

# The highest tide essay

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



The opening six chapters of the novel introduce us to its teenage narrator, Miles O'Malley. He is obsessed with the sea and marine creatures and spends a lot of his spare time on the beaches looking for oysters or other specimens that he can sell to museums, private collections., or local restaurants. His intelligence is established – he knows a lot about the sea – and so is his sense of inferiority: he is short for his age and has a crush on his neighbour's daughter, Angie Stegner, but lacks the macho casualness about women that his rather stupid acquaintance Phelps possesses. Miles is also obsessed with Rachel Carson who is famous for being the first writer/commentator to write about what we now think of as green issues or environmental issues. Carson could see that the way humans were treating the environment was dangerous and foolhardy. The main event of the opening chapters is Miles's discovery of a beached giant squid – which was briefly alive before dying; Miles heard it make a noise and becomes, briefly, a local celebrity, as marine experts and the media descend on his home town of Olympia: the giant squid is the largest ever found in that region and does not normally live in that area of the ocean.

The most interesting passage is the description of Miles finding the giant squid because it effectively communicates his fear and uncertainty. The final sentence of Chapter One shows Miles's fear: “ It was too late to stop my scream. Its eye was the size of a hubcap.”

The most noteworthy sentence is one that Miles speaks to a reporter about the giant squid. He says, “ Maybe the earth is trying to tell us something.”

(16) For me this signals that the novel will be concerned with the environment and that other unusual events will occur.

Chapter Six ends with Miles saving the life of Lizzy, a chocolate Labrador which belongs to Frankie Marx – a young man who is hanging around with Angie. Miles saves the dog by giving him the kiss of life – really in order to impress Angie.