

Section 4: Owl Creek and Trout Creek

Owl Creek and Trout Creek flow into the river, not far from the Lee Civic Center. Nick stands in the shallow water and, through the reeds, sees two fishermen on the shore.

“Did you hear that RiverWatch got an oxbow restored up by old Fort Denaud?” The first man jerks the rod as he reels.

The second man baits his hook, and Nick watches the minnow in his hands.

“What do you mean — restored?” The second man casts his line. Nick watches the bait fly through the air and splash into the water.

“They did some digging so the water would flow. They planted a bunch of plants to keep the water clean, even though it moves slowly. There’s even an oxbow island.” The first man pulls up his hook and checks the bait. Nick watches him cast.

The second man feels a tug on his line. He yanks his fishing rod to set the hook, but his line

is loose. Nick sees a blue crab stealing the bait.

The second man says, “It can’t be the way it used to be. I remember my grandfather’s stories. Somewhere the river used to make a curve like an S. Steamboats couldn’t steer around it.”

The first man asks, “So they turned around and went back to Fort Myers?”

Nick grabs the crab and eats it. “Nope. The boatmen tied ropes to the trees. They pulled the boats around the curves. It was called ‘Rope Bend.’ It was famous, and they even made it into picture postcards.” The second man pulls up an empty hook.

Nick walks away from the voices.

