Interconnectedness of events

- Ben gets burned
- Mag’s family suffers
- Mag’s mom dies
- Mag stays out all night w/Luke
- Ben joins military and moves away
- Luke joining Peace Corp and becoming bitter toward mankind
- Luke comes to Tamassee and fights for the river
- Mag becomes interested in Luke just to buck her family
- Allen becomes work-a-holic and his family dies
- Herb Kowalski is work-a-holic and inattentive to family
- Kowalski’s take vacation
- Ruth dies
- Allen needs to atone for his inept fathering
- Mag is lonely so she helps Allen
- Randy’s compassion leads him to sacrifice his life fro Ruth
- Mag, having been exposed to people who have been changed due to witnessing suffering, she begins to be able to forgive her father and herself
- Only once the self is made whole (good relationship with oneself) can one have good relationships with others
  o Once Allen has redeemed himself he can have a relationship with Mag.
  o Once Mag. Has redeemed herself and forgiven her father, she can have a relationship with Allen.

What happens w/Allen at the end of the book??

We do know. Look at the last line of the book.
IF we have forgiveness, true forgiveness, then we have reconciliation, so all the broken relationships are fixed, as well as they can be this side of Heaven.

- Mag becomes self-reliant and is brought back into the fold of her family and town
- Allen can finally have true closure with his wife and move on with Maggie
- After having asked for forgiveness, Mag’s dad can have a good afterlife and be reunited w/his daughter; “What good is love that can’t be expressed?”; he was unloving—at least openly—before the accident, but became more overtly loving after Ruth’s accident: mag’s dad’s dream: “I saw that girl in the river, but it was your face.”
- Luke; perhaps seeing Randy’s sacrifice will show him that mankind is capable of goodness; Allen will write about how damaging the dam process was to the watershed, thereby bringing awareness to Luke’s cause; perhaps this blond he’s with will show him that mankind is capable of goodness; Luke’s influence caused her to changed majors from chemical engineering to environmentalism, saying he saved her soul; he couldn’t fix anything in Biafra, but he has made an impact in fixing the conflict between man and nature—that should make him feel better.
- Now that this tragedy is over, Ruth’s family will be closer than ever
- Ronny’s family and the rest of the town will pull together to support Randy’s family; Randy’s sacrifice itself is an example of good fatherhood. He provides a good moral example for his children to follow.

Remember Lee’s line: “This is the best thing that could have happened for everyone involved.”

We thought that this was a cheesy line in the beginning, but, believe it or not, if Ruth hadn’t died in that river:
Maggie would never have come home to reconcile herself with herself, family, and town.

Allen wouldn’t have been able to do his act of penance that helped him to accept forgiveness and become whole again.

Mag’s dad would never have become more loving.

The Kowalsky’s may have gotten divorced.

Instead of a mediocre or non-existent relationship with her dad/family, she is in bliss with her perfect Heavenly Father.

Luke’s cause of adhering to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act will be furthered.

Now, none of this is to say that everything’s perfect now, because redemption doesn’t mean that nothing bad ever happens:

Tony Bryan is still lurking around.

Luke is not fixed yet.

Mag and her dad didn’t end up bff’s.

Randy’s kids still have to grow up without a father.

The Kowalski’s are still missing a family member.

The river has been damaged.

But we go on and do the best we can, just like the river.