



1. The Altamaha River, also known as Georgia's "Little Amazon," plays an important role as the setting of the book. What do you think the river represents to the two brothers, Hunter and Lawton?
2. In the first chapter, Hunter and Lawton paddle beneath two boys sitting on the Altamaha Bridge, playing hooky. Each brother reacts differently to the boys. How are their reactions indicative of their different characters and personalities?
3. The novel is full of the illustrations of Jacques Le Moyne, the first European artist to capture the flora and fauna of the New World. How do these illustrations shape the reader's sense of Le Moyne as a man, as well as the French culture he represents?
4. Uncle King is one of the more mysterious characters in the novel. What significance might his name hold? (Hint: Check the Hebrew word for "uncle.")
5. Jacques Le Moyne finds a glossopetra, or tongue stone, in the shallows of the river. How is this talisman illustrative of certain themes of the novel?
6. Hunter wears the tooth of a prehistoric shark—the megalodon—around his neck. How might this pendant relate to Le Moyne's tongue stone?
7. The search for a legendary river monster, Altamaha-ha, is central to the novel. Why do you think humans are so fascinated by cryptids, creatures of cryptozoology? What does it say about the nature of faith, myth, and story?
8. Do you believe the Altamaha-ha "exists"?

### *Discussion Questions*



9. Hunter and Lawton's father, Hiram Loggins, is engaged in an affair with Annabelle Mackintosh for most of his adult life. Beyond physical and romantic companionship, what do the two represent to each other?
10. Hiram Loggins is an abusive father. How does this shape each of his sons in different ways?
11. Tattoos are an important motif throughout the book. Explain how they help define certain characters—Hiram, Lawton, Uncle King, Satoriwa—and what symbolic meanings they might hold.
12. How might the world be different if the French foothold at Fort Caroline had survived? If the Huguenots, as portrayed in the novel, had become a larger cultural influence in this part of the New World?
13. Le Moyne arrives in the New World as a conservative flower painter. How does he evolve throughout the novel? How is he a different man by the time he reaches the deck of the Levrier, the ship that will sail him home to France?
14. The novel is composed of alternating storylines, both contemporary and historical. How do these storylines echo and speak to each other? How does the Altamaha River help both to link and differentiate the experiences of the French colonists and modern Americans?
15. There is a varying level of friction between brothers Hunter and Lawton throughout the book. What do you believe are the roots of this tension? How does the altercation on Lewis Island, as well as the later



discovery of their father's poaching business, help to redefine and recalibrate the brothers' relationship?

16. Both Hunter and Le Moyne experience vivid dreams throughout the book. How are these dreams portents of events to come or reflections of the past?
17. Discuss the possible symbolism of the sturgeon in the novel.
18. A sense of prehistory underlies the novel. For example, we learn that the lower half of Georgia below the "Fall Line" was once under water, the floor of an ancient sea. Are you aware of the prehistoric flora, fauna, and geography of your own region?
19. What do believe is the significance of the book's title, *The River of Kings*? Can you think of any other good titles for the book?
20. Perhaps the most iconic and mysterious of Le Moyne's illustrations is that of the natives hunting a giant alligator, which has decidedly dinosaurlike features. How does the anatomy of Le Moyne's creature differ from that of the American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) endemic to this part of the country? What might have been Le Moyne's motives, deliberate or subconscious, for this fantastical portrayal?

*Discussion  
Questions*

