky's legs were torn off by a large animal.

Chapter 4 Analysis

The wry humor continues as "Sparky" B. D. Harper is described as someone who worked very hard at being liked, so hard that he "excreted congeniality."

Brian Keyes appears to be the protagonist of the story, with the antagonist being Skip Wiley, who writes stories just to create controversy without much attention to facts.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

Al Garcia calls Keyes to meet him at a cheap motel used by tourists and prostitutes called the Flamingo Isles. In room 223 the police have found Sparky's clothes with the legs cut off, bottles of coconut suntan oil, and an empty plastic bag which they believe contained the toy alligator. Garcia tells Keyes that two men rented the room for two weeks, one a large black man and the other was a young Latin male. The front desk clerk is relatively certain the Latin man is Ernesto Cabal. The theory is that Sparky was brought here alive, had an argument with the other two, and was led away. Two gay guys in the room next door saw this and noted that the Cuban male was carrying a red suitcase. Garcia says that they think Sparky was killed somewhere else, but brought here to the bathroom where he was dressed in the tourist outfit and sunglasses. They have also interviewed a sales clerk who sold the clothes and alligator found on Sparky. She has almost positively identified Cabal as the person who purchased the items.

Keyes goes to the jail and meets Ernesto's attorney who is leaving, and says he holds little hope for Cabal. When Keyes gets to the cell, Cabal is nude and tells him they have taken his clothes because they think he will commit suicide. Keyes notices a tattoo of Fidel Castro on Cabal's penis.

As Keyes tells Ernesto about the description of the young, skinny, Cuban man who rented a room at the Flamingo and bought the clothes Sparky was found in, Cabal begins to remember more about the black man who sold him the Oldsmobile and tells Keyes he might find him at Pauly's bar, and that "he's no street nigger."

Chapter 5 Analysis

Chapter 5 creates more evidence that Cabal may have been involved in the murder, but Keyes stays true to his belief that he is innocent of this crime, at least. Fewer people side with Ernesto as his attorney asks him to plead guilty.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

When Skip Wiley goes to the psychiatric offices of Dr. Remond Courtney to be interviewed, he becomes very agitated, hangs the doctor by his heels fifteen floors above the street below and calls him Dr. Goosefucker.

When he brings him back inside, Wiley calmly asks the doctor if he is still going to tell his boss that he is crazy. Dr. Courtney mentions a column Wiley wrote stating that Miami needs more killer hurricanes to crumple condominiums, and Wiley walks out of the office.

Later, Mulchay, his boss looks for Wiley. No one has seen him all day, and his girlfriend doesn't know where he is. He quickly finds out that Wiley's Pontiac was just found by the police. It was empty but running in the middle of Interstate Highway 95, and has been towed off, and there is no sign of Skip Wiley.

Keyes finds Pauly's Bar and gives the bartender a twenty dollar bill for information about the large black man said to hang out here. It turns out the man is Viceroy Wilson, a former star of the Miami Dolphin football team. Keyes pays a wino at the bar another twenty to find Viceroy and bring him, and then another twenty to keep the bartender's friendship while he waits. Soon Viceroy enters the bar, and the next thing Keyes remembers is being hit and tossed outside on the concrete where he passes out just as a car with the vanity license plate, "GATOR 2" peels away.

When Keyes wakes, he is still on the sidewalk in front of the bar. A pleasant woman asks if he needs an ambulance and introduces herself as Nell Bellamy. She is accompanied by two men wearing fez hats who are introduced as Shriners. She says she is looking for her husband who disappeared the previous Saturday.

When Nell finds that Keyes is a private investigator, she and the Shriners hire him on the spot to help find her husband. When he tries to get out of taking the case, Nell hands him a piece of paper left in her mailbox the day after her husband's disappearance. It is almost exactly the same format as the one the newspaper received, and is signed by the Commander of the Nights of December. It tells her to go home and tell everyone how dangerous Miami is.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Skip Wiley is portrayed as much more violent and unpredictable than before. His episode with the psychiatrist is violent, but artfully pictured as humorous. He has apparently written stories on occasion in which he vents his displeasure with the continued condominium growth in the Miami area.

Keyes is obviously a football fan, and it is coincidental that a football hero is now a suspect in the murder he is investigating, and also could be directly involved in the disappearance of Ted Bellamy. Even more curious is the fact that there is a tie with the two through letters the newspaper and Mrs. Bellamy have both received.

Chapter 6 ties several sequences of events together and begins to drive one plot with many facets.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

Keyes and Garcia go to lunch, and Garcia tells Keyes that he thinks Ernesto Cabal is *El Fuego*, the person who wrote both the letters relating to the dead men. They decide that the person behind the letters and possibly the murders is Viceroy Wilson, and that he is Cabal's partner. As they discuss the letters further, they decide that the only thing the signature on the letter, "*The Nights of December*" relates to is the month Castro came into power. They realize that this is now almost the middle of December, and that maybe the group has something big planned.

At about the same time, Viceroy is driving a Cadillac belonging to a wealthy Seminole Indian. He is unhappy that the Indian doesn't appreciate it, but is somewhat superstitious about some of the customs of the Seminoles if you get on their wrong side, so he plays along with whatever the Indian wants to do.

Viceroy is a radical who believes in doing damage to rich white people in any way he can. He has spent most of the last ten years burglarizing homes and selling dope and hot cars. He is now outside the Seaquarium watching the tourists leave in their gaudy-colored outfits. He finally picks a young woman who is with a small man around five feet two as his target, and puts out the marijuana joint he has been smoking and gets out of the Cadillac.

Keyes is called into the newspaper office of his old boss, Cab Mulchay, and told that Skip Wiley has disappeared, and Mulchay wants to hire him as a private detective to locate him. Wiley's girlfriend, Jenna, has dumped Keyes, so there is some and bitter feelings about the situation. Keyes knows there are a number of reasons why Mulchay needs to find Wiley. For one, he is concerned that Skip could do embarrassing damage to the newspaper in some way, and for two, he is the star columnist and commands a following with the general public. When Keyes finds out that Jenna is the one who wants him to take the case (along with five hundred dollars a day plus expenses paid by his old boss) he agrees. At that time Ricky Bloodworth barges into the office with the news that Ernesto Cabal has just killed himself.

Chapter 7 Analysis

Keyes finds that Al Garcia has a theory that Ernesto Cabal is *El Fuego*, and that Viceroy is his partner. While Garcia does not know it, Keyes has some information about Cabal's feelings towards Castro that might help substantiate his theory.

The story shifts to the viewpoint of Viceroy, and the reader learns that he has become somewhat of an anarchist who wants to do damage to the white wealthy culture he sees as the possible reason for his professional demise.

A number of additional coincidences are revealed when it is learned that Keyes lost his girlfriend to Wiley, and that Keyes' client, Cabal, has committed suicide in jail.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

Viceroy and his partner, Jesus Bernal, a Cuban terrorist, watch over their kidnapped captive, Renee Levoux. Jesus, writing as *El Fuego*, prepares a letter for her boyfriend David Richaud. It is to be like the one sent to Nell Bellamy after they kidnapped her husband.

Keyes reads the newspaper and the story about the suicide of Cabal who hanged himself with a piece of I V hose. Another story on the front page by Ricky Bloodworth states that Cabal was "guilty as sin" and got what he deserved. The third story he notes is a small one which tells of the kidnapping of Renee LeVoux, a tourist visiting from Canada. Her boyfriend doesn't remember much as he was knocked out by a blow to the back of his head. The last one, the one Keyes was looking for, tells about a County Attorney, Mitchell Klein, who was thrown down and stabbed on the tongue with a fork while at the Royal Palm Club. It also notes that the victim was unable to comment due to his oral injury. Keyes notes several errors in the story. Keyes stabbed Klein, so he knows many of the facts are incorrect. Still, Keyes realizes it was a foolish gesture on his part.

When Al Garcia finds Keyes, he tells him that the case to find Sparky's murderer is closed with the suicide of Ernesto Cabal. He also admits that he doesn't think that Cabal was the killer, but that it is the start of the tourist season, and everyone wants the case closed so as not to scare off potential tourist dollars. He has one last clue for Keyes: the license plate of "GATOR 2" is registered to the Seminole Nation.

Chapter 8 Analysis

It is made known that Cabal was not Viceroy's partner, and the mystery of the briefly identified "Indian man" is tied in to the story as the Seminole Nation is revealed as the owner of the Cadillac with the license plate, "GATOR 2".

The not-so-hidden humor continues when the stabbing of Klein's tongue by Keyes is called "oral surgery" and used as the reason Klein could not comment on his injury.

Jesus Bernal is introduced and the antagonists in Miami are linked more closely with a dislike for the Cuban leader, Castro. It is made evident that the group doing the Miami murders is a larger, more organized group, most likely led by an Indian with ties to the hierarchy of the Seminole Indian Tribe.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Brian Keyes goes to Jenna's house for dinner, and has a difficult time being in the house with the woman with whom he used to live. It has changed, there is a coffin in the living room, and there are bullet holes in the wall. Evidently Wiley had shot at the wall during a television show about the governor's report on how many people relocate to Miami every day.

Jenna becomes slightly drunk on wine, and extremely seductive. Before she tells Keyes goodnight and goes off to bed, she tells him that he should begin looking for Wiley at the Otter Creek Village, three miles off State Road 84. It is a new development Wiley is very distraught about as he grew up near there when it was a wilderness.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Jenna's sexuality and Keys' love for her are illustrated along with the strange habits of Wiley. More is revealed about Wiley's dislike of the continued development in the Miami area.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

Keyes goes to the Otter Creek Condominiums where Wiley's cabin is. The condominiums feature three buildings slightly slanted to get better views. Each is painted white with canary-yellow trim. The grounds feature a swimming pool and tennis courts along with chairs and umbrellas made of aluminum. He is able to see Wiley's cabin with binoculars, and as he studies it he notices it looks like it has been uninhabited and unused for some time. However, he notices a pair of boots under the outhouse. Keyes begins to look for a boat to get him to the little island.

Garcia's supervisor, Hal Keefe, calls him into his office to lecture him for telling the newspapers that the case relating to the murder of Sparky Harper is still under investigation. They argue about it and then Keefe hands Garcia a letter putting him on limited duty and taking him off the cases he has been working on. He is also told that their chief thinks the letters from *El Fuego* are being created within their own department.

Keyes rents a canoe and finally gets to the island where Wiley's remote cabin is located. He finds no sign of recent life there except the boots which still remain. Just before dark he decides to leave, but, upon pushing the canoe out into the water, he realizes the paddle is gone and he can not move the boat through the growth in the swampy water. Some time after dark a figure appears in the doorway of the cabin, and a few seconds later someone overturns the canoe and he finds himself blinded in the swampy water.

Chapter 10 Analysis

There is a great contrast made between the encroachment of the condominiums upon the wetlands and the Wiley cabin. The reader is given more reason to sympathize with the antagonists than previously, but the mystery of the next step in scaring the tourism industry in Miami is still veiled in a complex web of intrigue.

Garcia makes more of a commitment to Keyes as he decides to state to the newspapers that the Sparky murder case is still under investigation. Some of the Miami police are depicted as naive when they refuse to believe the letters from *El Fuego* are real, and, instead try to cover up any problems which may lose tourist business.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

Keyes wakes up deep in the Everglades in Wiley's camp. He is tied up and is introduced to Wiley's associates who happen to be Viceroy Wilson, Jesus Bernal, and a Seminole named Tommy Tigertail. Tigertail is introduced as the business manager of the Seminole's gambling operation, and worth over five million dollars.

Wiley tells Keyes that the group plans to return the whole of Miami back to the wildlife it was stolen from, and they plan to do it mostly with bad publicity. Keyes is to witness a murder and takes the information back to the newspaper office, making certain it is published so the police and press will begin taking the Nights of December seriously. With that, Wiley asks to have Mrs. Kimmelman brought to him.

Mrs. Kimmelman is a retired resident of the Otter Creek Condominiums who lost her husband recently. However, due to some error by the government, she still receives the Social Security checks just as if he were still alive. She is not well liked as she is somewhat overbearing, so she concentrates her affections on her dog, Skeeter, a registered poodle.

On this particular day she is mad at Skeeter for making a mess on the bedroom floor, so she takes him to the canal where she lets him off his leash to run. Soon he disappears, and she finds herself a mile from home still looking for him. That is when Viceroy and

Jesus show up with her dead dog in a shoebox. Mrs. Kimmelman faints, and when she wakes she finds herself in an airboat.

Mrs. Kimmelman is brought before Keyes and the group forces Keyes and Mrs. Kimmelman through the marsh to a pond. Keyes is to witness her murder and take the news back to the newspapers that *Los Noches* is for real and a danger to everyone in Miami. Tigertail pats the water and calls out in an unusual voice, and soon a large North American crocodile slowly swims toward them. Keyes then realizes what happened to Sparky's legs as Mrs. Kimmelman is thrown into the water with the giant crocodile. Keyes finds himself on the ground after he tries to free Mrs. Kimmelman from Viceroy, and Jesus has stabbed him under his right arm. Mrs. Kimmelman goes under the water in the alligator's grasp.

Chapter 11 Analysis

The gang members are finally introduced as a group with Wiley as its leader. Letting the aging Mrs. Kimmelman represent Florida's infringement on the wildlife of the Everglades in a fight with a nearly extinct crocodile, to determine who is the rightful owner of the wetlands, is symbolic of the actual events which have happened over the last thirty years in Florida.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

After Tommy Tigertail gets Keyes to shore in his airboat, he is finally taken to a hospital on top of a bus, but the briefcase containing the evidence he was given to prove the murders is lost in the swamp. The story that ran in the paper the next day mentioned that Keyes was on a canoe trip when he was abducted by two men wearing wigs and Halloween masks. Viceroy and Bernal are told to go to the Orange Bowl committee and apply for jobs as security guards for the upcoming parade. On the way there in Tigertail's Cadillac, they argue about Bernal's previous experience with a group known as the First Weekend in July. He screwed up several times, including dropping anti-Castro leaflets meant for Cuba on Kingston, Jamaica by accident. That got him ousted from the terrorist group.

When Keyes wakes from a drugged sleep in the hospital, there is a woman lying on top of him in his bed. It is Jenna, who has dressed up as a nurse in order to be able to stay in the hospital past visiting hours. Keyes feels she is acting when she asks what happened, and doesn't believe her when she says that she has not talked to Wiley at all. With that she removes her clothes, one of the tubes connecting him to oxygen, and they make love.

Chapter 12 Analysis

The evidence tying *Las Noches* to the murders is lost, and Keyes gives a false story to Bloodworth, making him look even more foolish than he did previously, with one more totally untrue story based on incorrect facts.

A rivalry between Viceroy and Bernal is revealed, and the two are forced to begin an unusual assignment together.

The romance between Keyes and Jenna is rekindled. Keyes still feels she is using him, but still enjoys making love to him. The reader is left with a question whether or not she is actually interested in him once more or if she is seducing him on orders from Wiley.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

A headline story by Bloodworth makes Wiley and his group feel as if they are finally accomplishing something. It does not list any of their names, but it does connect the four murders together. Unfortunately for Wiley's group, Bloodworth makes one major error in the story. Instead of calling the group *Las Noches de Diciembre*, he made the error of publishing their name as *Las Nachos de Diciembre*, or the Nachos of December.

After reading the story, Cab Mulchay begins to wonder if Skip Wiley is involved. Harold Keefe is concerned that the police hierarchy can no longer cover up the fact that Sparkey Harper's murder may not be solved. He decides to release a police report to the newspapers, television, and radio stations that there is no connection between the murders and that the letters are a hoax. Tigertail is driving in the Cadillac when he hears the news and immediately goes to tell Wiley personally. Wiley decides to let Bernal try to produce a bomb that actually works, and Tigertail is concerned that he will accidentally blow up his Cadillac.

At the Otter Creek Condominiums, people begin to put their units up for sale, and existing contracts for purchase of others are cancelled. Many people rush to leave the area, and Wiley's first dream begins to come true as people begin to panic and leave the complex for safer areas.

When Nell Ballamy comes to the hospital, Keyes is feeling poorly due to the loss of several stitches during his visit with Jenna the previous night. He tells her that her husband was murdered, and that there is no chance of recovering his body. She is accompanied by two Shriners, James and Burt, and they announce that Nell is going back to Evanston, but that they would like to stay and help work on the case as a tribute to Nell's dead husband. It turns out that Burt is very good with a handgun and James has several belts proclaiming his martial arts expertise, plus a pilot's license, so Keyes agrees to let them tag along.

Viceroy Wilson and Jesus Bernal are hired as security guards, and are supposed to be guarding the rehearsal. However, Viceroy stands in the background smoking a joint while Bernal is concerned he'll get fired for smoking. He is also worried about the Cadillac double-parked in front of the Hyatt-Regency with a live bomb in it waiting to be delivered. As they get too close to the stage the M C comes and tells them to move which makes Viceroy unusually unhappy, so he grabs the man's ankles and flips him into the air, with that they leave to find the golf course where the bomb is to be planted.

Chapter 13 Analysis

Wiley's intelligence and understanding of the retirees who are visiting Florida for the winter are shown to be accurate as they begin to sell their units and leave at the first indication that there is a murderer killing tourists.

Keyes takes on two Shriners as assistants who are reluctant to take off their mauve fezzes.

Viceroy and Bernal scout out the Miss Orange Bowl Pageant rehearsal, and the humor continues as it is noted that Tigertail's Cadillac is double parked at the Hyatt-Regency with a live bomb in it waiting to be delivered to the golf course while Viceroy, the security guard for the Pageant, smokes a joint in front of the M. C. during a rehearsal.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

On December 13, Dr. Redmond Courtney is ready to tee off at the Palmetto Country Club golf course. He has few friends, so he is playing with a patient, a schizophrenic named Mario Groppo, and two engineers from the Boeing Company in Seattle. During one unusually good shot with a wedge, Groppo sends the ball deftly into the cup, and immediately the twelfth green blows up in the air with a brilliant orange plume, launching the flagstick like a flaming javelin along with Dr. Courtney who was holding the flag at the time. From some distance off comes a loud voice proclaiming, "*Bon Voyage*, Dr. Goosefucker!"

Keyes goes to Jenna's house to enlist her help in finding Wiley who has just killed three people at the golf course. She refuses, and tells him to leave because she has to catch a plane to see her parents in Wisconsin. He follows her at some distance, and is about to lose her when the Shriners appear and tell him they have everything under control, and that she is going to Nassau on a ticket purchased by the Seminole Nation. Keyes finds out that Wiley is on the plane also.

Chapter 14 Analysis

The wry humor continues as a schizophrenic patient of Dr. Courtney is described during a golf game as hooking the ball on one hole and slicing it on the next. Three people are killed by the bomb planted by Wiley, and the newspapers print the story that day.

Jenna is honest with Keyes about how she feels about him and Wiley both, but lies about where she is going. The Shriners prove to have unique talents that Keyes is forced to admire. However, they get stopped at security at the airport because their fez hats are suspicious, so they lose Jenna before she leaves on a flight to Nassau.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Keyes and the Shriners find Wiley on a beach in Nassau. The first thing Wiley asks is where the Shriners got the neat hats. Then he tells Keyes his plan and why he is so devoted to making the tourists leave the southern Florida area. As they continue to talk they hear sirens in the distance and notice a large group of people surrounding something. Keyes watches as two men wearing fez hats are led away by police. It becomes clear that Wiley has paid the police to guard over his little group, and that the Shriners discovered Viceroy on the beach and tried to detain him. Wiley tells Keyes that the Shriners and their funny hats will be deported as undesirables.

Wiley gives him a clue as to the next murder by saying they are going to violate the most sacred virgin in Miami. Soon after that Wiley blows a whistle three times and four burly policemen arrive to take Keyes to the airport.

Chapter 15 Analysis

Wiley is more organized than he has appeared previously, and two sides of him are revealed. He trusts Keyes and evidently plans to use him in the future, and his assault on the tourism population in order to return the land to nature is becoming an obsession. He appears to want to challenge Keyes to either stop him or to create more publicity for himself and his cause by giving Keyes a clue as to what is to be the next murder. Wiley's target appears to be related to the Orange Bowl Beauty Pageant,

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Kara Lynn Shivers is introduced as the winner of the Orange Bowl Beauty Pageant, and the author makes fun of her interview with the mayor, comparing her to a dumb blond who wants to save world children from hunger.

While Wiley, Tigertail, and Viceroy are in Nassau, Bernal blows up several more people and some greyhounds at the track with bombs. One of the people he hopes to blow up is detective Harold Keefe, but the bomb that is planted in his car only blows off his toes. He secretly hopes these acts will get him invited back to the First Weekend in July group of Cuban terrorists. Wiley orders more killings, and a number of tourists of various backgrounds disappear.

One day Tigertail announces that Pavlov, the North American Alligator they have been feeding, is sick from being away from his native saltwater too long. The group decides to return Pavlov to his home in Biscayne Bay. Pavlov makes his way through the Atlantic Ocean to the Ft. Lauderdale Beach where he goes into a saltwater swimming pool and eats a college boy who jumps off the third floor balcony of their hotel into the pool in response to a dare.

Al Garcia calls Keyes into his office and makes the announcement that he has been put in charge of a task force to find the members of *Las Noches de Diciembre*. Keyes tells him most everything except that Wiley is involved. Then Garcia hands Keyes the morning paper where there is a story on the front page that Wiley has returned to continue his column.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Kara Lynn Shivers is introduced as the pageant's winner and matches the stereotypical image of a dumb blond beauty queen.

Las Noches de Diciembre step up their killings with more bombs and abductions of tourists. The humorous descriptions and adjectives continue also with the bombing of the greyhound racetrack. The lead dog which sets off the bomb is named Blistered Sister, and since it was blown closest to the finish line, it is ruled the winner and pays \$40.60 in a \$2.00 bet.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Wiley's column that is sent from the Bahamas is harmless, and talks about his vacation there as if it were a normal trip. He mentions how the tourists there are bothersome to the locals, but, of necessity, tolerated just as the tourists are tolerated in Miami. Cab Mulcahy tells Keyes that he had no choice but to publish it and Keyes tells him everything, particularly how Wiley is the leader of the Nights of December.

As they continue to talk, they decide one possible way to get Wiley back to Miami is to let Bloodworth rewrite Wiley's next column and then publish it under Wiley's name. They could then get Wiley arrested at the airport. As they talk further, Keyes tells Mulcahy about the plot to violate the sacred virgin, and they figure out that he plans to kill the Orange Bowl queen during the parade on the last night of December.

Chapter 17 Analysis

Keyes and Mulcahy devise a plan to get Wiley to return to Miami by embarrassing him through words in his column. Then they figure out what he plans to do with the Orange Bowl queen during the parade, which coincides with the name of the terrorist group, the Last Night of December.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

Brian Keyes, Al Garcia, Cab Mulcahy, and the Orange Bowl Chairman join several police chiefs, local dignitaries, and vice-mayors to discuss the pending disaster in the chamber of commerce office. They sit around a large oak table that is shaped like a huge orange and painted orange and green. Disagreement stems from the need to find and stop the killers while at the same time keeping the tourists from making a mass exit from Miami.

Mulcahy gives Wiley's next column to Bloodworth to rewrite. It is originally about a fisherman who leaves on a stormy day and never returns. Bloodworth turns it into a major bash against the Bahamian Government for allowing it to happen at all.

Chapter 18 Analysis

The irony continues when it is revealed that the theme of the Orange Bowl Parade this year is, "Tropical Tranquility." The conflict between those who want to find the murders and stop additional ones from happening and those who want the scandal to just go away on its own so as not to scare tourists escalates.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

Keyes goes to the Shiver house to talk to Reed Shivers, Kara Lynn's father. Keyes tells him of the seriousness intent of the Nights of December, and the great risk in being in the parade. Shivers waves away the risk and tells his daughter that they aren't interested in losing the opportunity to participate. However, Kara Lynn wants to hear Keyes side of the situation before they decide. Shivers tells her that it is the most important moment in her life, and that he has contacted Lloyds of London about a kidnapping policy to cover her in case it comes to that. When they continue to argue, Kara Lynn asks to talk to her father alone, so Keyes goes to the game room to wait. It is filled with trophies and mementos of Shiver's golfing.

Kara Lynn finally enters and closes the door behind her. She tells Keyes that she will be entering the parade, partly because if she doesn't, someone else will. Also, her dad wants to see her live on N. B. C, television. Brian informs her that he will be her bodyguard from now until the parade is finished.

It is Christmas Eve Day and Wiley, Viceroy, and Bernal are getting ready to enjoy Christmas Eve Dinner. The newspapers in the Bahamas print Bloodworth's rendition of Wiley's story, and the prime minister himself reads the story. He is embarrassed for his government and order Wiley and his group immediately deported. They decide to go to Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Chapter 19 Analysis

Kara Lynn's father, Reed, is introduced. He is the epitome of the local businessmen whose profits are generated by tourist dollars. He is the reason that Kara Lynn is pushed into the spotlight, and it is him who convinces her to remain in the Orange Bowl Parade.

Bloodworth's rewrite of Wiley's column has the exact affect that Keyes and Mulcahy thought it would.

Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Viceroy, Bernal, and Tigertail are in a warehouse building something out of wood when Bernal calls the First Weekend in July Movement to ask to be taken back by them. The commander refuses, and tells Bernal that he is still the worst bomber he has ever seen, and if he wants to be considered for a return to the cause, he must do something important. Tigertail is despondent that the police have shot and killed Pavlov.

Chapter 20 Analysis

Chapter twenty-one brings the news that Pavlov is dead, Bernal wants to return to his old group of terrorists, and that the men are building something out of wood in a warehouse.

Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Kara Lynn wants to go to her father's club to play tennis, so Keyes has to tag along. When she informs him he will have to play her on the court, he is upset and embarrassed, but has no choice. He is beaten badly, and, in addition, his clothes make him look far inferior to anyone there. However, Kara Lynn seems to like being with him and insists he hold hands with her as they leave. As they do, Keyes spots Bernal sitting on the fender of a Cadillac near Kara Lynn's Volkswagen. Keyes smacks him a couple times with her dad's tennis racquet, and they leave to find a phone to call Al Garcia.

Chapter 21 Analysis

It is evident that Kara Lynn and Keyes are getting along quite well. He even comforts her as they leave the fallen Cuban Keyes has just knocked out with Kara's father's expensive tennis racquet.

Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

Al Garcia's men look all over for Bernal and the Cadillac, but Tigertail has gotten rid of it. Wiley returns and lectures them about their failures during the week, especially pointing out Bernal, his broken teeth, and swollen throat. Then Wiley announces a new plan. They will take not one, but two princesses from the parade. When they leave Bernal vows to execute his own plan, using the third bomb that everyone has forgotten he built but never got a chance to use.

Ricky Bloodworth goes to Garcia's office to get a story, but gets thrown out when Garcia finds he is being recorded. To make matters worse, Bloodworth realizes that Garcia is giving a live interview to a competitor television station. He sneaks back to Garcia's office where he finds an unopened package tied with a perfect bow. He sees that it must be from the Nights of December. Deciding to get even with Garcia, he steals the package and hurries to the nearest men's room where he opens the package. It blows him up along with the entire bathroom.

Chapter 22 Analysis

The Cuban is once more chastised for making a very dumb mistake that hurts the group's cause. He decides to show everyone he can still be effective by mailing the last bomb to Al Garcia at police headquarters. There the terrorist once again is dealt failure as the disliked reporter, Ricky Bloodworth steals the package and blows himself up.

Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

Mr. Cardoza, the owner of the Miami *Sun* calls Cab Mulcahy and tells him to get Skip Wiley's column back because the newspaper should be increasing its circulation because it is the middle of tourist season. He does not give Mulcahy much chance to respond. Soon after Keyes enters his office and breathlessly announces that Wiley left a message on his answering machine that he wants to talk to them both and will call the office. That's when the phone rings with the news that the Nights of December have blown up Ricky Bloodworth.

The bomb blew off Bloodworth's fingertips, scorched his penis, and gave him some burns and temporary deafness. The men's room is all but gone. When Mulcahy and Keyes visit him in his hospital room Bloodworth cannot talk, but refuses to let on in any way that he stole the package from Garcia's desk, and no one figures it out,

Chapter 23 Analysis

The irony of the story continues when it is pointed out that the newspaper depends on revenue from the tourist dollars to help make it profitable, just like many other businesses. The humor also continues as Cab Mulcahy wonders what he will do with a reporter who can't type and is deaf.

Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Keyes hurries back to Kara Lynn's house, and finds Jenna giving Kara a jazz aerobics lesson. They are both surprised to see each other, and Jenna tells Keyes that Kara has been a student of hers for two years.

Later when Keyes and Kara Lynn go out for pizza (against her father's wishes) Kara tells Keyes that Jenna is one of the ones responsible for her getting involved in the Orange Bowl Pageant in the first place. Keyes shudders to himself when he realizes that Jenna has been in on the plan from the beginning. The more they talk, the more comfortable they become with each other. Finally, Kara asks Keyes if he would mind if she kissed him, and they have a long kiss while in the booth at Pizza Hut. On the way home they sit much closer together, and Keyes tries to get her to cancel her appearance in the Orange Bowl Parade, but she insists she must do it. When they get to her house she takes him upstairs to her bedroom.

Chapter 24 Analysis

It is ironic at first that Jenna just happens to be giving aerobic lessons to Kara Lynn. It turns out, however, to have been part of Wiley's plan from its inception. It is made more complex for Keyes as he begins to feel romantic toward Kara Lynn.

Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Wiley has found out that Bernal tried to kill Bloodworth, and is furious that he did so without orders from him. The remaining three agree to continue with the plan, and discuss the helicopter they have hired. Later he calls Mulcahy, and tells him that the next event will happen before the parade, and to watch the skies. Then he hangs up.

A man named Mack Dane who is a newspaper reporter from Tulsa, Oklahoma, is on his first travel assignment. He will be on the Friendship Cruise which is an extravagant event held two days before the Orange Bowl parade on a new cruise liner called the SS *Nordic Princess*. It carries a crew of three hundred, and is full of tourists and travel writers from all over who are supposed to write about the pleasures of vacationing in Miami.

As Mack prepares to take snapshots of a tourist couple from Montreal, Canada, a helicopter approaches with its searchlight on the upper deck of the ship. It trails a banner that says "AVAST AND AHOY: WELCOME TO THE REVOLUTI-," and a man with a bullhorn calls down and asks if everyone is enjoying their vacation, and would they like some souvenirs. The passengers are all excited when expensive shopping bags begin to land on the deck, and many men and women begin fighting over who will get them. As people begin opening them, however, they find that each bag contains a fairly large live snake. As the snakes begin to strike at anything, many passengers begin to panic and jump the seventy feet into the Atlantic Ocean. The helicopter begins a slow arc around the terrorized passengers in the water and begins playing music that can be heard clearly and which resembles the music from *Exodus*. As lifeboats rescue those in the water, the helicopter leaves. However, shortly after, the engine sounds like it is having trouble and the helicopter falls into the water some distance away from the ship.

Chapter 25 Analysis

While it is hinted that Bernal will not return to the Nights of December, it is also hinted that, if he does, he may be killed for his insubordination. The terrorists' next tactic works well as it gets the tourists, travel writers, and politicians from Miami to understand that there is a real threat. It is made more ironic by the use of the better department stores' shopping bags as the tools for delivery of the live snakes. It also appears that there was an accident that may have killed the terrorists and their pilot.

Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

All the tourists from the liner are saved, but the helicopter went down hard and there are no survivors. Later at a press conference in the chamber of commerce office, the facts are provided as far as they are known. It is assumed that Wiley, Viceroy, and Tigertail went down with the helicopter, but there is no word where Bernal might be, but the Orange Bowl Committee does not pursue that question, wanting to let everyone assume the entire group is gone for good.

Keyes and Kara Lynn watch the program on television from her bed. Keyes says that he is not only worried about Bernal, but that Wiley or Jenna might have staged Wiley's death. He is uneasy at the thoughts that rush through his mind, but Kara Lynn tries to reassure him that everything will be fine.

Garcia phones and tells Keyes that he read Wiley's columns from the last several months and realizes that Wiley wrote about each one of the terrorists at different times. Both he and Keyes are skeptical that Wiley went down with the helicopter.

Chapter 26 Analysis

The romance between Keyes and Kara Lynn seems to be real for the time being. The mystery seems to be over, but there is lingering doubt about what has happened to Bernal, and even more questions raised about the whereabouts of the other three terrorists.



Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

As Detective Al Garcia sits in his office thinking about the recent events, his door opens and it is Jesus Bernal with a sawed-off shotgun aimed at him. He tells Garcia that the two of them are going for a ride. Bernal feels that he must make a statement that will get attention of the other Cuban terrorists if he is to rescue his reputation. He has decided that the murder of Garcia is the best way to show his expertise at his chosen trade.

As they go on a very long drive, he and Garcia talk in Spanish, and Garcia decides the best way to handle the situation is to make Bernal as mad as possible, so he begins to belittle his effect as a small-time terrorist. Bernal has the shotgun pointed directly at Garcia as Garcia drives.

Keyes sees them leave the police station and realizes what is happening. He follows them, but finally almost runs out of gas and has to stop for more. In doing so, he is fearful that he will not be able to catch Garcia and Bernal again. Garcia and Bernal have stopped the car in a lonely spot and walk through the brush toward the water nearby. Bernal follows with the shotgun and a police flashlight, and becomes nervous at the thought of returning to the car alone with the wild animals, and no shells left in the shotgun. It turns out that Jesus Bernal is afraid of the dark.

They finally stop and Bernal presents a paper that states that Garcia has betrayed his Cuban heritage. Garcia refuses to sign it and a short struggle develops during which Bernal shoots Garcia in the side. He then tells Garcia to sign the paper, but Garcia is wounded badly and knows by the amount of blood he is losing and the bare bone showing though his torn flesh that he will soon go into shock.

Bernal kicks him into the water and tells him to swim for Cuba. Garcia is paralyzed and can barely keep his head above water, when he hears gunshots and sees Bernal drop to the ground.

Chapter 27 Analysis

Fate takes a major role as Keyes drives up to the police station late Sunday night and watches Garcia kidnapped and forced to drive Bernal away in an unmarked police car. Fate again rises up as Keyes runs out of gas while trying to follow them.

The reader is given more of a sense that Bernal is nothing but a two-bit hood from Trenton, New Jersey, who grew up with an Ivy League father who was a C. P. A.

This continues the irony of the fact that most of the key figures in the story have benefited from the white establishment that, in the Miami area, is made up of tourism dollars.

Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

Keyes carries Garcia back to the car and drives frantically to the hospital. When he arrives Garcia has passed out and is rushed immediately into surgery.

Keyes goes back to the Shivers house where he gets a lecture from Reed Shivers about leaving his daughter. When Kara Lynn walks in and realizes what actually happened and why Keyes is bloodstained, she gives him a big hug in front of her father. He walks away somewhat concerned about the closeness of the hug his daughter has given to Keyes.

Garcia is questioned by the police chief, who wants to know who shot Bernal, but Garcia tells him he is too weak to talk, but he does say that he wants to have a color television brought to his room so he can watch the Orange Bowl Parade that evening.

Chapter 28 Analysis

Keyes and Kara Lynn continue their close relationship, and her father begins questioning her concern for Keyes. Garcia keeps the details of what has happened from his boss, and there is a sense that the parade will not be without some attempted plot by the terrorists.

Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

Kara Lynn's float is titled "Mermaid Magic" and features Kara Lynn sitting on a coral reef at the front while the four runner-up contestants cavort as mermaids in a lagoon behind her. There is a great deal of merriment prior to the parade, even though there are police everywhere, and even some policemen dressed up as Shriners will walk with the float. Keyes is in the passenger seat of the Datsun pickup the float has been built around, and can barely see out. The volume of the migrating sperm whales that accompany the float is deafening, and it is difficult to hear the police radio coordinating the bodyguards. As they turn toward the end of the route, there are several minor incidents, but nothing related to Cuban terrorists.

Garcia gets a call from his boss thanking him and telling him he'll get all the credit that is due him, and they agree to disband the special task force unit. As Keyes leaves the Shiver's house, he tells them goodbye and calls them "Mr. and Mrs. Cleaver." Then Kara Lynn arrives and wants him to go some place with her to make love. She notes she wasn't wearing panties during the parade, and Keyes jokingly tells her that he knows; the view from inside the float wasn't that bad!

Chapter 29 Analysis

The chapter begins with a lengthy historical analysis of Miami when it was known as Fort Dallas. It is pictured as a wild swampland where survival was difficult but where it slowly gave way to development and the pushing back of nature.

The parade ends with no interruptions, but the reader is left with a sense of mystery that will not go away. There has not been any specific closure to the supposed deaths of three of the terrorists. Kara Lynn makes it clear that she has told her friends something about Keyes, and when she tries to get him to go make love with her it is understood that the relationship is still sincere as far as she is concerned.

Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

Wylie's last column is run on the front page of the Miami *Sun*. It apologizes for his actions the last several weeks, but also notes that his actions were with the best of intent; bringing the disappearance of nature from the Florida coast to the forefront of peoples' minds. He mentions that he is in a cheap hotel in Pout-au-Prince with four fake passports and four thousand U. S. dollars.

When Brian Keyes wakes in his office Jenna is there reading the newspaper. She finally admits that Wiley was supposed to meet her that morning but he never showed up. She makes some small advances on Keyes as she mourns the fact that Wiley may actually be dead, but this time Keyes does not melt and remains stoic to her. He tells her he is going to the football game and gives her money to take a cab home.

Chapter 30 Analysis

Wiley's article for the newspaper does not shed any light on the final mystery of the story and nothing new is learned from it. Jenna goes to Keyes after she cannot find Wiley, and is now pictured as someone who will take advantage of whomever is at hand, but finally Keyes is able to ignore her advances.

The reader realizes that there are still forty one pages left in the novel, and, while it appears that all the plots have been tied up, the one of the missing Wiley remains.

Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Summary

The second-string running back for Notre Dame is a not-so-bright boy named David Lee. He has not done well during the first half of the game, and, while going back to the locker room for half-time, he is pulled off the field by a black security guard who just happens to be Viceroy Wilson. He offers Lee a thousand dollars for his helmet and uniform. When Lee stalls, Viceroy gives him another thousand and the deal is made. Lee goes back to the locker room nude and tells the coach he was robbed.

The half-time show is to consist of singing, dancing, and, of course, the ever present fireworks. It is raining fairly hard, but the show continues. Towards the end of the pageantry, the M. C. calls the crowd's attention to the east end of the field and introduces the Orange Bowl Queen, Kara Lynn Shivers. After the introduction, several floats from the previous parade enter to drive around the field. All of a sudden Keyes sees what everyone else sees: there is an unusual and unnamed float following the others.

The float features a scene from the Everglades with a traditional Seminole hut and a live Indian calmly looking out at the crowd from beside an airboat. Keyes realizes it is Tommy Tigertail, and tries to get down from the stands to the field, but is blocked by the large contingent from Nebraska.

Wiley, Viceroy, and the pilot escaped before the helicopter crashed, and were picked up by Tigertail in a speedboat. They then finished the float they had begun some days earlier.

Just before half-time ends, Viceroy Wilson emerges onto the field in a jersey with the same number he had worn as a Miami Dolphin. He runs a straight line down the field with all the people in the stadium wondering what is going on. At the same time Skip Wiley, dressed as the King of Siam, knocks out the M. C. and jumps into the spotlight with the cordless microphone. As he begins a speech, Brian Keyes has finally broken free and is on his way to the field. At the same time the Seminole float begins to shudder unusually. While the Shriners on their motorcycles begin to chase Viceroy, he deftly dodges them, knocking many off their Harleys onto the muddy field to lie in chaos. At that point Viceroy reaches Kara Lynn, grabs her and begins running across the field once more. The airboat lurches off the Seminole float and begins a wild trip across the muddy field. Keyes has gotten close to the field but the armed policemen prevent him from entering it. Two motorcycles continue to chase after Viceroy, but Tigertail maneuvers the airboat to pick him up while he still carries Kara Lynn. The crowd in front of the live cameras finally realizes that this is not part of the half-time show and begins screaming. Burt is one of the Shriners on a motorcycle, and now runs alongside the airboat trying to make Viceroy let go of Kara Lynn. He finally pulls out a small gun and shoots Viceroy who falls. As Tigertail guides the airboat out of the stadium toward a

waiting tractor trailer rig which is set to take the airboat away, he realizes the rain has given him enough water to drive the boat all the way to the river. Keyes and several police arrive at Viceroy's dead body and at the same time, Wiley, still dressed as the King of Siam waves down a taxi outside the stands.

Chapter 31 Analysis

What appears to be the final event planned by the Nights of December takes place with almost flawless execution. It is hinted at in the last sentence of the first paragraph with the statement, "for obvious reasons, the second half of the Orange Bowl game was never played." In perfect irony, the half-time show is entitled, "The World's a State."

Through a brief flashback the author explains the mystery of the helicopter crash and the cohesiveness of the remaining members of the Nights of December.

Chapter 32

Chapter 32 Summary

Keyes rushes to Jenna's house and forces open the locked coffin, but finds no clues there as to Wiley's whereabouts, and Jenna is no help either. Keyes goes to the curb and gets the trash and brings it back into the living room. He finds the newspaper Wiley had last looked at while in Jenna's house a few days previously. It gives him a clue as to where Wiley has gone.

Taking Jenna with him, he goes to a marina and arrives at almost the same time as Tigertail, still with Kara Lynn in the bow. Wiley steps out of the darkness and Tigertail hands him Kara Lynn and tells him he has drugged her and she will sleep for a while. With that the two men say goodbye and Wiley begins to warm up the big boat he has recently purchased.

Keyes drives through the night and begins to realize that Jenna was part of the plan all along, and that her appearance at his office that morning was to keep track of his whereabouts. As they drive, she asks to get out of the speeding car, but Keyes won't let her. She begins to tell him why she left him for Wiley. When they arrive at the marina Jenna's car is there, and she begins to cry and say she knew nothing about Wiley's activities. Keyes gets a fisherman to take them to a place called Osprey Island.

Wiley is the first to reach the deserted little island that holds a light house and a shack where a man once lived all alone. He carries the still body of Kara Lynn to the center of the island where his campsite waits. Wiley starts a small fire after a patrol boat goes slowly by on its nightly rounds. Kara Lynn wakes and tells him his last newspaper article was not one of his best. As they talk, Wiley informs her that this pristine island will soon become another condominium hi-rise, and shows her a newspaper ad telling of the planned development and touting its benefits. He goes on to explain that, at dawn, the entire island will be blown to bits in the first phase of construction. The explosives will be set off remotely by a barge a few miles away. He tells Kara Lynn that there are a number of species of wildlife remaining on the island, and they will all perish. She will be among them as he cannot put her ahead of the native animals that live here.

Soon there is a blast from a nearby thicket, and most of Wiley's right knee disappears, and he drops clumsily to the ground. At that Brian Keyes walks up holding his pistol and puts it to Wiley's face. He demands the keys to Wiley's boat, but Wiley insists he relate a story about Keyes to Kara Lynn before he will tell them where the boat is. It relates to a family whose young daughter was murdered, and Keyes was to get the final story from her parents. When he went to get the interview, he had so much grief over the violent murder of the little girl, instead of talking to them he left and made up the story which ran in the newspaper. As a result, Keyes resigned. Wiley decides he will not tell them where the boat is, so Keyes brings out another surprise for Wiley: Jenna is with him on the island and there are only twenty minutes before the dynamite goes off. Wiley

refuses to leave; instead he leans against the remains of an old flagpole in the center of what was once the cabin's yard.

As Keyes guides the speedboat away from Osprey Island, he, Jenna, and Kara Lynn look back and see an amazing sight. Wiley is trying to climb up a tall pine where an eagle has its nest. He is trying to make it fly away before the blast.

Chapter 32 Analysis

Jenna turns out to be one of the accomplices of Wiley and not just an innocent bystander. Wylie turns out to be extremely dedicated to saving wildlife, and not just through his terrorist acts of violence.

Characters

Theodore Bellamy

"Ted" Bellamy is a tourist from Evanston, Illinois, visiting Miami for a Shriners' convention. After their parade, Ted goes to a strip-tease show, gets drunk, and arrives back at his hotel room at 4:07 in the morning. His wife gets him up at 8:00 to go swimming, and he is promptly stung by some jellyfish. After being treated by two "Life Guards" he doesn't return and is reported missing by his wife. When the Shriners find his fez they assume he has drowned and hold an impromptu prayer service on the beach in his honor.

Nell Bellamy

Nell is Ted's wife who reports him missing to the police, and then organizes the Shriners to look for him. She is a pleasant woman who is persistent in her goal to discover what actually happened to her husband.

B. D. "Sparky" Harper

Sparky is the president of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, and an important person known by many people in the area. He disappears, and his body is found in a red Samsonite suitcase. His legs have been cut off just below the knees, he has a toy rubber alligator stuffed in his throat, and he is dressed unusually in a Jimmy Buffet shirt, baggy Bermuda shorts, and black, wraparound sunglasses such as tourists might wear. He is smeared with coconut suntan lotion.

When Sparky was alive he was just over five-feet-five inches tall, and weighed one hundred ninety pounds, most of the weight being around his middle. He was very likeable and good at his job of attracting tourists and then getting as much money from them during their stays as possible. He was also extremely creative in his advertising campaigns.

Dr. Joe Allen

Dr. Allen is the chief medical examiner in Miami. He is conservative, and has a great deal of experience with autopsies. He is not fond of police investigators watching him as he works but he is admired by everyone.

Ricky Bloodworth

Ricky is a short, bony, newspaper reporter with black hair and a squirrel-like face who is trying to make a name by creating a character for himself so he will be more noticed. He has tried Panama hats, silk vests, a black eye-patch, and other outlandish outfits, but has not succeeded in being noticed for anything but his excessive intake of 7-Up and his incessant drumming of pencils

He is desperate to become a recognized figure in his chosen field and has become almost too aggressive.

Skip Wiley

Skip is a reporter with the *Miami Sun*, and is one of the best known journalists in Miami. He is a gifted writer, but is avoided by the younger reporters due to his unpredictable character. He has high cheekbones, eyes the color of dark coffee, and looks more like an aged Gypsy than a thirty seven year old mirthful reporter. His daily column is responsible for much of the circulation of the paper.

He harbors a desire to return the swamps in the Everglades back to nature, particularly at great cost to the developers whom he feels are to blame for their demise.

His tactics to accomplish his goals go from somewhat bizarre stories to acts of violence.

Jenna

Jenna is a beautiful, seductive woman that was once Brian Keyes's girlfriend, but Wiley stole her away from him. She is the vice-president of the local Sierra club, and is protective of the Everglades. Keyes has difficulty forgetting her, but she remains loyal to Wiley as she sees him trying to make progress towards saving the environment from further development.

Brian Keyes

Keyes is somewhat older and more experienced than his thirty two years shows, and that makes it difficult for him to gain respect in his job as an attorney and a private investigator. He is clean-shaven and has straight brown hair, and stands five-foot ten. Until two years ago he was a reporter with the *Miami Sun*, and has maintained several of his contacts in the department as he became a private investigator, but still has a reputation for being too easily horrified to be a journalist.

Brian understands the desire to create an equalization between wild life and nature and to control growth in the Miami area, but also has an obligation to stop violence and to protect the general population.



Ernesto Cabal

Ernesto is accused of killing Sparky Harper. He is a Cuban who is proud that he can speak English, and has been in this country for sixteen years. He is small and sinewy but tough-looking. His one unique feature is his large, puppy-brown eyes which remain somewhat wet and he has small, yellow teeth. He is obviously familiar with the jail where he is when Brian Keyes comes to help his attorney solve the murder case. Brian notes he has gone by several aliases including Little Ernie and No-Way Jose.

Ernesto has an unusual tattoo on his penis which bears a great resemblance to Fidel Castro.

Al Garcia

Al is a police sergeant Brian Keyes has been friends with for some time. Keyes made a lifelong friend of him when he found that Al's new son-in-law had V D, and helped his daughter get a quick divorce. The two have remained friends, although they are now on different sides of investigations. Al trusts Keyes and tries to work with him in many instances when he should not, due to the sensitivity of some of the cases he investigates.

Harold "Hal" Keefe

Hal is a large red headed detective who supervises Al Garcia. He is trying to advance in the police department by being a good politician rather than through hard work.

Cab Mulcahy

The managing editor of Skip Wiley's newspaper, the *Miami Sun*, is Cab Mulcahy. He is a veteran and it takes a great deal to provoke him. He is thoughtful which is unusual in his business, and he is able to take control of extremely hectic. He likes Wiley but does not trust him at all to do the jobs that are assigned to him.

Cab is a distinguished, slim man, somewhat gray and graceful. He was a foreign correspondent and covered two wars and was even shot at three times and is therefore respected by most of the people in his business.

Mitch Klein

Mitch is the public defender assigned to Ernesto Cabal. Mitch has little desire to continue pursuing the case as he feels it is a dead end and that Ernesto is definitely guilty. He tells Ernesto to plead that way immediately. Brian Keyes comes to despise him for not doing his best to protect his client whom Keyes feels is innocent.



Dr. Remond Courtney

Dr. Courtney is the psychiatrist assigned to study Skip Wiley. He is a professional expert witness and very good at identifying people as crazy. He knows enough not to get rattled when his patients threaten him with unusual things such as radio beams from Venus.

He wears a blazer and a paisley ascot. Dr. Courtney is also someone who is more interested in money than actual psychological analysis, and generally sides with whomever is paying him.

Daniel "Viceroy" Wilson

Wilson was, at one time, a valuable player with the Miami Dolphins and is now thirty six years old, a large black man, two hundred thirty seven pounds and six feet two inches tall. He has gone bankrupt and is reported to be down on his luck. He is evidently the person who posed as a lifeguard and left with Ted Bellamy from the beach. He also sold the Oldsmobile that had belonged to Sparky to Ernesto, and was in the motel where Sparky's body was dressed in tourist's clothes after he was killed. He hits Brian Keyes and knocks him out when he finds him in his hangout at Pauly's Bar.

Since his time with the Miami Dolphins, he has been through three wives, two bankruptcies, lost his own Cadillac, become a heroine addict, and been involved in a near-fatal shooting, but he has kept his powerful physic. He is now an anarchist and believes all crimes done against rich people are acceptable. He has spent a great deal of time reading and this has caused him to become a radical, hoping to cause some serious damage to the white establishment some day. Viceroy realizes that many of the remaining Seminole Indians feel as he does, and he harbors the hope that they will one day rise up against the whites who have stolen their land and their dignity.

Renee LaVoux

Renee is a tourist who is kidnapped from the Seaquarium by Viceroy. She is a thin, pale girl with strawberry blond hair.

David Richaud

David is Renee's boyfriend.

Jesus Bernal

Jesus is the Cuban associate of Viceroy. He was once titled Defense Minister in a group called the First Weekend of July Movement which was an anti-Castro terrorist group. He



is mostly skilled at typing letters which take credit for violent acts the groups claim to have committed, and is now known as *El Fuego*.

Jesus was born in Trenton, New Jersey, to a wealthy certified public accountant that never set foot in Cuba. He grew up doing menial jobs for Cuban groups who were always trying to raise money to fight Castro. During that time he bungled several jobs where he was supposed to blow up specific people and places, and now must endure a reputation as someone who can not do anything right.

Tommy Tigertail

Tom Tigertail is a young Seminole in his twenties, small but very muscular. He has long black hair, high cheekbones, and Oriental eyes. He is the business manager for the tribe's casino gambling operation, and is already worth five million dollars. His money is also what finances *Los Noches*.

He is ever watchful in a quiet way, and never trusting of anything, particularly white people. His heart is with his ancestors and their loss of their lands and dignity. His great-great-grandfather died in a jail in New Orleans while trying to save their lands from the white man's development.

Ida Kimmelman

Mrs. Kimmelman is a retired resident of the Otter Creek Condominiums. Her husband dies, and leaves Ida with a reasonable amount of money, which she increases through an accident when the Social Security Department fail to recognize her husband's death and continue to pay her the monthly check he received while he was still alive.

She is not well liked, and is somewhat overbearing, so she lavishes her love on her dog, Skeeter.

Pavlov the Crocodile

Pavlov is a rare North American Crocodile that Tommy Tigertail has befriended by feeding it. It is symbolic of the reduction of the native animals in the Everglades, lost to development of condominiums and other tourist amenities.

Kara Lynn Shivers

Kara Lynn is one of the finalists of the Orange Bowl Queen contest. She is a beautiful girl who has won many beauty contests, but she is tired of them and now despises the ritual. She is nineteen years old, has blond hair, hazel eyes, is five-foot-eight, and weighs one hundred twenty pounds. Her father is the one who drives her to continue to



excel in the various contests he enters her into. He even changed her name from Kara Noreen to Kara Lynn.

While she has small breasts, she is satisfied with them and has no desire to alter her body with surgery and implants.

Reed Shivers

Reed is the father of Kara Lynn. He lives in an older two-story home next to the Coral Gables golf course. He has a new tan, wears L. L. Bean clothing, and is a tax attorney with big clients. He is extremely proud of his daughter, and pushes her whenever possible to get all the publicity she possibly can.

Mr. Cardoza

Cardoza is the owner of the *Miami Sun*. He also owns stock cars, a soccer team, family cinemas, twenty thousand condom machines, etc. His idea of fun is trying to make money in new and different ways, but he is a thorn in Cab Mulcahy's side. He understands all too well the popularity of Skip Wiley's column and wants it to continue at all costs.

Mack Dane

Dane is on his first travel assignment for the *Tulsa Express*. His first real assignment is the Orange Bowl, and he is going on the Friendship Cruise in honor of Sparkey Harper. He is in his sixties, and has always covered stories relating to the oil industry in the past. He is extremely happy to be in the warmth of Florida for Christmas. He has recently found out that his dog froze on his doorstep in forty-two below zero weather.

David Lee

Lee is a not-so bright second-string running back for Notre Dame who has grades which will not allow him to graduate. He is six-feet-four-inches tall and weighs just under two-hundred pounds.



Objects/Places

Brian Keyes' Office

Brian's office is in an old bank building, and the consulate of El Salvador has an office there, so the other tenants are worried about a terrorist attack and have hired security guards to watch the lobby. Unfortunately, the guards are actually professional burglars who steal all the office machinery of the I. B. M. office. Brian's office contains only a phone with an answering machine, an antique desk, and a fifty-gallon salt-water aquarium filled with catfish. He often sleeps there on an old couch in the corner.

The Flamingo Isles

The "Flamingo" is an old motel which rents rooms by the hour, mostly to tourists and hookers. In room 223 Sparky's clothes are found with the legs of his J. C. Penny suit cut off raggedly, and three empty plastic bottles of Coppertone tanning butter with coconut oil. There is also an empty plastic bag with the name of a souvenir store on it.

Ernesto Cabal's Tattoo

Ernesto has a picture of Fidel Castro tattooed on the tip of his penis. It symbolizes Ernest's dislike of the Cuban ruler and his freedom in the United States from his native country.

Pauly's Bar

Pauly's is a bar in an undesirable part of Miami. It is made mostly of cheap pine with fresh nails and splinters, and its decoration consists of a poster of Victoria Principal with a bourbon stain on her right breast and a football signed by Viceroy Wilson. The long horizontal mirror behind the bar is repaired with the type of tape used to cover cracks during a hurricane. Wilson hangs out there.

The Coffin

Wiley and Jenna have a coffin in their living room. It supposedly contains old newspaper clippings. It is vanilla-colored, the color of a coffin of a pauper. Jenna has tried to conceal what it is by covering it with cocktail coasters, a vase, and magazines, but it still looks strange, especially in the middle of the room.



Otter Creek Condominiums

On highway 84 west of Miami there are several new developments, one of which is the Otter Creek Condominium complex. It consists of three nondescript buildings slightly angled, each five stories high. They are painted white with canary-yellow trim. Each apartment has a very small balcony, and there are many shuffleboard courts, aluminum chairs circling a swimming pool, a tennis court, and ugly umbrellas shaped like mushrooms.

The Wiley Cabin

Not too far from the Otter Creek Condominiums Wiley's family cabin sits alone in the marsh, attainable only by boat. It has plywood walls, a tin roof, a crooked porch, and windows with torn screens. There is also an outhouse.

Wiley's Camp

Wiley and his group are camped in the Everglades in a clearing surrounded by cypress. A sweet-smelling fire burns brightly and throws sparks into the air at night.

The Chamber of Commerce Conference Table

The conference table in the offices of the chamber of commerce is carved into the shape of a huge orange, and painted to match. It is symbolic of what the chamber of commerce has done to nature, as once more they have taken a beautiful piece of natural oak and turned it into a garish monstrosity.

Reed Shivers' Game Room

The Shivers' game room is paneled in dark cork and is filled with Reed's golf trophies, pictures of him with famous people, and a pool table. A wide-screen television covers one wall.

The SS Nordic Princess

The Nordic Princess is a new cruise liner five hundred twenty-seven feet long. It carries seven decks, four hundred cabins, two heated swimming pools, five restaurants, eight bars, a spa, library, and a bowling alley in addition to its slot machines and video arcade. It is crewed by three hundred employees.

The Queen's Float

Kara Lynn's float is made of thirty thousand plastic flowers of gold and royal blue and is titled, "Mermaid Magic." She sits on a coral reef made of plywood, plaster, and chicken wire at the front of the float while behind her are four "mermaids" cavorting in a blue lagoon amidst the music of migrating sperm whales. The entire float is constructed over a Datsun pickup.

The Mystery Float at the Football Game

A mysterious float follows several others onto the field after the introduction of the Orange Bowl Queen. It is somewhat quaint, not quite so polished as the other floats. It is a simple scene from the Everglades containing a traditional Seminole shelter, a half-finished dug-out canoe, a mock fire under a smoldering kettle, and several stuffed animals looking on from a fabricated thicket. The centerpiece is an Indian in traditional dress with a small knife and a toy rifle by his side standing beside a modern airboat.

Osprey Island

Osprey Island is a paddle-shaped island in East Biscayne Bay. The base of the island is hard coral, dotted with a variety of hardwoods. A man who lived there for thirty years planted a row of palms and a stand of pines, then fell ill and had to move back to the mainland. A concrete slab and some upright cypress pilings are all that remain of the house where he lived, and a rusted flagpole stands at a slight angle where the old man had kept the American flag raised. Now it is fifty three acres mostly of scrub, not dense

enough for birds to nest in, but excellent habitat for mosquitoes and crabs. The original dock is gone but a channel has been blasted for small boats to enter, but the freshwater spring still flows clear, and one eagle nests in the top of a tall pine tree.

Osprey Island is to be the site of a new condominium development called the *Osprey Club*. It will have one hundred fifty two units and be seventeen stories tall.

Themes

Mystery

The central theme of the novel is mystery, the mystery of a man who becomes obsessed with returning the Miami, Florida area to nature. The plot and the main characters are clear by halfway through the story; however, the author continues to add more sub-plots which take unexpected turns.

There are several characters who drive the mystery of the story, chiefly Brian Keyes, a newspaper reporter turned private eye. His adversary, Skip Wiley, is a man he once worked with and the two understand each other very thoroughly, creating a match of wits. The plot centers around the methods the two utilize to attain their goals.

The mystery, then, becomes not what the main plot is, but instead, how the characters will play their respective parts in the various subplots woven throughout the novel.

Destroying the Natural Environment

While mystery is the tool the author uses to get the reader's attention, the demise of nature due to man's encroachment is the chief message. The chamber of commerce is the real definable villain, responsible for attracting the masses to Florida, ultimately allowing development into the areas wildlife has called home for centuries. The loss of the wetlands to this development is traced from the time when white men first created a permanent settlement called Fort Dallas, inhabited by people who felt the sun and humidity were deterrents to their lives. A great deal of detail is given in the descriptions of the swamps and the animals that live there. Also, many birds are mentioned as inhabitants forced off the lands due to loss of their food chain. The epitome of this is Pavlov, the North American Crocodile, that symbolizes the wildlife and its lost struggle to survive.

The author has a great deal of personal experience in this area, and has also done research to back up his concerns. Using a murder mystery to get out the facts of the loss of the wetlands and its occupants is both effective and creative.

Humor

Humor is used extensively throughout the novel. The image of a tattoo of Castro on the head of Cabal's penis is not only funny, it is also symbolic of its owner's distaste for the communist government and its affect on the poor Cubans. The many mistakes Jesus Bernal makes in trying to bomb various sites for the First Weekend of July Movement are not witnessed as acts of terrible violence, but instead are seen as humorous pauses in the action. When he mistakenly drops six metric tons of anti-Castro leaflets on Kingston, Jamaica instead of on Cuba, the total ineptness is more than laughable. The

leaflets were propaganda pieces claiming Castro had a venereal disease transmitted only by poultry.

Part of the humor of the story is the irony of the events and their parallels. The image of hundreds of tourists on an excursion boat scrambling for free souvenirs in posh department stores' bags, only to find them full of snakes, is reminiscent of shoppers fighting in a store for bargains.

Style

Point of View

The story is told from the third person point of view, often shifting from character to character, once even from the point of view of an endangered North American Crocodile. The demise of the natural wetlands and the loss of their wildlife is explained in detail through the thoughts of the characters, often during flashbacks where there is a remembrance of the land prior to tourist housing development.

Quoted newspaper columns present specific examples of the characters' viewpoints on the "terrorists'" goals. Much of the hidden message of the story is outlined at the beginning of chapter thirty one in a newspaper article published in the *Miami Sun* on December twenty eighth.

A humorous section is displayed verbatim when the script of the Orange Bowl Parade is revealed and appears authentic, but extremely contrite.

Setting

The overall setting is the Miami, Florida area in December of 1985. Cold weather is setting in on the northern U. S. and the winter "snow birds" are beginning to flock south to Florida. The mood of the novel is set as a conflict arises between the chamber of commerce, local politicians, and the police and their need to protect the locals and tourists alike from a suspected terrorist organization. Many of the specific settings are also humorous such as the conference table in the chamber of commerce offices which is shaped and painted like a naval orange.

The specific settings are often areas where nature has been violated by property development, due to increased tourism. One such place is the edge of the Everglades where, in one block condominiums are rampant, and the next block is relatively dense marsh-filled forests and uncharted lagoons. A variety of wildlife exists in and around the swamps while the condominiums are populated by part-time residents who wear obnoxious clothing and own yapping dogs. Another example is Osprey Island which at the time of the story is undeveloped, but the day after the story ends is dynamited to make way for a new condominium development.

A great deal of activity happens in the *Miami Sun's* newsroom, the offices of the Miami police department, and the conference room of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce.

The setting of the final act by the terrorists is the Orange Bowl where the football game begins, and is preceded by the Orange Bowl Parade, both dependent upon a prosperous tourist season.



Language and Meaning

The language is modern English with some Spanish slang. There are many Spanish words, however they are not difficult to translate. When Al Garcia and his captor, Jesus Bernal talk, the reader is told that they are actually speaking in Spanish.

Ernesto Cabal talks to Brian Keyes and says, "See, I was driving dees car and the policeman, he pull me over on a routine traffic stop... and told me I'm driving a stolen be-hickle. An the next thin I know I'm in jail and dey got me charged with first-degree murder and everythin else."

Language is often used to highlight a humorous incident such as when the greyhound named, "Twisted Sister," is blown up on the greyhound track. Vocabulary is often used humorously as when Sparky Harper is defined as a man who "positively excreted congeniality." Use of common words heightens the humorous vision as when it is learned that "Although no contraband was found, one of the German shepherds peed all over the Columbian Coffee Queen and the float immediately was withdrawn."

An error in translation also changes the name meant to bring fear into those who hear it, as *Las Noches de Diciembre* becomes, "*Las Nachos de Diciembre*," changing their name from the Nights of December to the Nachos of December.

An instance when a Cuban looses some of his teeth and then tries to talk in his Spanish accent results in, "Mank God," muttered Jesus Bernal. "Idth aah turding duh thid." The author tells us that Jesus is trying to say, "*It's all turning to shit.*"

Structure

The story consists of thirty-three basic chapters, and in six places there are three horizontal stars. The first of these is on page two hundred eighty-nine, and changes the direction of the novel more significantly than is usually done in the same chapter.

One unusual insertion occurs on page three hundred sixty five when the words "Osprey Island" appear in very large, bold, type in the last chapter.

The essential plot is told in chronological order. However, there are many flashbacks throughout the novel, often to explain the historical significance of the events.

Quotes

"See, I was driving dees car and the policeman, he pull me over on a rountine traffic stop ... and told me I'm driving a stolen be-hicle. And the next thin I know I'm in Jail and dey got me charged with first-degree murder and robbery and everythin else." Chapter 2, p. 14.

"So what we're talking about is blind luck. Some Beach cop nails the guy for running a traffic light and, bingo, there's Mr. Sparky Harper's missing automobile." Chapter 3, p. 20.

"I think your little scuzzball client is *El Fuego*, but I also think he didn't dream up this scheme all by his lonesome. I agree with you: Cabal ain't exactly a master criminal, he's a fuckin' burglar, and not very good at that. This whole thing sounds like a bad extortion scam, and our pal Ernesto, he don't have the brains to extort a blow-job from a legless whore. So he had help." Chapter 7, p. 54.

"I think this disappearance is part of a plan. I think he intends to embarrass the newspaper in some extraordinary way." Chapter 7, p.63.

"I got mad. Klein went to see Ernesto yesterday and told him the case was locked. Told him he didn't have a chance. Told him to plead guilty or they were going to charbroil him. Ernesto wanted to fight the charges but Klein told him to quit while he was ahead. Ernesto was going nuts in jail, all the queers chasing him. He had that incredible tattoo on his joint. The one I told you about." Chapter 8, p. 74.

"Somebody's snatching tourists, "Garcia said, "and all you guys want to do is cover up. I got a better idea: why don't we just go out and catch the goddamn kidnappers? Come on, Hal, it'll be fun. Just like the old days, back when you were a cop and not a two-bit office politician."

"Relax," Wiley said. "Just a raccoon. My constituency, Brian. Along with the eagles, the opossums, the otters, the snakes, even the buzzards. All of this belongs to themj, and more. Every goddamn acre, from here west to Miami Beach and north to the big lake, belongs to them. It got stolen away, and what we're going to do ..." Wiley made a fist and shook it. "...is get it back." Chapter 11, p. 103.

"The nachos?" Nell Bellamy asked. "But why would they want to kill my husband? He's just a realtor." Chapter 14, p. 146.

"*Bon Voyage, Dr Goosefucker!*" the voice sang out. Welcome to the Revolution!" Chapter 15, p. 156.

"He gets paid to be himself," Cardoza sail. "A small fortune, he gets paid. And here it's Christmas week, tourist season, when our circulation's supposed to shoot sky-high, and where's our star clean-up hitter? Every day I pick up the newspaper, and nothing. No

Skip Wiley. The *Sun's* dead without him. Lies there like a dog turf on my front lawn."
Chapter 24, p. 241.

"If you ever get down to Haiti," Wiley said, "look me up in the phone book. Under "E" for exile." Chapter 33, p. 354.

Topics for Discussion

The author is making a point about the advancing pressures on the wild life and flora and fauna in Florida. What is the message you got from his story?

What does the character of "Sparky" Harper symbolize?

The "character" of Pavlov, the crocodile, represents what kind of possible future for wild animals in Florida?

Discuss the role of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce in the author's message.

Cuban people play a significant role in the Miami area and two Cuban men have important roles in the story. Contrast the roles of the two men, one who grew up in Cuba and migrated to the United States, and the other, a graduate of a recognized American college.

Explore the author's use of humor. Give three examples where the details of brutal acts are lightened with humor.

There is a great deal of irony in the story, such as when Nell Bellamy asks why the "Nachos" would want to kill her husband who is only a realtor. What is the irony in her statement?