



Section 5: S.R. 31 Drawbridge

S.R. 31, known by some as Dixie Highway, crosses the river east of Fort Myers. Nick stands on a piling. Above him is a small house on the side of the bridge. Inside, the bridge tender makes sure that cars and trucks stop so the drawbridge can open for boats.

Just east of the bridge, a sailboat sounds its horn. It is too tall to pass under and waits for the bridge to open.

The bridge tender turns on the alarm bells. The noise is loud, but Nick doesn't fly away. Red lights flash on the gates. When lowered, the gates keep cars and trucks off the bridge.

When the bridge is empty of cars and trucks, the tender turns on the motors, and Nick feels the throbbing.

At the center of the bridge span, two sections of the bridge rise.

After the boat passes through, the bridge sections lower into place. Joined again at the center, the bridge is now safe for cars and trucks to pass. The gates are raised, the lights stop flashing and the bells stop ringing. Nick hears the hum of tires as traffic moves across the bridge again.

He also hears the cry of gulls and sees them behind the boat as they swoop and dive in the wake. They are catching small fish that tumble to the surface as the boat's propeller churns the water.

From the piling, Nick flies to the shallow water near shore where some of the small fish scatter. He catches and eats one, and then another.

