Snow Falling on Cedars

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF DAVID GUTERSON

David Guterson was born May 4, 1956. He grew up in Seattle, Washington, and later earned a degree in English literature as well as an MFA in creative writing from the University of Washington. He began his career as a writer publishing short stories and essays, and he taught high school before he was able to support himself with his writing. Guterson wrote *Snow Falling On Cedars*, his best-known work, over the course of 10 years before the school workday began, during the early morning hours. *Snow Falling on Cedars* earned him the 1995 PEN/Faulkner award, and it was made into a film in 1999. Guterson's published works since *Snow Falling on Cedars* include *East of the Mountains* (1999), *Our Lady of the Forest* (2003), *The Other* (2008), and *Ed King* (2011). Today, he lives on Bainbridge Island with his family.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The plot of *Snow Falling on Cedars* unfolds across the backdrop of World War II and the Internment of Japanese Americans in the United States. Following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, fearing espionage, ordered the forced relocation of between 110,000 and 120,000 people of Japanese descent living in the United States to internment camps located in the western United States. Over half of those relocated were *citizens* of the United States. They were met with wretched living conditions, such as overcrowding, harsh climates, and wholly inadequate living conditions. The socio-economic conditions of Japan in the latter half of the 19th century and into 20th century resulted in a significant increase of Japanese citizens leaving the country in search of more profitable opportunities elsewhere. Hundreds of thousands of these immigrants arrived in the U.S. mainland, settling mainly on the country's western coast. As the Japanese-American population grew, so too did tensions between Japanese Americans and white Americans. In 1908, the Gentlemen's Agreement (an agreement between the U.S. and Japan) banned the immigration of unskilled laborers. The cruelty directed at the U.S.'s Japanese population following the attack on Pearl Harbor, thus, exaggerated already existent tensions. *Snow Falling on Cedars* traces the origins, sudden heightening, and dire consequences of this institutional racism.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Snow Falling on Cedars features a fictionalized portrayal of real moments in history, namely World War II and the internment of Japanese Americans in the United States that occurred shortly after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. Other works of literature—both fictional and nonfictional—that deal with this moment in history are Julie Otsuka's 2002 novel *When the Emperor was Divine*, and Jeanne Wakatsuki's 1973 memoir, *Farewell to Manzanar*. Some prominent examples of literature focused on WWII more generally are Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), and Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948). The intricacies of Kabuo Miyamoto's trial are also a large part of *Snow Falling on Cedars*. In this respect, the novel may read within the crime fiction genre. Some examples of literary crime fiction are William Faulkner's *Sanctuary* (1931) and Annie Proulx's *Accordion Crimes* (1996).

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *Snow Falling on Cedars*
- **When Written:** 1980s-1990s
- **Where Written:** Washington, United States
- **When Published:** 1994
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary American Literature
- **Genre:** Novel
- **Setting:** The fictional San Piedro Island off the coast of Washington
- **Climax:** Ishmael Chambers discovers that Kabuo Miyamoto did not murder Carl Heine, and must decide whether to disclose this information to the court or to keep it to himself.
- **Antagonist:** Kabuo Miyamoto
- **Point of View:** Third Person

PLOT SUMMARY

In the San Piedro **courtroom**, on December 6, 1954, the trial of Kabuo Miyamoto is underway. Kabuo, a local fisherman of Japanese descent, is accused of murdering Carl Heine, another local fisherman. Carl, a war veteran, is well-liked in the community and embodies the ideal, revered San Piedro fisherman: he is respectable, quiet, and he keeps to himself. San Piedro is a small-knit (though judgmental) community of strawberry farmers and fishermen, and Kabuo's trial brings to light the racist undertones that cut through the islands foggy, **cedar**-covered landscape.

Like Carl Heine and the rest of San Piedro's fishermen, Kabuo is reserved and restrained. However, Kabuo's Japanese ancestry causes much of the courtroom to regard his calm, unreadable demeanor in a more negative light. Especially since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, San Piedro residents have

adopted a malicious, skeptical, and racist attitude towards their Japanese neighbors. Kabuo's trial, and the evidence that leads to his initial arrest, demonstrates the great impact biased "facts" have on the islanders' notion of larger truths.

Informing the court's opinion of Kabuo's demeanor and guilt, too, is the land feud between Kabuo's and Carl's families that is thought to be Kabuo's primary motivation for murder. Before the war, Kabuo's father, a sharecropper, had purchased seven acres of land from Carl Heine Sr., Carl's father. When the Miyamotos are forced to relocate to an internment camp after the attack on Pearl Harbor, they miss their last two payments. Soon after this, Carl Sr. dies. His wife, Etta, gains control of the land. Unlike her husband, Etta is hateful and bigoted, and sells all of the land before Kabuo, returned from his imprisonment and military tour, can have a chance to reclaim what is rightfully his. As Kabuo harbors resentment towards Etta for her cruel decision to sell the land, the prosecution claims that this was Kabuo's motivation for killing Carl, despite the fact that the two were friends as children.

Covering the trial is Ishmael Chambers, the editor of San Piedro's only paper, the *San Piedro Review*. Ishmael's a 31-year-old WWII veteran who lost an arm in battle and hasn't quite recovered from the psychological traumas he incurred during his military career. Ishmael's father, Arthur Chambers, founded the *Review*, and was a widely respected man of acute "moral meticulousness," who took great care in reporting the island's news. Though Ishmael would like to emulate his father's character, his cynical attitude holds him back.

Further fueling Ishmael's cynicism is his lovesickness for Hatsue Miyamoto, Kabuo's wife. Through flashbacks, the reader discovers that Ishmael and Hatsue engaged in a passionate teenage romance just over a decade ago. Due to the prejudiced views many islanders held towards the Japanese, the couple had to hide their relationship. Hatsue, the daughter of Japanese immigrants, was forced to conceal her relationship with Ishmael from her family. When she could no longer bear the moral anguish of living a double life, she broke up with Ishmael. Soon after this, Hatsue and her family were forced to relocate to an internment camp. There, she married Kabuo Miyamoto, whom she loves, and whose Japanese ancestry allows her to honor the obligations she has to her family. Ishmael considers Hatsue's abandonment and subsequent marriage to Kabuo to be betrayals of the highest order, and he exists in a constant state of anger because of it.

The night before Kabuo's verdict is to be delivered, Ishmael goes down to the lighthouse to research a story on the severe **snowstorm** that unfolds alongside the trial. There, he uncovers radio transmission logs that reveal the truth of Carl's death. Kabuo hadn't murdered Carl, Ishmael discovers; rather, a series of coincidental events led to Carl being thrown from his boat by the wake of a giant freighter.

Ishmael struggles to decide what he should do with the logs. He knows that a morally upstanding man and journalist—such as his father was—would recognize the necessity of coming forth with the truth. Still, Ishmael initially keeps the logs to himself. Withholding the logs, he reasons, will result in Kabuo's likely indictment. It will also allow him to get back at Hatsue for constant state of misery he lives in as a result of her abandonment. In the end, though, as the jury deliberates, Ishmael presents the radio transmission logs to the court. Kabuo is exonerated of the charges brought against him, and Ishmael, freed of his cynicism and lovesickness, can finally become the upstanding, truthful man he's wanted to be.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Ishmael Chambers – Ishmael Chambers is the owner and sole reporter of San Piedro's only newspaper, the *San Piedro Review*. Ishmael's father, Arthur Chambers, founded the newspaper, and Ishmael often compares himself to his late father, feeling disappointed and resentful for not actively living up to his father's "moral meticulousness" as a reporter. As a young person, Ishmael Chambers had argued with his father over the difference between "truth" and "facts": his father had argued for a looser version of truth, picking and choosing facts to spin into a larger narrative "truth," while the young Ishmael had naively believed that "facts are facts" and that it was wrong to be selective about which ones to report. Today, Ishmael's cynicism prevents from looking thoughtfully at the world, and he writes only banal and insignificant pieces for the paper. Ishmael was drafted and fought in World War II, during which a bullet cost him his arm. He harbors feelings of bitterness towards his injury and overall involvement in the war. Compounded with the injury is his perpetual lovesickness for Hatsue Miyamoto, with whom he had a passionate romance in adolescence. Society's disapproval of interracial relationships and the heightened racism inflicted towards people of Japanese descent during WWII forced the couple to meet in secret, often in the safety of a hollow **cedar tree**. Hatsue couldn't bear to lie to her parents, and also never felt that things were "right" when she was with Ishmael, so she broke off the relationship abruptly. Over 10 years after their break-up, during the novel's present day, Ishmael still harbors pain and resentment over the breakup, and this causes him to almost hold back information that would exonerate Hatsue's husband, Kabuo Miyamoto, who is wrongly accused of murdering Carl Heine, a local fisherman. Ishmael ultimately comes to terms with his heartbreak and learns that he must and strive to live as morally, truthfully, and happily as he can.

Hatsue Miyamoto (Hatsue Imada) – Hatsue Miyamoto is the wife of Kabuo Miyamoto, the man accused of Carl Heine's murder. She is known on San Piedro for her remarkable beauty.

Hatsue was first Ishmael Chambers's friend, and later, his teenage love. Because of the heightened prejudice against people of Japanese descent during WWII, the young couple was forced to keep their relationship secret. Hatsue broke off the relationship when the pain of lying to her family and to herself became too much for her to bear. Despite her feelings for Ishmael, her love for him was imperfect: she always nursed doubts about their relationship and felt torn between her desire for him and her duty towards her family and heritage. Because of this, Hatsue eventually marries Kabuo Miyamoto, who is also of Japanese descent, because their union feels "right" to her. Throughout the novel, Hatsue struggles to reconcile the duty she feels to honor her Japanese heritage with her desire to be part of the larger society. Hatsue wants to embrace her Japanese identity, but she also dreams of a world free of prejudice, where her ethnicity wouldn't matter as much as it does. She takes refuge in nature, which lies beyond the grasp of society's prejudices. Hatsue has a withheld quality to her personality. She keeps her thoughts to herself, and it's often hard for other characters, like Ishmael, to know what she is thinking.

Kabuo Miyamoto – Kabuo Miyamoto is a fisherman and the husband of Hatsue Miyamoto. Kabuo is accused of the murder of Carl Heine, another local fisherman. Kabuo struggles with anger and the power of fate throughout the novel. He killed four German soldiers during WWII, and he feels that the unfair murder trial is fate's way of punishing him for these forced acts of violence. And, because his great-grandfather was a samurai, Kabuo spends much of the novel believing that he, too, is destined to be violent and angry. Kabuo often feels that he has no ability to influence of the course of his life. Because of this resignation, Kabuo maintains an unreadable demeanor. He initially believes this will orient the jury in his favor—that his calm face reflects a soul that is focused and moral. But Kabuo receives only prejudiced interpretations of his demeanor from the jury, whose racism is a product of their personal bigotries, as well as a widespread racist perception of individuals of Japanese descent during WWII. Kabuo loves his wife, Hatsue, and their two children, but he has been cold and alienated since coming back from the war. His alienations stems from psychological trauma he incurred as a soldier in WWII, but he also harbors resentment toward the Heine family for selling the strawberry field acreage his father had bought under the table from Carl Heine, Sr. before the war.

Carl Heine, Jr. – The fisherman around whose murder trial the novel is centered. Carl Heine was friends with Kabuo Miyamoto, the accused, in childhood. The two grew distant after the war, due to Carl's Mother, Etta's, bigotry toward people of Japanese descent, but also because of Carl's personal prejudices. Carl was WWII veteran and, like his mother, harbors prejudices against people of Japanese descent. Before Carl's death, Kabuo approached the man, wanting to buy back his family's land. Carl seemed to want to do the right thing and sell the land to Kabuo, but his prejudices initially held him back. When he was alive, Carl often struggled with expressing himself, and Kabuo feels he and Carl were very much alike in this respect. The reader ultimately discovers that Carl wasn't murdered, but, rather, was tragically thrown from his ship and drowned in a most unlikely accident.

Carl Heine, Sr. – Carl Heine, Jr.'s father. He died of a heart attack in 1944. Carl Sr. owned and worked land before his death. He was a good, principled man who—unlike his wife, Etta—did not succumb to the widespread bigotry against people of Japanese descent. In his lifetime, Carl Sr. secretly sold seven acres of his strawberry field to Zenhichi Miyamoto, Kabuo's father, as it was illegal for non-citizens of Japanese descent to own land in the U.S. at the time.

Etta Heine –Carl Heine, Sr.'s wife and Carl Heine Jr.'s mother. She is hateful and prejudiced against people of Japanese descent. She is from Bavaria and still speaks with an accent. Etta lived on San Piedro until her husband's heart attack in 1944. After Carl Sr.'s death, Etta moves and sells her husband's strawberry fields—including the seven acres of it that had belonged (albeit, secretly) to the Miyamoto family. When Kabuo Miyamoto approaches Etta about the land after the war, she refuses to help him. Etta also testifies against Kabuo Miyamoto in court, claiming that Kabuo holds a vicious grudge against her and her family for selling his family's land and that this motivated him to murder Carl.

Ole Jurgensen – The man to whom Etta Heine sold Carl Sr.'s strawberry fields—including the Miyamoto family's share of seven acres—after the war. Ole doesn't seem to have much against Japanese people, but he's not sure what to do when Kabuo Miyamoto comes to him after the war explaining that Etta Heine had essentially stolen his family's land away from them when they were forced to relocate during the war. He testifies in Kabuo's trial.

Arthur Chambers – Ishmael Chambers's late father. He was the founder and sole reporter of San Piedro's only newspaper, the *San Piedro Review*. Before his death from cancer, he was a highly regarded member of the island community. Before becoming a reporter, Arthur fought in World War I and later worked as a logger. In life, Arthur was well-read and a lifelong learner. He believed that truth isn't immediately apparent—often, people have to look deeply and carefully to discern truths that lurk in the gray areas of life. Arthur tried to make his son, Ishmael, see the truth in this way, too, but his son was obstinate and unconvinced of his father's philosophies on truth versus facts. After Pearl Harbor, while other most islanders became very prejudiced against people of Japanese descent, Arthur wrote newspaper stories that drew on the positive contributions of the island's Japanese community.

Fujiko Imada – Hatsue's mother. She was sent to the U.S. to

marry Hisao Imada, who is much poorer than he'd led her to believe. Fujiko has had a difficult life, but she's worked hard to get where she is, and she has always kept her suffering to herself. She is weary of the white islanders and tries to teach her children about the inherent difference between the Japanese and the *hakujin* (white people). She is critical of Hatsue's confidence in her own wants, needs, and identity. She advises her daughter that it is best not to express the fleeting feelings of the heart, and that it is preferable to dwell and suffer in silence.

Mrs. Shigemura – A woman with whom young Hatsue studies traditional Japanese culture. Like Fujiko, Mrs. Shigemura emphasizes the differences between the Japanese and the *hakujin* (white people). Hatsue often thinks back to what Mrs. Shigemura taught her when she feels torn between her love for Ishmael and her duty to honor her family.

Zenhichi Miyamoto – Kabuo Miyamoto's father. Zenhichi trains Kabuo in the art of Kendo and teaches him about the family's Samurai past. He buys seven acres of land from Carl Heine, Sr. before the war, but is unable to complete payments on the land when the Miyamotos are forced to relocate after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Philip Milholland – The radioman that records the S.S. *Corona*'s radio transmissions the night of Carl's death. His notes from this night provide evidence that Carl drowned when the large freighter's wake threw him from his fishing boat. Milholland was transferred to another position the day after Carl's death, and his records are unknown until Ishmael discovers them.

Josiah Gillanders – The president of the San Piedro Gill-Netters Association. He testifies at Kabuo's trial, stating that a man would only board another man's boat in the event of an emergency. It would be ludicrous, he states, for a man to board another man's boat on the open sea to execute a pre-meditated murder.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Susan Marie Heine – Carl Heine Jr.'s wife. She is a beautiful woman who had a very active sexual relationship with her husband. The prosecutor, Alvin Hooks, sees Susan Marie as a valuable witness, as her fetching physique will be very persuasive to the males of the jury.

Helen Chambers – Arthur Chambers's wife and Ishmael Chambers's mother. Like her late husband, she seeks to uncover the larger truths that lie beneath plain, unexamined facts. Helen sees how bitter and unhappy her son is and encourages him to move on with his life.

Judge Llewellyn Fielding – The judge in Kabuo Miyamoto's murder trial. He's very tired throughout the trial and worries that he hasn't performed to the best of his abilities. He reminds the jury of the importance of reaching a verdict "beyond a reasonable doubt."

Art Moran – The County Sheriff. He and his deputy, Abel Martinson, discovered Carl Jr.'s corpse, and he testifies at Kabuo's trial. Moran has some animosity towards the coroner, Horace Whaley, who mocked him for "playing detective."

Abel Martinson – Art Moran's deputy. He and Art were the ones who found Carl Jr.'s corpse.

Horace Whaley – San Piedro's coroner. It's his job to objectively determine the cause of Carl Heine's murder, but he deposits his own prejudiced beliefs onto his autopsy report. He testifies in Kabuo's trial.

Dr. Sterling Whitman – The hematologist who analyzes the blood found on Kabuo's boat.

Nels Gudmundsson – Kabuo Miyamoto's defense attorney. He feels sympathetic towards Kabuo, even after he learns that Kabuo had been initially untruthful with him regarding his whereabouts and interaction with Carl Heine the night of Carl's death. He appears old and awkward in court.

Alvin Hooks – The prosecutor in Kabuo Miyamoto's murder trial. He uses racist rhetoric to appeal to the jury's inherent prejudice against Japanese people.

Ed Soames – The bailiff in Judge Fielding's courtroom.

Hisao Imada – Hatsue's father. He is a poor strawberry sharecropper but cares for his family. Hisao is sent to a work camp in Montana before his family is deported to Manzanar internment camp.

Sumiko Imada – Hatsue's sister. While the family is at Manzanar internment camp, Sumiko intercepts a love letter Ishmael sent to Hatsue. Sumiko brings the letter to their mother, Fujiko. Sumiko's action precipitates Hatsue's eventual decision to break off her relationship with Ishmael.

Alexander Van Ness – The sole member of Kabuo Miyamoto's jury who is on the fence about Kabuo's guilt. Van Ness repeatedly challenges the jury to see the extent of reasonable doubt present in the case against Kabuo, but they are unable to see past their prejudices.

Evan Powell – The chief petty officer of the lighthouse. Ishmael initially visits Powell to investigate records for a story on the **snowstorm**.

Levant – The radioman at the lighthouse who helps Ishmael with the coast guard's records. He tells Ishmael that Milholland was transferred the day after Carl's death.

Army First Sergeant Victor Maples – The sergeant who trained Kabuo. He witnesses Kabuo's kendo expertise and ends up studying the Japanese martial arts under Kabuo. He testifies at Kabuo's trial, offering his opinion that Kabuo is capable of killing another man.

Mr. Oshiro and Robert Nishi – Friends of the Imada family. Hisao Imada consults with them when tensions between the Japanese community and the white San Piedro islanders

escalate after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

The Ichiyama Family – The Ichiyamas own a theater in town. They have a negative interaction with Otto Willets, a white islander, when they accidentally leave their theater lights on during a blackout.

Otto Willets – A fisherman who unscrews the Ichiyama family's theater lights when they leave them on during a blackout.

Eric Bledsoe – A soldier Ishmael fights with during WWII. He watches Eric bleed to death.

Leonard George – A gill-netter who testifies at Kabuo's trial.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

RACISM AND PREJUDICE

Snow Falling on Cedars takes place before, during, and after World War II on the fictional island of San Piedro off the coast of Washington in the United States. During this time, Japan's alignment with Nazi Germany resulted in a tremendous amount of prejudice within the U.S. against its Japanese population. The bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese military in 1941 escalated these existing racial tensions. Fearing espionage and the possibility of future attacks, the government ordered the relocation of people of Japanese descent to internment camps across the western United States, which the novel gives a fictionalized account of. In *Snow Falling on Cedars*, Guterson suggests that prejudice towards Japanese people during WWII had a deep and lasting impact on American society, as demonstrated by the racially motivated trial and investigation that befalls Kabuo, a fisherman of Japanese descent, when he's accused of the murder of Carl Heine.

One marked example of prejudice in the novel is the double standards applied to stoicism, or enduring life's hardships quietly and without external signs of suffering. When the novel's white characters are silent, it's perceived as a marker of their inner strength and character. Guterson reveals early on that "on San Piedro the silent-toiling, autonomous gill-netter became the collective image of the *good* man. He who was too gregarious, who spoke too much and too ardently desired the company of others, their conversation and their laughter, did not have what life required." Among the islanders, silence among white fishermen is seen in a positive light, a signal of quiet strength. The late Carl Heine is an example of one of these revered, silent white men. Art Moran, the sheriff, observes: "He was silent, yes, and grave like his mother, but the war had a part in that […]." Moran sees Carl's unreadable demeanor as acceptable and even expected.

In contrast, the islanders are immediately suspicious of Kabuo's silence, revealing their underlying prejudice against him as a man of Japanese descent. The prosecutor Alvin Hooks's closing statement paints Kabuo as a "strong, cold, unfeeling man." While islanders see silence as an indicator of good character in white men, Kabuo's silence is somehow menacing, suggesting that that this is actually an issue of race. Hooks implores the jury to "Look into his eyes, consider his face, and ask yourselves what your duty is as citizens of this community." When he asks the jury to "consider his face," he draws the jury's attention to Kabuo racial difference—not necessarily his stoic facial expression—playing on the prejudice he knows the jury holds. Guterson further exemplifies this double standard as the jurors convene after the lawyers' closing statement to discuss the case's verdict. One of the jurors remarks: "Wouldn't put it past him, […] The man looks damn sly to me." Like Carl Heine, Kabuo is a fisherman, a quiet man, and a World War II veteran. But unlike Carl, Kabuo's race prevents him from receiving the benefit of the doubt.

Kabuo had initially believed his stoicism would make him appear favorably in court, but he soon recognizes his naiveté: "It had seemed to Kabuo that his detachment from this world was somehow self-explanatory, that the judge, the jurors, and the people in the gallery would recognize the face of a war veteran who had forever sacrificed his tranquility in order that they might have theirs. Now, looking at himself, scrutinizing his face, he saw that he appeared defiant instead." The court's racial bias prevents them from seeing Kabuo's silence in a positive light.

Prejudice plays out outside of the murder trial, as well. Throughout the novel, ethnic German islanders' potential loyalty to Nazi Germany is never even considered while the ethnically Japanese islanders' allegiances are called immediately into question. Despite the fact that the Japanese islanders had been their fellow workers, neighbors, and friends, most white islanders feel no remorse when residents of Japanese decent are forced to uproot their lives and relocate to concentration camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, reasoning "that this exiling of the Japanese was the right thing to do," and "that the Japanese must go for reasons that made sense: there was a war on and that changed everything." In the eyes of many white islanders, race alone is enough to be skeptical of their Japanese neighbors. But not all of the white islanders were born in America; in fact, Carl Heine's mother, Etta (who harbors immensely hateful prejudices toward the Japanese islanders) is from Germany and speaks with a thick accent. Following the logic of many white islanders, that "there was a war on and that changed everything," ethnic Germans should be equally suspicious. Yet none of the prejudice directed

at Kabuo, his family, and the rest of San Piedro's Japanese population is extended to the island's ethnic Germans. Islanders take for granted their German neighbors' loyalty to the U.S. because these people are white and of European descent. In other words, because the German characters *look* more stereotypically American (that is, white) than the Japanese characters, it's assumed that they are more committed to upholding American ideals and values.

The prejudice exhibited on San Piedro shows that racism is not an amorphous set of discriminatory beliefs, but is a serious warping of perspective that can result in real, lasting consequences. For Kabuo Miyamoto, the San Piedro residents' racism results in a biased, unfair trial that robs him of many months of his life. The residents' racist double standards and hypocrisies demonstrate the extent to which prejudice saturates the fabric of a society, even infiltrating its institutions and norms.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF WAR

Guterson's depiction of wartime violence in *Snow Falling on Cedars* isn't limited to the confines of the battlefield; on the contrary, the novel's characters who fought in World War II feel the psychological effects of the war from a distance and long after armistice has been declared. Ishmael Chambers, San Piedro's only journalist and the book's protagonist, feels perpetually alienated and embittered by the arm he lost in battle; Kabuo Miyamoto, the fisherman brought to trial for the murder of fellow fisherman Carl Heine, feels immense guilt over the violent acts he was forced to commit as a solider. At present, both men find themselves struggling to return to the normalcy of their pre-war lives, demonstrating the devastating long-term consequences of war.

Throughout the novel, Ishmael Chambers feels antagonized by his missing arm and the unsolicited looks of pity it brings him. He feels othered and out of place among the urban population of Seattle, where he attended college, and even among the fellow islanders he's known all his life. Ishmael fixates constantly on his missing arm, often feeling alienated by the way it makes him stick out to others: "He was keenly aware of his pinned-up sleeve, and troubled because it troubled other people. Since they could not forget about it, neither could he." Ishmael's missing arm—and the response it generates—serves as a constant reminder of a war he'd rather forget. The war also makes Ishmael bitter and unfriendly towards others. He admits that "He didn't like very many people anymore or very many things, either." Even though the war has long been over, the violence it inflicted on Ishmael remains embedded in his soul.

Though Ishmael would like to move forward and live up to the revered, virtuous image of his father—who was also a journalist—his bitterness in the wake of World War II holds him back. Ishmael longs to be like his father, who was a well-respected figure on San Piedro. Ishmael describes his late father, Arthur Chambers, as "deliberate in his speech and actions" and "morally meticulous." After his father's death from cancer, Ishmael took on the responsibility of running the local newspaper, but he's remained unable to tend to the position with his father's level of moral meticulousness. Ishmael wants to emulate his father's morality, but he remains too fixated on the past: "though Ishmael might strive to emulate [his father], there was nevertheless this matter of the war—this matter of the arm he'd lost—that made such scrupulosity difficult. He had a chip on his shoulder." Ishmael strives to become the virtuous, precise man his father once was, but the grudges he harbors towards the war prevent him from doing so. Ishmael might've taken on his father's occupation, but he is only going through the motions. The war's psychological impact renders him unable to live in the present, diminishing his ability write and act with his father's sense of moral obligation and integrity.

Kabuo Miyamoto is also forced to shoulder the long-term effects of the war, as he anguishes constantly over the murders he was forced to commit as a soldier. As Kabuo sits in his jail cell during the murder trial, he ponders the state of his broken soul: "He knew himself privately to be guilty of murder, to have murdered men in the course of war, and it was this guilt—he knew no other word—that lived in him perpetually and that he exerted himself not to communicate." Kabuo's actions during the war have had lasting repercussions. Even though he's not guilty of the murder he's on trial for, he's haunted by all of the other murders he's committed, which makes him feel like he's deserving of punishment. Kabuo's initial decision to withhold from his defense attorney and from the court the truth of his whereabouts and interaction with Carl Heine the night of Carl's death reflects the depth of his guilt. Kabuo feels such remorse for the German soldiers he killed during the war that he believes he has no right to defend himself now. Like Ishmael, the psychological trauma Kabuo incurred during the war persists into the present day. Through these two men—one brimming with bitterness and the other riddled with guilt—Guterson makes a larger narrative comment about the tragedy of war. Even though World War II has come to a close, the violence, hatred, injustice, and pain bound up in war is sutured into the bones of the soldiers, who are forced to carry their war-related baggage day in and day out for the rest of their lives.

CHANCE VS. CHOICE

Many of *Snow Falling on Cedars*'s characters find themselves frustrated and at the mercy of forces that are beyond their control. Ishmael is embittered by the arm he lost in the war and by his inability to win the heart of Hatsue Miyamoto, Kabuo's current wife and Ishmael's ex-girlfriend from adolescence whom he's still in love with. Meanwhile, Kabuo Miyamoto believes his wrongful imprisonment is fate's way of punishing him for the murders he

committed as a soldier during World War II. Both characters have little faith in their ability to exercise any amount of genuine control over their lives. As a result, both Kabuo and Ishmael shut down, refusing to act of their own accord, and believing that any agency they exercise is for naught. Guterson, though, forces his characters either to submit to chance or to choose their own destiny, suggesting that choice does exist. Even though it often seems like the universe determines people's fates for them, Guterson suggests that people *do* have some level of control over their lives and must act of their own accord when the opportunity to do so arises.

Kabuo believes that being accused of murder is fate's way of making him pay for the violent acts he committed as a soldier. As he sits in his jail cell and considers his unjustified arrest, Kabuo thinks, "Perhaps it was now his fate to pay for the lives he had taken in anger. […] Everything was conjoined by mystery and fate, and in his darkened cell he meditated on this and it became increasingly clear to him." Kabuo interprets the trial as fate punishing him for the murders he committed as a soldier. Kabuo's family history informs his interpretation—as he comes from a family of samurai and warriors, he thinks that the violence in his family's past means he is simply fated to be violent. When he first started his training in *kendo*, his proclivity for the art was immediately apparent: "It was said by many in the Kendo Club […] that the boy, Kabuo, had the stronger fighting spirit and a greater willingness to draw on his dark side in order to achieve a final victory. It was only after he'd killed four Germans that Kabuo saw how right they were, how they had seen deeply into his heart with the clarity of older people." Kabuo recognizes the ferocity with which he is able to kill enemy soldiers as an inevitable, fated part of his personality. Kabuo continues to speculate: "He was a warrior, and this dark ferocity had been passed down in the blood of the Miyamoto family and he himself was fated to carry it into the next generation." When Kabuo initially chooses not to come forward with the truth to his defense attorney and to the court—choosing not to tell them that he had encountered, and helped, Carl Heine the night of his murder—it is because he believes his actions are useless in the face of fate. To Kabuo's mind, the trial and indictment are all part of fate's larger plan for him. For much of the novel, Kabuo resigns himself to accepting that his life is at the mercy of fate. He chooses not to come forward with the truth because he feels his actions will have little impact against the stronger, uncontrollable forces of the universe—but his inaction nearly costs him his freedom.

Ishmael must choose between chance and choice when he discovers a crucial piece of evidence that could exonerate or indict Kabuo. Ishmael initially entertains the notion of keeping the information to himself, thus using his fateful discovery to entertain the possibility of winning back Hatsue while her husband rots in jail. When Ishmael goes down to the lighthouse to gather records for a newspaper story about the ongoing **snowstorm**, he discovers the coast guard's notes from September 15. The notes reveal that an "enormous freighter," the S.S. *West Corona*, had gotten turned around in the thick fog the night of Carl's death. The thickness of the fog and the spottiness of the radio signal caused the *Corona* to "plow[] right through the fishing grounds." By the end of his investigation, Ishmael realizes that Kabuo hadn't murdered Carl: through a precise series of coincidental events, Carl had been hit by wave caused by the *Corona*, knocked from his own ship, and drowned. In this moment, Ishmael realizes that he and he alone holds the evidence necessary to exonerate Kabuo of a crime he almost certainly didn't commit—a crime that wasn't really a crime at all, but a fated accident. Fate, it would seem, is what killed Carl Heine. But fate, too, placed this crucial piece of evidence in Ishmael's hands. Out of anger at the toll fate has taken on his life up until this point, Ishmael initially decides to withhold this information from the court. Should he withhold the logs from the court, he reasons, Kabuo would be sent to jail, and Ishmael might have a chance at winning back his long-lost love. In the end, Ishmael's cynicism nearly prevents him from making the right decision.

Ishmael ultimately decides to show Judge Fielding the Coast Guard's log. Ishmael's dilemma (to keep the information to himself, or to present it to the court) shows that the world occasionally offers one *some* semblance of control over their own fate. When this happens, Guterson suggests, one must rise to the occasion and choose. Guterson emphasizes this point in the last lines of the novel: "Ishmael gave himself to the writing of [the news article reporting Kabuo's exoneration], and as he did so he understood this, too: that accident ruled every corner of the universe except the chambers of the human heart." So much of life is mysterious and outside of one's control—the best one can do in life is to make the morally right decisions when given the chance to choose.

FACTS VS. TRUTH

So much of *Snow Falling on Cedars* centers around a quest for the truth. The jury of San Piedro undertakes one such quest when they are tasked with determining whether Kabuo Miyamoto is innocent or guilty of Carl Heine's murder. Throughout the novel, Guterson investigates the ways that facts may be interpreted differently depending on the truth people want to believe, given their various prejudices and personal motives. In the novel, Guterson argues that truth is not clear cut and objective; instead, truth is subject to interpretation and can be trimmed and tucked to fit the narrative a person wants to create or perpetuate. And, since truth is subjective, Guterson also suggests that one must think critically about why they believe what they do.

Guterson establishes the conflict between facts and truth early in the novel, when Ishmael recalls an argument he had years ago with his father, Arthur Chambers, who had founded and

reported for the *San Piedro Review*, the island's sole newspaper. The argument concerned the process by which his Arthur chose which facts to select for publication in the *Review* and which to leave out. Ishmael recalls his father's coverage of prejudice directed at the Japanese islanders during the war: "Arthur printed the sheriff's message. He printed a notice from the defense authority telling Japanese nationals on San Piedro that as of December 14 they could no longer ride the ferries. Twenty-four men, he wrote in a news article, had been named by Larry Phillips to be the civilian defense auxiliary fire force, including George Tachibana, Fred Yasui, and Edward Wakayama." Arthur Chambers, Ishmael's father, printed the names of these three men in particular in order to stick up for the Japanese Americans on San Piedro island, to paint them in a positive light in a time of heightened prejudice. Arthur explained: "Yes I did, I singled those three out. […] Not every fact is just a fact, […] It's a kind of…balancing act. A juggling of pins, all kinds of pins, that's just what journalism is about." In Arthur's eyes, journalism is about *contextualizing* facts so that they form a larger truth. A journalist has to emphasize certain facts and omit others in order to tell a story. But Ishmael disagreed. "That isn't journalism," he responded to his father. "Journalism is just the facts." Arthur challenged his son, though, asking, "But which facts? […] Which facts do we print, Ishmael?" Arthur believed that people instinctually impose a narrative onto the facts they observe, leaving out some and playing up others in order to fit the truths they want to believe; his job as a journalist, therefore, is to decide which "truths" the people need to hear. In this instance, Arthur arranged his facts to support the narrative that the Japanese citizens of San Piedro are not traitorous spies, but loyal Americans doing their part to protect the country—a truth, Arthur felt, many of the prejudiced islanders were unwilling to see.

The bias involved in Carl Heine's autopsy demonstrates another instance in which a subjective interpretation of facts is molded into "truth." Guterson states that, as San Piedro's coroner, "It was [Horace Whaley's] duty to find out the truth." Although Horace's task seems to be objective in nature, he is quick to construct a *subjective* narrative of the truth that implicates Kabuo Miyamoto in Carl's murder. When Horace discovers "the wound to the skull over the dead man's left ear," his thoughts immediately turn to Kabuo and the Japanese martial art of *kendo*. Horace generalizes: "The majority of Japs […] inflicted death over the left ear, swinging in from the right." Fueled by prejudice and referring to Kabuo with an ethnic slur, Horace constructs an autopsy report that implicates Kabuo in the death from the start. While Horace constructs his autopsy report around physical, factual pieces of evidence found on the corpse, the choices he makes in his examination are fueled by a narrative he chose to believe in: that most of the Japanese people he encountered in the war inflicted wounds of this sort, that Kabuo was Japanese and fought in the war, and that, therefore, this wound must have been inflicted by Kabuo, thus implicating him in Carl's murder. In fact, the wound on Carl's head was caused by Carl's own ship, and the death was accidental. Horace hadn't bothered to consider this as a possibility, though, as he was already invested in his subjective version of the truth.

As the residents of San Piedro are tasked with determining Kabuo Miyamoto's guilt or innocence, they must also grapple with the larger issue of determining their own assessments of what constitutes the truth. Some, like Horace Whaley, never pause to consider the way their own prejudices influence their grasp of what is true or false. Others, like Ishmael Chambers, discover that defining and reflecting on truth is more complicated than simply regurgitating the facts. Ultimately, the characters to whom Guterson extends the most sympathy are those who have learned to recognize their limited perspective and see beyond their personal, subjective versions of the world.

DUTY VS. DESIRE

The struggle to choose between one's sense of duty and one's desires is a central theme of *Snow Falling on Cedars*. While most characters eventually accept the necessity of honoring duty over desire, they arrive at this conclusion on vastly different terms. Often, marginalized characters recognize their obligation to duty far sooner than those of a privileged racial identity. The opposite ways Hatsue Miyamoto and Ishmael Chambers reflect on their secret relationship illustrates this point. In flashbacks to their adolescent affair, Guterson reveals that Hatsue, who is the daughter of Japanese immigrants, fears that her relationship with Ishmael, who is white and American, diminishes her ability to honor her family and cultural heritage. In contrast, Ishmael is more idealistic. He believes, naively, that love can conquer all, ignoring all of the social problems and prejudices that stand in the way of their romance. Through Hatsue's and Ishmael's different perspectives on love and duty, Guterson highlights how following one's desires—especially when it means abandoning one's duty to their family or culture—is a privilege that marginalized people don't often have.

Ishmael Chambers acknowledges the societal ills that complicate his relationship with Hatsue—such as the heightened prejudice against people of Japanese descent during WWII—yet he chooses to ignore them. He uses the ineffable power of love to validate acting on his desires. Because of this, Ishmael can't relate to Hatsue's hesitations about their relationship. He doesn't understand Hatsue's conflict between desire and honor, due, in large part, to his idealistic notions about love: "I don't care what else happens," he tells Hatsue, "I'm always going to love you." To Ishmael, the power of love is enough to validate their relationship. Ishmael insists that outside obstacles "don't really matter." He believes that "love is the strongest thing in the world […] Nothing can touch it. Nothing comes close. If we love each other we're safe

from it. Love is the biggest thing there is."

Unlike Hatsue, Ishmael's desires aren't complicated by any outside obligations. His privilege allows him to make decisions based solely on his own desires. When Hatsue tells Ishmael that continuing their relationship without her family's knowledge makes her feel "evil," Ishmael objects. "How can this be evil?" he asks Hatsue. "It wouldn't make any sense for this to be evil. It's the world that's evil, Hatsue, […] Don't pay it any mind." Ishmael's observation is true, of course: the world's racism *is* objectively wrong. Still, Ishmael's belief that Hatsue can simply ignore the societal ills that complicate their relationship is reflective of the privilege that allows him to subscribe to such idealism. Should the couple's secret relationship come to light, the consequences Ishmael would incur are significantly lesser than those Hatsue would face. Hatsue could lose her family—her primary source of comfort and belonging in a place that immediately rejects and others her based on her ethnicity.

Unable to reconcile her love for Ishmael with the moral guilt she feels for deceiving her parents, Hatsue is far less optimistic about the future of the couple's relationship. The social ills that are so easy for Ishmael to ignore factor heavily into Hatsue's decision to break off the relationship in the name of honor and obligation. Hatsue doubts the morality of her desire for Ishmael from the very start of their romance, recognizing that her instinctual desire for Ishmael contradicts her duty to honor her family. Society's disapproval of interracial relationships forces the couple to go behind their parents' backs. Hatsue know her parents will disapprove, and she feels guilty and immoral for deceiving them. Hatsue struggles to come to terms with the incongruity of her heart: the more she acts on her desires, the less she is able to act on her obligations. Hatsue confesses to Ishmael that deceiving her family "made her feel she had betrayed them in a way that was nothing less than *evil*." Hatsue's choice of the word *evil* underscores the intensity with which outside forces weigh on her as she contemplates her relationship.

After the government sends Hatsue's father to an internment camp, Hatsue's mother, Fujiko, instructs her daughters to accept the hate, darkness, and injustice of their present world, evidenced by the *hakujin*'s (white people's) hatred for the Japanese. Hatsue, thinking of Ishmael, protests that not *all* of the *hakujin* hate the Japanese. But Fujiko stands her ground: "These are difficult times. […] Nobody knows who they are now. Everything is cloudy and unclear. Still, you should learn to say nothing that will cause you regret. You should not say what is not in your heart—or what is only in your heart for a moment." Fujiko's words resonate with Hatsue, and she sees the futility of navigating her inner conflict between her duty to her family and her desire for Ishmael: "Who was she to say how she felt?" Hatsue realizes. "What she felt remained a mystery, she felt a thousand things at once, she could not unravel the thread of her feelings with enough certainty to speak with any accuracy. Her mother was right, silence was better. It was something—one thing—she knew with clarity." Fujiko teaches Hatsue that one's desires are rarely separate from one's obligations. When she advises Hatsue against saying "what is only in [her] heart for a moment," she suggests to her daughter that it's more important to act pragmatically and honorably than to act one's fleeting emotional impulses. Through Ishmael and Hatsue's conflicting responses to the adversities that threaten to dismantle their love, Guterson explores who can afford to act on their desires and who cannot.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

SNOW

Snow—and more specifically, the snowstorm that unfolds over the course of Kabuo Miyamoto's murder trial—represents all that is beyond the ability of humans to control. It also brings to light the distinction humans must make between the things they can (and should) change in life, and the things they have no ability to change. In other words, snow evokes the conflict between choice (things one can control) and chance (things that are beyond one's control) that so many characters grapple with throughout the novel. *Snow Falling on Cedars* contains multiple references to the storm's uncontrollable nature. One such reference comes from Judge Fielding's final remark to the jury before they begin their deliberations: "The storm […] is beyond our control, but the outcome of this trial is not." In his remark, Fielding reminds the jury that it's the *choices* they make that will determine the outcome of Kabuo's trial—not the random forces of the universe that governs the snowstorm. Throughout the novel, Guterson evokes snow or the snowstorm to differentiate between the things humans can control and the things they cannot, and the task of determining over which forces they have the ability to exercise control and agency.

THE CEDAR TREE

The cedar tree represents the absence of society's pressures and prejudices. In *Snow Falling on Cedars*, cedar trees—and, to a larger extent, nature as a whole—exist in a realm untouched by humans. Throughout the novel, characters retreat to nature to escape the ugliness and unfairness that plagues them in their daily lives on San Piedro Island. As young lovers, Ishmael Chambers and Hatsue Imada retreat to the haven of a hollow cedar tree to be together in a prejudiced society that won't permit their interracial

relationship. Hatsue, who spends much of her childhood torn between the American and Japanese parts of her identity, visits the cedar tree to be alone with her thoughts. When she is in the cedar tree and in nature, she doesn't have to feel stuck between two worlds: she can simply be herself. In *Snow Falling on Cedars*, Guterson evokes the cedar tree to underscore a contrast between the ugliness of San Piedro's often prejudiced, alienating culture and the capabilities humans have to transcend the limitations these prejudices create.

THE COURTROOM

In the novel, the courtroom symbolizes humanity's task of determining the truth from the limited (and often imperfect) facts to which it has access. The world that the residents of San Piedro inhabit is one dictated by bias, cruelty, and the whims of chance. Still, these people are tasked with determining—with certainty—whether Kabuo Miyamoto is innocent or guilty of a brutal murder. Their job isn't easy, and at times, Guterson seems to doubt that that humans can ever really separate themselves from the subjective truths they've come to accept as objective fact. For example, despite the reasonable doubt present in the prosecution's case against Kabuo, many jurors believe that the "fact" of his Japanese ethnicity is enough to convict him of murder. Their idea of the "truth," thus, is colored by deeply prejudiced "facts." When Guterson shifts the narrative back to courtroom or the trial, he means to draw the reader's attention more explicitly to this battle between fact and truth.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Vintage edition of *Snow Falling on Cedars* published in 1995.

Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ All in all, Art decided, Carl Heine was a good man. He was silent, yes, and grave like his mother, but the war had a part in that, Art realized. Carl rarely laughed, but he did not seem, to Art's way of thinking, unhappy or dissatisfied.

Related Characters: Carl Heine, Jr., Kabuo Miyamoto, Art Moran

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 16

Explanation and Analysis

Art Moran, San Piedro's sheriff, reflects on Carl Heine's personality as he and his deputy, Abel Martinson, investigate Carl's boat. Art sums up Carl's personality simply and swiftly: he knows Carl to be "a good man." Despite Carl's "silent" and "grave" demeanor, Art seems easily convinced of the integrity of Carl's personality—even the parts of himself that he masks with silence and gruffness. Art readily dismisses the questionable parts of Carl's character, reasoning that "the war had a part in" Carl's lack of humor and outward warmth.

In short, Art gives Carl's silence and seriousness a confident benefit of the doubt. This approving, nonjudgmental assessment of Carl is seen in countless other characters throughout the novel. Such a lack of judgment isn't so wrong in and of itself; however, when one compares the lack of judgment directed at Carl to the overabundance of judgment directed at Kabuo Miyamoto, a man who may also defined by his silence and veteran status, one starts to notice a glaring sense of hypocrisy. Carl's white, insider status allows his silence to be accepted. In contrast, Kabuo's Japanese, outsider status invites only fear and judgment.

Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ An unflagging loyalty to his profession and its principles had made Arthur, over the years, increasingly deliberate in his speech and actions, and increasingly exacting regarding the truth in even his most casual reportage. He was, his son remembered, morally meticulous, and though Ishmael might strive to emulate this, there was nevertheless the matter of the war—this matter of the arm he'd lost—that made such scrupulosity difficult.

Related Characters: Ishmael Chambers, Arthur Chambers

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 34-35

Explanation and Analysis

Ishmael Chambers reflects on his late father as a man and as a reporter. When Arthur returned to San Piedro from serving in WWI, he founded and wrote for the *San Piedro Review*. After Arthur's death from cancer, Ishmael assumed his father's position at the paper, but he performs this inherited role with considerably less success and care than his father did. For Arthur, the principles of journalism were a reflection of the principles of life. In life and in journalism, Arthur believed, every decision one makes has the ability to shape and transform the world.

When Guterson writes that Arthur was "increasingly

deliberate in his speech and actions," he means that Arthur understood the importance of words and their ability to manipulate one's perception of the truth and shape how one sees the entire world. Arthur was aware that people conceive of the truth though "speech and actions," therefore it was important for him to provide a balanced, "morally meticulous" representation of speech in the stories he published in his newspaper.

Arthur's belief in words and ideas stems from a larger belief that individuals have the ability to transform and influence their surroundings. The reason that Ishmael cannot live up to his father's standard, and the reason he finds "scrupulosity difficult" after the war, is because he's lost faith in his own ability to influence what hardships and misfortunes befall him. He believes that everything is up to fate, so there's no real point in being "morally meticulous" like his father. Ishmael's struggle to overcome this cynicism is a key point throughout the novel.

> His cynicism—a veteran's cynicism—was a thing that disturbed him all the time. It seemed to him after the war that the world was thoroughly altered. […] People appeared enormously foolish to him. He understood that they were only animated cavities full of jelly and strings and liquids.

Related Characters: Ishmael Chambers

Related Themes:

Page Number: 35

Explanation and Analysis

Ishmael Chambers reflects on the cynicism that colors his view of humanity after he returns from WWII. In particular, Guterson describes how an exposure to extreme violence caused Ishmael to adopt a cynicism towards humans and the power they hold to shape their own lives. Ishmael served in the Marines during WWII, during which time he suffered an injury that cost him his left arm, and the violence he witnessed in battle leaves him bitter and uninterested in life. Ishmael notes that his "veteran's cynicism" traumatizes him "all the time."

Ishmael can't help but be "disturbed […] all the time" because the war has completely "altered" the way he relates to the world around him. Before the war, Ishmael had had more faith in his ability to harness the world around him. He believed in the power of his love for Hatsue, and in his ability to dictate the course of his life using a strong sense of self and determination alone. The war destroys these beliefs for Ishmael, and he sees them now as confused, naïve delusions.

People seem "foolish" to Ishmael after the war because he no longer believes that human choice has any impact on one's life. What he once saw as power or determination he now sees as "foolish[ness]." His former belief in free will and individual determination seems "foolish" given the reality the war has shown him, that people "[are] only animated cavities full of jelly and strings and liquids." The violence of war makes Ishmael believe that humans are weak and at the mercy of the world around them, a belief that he will later use to excuse his own immoral behavior.

> Thus on San Piedro the silent-toiling, autonomous gill-netter became the collective image of the *good* man. He who was too gregarious, who spoke too much and too ardently desired the company of others, their conversation and their laughter, did not have what life required.

Related Characters: Carl Heine, Jr., Kabuo Miyamoto, Art Moran

Related Themes:

Page Number: 38-39

Explanation and Analysis

As Sheriff Art Moran heads down to the docks to interrogate other gill-netters to find out more information about Carl Heine's mysterious death, Guterson gives the reader context for what kind of people gill-netters are and how they are regarded by San Piedro's general population. Gill-netters are perceived as "silent-toiling" and "autonomous." In other words, they keep to themselves and their work, and they do not demand attention from anyone else.

On San Piedro, these hardworking, self-effacing qualities are seen as "the collective image of the good man." In contrast, islanders are skeptical of the "gregarious" and the chatty. They are suspicious of people who are too eager to spend time with others. San Piedro residents seem to believe that, if one needs the "conversation and laughter" of other people to be happy, their character is flawed in some crucial way, and they lack the toughness and self-sufficiency required in life.

The qualities attributed to and revered in San Piedro's gill-netters evoke those typically associate with the archetypal, idealized American man: he is practical, hardworking, and

self-effacing. Carl Heine embodies these characteristics, and thus is seen as a respected, honest member of the community. Kabuo Miyamoto also embodies these revered characteristics; however, San Piedro does not extend the same warmth and respect to Kabuo. While Carl Heine's autonomy and silence is revered, Kabuo's is seen as suspicious and sinister.

Guterson establishes the ideal characteristics of the San Piedro gill-netter in order to illustrate the double standard applied to them: these supposedly valued characteristics are rendered meaningless when a non-white character possesses them.

Chapter 5 Quotes

Carl Heine's dark struggle, his effort to hold his breath, the volume of water that had filled the vacuum of his gut, his profound unconsciousness and final convulsions, his terminal gasps in the grip of death as the last of the air leaked out of him and his heart halted and his brain ceased to consider anything—they were all recorded, or not recorded, in the slab of flesh that lay on Horace Whaley's examination table. It was his duty to find out the truth.

Related Characters: Carl Heine, Jr., Horace Whaley

Related Themes:

Page Number: 55

Explanation and Analysis

As Horace Whaley, San Piedro's coroner, performs an autopsy on Carl Heine's corpse, he contemplates the last moments of Carl's life. Horace imagines the final moments of Carl's life in great detail. The portrait Horace paints in his mind is one of intense, tragic suffering.

Guterson immediately brings Horace and the reader back into the reality of the present moment when he writes that Carl's last moments of life "were all recorded, or not recorded, in the slab of flesh that lay on Horace Whaley's examination table." That is, Horace's ability to project his imagined version of Carl's last moments of life onto the lifeless corpse that lies on his operating table shows the extent to which Horace's feelings color his ability to conduct an objective, unbiased autopsy.

The statement that "it was [Horace's] duty to find out the truth" suggests that his job as a coroner requires him to be factual and objective in his examination. However, the emotion and intensity with which Horace imagines Carl's last moments show that it is nearly impossible to present a "truth" unblemished by emotion and subjectivity.

Chapter 7 Quotes

The fishermen felt, like most islanders, that this exiling of the Japanese was the right thing to do, and leaned against the cabins of their stern-pickers and bow-pickers with the conviction that the Japanese must go for reasons that made sense: there was a war on and that changed everything.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 79

Explanation and Analysis

After Pearl Harbor Day, the United States government gave orders for the relocation of people of Japanese descent to internment camps across the western United States. On March 29, 1942, San Piedro's white fishermen stand on the docks, watching as their Japanese neighbors are loaded onto a ferry to be sent to these camps.

Guterson uses language that draws on the white islanders' level of assurance: he describes their "conviction" that relocation is the right action to take, that they must expel their Japanese neighbors "for reasons that ma[ke] sense." The fishermen seem to know with certainty that the government is right to relocate the Japanese.

Throughout the novel, Guterson plays with the distinction between truth and facts. Characters assess facts differently depending on a variety of external factors, including prejudice, anger, and fear. Prejudice often causes characters to turn a blind eye. Fueled by a biased worldview, they neglect some facts and exaggerate others in order to arrive at a version of the truth that aligns itself with what they *want* to be true.

In this instance, the fishermen, "like most islanders," are certain that expelling the Japanese is the right thing to do, even though they don't specify exactly how the war has changed things. In the wake of Pearl Harbor Day, islanders live in fear of another attack. As a result, they become desperate to embrace a "truth" that will allow them to feel comfortable, safe, and protected. "Exiling [] the Japanese" seems like "the right thing to do" because it creates this illusion of safety they desperately desire.

Chapter 8 Quotes

The inside of the tree felt private. He felt they would never be discovered here. […] The rain afforded an even greater privacy; no one in the world would come this way and find them inside this tree.

Related Characters: Hatsue Miyamoto (Hatsue Imada), Ishmael Chambers

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 111

Explanation and Analysis

As Ishmael Chambers watches Hatsue Miyamoto in the courtroom, he remembers the beginnings of their passionate teenage romance. Specifically, he recalls following her through the woods when they were teenagers, after they'd spent the afternoon picking berries at the Nittas' farm. Hatsue had ducked into the trunk of a hollow cedar tree. Seeing that Ishmael had followed her, she invited him to join her.

To Ishmael, the inside of the tree is "private." It burdens the teenagers with none of the expectations or obligations that they must shoulder when they are at school or with family. The tree is so private that Ishmael thinks "they [will] never be discovered here." The extent to which Ishmael sees the tree as a protective force is such that he exaggerates its possibilities for privacy, stating "no one in the world could come this way and find them inside this tree." On this rainy afternoon, Ishmael and Hatsue will confess to their feelings for each other, and from then on they will use the tree as a place to meet.

Because Ishmael is white and Hatsue is Japanese, they are forced to keep their relationship secret. Hatsue's family advises her not to become intertwined with the *hakujin*, or white people. Beyond this, many islanders hold prejudiced views of their Japanese neighbors—views that become more extreme after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. The cedar tree—and nature, more generally—offers Hatsue and Ishmael an escape from the prejudice and injustice that colors the rest of their world.

Chapter 11 Quotes

What could he say to people on San Piedro to explain the coldness he projected? The world was unreal, a nuisance that prevented him from focusing on the memory of that boy, on the flies in a cloud over his astonished face […] the sound of gunfire from the hillside to the east—he'd left there, and then he hadn't left. […] It had seemed to Kabuo that his detachment from this world was somehow self-explanatory, that the judge, the jurors, and the people in the gallery would recognize the face of a war veteran […]. Now, looking at himself, scrutinizing his face, he saw that he appeared defiant instead.

Related Characters: Kabuo Miyamoto

Related Themes:

Page Number: 154

Explanation and Analysis

As he sits in his jail cell, Kabuo anguishes over how grossly the jury has misread his intentions. Though he wanted them to see "the face of a war veteran," they saw instead only a "coldness" and "detachment" in his facial expression.

Kabuo's cold, unreadable face is a symptom of his psychological battle scars. He suffers a "detachment from [the] world" because he remains stuck in the past of the war. When Kabuo expresses that "he'd left there, and then he hadn't left," he means that, though he returned home from the war physically unscathed, the same cannot be said for his mental state. Memories of the war's violence consume him to such an extent that he considers the world around him to be nothing but an annoyance that keeps him from dwelling on his memories. Kabuo was forced to kill German soldiers during the war, and he feels doomed to replay the memory of a boy he left for dead over and over again.

Though Kabuo had thought that the court would see his detachment for what it is—the suffering of a traumatized man—the islanders' prejudice against the Japanese (the result of a lingering disdain for Japan, which was the United States's enemy during WWII) prevents them from extending to Kabuo the sympathy they grant to the island's white veterans.

Sitting where he sat now, accused of the murder of Carl Heine, it seemed to him he'd found the suffering place he'd fantasized and desired. For Kabuo Miyamoto was suffering in his cell from the fear of his imminent judgment. Perhaps it was now his fate to pay for the lives he had taken in anger.

Related Characters: Carl Heine, Jr., Kabuo Miyamoto

Related Themes:

Page Number: 169

Explanation and Analysis

As Kabuo sits in his jail cell, accused of Carl Heine's murder, he contemplates the forces that brought him to his current state of misery. When he says that he is "suffering in his cell from the fear of his imminent judgment," he refers not to the judgment of his peers, but to the judgment of the universe. Kabuo feels that the trial is fate's way of making him suffer for the wrongs he has committed in his life, and for the sins he has inherited from his ancestors.

Guterson reveals that Kabuo's great-grandfather had been a samurai warrior. When the world no longer had a place for warriors, his great-grandfather reacted in anger and plotted to kill others. Eventually, when his anger at society's rejection of him became too much to bear, he committed suicide. Kabuo sees his own life's trajectory as an extension of his great-grandfather's.

When he served in the military, Kabuo, fueled in part by a belief that he'd inherited his great-grandfather's warrior blood, and in part by an anger at San Piedro's rejection of their Japanese neighbors, was able to kill German soldiers with an effortlessness and willingness that repulses him to this day. When Kabuo says the trial has helped him "f[ind] the suffering place he'd fantasized and desired," he frames the trial as fate's way of punishing him for his anger, for his wartime sins, and for the sins of his warrior ancestor.

Chapter 13 Quotes

"Not every fact is just a fact," he added. "It's all a kind of…balancing act. A juggling of pins, all kinds of pins, that's what journalism is about."

"That isn't journalism," Ishmael answered. "Journalism is just the facts."

[…]

"But which facts?" Arthur asked him. "Which facts do we print, Ishmael?"

Related Characters: Ishmael Chambers, Arthur Chambers (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 188

Explanation and Analysis

In the aftermath of the Japanese military's attack on Pearl Harbor, Ishmael, then a teenager, helps his father, Arthur, decide which stories to print in the *San Piedro Review*. The Japanese attack resulted in increased displays of prejudice against San Piedro's Japanese population, so Arthur has made it a point to publish stories that highlight the loyalty of San Piedro's Japanese citizens. His decision to do so leads to accusations that he favors the Japanese.

Ishmael, too, is skeptical of his father's selective truth-telling: "that isn't journalism," he protests. "Journalism is just about the facts." But Arthur possesses a more nuanced, moral definition of truth. To Arthur, facts are only half the truth: "Not every fact is just a fact," he says. In other words, people tend to laud the facts that confirm truths they want to believe in, and minimize the facts that contradict what they want to believe.

When Arthur insists that journalism is a "balancing act," he suggests that it's his moral responsibility to present a narrative of truth that both confirms and challenges his readers' beliefs. Left to their own devices, people often see only the truths they want to believe in. Many white islanders, for example, believe that since the Japanese military attacked a U.S. military base, all Japanese people must be anti-American. Their prejudice causes them to generalize and believe a single, biased version of the truth. Arthur believes it's his job as a journalist to show these people the other side of the story. This is why he prints so many stories in support of San Piedro's Japanese population: to achieve a "balanced" version of the truth.

Ultimately, Arthur acknowledges that truth-telling in journalism (and more generally) is a complicated endeavor: it's impossible to know exactly "which facts" one should present.

Chapter 14 Quotes

"That is the fundamental difference, Hatsue. We bend our heads, we bow and are silent, because we understand that by ourselves, alone, we are nothing at all, dust in a strong wind, while the *hakujin* believes his aloneness is everything, his separateness is the foundation of his existence. He seeks and grasps, seeks and grasps for the separateness, while we seek union with the Greater Life—you must see that these are distinct paths we are traveling, Hatsue, the *hakujin* and we Japanese."

Related Characters: Fujiko Imada (speaker), Hatsue

Miyamoto (Hatsue Imada), Ishmael Chambers

Related Themes:

Page Number: 201

Explanation and Analysis

After the FBI arrests Hatsue's father, her mother, Fujiko, explains to her daughter the differences between the *hakujin* (white people) and the Japanese. In particular, Fujiko emphasizes the tendency of the *hakujin* to act according to their personal desires. In contrast, the Japanese "seek union with the Greater Life." White people, Fujiko explains, are motivated by selfish desires—they situate their identities and wants at the center of their world, disregarding the larger order of the universe. In contrast, the Japanese "bend their heads"; they recognize that wants and desires are fleeting impulses of the heart. To the Japanese, it is more important to recognize one's place within the larger universe, or the "Greater Life," than to recognize one's importance as an individual.

Fujiko's wisdom is important because it instills within Hatsue a sense of duty to honor her family's cultural obligations. At this point in the novel, Hatsue is engaged in a secret romantic affair with Ishmael Chambers. The affair represents Hatsue's temptation to act on desire rather than to honor her duty to her family and her culture. Fujiko's words force Hatsue to decide whether she will continue to act selfishly (thus aligning herself with the *hakujin*) or to set aside her selfishness and honor the traditions of her family and Japanese heritage.

> She was of this place and she was not of this place, and though she might desire to be an American it was clear, as her mother said, that she had the face of America's enemy and would always have such a face.

Related Characters: Hatsue Miyamoto (Hatsue Imada), Ishmael Chambers, Hisao Imada, Fujiko Imada

Related Themes:

Page Number: 205

Explanation and Analysis

After Hatsue's father is arrested by the FBI, Fujiko consoles her daughters, explaining the differences between the Japanese and American ways of life. After listening to Fujiko explain these differences, Hatsue struggles to determine where she fits in, and to which culture she belongs. On the one hand, she "[is] of this place." San Piedro is the only home she's ever known: she loves exploring the island's natural beauty, and, despite the secrecy with which they must conduct their affair, she has a white boyfriend for whom she feels genuine affection.

Still, as her mother reminds her, "she [has] the face of America's enemy and would always have such a face." The fact that Hatsue is Japanese prevents her from ever fully being "of this place." Though she might enjoy and relate to the American way of life, the prejudice of white islanders forces her to assume the permanent role of an outsider. Prejudice denies Hatsue the privilege of acting in accordance with her own desires. Whereas Ishmael's identity (as a white man of old island stock) allows him to act on the impulses of the heart, Hatsue's ethnic identity denies her this privilege. Throughout the novel, her Japanese identity remains important to her, but not always by her own choice.

> "None of those other things makes a difference. Love is the strongest thing in the world, you know. Nothing can touch it. Nothing comes close. If we love each other we're safe from it all. Love is the biggest thing there is."

Related Characters: Ishmael Chambers (speaker), Hatsue Miyamoto (Hatsue Imada)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 208

Explanation and Analysis

After her father is arrested, Hatsue is forced to accept the realities of the war and the heightened prejudice against Japanese Americans. As she and Ishmael sit in their cedar tree, she expresses uncertainty that their relationship can continue: there is the matter of the war, of her family, and of society's disapproval of their interracial union.

Ishmael shares none of Hatsue's pessimism. On the contrary, he believes that "none of those other things makes a difference." To Ishmael, love is strong enough to conquer all. Ishmael's overly optimistic attitude towards the transformative power of love speaks to his position of privilege: to Ishmael, love really is "the biggest thing there is." Relative to Hatsue and her Japanese family, there are few outside forces that threaten to destroy his way of life.

Ishmael doesn't have to worry about other islanders hating him for the appearance of his face, nor does he have to fear for his family's safety.

Ishmael's optimism also speaks to his tendency to act on feelings and desires. In comparison to Hatsue, whose cultural upbringing instructs her set aside fleeting desires of the heart, Ishmael's Western cultural sensibility imbues him with the perspective that his wants and desires should be what drives his actions. When Ishmael asserts that other things don't "make[] a difference," he suggests that things like honor and obligation are secondary to desire.

Chapter 18 Quotes

❝ Art Moran looked into the Jap's eyes to see if he could discern the truth there. But they were hard eyes set in a proud, still face, and there was nothing to be read in them either way. They were the eyes of a man with concealed emotions, the eyes of a man hiding something. "You're under arrest," repeated Art Moran, "in connection with the death of Carl Heine."

Related Characters: Art Moran (speaker), Carl Heine, Jr., Kabuo Miyamoto

Related Themes:

Page Number: 269

Explanation and Analysis

In response to tips from Carl's family that Kabuo Miyamoto and Carl Heine had bad blood between them, Sheriff Art Moran obtains a warrant to search Kabuo's boat for evidence of Carl's murder. The tips that inspired Moran's investigation in the first place were riddled with bias, and Moran's search is an extension of this bias.

It's ironic for Moran to believe that "he could discern the truth" by looking at Kabuo's eyes when his own gaze is subjective; because of his own prejudice, Moran can't possibly "discern" an objective "truth." The fact that he refers to Kabuo with a racial slur shows that he is unwilling to look at Kabuo's face with even the slightest degree of objectivity. Moran continues to look upon Kabuo with bias, proposing that his eyes somehow indicate that he's guilty. Moran's investigation relies too heavily on suspicion and intuition; he can't know that Kabuo is hiding something by the appearance of his face alone, yet he insinuates that Kabuo's eyes contain a discernable "truth." This moment reflects the larger tendency of the islanders to assume that external appearances always match internal realities—and that those who look different must be hiding sinister secrets.

Chapter 22 Quotes

❝ "I'm not talking about the whole universe," cut in Hatsue. "I'm talking about people—the sheriff, that prosecutor, the judge, you. People who can do things because they run newspapers or arrest people or convict them or decide about their lives. People don't have to be unfair, do they? That isn't just part of things, when people are unfair to somebody."

Related Characters: Hatsue Miyamoto (Hatsue Imada) (speaker), Hisao Imada, Kabuo Miyamoto, Ishmael Chambers

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 326

Explanation and Analysis

As he is on his way to the coast guard lighthouse to conduct research for a story about the snowstorm, Ishmael encounters Hatsue Miyamoto and her father, Hisao, who are stranded on the side of the road after a fallen tree punctures their car's tire. Ishmael offers Hatsue and Hisao a ride. As they drive, Hatsue pleads with Ishmael to write a story condemning the unfairness of Kabuo's trial, but Ishmael declines, arguing that sometimes things are just unfair.

Ishmael's comment insinuates that the unfairness of the trial is inevitable and beyond anyone's ability to control, but Hatsue rejects this stance: "I'm not talking about the whole universe," she says. Hatsue believes that the trial's unfairness is something that people absolutely have the power to control: "I'm talking about people—the sheriff, the prosecutor, the judge, you," she says. Kabuo's trial is unfair, Hatsue reasons, because the people who have the power to moderate it are choosing not to. Real people have the real power "to do things." She insists that "people don't have to be unfair." Hatsue's insistence that unfairness "isn't just a part of things" situates prejudice as the direct consequence of human action. There are so many things in the universe that are up to chance, but bias, prejudice, and unfairness are not "just a part of things," as Ishmael suggests they are; rather, they are completely within humanity's ability to control.

Chapter 23 Quotes

"You'll think this is crazy," Ishmael said. "But all I want is to hold you. All I want is just to hold you once and smell your hair, Hatsue. I think after that I'll be better."

Related Characters: Ishmael Chambers (speaker), Hatsue Miyamoto (Hatsue Imada)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 334

Explanation and Analysis

One early morning, shortly after he returned to San Piedro after the war, Ishmael goes for a walk along one of the island's trails. He comes across Hatsue, who is with her baby on the beach. Hatsue is married to Kabuo at this point and she and Ishmael have only seen each other once since their returns to San Piedro—it was an unpleasant encounter.

Still, Ishmael is miserable without her and desperately turns outwards in his search for closure. He pleads with Hatsue to let him hold her. If she allows him to do this, he reasons, he'll "be better." Ishmael's request is characteristic of his tendency to turn to anyone and everyone *but* himself for solace and comfort.

So miserable is he with his life, he turns to universe, to the weather, to reporting the mundane, and now to Hatsue in his quest to feel better. At this point in the novel, Ishmael has yet to discover that he alone can shape his destiny: no religion, fate, or embrace will help him come to terms with the person he is and the person he wishes to become. In order to "be better," he has to direct his gaze inwards—not outwards.

Hatsue rejects Ishmael's request at this point, and he continues to flail in his bitterness for years to come.

Chapter 24 Quotes

"The defense hasn't made its case yet, but you're all ready to convict. You've got the prosecutor's set of facts, but that might not be the whole story—it never is, Ishmael. And besides, really, facts are so cold, so horribly cold—can we defend on facts by themselves?"

"What else do we have?" replied Ishmael. "Everything else is ambiguous. Everything else is emotions and hunches. At least the facts you can cling to; the emotions just float away."

Related Characters: Ishmael Chambers, Helen Chambers (speaker), Kabuo Miyamoto

Related Themes:

Page Number: 345

Explanation and Analysis

At the conclusion of the first day of Kabuo's trial, the snowstorm that rages outside the courtroom results in a power outage on San Piedro Island. Ishmael Chambers goes to his mother's house to check up on her, and the two proceed to discuss the developments of the trial.

Helen Chambers urges her son, who has just expressed the belief that Kabuo is guilty, to keep an open mind about the ordeal. Besides the fact that the court has only heard the prosecution's side of the story, she argues that there is more to truth than just the facts. Helen's argument recalls the distinction between truth and facts that persists throughout the novel. Facts alone are "cold," argues Helen. It's human understanding, interpretation, and compassion, she implies, that transform "cold" facts into a full sense of the truth.

Ishmael rejects his mother's suggestion, paralleling his stance in a similar argument with his father earlier in the novel. When Ishmael dismisses "everything else" as just "emotions and hunches," he dismisses the huge role interpretation and bias have in humanity's understanding of the truth.

At this point in the novel, the reader knows that Ishmael is aware of Kabuo's likely innocence—he has just uncovered evidence that suggests Carl's death was an accident. Ishmael's dismissal of Helen is thus ironic, given how heavily his feelings color his willingness to pretend that Kabuo is guilty out of spite for Hatsue.

"I can't tell you what to do, Ishmael. I've tried to understand what it's been like for you—having gone to war, having lost your arm, not having married or had children. I've tried to make sense of it all, believe me, I have—how it must feel to be you. But I must confess that, no matter how I try, I can't really understand you. There are other boys, after all, who went to war and came back home and pushed on with their lives [...]. But you—you went numb, Ishmael. And you've stayed numb all these years."

Related Characters: Helen Chambers (speaker), Ishmael Chambers

Related Themes:

Page Number: 347

Explanation and Analysis

While he visits with his mother after the first night of the trial, Ishmael confesses that he is deeply unhappy. He asks Helen what he should do to remedy his unhappiness, but she doesn't know how to help him.

Helen acknowledges that war is hard and cruel. She admits to trying, genuinely, "to understand what it's been like" for Ishmael since returning from his service in the marines. When Helen tells Ishmael that despite her attempts at sympathy, "she can't understand [him]," she offers insight into the novel's larger theme of human choice. Because nobody can ever fully know or "understand" the truth of other people, it is the individual's (in this case, Ishmael's) responsibility to understand the self and act so as to inspire one's own growth and progress.

Helen suggests that the reason Ishmael continues to be so miserable, the reason he can't move on with his life like the "other boys," is because he "went numb" and has "stayed numb all these years." Not only has Ishmael gone numb to others, he has gone numb to himself and his ability to exercise control over his life. Essentially, the reason Ishmael stays unhappy is because he is looking for answers externally: from his mother, from fate, or from the larger universe. In reality, he should direct his question of "what should I do?" inwards, harnessing his ability to control his own fate.

Chapter 26 Quotes

"I'm not interpreting or misinterpreting," Alvin Hooks cut in. "I merely want to know what the facts are—we all want to know what the facts are, Mrs. Miyamoto, that's what we're doing here."

Related Characters: Alvin Hooks (speaker), Hatsue Miyamoto (Hatsue Imada), Kabuo Miyamoto

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 371

Explanation and Analysis

Alvin Hooks cross-examines Hatsue about her and Kabuo's reluctance to talk about the sale of land that Kabuo and Carl had supposedly discussed the night of Carl's death. Hooks grows frustrated when Hatsue accuses him of misinterpreting her words. Hatsue has just claimed that because Carl's accidental drowning meant that the Miyamotos' recent land agreement with him was no longer a certainty, they weren't in a hurry to discuss the agreement with others. Hooks responds by twisting her words to insinuate that the Miyamotos' reasoning was motivated not by practicality but by guilt.

Hooks's statement suggests that "facts" exist independently of "interpreting or misinterpreting." But as Guterson suggests throughout the novel, it's rare for facts to exist in a vacuum. People consistently approach facts with personal worldviews and prejudices that affect how they interpret facts in the context of a larger truth. Hooks's statement that he "merely want[s] to know what the facts are" is false. As a prosecution lawyer, it's Hooks's job to interpret or misinterpret witness testimonies in order to present the jury with a narrative that paints Kabuo as guilty.

Chapter 27 Quotes

"I'm an American," Kabuo cut in. "Just like you or anybody. Am I calling you a Nazi, you big Nazi bastard? I killed men who looked just like you—pig-fed German bastards. I've got blood on my soul, Carl, and it doesn't wash off very easily. So don't you talk to me about Japs, you big Nazi son of a bitch."

Related Characters: Kabuo Miyamoto (speaker), Carl Heine, Jr.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 404

Explanation and Analysis

Kabuo Miyamoto helps Carl Heine when Carl's boat's battery dies on the open sea. As Carl starts to explain how serving in WWII caused him to become prejudiced against the Japanese, Kabuo interjects, pointing out the hypocrisy of Carl's logic: "Am I calling you a Nazi, you big Nazi bastard?" Because both Japan and Germany were enemies to the United States during WWII, it would follow that Carl, who is of German ancestry, should be considered just as much of an outsider as Carl (and most other islanders) considers Kabuo to be.

Kabuo acknowledges the psychological burden that war and the act of killing forces veterans to shoulder. Still, Kabuo killed men "who looked just like [Carl]," and it hasn't caused him to treat Carl with disrespect. Kabuo's criticism emphasizes the importance of choice and human agency. Even though one might have "blood on [their] soul," it is still within one's capacity to control how one behaves and interacts with the world around them. Throughout the

novel, characters treat prejudice as a thing that just *is*—as a force beyond their control. In contrast, Kabuo's' criticism here reframes prejudice as a series of actions that people can consciously decide to take—or not take.

Chapter 28 Quotes

"The citizens in the gallery were reminded of photographs they had seen of Japanese soldiers. The man before them was noble in appearance, and the shadows played across the planes of his face in a way that made their angles harden [...]. He was, they decided, not like them at all, and the detached and aloof manner in which he watched the snowfall made this palpable and self-evident.

Related Characters: Alvin Hooks, Kabuo Miyamoto

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 412

Explanation and Analysis

After Alvin Hooks has finished his cross-examination of Kabuo, Kabuo steps down from the witness box. As he does so, the gallery observes the entirety of his body and (in their minds) intimidating presence. Their observation that Kabuo reminds them of Japanese soldiers confirms that they regard him as an outsider: WWII was only a decade ago, and many of the islanders still consider all people of Japanese descent to be enemies of the United States.

Guterson's use of imagery here also reinforces the sense of the gallery's negative perception of Kabuo. When he describes the way "shadows played across the planes of [Kabuo's] face," the word "shadows" conveys something hidden or unknown. In this description of Kabuo, Guterson shows how little trust the gallery has for Kabuo based on his physical appearance alone. Finally, the gallery's decision that Kabuo is "not like them at all" all but seals his fate. Guterson insinuates that no evidence offered by the defense could overpower the mistrust Kabuo's physical appearance inspires in the prejudiced gallery.

Chapter 29 Quotes

"The storm," said the judge, "is beyond our control, but the outcome of this trial is not. The outcome of this trial is up to you now. You may adjourn and begin your deliberations."

Related Characters: Judge Llewellyn Fielding (speaker), Kabuo Miyamoto

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 422

Explanation and Analysis

After the lawyers' closing statements, Judge Fielding appeals to the jury before they exit the courtroom to begin their deliberations. Fielding likens the storm that rages outside the courthouse walls to fate, stating that the storm "is beyond [their] ability to control." Fielding the proposes that the storm's uncontrollable nature should be seen in opposition to the jury's deliberations. That is, the jury controls the outcome of the trial; it doesn't depend on fate Fielding insists that the jury acknowledge and honor the special privilege their role as jurors affords them. Whether Kabuo lives or dies is not in the hands of fate—it is in the hands of the jurors, and directly dependent upon the choices they make.

Fielding's emphasis on choice highlights the novel's larger theme of chance versus choice. Even though so many aspects of life are left to chance, Guterson suggests, it is humanity's duty not to become indifferent and passive in the face of the uncontrollable. On the contrary, humanity must remain open to the opportunities for individual choice that *do* exist in the world. The jury, Fielding suggests, possesses the power to alter the course of Kabuo's life, and they should handle this important task with the seriousness it—and Kabuo—deserves.

"There are things in this universe that we cannot control, and then there are the things we can. Your task as you deliberate together on these proceedings is to ensure that you do nothing to yield to a universe in which things go awry by happenstance. Let fate, coincidence, and accident conspire; human beings must act on *reason*."

Related Characters: Nels Gudmundsson (speaker), Kabuo Miyamoto

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 418

Explanation and Analysis

As Kabuo's trial draws to a close, Nels Gudmundsson delivers his closing statement. He addresses the jury and implores them to recognize the significance of their deliberations. Like all humans, the jury has to allow "fate, coincidence, and accident" run their course; however, they must also take it upon themselves to not leave their deliberations to chance.

As humans, the jurors are capable of "act[ing] on reason." They must, therefore, ensure that Kabuo's future is not determined by mere "happenstance." In such an unpredictable world, it's rare for humankind to have any real impact on the way things turn out. Here, in this courtroom, Nels insists, the jurors can exercise real control over whether Kabuo lives or dies. Much of San Piedro's population regards Kabuo with prejudice without acknowledging that prejudice isn't instinctual, but rather, a choice. In Nels's closing remarks, he implicitly calls on the jury to see prejudice not as "happenstance" but as the product of their own decision-making.

Chapter 31 Quotes

❝ But the war, his arm, the course of things—it had all made his heart much smaller. He had not moved on at all. […] So perhaps that was what her eyes meant now on those rare occasions when she looked at him—he'd shrunk so thoroughly in her estimation, not lived up to who he was. He read her letter another time and understood that she had once admired him, there was something in him she was grateful for even if she could not love him. That was a part of himself he'd lost over the years, that was the part that was gone.

Related Characters: Hatsue Miyamoto (Hatsue Imada), Ishmael Chambers

Related Themes:

Page Number: 442

Explanation and Analysis

The jury ends their first night of deliberations without reaching a verdict, and Ishmael returns to his mother's house for the night. He rereads the breakup letter Hatsue had written him so many years ago, and he finally understands the source of his unhappiness. Where before he'd assumed it was entirely "the war, his arm, [and] the course of things" that were the source of his misery, he sees now that it is as much the fact that these things "made his heart much smaller" that has caused him to stagnate and wallow in self-pity.

Until this moment, Ishmael has spent years interpreting uncertain looks Hatsue gives him as the absence of love. He now recognizes that these looks are reflective of her sadness on seeing how he's changed and become less moral. Ishmael's life has been full of hardship, unrequired love, and the traumatic experiences of war. Although these hardships contribute to the sorry state of his current situation, what contributes most to his sadness and causes Hatsue to look on him with such sadness is his inability to respond to these hardships, take control of his life, and choose to move forward. Upon realizing how much he is the source of his own misery, Ishmael begins to accept that only he can make himself into the person Hatsue "had once admired." He must take it upon himself to move on and change his life for the better, which he starts to do soon after this scene.

Chapter 32 Quotes

❝ Ishmael gave himself to the writing of it, and as he did so he understood this, too; that accident ruled every corner of the universe except the chambers of the human heart.

Related Characters: Ishmael Chambers

Related Themes:

Page Number: 460

Explanation and Analysis

After Judge Fielding dismisses the charges brought against Kabuo Miyamoto, Ishmael sits down at his desk to write a story about the trial for the *San Piedro Review*. As he writes, he considers the role fate plays in one's ability to exercise control over the world. His acknowledgment "that accident rule[s] every corner of the universe" speaks to how little control humans have over their lives in the grand scheme of things.

For much of the novel, Ishmael responds to fate's power with cynicism and inaction. So frustrated is he by the burdens the world forces him to shoulder (losing his arm in combat and experiencing Hatsue's rejection, for example), he responds by shutting down and stagnating. He's been let down by so many fated "accident[s]" that he resolves to leave *everything* to chance. If "accident" truly does "rule every corner of the universe," Ishmael reasons for much of the book, what good does meager human action do? It is best not to act at all, so as to avoid disappointment.

Here, however, Ishmael discerns that although "accident" will always dictate the outcome of many aspects of life, it

cannot overpower "the chambers of the human heart." In other words, though the world may be full of hardship and tragedy, humans still contain the capacity to do what they think is right. No element of "accident," no matter how strong, can control how one responds to the random forces of fate.

By the end of the novel, Ishmael understands that the reason he's been so unhappy for so long is because he refuses to act in the face of "accident." He allows the injustices of fate to shrink his heart and stunt his progress. When Ishmael recognizes that he possess the ability to make choices in the face of "accident," he sees that he can move on and leave his unhappiness behind.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

CHAPTER 1

The novel opens in a **courtroom**, which is filled to capacity. Kabuo Miyamoto, appearing detached and unreadable, sits at the defendant's table. While some people think his blank facial expression "suggest[s] a disdain for the proceedings," other people think it "veil[s] a fear of the verdict that [is] to come." Carl Heine, the gill-netter for whose murder Kabuo is convicted, was well-known in the town; the atmosphere of the courtroom is thus solemn and grave.

Kabuo's facial expression is of great concern to everyone in the courtroom. Since the courtroom is symbolic of the task of discerning truth from an assemblage of facts, the prominence of Kabuo's face becomes especially significant. Before the jury begins to hear the "facts" presented in court, they begin to form their own "truths" based on assumptions they make about Kabuo's expression: that he must harbor "disdain for the proceedings," or that he has reason to be afraid of the "verdict […] to come." Guterson also hints at the racial prejudice directed at Kabuo—he positions Kabuo's unreadable face as the opposite of Carl Heine's well-known personality.


The **courtroom** is Judge Llewellyn Fielding's, and it is "run-down and small." The jurors, who have "studiously impassive faces" are an eclectic bunch: "two truck farmers, a retired crabber, a bookkeeper, a carpenter, a boat builder, a grocer, and a halibut schooner deckhand," and "a retired waitress, a sawmill secretary, [and] two nervous fishwives. A hairdresser accompanied them as alternate."

Guterson introduces the reader to Judge Fielding, who will preside over Kabuo's trial. The fact that the courtroom is "run-down and small" suggests that the town in which it resides is likely not a prosperous urban center. That the story takes place in a small town hints at the stereotype that small towns can be insular, small-minded, and prejudiced. Guterson also suggests the local flavor of the town through the jurors' professions: they're blue-collar workers, not flashy executive bankers and lawyers, for example. The "studiously impassive faces" of the jury parallel the "unreadable" quality of Kabuo Miyamoto's face, though whereas Kabuo's opaque demeanor is seen in a negative light, the jury's "impassive faces" don't seem to evoke much judgment or skepticism.

Snow falls outside the **courthouse**, and beyond it lies the town of Amity Harbor, which contains "a few wind-whipped and decrepit Victorian mansions, remnants of a lost era of seagoing optimism." Beyond this, the land is covered in **cedar trees**. Kabuo watches the snow fall and recalls that during the 77 days he'd been imprisoned—late September through early December—he'd missed all of autumn. The snow "[strikes] him as infinitely beautiful."

Guterson introduces the reader to the town of Amity Harbor. He reinforces how downtrodden the town is, drawing attention to the "wind-whipped and decrepit Victorian mansions" that dot its streets, as well as the town's "lost" economic "optimism." Guterson also mentions the cedar trees and snow that lie beyond the confines of the courthouse. As will become clearer later in the book, both cedars and snow symbolize life apart from humankind: cedars evoke life free of society's judgment, and snow symbolizes the elements of life that cannot be controlled by humans. In contrast, the courtroom symbolizes humanity's ability to exercise choice in the situations over which they have control. In separating the courtroom and the trial from the forces of nature, Guterson hints at the divide between the uncontrollable forces that shape the world and the ways in which humankind can exercise free will. The snow is "infinitely beautiful" to Kabuo in part because it is separate from the human choices and injustices that have led to his imprisonment.

The **courthouse** is located on San Piedro Island in Amity Harbor, the island's only town. Amity Harbor is a small, "eccentric" fishing village. It rains constantly. The island is isolated from much everything else. Though downtrodden, the town boasts great natural beauty, brimming with green hills covered in **cedar** trees.

The isolation of San Piedro Island is crucial in understanding how the theme of prejudice plays out in the novel. Because the Island is so isolated from everything else, its residents are largely cut off from the rest of the world. The views they hold are based in an insider/outsider dichotomy, which leads to a lot of prejudice against the Japanese immigrants that make their home on the island.

Back in the **courtroom**, there are "out-of-town reporters" from larger cities covering the trial, as well as Ishmael Chambers, San Piedro's sole reporter. Ishmael is 31 years old and has the look of a man who's been through war. Ishmael has only one arm, having lost the other during the war. Ishmael knows Kabuo from high school.

Guterson underscores San Piedro's isolation by drawing an explicit distinction between Ishmael Chambers and the "out-of-town reporters" from various urban metropolises. The "othering" of these reporters reinforces how prejudiced islanders are against non-locals; more specifically, it sets the stage for the prejudice Kabuo will face throughout the trial as a result of his "othered" Japanese ancestry.

As he sits in the **courtroom**, Ishmael recalls how he'd tried to speak with the accused man's wife, Hatsue Miyamoto, earlier that morning. Hatsue, who was sitting on a bench outside the assessor's office in the courthouse, turned away from him when he asked how she was doing. But as Ishmael continued to plead with her, she turned and faced him, with a piercing "darkness" in her eyes. Ishmael could not tell with certainty what Hatsue meant to convey with her eyes, and he would remember this darkness for years after the trial. Ishmael took in the neatness of Hatsue's appearance and the distance with which she regarded him. She told him to go away.

Ishmael doesn't behave outwardly prejudiced towards Hatsue, but he responds negatively to the unreadable "darkness" he detects in her eyes. Throughout the novel, silence and controlled emotions are seen as favorable or neutral qualities in white characters; however, when Japenese characters demonstrate these same qualities, they are viewed in a harsher, more skeptical light. This first interaction between Ishmael and Hatsue also hints to the reader that the two have a shared history.

Now, as he sits in the **courtroom**, Ishmael ponders this less than savory interaction with Hatsue. He feels uncomfortable sitting amongst the other reporters, and resolves to find an "anonymous" seat after the trial's morning recess. Ishmael's mind wanders and he considers the **snow**, recalling his fond early memories of beautiful winters.

By focusing on Ishmael's prolonged fixation on his failed interaction with Hatsue, Guterson foreshadows their complicated mutual history. Meanwhile, Ishmael's thoughts of snow transport him away from the courtroom and into the uncontrollable realm of nature. His longing to be away from the courtroom (and perhaps society more generally) and towards nature hint at an inner tension between an adherence to social norms and the desires of the heart.

CHAPTER 2

The first witness, Art Moran, the county sheriff, is called to the stand. Moran had been at his office on the morning of September 16 when his deputy, Abel Martinson, announced over the radio that Carl Heine's fishing boat "had been sighted adrift in White Sand Bay." Moran relates to the prosecutor, Alvin Hooks, that he was concerned about the sighted boat and went over to investigate around 9:00 a.m. A "lean" and "unimposing" man, Moran never had very strong feelings about being sheriff. He wears his uniform uncomfortably, as though "dressed for a costume party." Last night, Moran tossed and turned all night, anguishing over his role as a witness in Kabuo's trial.

Art Moran doesn't seem to make to much of an impression on anyone—in fact, he is "unimposing." Again, Guterson shows how an unreadable demeanor is most always perceived as neutral for white characters; that is, Moran's lack of expression doesn't seem to strike anyone as suspicious. The fact that Moran anguished over his testimony the night before the trial suggests that he's anxious about having to turn over his "facts" to the jury. He seems to recognize the complexity of turning individual facts into a cohesive narrative of truth.

The night before Carl's death, Moran recalls, had been very foggy. He describes the morning he and Abel Martinson went to investigate Carl's boat, the *Susan Marie*, in White Sand Bay: Moran and Martinson arrived at Carl's boat, but Carl was nowhere to be found. They assessed the conditions of the ship: the lights were all on, which gave Abel "a bad feeling." Carl's net was full of salmon. Abel speculated that Carl might've fallen overboard. The men wondered where Carl fished last night, with Abel suggesting that he might've gone to North Bank, Ship Channel, or Elliot Head. The men investigated Carl's cabin. They found a battery next to the wheel in the cabin. The cabin lamp was left on, which gave Art "the ominous impression of an extreme, too-silent tidiness."

Art's testimony is full of concrete, objective facts: they scrutinize the Susan Marie carefully and throughly. Still, despite the men's best efforts to be fair and objective in their investigation, so much of their search is dictated by emotion and subjectivity: when Abel observes that he has "a bad feeling," for example, Guterson shows that human emotion can lead to bias, despite one's best efforts.

Art suggested that they check to see if Carl's dinghy was over the reel; it was. After a quiet moment, Abel proposed that they look under the boat's deck—maybe Carl had experienced engine trouble—but Art observed that there was no room to crawl around beneath the deck.

The men are thorough and objective in their work. Still, Guterson emphasizes how much speculation is involved in their investigation as the men try to reconstruct Carl's actions the previous night. They create options for a narrative "truth" to try to understand what might have happened to Carl, and to help them move their investigation of the boat forward. This shows how much speculation and subjectivity is involved even in an examination of relatively straightforward "facts."

As the men searched for Carl, Art thought about the missing fisherman, whom he'd been fond of. Carl was of German descent, and "from old-time island stock." His grandfather and father (Carl Sr.) had been strawberry farmers. Carl's mother, Etta, had sold his father's strawberry fields after his death in 1944. The Heines were "hard-toiling, quiet people." Carl was a veteran who had served on the U.S.S. *Canton*, which later sank during the invasion of Okinawa. He had blond hair, and was a large, broad man who dedicated himself to the quiet life of a fisherman. He kept to himself and was polite, though not particularly warm.

Again, human emotion figures significantly into the men's search for the "truth" of Carl's whereabouts. Even as he tries to be clearheaded and objective, Art can't help but think about Carl as a person. In Art's memories of Carl, Guterson emphasizes how much of an insider Carl is on San Piedro: he's "from old-time island stock," and he's "hard-toiling" and "quiet," all traits that would make him a respected and well-liked figure on the island. He is also blond and white. All of these traits will add to the jury's later prejudice towards Kabuo: not only is Kabuo an outsider, but he (supposedly) murdered someone who represents everything the island respects in one of their own. Additionally, Carl's service on the U.S.S. Canton *is important to note. It grounds the novel in tpost-WWII culture and contextualizes the resentment many islanders feel towards their Japanese neighbors. Carl's service onboard a ship that later sank in the invasion of Okinawa is a crucial detail. Okinawa Island, located to the south of Japan's mainland, was the site of one of WWII's bloodiest battles. It lasted from April through June in 1945. For Carl to have left the U.S.S.* Canton *before it was sunk in Okinawa, only to drown in the relative safety of San Piedro's waters, seems like an unlucky stroke of fate.*

Moran thought that the death of such a typical and revered fisherman would be hard for the other residents to come to terms with. San Piedro's people already regarded the vast sea that surrounded them on all sides with a sense of fear—a fear that Carl's death only perpetuates.

Moran explicitly reveals that Carl's death would hit the islanders hard because he is the quintessential San Piedro working man. Carl's death at sea would let the islanders know that such a fateful tragedy could happen to any one of them.

The men continued to search. Abel suggested that they start up the boat's engine—if all the lights had been on for hours, it would've drained the battery quite a bit. Art turned the key, and the engine came on sounding strong.

The fact that the Susan Marie*'s engine started up with no problem will be a crucial piece of evidence in the trial: it will cause the court to speculate that Carl couldn't have had battery trouble the night of his death.*

As the men prepared to bring up Carl's net, Art considered whether he should warn Abel of the possibility that Carl would be in the net. Art had seen this happen twice before, but Abel, only 24, had never witnessed something so gruesome in his career as deputy. Art kept this fear to himself, but as the men brought up Carl's net, they immediately saw Carl's face among the fish and kelp. Abel vomited. They laid Carl down on the deck and observed his open mouth and the blood vessels that had burst in his eyes. Abel noticed a wound on Carl's head and observed that he "must have banged it against the gunnel going over." Art inspected the wound, noting how Carl's head was dented, but then "turned away from it."

When he wonders whether he should warn Abel about the possibility of seeing Carl's corpse, Art again emphasizes the human, subjective qualities of their supposedly factual, detached investigative work. The fact that Abel has witnessed the accidental drowning of multiple fishermen shows that such a death is somewhat common. When the men pull Carl out of the water, Abel's first thought is that Carl "must have banged [his head] against the gunnel going over." Abel's observation is objective and represents the most obvious, likely scenario that contributed to Carl's death. But when Art "turn[s] away from" the wound, he also turns away from Abel's objective observation. Art's initial turning away emphasizes his—and so many other's—decision to "turn away" from the facts that are right in front of them in favor of a less likely "truth" fueled by prejudice and subjectivity.

CHAPTER 3

Back in the **courtroom**, Nels Gudmundsson, Kabuo's defense attorney, cross-examines Art Moran. Nels is 79 years old, "with a slow and deliberate geriatric awkwardness" about him. He verifies several of the facts to which Moran just testified: that all the lights on the *Susan Marie* were on, that it was foggy the night of September 15, that the fog was still there the next morning, and that the boat's engine had no trouble starting up. Gudmundsson asks Moran whether he thought it was odd, with all the lights on, that the batteries hadn't been run down. Moran admits that it was a little odd. He also asks Moran to verify that there'd been a spare six-celled D-8 battery on Carl's boat; there had been, and it'd been dead. There were also two D-8 batteries on Kabuo's boat.

Nels's "slow and deliberate geriatric awkwardness" shouldn't matter, but it will influence how the jury sees him, and how much they trust his ability to competently and truthfully deliver Kabuo's defense. Nels's strategy is to paint Moran's seemingly air-tight testimony in a light that allows for more doubt and room for error. Guterson emphasizes the charged batteries on Carl's boat because this detail will be especially important later in the trial, as the defense will claim that Kabuo had loaned Carl a battery when Carl's had died while on the open sea.

Gudmundsson asks whether it's possible that Abel and Moran might have given Carl the bump on his head in their attempts to bring him aboard the ship when they discovered Carl in his net. Moran can't remember. Nels asks again whether Carl might have "any uncertainty at all" about the matter. Art responds that yes, it's possible, "but not likely." Kabuo watches Nels silently.

Nels identifies more holes in the testimony Art gave to Alvin Hooks. He asks Art whether he has "any uncertainty" about possibly creating Carl's head wound, in order to emphasize to the jury that Art's facts aren't absolutely true: they leave room for reasonable doubt. Guterson emphasizes Kabuo's unreadable face to show how unaffected his disposition is by development of the trial.

CHAPTER 4

Judge Lew Fielding calls for a recess and observes the **snowfall**. Everybody seems grateful for a break; the jurors' faces "appear quiet and even faintly reverent." Ishmael Chambers recalls how he found out about Carl's death the morning of September 16. He'd been in the newspaper office and called the coroner, Horace Whaley, to verify the death. Whaley affirmed that Carl had, in fact, died, which was hard to fathom given that "The man had survived Okinawa." Ishmael notes that he and Carl had attended high school together and had both graduated in 1942.

The "quiet and […] reverent" looks on the jurors' faces shows how Guterson conveys silence in a positive light when it pertains to white characters. Horace's comment points to the irony of Carl's death. "Okinawa" refers to a particularly ferocious, deadly WWII battle that occurred in 1945 between the U.S. and Japan. Over 150,000 soldiers were killed. For Carl to have survived Okinawa but died so pitifully at sea seems, to Horace, to be an unlikely and unlucky twist of fate.

During the recess, Ishmael reflects on his ambivalence towards San Piedro and towards his post-war life. He moved to Seattle after the war, and though he hadn't felt great, he attributed this to the experience of being a war veteran. He'd lost an arm in combat, and he was—and still is—bitter about it, especially because he knows that the missing arm bothers other people. In college, Ishmael studied American literature. And though he was cynically certain that he would hate *Moby Dick*, he surprisingly took great pleasure in reading the novel, whose character Ishmael bears his name. However, he couldn't stand Ahab, which ruined the book for Ishmael.

Ishmael notes the war's intense impact on his mental health. His missing arm is a constant, visible reminder of all the horrors he witnessed as a solider. His interest in Moby Dick is significant within the larger context of his life. Some of that novel's main themes parallel questions that Ishmael struggles with in his own life, such as fate vs. free will. It's ironic that Ishmael hates Ahab, given the similarities he shares with him: both men are tortured, complicated, and have lost a limb. Ishmael's hatred of Ahab seems to suggest that he knows how negatively the war has affected his life and he hates himself for it.


Ishmael's newfound love of books led him to pursue journalism as a career. Ishmael's father, Arthur, had also been a journalist, though he was a logger when he was Ishmael's age. Arthur founded the *San Piedro Review*, whose first issue boasted the headline "JURY ACQUITS SEATTLE'S GILL," which detailed a scandal involving Mayor Gill. Arthur later was drafted into General Pershing's army, fighting "at Saint-Mihiel and Belleau." When the war was over, Arthur returned to San Piedro to run his newspaper.

Ishmael's love of reading aligns him with his father, Arthur, whose character and values he aspires to emulate. Arthur both founded and built the San Piedro Review *into a legitimate, provocative publication. Guterson's choice to highlight Arthur's article about the trial of Mayor Gill shows how Arthur refuses to shy away from the big, pressing issues of his time. The fact that Arthur served in WWI (and in Belleau Wood, a particularly significant battle in U.S. history) and was able to return immediately to his paper shows how Arthur—unlike his son—didn't let cynicism overcome him.*


From this point on, Arthur committed himself fully to observing and reporting on San Piedro, knowing that doing so gave him both power and purpose. Arthur rarely took vacations, publishing even on holidays. He was a great believer in the capabilities of journalism, namely its ability to uncover and deliver the truth to the masses. Arthur was "deliberate in his speech and actions" and "morally meticulous." To this day, Ishmael longs to live up to his father's legacy—personally and professionally—but his perpetual bitterness holds him back. Unlike his father, Ishmael's time spent serving in the military has rendered him cynical and less invested in island life.

Arthur didn't live in the past after returning from the war: he was invested in and energized by island life. He channeled this energy into making the Review *a legitimate paper. His decision not to rest on holidays underscores his commitment to the paper and to journalism as a whole, whil his "deliberate [...] speech and actions" show how seriously Arthur valued the power of words and opinions to influence how others perceive the truth. Guterson shows the similarities in Arthur and Ishmael's histories to introduce one of Ishmael's major sources of tension throughout the novel: that he is not the "morally meticulous" man he thinks he could and should be, and that he doesn't honor his obligation as a journalist to report the truth.*

Ishmael stops daydreaming about Arthur and redirects his thoughts to the morning of Carl's death. The morning of September 16, Ishmael had arrived at the Amity Harbor docks to find Art Moran talking with several fishermen. The fishermen regarded Ishmael wearily, as he "made his living with words and was thus suspect to them." On San Piedro, residents regard words with great skepticism. They much prefer "the silent-toiling, autonomous gill-netter," regarding this as "the collective image of the good man."

Ishmael's cynicism alienates him from other Islanders, but his career also sets him apart from much of the island's population. That he "ma[kes] his living with words" and not with his hands identifies Ishmael as an outsider to the many fishermen who work and live on the island. Ishmael's investment in "words" is particularly problematic to the fishermen, as they are such a "silent-toiling" bunch. These men believe a silent man who keeps to himself is a "good man," and they view Ishmael's prodding, vocal profession as suspicious and even immoral.

Ishmael joined Art in talking to the fishermen, trying to learn more about the last night of Carl's life. The fishermen offered that they'd seen Carl's ship, the *Susan Marie*, out on Ship Channel Bank as late as 7:30 or 8:00 the night of September 15. Moran asked what other ships had been out on Ship Channel Bank, and the fishermen recalling seeing several others, among them the *Islander*, Kabuo Miyamoto's ship. When they were through with the fishermen, Art Moran and Ishmael left the docks together. Art revealed to Ishmael that, "off the record," he was investigating Carl's death as a murder.

It's critical to note that the fishermen confirm seeing Carl's and Kabuo's boats on Ship Channel Bank. This location and the closeness of the two boats to one another are critical details in Kabuo's trial. Art's admission that he's investigating Carl's death as a matter shows how quickly—perhaps, too quickly—Art decided there was foul play involved in the death. The fact that he tells Ishmael this information "off the record" perhaps suggests that Art isn't fully confident in the validity of his murder theory.

CHAPTER 5

Back in the **courtroom**, Horace Whaley, the Island County coroner, testifies to Alvin Hooks. He describes the autopsy he performed on Carl's corpse. He'd found a watch in Carl's pocket, which had stopped at 1:47. Carl's body was frozen and pink. Whaley forced himself to regard Carl "as *the deceased* and not as Carl Heine." He lamented the gruesome nature of his job, and how it forced him to become detached from the task at hand, citing another drowned fisherman he'd examined in 1949, and "the other men who had died in tidal pools" he'd observed during the Pacific War.

Horace's need to think of Carl "as the deceased *and not as Carl Heine" shows how, initially, Horace tried to be objective and detached in his autopsy. Guterson includes the detail that Horace had seen "other men who had died in tidal pools" in the Pacific War to foreshadow his prejudices. The Pacific War refers to the battles of WWII fought in the Pacific and in Asia. Horace's involvement in the Pacific War causes him to develop prejudices against people of Japanese heritage, which becomes clear as the novel goes on.*

As he worked, Horace recalled Carl's silence and unreadable temperament in life, noting that, though "the man seemed to have no friends, […] other men admired him because he was powerful and good at his work." Horace stopped daydreaming and reminded himself that he had to be objective. He pushed against Carl's chest and a pink foam came out of Carl's mouth. Horace recognized the foam as a sign that Carl had still been breathing when he'd fallen overboard.

Despite Horace's determination to remain detached as he conducts his autopsy, it's impossible for him to do so completely. When Horace remembers that Carl "seemed to have no friends," though "other men admired him because he was powerful and good at his work," he demonstrates how Carl's silence was never viewed negatively. That is, other men "admired" Carl despite—or even because of—his "powerful" silence. In contrast, such benefit of the doubt is never offered to Kabuo Miyamoto. Horace's discovery of the pink foam is an important piece of evidence because it proves that Carl was alive when he fell off his ship.

Horace continued to examine Carl, as "it was his duty to find out the truth." He then saw the wound on Carl's head that Abel had noticed earlier. The wound reminded Horace of the wounds he'd seen during his time in the Pacific War, administered by Japanese soldiers trained in *kendo*, a Japanese martial art administered at close range with the butt of a gun. Whaley knew that many Japanese soldiers were trained to kill in this manner, and that a majority, too, inflicted this type of wound "over the left ear."

That "it was [Horace's] duty to find out the truth" is ironic because so much of Horace's task as coroner relies on speculation. Horace's job underscores the novel's theme of truth vs. facts—his autopsy involves making assumptions about the facts in front of him to form a narrative of truth. Horace is quick to connect Carl's head wound with the kendo *wounds he observed during the war—this premature association shows bias present in Horace's supposedly objective, detached autopsy. Horace might claim that he must be detached during autopsies, but his impulse to associate Carl's wound with personal details from his past reveals his bias.*

Continuing with his testimony, Horace Whaley recalls that Art Moran had then entered the examination room. Horace let the sheriff in on the connection he'd made to the *kendo* wounds he observed during the Pacific War. Horace admitted that, while "anything could have happened," the wound on Carl's head struck him as "funny." Art agreed and asked Horace whether it's possible someone hit Carl in the head. Horace mocked Moran and accused him of "play[ing] Sherlock Holmes." Art rebuffed the accusation, but maintained that Carl's head wound was truly odd.

When Horace admits that "anything could have happened," he betrays how biased it was of him to immediately associate the gash on Carl's head with the kendo *wounds he saw during the Pacific War. When Art Moran refers to the wound as "funny" he shows how strongly feelings and hunches motivate his own assessment of Carl's corpse. It's also ironic that Horace accuses Moran of "play[ing] Sherlock Holmes," or playing detective, seeing as* both *men have just made overconfident leaps in their assessments of Carl's head wound.*

In the **courtroom**, Horace continues with his testimony, recalling that he told Art Moran that if Moran *were* to play "Sherlock Holmes," he should look "for a Jap with a bloody gun butt—a right-handed Jap, to be precise."

Horace slips a blatantly biased speculation into his testimony when he asserts that "a Jap with a bloody gun butt" had inflicted the wound found on Carl's head. His "Sherlock Holmes" detective work is motivated not only by what he could physically see on Carl's head, but by his personal experience in the war and his residual bias towards the Japanese.

CHAPTER 6

Horace Whaley is cross-examined by Nels Gudmundsson. Nels asks Horace to explain the significance of the pink foam he found during his autopsy. Nels emphasizes that, according to Horace's testimony, the presence of the foam is proof that Carl died by drowning, not by murder, specifically—which is also what Horace stated in his autopsy report. Nels makes Horace read the relevant section aloud from the report. Nels notes that the report specifies that Horace's findings could be proven "beyond doubt."

Nels steers Horace's testimony away from biased speculation and towards the facts they can ascertain by scientific observation alone. All they can know "beyond doubt" is that the pink foam proves that Carl was alive when he fell into the water. Nels's interrogation doesn't allow Horace to bolster his testimony with subjective, personal input in the way Hooks's did.

Nels shifts his attention to another part of the autopsy report, in which Horace noted the presence of another wound, on Carl's right hand. Horace reveals that the wound had been fresh. Nels then asks Horace about Carl's head wound. Horace states that the wound had been left by a "narrow and flat" object. Nels asks Horace if this is an observation or an inference, but Horace snaps that "it's [his] *job* to infer." Still, Nels challenges Horace's inference, and asks Horace whether it's also possible that Carl could've gotten the injury from falling against part of the *Susan Marie*. Horace admits that these scenarios are also within the realm of possibility, and that he cannot tell with certainty whether Carl's wound occurred before or after death.

Nels explicitly calls out the extent to which Horace's evidence is the product of speculation. Horace's idea that Carl's head wound was left by a "narrow and flat" object is nothing more that inference. When Horace snaps that "it's [his] job to infer," he reveals that autopsies are often not entirely "factual"; rather, they are a combination of hard "facts" and inferences that coroners stitch together to construct a cohesive version of the "truth." When Nels asks Horace whether it's possible that Carl could've incurred the head wound by falling against part of the Susan Marie, *and confirms that it's possible that the injury could have occurred before or after death, he forces Horace to admit that his inferences are not the only version of the truth.*

Art Moran takes pleasure in Nels's interrogation and in Horace's discomfort. He remembers the dread he felt driving to Carl's house to inform Carl's wife, Susan Marie, of Carl's death, and his thoughts turn to this tragic scene. On his way over to the Heines' house, Art had considered the least painful way to tell Susan Marie the tragic news. He knew Susan Marie, so he couldn't be professional and impersonal when he broke the news to her. Art had run into Carl's two sons as he arrived at the house. Susan Marie came to the door with the baby, the couple's youngest child. When Art told her about Carl, "She looked at him as if he'd spoken in Chinese." As the news set in, Susan Marie responded with shock, staring off into space. In retrospect, Art Moran recalls, Susan Marie's detached response had been strange.

Art feels pleasure at Horace's discomfort because he is still upset by Horace's condescending "Sherlock Holmes" remark, which insinuated that Art had made unfounded assumptions about Carl's death. Art's uncertainty about how to tell Susan Marie about Carl's death shows again that truth isn't only about facts—it's also about how facts are delivered, a theme that plays out throughout the trial. When Art observes that Susan Marie interprets his solemn news with disbelief, "as though he'd spoken in Chinese," he subtly indicates the complete lack of understanding that exists between the white characters and the characters of Asian descent.

CHAPTER 7

Back at the trial, the Japanese islanders sit in the back of the **courtroom**. They aren't legally restricted to the seats in the back, but "San Piedro require[s] it of them without calling it a law." The ancestors of these Japanese residents had arrived on San Piedro at the end of the 19th century, many of them finding employment at the mill. The census-taker didn't record their real names, but had used racialized, derogatory nicknames instead.

The Japanese islanders' position at the back of the courtroom illustrates the extent of San Piedro's prejudice. That the island "require[s] it of them without calling it a law" shows that adhering to biased social norms is more necessary than adhering to the law. This scene serves a metaphor for Kabuo's legal battle: he's technically allowed a fair trial, but nothing can prevent the jury from acting on their own prejudices. Additionally, details such as the census-taker's derogatory nicknames for Japanese people show that San Piedro's racism has existed for a long time.

Over the next century, hundreds of additional Japanese immigrants arrived on San Piedro. After the island's **trees** had been cleared and the mill dismantled, they had taken jobs clearing strawberries, another of San Piedro's major industries. From here, some Japanese immigrants leased bundles of land, starting their own farming businesses. Most, though, worked as sharecroppers on land owned by their white neighbors. At the time, the law barred non-citizens from owning land. The law also barred Japanese immigrants from becoming citizens in the first place.

The clearing of San Piedro's trees could be seen as a metaphorical destruction of a world free of prejudice. When the island destroyed their cedar trees, they chose to swap natural tranquility for social bias and prejudice. Guterson reveals that the early Japanese immigrants weren't allowed to own land in order to emphasize the systemic racism against Japanese immigrants, and also to foreshadow the land feud that develops between the Miyamoto and Heine families.

The work year of the Japanese strawberry farmers included the annual Strawberry Festival held at harvest time. A highlight of this festival was the crowning of the Strawberry Princess, who was "always a Japanese maiden dressed in satin," representing something of an olive branch extended between the Japanese and Caucasian populations.

Racial tensions were so bad between the white and Japanese islanders that they deemed it necessary to conceive of the "Strawberry Princess" as a meager attempt at reconciliation. The image of a "Japanese maiden dressed in satin" is somewhat objectifying and seems to reflect the stereotype of Asian women as virginal and docile.

San Piedro's Japanese population continued to grow: By Pearl Harbor day, there were nearly 1,000 people of Japanese descent living on the island. After Pearl Harbor day, these families would be forced by the U.S. War Relocation Authority to move to internment camps across the West. The white islanders supported the relocation, since everything was different after the war broke out.

On Pearl Harbor Day (December 7, 1941), the Japanese Army launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. Fearing future attacks and espionage, the U.S. government forced many people of Japanese descent living in the U.S. to relocate to interment camps. The islanders' indifference toward their Japanese neighbors' relocation shows how significantly prejudice influences their beliefs. The island might make a metaphorical show of equality with the Strawberry Princess, but, deep down, the residents' biases remain strong.

Back in the **courtroom**, the trial's morning recess is underway. Hatsue Miyamoto talks to her husband, Kabuo. Hatsue has visited her husband each afternoon since his arrest. Hatsue is 31 years old and elegant. She picks strawberries during the summer. During Hatsue's childhood, a woman named Mrs. Shigemura had taught Hatsue the cultural traditions a young Japanese girl should know, such as how "to dance *odori* and to serve tea impeccably," as well as the arts of flower arrangement and calligraphy. Mrs. Shigemura had praised Hatsue for her beauty.

Hatsue's lessons with Mrs. Shigemura engrained in her a sense of duty to her Japanese culture. Still, the fact that Hatsue spends so much time in nature suggests that she longs to retreat to a realm free of her social, cultural, and familial duties.

Mrs. Shigemura's lessons taught Hatsue to react to hardship with studied composure. These teachings would come in handy, as hardships had followed Hatsue all her life. In her lessons, Mrs. Shigemura also emphasized the differences between Japanese and American culture, urging Hatsue "to seek union with the Greater Life," as opposed to fearing death, as was the American way. Mrs. Shigemura taught Hatsue to be calm and composed, but Hatsue doubted her ability to be truly calm. As a child, Hatsue would linger in nature, especially among **trees**, and "contemplate her attraction to the world of illusions." She found herself torn between a longing for the calmness Mrs. Shigemura encouraged and her desire for material, American pleasures like clothes and makeup. Hatsue knew that her calm, outer composure was a lie. On the inside, she remained torn between that superficial appearance and her desire for "worldly happiness."

Like her husband, Hatsue boasts a calm, unreadable composure. Her unreadable face masks and helps her cope with the stress and hardship of living. Guterson introduces Hatsue's lifelong tension between honoring her cultural obligations and acting on her heart's impulses. From an early age, she was taught that "the American way" almost always contradicts the Japanese customs of her family. Hatsue escapes to the solace of trees because it allows her to escape both the American and Japanese cultures to which she is drawn. Mrs. Shigemura's teachings cause Hatsue to feel immensely guilty about her persistent longing for the "worldly happiness" associated with the American way.

Hatsue's parents arranged for her to have these lessons with Mrs. Shigemura so that Hatsue would never forget her Japenese identity. Hatsue's parents had incurred numerous hardships to get to the United States, and so it was important for their daughter to know where she came from. Hatsue's mother, Fujiko, had been sent to Seattle to marry Hisao, Hatsue's father, who she falsely believed was wealthy. After a queasy voyage across the ocean, Fujiko arrived in the United States only to discover that Hisao was of modest means. The couple was very poor, and Fujiko worked long, hard hours "for the *hakujin*."

Hatsue's lessons with Mrs. Shigemura aren't only about cultural duties—they're connected to important familial obligations, as well. As Hatsue feels increasingly torn between American and Japanese customs, the extra duty she holds to her family, specifically, will magnify her anguish about wanting two ways of life. Hatsue's parents feel less enthusiastic about embracing the American way of life because they both have experienced hardship and prejudice trying to build a better life for themselves working "for the hakujin." Hakujin *is the Japanese word for "white person" or "Caucasian." It has no derogatory connotation, but it does underscore the stark divide between families like Hatsue's and their white employers.*

After Hatsue was born, Hisao and Fujiko moved from a shoddy Beacon Hill boardinghouse to a Jackson Street boardinghouse. The Jackson Street boardinghouse was not much of an improvement, and it smelled like rotting fish and vegetables. Still, Fujiko worked there for years, cleaning. One day, Hisao heard about jobs at the National Cannery Company. The family moved to San Piedro, where they worked in the strawberry fields.

The Imada family's early life in America was extremely difficult for many years. Guterson further illustrates the trials Hisao and Fujiko went through to assure a better life for their children in order to show why they felt so strongly about Hatsue knowing and embracing her cultural and familial roots.

Life was hard for the Imadas on San Piedro, too. When she was seven, Hatsue and her sisters worked outside with Fujiko. Hisao sold fish. The family saved their money and eventually were able to lease a small plot of rough land. They bought a plow and cleared the land. Then they built a house on the land, and, soon after, planted their first crops.

The family's few acres of strawberry fields came only after many years of grueling work and hardship. Later in the novel, Hatsue and Kabuo Miyamoto will bond over their mutual dream of owning and working the land. For both of them, this dream is rooted in a duty to honoring their families and their pasts.

Hatsue grew up outside, by the ocean and in the strawberry fields. At age 10, Hatsue made friends with Ishmael Chambers, "a neighborhood boy." The two children would explore what lurked underwater with Ishmael's special "glass-bottomed box." On one of these days spent on the water, Ishmael kissed her; it was her first kiss and his.

Hatsue's childhood interactions with nature symbolize her desire to escape from her obligations to her family. Nature offers a world free of the familial and social stresses that exist in the human world. Despite the fact that Ishmael is "a neighborhood boy" from a very different background, the two children interact in nature, away from their homes. This foreshadows the prejudiced societal pressures that will eventually complicate their relationship. The kiss also shows how early Hatsue and Ishmael began their intimate relationship and hints at their deep connection.


Back in the **courtroom**, Hatsue talks to her husband. She remarks on the **snow**. Kabuo notes that it reminds him of Manzanar, as snow usually does. The couple had been married in Manzanar.

Hatsue and Kabuo direct their attention away from the courtroom and towards snow and memories from long ago. Symbolically, this shift evokes their mutual skepticism about the court's ability to conduct Kabuo's trial in a fair, unbiased manner. Guterson repeatedly uses snow to symbolize fate or the uncontrollable—in this instance, the couple's attention to the snow suggests their fear that the trial and Kabuo's future is out of their hands. Manzanar was a Japanese internment camp in California during WWII. Hatsue and Kabuo's shared history at Manzanar speaks to the persistent racial prejudice that has dictated the course of their lives.



In a memory, Hatsue recalls this first night together. As the **snow** fell outside on their wedding night, the couple made love. Kabuo smelled like earth to Hatsue, and it was then that realized she wanted a life of working the fields with the man she loved. Hatsue thought of Ishmael, but she cast him quickly out of her mind. Kabuo asked Hatsue if she'd made love before, and she lied that she hadn't. "It feels so right," Hatsue whispered to her new husband.

Hatsue knows that Kabuo is right for her, whereas the reader will later learn that she never felt so intuitively sure of her feelings for Ishmael Chambers. Kabuo's associations with "work" and "fields" are important to Hatsue because they remind her of her family's dedication to working their strawberry fields. That is, Hatsue's love for Kabuo allows her to act on her heart's desires and to honor her family. Hatsue chooses to erase Ishmael from her mind and deny his existence to Kabuo because she has found a partner with whom she "feels so right."

Back in the **courtroom**, Hatsue observes that Kabuo has grown distant since he returned from fighting in the war, which he'd enlisted for because "there was something extra that had to be proved, a burden this particular war placed on him" by virtue of his Japanese ethnicity. Hatsue anguishes over her husband's distance, but tries to accept that it was the war that caused it. She resigns to endure his distance, his current imprisonment, and his trial.

Like Ishmael, Kabuo's duty as a soldier has resulted in lasting psychological trauma. Unlike Ishmael, however, Kabuo's Japanese ancestry saddles him with "something extra that had to be proved." Japan was the U.S.'s enemy during WWII. Kabuo felt that the war had placed "a burden" on him because he felt the need to prove his loyalty to the U.S. in the face of heightened prejudice directed at the Japanese. Hatsue resents what the war and its "burden" has done to Kabuo, but, as her Japanese upbringing has taught her to do, she endures her husband's psychological distance with a silent composure.

CHAPTER 8

In the **courtroom**, Ishmael Chambers watches Hatsue. He remembers their childhood friendship, thinking back to one particular day when they dug for clams together at South Beach, arguing about whether the different oceans were truly distinct, or whether they all blended into one another. Young Ishmael observed Young Hatsue's body as his heart pounded; her beauty paralyzed him. He admitted to liking her. Hatsue didn't respond, but Ishmael kissed her anyway. In this moment, Ishmael decided to love Hatsue forever, though her lack of response made him wonder whether "[the] kiss was *wrong*." Even though Hatsue hadn't responded to his hesitations about the kiss being wrong, Ishmael "felt certain" that their feelings were mutual.

Hatsue and Ishmael's interactions continue to occur exclusively in nature, hinting at their inability to extend their relationship to the prejudiced, constraining world of humans. Even in retrospect, Ishmael's memories of his budding romance with Hatsue are one-sided and subjective. His notion of truth is warped by his desire for Hatsue to return his love. Hatsue neither confirms nor denies that she loves Ishmael, yet he remains "certain" that she loves him back.

Young Ishmael anguished over Hatsue after their kiss as he worked odd jobs around town. He feared she had begun to avoid the beach so she didn't have to see him. One night, he went to Hatsue's house as dark fell and waited, in secret, for her to come outside. Hatsue emerged from her house to retrieve laundry drying on a line. Overjoyed at seeing Hatsue, Ishmael returned to her house all week. He observed "young strawberries growing on the plants around him." The Imadas' dog eventually discovered Ishmael and barked, which scared him out of returning to spy again.

Ishmael is completely obsessed with Hatsue. Unlike Hatsue, Ishmael is bolder about acting on his feelings. He goes so far as to embark on a nightly pilgrimage to her house out of the slightest hope that he might catch a glimpse of his love. In contrast, Hatsue remains unable even to comment on the truth of her feelings. In this distinction, Guterson sets up Ishmael's impulse to act on feelings versus Hatsue's drive to act on duty. The "young strawberries growing on plants" that surround Ishmael as he spies on Hatsue evoke the natural setting in which their intimate moments occur.

Ishmael and Hatsue worked together at the start of that strawberry season, but she continued to avoid him. Ishmael resolved to watch Hatsue work from a distance. Late one June afternoon, after a day of picking, Ishmael followed Hatsue as she left for home. It began to rain. As Hatsue approached the beach on Miller Bay, she took a shortcut through the **cedar** woods, and Ishmael followed her. Hatsue went inside a hollow **tree** that the two used to play in as children. Hatsue looked at Ishmael from inside the cedar tree, invited him in, and told him she knew he'd been following her. She explained that she often visited the hollow tree "to think." Ishmael seemed to understand this; to him, "the inside of the tree felt private. He felt they would never be discovered here."

Hatsue continues to conceal her emotions from Ishmael, which she accomplishes through avoiding him wherever possible. However, the couple's meeting at the cedar tree marks a shift in their relationship. The natural world has always been the backdrop of their intimate exchanges, and the cedar tree is especially important. The cedar tree represents the absence of social prejudices and pressures, and it offers a glimmer of optimism for Ishmael: "the inside of the tree felt private. He felt they would never be discovered here." Ishmael hopes that the tree's seclusion will encourage Hatsue, for whom the tree is a safe place "to think," to be more forthcoming about her feelings with him.

In the **tree**, Ishmael apologized for kissing Hatsue on the beach. Hatsue told him not to be sorry—she, herself, wasn't sorry it happened. She asked him if he thought the kiss was wrong, and he responded that although he found nothing wrong with it, her parents and other people wouldn't agree with him. Hatsue agreed; in fact, even their being alone together would be an issue, as Ishmael isn't Japanese. Ishmael couldn't see how this would matter. They lay down together in the hollow **tree** and began to kiss.

Immediately, the tree becomes a place where Hatsue and Ishmael can open up to one another to an extent that would never be possible in the human world, where Hatsue is so weighed down by her familial obligations. Still, Hatsue's anxieties about obligation don't leave her completely: she can't help but feel guilty about seeing a white boy behind her family's back.

CHAPTER 9

Back in the **courtroom**, Ishmael watches Hatsue talk to Kabuo. He forces himself to look away. When the court returns after the recess, it's Carl Heine's mother's turn to testify. Etta Heine is a weathered old woman who spent decades working alongside her husband, Carl Sr., in the strawberry fields. Etta was born in Bavaria and speaks with an accent. Etta and Carl Sr. had eloped to Seattle. Etta liked Seattle but struggled to enjoy San Piedro, where the couple had returned to tend to Carl Sr.'s father's strawberry fields.

Ishmael remains obsessed with Hatsue. The reader has yet to discover how or why their teenage affair ended, but Guterson builds tension and intrigue in moments like these. At first glance, Etta's history is very similar to Fujiko Imada's: she is an immigrant woman who speaks with an accent, and she followed her husband to San Piedro where she helped him work the land. The reader will soon discover that Etta is incredibly bigoted towards the Japanese. Guterson establishes the similarities between Etta and Japanese characters like Fujiko to emphasize Etta's ignorance and hypocrisy.

Carl Sr. had a heart attack and died in 1944. Alvin Hooks, the prosecutor, is excited to interrogate Etta Heine about her finances. Etta reveals to Hooks that she did the bookkeeping for her husband's strawberry fields. The strawberry fields weren't particularly lucrative, but they supported the family for years. Etta reveals that she knows Kabuo Miyamoto because his family picked in their fields back before the war. She recalls that the family "lived in one of the pickers' cabins," and that she used to watch them "sitting under a maple tree eating rice and fish off on tin plates." She also notes that "they walked barefoot." Of course she remembers the Miyamotos, Etta relays to Hooks, asking "How was it she was supposed to forget such people?" Judge Fielding calls for a recess, "seeing that [Etta's] emotions had overwhelmed her."

Through Etta's testimony, Guterson introduces the land feud that developed between the Miyamoto and Heine families in the 1940s. Etta's description of the Miyamoto family is riddled with bigoted, derogatory language. She emphasizes the pitifulness of their living quarters by calling it "one of the pickers' cabins," sees it as uncivilized that they "walked around barefoot," and makes it clear that she considers the family to be "other" by referring to them as "such people." When Judge Fielding brings Etta's testimony to a halt because of her "emotions," he draws attention to the bias in Etta's language. Fielding's actions here align him with the characters who resist the influence of prejudice in Kabuo's trial.


Etta steps off the witness stand and her thoughts turn to the day Zenhichi Miyamoto came to the Heines' house: Zenhichi asked to speak with her husband, and the two men left the room. Carl Sr. returned, explaining that Zenhichi wanted to buy seven acres of his land. Etta insisted that it wasn't a good time to sell, and that Carl Sr. would regret selling the land. Etta also insisted that the Miyamoto family didn't have the money to buy. Carl Sr. disagreed with his wife, and added that the Miyamotos were a good family. Etta, unimpressed, compared the Miyamotos to "Indjuns." But Carl Sr, didn't share his wife's prejudices, saying: "People is people, comes down to it," he said. Etta was exasperated by her husband, and told him to "go ahead and sell our property to a Jap and see what comes of it."

Etta demonstrates the breadth of her bigotry when she refers to the Miyamotos as "Indjuns," but the reader learns that Carl Sr. does not share his wife's skewed worldview when he insists, "People is people, comes down to it." Etta's remark that the Heines will "see what comes of it" if they sell their land "to a Jap" reflects the novel's preoccupation with fate. Etta seems to suggest here that Carl Sr.'s decision to sell the land sealed the family's fate, leading to the many misfortunes that would befall them in the years to come (such as Carl Sr.'s death and Carl Jr.'s death).


Etta's memory of this time moves forward as she returns to the witness stand to continue with her testimony. Etta tells Hooks that Zenhichi and Carl Sr. had worked out a "lease-to-own" contract for the land. Zenhichi would pay Carl $250 twice a year, in June and December. Carl would draw up papers but keep the land in his own name, as it was 1934, and people of Japanese descent couldn't legally own land.

Guterson emphasizes how legitimate Zenhichi and Carl Sr.'s deal was: Carl Sr. only drew up the contract as a lease agreement because Japanese persons couldn't legally own land in 1934. The legitimacy of the contract contrasts with Etta's refusal to validate it, which shows the extent to which her bigotry poisons her perspective and influences her actions.


Judge Fielding interrupts Etta to explain the legality of the arrangement to the court. Because it was technically illegal for the Miyamotos to own land at the time of the arrangement, it was necessary for the papers to be drawn up as a lease; in reality, however, the lease agreement served as a legal loophole through which Carl Sr. could sell the seven acres to Zenhichi Miyamoto. At any rate, explains Judge Fielding, the restriction that had prevented the Miyamotos from purchasing land in the first place, the "Alien Land Law," is "blessedly" no longer enforced. Etta scoffs at Fielding's clarification, saying: "Them Japanese couldn't own land. [...] So I don't see how them Miyamotos could think they owned ours."

Judge Fielding explains the logistics and prejudice of the "Alien Land Law" in order to make the circumstances of Zenhichi and Carl Sr.'s contract clear. He emphasizes the contract's legitimacy, explaining that the racist laws of the time made it necessary for the men to find a legal loophole through which Zenhichi could unofficially "purchase" the land from Carl Sr. Unlike Fielding, Etta has no interest in considering the circumstances that prevented the Miyamotos from owning land. In her prejudice, she turns a blind eye to asserting, simply that Japanese people could not own land. In short, she refuses to humor any perspective not in line with her bigotry.


Hooks tries to validate Etta's bigotry as merely her honest attempt to recall the land purchase as she remembers it, but Fielding urges Hooks to move forward with Etta's testimony. Through Etta's testimony, the court learns that Kabuo was the Miyamotos' first child: he was 12 in 1934. The Miyamotos' thinking behind the eight-year "lease," reveals Etta, was that Kabuo could officially purchase the land on his 20th birthday. In 1942, thus, the Miyamotos would be finished paying for the land, and Kabuo (who, unlike his parents, was born in the United States) would be able to own the land in his name.

Hooks downplays Etta's bigotry. By moving the interrogation along, Fielding tries to minimize the influence of prejudice in his courtroom. The reader learns that Zenhichi Miyamoto's ultimate plan was to have his son, a United States citizen, eventually inherit and legally purchase his land. Etta will frame Kabuo's entitlement to the land as his supposed motivation for murdering her son.

But, Etta reveals, the Miyamotos missed their final two payments. Etta hesitates and recalls the circumstances that prevented the Miyamotos from paying their last installments: people of Japanese ancestry had been ordered to relocate to internment camps. Carl Sr. was appalled by this news, but Etta was less sympathetic: "They're Japs," she told her husband. "We're in a war with them. We can't have spies around." Carl shook his head at his wife and retorted, "You and me, we just ain't right."

Etta hesitation before revealing the Miyamotos' reason for missing their final two payments seems to suggest that she knows her prejudice makes her argument unreasonable. When Etta calls the Miyamotos "Japs" and embraces the forced relocation of Japanese citizens, she further asserts her bigotry. Etta's statement is also ironic, given that she is from Germany, with whom the United States is also "in a war." By Etta's logic, she could also be a spy. Carl Sr. condemns his wife's statements when he says that the two of them "just ain't right."

Etta Heine testifies that Zenhichi came to the Heine home to try to figure out how they'd handle the land in light of the family's forthcoming relocation. Carl Sr. expressed sympathy. Etta scoffed as Zenhichi tried to discuss payments and as he offered to let Carl keep the berries he'd be able to pick from their seven acres. When Carl Jr. returned home, he saw Zenhichi and asked after Kabuo, with whom he was friendly. After Carl Jr. left to meet up with Kabuo, Zenhichi continued with his proposition, asking if it would be possible to make late payments on the seven acres and apply the additional berries the Heines could harvest from those acres toward future payments. Etta saw this suggestion as trickery on Zenhichi's part.

When Carl Jr. asks for Kabuo, the reader learns that the two men had once been friends. Guterson includes this detail to complicate the reader's current understanding of Carl and Kabuo's history with one another. At this point in the novel, the reader knows little of the men's relationship prior to Carl's death. Etta's immediate assumption that Zenhichi has come to her house to try to swindle the Heines out of their money is based on her bigoted stereotype of the Japanese as a tricky, suspicious people.

Etta continues with her testimony: Zenhichi, she reveals, offered to pay the Heines $120 on the spot, but Carl Sr. refused to take it, as he knew that the Miyamotos would need that money for their looming departure. Etta remained frustrated by what she perceived as Zenhichi's shrewdness. She observed that Zenhichi had "gone rigid, gone cold." She saw Zenhichi's silence as restrained but intense anger. Carl Sr. was more understanding. He assured Zenhichi that they would get the final payments figured out eventually. At the moment, Carl knew, the Miyamotos had more pressing matters to attend to.

Carl Sr. counters his wife's bigoted cruelty with sympathy and kindness. When Etta notes that Zenhichi had "gone rigid, gone cold," she demonstrates the double standard applied to silence: the silence of white people may be interpreted neutrally, but the silence of Japanese people is most always seen as "cold" or threatening.

Continuing with her testimony, Etta recalls that Carl Jr. had returned later with fishing rod that Kabuo had loaned him. Without hesitation, Etta had instructed Carl to "take the fishing rod back to the Japs," because the loan complicates the situation with the land payments. She had registered Carl's hurt when she told him this, but she didn't back down. Etta continues with her testimony, reiterating that the Miyamotos didn't meet their payments, so she saw no problem with selling the land to Ole Jurgensen after her husband's death. Kabuo, she believed, had been bitter ever since the sale, and had murdered Carl Jr. in anger.

The fishing rod is more evidence of Carl Jr. and Kabuo's friendship. Kabuo had presumably given Carl the fishing rod for safekeeping while he was away at the internment camp. Etta's order to return the fishing rod hurts Carl, and this hurt shows that Carl (at least at this point in his life) did not share his mother's prejudice towards the Japanese.

CHAPTER 10

In the courtroom, Alvin Hooks continues to question Etta. She tells him that she moved back to Amity Harbor in 1944 after her husband's death, as she couldn't work the land on her own. Hooks asks Etta whether she heard from the Miyamotos after this, and she reveals that she did, in July, 1945. Kabuo had come to her door inquiring after the property. "Well," responded Etta, "I told you people about it when I sent on down the equity." She couldn't work the land on her own, she explained to Kabuo; he'd have to go to Ole Jurgensen if he had questions about the land.

Again, Etta demonstrates how much of a bigot she is, referring to the Miyamotos as "you people." When she insinuates that the land is a matter between Ole Jurgensen and herself, she denies Kabuo his entitlement to the land. She also condescends to him, acting as though it's not worth her time to explain the matter to him further.

Kabuo replied that he had talked to Ole, who had no idea that Carl Sr. had sold the seven acres to Zenhichi. Etta scoffed at the idea that she should have told Ole about what she considered an illegal arrangement. The Miyamotos hadn't met their payments, she told Kabuo, so she was right to sell the land.

Etta ignores the legal and historical circumstances (the Alien Land Law) that forced Carl Sr. and Zenhichi to draw up the deal as a technical "lease" in the first place, asserting that the contract was illegitimate. Her prejudice prevents her from extending any sympathy towards the Miyamotos' situation.

After this confrontation, Etta recalls in her testimony, there was no further communication between her and Kabuo, except "dirty looks." Etta tells the court that Kabuo gives her angry looks any time he sees her, and she says that Carl Jr. knew all about the feud and that was wary of Kabuo. Etta insists that Kabuo was never a friend of her son's. Hooks speculates on Etta's remark, asking: "He saw some danger from Mr. Miyamoto?" Gudmundsson objects to Hooks's follow up, arguing that Hooks is forcing Etta to speculate about what Carl Jr. might have thought.

It's unclear whether the "dirty looks" Kabuo directs at Etta are actually malicious or merely blank and unreadable. Guterson repeatedly draws the reader's attention to the double standard applied to an unreadable facial expression. Someone like Etta's own son, Carl, for example, is often unreadable, yet she never assumes the worst of him. What's more, Etta's instance that Kabuo was never Carl's friend is a lie—it's clear from her earlier memories that the two were at least friendly in their youth. When Hooks asks Etta to speculate as to whether Carl "saw some danger from Mr. Miyamoto," he is encouraging her to construct a version of the "truth" that cannot be verified by what little "facts" are available to the court.

Hooks amends his question to ask what Etta saw in her son that would suggest he was afraid of Kabuo. Etta agrees that the term "family feud" could describe the conflict between the two men, and continues to speculate on Kabuo's motivations for supposedly killing her son. Gudmundsson objects again, and Judge Fielding sustains the objection, asking that Etta stick to answering specific questions.

Even as Hooks rephrases his question to appear more objective, Etta continues to speculate. Hooks wants the jury to see Etta's belief that "family feud" motivated Kabuo to kill Carl as a valid "fact," even though it's only her own prejudiced opinion. Judge Fielding sustains Gudmundsson's objection because he wants to do all he can to eliminate bias in his courtroom.


Nels Gudmundsson takes his turn. He asks Etta three questions: whether it's true that the value of the Miyamotos' land, at the time of purchase, was $4,500 (it was); what the price of the land was per acre when Etta sold the land to Ole Jurgensen years later ($1,000 per acre); and lastly, whether these two sums would mean that the land increased in value by $2,500 of she sold it to Ole Jurgensen (it would). Nels has no more questions for Etta.

Nels inquires about the exact price for which the Miyamotos purchased the land, the exact price for which Etta sold the land to Ole, and the exact value by which the land appreciated over time in order to steer the trial away from biased speculation and towards observable, objective evidence.


Ole Jurgensen testifies after Etta. Ole is old: he had a stroke in June and walks with a cane. At Hooks's urging, Ole verifies that he was a longtime friend of the Heines, for more than 40 years. He'd owned 30 acres of strawberry fields before acquiring 30 more from Etta. Hooks asks Ole if the agreement Etta had him sign was clear, and Ole concedes that yes, it was clear; Ole hadn't been aware of the Miyamotos' seven acres until Kabuo came to see him in the summer of 1945, claiming that "Mrs. Heine robbed him, Mr. Heine never would have let no such thing like that happen." Hooks acts flabbergasted that Kabuo would've used to word "rob" to describe what Etta had done.

The fact that Ole has been a friend of the Heines for over 40 years suggests that he would have no reason to doubt the legitimacy of the agreement Etta brought to him to sign. Ole's confidence in the agreement could validate its legitimacy in the jurors' eyes, as well. Hooks first establishes the legitimacy of this agreement to make Kabuo's supposed claim that "Mrs. Heine robbed him" appear unfounded and uncalled for to the jurors. The order in which Hooks asks Ole questions impacts how the jury perceives Ole's answers. In this way, Hooks manipulates facts to construct a particular version of the truth.

Kabuo told Ole he wanted his family's seven acres back, but Ole, had been unwilling to sell. When Kabuo left, Ole recalls, he said angrily that "some day he would get his land back."

Ole's testimony is meant to make Kabuo out to be a man angry at being wronged, who would stop at nothing to "get his land back."

Ole continues his testimony. After his stroke in June, he changed his mind and decided to sell his land, putting it on the market shortly after Labor Day. Carl Heine Jr. had approached him first and Ole sold the land to Carl. Carl admitted to Ole that fishing never really suited him, and he wanted to turn to farming, his father's livelihood. Ole and his wife, could see that it hurt Carl to admit aloud to being only a mediocre fisherman. Carl, Ole tells the court, had put down $1,000 on the land. This sealed the deal.

It's hard for Carl to admit out loud that he's not a great fisherman because, like so many other San Piedro fishermen, he keeps his thoughts and feelings to himself. Ole and his wife are touched and sympathetic towards Carl's difficulty expressing himself. This is another example of the sympathy extended to the book's inexpressive white characters that is denied to the book's inexpressive Japanese characters.

Later the same day, Ole remembers, Kabuo came to his house to inquire after the land. Ole remembered that Kabuo had worked for him in 1939. Ole inquired after Kabuo's father, Zenhichi, whom he also remembered; Kabuo told Ole that his father had been dead for years. When Ole told Kabuo he'd already sold the land, Kabuo "stiffened." His face was unreadable. Ole told Kabuo that Carl Heine had bought the land earlier that day.

Guterson illustrates another example of the white islanders' hypocritical stance on silence and unreadable facial expressions. Ole regards Kabuo's unreadable face skeptically, noting that he "stiffened" on hearing the news that the land had already been sold. Ole is unsympathetic towards Kabuo's inability to express himself, even though he had been accepting of Carl's similar inexpressiveness earlier that same day.

Carl Heine dropped by Ole's house the next day to take down the "For Sale" sign on the land, and Ole told him Kabuo had been by, and explained "the way the politeness had gone out of" Kabuo's face when he heard the land was sold. Carl nodded in response.

Again, Guterson emphasizes how much the white characters read into Kabuo's neutral facial expressions. Ole's observation that "the politeness had gone out of" Kabuo's face when he heard about the sale is a harsh and likely racially biased conclusion to draw from so little evidence.

CHAPTER 11

Kabuo eats in his jail cell after the trial's noon recess. The room is small and sparsely adorned. Kabuo looks in the mirror, noting how "he had come home from the war and seen in his own eyes the disturbed empty reaches he'd seen in the eyes of other soldiers he'd known." Kabuo reflects on the Germans he'd been forced to kill during the war, in particular a young boy who had "refused to die." The boy suffered on the ground at Kabuo's feet, begging for mercy, and Kabuo squatted next to the boy as the life drained from his body. In his jail cell, Kabuo looks again at his face, and he thinks about how "he appeared to the world seized up inside precisely because this was how he felt."

Kabuos' reflections on "the disturbed empty reaches he'd seen in the eyes of other soldiers he'd known" shows the war's lasting impact on his mental health. The fact that he continues to dwell on the vivid details of the atrocities he was forced to commit during the war, such as the suffering young boy who had "refused to die" demonstrates the extent of Kabuo's guilt. When Kabuo looks in his face, he sees a reflection of "how he [feels]," demonstrating how wildly the court has misinterpreted his unreadable demeanor. Motivated by prejudice, the court believes that Kabuo is angry and bitter; in reality, he is psychologically tormented and emotionally "seized up."

In his jail cell, Kabuo continues to look at his reflection. He wonders how he could begin to explain to the court "the coldness he projected" in his face. He realizes now that his unreadable demeanor doesn't project what he originally intended it to portray: Kabuo had wanted to seem innocent and "haunted," before the jury; but, instead of evoking his past traumas, his unreadable face seemed to suggest a "haughtiness," as if he thought he was superior to the court and even to death. The jury gives Kabuo no benefit of the doubt.

Still, Kabuo is aware of the jurors' prejudice. He can see how they would see "coldness" in his face. He also recognizes the problem this presents for him. Although he'd wanted his face to appear "haunted" (which would reflect his actual emotional experience) the jury had misinterpreted his intentions. The facts of the trial won't be able to help him if all the jury can see is "haughtiness." Fair or not, Kabuo acknowledges the role appearance and prejudice play in his trial.

Kabuo knows that his face, so much more than his testimony and the testimonies of others, will dictate how the jury regards him. As Nels Gudmundsson had cautioned Kabuo, the jurors will likely pay more attention to how Kabuo looks and acts than they will to the facts of the case.

Nels reasserts the importance of appearances in the court room. Nels's advice to Kabuo draws on the book's larger theme of facts vs. truth: in the courtroom, objective "facts" are often overshadowed by the jury's subjective impressions of Kabuo. The jury's interpretation of the truth, thus, is ultimately subjective.

Kabuo likes Nels. He remembers the first time they met in his jail cell. Kabuo right away expressed his innocence. Nels told him they'd worry about that issue later—although, as Hooks was serious about pursuing the death penalty, they *would* eventually have to worry. Kabuo considered the real possibility of his own death, and observed that it seemed only right that he pay for the murders he committed as a soldier; "everything comes back to you, nothing is accidental," he knew. Still, Kabuo had been fearful at the prospect of death.

Kabuo's immediate fear of death stems from his overarching anxieties surrounding fate. He believes that the murder trial and the possibility of the death penalty are both fate's way of punishing him for the atrocities he was forced to commit during WWII.


Kabuo recalls that Nels repeated his point that they'd worry about innocence later. Then, he pulled out a chessboard. "White or black?" he asked Kabuo. Kabuo put a black piece and a white piece behind his back and asked Nels to guess. Nels replied, "If we're going to leave it to chance, left is as good as right. They're both the same, this way." Nels won that game.

This scene illustrates the novel's larger theme of chance vs. choice. Kabuo puts a black and a white chess behind his back to allow Nels to "choose" his fate. Guterson seems to suggest that Kabuo is conflicted about the role fate plays in life. On the one hand, he believes that fate will always control certain aspects of life; on the other hand, he wants to be able to make choices for himself. For his part, Nels seems to accept his inability to control all aspects of life: "If we're going to leave it to chance, left is as good as right." Nels knows that there's no point in maintaining the illusion of choice in certain situations.

Now, in his jail cell, Kabuo resumes eating his lunch. He daydreams about wandering through the woods of San Piedro. Kabuo thinks some more about nature, recalling a trip he'd taken with Hatsue and their children just before his imprisonment, to Lanheedron Island.

Kabuo recalls a happier time in his life. San Piedro's wood paths are untouched by the social prejudices and injustices that led to his imprisonment.

Kabuo continues to think about Hatsue. He remembers seeing her before they'd been married, when they were 16: they'd both been employed to pick berries at the Ichikawas' farm. Kabuo spotted Hatsue,, absorbed in her work picking berries. He watched as she brought some of the berries to her mouth and ate them. Later that evening, he went to Hatsue's house and saw her walk outside with a bucket of kitchen scraps. As she passed by a row of raspberries, she picked some of them, brought them to her lips and ate them. Kabuo watched Hatsue's mouth and wondered what it would taste like to kiss her at that moment.

Kabuo's budding romantic feelings for Hatsue parallel Ishmael's. Like Ishmael, Kabuo associates Hatsue with nature, placing her and his romantic feelings toward her in a sphere that is separate from the prejudices and constraints of society. Kabuo's journey to Hatsue's home also parallels Ishmael's earlier trips there.

Kabuo then remembers their budding romance in Manzanar. One night, after a long day of work in the camp garden, they spoke of San Piedro's strawberry fields. Kabuo realized they "shared the same dream" of one day working their own strawberry fields, and he knew then that he loved her. One night some time later, they kissed in the back of a truck.

Kabuo's realization that he and Hatsue "shared the same dream" perhaps suggests that he believes they are fated to be together. Their dream of working their own strawberry fields is born of a mutual desire to honor the legacy of their families, as well.

Kabuo continues to reminisce about Hatsue. He recalls her unhappy reaction when he told her he'd enlisted in the military. Kabuo told her that he was obligated to join out of honor. Hatsue disagreed, arguing that love was more important than honor, but Kabuo could not align himself with his wife on this issue. To Kabuo, honor mattered more than love, and he could not commit himself to loving Hatsue if his honor was compromised. Hatsue eventually agreed with her husband, citing something she'd learned from Mrs. Shigemura, "that character was always destiny."

An obligation to duty dictates Kabuo's decision to enlist in the military. Hatsue and Kabuo are alike in this way, as both repeatedly choose to honor their obligations over acting on their desires, even though Hatsue claims to value love more than honor. Hatsue and Kabuo's obligations both have significant ties to their cultural background: as Guterson revealed earlier in the novel, Kabuo was obligated to fight against the Japanese in order to prove his loyalty to the United States. When Hatsue accepts Kabuo's need to enlist, it is because she recalls her lessons with Mrs. Shigemura, who instructed her in traditional Japanese culture. Hatsue understands her obligation to enlist through the Mrs. Shigemura's position "that character was always destiny."

In his jail cell, Kabuo's thoughts turn to his father and his father's *katana*, which he'd brought to the United States from Japan. The sword had been in the Miyamoto family "for six centuries." Kabuo's father buried the sword, along with other personal belongings from Japan.

Like Hatsue's, Kabuo's sense of obligation stems from a need to honor his family and cultural heritage. The katana *illustrates the Miyamoto family's rich cultural history.*

His father had also buried a photograph of Kabuo, taken at the San Piedro Japanese Community Center. In the photograph, Kabuo was dressed in a traditional costume and held a *kendo* stick. In the jail cell, Kabuo's daydreaming turns to the *kendo* training of his youth, which he started when he was seven years old.

Kabuo's kendo *training links him more closely to the narrative of his family's cultural history. It also connects back to Horace Whaley's earlier observation that Carl Heine's head wound resembled the injury inflicted by a* kendo *stick.*

Kabuo remembers how his father had told him about his family's samurai past. Kabuo's great-grandfather had been a samurai who died because he was so devoted to being a samurai. Kabuo's father believed it was an unfortunate twist of fate that Kabuo's great-grandfather was a samurai in a society that no longer had any place or use for them. When the government told Kabuo's great-grandfather he could no longer bear his sword, he became angry and started wishing to kill people. Zenhichi conceded that although his grandfather really was an incredible swordsman, "his anger overwhelmed him in the end."

Kabuo's great-grandfather's "anger overwhelm[s] him" because society rejects the role of warrior he believes fate destined him to fill. He will eventually die because he is unable to honor this obligation he is fated to fulfill, which shows how believing in fate can often become a heavy burden.

Kabuo recalls how Zenhichi told him that although it was in his blood to be a warrior, it was ultimately his *decision* to train to become one. Kabuo decided to take on the task, and began training with his father. As he remembers, he recalls his successes in *kendo* and how some people believed that he was willing to draw on his "dark side" in order to succeed as a fighter. Kabuo's "fighting spirit" became apparent to him during the war, after he'd been forced to kill Germans.

When Kabuo decides to begin his training in kendo, *he agrees to honor the long and complex warrior tradition that exists in his family. On the other hand, Guterson seems to suggest that Kabuo might not have chosen to train in* kendo *so much as felt it was his fate or destiny to do so. When others claim that Kabuo has a "fighting spirit," they suggest that Kabuo's very soul embodies the warrior spirit. Kabuo himself also acknowledges the reality of this innate "fighting spirit" when he sees how effortlessly he is able to kill German soldiers in WWII.*

At present, as he sits in his jail cell, Kabuo feels trapped by his perception that his family's warrior past has sealed his fate. Kabuo believes that being accused of Carl Heine's murder and the unfair trial that followed was meant to be. He feels doomed by his fate.

Kabuo believes that fate is punishing him for the warrior spirit he inherited from his great-grandfather, which enabled him to kill so ruthlessly during the war. He believes that the unjust trial in which he now finds himself is fate's way of making up for the death he caused.

CHAPTER 12

Outside Kabuo's jail cell, it continues to **snow**. Ishmael Chambers walks outside and takes in the forces of nature that surround him, which Kabuo's trial has reminded him of.

Guterson uses snow to symbolize fate, or things that are beyond humankind's ability to control; thus, the presence of snow evokes Kabuo's meditations (in Chapter 11) that his trial is fate's way of punishing him for his warrior ancestry and wartime atrocities. The trial also pushes Ishmael Chambers into his own thoughts of the past.

Ishmael's memories overwhelm him completely, transporting him back to his teenage love affair with Hatsue: unable to be seen together in public, the young lovers spend many hours alone in their tree on the weekends. The **cedar tree** provides them with an alternative reality, separate from the judgment and cruelty of society. They lie pressed against one another's bodies. Young Ishmael thinks of Hatsue constantly, and he dreams of the future they might have together. He imagines escaping to Europe. He believes he and Hatsue were meant to be, and "[gives] his whole soul to love."

Until this point, Guterson has only hinted at Hatsue and Ishmael's relationship. Through a sequence of Ishmael's memories, the reader now learns more about the growth (and eventual decay) of their teenage love affair. Again, Guterson emphasizes the central role the cedar plays in their intimacy: nature, untouched by social norms and prejudices, is the only place the interracial couple can be together. Ishmael dreams of a future with Hatsue, even though such dreams are overly hopeful and unrealistic. Ishmael isn't obligated to honor his family in the way that Hatsue is, so he is able to "[give] his whole soul to love" in a way she is not.

The young couple opens up to each other in the **cedar** tree, speaking with the intensity and dramatics of teenagers. But Hatsue is sometimes "cold and silent" with Ishmael in the cedar tree. Hatsue's silence hurts Ishmael, but Hatsue insists she is not being emotionally withholding. On the contrary, it's just the way she is: "She had been carefully trained by her upbringing [...] to avoid effusive displays of feeling, but this did not mean her heart was shallow," Hatsue explains. Still, Ishmael frets over Hatsue's silence.

Hatsue's "cold and silent" demeanor hurts Ishmael because he does not understand it. Ishmael isn't being outwardly prejudiced towards Hatsue's style of emotional expression, but his misunderstanding does parallel the skepticism with which many white islanders' regard Kabuo's unreadable coldness in trial. Hatsue's unreadable demeanor comes from her childhood lessons with Mrs. Shigemura: "She had been carefully trained [...] to avoid effusive displays of feeling." In this way, Hatsue's silence is linked to a learned obligation to honor Japanese social norms.

Ishmael recalls Hatsue's "religious side." Hatsue believes that "all of life [is] impermanent," and that every action has "consequences for the soul's future." For this reason, Hatsue feels very conflicted over their secret meetings. She feels that she will "suffer from the consequences of it." Outside of their **cedar tree**, Hatsue and Ishmael essentially ignore one another.

Hatsue's cultural upbringing impacts her composure and values. Her "religious side" instills within her a belief in the impermanence of life, and a heightened awareness of "consequences for the soul's future." Hatsue's religious upbringing, thus, prevents her from giving herself over to love in the way Ishmael is able to do. The separateness and seclusion of the cedar tree allows Hatsue to forget about her hesitations somewhat; however, when she is in the world—around her family, for example—her cultural obligations are more difficult to ignore, and this (along with the prejudices of other islanders) prevents the couple from letting others know about their relationship.

Back in the present, Ishmael remembers that Hatsue was crowned the Strawberry Princess at the 1941 Strawberry Festival. Ishmael's father, Arthur Chambers, had covered the event for the local paper. Ishmael watched as Arthur took Hatsue's photo. Hatsue gave Ishmael an undetectably small smile.

On San Piedro, The Strawberry Princess serves as a symbolic peace offering between the white islanders and the Japanese islanders: the princess bridges the gap between these two groups of people and their conflicting worldviews. When Hatsue is crowned Strawberry Princess, it is symbolic of her anguish at being torn between the American way (Ishmael) and the Japanese way (her family).

Ishmael's memory flashes forward to when they were high school seniors: In the **cedar tree**, Hatsue tells Ishmael about her training with Mrs. Shigemura, about how she'd been strongly advised to marry a Japanese boy. She feels that it is "evil" for the two of them to deceive the world. Ishmael disagrees, saying that they're not evil; the world is. But Hatsue continues to anguish, saying that it drives her mad to lie to her family.

Hatsue speaks more about the forces that prevent her from feeling completely absorbed and confident in the relationship. She feels pressure from her family and from Mrs. Shigemura to marry a Japanese boy, and considers it "evil" to act against her parents' wishes. Ishmael, who doesn't share Hatsue's religious and cultural obligations, struggles to understand how what feels *right can* be *so wrong. He believes they can simply choose not to think about their conflicting cultures. Ishmael's privilege as a white man allows him to ignore obligations and act on his heart's impulses in a way Hatsue cannot.*

Hatsue expresses her fears about the war; Ishmael responds that he's going to be drafted and that he has no choice. They sit in the **cedar tree**, and Ishmael sees that "their absorption in one another [...] shield[s] them from certain truths." Still, it's hard for Ishmael to ignore the war, even with his absorbing love of Hatsue to distract him.

The cedar tree "shields" Ishmael and Hatsue from the prejudices and obligations of the outside world, but as wartime tensions continue to grow, the couple—even Ishmael, the hopeless romantic—starts to see that they cannot remain in their escapist paradise forever.

CHAPTER 13

Teenage Hatsue is buttoning her coat after church at the Amity Harbor Buddhist Chapel when she hears about the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Hatsue's father consults with his friends Mr. Oshiro and Mr. Nishi over the phone. He learns from Mr. Oshiro that Otto Willets, a fisherman, had unscrewed the light bulbs in the marquee of Shigeru Ichiyama's movie theater. Meanwhile, two other men shout derogatory slurs at Ichiyama. Willets calls Shigeru Ichiyama "a dirty Jap" and asks him if he knows there was supposed to be blackout.

The attack on Pearl Harbor (a surprise military strike by the Japanese Navy on the Pearl Harbor United States Navy base in Honolulu, Hawaii) results in heightened racism directed towards San Piedro's Japanese population. Willets's behavior towards Shigeru Ichiyama foreshadows the future acts of injustice San Piedro's Japanese population will be forced to endure over the course of the next several years.

Oshiro calls Hisao again, telling him Amity Harbor was on high alert for a subsequent Japanese attack. Hisao takes out his shotgun. Nobody in the Imada house sleeps that night.

The Imadas are worried about another attack by the Japanese, but they are also afraid of another attack on Japanese citizens by someone like Otto Willets.

On the school bus the next morning, Hatsue and Ishmael learn that the Japanese are making attacks all around the Pacific Ocean. Their bus driver tells them that Roosevelt will declare war, that arrests are being made on "Jap traitors," and that the government is freezing Japanese bank accounts. The general atmosphere is one fear—that if it happened at Pearl Harbor, it could happen in Amity Harbor. There are blackouts ordered that night all along the coast.

The bus driver's prejudiced comment about "Jap traitors" parallels Otto Willets's comment about Shigeru Ichiyama being a "dirty Jap." San Piedro—and much of the rest of the United States—considers all people of Japanese descent to be enemies of the United States.

The radio is on all day at school, transmitting "cheerless and sober" voices. Hatsue and Ishmael's teacher encourages the male students to "consider it an honor to meet the Japs head-on."

Everyone is on high alert. Despite the fact that some of his students are of Japanese descent, Hatsue and Ishmael's teacher engages in racist rhetoric, urging his students "to meet the Japs head-on."

Ishmael's father publishes the paper's first war extra. It reads "ISLAND DEFENSE. SET!" and describes the steps taken on the island to counter potential attacks. It contains, noticeably, none of the slurs present in the rhetoric of many of the other islanders; in fact, Arthur's publication contains articles that feature Japanese islanders pledging loyalty to the United States.

Ishmael's father tries to combat the racism of his neighbors by emphasizing the dedication of San Piedro's Japanese residents to the United States. Arthur's decision to publish stories highlighting Japanese loyalty to the United States shows how certain facts can be selected and emphasized in order to paint a certain picture of the truth. In this case, Arthur publishes stories selectively in order to present a version of the truth (that many Japanese islanders are in fact loyal) that corrects and contradicts an alternate, racially biased "truth" (that all Japanese people are enemies of the United States).

Hatsue approaches Ishmael as he reads his father's war extra. Hatsue tells Ishmael that her family's bank accounts have been frozen—they have no way of accessing their money. Ishmael and Hatsue reflect on how surreal their current situation feels. Ishmael insists that "the Japanese *forced* [them] into" their current predicament. But Hatsue is hesitant to accept Ishmael's blame. She tells him to look at her face, saying: "My face is the face of the people who did it." Ishmael doesn't understand Hatsue's worry, declaring that Hatsue isn't Japanese—she's American. But Hatsue accepts the direness of her situation pragmatically: she tells Ishmael about the incident at the Ichiyamas' theater. The couple promises not to let the war hurt them.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States froze accounts in United States branches of Japanese banks, just as Hatsue's family experiences here. Ishmael believes he can separate Hatsue from "the Japanese [that] forced [them] into" their current troubles, but Hatsue adopts a more realistic attitude: "My face is the face of the people who did it." Hatsue knows that most Americans, like Otto Willets, will assume the worst about every person of Japanese descent—even Japanese Americans, like she and her sisters.

Later in the week, Ishmael helps his father with the paper, taking phone calls. The county sheriff calls, concerned about Japanese farmers keeping dynamite in their sheds. The dynamite, the sheriff speculates, might be used for "sabotage," and should thus be turned in to the sheriff's office. The sheriff wants Arthur to print the notice in the paper. Arthur publishes the notice, and also the defense authority's message that, as of December 14, people of Japanese descent would no longer be permitted to ride the ferries.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, prejudices directed at the Japanese continue to rise. The sheriff, fearing "sabotage," demands that all Japanese farmers turn over the dynamite they use for clearing land. The sheriff has no evidence to suggest that any of these farmers would initiate sabotage—he acts only on speculation, motivated by his prejudice.

Arthur also writes a story about men who had joined the "civilian defense auxiliary fire force." Arthur singles out a few Japanese men on the force, referring to them by name in his article. Arthur tells his son that he singled these three men out because "not every fact is just a fact. […] It's all a kind of…balancing act. […] that's what journalism is about." But Ishmael disagrees with his father's assessment, arguing that journalism is only about reporting facts. Arthur replies by noting that they still have to choose *which* facts to print.

Arthur continues to use his newspaper to retaliate against his neighbors' unjust prejudice against the Japanese residents of San Piedro. Ishmael criticizes his father's selective use of "fact," arguing that, regardless of intention, Arthur's "balancing act" still imposes a narrative on his supposed "facts," much like other white citizens impose a racist narrative on their Japanese neighbors. Arthur, however, challenges his son, implying that journalists have a moral obligation to determine with which facts they use to construct a narrative of truth. The argument between the two highlights how difficult it can be to determine what an objective "fact" really is.

Arthur continues to be selective in "which facts" he publishes, actively drawing his readers' attention to acts of loyalty performed by the island's Japanese population. "Seems like you're favoring the Japs, Art," writes in an anonymous *Review* reader. People cancel their subscriptions to the paper, disappointed and angered by Arthur's supposed "favoring" of the Japanese. The Price-Rite in Anacortes backs out of its advertisements in the paper. Arthur prints the complaints he receives, and also responses to these complaints.

Arthur believes it's his moral imperative to include "facts" that dispute the heightened racism directed at San Piedro's Japanese population, so he continues to publish stories that emphasize the loyalty of the island's Japanese population. Some readers accuse Arthur of bias, arguing that he's "favoring the Japs." Arthur publishes the complaints he receives in order to maintain a neutral, unbiased position.

CHAPTER 14

On February 4, two men from the FBI visit Hatsue's family. The FBI men inform them that they have to search the place. Hatsue's father, Hisao, is accommodating and polite with the men, who've received "complaints from local citizens" about "aliens" on the island who are hoarding "illegal contraband." The men confiscate the family's Japanese belongings, such as Fujiko's kimono, a sword, a wooden flute that had been in their family for generations, and sheet music.

The FBI men confiscate the Imada family's most precious Japanese items. Seizure of these objects isn't motivated by concerns for natural security; rather, the FBI takes these particular items to attack the Imadas' ties to Japanese culture.

The FBI men discover dynamite in Hisao's shed. Hisao pleads with the men, insisting that the dynamite is for clearing land for farming. But the FBI men refuse to back down. They arrest Hisao and tell him that they must bring him to Seattle. There, they say, Hisao will answer a few questions, after which point he'll be allowed to return home. Hatsue's sisters begin to cry. Fujiko pleads with the men, but to no avail. "Think of this as a war sacrifice," they tell her. Hisao, along with the other arrested Japanese men, ride on a train from Seattle to an internment camp in Montana.

The FBI men are acting in response to the political narrative that all Japanese persons should be considered a threat to the United States. It is useless, therefore, for Hisao to try to reason with the men, because no facts will come between them and the prejudiced narrative their country has instructed them to believe in and act on. The men try to legitimize and minimize Hisao's unjustified arrest by framing it as "a war sacrifice."

Fujiko comforts her daughters and urges them to be strong, recalling her journey aboard the *Korea Maru* from Japan to the United States, and of the hardships she endured in her early days in the new land. She encourages her daughters to embrace these new hardships. They are Japanese living in a country at war with Japan. In Japanese culture, "a person learned not to complain or be distracted by suffering" but rather to persevere. The hardships they endure now will strengthen them, but they can also teach them about the dark sides of life—especially the dark sides of the *hakujin*.

Fujiko encourages her daughters to rely on their Japanese culture as a way of coping with Hisao's arrest and the other injustices they will surely continue to face. She emphasizes how vastly different Japanese culture is from American culture. The Japanese way of life instructs them "not to complain or be distracted by suffering," so therefore her daughters should accept and learn from the sadness Hisao's arrest has brought on their family.

Hatsue resists her mother's comments about the *hakujin*, insisting that not all white people hate the Japanese. Fujiko admits that, yes, not *all* white people hate the Japanese; but still, she asks her daughter to admit that they're different in significant ways. Hatsue stands her ground. Fujiko insists that the *hakujin* are different because they are "tempted by their egos." The Japanese, however, "*know* [their] egos are nothing." The Japanese ultimately seek a connection "with the Greater Life," and white people do not.

Hatsue's romance with Ishmael represents a partial allegiance to the hakujin, *so she is conflicted about going along with her mother's generalization that all white people hate the Japanese. Fujiko doesn't know about her daughter's romance (though she might suspect that her daughter is being dishonest in some regard), so she tries to reason with Hatsue's hesitations. Fujiko reinforces the major differences in the two cultures: "the whites […] are tempted by their egos," she claims, while "We Japanese […]* know *our egos are nothing." Fujiko believes it is more important to seek a connection the universe than to seek a connection with the self, as the self is unstable and unreliable. She wants her daughter to honor her Japanese culture and abide by these tenants as they navigate their current plight.*

But, argues Hatsue, these Japanese searching for "the Greater Life" are the ones who bombed Pearl Harbor, and she doesn't want to be connected to them. Hatsue feels more a part of America. She doesn't want to be Japanese.

Hatsue resents the Japanese who attacked Pearl Harbor. She wants to be able to choose to whom and to where she belongs.

Fujiko sympathizes with her daughter, citing the difficulty of their times. Still, she urges her to stay quiet and be certain not to say anything she'll regret later. Fujiko's words finally resonate with Hatsue, and she sees how right her mother is; that she doesn't know herself well enough "to speak with any accuracy."

Fujiko reinforces her earlier statement about the Japanese knowing their egos are nothing. She encourages her daughter to not be so bold in her assertions—it is best to keep silent, because nobody can no exactly who they are. What's more, the impulsive desires of the heart do not define who one is as a person. In other words, Hatsue's immediate anger at the Japanese who attacked Pearl Harbor does not define her identity as a whole, nor do her current feelings for Ishmael: both of these emotions are only small, inconsequential pieces of her whole self, and, according to Japanese culture, even the whole *self means very little in the context of "the Greater Life."*

Fujiko says she thinks living among white people has "tainted" her daughter, and "made [her] soul impure." She tells Hatsue that she must learn to live among the *hakujin* without becoming "*intertwined* with them." Becoming intertwined, advises Fujiko, will cause her daughter's "soul" to "decay."

*Fujiko hints that she knows her daughter is deceiving her in some way when she comments that Hatsue's soul has become "tainted" and "impure." In particular, her use of the word "*intertwined*" is evocative of the intertwined, intimate relationship Hatsue conducts with Ishmael.*

Immediately, Hatsue thinks of her secret meetings with Ishmael and wonders if her mother knows about them. "I know who I am," Hatsue tries to insist once more, but as she says the words she realizes how uncertain they are; it might better to stay quiet instead of saying things she might regret later.

Hatsue realizes her mother might know about her secret rendezvous, and she responds to this defensively: "I know who I am." Still, Hatsue knows this assertion is only a desperate attempt to avoid acknowledging what she knows to be true: that she doesn't know herself at all, and this is why her meetings with Ishmael have been riddled with so much anguish and uncertainty.

Hatsue walks into the forest later that day, admiring the nature around her. She contemplates everything that troubles her, such as her father's imprisonment, her secret white boyfriend, and the fear that her mother seems to know how torn she is about her identity. Hatsue realizes that "she [is] of this place and she [is] not of this place," and that she looks like an enemy of the country even though she's American. Her thoughts turn to Ishmael, and as she reflects on their past together, she feels ill.

For Hatsue, nature usually represents a space apart from culture—a place where she doesn't have to choose between following her heart and deceiving her family and culture. But Hatsue's problems have escalated to such an extent that she can no longer run to nature to escape her problems: "she [is] of this place and she [is] not of this place," she realizes. There is no way for her to carry on believing that her identity can be rooted in America and in Japan: she must either choose, or continue to feel torn and anguished.

Still, Hatsue knows she has feelings for Ishmael: she wonders what love could mean if it doesn't mean the experience she shares with Ishmael inside the **cedar** tree.

Hatsue anguishes some more: as obligated as she feels to honor her family, she can't deny that her feelings of Ishmael are real. Still, Hatsue considers "love" to be what she feels when she's inside the cedar true. In other words, Hatsue's notion of love is unable to extend beyond the constraints of the cedar tree and nature. She recognizes, at least unconsciously, that her love will never be legitimate in the prejudiced, human world.

The couple meets in the **tree** later that day. They both admit they cannot recall a time when they didn't know one another. Still, Hatsue says, "We're trapped inside this tree." The couple cannot have a life together in the world. The attack on Pearl Harbor has made the idea of a future together even less likely than it was before. Ishmael adopts a more optimistic view, reasoning that they'll graduate in a few months, and then they can escape to a place where they can be together. Hatsue reminds Ishmael of the arrests of Japanese people and of the ongoing war. Ishmael asks for an answer to their predicament, and Hatsue says that there is none. Ishmael believes that their love can get them through anything, but Hatsue isn't so sure.

The attack on Pearl Harbor forces the couple to come to terms with the unlikelihood that their relationship will be able to survive the cruelty and bigotry of the outside world. Ishmael, guided solely by his heart, remains optimistic that the couple can one day run away to a more accepting place. Having spoken with her mother earlier that day, Hatsue now realizes that there is more to life than the heart's desires, and therefore, one must not act on desire alone. She has a more negative, realistic outlook on their relationship than Ishmael has.

Hatsue turns out to be correct, as "on March 21 [...] the U.S. War Relocation Authority announce[s] that islanders of Japanese descent had eight days to prepare to leave." The Japanese islanders prepare to depart. Arthur runs multiple stories in the paper sympathizing with their predicament, and gets a phone call telling him that "Jap lovers get their balls cut off."

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, fearing espionage and future attacks, called for the forced relocation of Japanese Americans. Arthur Chambers continues to use his newspaper to construct narratives that shed light on the injustices being done to the island's Japanese population. In response, racist islanders continue to discredit Arthur, arguing that he favors the Japanese.

On Sunday, the day before she and her family must leave, Hatsue goes out to meet Ishmael in the **cedar tree**. Ishmael proposes a way for them to write to each other secretly while she is away—Ishmael will place a letter inside the school newspaper and put "Journalism Class" as the return address. Hatsue calls Ishmael's plan devious, but Ishmael says it's "just what we have to do."

Ishmael rolls with the punches because he believes it's "just what [they] have to do." He continues to act on his heart's impulses, and Hatsue continues to act pragmatically in a way that acknowledges her connections to both Ishmael and her family and culture.

Ishmael and Hatsue begin to kiss. "Let's get married," says Ishmael. Hatsue makes no response, but they continue to kiss. Hatsue cries as they undress each other. Ishmael penetrates her as she continues to cry. "No, Ishmael. Never," she says. Although Ishmael says "It seemed right to me," Hatsue realizes that the relationship doesn't feel at all right to her. She tells Ishmael goodbye, tells him that she'll write, and leaves him in the woods behind a **cedar tree**.

Ishmael's love for Hatsue blinds him to Hatsue's hesitations as he tries to engage her in an act of physical intimacy. His perspective is warped by the belief that Hatsue feels the same way about him as he does for her; "It seemed right to me," he argues on realizing his blunder. When Hatsue leaves Ishmael in cedar tree, it is symbolic of her decision to leave behind the idyllic world of nature. Up until this point, Hatsue has used nature to avoid choosing between loving Ishmael and honoring her culture; her decision to leave Ishmael and the cedar tree, thus, shows that she has chosen honor over desire.

CHAPTER 15

Hatsue and her family leave San Piedro. It's a miserable journey to the internment camp. They travel by train to a transit camp, sleeping in horse stables and eating only canned figs, white bread, and coffee. The food makes Fujiko sick, and she is ashamed at having to relieve herself in front of others, barely maintaining her dignity. They board another train after three days. It's crowded and miserable, and a baby won't stop screaming. Eventually they arrive in Manzanar.

In vivid detail, Guterson describes the horrendous conditions to which people of Japanese descent were subjected during the process of relocation. The FBI men who arrested Hisao framed his relocation as a war effort, and similarly, the Imada family's journey could also be thought of in terms of the war's psychological effects.

The Imada family is assigned a place to live. Their room is adorned only with cots, mattresses, a lightbulb, an oil heater, and army blankets. The latrines outside overflow. Everybody is sick and apologetic about it. There is nowhere to wash their hands. The prisoners suffer silently, for "there [is] no sense in talking to anyone about things," since everyone is in the same situation.

The prisoners suffer in silence, thinking that talking won't make anything better. They internalize the hardships they've been dealt, just as Fujiko earlier told her daughters that Japanese culture instructs them to do.

One day, Hatsue's sister, Sumiko, intercepts a letter Ishmael sent Hatsue. Sumiko opens and reads the love letter before bringing it "regretfully" to Fujiko. Fujiko reads the letter and is shocked and angered, realizing that her suspicions about Hatsue are correct. She knows Hatsue has been sexually intimate with Ishmael, and compares this to her own passionless, young relations with Hisao. Fujiko had suffered in silence, but Hatsue sought out pleasure. Fujiko wonders whether her daughter loves the white boy. She resolves to confront her daughter, but to "behave with dignity."

Guterson confirms explicitly that Fujiko has had lingering suspicions about her daughter's afternoon walks. Fujiko sees Hatsue's dishonesty as a betrayal: she has betrayed her family's trust, and she has betrayed the tenants of her culture by choosing to indulge her heart rather than suffer in silence, as Fujiko had done before her. True to her principles, Fujiko plans to handle the situation composed and "with dignity."

Before Fujiko confronts her daughter, a group of boys from the island, including Kabuo, come by the make repairs and improvements on the Imadas' sorry excuse for a home. Hatsue comes back while they are there, and Kabuo tells Hatsue he is happy to see her. Once the boys leave, Fujiko confronts her daughter about the love letter. Fujiko angrily tells Hatsue that she has deceived her family *and* herself. Fujiko proceeds to the post office, instructing the clerk to hold all their mail. She writes a letter to Ishmael's parents, telling them everything. She apologizes and says everything is over now.

Kabuo's appearance marks the beginning of his eventual romance with Hatsue. Fujiko is angry with her daughter because the relationship with Ishmael confirms her earlier suspicion that Hatsue's soul has been tainted or marred by living among the hakujin. *In other words, Hatsue's relationship is proof that she has chosen fleeting desires over her cultural obligation to suffer silently.*

Fujiko shows the letter to Hatsue, who informs her that the letter is unnecessary: Hatsue will write her own letter to break things off with Ishmael, as she realized she didn't love him anymore when they were on the train en route to Manzanar. Hatsue says that she knows Ishmael isn't right for her because she always had "this feeling like [she] loved him and at the same time couldn't love him." Hatsue then writes her own letter to Ishmael.

Hatsue tells her mother what she's known to be true for some time now: that she can not remain torn between her desires and her duties, as she knows that doing so is wrong. Her desires are attached to fleeting, ultimately meaningless feelings, while her duties are attached to her cultural obligation to search for a greater, larger truth. When Hatsue writes her breakup letter to Ishmael, she chooses to honor her cultural obligations at last.

Kabuo brings the drawers he made for the family's room, and Fujiko invites him to stay. She does this again, as Kabuo delivers other things for the family. A couple nights later, Kabuo asks Hatsue out to walk with him. She refuses, but realizes that Kabuo is attractive and kind. She knows that she can't stay sad over Ishmael forever. A few months later, "when Ishmael was mostly a persistent ache buried beneath the surface of her daily life," she begins to pursue a relationship with Kabuo. They talk about their mutual dream to farm strawberries once they return to San Piedro. Later, they kiss for the first time, and Hatsue feels sadness, realizing "how different his mouth was from Ishmael's. He smelled of earth and his body's strength was far greater than her own." She tells him he must be gentle, and he says he will try.

Hatsue's ultimate decision to pursue a relationship with Kabuo demonstrates her newly realized priority of cultural and familial duty. When she and Kabuo bond over their mutual dream to continue their families' way of life and farm strawberries, Hatsue realizes that this new relationship is right because it allows her to honor her family's legacy. Though when they kiss Hatsue is saddened by "how different [Kabuo's] mouth [is] from Ishmael's," she now recognizes that emotions like these are fleeting and not meaningful in the grand scheme of things—momentary pangs of sadness are secondary to the larger task of honoring who she is and where she came from.

CHAPTER 16

Ishmael's life continues after the Imada family leaves San Piedro. He becomes a marine rifleman in 1942. Soon after, he gets sick with dysentery and is hospitalized. Ishmael remains in the hospital for quite some time, and he can't help but feel that the suffering he incurs in sickness is "the kind […] he'd yearned for […] since receiving Hatsue's letter."

Ishmael's immediate sickness seems to foreshadow the horrors that lie ahead in his career as a marine. Further, his experience in the military coincides with receiving Hatsue's breakup letter. His later cynicism towards the war seems connected to the painful memory of the shocking breakup. Interestingly, Ishmael's "yearn[ing]" for suffering parallels Fujiko Imada's advice to her daughters to suffer in silence.

Eventually, Ishmael recovers. He's trained as a radioman and sent to New Zealand as with the Marines. In New Zealand, he hears of a former radioman who found a dead Japanese boy while stationed in the Solomons. The radioman had removed the boy's pants, propped his penis up with rocks, "and shot carbine rounds until he'd blown the head of it off." The radioman was apparently quite proud of his actions.

The military is wrought with racist anecdotes and propaganda. The former radioman's horrific mutilation of the dead Japanese boy further contextualizes the source of much of San Piedro's racism towards the Japanese.

Ishmael and his fellow marines "practice landing maneuvers at Hawkes Bay, where the tides [are] bad." Their training is dangerous, and some of the men die. When he doesn't have to practice landing maneuvers, Ishmael drinks with the other marines. He takes his training seriously, but the other marines seem more indifferent, which makes Ishmael feel alienated from them. Ishmael writes letters to his parents and to Hatsue, but he rips them both to pieces before he can send them.

Ishmael sees fellow soldiers die even before he has the chance to engage in actual combat. This reality underscores the psychological baggage he carries years after his service. Ishmael's desire not to be indifferent towards war also stands in stark contrast to the ambivalence he projects a decade later, at the book's present moment. That shift in character shows how significantly the war will alter his personality.

On November 1, Ishmael's division leaves Wellington, New Zealand—not for more training at Hawkes Bay, "but ending up instead at Nouméa on the French island of New Cledonia." Less than two weeks later, Ishmael's regiment, along with over half of the Third Fleet, is on the *Heywood*, a transport ship, headed towards "an unknown destination." The troops are later informed that they're headed to Tarawa atoll, from which point they'll make their way ashore Betio, a well-defended island in the middle of the Pacific. There, they will "let the navy obliterate the place" before finishing off the job themselves.

An atoll is a coral reef that surrounds a lagoon. Tarawa (an atoll) is the capital of the Republic of Kiribati, located in the Pacific Ocean. The real-life Battle of Tarawa took place November 20-23, 1943. Thousands of Japanese, Korean, and American soldiers died during the battle, which is remembered as being a significant failure in United States Military history. Previous U.S. offensive strikes on the island had been highly successful, but on this occasion, the United States was opposed by an exceptionally prepared Japanese resistance situated on Betio, an island located in Tarawa atoll. Guterson includes a fictionalized account of this battle to illustrate the horrors of warfare.

The men are instructed to write letters, as it might be the last chance they get. Ishmael writes to Hatsue: "I hate you, Hatsue, I hate you always." He writes about "how he was about to go ashore on an island in the South Pacific [...] to kill people who looked like her." Ishmael ultimately rips the paper up and throws it into the water.

Scared at the prospect of dying and looking for an outlet through which to channel his fear, Ishmael writes a prejudiced letter to Hatsue. This moment indicates how societal prejudice can affect the perspectives of even otherwise kind, loving people.

In the middle of the night, at 3:20 a.m., Ishmael receives his orders: the marines are to "lay topside to [their] debarkation stations." The men—over 300 of them—bring their gear to the *Heywood*'s top deck. Ishmael hears a landing craft's whine as it falls "over the sheaves of the boat blocks." Men begin to leave the *Heywood*, navigating down the cargo nets.

The men enter willingly into their mission, as they have no other choice. Guterson seems to suggest that war is so traumatic to soldiers in part because they are never adequately able to mentally prepare for the violence.

Ishmael sees the navy "packing medical field kits." He remarks to Testaverde, a fellow marine, that he didn't see anything like this in any of their training. Ishmael listens to his TBX but removes it, as he doesn't want to be weighed down with gear too early.

Again, it's clear that training hasn't prepared Ishmael for the logistical or mental aspects of his mission.

Ishmael sits next to his gear and gazes into the vastness of the sea that lies before him. He tries to see the island of Betio, but it's too far in the distance and he can't make it out. Ishmael and the rest of Third Platoon are briefed about the task that awaits them. First Lieutenant Pavelman tells them about B Company's specific role in the mission. He shows them a model of Betio. Amtracs will go in first, followed by more landing crafts. The squads would have "air cover." Ishmael's group, B Company, would land on Betio at Beach Red Two. The "mortar section" would answer to "the weapons platoon leader, a Second Lieutenant Pratt, for the purpose of establishing a base of fire."

Given how precise and well-thought out the mission appears at this point, its failure will come as a shock to Ishmael. The residual bitterness he feels after the war might be a side effect of his inability to prepare for the possibility of failure. What's more, the failure of such a meticulous mission underscores the broader point that some things are simply beyond humans' control.

"Second Platoon would come in simultaneously [...] and advance over the seawall behind its light machine guns, then collect on higher ground and move inland." South of Beach Red Two, where B Company would land, there were supposed to be "bunkers and pillboxes." Intelligence was under the impression "that the Jap command bunker" was in the near vicinity, as well. It would be Second Platoon's task to look for this command bunker "and fix the location of air vents for the demolitions teams."

Guterson continues to portray the mission as well-planned and foolproof. The military uses the slur "Jap" to dehumanize the enemy, effectively making it easier for the American soldiers to kill the Japanese with less moral hesitation.


After Second Platoon went ashore, Third Platoon (Ishmael's group), would follow, assisting whoever needed assisting. There would be help from K Company, who would arrive after Third Platoon. K Company "would land more amtracs, which could be used against the seawall." A marine in Ishmael's platoon wryly calls their instructions "suckers first."

When the marine jokingly calls Ishmael's platoon's instructions "suckers first," he implies that the first squad to reach the island stands a greater chance of dying. Joking about death serves as a coping mechanism.

The men, led by a chaplain, sing "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" before the battle. Ishmael wonders what good this will do. He's also uncertain as to what his role is in the larger mission. The chaplain passes out candy to the soldiers.

Ishmael finds the religious fervor of the song pointless. If the soldiers are fated to die, they're fated to die—no prayers will be able to save them. This is one of the first inklings of the cynicism that Ishmael will show later in life.


Ishmael crawls down the *Heywood*'s cargo net, but it is difficult with his full pack of gear. He hears the whistling of a shell and sees that one has landed in the water, "seventy-five feet" from the *Heywood*'s stern. Private Jim Harvey, who is next to Ishmael, expresses great disbelief: "I thought they dusted all the big guns off before we had to go in." Walter Bennett assures them that "the big boys are still coming out from Ellice," and will take care of "the Japs with daisy cutters" before Ishmael's platoon arrives ashore.

Again, the soldiers refer to the Japanese with a derogatory slur. Dehumanizing the enemy will make it easier to kill them. This moment is also one of the first indications that this battle won't go as planned.

Another shell lands in the water near Ishmael's platoon. Larry Jackson, another marine, expresses skepticism at the lieutenant's assurance that the Japanese forces on Betio would be "soften[ed]-up" before their platoon reaches the island. The *Heywood* moves closer to Betio. Ishmael hears more shells. Jim Harvey optimistically speculates that there will be nothing but "a whole lot of little Jap pieces" on Betio by the time they arrive. The water is "high and choppy." Ishmael takes some Dramamine.

The lieutenant felt confident that the Japanese forces on Betio would be "soften[ed]-up" because this had been the case in previous United States offensives on the island. Harvey's prediction that there would be nothing but "a whole lot of little Jap pieces" also speaks to the novel's larger theme of prejudice, which dehumanizes people based on their race. Ishmael's decision to take Dramamine subtly sets him apart from his confident, bellicose counterparts: he is scared and sick to his stomach about this mission.

Ishmael sees three other boats carrying soldiers to his left. He tries to calm his mind as they continue to journey towards Betio. Finally, the island appears before them. Ishmael sees fire ahead. Still, everyone remains somewhat optimistic. Fifteen minutes later, the troops arrive at Tarawa lagoon. They pass by two destroyers. The sound of machine-gun fire is deafening. There are no B-24s—no air cover, that is—which they'd been promised they would have. Ishmael tries to avoid being shot. He is terrified.

Already, holes begin to appear in the mission, evident by the absence of B-24s. A B-24 is an American bomber aircraft that was first introduced in WWII.

Ishmael's platoon, still aboard the *Heywood*, is being shot at. They make their way off the boat and into the lagoon. Ishmael stays underwater. When he comes up for air, he sees that "everybody—the ammo carriers, the demolitions guys, the machine gunners, *everybody*—were all dropping everything into the water and going under," just as he had.

Water used to be a source of comfort for Ishmael—he spent hours of his childhood playing along the shore. Now, water is a theater of unspeakable violence and destruction. It may be that this transformation of the natural world is part of what makes this experience so traumatic for Ishmael.

Ishmael and some other men swim behind the ship, which continues to be shot at. He imagines that he is a "a dead marine floating harmlessly in Betio's lagoon." The water that surrounds them is "tinged pink by the blood of other men in front of them." Every moment, more men are shot down in front of Ishmael's eyes. In front of Ishmael, "a Private Newland [...] run[s] for the seawall." More men do the same. One of these men is Eric Bledsoe. Bledsoe is shot in the knee and collapses in the water. One of his legs has been shot clean off, and Ishmael watches as the leg floats away from the bleeding body.

Ishmael would rather be "a dead marine floating harmlessly in Betio's lagoon" than be alive to witness to violence that surrounds him. So many men have died that the water that surrounds him is "tinged pink by the blood," an image that calls to mind the pink foam in Carl Heine's lungs and connects these distant instances of death. Ishmael will think often of Eric Bledsoe, and of the sight of his leg floating away from his bleeding body will haunt him into the novel's current day.

Ishmael runs and hides behind the seawall as Bledsoe bleeds to death. Bledsoe pleads for help. Ishmael and the other men who made it to the seawall can do nothing to help him. Ishmael reflects on the pointlessness of everything.

Ishmael sees war as pointless, and this will make it hard for him to come to terms with its psychological effects years down the line.

Hours later, at 10:00 a.m., Ishmael remains "crouched behind the seawall." A sergeant from J Company appears and berates the men for being cowardly and hiding. Ishmael and the other men insist that the sergeant should take cover, but he refuses and is "shot through the spine." A tractor creates a hole in the seawall. Ishmael digs "a half-track that had been deposited on Betio by a tank lighter and had promptly buried itself."

Again, Guterson includes more vivid depictions of violence and gore to illustrate how traumatic Ishmael's experience in the marines is. Horrific images like the sergeant "shot through the spine" help the reader understand the trauma to which Ishmael bears witness.

Ishmael smells something "sweetish" and realizes it's the stench of the dead marines that litter the beach before him. He vomits. He has no way of knowing if anyone from his squad is still alive. Ishmael lost his pack when he first fell into the lagoon, but he was given new supplies—"a carbine, an ammo pack, and a field machete"—by cargo handlers who moved along the seawall earlier. As Ishmael cleans out the carbine, "a new wave of amtracs [come] up on the beach." Ishmael watches as more men die and are wounded all around him. He stays there for hours.

Guterson's depictions of the horrors of war don't stop at the visual; he also describes the "sweetish" smell of the dead soldiers' bodies.

A colonel instructs the men who are still alive to "re-form and improvise quads." Soon, everybody will go over the top of the seawall. A lieutenant from K Company asks Ishmael where his squad is. Ishmael tells him that everybody who'd been around him is now dead, and he also doesn't know where his original gear went, as he lost it when he originally landed in the water. The lieutenant tells Ishmael to pick other men along the wall and form a new squad. Ishmael tries to form a new squad, but the remaining soldiers are less than cooperative. Ishmael reunites with Ernest Testaverde, who had been a part of his original platoon. Testaverde tells Ishmael that basically everyone is dead, and Ishmael exchanges similar information.

Despite the hopelessness of their situation, the soldiers push forward. Ishmael is forced to reform a squad after his original group is either missing or dead. The amount of detail in this war chapter is Guterson's way of making Ishmael into a more sympathetic character. Though the cynicism and selfishness of his character in the novel's present day can become grating, the trauma he suffered as a soldier contributes, in large part, to these less than savory personality traits.

Ishmael crouches against the seawall. He doesn't want to think about Eric Bledsoe, whom he watched bleed to death in the water. Ishmael sees his current predicament as dreamlike in is repetitiveness: "He was dug in against the seawall, and then he found himself there again, and again he was still dug in beneath the seawall." Ishmael reflects on the pointlessness of the mission and on everything as a whole. He can't recall why he is where he is or why he enlisted in the Marines in the first place.

Ishmael tries not to think about Eric Bledsoe, but he will not be successful in this endeavor: Ishmael will recall the image of Bledsoe bleeding to death later on in the novel, and he will admit that he thinks about him often. The repetitive language describing Ishmael's circumstances also highlights how inescapable these memories will be for him.

At 1900 hours, Ishmael, Testaverde, and hundreds of other men in their new, re-formed squads finally go over the seawall. They are met with "mortar and machine-gun fire" straight on. Testaverde is shot, though Ishmael doesn't see it happen. Apparently, Testaverde ended up "with a hole in his head roughly the size of a man's fist." Ishmael is shot in the left arm and blacks out.

Testaverde's injury is particularly gruesome. Ishmael carries images like these with him years after the war.

Ishmael wakes hours later, beside two medical officials. A man next to him has suffered a gruesome head wound, "and his brains [are] leaking out around his helmet." Ishmael takes in the horrors around him and says, "Fucking Japs." Later, Ishmael has his arm amputated by an inexperienced assistant pharmacist. The man removes Ishmael's arm, clumsily, with a handsaw; the resultant scar tissue would be "thick and corse." Ishmael had been semi-conscious for the procedure, and recalls "[awakening] to see his arm where it had been dropped in a corner on top of a pile of blood-soaked dressings." He stills dreams of his amputated arm a decade later. In and out of consciousness after his amputation, "all Ishmael can think to say" is "*that fucking goddamn Jap bitch.*"

Guterson describes in detail the endless horrors Ishmael witnessed during the war to explain and create sympathy towards the cynicism he carries with him in the present day. Visceral details, such as the man whose "brains [are] leaking out around his helmet," and Ishmael's memory of seeing his arm "where it had been dropped in the corner on top of a pile of blood-soaked dressings," help to bring the horrors to life for the reader. When Ishmael talks about "that fucking goddamn Jap bitch," it also shows how desperate and unable he is to make meaning of the senseless violence the war has forced on his life. "That [...] Jap bitch," of course, refers to Hatsue. Ishmael's anger is misdirected, but it shows how he groups together all of the facets of his life over which he has no control. So much of this novel centers around Ishmael's need to accept the things he cannot control and act on the things he can control, and this moment shows him struggling to do just that.

CHAPTER 17

Back in the **courtroom**, the **snow** continues to fall heavily on San Piedro. It covers all the roads, impacting the daily goings-on of the island. Islanders are wary of the storm and all the unknowns it presents. Still, they recognize that the snowstorm could present some positive aspects, like cancelled school and workdays, and more time for families to spend together. At any rate, islanders know that they cannot predict the intensity of the storm, and they resign themselves to the hands of fate: "there was nothing to be done except what could be done. The rest—like the salt water around them, which swallowed the snow without any effort, remaining what it was implacably—was out of their hands, beyond."

Guterson describes the uncontrollable aspects of the snowstorm in order to establish it as opposite from the very controllable nature of Kabuo's trial. On San Piedro, there are elements that remain "out of their hands, beyond," and there are elements that remain completely within humanity's ability to influence and control. One of the book's driving themes is the struggle to determine and act on the situations in which one has the power to do so.

After the trial's afternoon recess, Alvin Hooks calls Art Moran once more to the witness stand. Art is restless. Hooks asks Art to identify four pieces of mooring line rope that Art had collected as evidence. Exhibit A is from Kabuo's boat, explains Art. It is old and matches the rest of Kabuo's lines—except for one, "on the port side cleat *second* up from the stern." The un-matching rope, Exhibit B, is new, which is very uncharacteristic of the ropes Kabuo keeps on his ship. Moran emphasizes that Kabuo keeps his ropes generally worn down, so the new rope (Exhibit B) stands out.

Art's testimony consists of facts supplemented by narrative or speculation. He identifies the pieces of rope before him (facts), but he follows this by making an inference about how Kabuo usually *keeps his ropes (narrative speculation). Art can't know how Kabuo keeps his ropes all the time, yet his inference is seen as fact by the court.*

The next piece of rope (C) was found on Carl's boat. It is new, and has an intricate, hand-braided knot at the ends, which is characteristic of the ropes found on Carl's ship. But the fourth rope, which was found on Carl's boat, *isn't* like these fancy, new ropes. It's more like Kabuo's worn out ropes. This suggests that, at some point, Kabuo had been "tied up to Carl Heine's boat."

Again, there's nothing literally incorrect about Art's testimony, but it takes a single possibility, that Kabuo had been "tied up to Carl Heine's boat," and frames it as fact. Art is only speculating that Kabuo might've tied himself to Carl's boat, but the jury could interpret his speculation as absolute fact.

In response to Hooks's prompting, Art explains that he was inspired to investigate something as small as "a new mooring line" after talking with Carl's relatives, who'd brought Art up to speed on Carl's supposed bad blood with Kabuo Miyamoto. Feeling that the land feud was a reasonable lead to follow, Art had resigned to search Kabuo's boat, the *Islander*, before Kabuo took it out fishing the night of September 16.

Art is only convinced to investigate Kabuo's boat in the first place because of a biased, one-sided rumor that Kabuo and Carl have bad blood. This suggests that Art's supposedly objective investigation was riddled with bias from the start.

CHAPTER 18

The evening of September 16, the day he discovered Carl Heine's body, Art Moran went to Judge Lew Fielding to obtain a warrant to search Kabuo's boat. Fielding seemed surprised to hear Moran mention Kabuo, so Art explained the five main "*concerns*" he had regarding Kabuo's possible involvement: (1) men had told Moran that Kabuo and Carl were in the same waters the night of Carl's death; (2) Etta claimed Kabuo and Carl were enemies; (3) the out-of-place mooring line on Carl's boat made it seem as though someone had boarded his boat recently; (4) Ole Jurgensen claimed that both Kabuo and Carl saw him to inquire after the land for sale; and (5), the head wound Horace Whaley had identified on Carl was strikingly similar to the *kendo* wounds he'd seen during the war.

Art's reasons for wanting to obtain a search warrant are mostly valid, though Etta's claim that Carl and Kabuo are enemies is likely fueled by her personal biases against the Miyamotos and Japanese people more generally. Art's fifth reason is particularly problematic. Horace Whaley thought Carl's head wound was similar to the kendo *wounds he'd seen during the Pacific War, but it's only an observation. There's no evidence to suggest that Carl's head wound is in fact a* kendo *wound, other than the fact that Horace thinks it looks like one.*

Fielding had been skeptical, and referred to Horace's thoughts about the wound's resemblance to a *kendo* infliction as an "off-the-cuff statement." He hadn't been convinced that this detail *really* incriminated Kabuo. As far as Etta was concerned, Fielding found her hatefulness to be problematic.

Fielding recognizes the bias and illegitimacy of Etta's and Horace's remarks. His skepticism shows that he cares about eliminating bias and maintaining factual integrity in his courtroom.

But Art insisted that if they didn't act soon, they'd lose their chance to uncover the truth. He presented an affidavit he'd prepared earlier. Judge Fielding caved, and made Art "swear that the facts in [the] affidavit [were] true," and then asked for a warrant for him to sign. Fielding allowed Art to search Kabuo's boat, but not his home.

Judge Fielding values learning the truth about Carl's murder, so he lets Art search Kabuo's boat. But by limiting Art's search warrant to Kabuo's boat, Fielding demonstrates that he is still conflicted and uncertain about signing the warrant.

Later that night, Kabuo Miyamoto made his way toward his boat, the *Islander*, which sat in the south dock. He saw "half a hundred seagulls" around his boat. San Piedro fishermen were generally pretty superstitious, paying great attention to "signs" large and small. Kabuo wouldn't typically count himself among his superstitious cohort; still, the enormous flock of birds circling around his ship was unsettling to him. According to fishermen's lore, "those who harmed seagulls risked the wrath of ship ghosts, for gulls were inhabited by the spirits of men who had been lost at sea in accidents." The seagulls, thus, made Kabuo feel a real sense of dread.

The seagulls seem to remind Kabuo of fate. According to the fishermen's lore, "gulls [are] inhabited by the spirits of men who had been lost at sea in accidents," so it would make sense for Kabuo to connect the souls of lost men to the souls of the Germans he killed during the war. The seagulls, then, serve as evidence of the consequences Kabuo believes he will ultimately pay for committing those wartime atrocities.

Kabuo, nonetheless, went about prepping his boat for a night of fishing. He opened up his battery well and inserted a new battery. He started the engine. He still felt ill about the seagulls. He watched other boats depart from Amity Harbor towards the salmon grounds. He thought about heading out to Ship Channel Bank, as others would likely have fished all there was to fish at Elliot Head.

The batteries are presented as evidence in court, so this is an important detail to note. Kabuo's continued wariness of the seagulls suggests that he is still worrying about fate as it relates to his role in the war. The war remains a perpetual source of anguish for Kabuo.

Suddenly, Kabuo saw a seagull "perched arrogantly on the port gunnel" of his boat. It looked like it was watching him. Kabuo aimed his water hose at the bird. The water hit the bird, and as it tried to escape the hose's heavy stream of water, "its head smashed against the gunnel of [an adjacent boat]."

Kabuo harms the seagull, so according to fishermen's lore, he now "risk[s] the wrath of ghost ships." The seagull hitting its head on the gunnel also foreshadows the injury Carl will suffer.

At this very moment, Art Moran and Abel Martinson appeared before Kabuo's boat. Art instructed Kabuo to turn of the *Islander*'s power. Moran informed Kabuo that he had a warrant to search his boat. He told Kabuo that he's looking for a murder weapon. Moran noted the D-6 batteries and the replaced mooring line on Kabuo's boat. Kabuo insisted he'd had the line for some time. Art Moran seemed not to believe Kabuo.

Art and Abel's entrance immediately follows Kabuo's accidental slaying of the seagull. It would be hard for him not to perceive their appearance as being connected to the bird's death. To Kabuo's mind, Art and Abel have been sent by fate to make him pay for the seagull's death, and, by extension, for the deaths of the slain German soldiers.

Then Art and Abel found a "long-handled gaff wedged against the wall." The gaff was "a stout three-and-a-half-foot gaff with a barbed steel hook on one end." There was blood on the butt end—not where fish are pierced, but where the user's hand would normally rest. Kabuo claimed that this sometimes happened—that fish blood got on one's hands and was then transferred to the butt end.

Kabuo's explanation for the blood on the butt end of the gaff is just as legitimate and likely as the prosecution's explanation that the blood came from Carl's head when Kabuo struck him with the gaff. However, the prosecution's story, fueled by prejudice, is always seen as more factual and more legitimate than Kabuo's alternate story.

Moran said his warrant allowed him to send the gaff in for testing. Kabuo insisted again on his innocence. Moran placed Kabuo under arrest, noting to himself that the investigation had taken five hours so far. He remembered Horace Whaley's condescending "Sherlock Holmes" remark during Carl's autopsy. He also remembered telling Susan Marie about Carl's death earlier that day. Though Moran hadn't initially expected to find anything, he now believed Carl's death was a murder. He saw, also, "that [...] Horace Whaley had been right. For here was the Jap with the bloody gun that Horace had suggested he look for."

Five hours is a ludicrously short amount of time for a murder investigation. The duration of Art's investigation suggests a lack of thorough, unbiased investigation. As Art arrests Kabuo, his thoughts are not on the facts that validate his arrest, but on the subjective emotions that drive him to act—Susan Marie's shock, and Horace Whaley's impassioned, bigoted speculation about "the Jap with the bloody gun." This scene makes it clear that Kabuo's arrest isn't the culmination of a successful investigation—it's the inevitable outcome of unchecked prejudice and emotion.

Art faced Kabuo, "look[ing] into the Jap's still eyes to see if he could discern the truth there," but he saw only "a proud, still face." He placed Kabuo under arrest "in connection with the death of Carl Heine."

Art is unable to "discern the truth" in Kabuo's eyes because prejudice clouds his judgment. When Art looks at Kabuo, he sees only the unreadable, "proud, still face" of a "Jap." This is another instance in which a white character unfairly regards Kabuo's unreadable face with skepticism. His own prejudice and the prejudice of others has already convinced Art that Kabuo is guilty, so he sees what he wants to see in Kabuo's face.

CHAPTER 19

It's now December 7, the morning of the second day of Kabuo's trial. It's freezing and **snowing** outside, but the **courtroom** is warm. Alvin Hooks calls Dr. Sterling Whitman to the stand. Whitman is the hematologist who examined the blood found on Kabuo's gaff. He describes the process of typing blood as "a standard procedure" in his line of work.

Again, Guterson draws the reader's attention to snow, evoking the court's responsibility to decide where they can (and must) exercise their free will, and where they must leave things to chance. Meanwhile, Dr. Whitman's profession makes him seem reliable: because he regards typing blood as a "standard procedure," the jury considers his testimony—his presentation of facts—as legitimate.

Ed Soames, the bailiff, brings Hooks the gaff, which is a piece of the prosecution's evidence against Kabuo. Whitman identifies the evidence as the gaff he examined, and verifies that it is in identical condition. He shares his findings with the court: that the blood on the gaff was human blood, and that he identified it as B-positive. He checked this blood type against Carl Heine's, and found that Heine's blood was also B-positive.

Whitman's testimony that the blood found on the gaff is human blood contradicts Kabuo's earlier remarks: on the day of his arrest, he told Art that the blood might have been from a fish. Whitman's testimony, therefore, is damning for Kabuo; it's even worse that the blood type, B-positive, matches Carl Heine's. In short, Whitman's selection of facts discredits Kabuo's supposed account of the truth.

Hooks asks Whitman whether he can say with certainty that the blood is Carl's; he admits that he cannot, although he does say that the B-positive blood type is somewhat rare. In contrast, Kabuo's blood type is O-negative. Thus, the blood on the gaff was neither animal blood nor Kabuo's own blood.

Whitman can't prove beyond reasonable doubt that the blood is Carl's. The notion of reasonable doubt becomes important later on when the jurors must deliberate and render a verdict.

Nels Gudmundsson rises to question Whitman. Whitman verifies, again, that he took the blood sample from the butt of the gaff. Nels asks him if he found anything besides blood and wood scrapings on the sample, such as "strands of hair, or particles of scalp." Whitman admits that no, there were no strands of hair or particles of scalp. Nels speculates that this is odd, as the prosecution's theory seems to be that Kabuo hit Carl over the *head* with the gaff.

Hooks's interrogation of Whitman purposely avoided the question of whether or not there were "strands of hair, or particles of scalp" found on the gaff. He chose not to include this detail in the facts he presented to the jury because it didn't line up with the "truth" he wanted them to believe—that Kabuo struck Carl over the head with the gaff. Nels purposely widens the scope of the facts in order to discredit Hooks's version of the truth.

Nels directs Whitman's attention to the *second* wound found on Carl's corpse, on his hand. He asks whether it's possible that the B-positive blood could've been transferred to the gaff from this wound on Carl's hand (as opposed to the wound on Carl's head). Whitman admits that this is possible; what's more, he says that, though his findings prove that the blood on the gaff is B-positive, they *don't* prove how the blood got there.

Nels further widens the scope of the facts to include Carl's second wound, a detail Hooks also chose to omit when he examined Whitman. By including the fact of Carl's wounded hand, Nels introduces a second—and equally likely—possibility of how B-positive blood could have ended up on Kabuo's fishing gaff.

Nels positions Whitman to admit that the percentage of males of Japanese descent with B-positive blood is even higher than the percentage of Caucasian males (20% versus 10%), suggesting that the blood could've come from any number of men. Finally, he asks Whitman to determine whether it's more likely that the blood was transferred to the gaff from a hand wound or a head wound. Whitman believes it's "more probable" that the blood came from a hand.

Nels widens the scope of the facts again. In doing so, he shows the jury that it's hardly certain that the blood on the gaff is Carl's, even if the blood types match: the higher percentage of Japanese men who have B-positive blood creates a reasonable possibility that the blood could be someone else's. Whitman's admission that it's "more probable" that the blood on the gaff came from a hand discredits Hooks's examination.

Three fishermen testify that they'd seen Carl and Kabuo's boats near one another on September 15, the night of Carl's death, at Ship Channel Bank. Leonard George, a gill-netter, tells Nels Gudmundsson that Ship Channel is similar to other places the men typically fish: it is "narrow" and with a "limited seafloor topography." These features force the fishermen to "fish within sight of other men."

George's testimony places Carl's and Kabuo's ships in the same area (Ship Channel Bank) the night of Carl's death. He also backs up his account with logic, stating that the "narrow," limited space of the Ship Channel requires gill-netters to "fish within sight of other men." This extra detail legitimizes George's initial observation: not only did he see the two boats near each other, he can provide a logical explanation for their nearness.

The nearness of other men's boats combined with the typical fog observed that time of year on San Piedro made it necessary for the fishermen to move around carefully, so as not to hit another man's net. Thus, it would make sense that Leonard George would remember seeing Carl and Kabuo's boats at Ship Channel Bank: he would've been on high alert so as not to bump into either of them. They were fishing in the same area, with Carl "a thousand yards closer to the shipping lanes that gave Ship Channel Bank its name."

George provides another fact to legitimize why he noted the two boats in the first place: the narrow dimensions of Ship Channel Bank require gill-netters to be acutely conscious of other boats in their vicinity. George's ability to explain why he knows what he knows strengthens his credibility as a witness.

Nels Gudmundsson then asks Leonard George if it's common for gill-netters to board each other's ships at sea; George reveals that it is not. There aren't many reasons to board another's ship. George cites helping out a man with a stalled boat as one of these rare cases, however. George emphasizes that the men generally keep to themselves.

George brings up a compelling point; still, just because something doesn't usually happen doesn't mean it won't or can't ever happen. George's observation is closer to speculation than it is to fact.

Nels then asks if fishermen ever argue on the open sea. George says yes, when "a guy gets corked off." He explains that a gill-netter's net consists of a top and a bottom part. The top of the net rests above water, allowed to float with bits of cork tied to it; the bottom rests beneath the surface, weighted down with lead. When one man places his net up current from another, he essentially takes all the fish in that area before they can drift to the net behind his—this is getting "corked off." A man who'd been corked off might motor past the fish-stealer and lay his net up current, thus corking off the man who'd done it first to him, essentially setting up a game of "leapfrog." Still, as infuriating as a situation like this would be, George emphasizes, it wouldn't be a serious enough argument to warrant boarding another man's boat.

George's expertise on the behaviors and habits of gill-netters lend more credibility to his testimony. George presents the scenario of getting "corked off" to suggest that even in extreme, infuriating situations, it is highly unusual for a gill-netter to board another gill-netter's boat—in other words, even if Kabuo and Carl had bad blood between them, it would be odd for them to act on their feelings while they were both on the open sea.

The trial continues. Alvin Hooks calls Army First Sergeant Victor Maples, who trains combat troops, to the stand. He testifies that he remembers Kabuo due to the *kendo* expertise he demonstrated during training. Kabuo was so skilled that, in a practice exercise, Maples was unable to hit him back. So impressed was Maples with Kabuo's skills that he'd asked to study with him. In his testimony, Maples asserts that "a man with no training in *kendo* had little chance of warding [Kabuo] off." What's more, Kabuo struck him as "willing to inflict violence on another man." In fact, "it would not surprise" him to hear that Kabuo had murdered another man with an implement like the fishing gaff.

Hooks selects Maples as a witness to add credibility to Horace Whaley's earlier remark about Carl's head wound looking like a Japanese kendo *wound. Even though Maples's testimony paints Kabuo as a man "willing to inflict violence on another man," it does little to prove that Kabuo's supposed willingness lead him to actual murder. Again, Hooks's case against Kabuo includes a lot of speculative, hypothetical "facts."*

CHAPTER 20

Susan Marie Heine is the prosecution's next witness. It's been three months since her husband's death, but she's still dressed all in black. Susan Marie projects "the air of an unostentatious young German baroness," and Hooks recognizes "the value" of her as a witness: in particular, he notes that "the men especially would not wish to betray such a woman with a not-guilty verdict at the end of things."

Susan Marie's looks and mourning clothes will cause the jury to regard her and her situation sympathetically—they won't want to "betray" someone who is herself a victim of Carl's tragic death. When Guterson highlights Susan Marie's "German" features, he emphasizes her whiteness. Susan Marie's whiteness establishes her as an insider, which gives her testimony a level of extra legitimacy in the eyes of the prejudiced jury.

On the afternoon of September 9, Kabuo had gone to the Heines' house to talk to Carl Jr. about the land he'd recently purchased from Ole. Susan Marie let Kabuo into the house. She observed that "his back was straight, his demeanor formal." Susan Marie found everything about Kabuo to be very deliberate. Carl came in soon after, and the two men left to discuss the land.

Like so many others, Susan Marie reads into Kabuo's "straight," unreadable demeanor. She sees his composure as affected and deliberate, inferring that his face conceals some ulterior motive.

After the two men left, Susan Marie turned her thoughts to when she first met Carl. Her good looks could have guaranteed her any man on the island, but she'd wanted Carl. From the very beginning, their relationship was extremely sexual. Susan Marie seemingly boasts quite a fetching physique. She'd apparently been very happy in her marriage to Carl: "In his grave, silent veteran's way he was dependable and gentle," she observed. Carl didn't talk much, and their sex life continued to be the backbone of their marriage.

Immediately after Susan Marie expresses skepticism towards Kabuo's unreadable demeanor, she paints Carl's "silent" composure as "dependable and gentle." Put simply, Susan Marie sees white silence as positive and Japanese silence as sinister. Carl's graveness is passed off as the "veteran's way." Kabuo is also a veteran, yet this fact is hardly mentioned.

Susan Marie had stopped daydreaming, then, as Carl had returned alone. Kabuo wanted to buy the land, Carl revealed to his wife. He'd responded to Kabuo's request ambivalently, which inspired a "real polite, but frozen" response from Kabuo. Carl hadn't known what to say to Kabuo, and Susan Marie observed that she'd never been sure whether the two men were friends or enemies. She'd never seen them together, but she had a feeling that they were still somewhat friendly as a result of their childhood friendship.

Carl also regards Kabuo's silence with skepticism, noting his "frozen" response to Carl's ambivalence about selling the land. Susan Marie's failure to discern whether Carl and Kabuo are friends is likely the result of her husband's unreadable silence on the matter. Yet she, like the others, speaks favorably of her husband's quiet nature. Again, Guterson draws the reader's attention to the double standards applied to silence: nobody views Kabuo's silence in a positive light.

Carl told Susan Marie that he should just sell the land to Kabuo, as he knew that Susan Marie was never keen on moving back to work the land. At the time, Carl couldn't quite seem to express what was making him uncertain about the decision to keep or sell his newly purchased land. Susan Marie had guessed it was because of the hate Etta harbored against the Miyamotos. Still, Carl insisted it wasn't about *that;* rather, he said, "it comes down to the fact that Kabuo's a *Jap*. And I don't hate Japs, but I don't like 'em either."

Carl appears to have inherited some of Etta's prejudice, made evident by his use of the derogatory word "Jap" to describe his childhood friend. Carl's use of the slur also points to the psychological impact of his military service: fighting against the Japanese could have instilled this racial bias in him.

Susan Marie then reminded Carl of his childhood friendship with Kabuo. Carl said that the friendship was of the past, "Before the war came along." One of the Heines' children cried and their conversation ended abruptly. The couple rushed outside to find their older boy had sliced his foot open. Susan Marie watched Carl tend to the child and saw that Carl was "transformed," and "no longer a war veteran."

When he states that Kabuo was his friend "before the war came along," Carl confirms that fighting against the Japanese has caused him to be biased in a way he was not in his childhood. Still, Carl's ability to "transform[]" into an affectionate father shows that he remains capable of tenderness and compassion despite the psychological burdens he carries from the war.

The couple didn't talk about Kabuo again after this. Susan Marie knew that was unacceptable "to open up her husband's wounds and look at them unless he asked her to."

Susan Marie calls attention to Carl's silence, and to the way the war has affected his personality.

After Carl's passing, Susan Marie reflected again on her marriage. She considered again how largely sex had figured into the relationship, remembering how they had sex in the shower on the last day she saw him. After this episode, the couple cleaned up. They talked minimally. Carl left to fish, and this was the last Susan Marie saw of her husband.

The Heines' marriage is highly physical and minimally verbal. Again, Susan Marie calls attention to Carl's silence, as well as the emotional burden he shoulders as a veteran.

CHAPTER 21

Back in **the courtroom**, it's Nels Gudmundsson's turn to cross-examine Susan Marie. He looks at Susan Marie's "tragic, sensual beauty" and feels "self-conscious about his age." He thinks about a prostate he'd recently had removed. He hasn't been able to get an erection in quite some time. He thinks some more about his non-existent sex life and the sadness of aging—his wife has recently died of cancer, it's harder for him to read, and his mind is going.

Even Nels Gudmundsson, who's supposed to be cross-examining Susan Marie, can't help but be distracted by her beauty. Nels's distraction highlights the extent to which superficial appearances can affect the way one receives and interprets facts.

Nels stops daydreaming and directs his attention to the matter at hand. He asks Susan Marie about the conversation Carl had with Kabuo on September 9. She admits that she has "no firsthand knowledge of its content," as the men had gone outside to talk.

It's important that Susan Marie admits to having "no firsthand knowledge of the content" of Kabuo and Carl's conversation, because it shows that what she "knows" to be true about it is speculation, not fact.

When Carl had come back from talking to Kabuo, Susan Marie agrees, he didn't want to discuss their conversation. She also agrees that Carl expressed concern over what Etta would think of his selling the land to Kabuo, which he had also expressed to Kabuo.

Susan Marie's admission about Carl's reluctance to discuss the conversation speaks more to his quiet personality than to the content of the conversation itself. Meanwhile, Carl's concern for Etta suggests that he feels some obligation to honor her wishes.

When Nels suggests that Carl had made Kabuo hopeful that he would seriously entertain selling him back the land, Susan Marie disagrees, though she admits that Carl hadn't been wholly unwilling to do so.

Nels tries to get Susan Marie to speculate in a way that would benefit his narrative of the truth (that Kabuo would have no incentive to kill Carl because the men were on good terms about the land), but Susan Marie cannot be certain of the facts.

Prompted by Nels, Susan Marie says she "suppose[s]" that Kabuo had seemed to be a childhood acquaintance of Carl's. Nels also brings up the "dirty looks" that Kabuo "is supposed to have aimed at [Etta]." Susan Marie says that, yes, she remembers Carl mentioning these looks. She can't speak for Etta or Carl, but she knows that none such looks had been directed at her. Nels agrees that Susan Marie cannot speak for Etta or Carl, as this would be hearsay. He goes off on a tangent about hearsay and speculation and Fielding tells him to please stop, as Susan Marie is "under oath to tell the truth," thus, they are all obligated to trust what she says is the truth.

Susan Marie's repeated use of "suppose" in her testimony underscores her uncertainty: she can't say with certainty that Carl and Kabuo were friends, or that Kabuo aimed mean looks at Etta, because she was neither present nor directly involved in either of these scenarios. Nels uses Susan Marie's uncertainty to make a point to the jury about how much speculation and hearsay is involved in the trial's representations of "truth."

Fielding turns to the jury and explains the significance of the "Deadman's Statute" in this case: normally hearsay is deemed inadmissible in a court of law. However, "in criminal cases," the statute doesn't prevent hearsay from being presented. The statute thus "creates a…shady legal area." Gudmundsson says that this is exactly the point he was trying to make. The lights in the **courtroom** go out: a **tree** has downed the power line.

Gudmundsson wants to make sure the jury is aware that the admission of hearsay in criminal cases "creates a…shady legal area" because it increases the likelihood of them seeing reasonable doubt in the prosecution's case against Kabuo.

CHAPTER 22

Nels is done questioning Susan Marie, and deems the darkness "well timed." Hooks agrees, as he declines his chance to question Susan Marie again. Fielding dismisses the court for their lunch recess, noting that they'll contact the power company about the outage.

The power outage caused by the snowstorm again highlights how fate or chance results in consequences beyond humans' control.

Fielding, Hooks, and Gudmundsson retreat to the Judge's chambers. The **courtroom** is empty, save for Ishmael Chambers, who is lost in thought. Ed Soames thinks that Ishmael is "a strange bird." Ed and Arthur Chambers had been pals, "but the boy was not someone you could speak to."

Ed Soames's observation that Ishmael is "a strange bird" and "not someone you could speak to" highlights how different Ishmael is from his father, or at least how he has failed to live up to his father's image.

Ishmael walks outside. The wind is blowing, and all the town's power is out. Ishmael goes to the newspaper office to call his mother, who lives alone, outside of town. He discovers that the office's phone is dead, though. Without power, the office grows cold, and Ishmael's amputated arm throbs. He thinks about how a doctor had suggested that he undergo "sympathetic denervation of the limb," thus ridding it of feeling. But Ishmael had declined—he needed to feel the pain, for some reason.

The cold of the storm (a force of nature beyond his control) draws Ishmael's attention to his throbbing, amputated arm (an aspect of life he also cannot control). Ishmael's choice to reject the doctor's suggestion of a "sympathetic denervation of the limb" shows how strongly he clings to his cynicism. It seems that Ishmael needs his missing arm to validate or excuse how little he's done with his life since the war.

Ishmael thinks of the things he has to do: visit his mother; figure out how to print the paper elsewhere (as he has no power in the office); talk to Gudmundsson and Hooks; investigate the extent of the power outage around town; and go down to the coast guard station to "get a full **storm** report."

Ishmael's decision to find out more about the storm could be interpreted as a symbolic gesture that signifies taking fate into his own hands.

Ishmael walks around town taking pictures of the **snow**'s impact on the town and townspeople. He captures a car accident. The heavy snowfall, in combination with his amputated arm, makes it difficult for him to take photos. Ishmael feels the need to document such a big storm, though he thinks that the storm shouldn't "overshadow" Kabuo's trial.

Ishmael's instinct to direct the townspeople's attention away from the storm and towards Kabuo's trial shows that he has some of his father's impulse to discern which facts are more important than others.

Ishmael wanders down to Tom Torgerson's filling station. He asks him to put chains on his car so he can go about completing his tasks. Tom tells him that the whole island's power is down, but that he'll send two high school kids up to put on chains as soon as he can. Ishmael wanders around town for a while longer, picking up kerosene for his mother's heater and sandwiches for his lunch.

Ishmael and the rest of San Piedro must accept the snowstorm and work around its inconveniences. Symbolically, this speaks to the larger thematic idea of chance vs. choice: Guterson repeatedly puts characters in situations where they must exercise free will (choice) in the face of uncontrollable circumstances (chance).

Ishmael returns to the courthouse. Judge Fielding announces that the trial will continue tomorrow morning, when the power will hopefully be back on. Unfortunately, the jury will have to spend another night in their severely lacking, uncomfortable accommodations at the Amity Harbor Hotel, though Judge Fielding hopes their lackluster accommodations won't "divert the jurors from the crucial and difficult matters at hand."

The treacherous weather conditions and undesirable lodgings are out of the jurors' control, but they must not let these uncontrollable circumstances impact their ability to assess "the crucial and difficult matters at hand." Judge Fielding posits that the jurors might not be able to control the weather, but they can (and should) control their attitudes toward the trial.

Ishmael leaves town in his car—the high school kids had gotten around to putting chains on the tires. Cars are scattered along the sides of the road. Ishmael's car, a DeSoto, is "a dubious **snow** car," but Ishmael keeps it because it had been his father's.

Despite the safety risks it poses, Ishmael continues to drive his father's "dubious" old car. This speaks to Ishmael's desire to honor and live up to his father's image.

On his way up to his mother's, Ishmael sees a "Willys station wagon" that he recognizes as the Imadas'. The car has wiped out on the side of the road. Hisao Imada shovels **snow** out from beneath the car's rear wheel. Ishmael knows that Hisao won't accept his help, but he pulls over anyway, thinking he can convince them to accept a ride. As he walks toward the car, Ishmael sees that Hatsue is next to her father, helping him shovel snow. Ishmael helps Hatsue and Hisao, but the Imadas' car's tire has been punctured by a felled **tree**, and they eventually accept a ride from Ishmael.

It's as if by fate that the snowstorm leaves Hatsue and her father stranded at the side of the road at the moment that Ishmael passes by. This chance encounter puts Ishmael in a position to choose how he responds to it. It's symbolically important that a tree punctured the Imadas' tire, as trees played such a central role in Ishmael and Hatsue's teenage romance.

Hatsue is reluctant to speak to Ishmael. Most of the car ride's conversation consists of Hisao explaining the details of how their accident occurred. Ishmael listens sympathetically. He acknowledges the inconvenience the storm has created for the Imadas, but asks, "don't you think the **snow** is beautiful?" Hisao agrees, but Hatsue only looks straight ahead, a "cryptic look" on her face.

Ishmael thinks the snow is beautiful because it was the snow that led him to this chance encounter with Hatsue. Given that he was unsuccessful in his attempts to talk to her before Kabuo's trial, he might consider this car ride to be fate giving him a second chance to approach her. Hatsue's "cryptic look," however, shows that she does not consider the chance encounter to be a fortuitous one.

If the two of them were alone, Ishmael thinks, he'd like to ask Hatsue what she means by her expressionless look. Ishmael thinks about all the times he's seen Hatsue throughout the years. The two can't avoid running into each other in such a confined, small place, but they avoid any real interactions or communication. Still, despite their avoidance, and despite the fact that Hatsue is married and has children, Ishmael can't help but feel that he's "waiting" for her.

Ishmael continues to live in the past, refusing to let go of a decade-old failed relationship. This parallels the cynicism that he developed as a result of the war.

Finally, in the back of Ishmael's car, Hatsue addresses Ishmael: "Kabuo's trial, is unfair […]." She urges Ishmael to write about the unfairness in the paper. In an attempt to continue their dialog, Ishmael asks Hatsue to explain what she means by fair. Hatsue tells Ishmael that the trial is fueled by the islanders' prejudice against the Japanese.

Hatsue wants Ishmael to write about the unfairness of Kabuo's trial to present the public with a different, unbiased set of facts. Her request mirrors Ishmael's father's decision to publish stories that defended San Piedro's Japanese population during WWII.

Ishmael sympathizes with Hatsue, but he ultimately believes the jury can reach the right verdict. At any rate, he adds, "sometimes I wonder if unfairness isn't…part of things." Hatsue interjects that she isn't "talking about the whole universe," but a small, concentrated instance of prejudice that is *directly* imposing unfairness onto her husband's trial—something that can be fixed, in theory.

Ishmael's comment that unfairness might be "part of things" affirms the role of fate in the novel, suggesting that there are things in the world that humanity will never be able to control or explain. Hatsue refuses to accept this, arguing that the trial's unfairness isn't a matter of chance; rather, the unfairness is the direct result of most everyone involved choosing to act on their prejudices. In other words, Ishmael may be right that some unfairness is unavoidable, but Hatsue points out that in many specific cases, humans still do have the power to make things more fair.

As Hatsue and Hisao leave his car, Ishmael thinks that he's gained "an emotional advantage" over Hatsue because she wants him to write about the unfairness of Kabuo's trial in his newspaper. He reflects on fate's hand in Hatsue's current predicament: her husband "was going out of her life in the same way he himself once had," by forces beyond their control. Kabuo's possible, even *likely*, imprisonment, Ishmael speculates, might change things between Hatsue and himself.

Ishmael dismisses the notion of publishing a story about the trial's unfairness, forgoing his moral obligation to report facts in favor of advancing his own self-interest. Ishmael's bitterness toward the breakup causes him to handle the situation in the opposite manner his father would have. What's more, when Ishmael frames Kabuo's possible imprisonment and his own breakup with Hatsue as the product of forces beyond their control, he ignores the role prejudice and choice play in both matters. Ishmael's stance that fate governs all of life is his way of both coping with his misfortunes and excusing his cynicism and inability to exercise moral judgment.

CHAPTER 23

Ishmael heads over to the coast guard lighthouse on Point White. The lighthouse's purpose is to direct disoriented ships in the face of unsavory weather. Before the tower was built, 11 ships had run aground. Decades have passed since then, and there is no longer any sign of the ships—they've all washed away. Despite the presence of the lighthouse, accidents still happen when the fog is too thick to see through. The wrecks almost cannot be helped. Islanders consider them to be "ordained by God, or at any rate unavoidable." They accept the inevitability of shipwrecks, but ponder them privately.

The lighthouse is San Piedro's attempt to exercise some control over the unpredictable, often violent storms that wreak havoc on island life. In this way, the lighthouse symbolizes humanity's often-futile attempts to understand and accept whatever fate has in store. The islanders try to accept fate's place in their lives, but the fact that they ruminate over shipwrecks in private suggests that they've never fully come to terms with their inability to control their lives.

Ishmael sits before "the lighthouse chief petty officer, […] Evan Powell." Ishmael tells Powell he's writing a story about the **storm** and would like to go through old logs to compare this storm's intensity to past storms. Powell tells Ishmael that the lighthouse keeps a lot of logs, but telephones Levant, the radioman, to assist Ishmael. Levant directs Ishmael to the records room. He shows Ishmael how all records—radio transmissions, shipping logs, weather reports, maintenance—are sorted by date. Levant reveals that he's been the radioman only for a few months—he was promoted after some others were transferred to another location.

The wealth of radio logs seems to represent humanity's attempt to make sense of the forces over which they have no control. Along these lines, Ishmael's decision to write a story about the storm represents his individual attempt to exercise control over this one aspect of life—something he is rarely able to do. He might not be able to control Hatsue's feelings or his amputated arm, but he can at least try to make sense of the weather.

Ishmael tries to concentrate on the abundance of records, but his thoughts are pulled back to Hatsue in the backseat of his car earlier that day. He is overcome by memories of his and Hatsue's first interactions after the war. In particular, he recalls a moment when he was behind her in line at the general store. Ishmael stood there, hating her silently, as she told him she was sorry that he'd lost his arm in the war. Ishmael replied, "The Japs did it." Ishmael immediately apologized to Hatsue for the derogatory comment, and for "everything." He told her how miserable he was. They parted ways.

Ishmael berates Hatsue with a racist slur as a way of expressing his bitterness towards what he sees as the results of fate—his amputated arm and Hatsue's rejection. Verbally assaulting Hatsue allows Ishmael to exercise some control over his misfortunes.

During this period, Ishmael would seek refuge in nature, taking long hikes along the beach. On one of these walks, he encountered Hatsue and her baby. Hatsue refused to speak with him then. Ishmael whined about how lonely he was, and begged for Hatsue to hold him one last time. If Hatsue could do this, Ishmael reasoned, he could finally move on from her. But Hatsue declined: she was married, after all. "I feel terrible for your misery, but I'm not going to hold you, Ishmael," she said. "You're going to have to live without holding me."

Ishmael walks through nature in attempt to forget the miserable reality of his life. Throughout the novel, nature functions as a world separate from society's problems and prejudices. When Hatsue tells Ishmael that she's "not going to hold [him]" she implies that it's Ishmael's responsibility to get himself through his misery. He cannot rely on fate and others to improve his condition; rather, he must choose to change himself.

Ishmael stops daydreaming and focuses on his task of combing through the maritime records. His thoughts of Hatsue have made him wonder if, perhaps, there's evidence pertaining to Kabuo's trial present among all the records and logs. He abandons his research for the **storm** story and turns instead to the records for September 15 and 16. In a series of transmission logs, Ishmael discovers that, the night/morning of Carl's death, a large ship called the S.S. *West Corona* had passed, off course, through the Ship Channel Bank, where Carl's boat had been. The logs were signed by "a Seaman Philip Milholland." Ishmael pockets the logs and returns to Levant.

Ishmael's choice to search for transmission logs related Kabuo's trial implies that he wants to take matters into his own hands rather than leave the trial's verdict to chance. Ishmael seems to have been motivated to act by his lovesick daydreaming over Hatsue, suggesting that his motivations for investigating the logs are less than morally respectable. It's more likely that Ishmael wants to find something in the logs that will incriminate Kabuo, thus enabling him to get back at Hatsue for the anguish she's caused him all these years.

Ishmael asks Levant who Milholland might be. Levant explains that Milholland was the radioman whom he replaced—on September 16. Ishmael realizes that Milholland had logged the *Corona*'s transmissions and then immediately been transferred elsewhere. "Nobody knows," Ishmael realizes. The men had filed away these logs among hundreds of others just like them. There would be no reason for anybody involved in the trial to even start to look for evidence here.

Because Ishmael is the only person who knows about the notes, he is the only person in possession of the information they contain. The reader will soon see that these notes contain information that could exonerate Kabuo. Thus, Ishmael is now tasked with deciding whether to honor his moral obligation to come forward with the notes, or to act selfishly and keep them to himself.

Ishmael pieces together the meaning of these logs: "that on the night Carl Heine had drowned, stopping his watch at 1:47, a freighter plowed through Ship Channel Bank at 1:42—just five minutes earlier—no doubt throwing before it a wall of water big enough to founder a small gill-netting boat and toss even a big man overboard." These logs prove that Kabuo couldn't have murdered Carl.

Ishmael is the only person who possesses the information necessary to exonerate Kabuo. Thus, Ishmael faces a new moral dilemma: he must decide whether he will act with moral integrity and bring forward the notes, or act selfishly and keep the notes to himself, almost certainly sealing Kabuo's fate and getting back at Hatsue for the misery she has caused him.

CHAPTER 24

Ishmael arrives at his mother's house. He feels the logs in his coat pocket. His mother, Helen Chambers, is in the kitchen. He tells her of all the car accidents the **snowstorm** has caused. Helen Chambers is "the sort of country widow who lives alone quite capably." She reads, has acquaintances, and generally manages to fill her days. Her husband's death has made her focus more on "her books and flowers" and has instilled in her "a greater need for people."

Ishmael's reference to the logs evokes his new moral dilemma. He knows he should tell the court about his discovery, yet he sits on the evidence anyway. Helen's decision to become more invested in "her books and flowers" and expand her social life is evocative of her choice to move forward in life after her husband's death. Helen's proactive approach stands in sharp contrast Ishmael's bitterness. Met with adversity, Helen continues to grow while Ishmael continues to stagnate and suffer.

Ishmael recalls a conversation with Helen in which he'd expressed his agnosticism. Helen asks Ishmael, if he had to choose at that very moment whether to believe or not, if he'd believe in God. Ishmael asserts that he doesn't have to choose. Helen seems sad at this response, and recalls how, as a child, Ishmael used to "feel" God.

Ishmael's loss of religion seems to be a result of the psychological trauma he carries from his involvement in the war. His agnosticism also speaks to his current inability to discern which aspects of life are within his control and which are beyond his control.

Back in the present, Ishmael once more feels the coast guard's logs in his pocket. He thinks about God some more. After the war, he'd been unable to take solace in God's supposed presence.

The violence and atrocities Ishmael witnessed during the war leave him unable to accept the idea of God. The coast guard's logs he feels in his pocket show that he continues to be morally conflicted between letting the outcome of Kabuo's trial fall to "fate" or exercise control by coming forward with the logs.

Helen urges Ishmael to stay the night, and they get to discussing the trial. Helen considers it a "travesty" that they've likely arrested Kabuo because of his Japanese ancestry. She asks Ishmael for his opinion. Ishmael becomes cold and lies: "I have to think he's guilty." He cites all of Hooks's evidence, taking care to present it as objective—even though he knows it was anything but.

Unlike Ishmael, whose conscience is clouded by the residual bitterness from his breakup with Hatsue so many years ago, Helen clearly sees the way the court chooses to act on their prejudices in Kabuo's trial. Despite the logs he carries in his pocket that are proof of Kabuo's innocence, Ishmael insists that Kabuo is "guilty" because he wants to get back at Hatsue for the heartbreak she caused him in their youth. Helen's description of Kabuo's arrest as a "travesty" shows that she has strong moral integrity, like her late-husband.

Ishmael cites Kabuo's "unmovable and stolid" posture in court, and how Kabuo seems not to care that he might be sentenced to death. He tells Helen that Kabuo's unreadable face reminds him of a training lecture he'd received as a soldier, in which a colonel told him that the Japanese "would die fighting before [they] would surrender." To the Japanese, there was an honor in dying. Ishmael recognizes that these lessons were "all propaganda" administered to soldiers so they'd have less trouble killing their enemy. Still, Ishmael recalls this propaganda when he sees Kabuo in the **courtroom**.

Ishmael attacks Kabuo's "unmovable and stolid" composure, attributing it to a detachment from and acceptance of death that is central to Japanese culture. Ishmael acknowledges that he's learned to be derisive towards Japanese cultural ideas because of his training in WWII, in which the United States military emphasized Japanese soldiers' willingness to die so it would be easier to kill them. Ishmael is aware that his instruction was "all propaganda," but doesn't seem willing to dismiss the propaganda, as it excuses the personal derision he feels toward Kabuo.

Helen challenges her son. Didn't Kabuo serve in the United States military, just as Ishmael did? Ishmael stubbornly refutes this, dismissing this fact as irrelevant. Helen accuses her son of "allowing [himself] an imbalance." She asks whether they can rely on "cold" facts alone. Ishmael makes a distinction between "facts" and "emotions and hunches," and proclaims that cold, hard facts are most important. Helen accuses Ishmael of having gone "cold."

When Helen reminds her son of Kabuo's military service, she tries to mitigate his prejudices, steering Ishmael away from his and Kabuo's differences and towards their similarities. Helen and Ishmael's argument about "facts" versus "emotions and hunches" harkens back to Ishmael's earlier argument with his father about which facts should be published in the Review. *In these arguments, Guterson implores the reader to see how all facts are interpreted through the lens of narrative, and it is up to humanity to decide which narrative is the fairest and most moral.*

Ishmael is upset with Helen, who doesn't seem to understand the hardships he's endured. He compares the differences in their grieving processes when Arthur had died. His mother's grief had made her "cold," but she's still sought happiness. Ishmael, in contrast, has let himself stagnate. "I'm unhappy," he tells his mother. "Tell me what to do."

Ishmael's hardships (the war and his breakup) caused him to stagnate, become "unhappy," and retreat within himself, and he is jealous of Helen's ability to bounce back from her grief.

Helen tells Ishmael that she's tried to understand his sadness: she knows his arm, the war, and being single can't have been easy for him. Still, she can't wrap her head around his inability to move on with his life. Other people have suffered hardships and managed to move on with their lives—to make new connections, to enjoy the sensations of living. Ishmael, she observes, has gone "numb." Even Ishmael's father, who'd fought at Bellau Wood, had managed to move on with his life.

Helen validates the real traumas—mental and physical—the war imposed on her son. Still, she cannot accept his inability to move on and experience personal growth so many years later. She cites Arthur as an example of someone who moved on from personal hardship. Such a comparison would be especially impactful for Ishmael, as he constantly frets over his inability to match his father's moral and professional sensibilities.

After he and his mother eat dinner, Ishmael retreats to his room. He thinks about his childhood. He goes outside to check on his mother's chickens, then goes back to his room and thinks about the baseball pennant collection he'd had as a boy. He and his father had both liked baseball and would listen to games on the radio together.

As Ishmael ruminates over the childhood artifacts that remind him of his father, it's clear that Helen's words have resonated with him in some meaningful way—why has he not been able to embrace life and morality after hardship like his father? Are fate and the universe holding him back, or is it simply a matter of making the decision to move forward?

Ishmael's thoughts turn to his father's death. Arthur had pancreatic cancer, and had died in Seattle. Over 100 islanders had turned out for Arthur's funeral. In particular, the island's Japanese population had expressed sadness over Arthur's death, as well as their "great respect for him as a newspaperman and as a neighbor, a man of great fairness and compassion for others." Masato Nagaishi tells Ishmael, "We know you will follow in your father's footsteps."

Guterson emphasizes how honored and important Arthur Chambers was to the San Piedro community. In particular, members of the Japanese community remember Arthur's support of them during a time of heightened prejudice. Ishmael particularly remembers Nagaishi's comment about his father's "great fairness and compassion" because it makes him think of Hatsue's earlier request for him to publish a story about the unfairness of Kabuo's trial. Arthur would have published such a story immediately; though Nagaishi predicted Ishmael would "follow in [his] father's footsteps," he has so far failed to respond to Hatsue's request for fairness and compassion.

Ishmael looks in his bedroom closet, where he knows he will find Hatsue's final letter to him. He reads the letter. In her letter, Hatsue tells him that, although she doesn't love him, she wishes him well. She notes that he's a good person who will have a positive impact on the world, but she says that she has to say good-bye because it's time for them both to move on with their lives. He reflects on the incongruity of their feelings: in the very moment he'd felt certain of his love, she'd felt uncertain of hers.

Ishmael realizes his belief in his and Hatsue's mutual love was a delusion caused by his desire for their love to be true. In other words, Hatsue hadn't truly loved him—he only wanted to believe she did. When in her breakup letter she writes that they should both move on, Hatsue offers Ishmael the opportunity to reflect on the ways he hasn't yet moved on, but he overlooks this opportunity and instead chooses to wallow in self-pity.

Ishmael thinks about his life after Hatsue and after the war. He'd slept with three women in Seattle, but he dumped them all fairly quickly, out of "disgust" and lack of "respect." He used sex to avoid his unhappiness and loneliness. Arthur informed him of his sickness soon after these escapades, and Ishmael hasn't been with a woman since.

Ishmael used casual sex to avoid coming to terms with his delusion about Hatsue's love—it was easier for him to blunt the pain of her rejection than accept that he had been wrong about her feelings for him from the start. Arthur's sickness and death provided another way for Ishmael to avoid addressing his misplaced beliefs directly

Ishmael decides he will write the article in the *San Piedro Review* that Hatsue asked him to write—though not for the noble reasons that would've motivated Arthur Chambers to do so. Of course, Arthur would've also shown the coast guard's logs to Judge Fielding immediately upon finding them, Ishmael notes, again feeling the notes in his pocket. Ishmael leaves the notes in his pocket, and tells himself he will write the article—not to protest the trial's unfairness, but "in order to make [Hatsue] beholden to him." With Hatsue "beholden" to Ishmael, and with her husband, Kabuo, in jail, perhaps the star-crossed couple can finally reunite, Ishmael reasons.

Ishmael decides to write the article Hatsue requested about the unfairness of Kabuo's trial. Still at the mercy of his own delusions–that he and Hatsue can have a future together—he schemes to write the letter "to make [Hatsue] beholden to him." Arthur Chambers would have published the letter in response to a moral imperative, but Ishmael writes the letter to act on his delusional, selfish desires. Additionally, Ishmael continues to keep the coast guard's logs in his pocket, still more proof of his insistence on living in the past, burdened by old grudges.

CHAPTER 25

It's the third day of the trial. Nels Gudmundsson starts calling forward his own witnesses. His first witness is Hatsue Miyamoto. She wears a "calm expression" on her face as she approaches the witness stand. Nels coughs and clears his throat before questioning her—it'd been a cold, rough night, and he's not feeling well.

Like her husband, Hatsue's face is "calm" and composed. Nels's appearance and coughing makes him seem sickly and off-putting. Nels's appearance has nothing to do with the facts of the trial, but it might influence the way the jury perceives what he has to say.

Hatsue is dressed cleanly and tastefully. Her composure reminds a reporter of a geisha. Hatsue isn't calm on the inside, though. She's not confident in speaking for Kabuo, who "[is] a mystery to her, and [has] been ever since he'd returned from his days as a soldier nine years before." Hatsue is overcome by memories of her husband's sudden shift in demeanor when he returned from the war.

The reporter's instinct to compare Hatsue to a geisha exemplifies the casual prejudices present throughout the trial. Hatsue's admission that Kabuo has been "a mystery to her [...] ever since he'd returned from his days as a solider" is evidence of Kabuo's psychological struggle.

Hatsue remembers how Kabuo had been cold, aloof, and suffered from frequent "disturbing dreams." Hatsue thought that having children would change things: she'd been encouraged when Kabuo had taken it upon himself to get a job at the cannery to support the growing family. But Kabuo hadn't been happy there, and talked constantly about buying a farm. Every place they visited was wrong in some way. Soon, Kabuo revealed to Hatsue his plans to buy back his family's seven acres of land.

In the face of the "disturbing dreams" and general psychological upset the war caused him, Kabuo's dream of honoring his family and buying back their land gives him hope for the future. Kabuo and Hatsue are alike in this way: they both embrace the beauty of honoring one's duties.

The land predicament was a huge problem for Kabuo. Half a year after war's end, Hatsue, pregnant, woke to find Kabuo gone. Eventually, Kabuo came back, holding the Japanese family keepsakes his father had buried before the family's relocation years before. He showed Hatsue the photo of him "wielding a *kendo* stick in both hands" and told her of his family's samurai past. Kabuo talked some more about his family, how they'd "lived as children by the fruit they produced" on the strawberry farm. He insisted on buying back the land.

When Hatsue sees Kabuo holding the Japanese family keepsakes, she understands that his obsession with buying back the strawberry land is motivated by a desire to honor his family. The note about living "as children" also indicates that there may be something naïve about Kabuo's wish to buy the land; it may not be possible to return to simpler times in the way that he wishes to.

After that, they'd saved their money. Kabuo fished to support his family and save up money to buy back the strawberry field, but he wasn't naturally talented at it, and some nights on the water weren't successful. Kabuo grew bitter and dark himself, and took it out on his family, as well. Hatsue had once shared the dream of owning land with her husband, but the unrealized dream never tortured her as it did her husband.

Kabuo and Hatsue work together to save up money to purchase the land because they are both invested in honoring the memories and traditions of their families. It's possible that Kabuo's traumatic military past causes him to grow dark and bitter in a way his wife cannot fully understand.

Back in the **courtroom**, Hatsue's memory ends as Nels begins to question her as to whether it would be "fair" to propose that Kabuo was interested in buying back his family's land. Yes, Hatsue answers; he'd been very interested. Nels directs her attention to September 7, when Kabuo had gone to Ole's to ask about the land. Hatsue remembers this day. Hatsue recalls her husband had returned home with bad news: Ole had already sold the land to Carl Heine.

Nels's use of the word "fair" here again hints at how every aspect of the trial is affected by different people's ideas of justice; the outcome depends more on interpretation than actual objective facts.

But Kabuo hadn't been upset, recalls Hatsue; rather, he'd been hopeful. Kabuo decided to talk to Carl about the land. On September 9, Kabuo went to the Heines' house to talk with Carl. Nels recalls Susan Marie's testimony, in which she said that Carl hadn't told Kabuo "no" outright. According to Susan Marie's earlier testimony, Carl had given Kabuo reason to be hopeful. Hatsue agrees with this point: her husband had returned home "more hopeful than ever."

Kabuo's lack of disappointment and willingness to talk to Carl suggests that the two men couldn't have had as stormy a relationship as others have suggested. It also suggests that the supposed coldness and stiffness that Ole reported seeing in Kabuo's eyes when he told him he'd sold the land was a projection of Ole's prejudice, not a reflection of Kabuo's true state of mind.

Still, Nels reminds Hatsue, there was the issue of Etta Heine: Kabuo and Etta weren't on good terms. Hatsue agrees; in fact, she'd cautioned Kabuo to be realistic and not get his hopes up about buying back the land. But Kabuo had maintained that "Etta and Carl [were] two different people," relates Hatsue. Because Carl had been Kabuo's friend, Kabuo had reasoned, he "would do what was right."

Kabuo believed that Carl would not discriminate against him like Etta. Kabuo's instinct to separate Carl from Etta is evidence of the men's childhood friendship. Kabuo wouldn't have had such confidence in Carl if the men were on truly bad terms at this point in their lives. Thus, the prosecution's earlier claim that Kabuo had directed mean looks at Carl is called into question.

Hatsue tells Nels that she and Kabuo had waited, because "the next move was Carl's." Kabuo thought it "dishonorable" to approach Carl before he'd had the chance to respond on his own terms. On September 16—the day Carl's body was discovered—Kabuo had returned home happy: the men had come to an agreement, he said. Kabuo had helped Carl with his boat's dead battery; afterwards, Carl had decided to sell Kabuo the land. It was only later in the day, Hatsue explained to Nels, that the couple learned of Carl's death.

Kabuo believed that Carl would honor his obligation to the Miyamotos and make the right decision to return the land. Hatsue's testimony indicates that all was well between the two men and that Kabuo had a legitimate reason for being on Carl's boat, showing a new side to the story that prosecutors have been trying to construct.

CHAPTER 26

It's Alvin Hooks's turn to cross-examine Hatsue. He finds Hatsue's "story" about Kabuo's excitement towards the news that Carl had decided to sell him the seven acres "terribly interesting." Hooks tries to paint Kabuo's emotional state that morning as "agitated" but Hatsue insists that Kabuo was "excited, […] not agitated."

By calling Hatsue's testimony a "story" Hooks insinuates that Hatsue has not told the truth. He tries to spin Hatsue's facts to fit the narrative he wants to tell, reframing Kabuo's excitement as agitation, thus painting it in a more negative, suspicious light.

Hooks asks Hatsue to reaffirm that the "story" she told to Nels was true, which she does. Hooks then asks Hatsue whether the couple had called any friends or family to share the exciting news of the returned land. Hatsue says they didn't, because it seemed in poor taste to tell people so soon after they'd learned of Carl's death; what's more, the accident changed things. She explains that their circumstances were no longer so certain.

When Hooks asks Hatsue why the couple hadn't told anyone about their good news, he seems to want the jury to doubt Hatsue in light of these new details. In other words, Hatsue hadn't mentioned to Nels that the couple kept news of the new land agreement to themselves—why had they not told anybody? Hooks's new perspective reframes Hatsue's narrative in a way that leaves room for doubt.

Hooks twists Hatsue's words, suggesting that Carl's death had been what prevented the couple from sharing the news. Hatsue asserts that it wasn't the death that had prevented them from sharing their news, but, rather, the fact that things were still somewhat up in the air. Hooks continues to twist Hatsue's words, saying: "Worse than up in the air […]. On top of your husband's real estate deal going sour, a man, we might note, had died."

Hooks tries to present Hatsue's sincere explanation in a way that makes the couple's actions seem suspicious. Hooks imposes a narrative of suspicion and premeditation on Hatsue's testimony to make her appear calculating to the jurors. He suggests that Hatsue and Kabuo had been selfish and more concerned over the possible loss of their land than they were with the loss of Carl's life.

Hooks asks Hatsue why the couple hadn't gone to the police when they learned of Carl's death—did they think it might be useful for authorities to know about Carl's battery dying, and about Kabuo helping him? Hatsue says they'd considered coming forward, but ultimately decided not to, because the coincidence of Carl dying immediately after Kabuo had been aboard Carl's ship "looked very bad." Hooks twists these words, too. What did the Miyamotos have to be afraid of, he reasons, if Kabuo had truly done nothing wrong? Hatsue stands her ground: "Silence seemed better." Hooks maintains it was "deceitful" of them to withhold information.

Hatsue tells Hooks that she and Kabuo hadn't gone to the police because they realized the situation "looked very bad." Implicit in Hatsue's confession is the couple's fear that the Miyamotos' Japanese ethnicity would prevent the police from hearing their story fairly and without prejudice. Hooks continues to twist Hatsue's words, changing her narrative from one of honest fear and hesitation to one of deceit, trickery, and suspicion. Hatsue's insistence that "Silence seemed better" echoes the conversation she had with Fujiko after Hisao's arrest, about the difference between the Japanese and the American ways of life. The court's inability to understand the Miyamotos' silence, thus, may be seen as a prejudiced ignorance of Japanese culture.

Hooks continues to tell Hatsue that withholding information has made the Miyamotos appear suspect. She argues that there wasn't time to come forward before Sheriff Moran arrested Kabuo. Hooks continues to act flabbergasted at the Miyamotos' actions in an effort to get Hatsue to appear angry—and it works. "Wait a minute," she tries to interject, upset. But Judge Fielding gives her a stern look, urging her to keep her emotions in check. Hatsue looks at her husband. He nods at her, and she immediately composes herself once more.

Hooks effectively tells Hatsue that her culturally informed silence appears suspicious to the court. This sentiment parallels the consistent suspicion white characters direct at the unreadable, supposedly cold and calculating composure of the Japanese characters. But when Hatsue finally lashes out at Hooks's repeated attempts to bait her, Fielding scolds her. Hatsue (and the rest of the novel's Japanese characters) can't win: they are judged when they keep silent, and they are judged when they speak.

Gudmundsson's next witness is Josiah Gillanders, president of the San Piedro Gill-Netters Association. Gillanders has been president of the association for 11 years, and has been fishing for 30. Nels asks Gillanders if he'd ever tied his boat to and boarded another fisherman's boat. Gillanders explains that it would be very rare for this to happen—he's only experienced it about half a dozen times over the past few decades. Nels asks Gillanders what had precipitated these few rare occasions in which a man tied up to another man's boat. Gillanders says that in an emergency, no gill-netter would hesitate to help out another man. Nels asks Gillanders if he'd ever board a man's boat for a reason *other* than an emergency. Gillanders replies with a resounding no, never—it's an "unwritten rule of the sea" for fishermen to keep to themselves.

Gillanders's position within the San Piedro Gill-Netters Association and his tenure as a fishermen lend a sense of credibility to his testimony. The jury can be confident that the facts he delivers about the habits and principles of fishermen can be trusted. Nels asks Gillanders about the likelihood of a man boarding another man's boat on the open sea in order to dispel the prosecution's theory that Kabuo boarded Carl's ship to carry out his premeditated murder. Gillanders's statement about the fishermen's "unwritten rule of the sea" also indicates that in some cases, silent forms of communication are respected amongst the islanders—it's generally only people of Japanese ancestry who are criticized for keeping quiet.

Nels explores another area. He asks Gillanders if it's difficult to tie up to another man's boat on the open sea. Gillanders says that it can be difficult to tie up at sea, yes. Nels then asks if it would be possible to board another man's ship, at sea, against his will—as a manner of attack. Gillanders says he's "never heard of it." It would be difficult to board another man's ship on open water without his consent. Josiah insists that this would an unfeasible—if not impossible—method of attacking or killing another man. Carl's large size, in particular, would make this method of attack extremely unlikely.

Gillander's assessment that it would be very difficult to tie up to another man's boat at sea suggests that it is unlikely that Kabuo would have planned to murder Carl at sea: attempting such a feat would be difficult and impractical. Still, one should note that Gillanders's statements are not facts that determine whether or not Kabuo committed the murder; rather, they simply speculate on the likelihood of his being able to do so. It's still up to the jury to decide on the most plausible narrative overall.

Nels shifts focus to Carl's battery troubles. Gillanders says it would be unlikely for a gill-netter to carry a spare battery on their boat. Nels says that there were a D-6 and a D-8 battery on Carl's boat at the time of his death, as well as a spare D-8 on the floor of the boat by his cabin. Gillanders says this spare battery is strange—especially because it was dead. Typically, a boat runs off two batteries; when one battery dies, the gill-netter can use the second one as back up until they can get back onshore to replace the dead one.

Gillanders notes that it is very unlikely that Carl would carry a spare battery on his boat. Thus, the presence of a spare battery implies that Carl acquired the battery from another fishermen. Gillanders's testimony creates a narrative that attests to the likelihood of Carl receiving help.

Gillanders thinks that Hatsue's story—that Carl's batteries had died, and that Kabuo had given him his spare—must be true. If Carl's batteries were both dead, he wouldn't even have access to a radio on which to call for help. He'd have to rely on the odd chance that someone happened by his boat in time to help him.

Gillanders compiles his facts— that is, what he knows about gill-netting from his 30 years of experience—in order to attest to the likelihood that Kabuo did help Carl when his boat's battery died on the open sea.

Gillanders adds that the dangerous location of Carl's boat—in the middle of the Ship Channel Bank—would have made it especially critical that Carl seek out whatever help he could get: "big freighters" barrel through the channel regularly, and Carl's boat could easily have been destroyed. Gillanders thinks it's most likely that Carl would have blown his boat's horn in an attempt to capture the attention of a nearby boat; a horn, after all, would require no battery. Finally, Nels expresses how unlikely it would be for Kabuo to be able to premeditate running into Carl, in such a compromised position, under such compromised, foggy weather conditions; in other words, so many odd circumstances would have to line up exactly in order for Kabuo's supposed plan to murder Carl to be executed successfully. Gillanders agrees wholeheartedly with this speculation.

Gillanders's statement about the "big freighters" that regularly pass through Ship Channel Bank matches the description of what actually happened to Carl Heine (as it is recorded in the coast guard's log Ishmael discovered the day before). Nels speculates that there are too many things that would have needed to line up exactly to make Kabuo's supposed plan for murder a success; unless one attributes those extraordinary coincidences to fate, it seems impossible that Kabuo could have anticipated all of those factors aligning.

It's Alvin Hooks's turn to cross-examine Gillanders. He plays off of the "hypothetical" situation Nels had proposed for Gillanders and that Gillanders had accepted as possible (that Kabuo had successfully boarded Carl's ship on the open sea and loaned him a battery) by posing *a different* hypothetical scenario.

Using the facts Gillanders conveyed to Nels, Hooks rebuts Nels's speculation with a contrasting speculation of his own; in other words, Hooks spins the facts a different way in order to support a different version of the truth.

"Hooks tells Gillanders to consider another possibility: that Kabuo wants to murder Carl; that Kabuo follows Carl out to sea, so as to know where Carl's boat is, despite the thick fog; that Kabuo then shuts off his boat's power, pretending that *his own batteries have died;* that he then signals to Carl for help. Because Gillanders had previously asserted that a gill-netter will always help another gill-netter in an emergency—even if there was bad blood between them—Carl would have had no choice but to board Kabuo's boat to help him with his supposedly dead batteries. Once Carl was onboard Kabuo's ship, Hooks hypothesizes, Kabuo would have been able to murder Carl.

Hooks imagines an alternate scenario in order to downplay the unfeasibility of Kabuo murdering Carl on the open sea. Hooks's hypothetical scenario takes the same facts Gillanders gave to Nels, but spins them in a different way to suggest a different, incriminating outcome.

Gillanders admits that this scenario "could have happened," though he doesn't think it did. Hooks says that what Gillanders "thinks" doesn't matter. What matters is that Gillanders has admitted that such a hypothetical situation is entirely within the realm of possibility—or, it's at least as possible as the hypothetical situation Nels had entertained in his own examination of Gillanders.

Gillanders has to admit that Hooks's scenario "could have happened," though he insists that Hooks's is the less likely of the two hypothetical scenarios. In these two competing scenarios, Guterson shows that a difference of perspective can allow two different people to approach the same set of facts but arrive at very different outcomes. The journey from facts to truth is more complex than it would first appear.

CHAPTER 27

The **snowstorm** continues outside the **courtroom**, beating against the windows. Kabuo hasn't been able to sense the snow from his windowless jail cell, though. In his jail cell, Kabuo thinks about the mess he's in. He reveals that, when Nels had asked him for his side of the story months before, he lied: he failed to disclose the fact that he'd seen and helped Carl Heine the night Carl was last seen alive.

Guterson again uses snow to symbolize fate and the distinction between the uncontrollable (chance) and the controllable (choice). Kabuo's inability to see the snow seems to point to complete lack of agency. Imprisoned, Kabuo is rendered unable to make choices about his life: it is the court who dictates what his future will hold, not fate or his own actions. Guterson also reveals a crucial piece of information: that Kabuo originally lied to Nels about the night of Carl's death.

Kabuo recalls how, at first, Nels had taken Kabuo's statement as the truth. But when he received the sheriff's report, Nels told Kabuo that there were "a few facts [he was] concerned about." Nels cited the evidence that the blood on the gaff matched Carl's blood type, as well as the mooring lines found on Carl's boat, and waited for Kabuo to come forward with the truth. Nels had told Kabuo that he couldn't do anything for him if Kabuo continued to lie.

Without Kabuo's side of the story, the facts of the sheriff's report are highly incriminating. In other words, the selection of facts that the sheriff's report offers present a narrative of Kabuo's guilt. The report contradicts Kabuo's initial narrative that he didn't interact with Carl the night of his death.

Kabuo recalls that Nels had returned the next day with the sheriff's report. He told Kabuo that he could read it to know what they were up against, in order to prepare "a more defensible lie." But, if Kabuo read the report *before* constructing a new story, Nels would no longer trust Kabuo—and he'd "rather it didn't turn out that way."

Nels and Kabuo must assemble a new narrative to incorporate the facts in the sheriff's report. Nels's offer to prepare "a more defensible lie" means that, if Kabuo is guilty, he can read the sheriff's report and the two men can construct a narrative that aligns itself with the evidence in the report. The second option is for Kabuo to tell Nels a new account of the truth before reading the report. If Kabuo is truly innocent, his new account will hold up next to the facts contained within the report. When Nels says he'd "rather it didn't turn out that way," he means that he'd rest easier knowing that the new narrative is actually the truth—not a story they've constructed to make it appear that Kabuo is innocent.

When Kabuo remained silent, Nels seemed to sense Kabuo's motivations for silence: "You figure because you're from Japanese folks nobody will believe you anyway." Kabuo admitted that, yes, this was part of it. "We're sly and treacherous," he said. "You can't trust a Jap, can you?" Nels reminded Kabuo that the law applies to everyone, or is supposed to, at least. He urged Kabuo to tell the truth. "The truth isn't easy," Kabuo replied. But he knew it had to be told.

Nels seems to intuit that his client is innocent. He understands that Kabuo withheld his story in the first place out of fear that prejudice would render his version of the truth meaningless in the eyes of the biased San Piedro legal system. Kabuo's responses— "We're sly and treacherous," and "You can't trust a Jap, can you?"—mimic the prejudiced language of white islanders. Similarly, when Kabuo says, "The truth isn't easy," he conveys his doubt regarding Nels's reminder that the law applies to everyone: it might be easy to speak the truth, but it's less easy for the truth to be believed when one is up against prejudiced listeners.


Kabuo recalls the night of September 15: he checked his boat's engine. He was determined to have a good night on the water. On the advice of others, he'd decided to fish at Ship Channel—there was supposed to be an abundance of fish there. Kabuo drank green tea from a thermos and listened to the other gill-netters communicating over the radio channels. He ate his dinner at dusk. The fog around him grew thicker, and he became a bit concerned. At 8:30 p.m., Kabuo idled his engine. He could hear the lighthouse station's foghorn in the distance. He moved here and there, as he wasn't completely sure that he was out of the shipping lane (and out of the way of the freighters that might pass through it). He turned on his mast light in attempt to increase his visibility.

Kabuo runs through his actions the night of September 15, this time including the interaction with Carl Heine he'd originally withheld from Nels. He is more forthcoming in his selection of facts: this time, he must construct a narrative that contains every detail of his night. It's important to note that Kabuo recalls deciding to fish at Ship Channel. It was confirmed earlier in the novel that Leonard George spotted both Carl's and Kabuo's ships in this location.

Kabuo waited and listened to the radio. He heard the other gill-netters complain about the thickness of the fog. At 10:30 p.m., he checked his net and saw that there were salmon in it. He was happy about the salmon, and daydreamed about his family's future: how they would hopefully—and soon—be able to buy back their land. Kabuo caught more fish. At 11:30 p.m., he moved west "in order to fish the tide turn," thinking that "on the turn the salmon would pile up." He was correct. There were few fisherman in this area, as most (as they'd discussed on the radio earlier) had turned back to Elliot Head because of the fog.

Kabuo's new account confirms Hatsue's earlier statement that he had been optimistic about his chances of buying back his family's land and honoring their legacy. This is noteworthy because, if Kabuo was optimistic, it's unlikely he and Carl were on such bad terms that Kabuo would consider murder.

Kabuo drifted through the fog, laying on his fog horn from time to time in order to alert oncoming boats (should there happen to be any) to his presence. After Kabuo signaled half a dozen times, he heard an air horn respond to his signals. He heard a voice call out before him: "I'm dead in the water, drifting." The voice belonged to Carl Heine. Kabuo stumbled upon Carl, "his batteries dead, adrift at midnight, in need of another man's assistance." Kabuo instructed Carl to tie up; he had battery power to spare. Kabuo remarked that he hoped they weren't in the shipping lane. He saw that Carl had put up a lantern to alert other boats of his presence. "Best I could to," responded Carl, who'd lost access to the radio transmissions when his battery died.

Because Kabuo consistently sounded his fog horn to alert other ships of his presence, Carl was able hear him approach and reach out for help with his dead battery. As Josiah Gillanders conveyed in his earlier testimony, the fishermen's unspoken moral code dictates that a man will always help a man "in need of another man's assistance." Kabuo honors this code and helps Carl. Carl's lantern will be important later in the novel, so it's important to note that Carl has a lantern hung from his mast to alert other boats of his presence while his battery is dead.

Kabuo told Carl he had two batteries. Carl responded that his boat ran D-8s. Kabuo's boat ran D-6s, but Kabuo said they could make them fit. The men set to work. Kabuo hoped that Carl might want to discuss the land, even though Carl seemed as silent as ever. Kabuo reasoned that Kabuo would *have* to say something, given the fact that the two men were adrift together at sea, with nothing else to do.

Kabuo's reading of Carl's impenetrable demeanor is optimistic, as he hopes that Carl is thinking about the land just as Kabuo is. Even after all that Kabuo has been through in his efforts to regain his family's land, he chooses to see the best in Carl. Kabuo's optimism stands in stark contrast to the judgment he's received from Ole and Etta, among others, for his own silent, unreadable demeanor.

Kabuo reflected on how long he'd known Carl. He knew that Carl avoided speaking whenever possible. Kabuo remembered, in particular, a moment from their childhood, when the two boys had sat together in a rowboat on the water after sunset. Carl had remarked on the beauty of the sunset, and Kabuo "even at twelve [...] had understood that such a statement was out of character." It was Carl's nature, he knew even then, to keep everything bottled inside. Kabuo observes that the two men "were more similar in their deepest places than he cared to admit."

Guterson gives the reader more insight into Kabuo and Carl's childhood friendship, something that, up until now, has remained fairly mysterious. Kabuo's memory of being shocked by Carl's remarks on the sunset underscores how little Carl has spoken all his life, but still neither Kabuo nor the white islanders judge Carl for his characteristic silence. In contrast, Kabuo's silence is consistently painted in a negative, skeptical light by most people.

Kabuo lifted one of his batteries from his battery well. He carried it to Carl. Carl said they could make it fit. Kabuo retrieved his gaff—they could use it to hammer the battery into place. Carl hammered the battery hold with the gaff. At one point, his hand slipped, and he cut himself. Once the battery was in place, Carl tried to start up the engine. Kabuo's battery worked, and Carl's boat started up successfully. Kabuo told Carl to go on fishing—he could return the battery to him in the morning.

It's important to note that Carl slips and cuts his hand on the gaff. Carl's hand wound—not his head wound—is the source of the blood is later discovered in Sheriff Moran's investigation. It's also relevant that Carl's boat starts up after Kabuo's battery is set in place: when Moran and Martinson check on Carl's boat the morning of September 16, they will find that the boat's battery works fine. Kabuo's offer to let Carl return the battery the next day relates back to the fishermen's unwritten honor code of helping each other at all costs.

Before Kabuo could depart, Carl brought up the subject of the seven acres. He asked Kabuo what he'd pay for them, hypothetically. Kabuo asked Carl if this hypothetical meant he'd be willing to sell the land. Carl responded, jokingly, that he might charge Kabuo a high price but that he probably shouldn't, since then maybe Kabuo would take the battery back. Kabuo smiled, and said that the battery was already in; plus, he knows Carl would do the same for him. Carl joked that although he "*might*" do the same for Kabuo, he's "not screwed together like [he] used to be."

When Carl jokes that Kabuo could leave him stranded at sea if he didn't offer a fair price for the land, Kabuo's response that he knows Carl would do the same for him evokes the idea of the fishermen's unwritten code and suggests that Kabuo and Carl really do have some kind of genuine bond. Carl's admission that he "might" do the same because he's "not screwed together like [he] used to be" alludes to the prejudice against the Japanese Carl holds as a result of his WWII military service.

But Carl stopped joking and apologized for the big mess of the land, his mother, and the war: "I was out at sea, fighting you goddamn Jap sons a—" he began, in defense. But Kabuo interrupted him. "I'm an American," he told Carl. Besides, he reminded him, Carl was of *German* descent. By Carl's logic, wasn't he a "big Nazi bastard," himself? Carl admitted that he was a "bastard." He told Kabuo he still had the bamboo fishing rod Kabuo had given him so many years ago, to keep safe while Kabuo was away at the internment camp. Kabuo told Carl he could keep the fishing rod. The two men settled their differences, and Carl agreed to sell Kabuo his family's seven acres for $1,200 an acre. Carl asked for $1,000 down, and said that they could sign papers the next day. Kabuo offered $800 and agreed to their deal, and the men parted ways.

Carl's apology signifies that he knows he must set aside his prejudiced feelings to do what is right and honor his obligation to return the Miyamotos' land to Kabuo. When Carl starts to defend his racism, Kabuo reminds him that his German ancestry makes him just as much of a theoretical enemy to the United States –by Carl's logic, Carl is as much a "big Nazi bastard" as Kabuo is a "goddamn Jap." Kabuo's comparison illustrates the illogical and racist underpinnings of San Piedro's prejudices against the Japanese.

CHAPTER 28

Back in the courtroom, Kabuo finishes relaying his testimony to Hooks. Hooks picks at his nails and, exasperatedly, asks Kabuo why he didn't come forward with this story from the start. Kabuo tries to explain that he hadn't heard about Carl's death on September 16 until 1 p.m., and that, after that, it was only a few hours until Art Moran arrested him for Carl's murder. Hooks twists Kabuo's words, suggesting that a few hours should've been plenty of time to come forward—had Kabuo ever even intended to come forward in the first place?

When Hooks refuses to understand why Kabuo didn't immediately come forward with the truth when the authorities confronted him about the night of September 15, he doesn't account for the fear of prejudice that prevented Kabuo from telling the truth in the first place. Hooks's narrative of suspicion leaves out a critical fact (that Kabuo didn't think he'd be believed anyway), and, in so doing, paints Kabuo's initial silence in a more suspicious, damning light.

Kabuo again reinforces what a tricky situation he was in. Hooks asks Kabuo if he was weighing the decision of whether to come forward or to conceal the "battery incident" from Sheriff Moran. Kabuo says yes, this was the decision he'd tried to make. Hooks responds that Moran came to Kabuo before Kabuo could come forward with the truth. Kabuo, again, confirms this. Hooks underscores that, even as he faced immediate arrest, Kabuo had continued to withhold the supposed truth. He emphasizes that Kabuo's story after his arrest differs from his testimony today. "So," he asks, "where lies the truth?"

Hooks's question oversimplifies the concept of truth. He makes truth out to be as simple as the cold, hard facts, when in reality, "truth" is far more complex. Throughout the novel, Guterson demonstrates that the truth one believes is often the truth one wants to hear; subjective factors, such as prejudices and emotional attachments, can alter how one defines and interprets so-called truth.

Kabuo pauses before responding that the truth is that he helped Carl, as he just stated in his testimony. Hooks listens and then asks if Kabuo is saying he'd like to "retract the story of complete ignorance" that he earlier told Art Moran. Hooks asks if Kabuo wants to go with "this new story." Kabuo says yes, because it is the truth. Hooks then walks Kabuo through what he calls Kabuo's "new story," beginning when he returned from his night of fishing (and helping Carl) on the morning of September 16, and continuing through the day until he returned to his boat for the next night of fishing, only to be approached, searched, and arrested by Sheriff Moran and Abel Martinson.

Hooks refers to Kabuo's detailed narrative as a "story" to insinuate to the jury that Kabuo's testimony is more fiction than fact. Of course, Guterson suggests throughout the novel that all versions of the truth are essentially stories; people simply choose which ones to believe.

Hooks directs his testimony at Moran's search of Kabuo's boat, drawing attention to the details of the search. Specifically, he cites the fact that there were two D-6 batteries found in Kabuo's well. Hooks asks incredulously why it was that Kabuo still had *two* batteries in his boat after he'd loaned Carl one; Kabuo had mentioned nothing about purchasing an extra battery at the store that day, and it would be odd for him to have a spare lying around. As Hooks makes this point, he appeals to the jury, theatrically tapping his finger against the pages of the sheriff's report and turning towards the jury as he does so.

Hooks pokes holes in Kabuo's supposed "story" to discredit his account of the truth. As Gillanders stated in his earlier testimony, it's highly unusual for a gill-netter to carry a spare battery, so this detail does appear somewhat confusing. But when Hooks taps his finger theatrically against the sheriff's report, he conveys complete confidence to the jury, making this new detail seem like conclusive evidence when really it's just one more fact to consider. As the reader sees throughout the novel, it's not enough simply to state the facts: often, one's presentation and performance of the facts is what ensures that facts are received as truth.

Kabuo pauses, and responds that he simply had a spare battery in his shed. He'd brought it to his boat before Moran showed up for his search. Hooks walks towards Kabuo slowly and reminds him that he's' "under oath here to tell the truth." Hooks claims that Kabuo's choice to add this new information about the spare battery to his "story" is another attempt of Kabuo's to "change" the truth. He says that Kabuo is "a hard man to trust," citing his "poker face." To this, Nels Gudmundsson interrupts: "Objections!" Judge Fielding, too, tells Hooks he should "know better than that."

When he reminds Kabuo that he's "under oath here to tell the truth, Hooks insinuates that Kabuo is lying about the battery he supposedly brought from his shed the morning of Moran's investigation. Hooks's snide comment about Kabuo's "poker face" is a nod to the racist lens that has colored so much of the trial; again, Kabuo is penalized for having unreadable facial expressions, while white characters (like Carl) are admired for the same thing.

But Hooks seems satisfied, and says he has no more questions for Kabuo. When Kabuo's questioning is over, he stands up and makes sure that everyone sees that he is a strong, proud Japanese man. The jury takes in Kabuo's strength and "[are] reminded of photographs they had seen of Japanese soldiers." The citizens have decided that Kabuo is "not like them at all," citing "the detached and aloof manner in which he watched the **snowfall**" as sufficient proof of the matter.

When the jury likens Kabuo's stature to "photographs they had seen of Japanese soldiers," it's a hint that the jury will not set aside their prejudice to render a fair, unbiased verdict. Before they even convene to discuss the evidence presented in court, they decide that Kabuo is "not like them at all." Kabuo's outsider status (and his calm acceptance of life's chances, as symbolized by the snowfall) is fact enough to convict him of the murder of one of their own.

CHAPTER 29

Alvin Hooks gives his closing statements. He claims Kabuo murdered Carl in cold blood. He emphasizes how much motive Kabuo would've had to murder Carl, citing the land dispute between Kabuo and the Heines.

Hooks paints Kabuo as a cold- blooded murderer. This sentiment confirms the jurors' racist comparison of Kabuo's physical appearance to that of the photos of Japanese soldiers they remember from WWII propaganda.

Hooks goes through the night of the murder, step by step, emphasizing how patiently and carefully Kabuo orchestrated the event. Enraged by Ole's decision to sell the strawberry fields to Carl, Kabuo decided to take matters into his own hands. He followed Carl's boat to the Ship Channel Bank, laying out his net near Carl's. He'd waited to strike until it was late at night, "watch[ing] while the fog concealed everything." When the moment was right, Hooks postulates, Kabuo cut his engine. He signaled to Carl, who'd been not more than 100 or so yards away, that his battery had died and that he needed help. Because both men adhered to a fishermen's code that required them to help a man in trouble, Carl would've set aside his differences with Kabuo to lend him a hand.

Hooks goes through the night of Carl's death step by step in order to present a logical narrative of "facts" for the jury to follow. Hooks brings up the fishermen's code in order to paint Carl as an even more hapless victim. In Hooks's account, Carl is but an innocent, honest man trying to honor his obligation to help another man in need. Hooks's presentation of Carl as blameless renders Kabuo's supposed act of treachery even more sinister in the jury's eyes.

Hooks repeatedly calls on the jury to "imagine" placing themselves in the scene: he asks them to picture Carl "stopping to help his enemy" late at night, only to be attacked with the fishing gaff.

Hooks knows it will be easy for the jury to "imagine" they are in Carl's shoes because they consider Carl—a white man of old island stock—to be one of them. Hooks's portrayal of Kabuo, in contrast, evokes the image of an "enemy" Japanese soldier with which the jury would be all too familiar. Hooks scenario appeals to the jury's prejudice, even as he pretends to present an unbiased account of the facts.

Hooks ends his remarks by expressing that there is "no uncertainty any more," as both the defense and the prosecution have disclosed all the facts there are to disclose. It's the jury's job, Hooks emphasizes, to "ask [themselves] what [their] duty is as citizens of this community" and call the truth as they see it.

Hooks's remark that there is "no uncertainty any more" aims to convince the jury that there is no reasonable doubt present in Kabuo's case—and to erase the reality that no one can know for sure exactly what happened. He calls on the jury as "citizens of this community" to reinforce both their (and Carl's) insider status as well as Kabuo's outsider status.

It's Nels Gudmundsson's turn to give a closing statement, and he rises to do so "with a geriatric awkwardness that was painful for the citizens in the gallery to observe." Nels delivers his statement "in measured tones, as soberly as he [could]." He outlines how Kabuo had gone to Ole Jurgensen and then Carl Heine about the land; how then fate had brought the two boats together at Ship Channel Bank. Kabuo had helped his childhood friend, they'd resolved their land issue, and Kabuo had gone on his way to fish for the rest of the night. Finally, the next day, Kabuo "found himself arrested."

Nels's "geriatric awkwardness" affects the way the jury perceives his closing statement—it might appear to them that Hooks's remarks are more valid because he was able to deliver them with more outward confidence. Nels refutes Hooks's claim that Kabuo hunted down Carl when he offers that it was "a circumstance of fate" that caused them to cross paths the night of September 15. Nels further highlights Kabuo's lack of agency by insisting that he "found himself arrested" (as opposed to having "gotten himself arrested," for example).

Nels emphasizes that the prosecution hasn't provided any evidence that Kabuo] planned to commit murder. There were no witnesses to attest to Kabuo's mental state before Carl's death. Above all, Nels emphasizes that the prosecution hadn't proved Kabuo's guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt." Nels tells the jury that Hooks's case encouraged them to "be open [...] to an argument based on prejudice." Hooks had depended on the prejudice the jury would impose onto Kabuo's face. Nels sympathizes with this prejudice—conceding that, yes, it hasn't been so many years since the U.S. was at war with Japan. Still, he reminds the jury, Kabuo served the *United States* in this war.

Nels notes that the prosecution hasn't presented any evidence of premeditation on Kabuo's part—the best they could offer was speculate on Kabuo's mental state. Nels's assertion that the prosecution hadn't proven Kabuo's guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt" refutes Hooks's claim that the trial leaves the jury with no uncertainties. Nels also reminds the jury of Kabuo's military service in attempt to lesson Kabuo's outsider status: yes, he is of Japanese descent, but he is also a citizen of the United States.

Nels suggests that "perhaps there is such a thing as fate." It might've been fate that led Carl and Kabuo to come together under such a series of coincidences, and fate, ultimately, that led "an accident of some kind [to befall] Carl Heine at a moment that could not be less propitious or less fortunate for the accused." Still, Nels emphasizes, these things happened. Fate might be beyond humankind's control, but it is completely within the jury's ability to choose what happens now: they can choose to honor or ignore the reasonable doubt present in the prosecution's case against Kabuo, and they can choose to honor or to look past their racial prejudices.

Nels plays up the role of fate to further downplay the prosecution's notion that Kabuo intentionally hunted down and murdered Carl. He then reframes the trial's narrative to be matter of humanity vs. fate, rather than Kabuo vs. Carl (or Japanese vs. White). Nels posits that the jury holds the power to get back at fate: they can use their agency to free a man who has been imprisoned by fateful circumstances beyond anyone's control. Along these lines, Nels also emphasizes the role choice plays in prejudice; prejudice is not an instinct, Nels argues, but a choice.

Nels ends his closing statement. He tells the jury he is an old man who may not live much longer. He tells them this because, in his old age, he is "prone to ponder matters in the light of death" in a more serious way. He sees now how "human frailty" and "hate" dictate all things on earth. "In such a world you have only yourselves to rely on," asserts Nels. He ends his statement by emphasizing the weight and power of the jury's ability to *choose* Kabuo's fate.

Nels tries to use his age to his advantage, establishing credibility based on the wisdom he holds in his old age. His basic argument is that in a world of so many powerful, uncontrollable forces (such as prejudice and chance) one must use the power of choice in the rare moments when the opportunity to do so presents itself. Now is one of those moments: the jury—not fate or chance—will decide whether Kabuo lives or dies.

Judge Lew Fielding sits at his bench and looks down on the scene before him. He's very tired and bothered by the fear that he hasn't done well in this case. He has high standards. He's never presided over a first-degree murder case, and he thinks he didn't handle it well. He's not comfortable with the fact that Kabuo's life is on the line.

Judge Fielding seems to acknowledge the role prejudice and speculation played in Kabuo's trial and finds that he didn't do enough to maintain a fair, objective courtroom.

Before Fielding dismisses the jury to make their deliberations, he emphasizes that they must be certain that Kabuo is guilty "*beyond a reasonable doubt*" if they are to convict him. They must also "keep in mind the specificity of the charge and address that charge exclusively." In other words, they must be able to identify the presence of "planned intent" if they are to convict Kabuo of murder in the first degree. Fielding tells the jury this is a very difficult distinction to make.

Fielding explains to the jury that they must determine that Kabuo is guilty "beyond a reasonable doubt" in attempt to mitigate his own failure to maintain a completely fair, objective courtroom. He makes reference to the idea of "planned intent" as it is a particularly difficult aspect to prove, given that the court can only speculate as to Kabuo's mental state leading up to Carl's death.

Fielding reminds the jury that they were selected to serve because they were deemed unprejudiced and fair. They have to make their decision with these qualities in mind, and they have to listen to each other. Because the trial is a criminal case, the jury's decision must be unanimous. Fielding then makes his closing remarks: "The **storm** [...] is beyond our control, but the outcome of this trial is not." He reminds them that the outcome is in their hands and tells them to begin deliberating.

Fielding reminds the jury how privileged they are to be able to choose. He makes the point that, in so many ways, one's life is often at the mercy of fate and the uncontrollable whims of the universe. The snowstorm that unfolds outside is an example of one of these uncontrollable forces. Kabuo's trial, in contrast, offers the jury the rare opportunity to act honorably and have a real impact on the world around them.

CHAPTER 30

It's 3:00 p.m., and the jury leaves the **courtroom** to begin their deliberations. Hatsue goes to Kabuo and tells him that he'll be free: the jury will do the right thing. Kabuo tells her that regardless, he loves her and their children. Nels packs up his papers; Ed Soames leaves the courtroom open to the public, as the **storm** has given them no other warm place to go; Ishmael looks at his notes.

Hatsue's encouragement reflects her hope that the jury will set aside their prejudices and go about their deliberations objectively.

Ishmael looks at Hatsue from across the **courtroom**. He thinks about her testimony, and about how his private knowledge of her allowed him to understand "what each expression [of hers] suggested, what each pause signified." He really wants to hold and smell her. He wants to have a different life. He feels the coast guard's log that is still in his pocket. He knows all he'd have to do is tell Ed Soames he needs to speak to Judge Fielding and he'd have done the right thing.

When Ishmael looks at Hatsue, he at first ruminates selfishly: he relishes the fact that their teenage romance allows him to have a private knowledge of her subtle expressions and mannerisms. However, the coast guard's logs in his pocket remind Ishmael of his duty to come forward with the truth of Carl's death.

Ishmael thinks back to Nels Gudmundsson's closing statement, remembering how he'd reminded the jury that Hooks's case had assumed that the jury would act on their prejudices, how Hooks "is counting on [them] to act on passions best left to a war of ten years ago." But, Ishmael thinks, 10 years isn't really such a long time ago, and he doesn't know how to let go of his feelings for Hatsue—the same way he still feels pain in his phantom limb. He thinks about the horrors he witnessed in the war.

Ishmael compares the jury's decade-long grudge against the Japanese to his own grudge against Hatsue for abandoning him. Needing to find a way to validate how unhappy he is, how little he's done with his life, and his failure to bring forth the coast guard's notes, he reasons that 10 years isn't really a long time. In other words, Ishmael seems to believe that the jury deserves to act on their prejudices, and so does he.

Ishmael looks at Hatsue again, examining her physical attributes. He thinks about "all the times he had touched her body and the fragrance of all that **cedar**..." Ishmael leaves the **courtroom** just as the lights flicker back on. Ishmael celebrates the return of the electricity with Nels, who tells him how much he liked Ishmael's father. "Arthur was one admirable man," says Nels. Ishmael agrees and parts ways with Nels.

Ishmael's memories of his teenage romance and the cedar tree reflect his longing to return to a world separate from society's prejudices and complexities. Nels's admiration of Arthur seems to jolt Ishmael back into the present moment, however; Nels's praise reminds Ishmael that he isn't half the man his father was.

Ishmael passes Hisao Imada on his way out. Hisao thanks him for his help with the car the other day. Ishmael buttons his coat and again feels Milholland's coast guard's log. Hatsue again tells Ishmael how unfair Kabuo's trial was. She tells Ishmael he needs to write about it "in [Arthur's] newspaper." Ishmael says it's not "[his] father's newspaper." It's *his* newspaper. He tells Hatsue he'll be at his mother's if she wants to talk to him.

The feeling of Milholland's coast guard's log in his pocket reminds Ishmael of his moral obligation to bring forth the evidence that will clear Kabuo's name. When Hatsue refers to the Review *as "[Arthur's] newspaper," Ishmael responds with annoyance because her comment reinforces how inferior Ishmael is as a reporter and a man compared to his father.*

Ishmael walks outside and sees that the **snow** has stopped. He continues to walk and sees some **cedars** along the road. He notices that the town's docks are under water from the storm and thinks about how "such destruction could be beautiful." He connects this scene to the failed battle 10 years ago in which he'd lost his arm: "He was reminded of Tarawa atoll and its seawall and the palms that lay in rows on their side, knocked down by the compression from the navel guns." He thinks about this often. He is both disgusted by and attracted to his memories of war.

Ishmael's observation that the storm's "destruction could be beautiful" suggests, symbolically, that Ishmael is comforted by the forces of nature he cannot control. If one lacks the ability to choose in the first place, there is no risk of choosing incorrectly. This reflects Ishmael's current predicament of whether he's obligated to come forward with the coast guard's notes or if he can selfishly keep them to himself. Ishmael's thoughts of Tarawa atoll also show that even in the beauty of a snowstorm, he is haunted by the violence of his military past.

Ishmael continues to look at the destruction the **storm** has wrought on the harbor and knows that he is different from other men because of the destructions he witnessed during the war. He feels Milholland's coast guard's notes in his pocket and doesn't know what to do about them. Nothing in the world can tell him what to do about it. Ishmael looks at the destruction of the harbor and realizes there is no inherent rhyme or reason to why things happen the way they do.

Ishmael dwells some more on how the war has affected him, perhaps as a means of defending his hesitancy in bringing forward the coast guard's notes: the war was cruel to Ishmael, so it's acceptable for him to exercise cruelty of his own. As Ishmael looks at the harbor, he reflects on the indifference of nature to human suffering, perhaps realizing that he shouldn't take the hardships he's suffered so personally; perhaps he shouldn't hold a grudge.

Back in the **courthouse**, the members of the jury are in the midst of their deliberations. All but one of the twelve jurors have decided that Kabuo is guilty. Alexander Van Ness, the sole unconvinced member, stubbornly holds his ground. He wants to heed Fielding's cautions about reasonable doubt.

Alexander Van Ness seems to be less motivated by prejudices than the rest of the jury. He wants to consider the facts on their own, not view them through a subjective narrative of bias.

Other members of the jury suggest that there's always room for doubt in life: "Nobody ain't ever sure about nothing," says Harold Jensen. Others believe the physical evidence found on the boats is damning. Others cite Kabuo's supposedly guilty demeanor; they think he's a liar. "Then [...] what's he hiding?" asks Van Ness. Van Ness maintains his doubts.

Emboldened by prejudice, members of the jury cast judgment on Kabuo's guilty demeanor. Van Ness argues that a guilty face is not enough: if the jury really thinks Kabuo's face is hiding something, he wants to know exactly what that something is.

Members of the jury craft hypothetical situations in which it would be necessary and expected to make an imminent, necessary choice despite the presence of some uncertainty. For example, suppose a comet crashes down through your roof, Burke Latham poses to Van Ness; does Van Ness move to another place in the room, or does he take his chances and stay where he is? Certainly it's reasonable to have doubt there—you can doubt everything. But, you still have to make a decision. Van Ness argues it would be unreasonable to move his position, as he'd run the same risk of being hit anywhere. Van Ness acknowledges that the hypothetical situations the other members of the jury pose are interesting, but not applicable to the *specific* matter at hand—they don't relate to whether Kabuo should hang or go free.

Van Ness argues that hypothetical situations are irrelevant to the task at hand: they must avoid speculation and limit their concentration to the facts presented to them in the trial. In other words, the jury has a duty to settle on a truth based on facts—not based on what they'd like to believe.

The jury continues to mull over the evidence presented in court, and to craft hypothetical situations to distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable doubt. Many still just don't believe in Kabuo, personally. Alex Van Ness maintains that he is open to hearing what the other members of the jury have to say, but he still holds his ground. He refuses to rush a decision where a man's life is on a line, especially in light of the abundance of reasonable doubt present in the state's case against Kabuo.

Van Ness alone heeds Judge Fielding's warning that they have a duty to be objective and careful in deciding whether a man lives or dies. Other jurors maintain that their personal dislike of Kabuo (a dislike that is likely a result of racist prejudice) is enough to convict him.

The jury continues to deliberate. Ed Soames announces that the jury will resume their deliberations the next day, since they haven't yet reached a verdict.

The jury's inability to come to a unanimous decision underscores just how hard it is for people to agree on what the truth really is. Even this group—who were specially selected for being fair-minded—can't easily come to a consensus.

CHAPTER 31

Ishmael drives through the **snow** to his mother's house. The power is still out there. She's reading in the kitchen when he arrives. She remarks on how old she's getting. She feeds her son soup and Ishmael tells her the jury hadn't reached a verdict that night. His mother laments the jury's prejudice that will likely inform their decision. She hopes Ishmael will write an editorial condemning their hatred. Ishmael again feels Milholland's notes in his pocket.

Helen urges Ishmael to write the editorial condemning the court's hatred because it is what Arthur would have done. The feeling of Milholland's notes in his pocket reminds Ishmael of his moral duty to bring forth the notes and exonerate Kabuo, but at this point, it seems that his personal bitterness is still standing in his way.

The power comes on at 8:00 p.m. and Ishmael turns off lights and turns on heaters. He sits in the house to listen for pipes thawing. His mother goes to bed and Ishmael sits in his father's study, looking over his father's books. There are a lot of virtuous, philosophizing volumes on the shelf—Thoreau, Rousseau, Emerson, and Plato, to name a few. There are also some books on gardening and nature. Ishmael remembers how his father loved to garden. He recalls his father tending, carefully, to his fruit **trees**. He also painted and built his own desk (at which Ishmael now sits).

Consumed as he is by moral anguish, Ishmael can't help but think of his father, who embodied the height of moral integrity. The fullness of Arthur's life and the breadth of his interests and occupations stand in stark contrast to the empty, meaninglessness of Ishmael's present life. What's more, Arthur's love of gardening suggests on a symbolic level that personal morality like his can be an effective way of escaping societies prejudices—a kind of freedom that nature represents throughout the novel.

Ishmael continues to reflect on his father's life and legacy. Arthur had gone into the logging profession backed by thoughts of grandeur, but he'd outgrown these notions over the course of time. He'd then turned to reading and education, saved up his money, and started the *San Piedro Review*. He built his own house. He wrote about the big, sensational stories, but also wasn't too big for the tedious: for the "garden club features, school board reports, horse show notices."

Ishmael's father respected the San Piedro Review *in practice and in principle. He believed a reporter's task of recording the facts of the times was of utmost importance, so he covered stories large and small. To Arthur, no aspect of island life was too inconsequential to find its way into the newspaper.*

Arthur was meticulous in everything he did, and he acknowledged the gray areas of life. This was important, especially, on an island, where "surrounding waters […] imposed upon islanders certain duties and conditions foreign to mainlanders." Arthur had known that living on an island prevents one from "blending into an anonymous background." Living on an island forced one "by the very [isolated] nature of their landscape" to be wary of what they showed to others. For this reason, many islanders turned inward, to silence, "in fear of opening up." Arthur hated this about islanders, but also loved it. As Ishmael sits in his father's chair, he realizes that he shares this ambivalence—that he is "his father's son."

As Ishmael reflects on Arthur's ambivalence toward island life—that he both loved and hated the isolation of the island and the insular quality this isolation instilled in its residents—he begins to see that he, too, regards the island in this way. Despite—or perhaps, because of—his cynicism, he is "his father's son." This realization seems to give Ishmael an ounce of hope that he can move forward in his life and start to be as virtuous and honorable as his father once was. That is, being moral doesn't require total certainty; Arthur's example shows that one can see gray areas and still avoid cynicism.

Ishmael recalls when he'd gone with his father to cover the Strawberry Festival. It was a beautiful, picturesque day. His father took a picture of Mr. Fukida's impressive display of strawberries. Arthur and Mr. Fukida made small talk about their children, and Arthur said he has "high hopes for [Ishmael]." Fukida agreed: "Oh, yes. […] We believe his heart is strong, like his father's."

Whereas before Ishmael might have regarded Mr. Fukida's observation that Ishmael's heart was "strong, like his father's" as evidence of his failure to live up to Arthur's image, he now feels hope that he will be able to embody his father's strength of character.

Ishmael stops reminiscing. He leaves his father's study and walks upstairs to his old bedroom. He returns to the farewell letter Hatsue sent him so many years before. He focuses on the last lines: *"I wish you the very best, Ishmael. Your heart is large and you are gentle and kind, and I know you will do great things in the world […]. I am going to move on with my life as best I can, and I hope you will too."* Ishmael realizes how the war and his arm and everything have "made his heart smaller," and that he's not moved on with his life. He sees that the admirable qualities he used to possess—the reasons that Hatsue used to loved him—are no longer a part of him.

When Ishmael read Hatsue's letter the night before, he remained heartsick and bitter over her rejection. Tonight, having realized he still has the capacity to live up to his father's image, he realizes that Hatsue hadn't meant to condemn his character, but rather to celebrate the strength of his heart. Ishmael sees that whereas before his heart had been "large" and he had been "gentle and kind," it now is "smaller." He sees how greatly the war and his cynicism have held him back, and have ripped from his personality the very qualities Hatsue once found so admirable.

Ishmael puts the letter away. He puts on his coat. He sees Helen sleeping, observes her wrinkles, and thinks about how much he will miss her when she dies. Ishmael walks through the woods to the Imadas' house. He sits with Hatsue and her parents and shows them Milholland's notes. He explains the notes' significance and why he's finally come to talk with Hatsue.

After thinking about his father and reading Hatsue's letter, Ishmael realizes that only he has the ability to change his life for the better. He resolves to regain the admirable qualities he lost after the war and goes to Hatsue's to finally come forth with the coast guard's notes.

CHAPTER 32

The phones are dead along South Beach, where Ishmael's mother and the Imadas live, so there's no way to reach Judge Fielding. Ishmael, Hatsue, and her parents stay up all night discussing the trial. Hatsue remembers that Art Moran, in his testimony, had remarked on a spilled cup of coffee on Carl's cabin floor. Hatsue believes this is proof that "*something*" must have knocked both the coffee cup *and* Carl down that night. Hatsue's parents lament that this is not enough evidence.

The coast guard's notes seem to have given Hatsue a new optimism about Kabuo's trial. She searches for more facts–such as the spilled cup of coffee –that would support the claims made in the notes (that Carl was knocked off his boat by the freighter).

Fujiko tells Ishmael she'd always thought highly of his family. She compliments Ishmael's newspaper and gives him some cookies to eat. After midnight, Ishmael leaves. Hatsue expresses her gratitude. Ishmael says he hopes Hatsue will remember him when she's "old and thinking back on things." She says she will. She kisses him softly and tells him to "find someone to marry." Ishmael returns home to his mother's house.

It's telling that Ishmael almost immediately gets some measure of what he wants as soon as he decides to behave morally: he is treated kindly, admired, and even gets the attention from Hatsue that he has desired for so long. This scene underscores that individual acts really do have great power to transform life, even though so much is still left up to chance.

Ishmael's mother wakes him up before 7:00 a.m. She says that Hatsue is there for him. Hatsue and Ishmael talk in his father's study. She tells him how much he looks like his father. Then, she tells him why she's there: she thought about another piece of evidence that could help her husband's case: the lantern. When Kabuo testified, he'd mentioned that Carl had a lantern hung from his ship's mast, as his batteries had died and he needed some light. Hatsue thinks that if the lantern were still up, it would be proof that the batteries on Carl's boat truly *had* died. Ishmael and Hatsue go into town to investigate.

Hatsue's comment that Ishmael looks like his father signifies that Ishmael is finally starting to act with the level moral integrity his father possessed. Their renewed closeness also indicates that such integrity is a crucial part of having genuine relationships with others.

The jury convenes at 8:00 a.m., so they're a little crunched for time. Ishmael and Hatsue drive in Ishmael's DeSoto. Ishmael thinks if they can go to Carl's boat first, then they can go to the courthouse with all their new evidence (Milholland's notes, the spilled coffee, the lantern) in hand and end it all at once. Hatsue sits in silence and tells Ishmael that she knows he's known about the freighter. Ishmael admits that, yes, he sat on the crucial evidence for one day. He calls his actions "inexcusable." She says she understands. They comment on the beautiful scenery around them.

Hatsue has always had a greater sense of the duties required of her, and Ishmael has habitually acted (or failed to act) based on feelings alone. Thus, in Hatsue's presence, Ishmael recognizes how wrong and dishonorable it was to withhold the notes for so long. Hatsue's ability to understand Ishmael's failure speaks to her ability to see the bigger picture—something she was taught in her childhood lessons with Mrs. Shigemura.

They arrive at the sheriff's office and find Art Moran. He accuses them of being "on a mission." Hatsue shows Moran the coast guard's notes that Ishmael discovered, and Moran accuses them of "trying to be Sherlock Holmes." Ishmael urges Moran to take the notes seriously. Moran reads the notes and Abel Martinson comes in announcing that the phones are back up. Moran says they're going to go down to Beason's Cannery dock to look at Carl's boat. Moran makes Hatsue get breakfast while the men go down to the docks to investigate.

Moran's "Sherlock Holmes" comment harkens back to Horace Whaley's condescending remark to Moran at the beginning of the novel, making Moran seem somewhat hypocritical here. The sheriff seems to insinuate that the coast guard's logs notes are not fact but speculation, even though he himself as been accused of making similar misinterpretations in the past.

The men arrive at Carl's boat, the *Susan Marie*. There is no lantern on the mast. They look in Carl's cabin. Ishmael brings up the coffee cup. Abel says that he himself picked it up earlier, thus tampering with the crime scene. Art Moran reprimands Abel but says that the coffee cup isn't really evidence of much—if Carl had gotten "waked hard enough to go overboard," there should've been more of a mess onboard the boat.

The fact that Abel—unbeknownst to anybody else until this moment—unintentionally tampered with the crime shows that one can never trust that the visible facts will reveal the truth.

Abel shines a light where Carl would've hung the lantern. There are "cut lashings of net twine visible there, loose ends dangling." Ishmael sees this as proof that the lantern once was there. Abel agrees. Art tells Abel to climb up to get a better look. Abel sees "a rust streak 'crost these lashings," which might've come from the lantern. He also finds some blood—likely from Carl's cut hand. This suggests that Carl removed the lantern after he'd been with Kabuo and after he'd cut his hand on Kabuo's gaff. The men turn to the "port side gunnel just below the mast." They find "three small hairs […] embedded in the crack." Carl must have been thrown from his boat as he was on the mast removing the lantern. Abel and Ishmael are pretty sold on this theory, but Art wants them to go to Judge Fielding first.

Despite the lantern's absence, the "cut lashings of net twine" hanging on the mast and "a rust streak 'crost" the lashings" are evidence that the lantern was likely there at some point. Guided by a new narrative of what happened the night of September 15, the men find more clues that support the version of Carl's death evidenced in the coast guard's notes. The discovery of so much evidence that had before gone unnoticed illustrates that one often sees only the truth one wants to see.

The men consult with Judge Fielding. At 10:00 a.m., Fielding dismisses the jury and dismisses the charges against Kabuo. Ishmael returns to his newspaper office to write a story about the trial. He "trie[s] to imagine the truth of what had happened." He sees the *Susan Marie*, dead in the water. He sees Carl light and hang his lantern from the mast. He sees Kabuo's boat, the *Islander*, approach Carl. He sees Kabuo help Carl. The two men come to an agreement about the land, and then they part ways.

Judge Fielding dismisses the charges against Kabuo because the new evidence allows him to see the fuller, true picture of what happened the night of September 15. The evidence is no longer limited to the prejudiced, biased material the prosecution had previously offered. Ishmael's attempt to write the story is a symbolic gesture toward correcting the unjust narratives that dominated the trial.

Ishmael wonders whether Kabuo had initially found it "a fortuitous thing" to encounter Carl on the sea, since helping Carl might mean that Kazuo's goal of owning and working the strawberry land could be closer than ever before.

Ishmael creates his own narrative of the night of September 15. He imagines that Kabuo might have felt fortunate that fate brought Carl to him, as their meeting resulted in the long sought-after return of his family's strawberry fields. Such musings would be ironic, of course, given what unfortunate events would unfold the next day—Kabuo's arrest, months of imprisonment, and the eventual trial.

Ishmael imagines the scene that unfolded the night of September 15: as Kabuo, having just parted ways with Carl, was occupied by happy thoughts of the strawberry farm and his family's future, The S.S. *Corona* grew closer and closer to Carl's boat. Carl made coffee and listened to his radio.

Ishmael seems fascinated by how Carl and Kabuo could have both gone about their nights, completely unaware of the drastic changes fate would wreak on their lives later that night.

Over the radio, Carl heard the *Corona* decide, suddenly, to switch course—it would now plow right through Ship Channel Bank. As he listened to the freighter approach him, he wondered if his ship could weather the swell the freighter would make. Carl felt that he could manage it; still, the freighter's wake would destroy the lantern he'd hung from his mast earlier. Carl proceeded to climb the mast to take down the lantern, "open[ing] the palm wound" in the process. In that moment, the wake hit his boat, and he was tossed overboard, hitting his head against the port gunnel on his way down. The *Corona* moved on, ignorant of the havoc it had wreaked.

Had Carl not climbed up the mast to remove the lantern, he might not have been pushed off the boat. Still, Ishmael decides, Carl's tragic death was the result of a series of events and circumstances beyond anyone's ability to control.

In his newspaper office, Ishmael thinks about the fog and the series of fateful events that led to Carl and Kabuo's meeting, and to Carl's eventual death.

Ishmael once again contemplates the unavoidable role fate plays in life.

Seated before his typewriter, Ishmael considers all that he has learned about life over the course of the trial, knowing, finally, "that accident ruled every corner of the universe except the chambers of the human heart."

Ishmael's final revelation speaks to the book's theme of chance vs. choice: chance, or fate, controls all of life except for human emotions. In other words, despite the unavoidable forces of fate that shape the universe, every human still has the ability to make choices and exercise moral integrity. It is humanity's task, thus, to both accept fate and exercise choice.

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