**Characters in order of appearance**

Kya – The Marsh Girl – Catherine Danielle Clark

Ma — Miss Julienne Maria Jacques

Pa — Mister Jackson Henry Clark (Married June 12, 1933)

“Blending in with the fighting, drinking, cussing renegades of the marsh was the easiest thing Jake ever did.”

Jodie \_ Kya’s older brother by 7 years

Other older siblings: Missy, Murph, and Mandy

*Miss Mary Helen Clark, Sept 19,1934*

*Master Napier Murphy Clark, April 4, 1936*

*Miss Amanda Margaret Clark, May 17, 1937*

*Master Jeremy Andrew Clark, Jan 2, 1939*

*Miss Catherine Danielle Clark, Oct 10, 1945*

**Barkley Cove citizenry**

Miss Pansy Price, saleslady in fabric and notions —Kress’s Five and Dime

Chase Andrews (only child of Patti Love and Sam Andrews, the owners of Western Auto)

Miss Arial—second grade teacher of the three boys on the bikes and of Kya for the one day she attended school

Miss Singletary, checkout lady at the Piggly Wiggly

Benji Mason and Steve Long — boys on bikes who found Chase Andrews dead body

Sheriff Ed Jackson, who (p23) “mostly ignored crimes committed in the swamp. Why interrupt rats killing rats?”

Dr. Vern Murphy—the town’s only physician

Mrs. Culpepper—Truant officer — p347 “A lone tear trailed down Mrs. C’s cheek, and then a shadow smile for the little swamp truant escaping again.”

The school Principal

Tallskinnyblonde

Roundchubbycheeks

School bus driver

Deputy Sherif Joe Purdue

Tate Walker —and his father, a shrimper (*The Cherry Pie*) named Scupper—“stayed mostly to themselves not like they had when his mother and sister (Carianne) were still there.” P47

Mr. Johnny Lane, owner of Sing Oil

“Yo’gramma on my side wore bonnets big as wagon wheels and long skirts.” P57

Pearl (Stone) Andrews, Chases’ wife (widowed).

Lamar Sands —“they heard Mr. Lane from the Sing Oil saying to his diesel mechanic, “I reckon it was Lamar Sands. Ya r’member, he caught his wife doin’ a number wif Chase right on the deck of his fancy ski boat.” P61

Jim Bo Sweeney—owner of the Barkley Cove Diner

Jumpin’—owner of the marina gas station, Gas and Bait, and his wife Mabel

Mrs. Teresa white, wife of the Methodist preacher and mother of Meryl Lynn, 4 yr old who reached out her hand to Kya outside the Barkley Diner:

p66 Barkley Cove served its religion hard-boiled…Of course, the pastors and preachers, and certainly their wives, enjoyed highly respected positions in the village, always dressing and behaving accordingly. Teresa White often wore pastel skirts and white blouses, matching pumps and purse. …Meryl Lynn, dahlin’, don’t go near that girl, ya hear me. She’s dirty.” …”I saw her in time. …I wish those people wouldn’t come to town. Look at her. Filthy. Plumb nasty.”

Ponytailfreckleface

Shortblackhair

Alwayswearspearls = Pearl Stone

Betty—waitress at Barkley Cove Diner

Mrs. Hines—Librarian at Sea Oaks who gets college textbooks for Kya from U of N Carolina at Chapel Hill

Hal Miller—shrimper crew for Tim O’Neal —p204 “the very night he died…me and Allen Hunt seen that woman, …the Marsh Girl motoring just outta the bay…headed right toward the fire tower…out late…cruisin’ along with no lights on”

Tate introduces Kya to his friends: p207 “Kya, you remember Brian, and Time, Pearl, Tina. …Of course, she didn’t remember them; she’d never been introduced to them.”

Mr. Robert Foster— Editor of Kya’s book, *The Sea Shells of the Eastern Seaboard*

Jerry — the fix-it man Kya hires to modernize her cabin

County clerk at the courthouse from whom Kya gets the deed to her land, 310 acres of “wasteland category” land on the NC coastline

Rosemary — Ma’s sister

Rodney Horn —Retired mechanic — spent most of his days fishing with his pal Denny Smith — reported seeing Kya’s attack on Chase after he attempts to rape her at Cypress Cove —first witness called by the prosecuting attorney

**The trial**

Tom Milton —Kya’s lawyer

Bailiff Hank Jones

Miss Henrietta Jones —the bailiff’s daughter and the court reporter

Mr. Eric Chastain — prosecuting attorney

Judge Harold Sims

Jury members — 7 women including Sally Culpepper, the truant officer, and Teresa White, and 5 men including Mr. Tomlinson, owner of the Buster Brown Shoe store and the jury foreman

Jacob—small black man, the jail guard

**Witnesses for the Prosecution**

Rodney Horn

Dr. Steward Cone, the coroner

Sheriff Ed Jackson

Mr. Larry Price—Trailways bus driver —the night Chase died “none of the passengers looked like Miss Clark”

Mr. John King —Trailways bus driver for the 2:30 am bus — Is it possible that if Miss Clark had disguised herself as an older lady, she would have looked similar to the woman on the bus? …Yes, I guess.

Patti Love Andrews

Hal Miller —“Me and Allen Hunt were crewing for Tim O’Neal on his shrimp boat and we were headed back to Barkley Cove… late and we seen her, Miz Clark, in her boat, about a mile out, east of the bay, headed north-northwest.

**Witnesses for the Defense**

Sarah Singletary

Mr. Lang Furlough—owner/operator of the Three Mountains Motel in Greenville

Mr. Robert Foster

Sheriff Ed Jackson

Tim O’Neal

[Amanda Hamilton] was Kya. Kya was the poet. P366 —Somewhere for her words to go.

**Structure**

**Part 1 The Marsh**

Prologue 1969 (Oct 30, 1969)

1. Ma 1952
2. Jodie 1952
3. Chase 1969
4. School 1952
5. Investigation 1969
6. A Boat and a Boy 1952
7. The Fishing Season 1952
8. Negative Data 1969
9. Jumpin’ 1953
10. Just Grass in the Wind 1969
11. Croker Sacks Full 1956
12. Pennies and Grits 1956
13. Feathers 1960
14. Red Fibers 1969
15. The Game 1960
16. Reading 1960
17. Crossing the Threshold 1960
18. White Canoe 1960
19. Something Going On 1969
20. July 4 1961
21. Coop 1961

**Part 2 The Swamp**

1. Same Tide 1965
2. The Shell 1965
3. The Fire Tower 1965
4. A Visit from Patti Love 1969
5. The Boat Ashore 1965
6. Out Hog Mountain Road 1966
7. The Shrimper 1969
8. Seaweed 1967
9. The Rips 1967
10. A Book 1968
11. Alibi 1969
12. The Scar 1968
13. Search the Shack 1969
14. The Compass 1969
15. To Trap a Fox 1969
16. Gray Sharks 1969
17. Sunday Justice 1970 — Feb 25, 1970 — first courtroom proceedings
18. Chase by Chance 1969 — August morning —Chase attempts to rape her — her attack in self defence is seen by Rodney Horn out fishing
19. Cypress Cove 1970
20. A Small Herd 1969
21. A Cell 1970
22. A Microscope 1969 — Early Sept, a week after Chase’s attack Kya visits with Tate and then narrowly escapes Chase’s visit to her shack —p 282 “face in an ugly scowl. …She’d learned over and over from Pa: these men had to have the last punch. Kya had left Chase sprawled on the dirt. …As Pa would have it, Kya had to be taught a lesson….Chase would not let this go. Being isolated was one thing; living in fear, quite another.”
23. Cell Mate 1970
24. Red Cap 1970
25. King of the World 1969
26. The Expert 1970
27. A Trip 1969
28. Disguises 1970
29. The Journal 1970
30. Waning Moon 1970
31. Three Mountains Motel 1970
32. Missing Link 1970
33. Vice Versa 1970
34. Grass Flowers 1970
35. The Night Heron 1970
36. The Firefly

**Timeline:**

**Part 1 The Marsh** 1952-1969 = 17 years

**Part 2 The Swamp** 1965-2009 = 44 years

Kya born 1945 dies age 64 yrs in 2009. = 19 years with Tate

**Settings**

The Marsh

The Swamp

“Way out there where the crawdads sing” = “Go as far as you can—way out yonder where the crawdads sing.” “Just means far in the bush where critters are wild, still behaving like critters.” P111

**Themes**

What do we learn from this work?

… that instinctive suspicion and fear of ‘the marginalized’ can be correct and justifiable: p62 “They heard Miss Pansy Price…say to a friend, “It coulda been that woman lives out in the marsh. Crazy ‘nough for the loony bin. I jus’bet she’d be up to this kinda thing…”

…That it’s okay to get away with murder? — When? For whom?

— a baby kit left by her Ma? —p96 “Where’re you now, Ma? Why didn’t you stick?”

—p8 Just like their whiskey, the marsh dwellers bootlegged their own laws—not like those burned onto stone tablets or inscribed on documents, but deeper ones, stamped in their genes. Ancient and natural, like those hatched from hawks and doves. When cornered, desperate, or isolated, man reverts to those instincts that aim straight at survival. Quick and just. They will always be the trump cards because they are passed on more frequently from one generation to the next than the gentler ones. It is not a morality, but simple math. Among themselves, doves fight as often as hawks.

—p173 Ed: If somebody took the necklace off Chase at the tower, that would at least put them at the scene, and I can see somebody from the marsh being involved in this thing. They got their own laws.

… but that shunning the marginalized risks incurring their revengeful wrath. (But isn’t shunning the-different a law of Nature? A question of survival?)

Tom Milton: p340 Some people whispered that she was part wolf or the missing link between ape and man. That her eyes glowed in the dark. Yet in reality, she was only an abandoned child, a little girl surviving on her own in a swamp, hungry and cold, but we didn’t help her. Except for one of her only friends, Jumpin’, not one of our churches or community groups offered her food or clothes. Instead we labeled and rejected her because we thought she was different. But…did we exclude Miss Clark because she was different, or was she different because we excluded her? If we had taken her in as one of our own—I think that is what she would be today. If we had fed, clothed, and loved her, …we wouldn’t’ be prejudiced against her. And I believe she would not be sitting here today accused of a crime.”

…That isolation (for humans) is life-threatening and life-distorting, but also, in Kya’s case motivating, energizing, and inspiring.

…That food is a basic necessity and a cultural connector. That sharing food is a/the primal connecting act. — Why is there so much food? Why are the biscuits always light and fluffy?

…That interpreting signs and being literate is elevating, life-enhancing, and civilizing.

…That interpreting ‘negative data’ is also a valid truth-seeking exercise: p60 “But negative data’s still data. Somebody cleaned up real good or killed him somewhere else and moved his body to the tower. …Anyway, I’m confident now, this was no accident.”

…That Nature is the source of all pattern, order, and beauty, and that close observation of it is life-enhancing and spiritually rewarding. But it is also mysterious, immeasurable, chaotic, uncontrollable, and amoral.

—p142 Kya knew judgment had no place. Evil was not in play, just life pulsing on, even at the expense of some of the players. Biology sees right and wrong as the same color in different light.

—p183 “Some female insects eat their mates, overstressed mammal mothers abandon their young, many males design risky or shifty ways to outsperm their competitors. Nothing seemed too indecorous as long as the tick and the tock of life carried on. She knew this was not a dark side to Nature, just inventive ways to endure against all odds. Surely for humans there was more.”

…That water in channels, streams, and oceans, still and moving in currents and riptides is the element most illustrative of the various faces and power of Nature:

—p210 she’d never headed straight into the deeper currents, some of them stirred by the Gulf Stream, which gushes four billion cubic feet of water every second, more power than all the land rivers on Earth combined…producing cruel backcurrents, fisted eddies, and reverse circulations that swirl with coastal riptides, birthing one of the nastiest snake pits of the planet’s seas. Kya had avoided these areas all her life, but not now.

…Sexuality…functional, spiritual????

…Collecting and classifying — primal – linked to interpreting signs and reading.

…Drawing and painting — primal – linked to interpreting signs and reading — linked to celebration and worship —Purpose of the Map?

—P236 Jodie brings Ma’s paintings of her children and one of Kya with Tate Walker when they were young children. … “Somehow Ma’s mind had pulled beauty from lunacy. …(Jodie to Kya) Ma was isolated and alone. Under those circumstances people behave differently.”

…Music — primal – linked to interpreting signs and reading — linked to celebration and worship

—Tate and opera: Miliza Korjus

Wikipedia: Miliza Elizabeth Korjus [militsa] (August 18, c. 1905– August 26, 1980) was a [Polish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland)-born ethnic [Estonian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estonia) [coloratura soprano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coloratura_soprano) [opera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opera) singer, who later appeared in [Hollywood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hollywood,_Los_Angeles,_California) films. Her birth year is uncertain, and ranges from 1900 to 1912, according to various sources. She later became a naturalized United States citizen.

—p202 “It seemed to Kya that when Chase played these melancholy tunes was when he most had a soul.”

— p206 “The notes floated with the fog, dissipating into the darker reaches of the lowland forests and seemed somehow to be absorbed and memorized by the marsh because whenever Kya passed those channels again, she heard his music.”

Shenandoah

Michael Row the Boat Ashore

Molly Malone

Wooly Bully

Mr. Tambourine Man

…Dancing— primal – linked to interpreting signs and reading — linked to celebration, worship, and communion

…Poetry and novels — P48 Scupper to Tate “Don’t go thinking poetry’s just for sissies. …Whole point of it—they make ya feel something.”

*The Cremation of Sam McGee*, Robert Service

*A Ballad: The Lake of the Dismal Swamp*, [Thomas Moore](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/thomas-moore), Written at Norfolk, in Virginia

*The Daddy Long-legs and the Fly*, Edward Lear

*Evening*, James Wright

[Wikipedia — Galway Mills Kinnell (February 1, 1927 – October 28, 2014) was an American poet. He won the [Pulitzer Prize for Poetry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pulitzer_Prize_for_Poetry)[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galway_Kinnell#cite_note-pulitzer-1) for his 1982 collection, Selected Poems and split the [National Book Award for Poetry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Book_Award_for_Poetry) with [Charles Wright](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Wright_(poet)). From 1989 to 1993 he was [poet laureate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poet_laureate) for the state of [Vermont](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermont). An admitted follower of [Walt Whitman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Whitman), Kinnell rejects the idea of seeking fulfillment by escaping into the imaginary world. His best-loved and most anthologized poems are "St. Francis and the Sow" and "After Making Love We Hear Footsteps".]

I have to say I am relieved it is over:

At the end I could feel only pity

For that urge toward more life

…Goodbye.

*Rebecca*, Daphne du Maurier — Kya’s first novel

*Sea Fever*, John Masefield

*The Bustle in a House,* [Emily Dickinson](https://www.poemofquotes.com/emilydickinson/)

The bustle in a house

The morning after death

Is solemnest of industries

Enacted upon earth,

The sweeping up the heart,

And putting love away

We shall not want to use again

Until eternity.

Poems by Amanda Hamilton published in the local newspaper

P153 Trapped inside, Love is a caged beast

P213 I must let go now. Let you go.

P214 Fading moon, follow my footsteps …how much sky is in one breath when time slides backward from the sand

P219 Child to child, eye to eye, we grew as one

P249 Sunsets are never simple…Eventide is a disguise covering tracks, covering lies.

P276 Broken Gull of Brandon Beach —A broken heart cannot fly, But who decides the time to die?

P312 Never underrate the heart, Capable of deeds The mind cannot conceive. The heart dictates as well as feels. How else can you explain The path I have taken, That you have taken, The long way through this pass?

P352 You came again, Blinding my eyes Like the shimmer of sun upon the sea.

P367 The Firefly—Luring him was as easy/ As flashing valentines./ But like a lady firefly/ They hid a secret call to die.

What are the rules in a world without sin? Who makes them? Who enforces them?

* “When cornered, desperate, or isolated, man reverts to those instincts that aim straight at survival. Quick and just.”
* P299 Back in her cell Kya takes the WWI compass Tate had given her from the bag: She let the needle swing north and watched it settle true. She held it against her heart. Where else would one need a compass more than in this place? Then whispered Emily Dickinson’s words: The sweeping up the heart,/ And putting Love away/ We shall not want to use again/ Until Eternity.

What are the laws of Mother Nature?

—p6 That “A ma don’t leave her kids. It ain’t in ‘em.” “You told me that fox left her babies.” “Yeah, but that vixen got ‘er leg all tore up. She’d’ve starved to death if she’d tried to feed herself’n’ her kits. She was better off to leave ‘em, heal herself up, then whelp more when she could raise ‘em good. Ma ain’t starvin’, she’ll be back.”

—p80 “Ma said women need one another more than they need men, but she never told her how to get inside the pride.”

—p90 Kya sees a hen turkey being pecked to death by other turkeys: “Jodie had said that if a bird becomes different from the others—disfigured or wounded—it is more likely to attract a predator, so the rest of the flock will kill it, which better than drawing in an eagle, who might take one of them in the bargain.

—p183 “Some female insects eat their mates, overstressed mammal mothers abandon their young, many males design risky or shifty ways to outsperm their competitors. Nothing seemed too indecorous as long as the tick and the tock of life carried on. She knew this was not a dark side to Nature, just inventive ways to endure against all odds. Surely for humans there was more.”

—p186 *Like everything else in the universe, we tumble toward those of higher mass.*

—p200 Kya’s collections: “Her collections had grown from a child’s hobby to a natural history museum of the marsh. He lifted a scallop shell, labeled with a watercolour of the beach where it was found, plus insets showing the creature eating smaller creatures of the sea. For each specimen—hundreds, maybe thousands of them—it was the same.”

—p212 She knew from her studies that males go from one female to the next, so why had she fallen for this man? …she had fallen for the same ruse as Ma: *leapfrogging sneaky fuckers*. …Perhaps love is best left as a fallow field.

—p215 Nature seems the only stone that would not slip midstream.

—p238 Some behaviours that seem harsh to us now ensured the survival of early man in whatever swamp he was in at the time. Without them, we wouldn’t be here. We still store those instincts in our genes, and they express themselves when certain circumstances prevail. Some parts of us will always be what we were, what we had to be to survive—way back yonder.

—p245 Joe to Ed while searching Kya’s place: Did ya know that female birds only got one ovary?... and the note says that over eons of time the male peacock feathers got larger and larger to attract females, till the poin the males can barely lift off the ground. Can’t hardly fly anymore. (they find the red wool hat hanging in plain view.) …I bet she knows a bunch. Those male peacocks struttin’ around, competin’s so much for sex, they can’t hardly fly. I ain’t sure what it all means, but it adds up to something.

—p274 While hiding out at the reading shack recovering from Chase’s attack Kya watches a female praying mantis bite the head off a male —“mantis females devour their own mates. Female insects, Kya thought, know how to deal with their lovers.”

—p320 *Dominance hierarchies enhance stability in natural populations, and some less natural,* Kya thought.

Can mankind live/survive/thrive/administer justice according to them?

P 198 Why should the injured, the still bleeding, bear the onus of **forgiveness**?

P201Tate: Kya I’m so sorry about leaving you. Please, can’t you forgive me? …I don’t know how to Tate. I could never believe you again.

P238 Kya: Maybe some primitive urge—some ancient genes, not appropriate anymore—drove Ma to leave us because of the stress, the horror and real danger of living with Pa. That doesn’t make it right; *she should have chosen to stay.* But knowing that these tendencies are in our biological blueprints might help one forgive even a failed mother That may explain her leaving, but I still don’t see why she didn’t come back. Why she didn’t even write to me. …Jodie: I guess some things can’t be explain, only forgiven or not. I don’t know the answer. Maybe there isn’t one.

P242 Jodie to Kya: …it’s not just guys who are unfaithful. I’ve been duped, dropped, run over a few times myself. Let’s face it, a lot of times love doesn’t work out. Yet even when it fails, it connects you to others and, in the end, that is all you have, the connections.

P277 Kya overhears her fellow inmates talking about the odds of her getting the death penalty: “Being dead didn’t bother her; they couldn’t scare her with threats of ending this shadow life. But the process of being killed by another’s hand, planned out and set to schedule, was so unthinkable it stopped her breath.”

p340 Tom Milton: Some people whispered that she was part wolf or the missing link between ape and man. That her eyes glowed in the dark. (Figuratively they did!) Yet in reality, she was only an abandoned child, a little girl surviving on her own in a swamp, hungry and cold, but we didn’t help her. (Tried to …sort of) Except for one of her only friends, Jumpin’, not one of our churches or community groups offered her food or clothes. (Miss Singleton, Tate Walker) Instead we labeled and rejected her because we thought (knew) she was different. But…did we exclude Miss Clark because she was different, or was she different because we excluded her? If we had taken her in as one of our own—I think that is what she would be today. (But she wouldn’t let herself be taken in) If we had fed, clothed, and loved her, …we wouldn’t be prejudiced against her. And I believe she would not be sitting here today accused of a crime.

P340 Tom Milton: The job of judging this shy, rejected young woman has fallen on your shoulders, but you must base that judgment on the facts presented in this case, in this courtroom, not on rumors or feelings from the past twenty-four years. What are the true and solid facts? …not one single piece of evidence proves Miss Clark was on the fire tower in Barkley Cove or killed Chase Andrews. …It is time, at last, for us to be fair to the Marsh Girl.

P363 Kya knew the years of isolation had altered her behaviour until she was different from others but it wasn’t her fault she’d been alone. Most of what she knew, she’d learned from the wild. Nature had nurtured, tutored, and protected her when no one else would. If consequences resulted from her behaving differently, then they too were functions of life’s fundamental core. /Tate’s devotion eventually convinced her that human love is more than the bizarre mating competitions of the marsh creatures, but life also taught her that ancient genes for survival still persist in some undesirable forms among the twists and turns of man’s genetic code.

**Clues**

P13 “Kya, ya be careful, hear. If anybody comes, don’t go in the house. They can get ya there….Always cover yo’ tracks; I learned ya how. And ya can hide from Pa, too.”

Kya’s propensity for cleaning up and paying careful attention to details.

P54 …after thinking about it, she worried that if she asked to use the boat, he would think she’d cooked and cleaned only for the favour…so she didn’t mention using the boat by herself, instead asked, “Can I go out fishin’ with ya sometime?”

P66 One night they played gin rummy, he guffawing when she won, and she giggling with her hands over her mouth like a regular girl.

P102 …they taunted Jumpin’. …Kya stalked through brush until she was ahead of then, her eyes glued on their caps bobbing above the branches. …She twisted the cloth bag with the jam so that it was wrung tight and knotted against the jars. As the boys drew even with the thicket, she swung the heavy bag and whacked the closest one hard across the back of his head. He pitched forward and fell on his face. Hollering and screeching, she rushed the other boy, ready to bash his head too, but he took off.”

P140 “It’d be nice to have a real clue. Beats walkin’ around looking for aome guy wearin’ a red wool sweater with a motive attached. We gotta admit, if this was a murder, it was a clever one. The marsh chewed up and swallowed all the evidence.” (Ed and Joe)

P142 Kya watching fireflies: Suddenly Kya …paid attention: one of the females had changed her code. …she flickered a different signal, and a male of a different species flew to her. Reading her message, the second male was convinced he’d found a willing female of his own kind and hovered above her to mate. But suddenly the female firefly reached up, grabbed him with her mouth, and ate him, chewing all six legs and both wings. Kya watched…The females got what they wanted—first a mate, then a meal—just by changing their signals. Kya knew judgment had no place. Evil was not in play, just life pulsing on, even at the expense of some of the players. Biology sees right and wrong as the same color in different light.

P145 “Why, Tate, why? …”You said you loved me, but there is no such thing. There is no one on Earth you can count on.” From somewhere very deep, she made herself a promise never to trust or love anyone again.

P155 Tate spying on Kya: “Squatting low to the ground and snatching glances to see if the boat had come into view, she duck-walked toward her boat. Knees lifting nearly to her chin. She was closer to Tate now, and he saw her eyes, dark and crazed. …she remained frozen listening until the motor whined away, then stood dabbing her brow. Continued to look in the direction of the boat as a deer eyes the empty brush of a departed panther. On some level he knew she behaved this way, but since the feather game, had not witnessed the raw, unpeeled core. How tormented, isolated, and strange.

P165 Kya gives Chase the shell necklace while they are on top of the Fire Tower

P172 Patti Love to Ed: “I was shocked when the coroner said Chase didn’t have on the necklace. And then it occurred to me that she’s the only one who’d have any interest in taking it. Chase had broken off their relationship and married Pearl. She couldn’t have him, so maybe she killed him and took the necklace from his neck.”

P173…It’s not much of a lead. The absence of a shell necklace. …but why take the necklace when it could connect her smack-dab to the crime? “You know how it is. Seems like there’s something in every murder case that doesn’t make sense. People mess up.”

P196 When Tate shows up a few days after Christmas, years later: Her first thought was to run. …Her next thought was to pick up a rock, and she hurled it at his face from twenty feet. …she picked up another….The rock hit him hard on the shoulder.

p204 Hal Miller: “the very night he died…me and Allen Hunt seen that woman, …the Marsh Girl motoring just outta the bay…headed right toward the fire tower…out late…cruisin’ along with no lights on”

p209 After seeing the engagement announcement in the newspaper Kya throws the food she had bought for Chase’s birthday picnic to the gulls … “Then swore louder and meaner than the wind.”

P213 Amanda Hamilton poem: I drop the line and watch you drift away.

P227 Ed: “Could be she wanted to be seen out there in broad daylight getting on and off of buses. When you think about it, she had to do something out of the ordinary for an alibi. To claim that she’d been alone in her shack the night Chase dies, as she usually is, would be no alibi at all. Zip. So she planned up something that lots of people would see her do. Making a great alibi right in front of all those folks on Main Street. Brilliant.”

P227 Well you’re right. …it would be possible to bus from Greenville to Barkley Cove and then back again all in one night. Easy really. …Plenty of time between the two buses to push somebody off the fire tower.

P251 Fibers from her (red wool) hat were on Chase’s jacket as he lay dead.

P314 Do you believe it’s possible that the skinny man on the bus was Miss Clark in disguise? …Yeah I do. …I can’t be 100% sure.

P321So on the night that Chase Andrews died at the fire tower, Miss Clark was boating in exactly that direction, just minutes before the time of his death. Is that correct? /Yeah, that’s what we seen.

P367 The Firefly by Amanda Hamilton —Luring him was as easy/ As flashing valentines./ But like a lady firefly/ They hid a secret call to die. + the shell necklace in the cardboard box under the floorboards of Kya’s kitchen

**What have we got here?**

A movie script?

A detective story?

A fable? —p360 “Over the years the case, too, eased into legend.”

A morality lesson?

A character study? — Joe to Ed: p250 “A better motive might help. Being jilted doesn’t seem like enough.”

A nature study?

A collection of clichés?

**Writing Style**

Voice

P320 The language of the court was, of course, not as poetic as the language of the marsh. Yet Kya saw similarities in their natures.

Poetry by Amanda Hamilton

**Terms**

Wikipedia — Tate is studying protozoology in graduate school (p199): … is the study of [protozoa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protozoa), the "animal-like" (i.e., [motile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motility) and [heterotrophic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heterotroph)) [protists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protists). This term has become dated as understanding of the evolutionary relationships of the [eukaryotes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eukaryotes) has improved. For example, the Society of Protozoologists, founded in 1947, was renamed International Society of [Protistologists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protistologist) in 2005. However, the term persists in some cases (e.g., the Polish journal Acta Protozoologica).

spoiler alert

**Reviews**

[www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jan/12/where-the-crawdads-sing-delia-owens-review](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/jan/12/where-the-crawdads-sing-delia-owens-review)

Surprise bestsellers are often works that chime with the times. Though set in the 1950s and 60s, Where the Crawdads Sing is, in its treatment of racial and social division and the fragile complexities of nature, obviously relevant to contemporary politics and ecology. But these themes will reach a huge audience though the writer’s old-fashioned talents for compelling character, plotting and landscape description.

[www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/now-that-weve-all-read-where-the-crawdads-sing-can-we-talk-about-the-ending/2019/04/17/9ef35184-6074-11e9-9ff2-abc984dc9eec\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/now-that-weve-all-read-where-the-crawdads-sing-can-we-talk-about-the-ending/2019/04/17/9ef35184-6074-11e9-9ff2-abc984dc9eec_story.html)

Instead, we see the scenes as we might in a film — dramatic, brisk, dialogue-centric, cleverly interspersed with flashbacks that reveal the stories behind the case’s physical evidence, but with all the pesky thoughts and feelings edited out. Kya is checked out during the trial, her eyes — and observations — withdrawn. And it’s here that Owens, as if to acquit herself, to apologize for having earlier gifted us with sprawling, richly metaphored writing that’s suddenly come to a halt, offers her meta-wink: “The language of the court was, of course, not as poetic as the language of the marsh.”

I actually laughed out loud when I read the line — almost as if it said, “I’m no John Grisham, but cut me some slack — up until now this book has been freaking gorgeous.” And that would be true! In any case, if the courtroom scenes aren’t as evocative and immersive as what came before, at least they’re compulsively readable, split into quick-cut interactions and capped by swelling closing arguments that scream out for life as a screenplay. …

And yet, I can’t help but think that the most stunningly evocative aspects of this book, the solo dances between Kya and nature, will be the weakest the film has to offer: How do you capture soulfulness, convey stillness, without boring a modern audience to tears? Meanwhile, the least gorgeous parts, the paint-by-numbers court case and Kya’s fish-out-of-water trips to town, featuring cruel interactions and pointed 1960s racial tensions, will be heightened and exploited on-screen, mined for Oscar bait. At least I’ll be able to count myself among the haughty legions to parrot that timeworn phrase, “Yeah, but did you read the book? It’s so much better.”

artsfuse.org/181345/book-review-where-the-crawdads-sing-are-the-rural-poor-noble-savages/

… Crawdads expresses an essential truth about class and ecology. Do we conserve ecology as a way to insure its continued use for those (the rural poor) who live off the land? Or romanticize it for the sake of the privileged classes who profit by it?  What direction should responsible ecological management take?  The hicks abusing (and inhabiting!) the land are seen in Crawdads and elsewhere as an ideological surrender. Owens unintentionally provides an example of how this looks. At the end of the novel, in the 2000s, the town of Barkley Cove has been transformed into a place where grits have become polenta, with all manner of Southern-lifestyle goods for sale. But people’s visceral connection with nature has been cut and/or sterilized. Ironically, it isn’t the rednecks abusing the marshes or each other that have brought this about. It is the mature Kya’s successful naturist artwork — the triumph of a domesticated ecological ideology. The book’s success lies in how it connects the noble savage (Southern “white trash” or “maroon”) with a comforting vision of conservation that is dramatized through the story of a woman who learns to feel emotions about love, her body, and nature. Reality is much more ambivalent: the heavily funded ecological industry and the rural peoples of the South are in conflict. What Crawdads lacks is acknowledgment of how the ‘primitive’, ‘backwards’ South is pressing itself against (or being squeezed out by) the ‘progressive’, ‘elitist’ South. The narrative welcomes rural gentrification while serving up an air-brushed reproduction of small-town Southern pasts. Today, as in the book, the townsfolk still jeer at the “swamp trash” outside of town. The only differences now is that the townsfolk have Witherspoon’s blessings, and the swamp trash are perhaps — rather less nobly than Crawdads‘s characters of yesteryear – cooking meth or fishing with car batteries. The message of Owens’s tale is that the only forward movement for her outsider-protagonist and “swamp trash” is to become curators of ecological/cultural museums in the very places where they once struggled for an independent life. To her credit, the author does not present this as a happy ending. She knows that conservationism is potentially antithetical to social and cultural equity. In its contradictions, Kya’s tale bears close resemblance to the experience of North Carolina folk hero Robert Harrill, a.k.a. The Fort Fisher Hermit, who is rumored to have met his end following cruel harassment by some local hooligans. This quote is attributed to him: “My life here goes up and down like the tides of this old sea out here… Only nature determines my existence.” In hindsight, it is hard not to shake our heads at his admirable hubris. Evidently not, Mr. Harrill. There is nature, and then there is something else. And nothing is in harmony here. Not at all.

http://www.literatureandleisure.com/2019/06/review-of-where-the-crawdads-sing/

Owens lacks the art of subtle revelation in her narrative. She repeats things over and over as if she needs to remind the reader about the clues she’s leaving….Similarly, Owens’ nature prose is too heavy handed. I love a beautiful description with a metaphor as much as the next reader, but I also get the parallels between wildlife and human nature – you don’t have to beat me over the head with them. Again, subtly can go a long way. By the way, this is the author’s fault, not that of the editor….And, I don’t know if that’s she been gone from South Georgia for too long, but I thought her Southern dialect was horrible. As one fellow (Southern) reader said, “It’s insulting.” Well said. … While I didn’t hate the fact that it turns out Kya did murder Chase, I do think the way it was revealed was low-rate and demonstrated the author’s inability to (again) artfully craft a narrative where this bears the weight that it should. As it is, Tate and Kya live happily ever after – her knowing she killed Chase – and Tate finds out after she dies? What’s the point? This feels like an elementary solution.

This review is long enough without me getting into all that is wrong with “Amanda Hamilton” but suffice it to say, I wanted to scream every time one of her poems was dropped into the story and finding out that Kya was the poet didn’t make it any better. (A better “ah-ha” for Amanda Hamilton would have been that she was Kya’s mother – and Kya to have discovered she had this link and shared language with a woman she longed to know.)

Sara Boonin Malone: I thought that this book was idiotic. She lived outdoors for two decades, never went to a dentist, certainly didn't wear sunscreen...do you know what you look like at that point? I work at the local homeless shelter. People who live outside look weather beaten and ancient. She was taught to read by a high school kid, so what, her reading was at an eighth grade level or so? And then she gets book deals? And she uses her advance to 'fix up the shack' for $5000, including putting in electricity, even though the closest electricity was likely about 15 miles away. Trench 15 miles, lay cable for $5k? I could go on and on, but what really got me is that Delia Owens knows better. She lived in the Kalahari Desert, for Pete's sake. She knows all about the rigors of primitive living. Oddly, I read 'Educated' immediately after reading this, and THAT was a lifelike, believable account of a child who grows up without responsible adults or a basic education.

www.thefashionmagpie.com/magpie-book-club-delia-owens-where-the-crawdads-sing/

### Where the Crawdads Sing Book Club Questions.

+What role does the natural world play in the book? Specifically, I’m interested in Kya’s relationship to it. At times she blends, nymph-like, into its foliage and seems more “at home” outside than she does in her shanty. What did you think about the geography? How did it propel or stagnate Kya?

+Could this book have taken place in a different setting? Why or why not?

+Do you see Kya as a victim? Of what?

+What was your take on the outcome of Kya’s trial?

+The book presents complicated relationships between gender, the natural world, human instinct, maternal instinct, and social norms. How did you come to understand Owens’ perspective on this? I am thinking particularly of the line: “She knew this [she’s talking about the reproductive habits of certain mammals] was not a dark side to Nature, just inventive ways to endure against all odds. Surely for humans there was more.”

+What was your take on the poetry in the book? Why was it there? What purpose(s) did it serve? Did you find it effective?

+What did you make of Tate “abandoning” Kya and then eventually returning? What about Kya’s brother’s disappearance and re-entry?