I'm not a bot



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necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. 0 ratings0% found this document useful (0 votes)534 viewsThe document discusses the structure of Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston. It notes that the story is framed by Janie telling her story
to her friend Pheoby on Janie's front...AI-enhanced title and descriptionSaveSave THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD For Later0%0% found this document useful, undefined We're getting everything ready for you. The page is loading, and you'll be on your way in just a few moments. Thanks for your patience! Inciting Event: Janie's grandmother
marries her off to keep her out of trouble. First Plot Point: Janie runs off with Jody Starks. First Plot Point: Janie and Tea Cake, Janie discovers he stole her hidden $200. Third Plot Point: Janie and Tea Cake flee the
hurricane. Climax: Tea Cake comes down with hydrophobia. Climactic Moment: Tea Cake dies. Resolution: Janie returns home and tells her friend about her experiences. Zora Neale Hurston was born on Jan. 7, 1891, in Notasulga, Alabama. Hurston moved with her family to Eatonville, Florida, when she was still a toddler. Her writings reveal no
recollection of her Alabama beginnings. For Hurston, Eatonville was always home. Growing up in Eatonville, in an eight-room house on five acres of land, Zora had a relatively happy childhood, despite frequent clashes with her preacher-father. Her mother, on the other hand, urged young Zora and her seven siblings to "jump at de sun." Hurston's
idyllic childhood came to an abrupt end, though, when her mother died in 1904. Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 14 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was only 15 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora was old. After L
& Sullivan traveling troupe as a maid to the lead singer. In 1917, she turned up in Baltimore; by then, she was 26 years old and still hadn't finished high school. Needing to present herself as a teenager to qualify for free public schooling, she lopped 10 years off her life--giving her age as 16 and the year of her birth as 1901. Once gone, those years
were never restored: From that moment forward, Hurston would always present herself as at least 10 years younger than she actually was. Zora also had a fiery intellect, and an infectious sense of humor. Zora used these talents--and dozens more--to elbow her way into the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, befriending such luminaries as poet
Langston Hughes and popular singer/actress Ethel Waters. By 1935, Hurston--who'd graduated from Barnard College in 1928--had published several short stories and Men). But the late 1930s and early '40s marked the real zenith of
her career. She published her masterwork, Their Eyes Were Watching God, in 1937; Tell My Horse, her study of Caribbean Voodoo practices, in 1939. When her autobiography, Dust Tracks on a Road, was published in 1942, Hurston finally received the well-earned acclaim that had
long eluded her. That year, she was profiled in Who's Who in America, Current Biography and Twentieth Century Authors. She went on to publish another novel, Seraph on the Suwanee, in 1948. Still, Hurston never received the financial rewards she deserved. So when she died on Jan. 28, 1960--at age 69, after suffering a stroke--her neighbors in
Fort Pierce, Florida, had to take up a collection for her funeral. The collection didn't yield enough to pay for a headstone, however, so Hurston was buried in a grave that remained unmarked until 1973. That summer, a young writer named Alice Walker traveled to Fort Pierce to place a marker on the grave of the author who had so inspired her own
work. Walker entered the snake-infested cemetery where Hurston's remains had been laid to rest. Wading through waist-high weeds, she soon stumbled upon a sunken rectangular patch of ground that she determined to be Hurston's grave. Walker chose a plain gray headstone. Borrowing from a Jean Toomer poem, she dressed the marker up with a
fitting epitaph: "Zora Neale Hurston: A Genius of the South." Jump to ratings and reviewsFair and long-legged, independent and articulate, Janie Crawford sets out to be her own person—no mean feat for a black woman in the '30s. Janie's quest for identity takes her through three marriages and into a journey back to her roots. 14425 people are
currently reading337600 people want to readNovels, including Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937), and nonfiction writings of American folklorist Zora Neale Hurston, one of the leaders of the literary renaissance, happening in Harlem, produced the short-lived literary
magazine Fire!! alongside Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurman shortly before she entered Barnard College. This literary movement developed into the Harlem renaissance. Hurston applied her Barnard ethnographic training to document African American folklore in her critically acclaimed book Mules and Men alongside fiction Their Eyes Were
Watching God. She also assembled a folk-based performance on Broadway. People awarded a Guggenheim fellowship to Hurston to travel to Haiti and conduct research on conjure in 1937. Her significant work ably broke into the secret societies and exposed their use of drugs to
create the Vodun trance, also a subject of study for fellow dancer-anthropologist Katherine Dunham, then at the University of Chicago. In 1954, the Pittsburgh Courier assigned Hurston, unable to sell her fiction, to cover the small-town murder trial of Ruby McCollum, the prosperous black wife of the local lottery racketeer, who had killed a racist
white doctor. Hurston also contributed to Woman in the Suwanee County Jail, a book by journalist and civil rights advocate William Bradford Huie. Displaying 1 - 30 of 22,981 reviews April 4, 2022 read this masterpiece for the first time in high school. The love story of Janie and Tea Cake is one of stupendous beauty. Zora Neal Hurston's text is a
treasure: "So she went on thinking in soft, easy phrases while all around the house, the night time put on flesh and blackness." Early in life, Janie is taken care of by her grandmother Nanny, "Every tear you drop squeezes a cup uh blood outa man heart" As she grew, "Janie waited for a bloom time, a green time and an orange time. "She is married off to
an old, rich man, but grows restless, "There are years that ask questions and years that answer."Ultimately, she gets an answer takes off with the ambitious Jody Starks. But, her hopes are shattered as Jody's ambitions in Eatonville, FL (coincidentally Hurston's hometown) where she feels, "Four walls squeezing her breath out." as Jody ignores her and
builds his empire in the town. He passes away and Janie meets her true love Tea Cake and she seems to have found her inner peace: "So she sat on the porch and watched the moon rise. Soon its amber fluid was drenching the earth, and quenching the thirst of the day. "Tea Cake gives her some lessons of wisdom: "See dat? You'se got de world in uh jug
and make out you don't know it. But Ah'm glad tuh be the one tuh tell yuh. "She sheds her reticences and fears in her love for him: "He drifted off to sleep and Janie looked down on him and felt a soul-crushing love. So her soul crawled out from its hiding place." She never takes on any religion for: "All gods who receive homage are cruel. All gods
dispense suffering without reason. Otherwise, they would not be worshipped."Her love is her temple as she dreamed of under the pear trees as a young girl with Nanny. Disaster eventually strikes, as it always does, gods dispensing their unreasoning suffering. "The wind came back with triple fury, and put out the light for the last time. They sat in
company with the others in other shanties, their eyes straining against crude walls and their souls asking if He meant to measure their puny might against His. They seemed to be staring at the dark, but their eyes were watching God. "This novel was a forgotten masterpiece published in 1935 but forgotten until Alice Walker rediscovered her - and her
gravesite - in 1977. Since, it has been appreciated as the quiet, beautiful monument to a woman's strength and endurance. A must read in these times of women-hating rhetoric in Drumpf's amerikka. The attacks on Planned Parenthood and the bullshit "reverse discrimination" are just two of the many demonstrations of why this book is important as
both a feminist and anti-racist classic. Their Eyes Were Watching God is one of the most beautifully evoked portraits of a woman of color that I have ever read. african-american-lit american-20th-c favorites January 17, 2019 Janie saw her life like a giant tree in leaf with the things suffered, things enjoyed, things done and undone. Dawn and doom was
in the branches. I've spent many years wanting to read this book, but also not wanting to read this book. It's a wonderful, lyrical tale of a woman's life and search for independence. Now I'm fascinated by interpretations of the
title because religion and God don't feature much in the story at all. I've been reading about the idea that the title implies how Janie must look to God - not white people, not husbands, not well-meaning family members - to determine her future. While this theory doesn't give her much agency, it does fit with her search for a life outside of others'
expectations (except God's). It's set in Florida in the early 20th Century, at the height of Jim Crow. The novel begins with Janie Crawford sharing her life story with her friend Pheoby. We are taken back to her youth and sexual awakening.
You feel both Janie's frustration toward her controlling grandmother, and Nanny's desire that Janie will have a better life and be taken care of. "She was borned in slavery time when folks, dat is black folks, didn't sit down anytime dey felt lak it. So sittin' on porches lak de white madam look lak uh might fine thing tuh her. Dat's whut she wanted for
me - don't keer whut it cost. Git up on uh high chair and sit dere. She didn't have time tuh think whut tuh do after you got up on de stool uh do nothin'." As you can see from above, the novel's dialogue makes strong use of dialect and colloquialisms. Through three marriages and many instances of physical abuse, Janie remains fierce and unapologetic
It was a terrible time in America for a black woman to find freedom and independence, but Janie pursues it nevertheless. It's now eighty years after the book's first publication and living for oneself. Everyone in Janie's life
wants and expects something from her. Her Nanny wants her to marry for protection, white men want to keep her down, darker-skinned African-Americans feel she should emphasize her lighter skin, each of her husbands wants her to behave and dress in a way that suits them. But Janie remains wholly herself throughout. I love her. Blog | Facebook |
Twitter | Instagram | YoutubeFebruary 20, 2017I have mixed feelings on this book. On one hand I loved the writing style and I loved the main character and following her journey through life's struggles. On the other hand it was slow moving, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but I felt things could've been cut to keep the story moving better. I
understand why this is such a well loved classic, but I didn't love it as much as I'd hoped to!: (October 30, 2024I Mean...What Can I Say? So sad such a talented person has to die indigent. Zora Neal Hurston, born 1891, died in abject poverty in 1960. Although I have read this book several times, each time I read it, I see a different story that she is
trying to tell. Unfortunately, though many people don't want to admit it, the relationship between black men and black women today are fighting back. I don't know how things were happening for my female ancestors who lived in Africa, hundreds of
years ago, but I know they have suffered a great deal living in America. With white men being the king of the world and their white women with them, the black man could have a place at the bottom of the pits. And lying underneath him, throats under his heel, lies the black woman barely alive. I have been told by family members that the women in this
world feel that it is their duty to make a man feel like a man. They say that in America, for a black man, it is very hard to do.I disagree completely. If a woman has no idea what manhood is about. Some of you may disagree with me,
but that is your choice. Five magnificent stars. a-z-challenge black books-i-want-to-read-again Adina (notifications back, log out, clear cache) February 8, 2023"The sun was gone, but he had left his footprints in the sky." A masterpiece. Zora Neale Hurston does the impossible, she perfectly combines beautiful poetic prose with the Southern black slange
of the 30'. The result swept me of my feet and transported me in the middle of an all in-love story. Imperfect, passionate, sometimes violent but it was impossible to look somewhere else because of its beauty. The narrator was perfect and it made me feel the atmosphere of the place and time. I finally read Their Eyes Were Watching God thanks to
Marlon James and his podcast. It is one of his favourite novels and now I can see why. As other reviews also mentioned, I was surprised by the plot. I was expecting it to be a novel mostly about racial conflicts but instead I read about a courageous woman who dumps two unsuited husbands in order to find her true love. "Love is lak the sea. It's uh
movin' thing, but still and all, it takes its shape from de shore it meets, and it's different with every shore."Did I mentioned how much I loved the writing? "She couldn't make him look just like any other man to her. He looked like the love thoughts of women. He could be a bee to a blossom - a pear tree blossom in the spring. He seemed to be crushing
scent out of the world with his footsteps. Crushing aromatic herbs with every step he took. Spices hung about him. He was a glance from God.""It is so easy to be hopeful in the daytime when you can see the things you wish on. But it was night, it stayed night. Night was striding across nothingness with the whole round world in his hands . . . They sat
in company with the others in other shanties, their eyes straining against cruel walls and their eyes straining against true watching God. "February 7, 2025'There are years that ask questions and years that answer.'When so much in life is busy talking
over or silencing others, finding your voice and having it heard is important to securing your place and being valued. This was something God, is the life narrative of her protagonist, Janie, chasing her horizon and finding her voice as a Black woman
in a world dominated by men and gatekept by white people. The quest myth is the heartbeat driving the narrative as we follow Janie embarking from her travels, which is where we
find her as the novel begins. Though the road is long and beset by troubles, the novel feels more a celebration of freedom told with an underpinning of joy rather than bleakness with Janie seeking out self-actualization and fulfillment in life and love, boldly rising above the obstacles the world—especially the men around her—throws in her path. With
an elegant use of symbolism to highlight the critiques on obdurate social roles and hierarchy in a quest for freedom and selfhood, Their Eyes Were Watching God is an absolute classic work of literature that withstands the test of time. 'Now, women forget all those things they don't want to remember, and remember everything they don't want to
forget. The dream is the truth. Then they act and do things accordingly. Janie's quest for the horizon of independence as a Black woman in the 1930's US south is altogether not so different from the feat the author achieved in bringing this book out in 1937, and then becoming a canonized literary classic. Hurston was working within the confines of a
very gatekept white, male literary tradition in a country that used (and often still uses) their framework as the yardstick for value, though in this hostile terrain Hurston—a folklorist and anthropologist—was able to grow her voice as well as help make space for Black literature, and especially Black women, to blossom. The intersections of misogyny
and racism—termed 'misogynoir' by Black feminist writer Moya Bailey in 2010—are something that Janie herself must navigate in the novel, particularly from husbands who use their fists as a method of controlling women. Hurston's education in folklore and anthropology are a gift as we see her making exceptional use of literary tradition in a way
that is entirely her own. The story itself embodies the archetypes of the hero's journey, as written by Joseph Campbell, leaving her grandmother's house on an adventure of sorts, the awful marriages and social issues as trials, the 'belly of the whale' moment being a hurricane and her return to Eatonville to tell Phoebe her story having been
transformed and embracing her freedom and voice as the Freedom to Live stage of the monomyth. The framing of the narrative as Janie telling her story to Phoebe also reflects the idea of oral storytelling and, particularly with the lyrical aspects of the monomyth. The framing of the monomyth. The framing of the monomyth are the line of the monomyth and particularly with the lyrical aspects of the monomyth.
working class Black people and the dialogue is written in diction rife with colloquialisms to represent this, with Hurston displaying an excellent ear for language and a lyricism that truly brings this book to life. She also uses free indirect discourse to great advantages of prose, dipping between perspectives and often embedding dialogue of multiple
characters without quotation markers that creates a brilliant fluidity to the novel that manages to never be confusing. This is particularly informative on the divide between the perspective of narrator Janie in the 'present' and Janie in the 'present' and Janie in the past, with careful readings of passages seeing the sensibilities of both (and other characters) interchangeably
throughout a single paragraph. 'Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board. For some they come in with the tide. For others they sail forever on the horizon, never out of sight, never landing until the Watcher turns his eyes away in resignation, his dreams mocked to death by time. That is the life of men. 'The horizon is a key symbol in the
novel, the idea of something grand to chase after, an image of possibility. It has an almost mystical quality, being where 'she saw the sun plunge into the same crack in the earth from which the night emerged,' also making it a symbol of life and death. In the start we find Janie feeling closed in and the world getting smaller, seeing nothing but 'narrow
hallways' in her grandmother's home and conceived of a grander life out there. 'She searched as much of the world to be made.'Throughout the
novel, Janie looks for ways to chase her horizon, leaving one bad marriage for another on the assumption that it will allow her more mobility, which it does to some extent being married to a mayor, but also finds the dominance of men to be restrictive and violent against her. 'Love is lak de sea. It's uh movin' thing, but still and all, it takes its shape
marriage is often something of convenience and security but devoid of love, another mark on her list of the world closing around her and depriving her of freedom. 'She knew now that marriage did not make love,' we are told, 'Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman.' Janie saw her life like a giant tree in leaf with the things suffered,
things enjoyed, things done and undone. Dawn and doom was in the branches.'Coupled to the symbolism of the horizon is that of a pear tree, specifically the pear tree under which Janie has her first moment of sexual awakening kissing a boy. When Janie sees a bee pollinating the early flowers on the tree she thinks 'so this was a marriage!' and her
ideas of happiness and sexual fulfillment are intertwined, being a large object on the horizon,' and the lack of love in
the marriage still took her closer to the horizon, but not enough. His death leaves her feeling free to chase the horizon again. This contrasts with her impression of Tea Cake, the true love of her life with whom she can wed sexual fulfilment with self-agency: 'He looked like the love thoughts of women. He could be a bee to a blossom - a pear tree
blossom in the spring. He seemed to be crushing scent out of the world with his footsteps. Crushing aromatic herbs with every step he took. Spices hung about him. He was a glance from God. Notice the pear tree again being a key in the way she regards love. Though with Tea Cake she faces the scrutiny of townsfolk—the gatekeepers on the journey
understanding of violence and its use towards oppression. This is most notable with Jody who publicly assaults her, but it is merely the most aggressive moment in a long line of men keeping women like Janie down. Hurston has mules become a symbol of victimization, playing off Janie's grandmother saying that Black women are 'de mule uh de world
so fur as Ah can see.' Mules make an appearance first when the gift of a mule by first husband Logan to make her labor more has Janie realizing he views her like an animal and treats her according to this view, and again when Janie pities the mule in Eatonville because it is widely mocked by the townspeople. Jody's purchase of the mule is symbolic
of empty gestures for the sake of good PR (he is a mayor afterall), and also indicative of his relation to everything as property and gobbling up ownership as status by proxy made men objectify their wives as property,
and this attitude is shown in Jody's treatment of Janie as more an accessory to his status than as a woman. He beats her to keep her under his guidelines and does not value her agency, the thing she most seeks. Later, Janie will recognize that she must meet violence with violence to survive as a Black woman amongst men, and when she publicly beats
everyone is simply trying to survive. If the tree represents love, the hurricane is a symbol of destruction and complete disregard for human hierarchies of oncoming death. The book is less religious of a
novel as the title might imply, though religious symbolism is frequent in the novel. Three marriages for instance, with the number three representative of the holy trinity where the last was fulfillment but each was another lesson on the way towards actualization. So her soul crawled out from its hiding place. Three marriages for instance, with the number three representative of the holy trinity where the last was fulfillment but each was another lesson on the way towards actualization.
Zora Neale Hurston is a fantastic writer and honestly a literary icon and if you haven't read this one yet I would highly encourage it. It draws from a rich literary tradition and is so full of symbolism, metaphor and outstanding writing that it is hard to put down. A gem for sure.5/5'Here was peace. She pulled in her horizon like a great fish-net. Pulled it
from around the waist of the world and draped it over her shoulder. So much of life in its meshes! She called in her soul to come and see.' May 10, 2024Two things:1) This is deserving of the one-of-the-great-classics-of-the-20th-century title.2) Every book should be large print. To elaborate on both: This is deserving of the one-of-the-great-classics-of-the-20th-century title.2)
and consuming read. I tend to hate historical fiction, but when it's done like this I love it completely. Equally significantly, I accidentally bought the large-print version of this book, and give large print editions the respect they deserve.
have paid more attention the first time. or any attention at all, rather.review to come-----currently-reading updatesi read this in school and do not remember a single thing about it.realizing i may have only pretended to read this in school and do not remember a single thing about it.realizing i may have only pretended to read this in school and do not remember a single thing about it.realizing i may have only pretended to read this in school and do not remember a single thing about it.realizing i may have only pretended to read this in school and do not remember a single thing about it.realizing i may have only pretended to read this in school and do not remember a single thing about it.realizing i may have only pretended to read this in school and do not remember a single thing about it.realizing i may have only pretended to read this in school and do not remember a single thing about it.realizing i may have only pretended to read this in school and do not remember a single thing about it.realizing in a single thing about it.realizing it.r
didn't work lak they love, if dey ever had any. Then you must tell 'em dat love ain't somethin' lak uh grindstone dat's de same thing everywhere and do de same thing everything it touch. Love is lak de sea. It's uh movin' thing, but still and all, it takes its shape from de shore it meets, and it's different with every shore." Janie Crawford knows about
love. She knows how life is with it and she knows how life is without it. She had three marriages with varying degrees of success. The first was a marriage with a much older man when she was on the verge of womanhood. Her Grandmother, fearing her own death, and wanting to make sure that Janie had some security in her life made arrangements
with a man of means to be her husband. Nanny wasn't worried about love, but about whether a man could provide. She was looking at her granddaughter's future with old eyes. Love and lust, from her withered view, were just enticements best skipped for the security of a solid roof and a steady diet of square meals. Nanny was a force of nature and
any protest that Janie may have thought about making was quickly swallowed up in the gale force wind of her grandmother's will." Nanny's head and face looked like the standing roots of some old tree that had been torn away by storm. Foundation of ancient power that no longer mattered. The cooling palma christi leaves that Janie had bound about
her grandma's head with a white rag had wilted down and become part and parcel of the woman. Her eyes didn't bore and pierce. They diffused and melted Janie, the room and the world into one comprehension." Zora Neale HurstonIt wasn't long before a smooth talking man by the name of Joe Starks came along and told her all the wonderful things
he would be doing with his life. With barely a twist of her arm she jumped in the buggy with him and moved to Eatonville, Florida where an all black community was being formed into a town. Joe could see the potential and opened up a general store/post office and started making money hand over fist. He didn't like the way the men looked at Janie
and had her tie up her lovely hair everyday so as not to rile up so much lust in the male population. He was controlling and had words of "wisdom" to attach to everything he instructed her to do, but Ah can't tell you nothin' Ah see!" "Dat's 'cause you need tellin' Joe rejoined hotly. "It would be pitiful if Ah didn't.
Somebody got to think for women and chillun and chickens and cows. I god, they sho don't think none theirselves."Now Joe just seemed to fold all up in himself and took sickly and died leaving Janie with a good stack of green and as good a living as she wanted to make. Now Janie was North of forty, but was still a damn good looking woman. "The
men noticed her firm buttocks like she had grape fruits in her hip pockets; the great rope of black hair swinging to her waist and unraveling in the wind like a plume; then her pugnacious breasts trying to bore holes in her shirt. They, the men, were saving with the mind what they lost with the eye." The Lovely Halle Barry played Janie Crawford in the
2005 movie versionThe men of the community that had been having unnatural thoughts that came...well...very naturally to them regarding this married woman soon found themselves on the outside track once she became a widow. A young man by the name of Tea Cake showed up and suddenly for the first time Janie found out what love felt like. Dear
lord did the community carry on about this old woman shaking the sheets with this youngster with no money and no name for himself. Janie herself was suspicious even pushed him about the thought that his intentions might be built on false pretenses. "Janie, Ah hope God may kill me, if Ah'm lyin'. Nobody else on earth kin hold uh candle tuh you
baby. You got de keys to de kingdom."Now what woman could resist that. I'm ready. Where do you want to go? They moved down in the Everglades to pick beans by day and for Tea Cake to shake the dice by night. He could pick a mean guitar as well and sang songs for the entertainment of all those hard working people. Yo' mama don't wear no
DrawsAh seen her when she took 'em OffShe soaked 'em in alcoHolShe sold 'em tuh de Santy ClausHe told her 'twas aginst de LawTo wear dem dirty Draws Like all her other husbands Tea Cake is not above being jealous. Men kept circling around her like bees looking for a hive. "Before the week was over he had whipped Janie. Not because her
behavior justified his jealousy, but it relieved that awful fear inside him. Being able to whip her reassured him in possession. No brutal beating at all. He just slapped her around a bit to show who was boss. Everybody talked about it next day in the fields. It aroused a sort of envy in both men and women. The way he petted and pampered her as if
those two or three face slaps had nearly killed her made the women see visions and the helpless way she hung on him made men dreams." Yeah they are looking at you Zora. Now there are hurricanes, heart breaks, rabid dogs, lustful men, stiletto knives, and a young girl blossoming into a beautiful woman that has to find her place in the
She worked as a substitute school teacher, librarian, freelance writer, and even as a maid towards the end of her life. When she suffers a stroke in 1959 she is forced to enter the St. Lucie County Welfare Home where she remains until her death on January 28th, 1960 from hypertensive heart disease. She is buried in an unmarked grave in the Garden
of Heavenly Rest, Fort Pierce. In the 1970s Alice Walker's efforts Zora's reputation is restored and her works begin to be added to the syllabuses of major universities. As a final tribute to Hurston, Walker finds the approximate point of her internment and puts a grave marker on the
Southern masterpiece "Confederacy of Dunces." I cannot imagine that this isn't Toni Morrison's true foundations of prose-the beauty of which borders on the sublime. The modernism of "Their Eyes" lies in the intermixing of 1930's black vernacular with poetic lines which themselves carry astute and precise craft-this is outstanding. Lightning in a
bottle--that's what this book reads like. I love to choose sides in literary battles--most of which are absurd but still funny to reminisce about (as if the reader himself was actually there). Richard Wright versus Zora Neale Hurston. A 500 page discourse on the unfairness of being black ("Native Son"), vs. this, a behemoth underdog, a "rediscovered" gem
of a novel which sings and never underwhelms. "Their Eyes" is better, Hurston a better writer, THE END. Janie the pre-feminist heroine is incredibly free--restraints are identified & gotten rid of properly--& this independence can be seen in the intrepid style with which high & low literature interplay. The prose is severely, sincerely alive. The sadness
comes when you realize that Hurston was outright forgotten--she had to be found, her grave properly marked, by none other than Alice Walker (the topic for a screenplay perhaps?). Even the man at the end of "Their Eyes" has a proper burial, while she, the progenitor of it all was utterly forgotten--but re-found by smart and freeminded readers. The
prophecy is chilling, but the body of work is its stark opposite--alive, beautiful, raw, human, poetic, godly. December 1, 2024Zora Neale Hurston was born to write. This 1930s deeply human story of one indefatigable black woman's life, loves and catastrophes dazzled and delighted me from start to finish. It was apparently written in a hurry and the
story does have a breakneck feel to it. Characterful expressions burst from its pages; the syncopated, lively dialogue of the day is lush and gorgeous to read. But please don't accept my effusive review as a recommendation. This book is not a generic crowd-pleaser and won't suit all tastes. It is dialogue heavy and at times I felt I was a recommendation. This book is not a generic crowd-pleaser and won't suit all tastes. It is dialogue heavy and at times I felt I was a recommendation.
reading a theatre script, rather than a novel. I've seen that some readers weren't able to get to grips with the spoken vernacular, which surprises me no end. This white English/Irish guy had no problem whatsoever, and the person whose review inspired me to read this (@Lisa) is Swedish and had no difficulty either!Lisa's reviewFor me, the writing
was irresistible. I do however think it wouldn't be for everyone as-per-lisas-intriguing-review black-american gentle-humour February 24, 2017I was prepared, based on the many five star reviews for this novel by many of my esteemed Goodreads friends, for a worthy book. I was prepared, based on its 1937 publishing date and its setting of Eatonville
Florida and then the Everglades, that important racial themes would be present. What I wasn't prepared for, however, was to be knocked over completely by the shimmering, feathery-fine, poetic prose. I wasn't prepared to be told a courageous, all-in, love story. Zora Neale Hurston's incredible book is the story of Janie Crawford, a middle aged black
woman who has had three marriages. Her grandmother (Nanny) was a slave who had been abused by her white master. Her mother (Leafy) was also a victim of rape. She started drinking and disappeared, leaving Nanny to raise Janie kiss a boy as a teenager, Nanny insists on Janie marrying a man she didn't know or love, thinking
that this was how she could be safe and happy. The familiar people and things had failed her so she hung over the gate and looked up the road towards way off. She knew now that marriage did not make love. Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman. She runs off and marries another man, Joe, who turns out to be a controlling misogynist
Despite providing materially for her, Janie is isolated and unhappy. So gradually, she pressed her teeth together and learned to hush. The spirit of the marriage left the bedroom again. And then, she meets Tea Cake
He's twelve years younger, but he is her match. And she lives with him, wholly and sensuously, the way she imagined the way it would be as a teenager, looking upon a pear tree: She saw a dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest
branch creaming in every blossom and frothing with delight. Oh MY. Are you dying yet? With this writing? No? Then, read on these few short samples: The stillness was the sleep of swords. No hour is ever eternity, but it has its right to weep. So while I
was dizzy with delight, swooning over this writing, I was alternately impressed with the dialogue, written in the dialogu
blacks and whites, she also shows the problems and hindrances caused within her own community, which in some ways are just as limiting. Within the black community there exists a class system, and people are expected to keep to their place. She zeroes in specifically on a woman's place within this culture, and then, in relation to her man. Through
all this, shines the love story of Janie and Tea Cake. It is a love that is unhesitating, accepting, passionate and pure. It pulses with adventure and life, and the beating of two devoted hearts. Love is lak the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating, accepting, passionate and pure. It pulses with adventure and life, and the beating of two devoted hearts. Love is lak the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating, accepting, passionate and pure. It pulses with adventure and life, and the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating, accepting, passionate and pure. It pulses with adventure and life, and the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating, accepting, passionate and pure. It pulses with adventure and life, and the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating, accepting, passionate and pure. It pulses with adventure and life, and the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unhesitating accepting the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is a love that is unheat the sea. It is unhea
Zora Neale Hurston, who is not only a truly dazzling writer, but an inspiring woman. I learned after reading this book that she was elected mayor. She was a graduate student at Columbia University. Though her life ended in poverty and in an
unmarked grave, she left behind a powerful and lasting legacy. 2017 american literary-fiction literary-ficti
Crawford, a child born out of a possible rape, a sure forerunner to Toni Morrison's Sethe, Denver and Beloved or Alice Walker's Celie and Nettie. A mulatto woman in a white man's world, who grew aware of an identity not shackled by notions of race, skin color, and even gender, who could look beyond the small horizon carelessly conferred on her by
an era which was bluntly apathetic to her kind, who could aspire to be free of a legacy of mere victimhood. And here I am, trying to make sure I do not fuse Zora and Janie together, unable to decide how to love, revere and pity them at the same time. I watched the young and carefree Janie, who bubbled over with an enthusiasm for life, eventually
morph into the Janie who embraced the bittersweet realization of having loved and lost. My eyes traced her unsure footsteps from financial servitude to financial stability, from the daily battle of ignoring the sting of self-denial to grasping at a life free of emotional subservience. I loved the hapless, innocent Janie who consented to being passed over
like property from her grandmother's ownership to her first husband's just as much I admired the Janie who found her salvation in Tea Cake's good-natured laughter after two marriages which had simultaneously stripped her of her last shred of self-esteem and caused her to listen to that stifled inner voice. And I felt a strange kind of happiness
building up inside for the Janie who would not succumb to the temptation of self-loathing like the misguided Mrs Turner, the Janie who found the firm ground of self-awareness to tread on while the world of conflicting ideas rotated on its axis like ever. Zora Neale Hurston had a rich dual voice - one of them fearlessly recounting the quirks
characterizing the Black American community in the deep south still clinging on to the outer fringes of a white-dominated society intertwined with the lyrical, oneiric voice of a philosopher and a feminist, possibly one of the first among her kind. And it is this wholly harmonious union of these two voices which transforms this bildungsroman into a
honeyed ballad of love and grief, of psychological bondage and emancipation. "He looked like the love thoughts of women. He could be a bee to a blossom-a pear tree blossom in the spring. He seemed to be crushing scent out of the world with his footsteps. Crushing aromatic herbs with every step he took. Spices hung about him. He was a glance
from God." Janie never bore a grudge against her 'God' for making her path to fulfillment so long and arduous. She merely watched Him with hopeful eyes, lovingly accepting all He bestowed on her. And I watched Janie with a tear-strained smile. 1001-and-more adoration by-women-who-matter April 3, 2023 "Women forget all those things they don't
want to remember, and remember everything they don't want to forget. The dream is the truth!". 'Their Eyes were watching God' is the touching and powerful story of Janie Crawford, a woman who lived in search of freedom not from slavery or restrictive cultures but the men she married in her life. Men who would seek to control her, often physically
abuse her and husbands who might have even loved her, in their selfish and condescending way, but all of them men who were to deny Janie the ability to live freely, express herself and exist as a 'thinking' woman. First and 'only', she was a wife, dominated by the husbands who devalued her, objectified her, silenced, and manipulated her to their
ends and for their domestic needs. Yet Janie was to find her voice and when it mattered make the decisions that would finally allow her to be what she craved the most.... to be a woman who could think, live and love freely without fear of abuse or ridicule. "She knew now that marriage did not make love. Janie's first dream
was dead, so she became a woman." A story about liberation and the struggle for identify in this black community where culture and tradition sometimes permitted and was even accepting of men who displayed such behaviours which women were expected to endure and not challenge. Yet many women aspired to have something else and could see
through this darkness and gloom...."It is so easy to be hopeful in the daytime when you can see the things you wish on. But it was night, it stayed night......They seemed to be staring at the dark, but their eyes were watching God."Review and CommentsA unique and powerful story about women, where the storytelling felt a means to an end and it was
the themes of freedom, abuse against women, inner strength, and passion that stood out for me. An interesting approach even though the subject matter made for difficult reading at times. Like domestic violence and abuse. As we alternated narrators, the writing also shifted from beautiful descriptive prose to a colloquial dialect that didn't easily roll
off the tongue. And while I managed to get into it quite quickly, it is true to say that I never made my peace with the constant shifts in the writing style, especially when I am such an advocate for descriptive prose. Yet the local dialect added such authenticity of the book. The characters so much substance. The themes incredibly evocative and the
ending oh so satisfying!!!The book is not a love story, nor is it a story about love in my opinion. Instead, it is a story about relationships, freedom, fulfilment, and identity and for that I give this a worthy 4 stars. And to finish with another wonderful and poignant quote about finding answers .... "Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board. For
Here's what I do recall:A) The main character was a woman, and she had something like 3 lovers throughout the book. Saucy.B) One of these dudes was named either Teabag, Cornbread, Teabread, or something like 3 lovers throughout the book. Saucy.B) One of these dudes was named either towards the end.D) Zora Neal Hurston got arrested for fucking a kid, or something.
character living in a real world--albeit, one that is touched by literary genius and reflective of literary 
Janie silences herself. But Janie grows. And, in my mind, a revolution begins. Hurston's character construction is superb. At once, her characters are strongly allegorical AND so real that they are breathing entities in the reader's mind (and disturbingly remind you of that uncle you don't really like). Janie is as real as they come. By the end of the story,
I, as a reader, am her best friend Pheoby, sitting on that porch with her and listening her to tale. I understand her insecurities, I feel her pain, I smile as she inexplicably giggles for two pages, and I am full of that emotion the conclusion of Hurston's epic tale creates. I love that Hurston gives her readers the tools to understanding Janie's motivation
and responses very early in the book in the form of her beautifully constructed pear tree and mule metaphors. It is a wonderful book to teach to those teenagers who still think literary analysis is a sham that teachers come up with to torture students, because Hurston stitches her novel together with meaningful patterns of metaphors and symbols that
deliberately guide readers through Janie's experience. Hurston's literary talent shines in her ability both to construct believable, life-like dialogue in strong southern dialect and to create poetic prose rich in metaphor and meaning, as well as in her ability both to spin a tale that leaves the reader in greedy suspense and to write a story that says so
much about the nature of love, power, language, race, gender, and identity. The more I read this book, the more I like it. On a side note: As the book is so strongly embedded in oral tradition, my classes listen to a few chapters of the audio book, which is read by Ruby Dee (who also played the role of Janie's grandmother in Oprah's movie). It is simply
fantastic, If you're a fan of the book, you should definitely listen to it. May 21, 2018"Love is like the sea, It's a moving thing, but still and all, it takes its shape from the book, you should definitely listen to it. May 21, 2018"Love is like the sea, It's a moving thing, but still and all, it takes its shape from the shore it meets, and it's different with every shore." In the beginning, there was Nanny, Nanny knew what it meant to be a slave to men. And Nanny had a daughter. She saw what
happened to her, how she chose to escape pain in oblivion. And Nanny was scared. She was so scared that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted to prevent the same thing from happening to her daughter, even if it meant that she wanted the same things from happening the same than the
side. That is the background of Janie Crawford's story. She is in her early forties, and starts telling a friend her life story in beautiful, colloquial language. And what a life it is! So common and typical, and yet individually painful and loving. Three men, three facets of female experience. Three ways to love and respect each other, and to abuse and kill
each other's spirit. Sometimes our family's fear of suffering makes us suffer more than anything we could possibly live through ourselves. And sometimes we find love where we least expect it. Janie sings the Ballad of the Gaol of Woman: "Some too long, Some sell, and others buy; Some do the deed with many tears, And some without
a sigh: For each (wo)man kills the thing (s)he loves, Yet each (wo)man does not die. "Recommended to humanity! 1001-books-to-read-before-you-die persuasive so-good-it-hurts September 25, 2017When I was in school we were given a choice to read Soul on Ice, Johnny got his gun or this book. I choose Johnny, a book that haunts me to this day.
Hurston's book always remained in the back of my mind, though I can't help but wonder if I would have appreciated it back then as much as I did now. I did find the dialect difficult at times, but I found if I read it out loud it made more sense. Of course my husband thought I was demented, but he often does. I cannot imagine being married as young as
Janie was made to marry vent though I understood her grandmothers reasoning. What a life she had. What a tragic ending. A very important symbol of place and time, was what this novel represents for me. Found it amazing that this novel was written in so short a time. Read the forward after I had finished and it was vey informative about the difficult
journey this book had and how it largely disappeared for a number of years. Glad I got the chance to read it now. September 24, 2018 Talking about what a revelation this book was to me with a girlfriend, I told her this is essentially a feminist novel that was published in 1937. Gone With the Wind was published in 1936, so this was what shook me to
my core. Here is Thurston with her main character, Janie, not content with what others have decided for her; she will live her life on her own terms and decide for herself. It is truly a modern idea. Unlike Gone With the Wind (which I hated), in which all the black people are depicted as stereotypes, either stupid or bestial or so dependent on their
white owners to tell them what to do and can't live without an overseer. Thurston writing in the 30s too, sees a black woman as a human being; she is not content to let her granny or her husband live her life, she "must" live it herself. I found the novel very refreshing, like taking a cool shower. There is one thing that Janie allows her lover to do that is
horrible, but it is her life and she makes bad decisions sometimes, as do we all. Her lover fully redeems himself by the end of the novel which is a sad ending and one I didnt see coming, even though the signs were there. It reminded me of The Color Purple, which I loved and was also astounded by. Here is a passage I loved, "When God had made The
Man, he made him out of stuff that sung all the time and glittered and hummed. So they beat him down to nothing but sparks but each little spark had a shine and a song. So they covered each one over with mud. And the lonesomeness in the
sparks made them hunt for one another, but the mud is deaf and dumb. Like all the other tumbling mud-balls, Janie had tried to show her shine. "February 13, 2018There are two ways to approach this book:1. Enjoy the writing! Take in the dialect and try to put yourself in the atmosphere that is created by Hurston's fantastic prose and poetry. (Side
note: The audio version narrated by Ruby Dee only makes this better)2. While reading, think about the South affect the progression of the story?
What are the attitudes within the black community? I was able to do a bit of both with this. I thought the writing was great. While there were times the dialect and the content caused me to get a little lost, in general I loved getting into
Sometimes when combining poetical writing into a story it feels forced - almost like the writer is trying to impress you with their ability to be flowery and fancy. That was not the case here. With this book, the Hurston couldn't help but combine poetry with her prose. As I was reading I could not help but think about the climate of the Southern United
States at the time of this story. I am reading Gone With The Wind at the same time as I am reading this and it really is a great companion story to give additional fuel to my thoughts on where black Americans in the south stood during the Civil War, how they came out of it, and where things were for them going into the 20th century. What is also
fascinating is to read about the attitudes within the black community; while we might think that everyone was united in the black community after the Civil War, that was not necessarily the case. If you like historical fiction, stories about American people during different eras, well-written prose combined with well-written poetry, you should check this
book out. It is great for either a getaway into great writing, or lots of fuel for a discussion about a volatile era in American author, anthropologist, and filmmaker. She portrayed racial struggles in the early-1900's
American South and published research on hoodoo. The most popular of her four novels is Their Eyes Were Watching God, published in 1937. Their Eyes Were Watching God is a 1937 novel by American writer Zora Neale Hurston. It is considered a classic of the Harlem Renaissance, and Hurston's best known work. The novel explores main character
Janie Crawford's "ripening from a vibrant, but voiceless, teenage girl into a woman with her finger on the trigger of her own destiny". Janie Crawford, an African-American woman quest for identity takes her through three marriages and into a journey back to her roots. Janie, in her forties, recounts her life starting with her sexual awakening, which she
compares to a blossoming pear tree kissed by bees in spring. Around this time, Janie allows a local boy, Johnny Taylor, to kiss her, which Janie's grandmother, Nanny, witnesses. As a young enslaved woman, Nanny was raped by her white enslaver, then gave birth to a mixed-race daughter she named Leafy. Though Nanny wanted a better life for her
daughter and even escaped her jealous mistress after the American Civil War, Leafy was later raped by her school teacher and became pregnant with Janie. Shortly after Janie's birth, Leafy began to drink and stay out at night, eventually running away and leaving Janie with Nanny. Nanny, having transferred her hopes for stability and opportunity from
Leafy to Janie, arranges for Janie to marry Logan Killicks, an older farmer looking for a wife. However, Killicks doesn't do enough around the farm and considers her ungrateful. When Janie speaks to Nanny about her desire for love, Nanny, too, accuses
Janie of being spoiled and, soon afterwards, dies. Unhappy, disillusioned, and lonely, Janie leaves Killicks and runs off with Jody (Joe) Starks, a glib man who takes her to the all-black community of Eatonville, Florida. Starks arranges to buy more land, establishes a general store, and is soon elected mayor of the town. However, Janie soon realizes that
Starks wants her as a trophy wife to reinforce his powerful position in town and to run the store, even forbidding her, controlling her, and physically abusing her. Finally, when Starks's kidney begins to fail, Janie says that he never
knew her because he would not let her be free. در پیش می گیرد؛ چگونگتاردین گیزی میلون ایزین کینوسلون افوان این کینوسلون افوان این کینوسلون انوان این کینوسلون انون این کینوسلون انون کینوسلون انون کینوسلون کرده کینوسلون کورسلون کینوسلون کینوسلون کینوسلون کینوسلون کینوسلون ک
2022Sorry, but the dialect is hard to concentrate on for me and I am 1/3 of the way through without caring a whit for any of the characters, including Janie. This might be one of those rare books that would work better as an audio book. My life is too short and my reading time too limited to continue to read on this one...so, I am DNFing. I seldom DNF
and this is the second one in a week that I have given up on. I do hope I make a better choice in my next read.borrowed-from-library try-againOctober 15, 2012Another book that I recently re-read that stands up well to a second reading. Hurston's novel, unlike many classics, is as impressive and as relevant today as it was when written. Hurston's story
of Janie, a fair-skinned black woman caught in the time period between the end of slavery and the civil rights movement, is the first woman in her family who has the opportunity to be defined as something other than property. Despite this, Janie is unable achieve self-actualization or seek out the independence for which she longs; however, this is not
due to the racism or prejudices of white society (in fact, there isn't a prominent white character in the book). Instead, Hurston takes a fascinating look at intraracial racism. Janie's obvious "whiteness" sets her apart from the black community. At first, she's envied for her pretty hand-me-down dresses and hair ribbons that she obtains from the kind
white family for which her grandmother works. Coupled with her straight hair (which hangs down to her waist), her exquisite beauty, and her light skin, she defies color categorization and leaves the question of "What is black?" lacking a definite answer. Later, she's an outcast because her second husband's "big voice" and quest for power in the all
black community of Eatonville comes to be identified with the white masters of days gone by, and Janie comes to be seen in the role of the Southern plantation "mistress." In addition, Hurston explores the repression of women in a patriarchal society. Janie's grandmother tells her that the black woman is the "mule of the world," the lowest of the low.
Janie finds this to be true in her first two marriages, as she is treated like property by Logan Killicks and is later objectified by Jody Starks. It isn't until she meets Tea Cake, a man half her age, that Janie begins to live life on her own terms and not by the definition her man has set forth for her. Whether you like the novel or not, it's importance to
African-American and feminist literature is undeniable. Cross posted at This Insignificant Cinder December 23, 2014 I recently reread this book, in February 2011 and wrote a new review, but I learned a lot on the second reading, hence the length. I posted that review on my blog, so here's the link: .... ***I decided to remove the
original review I posted for this book due to the new review, thank you for reading it, I know it's long. I appreciate the time you've given
to read my review. Thank you, Tara Nelson(December 2014) collegereading list 1994-1998 October 22, 2017 "To meet as far this morning From the world as agreeing With it, you and I Are suddenly what the trees tryTo tell us we are: That their merely being there Means something; that soon We may touch, love, explain." Some Trees by John
Ashberry, Janie returns to Eatonville with the sunbeams glowing on her shoulders giving her the appearance of a luminescent and almost unearthly goddess whose bare feet voluptuously caress the dusty road. Women on porches sing a harmonious chorus of gossip and covetousness while men stare greedily at Janie's lustrous and long hair and
sweeping hips moving to the rhythm of a life washed by the sea tides of love and scented by the pear blossoms of desire. Pheoby, Janie's best friend and confidante, loses no time to meet the newcomer and inquires after the reasons of her unexpected homecoming. It's under the shadows of dusk, when languid leaves and elongated branches dance at
the tune of ephemeral loves and perennial memories, that Janie discloses her journey in flashbacks and unconsciously intertwines her ultimate search for fulfillment as a woman with the sustained abuse in the hands of the white master, the debasement inflicted by
the mistress and the burden of attaining freedom and not knowing what to do with it, to the subtle division between those with fairer skins and those with fairer skins an
decades of merciless oppression and gratuitous atrocity. "You know, honey, us colored folks is branches without roots and that makes things come round in queer ways. You in particular. Ah was born back due in slavery so it wasn't for me to fulfill my dreams of whut a woman oughta be and to do." (p. 31) The magic of Hurston's writing style relays
not only in the use of the Afro-American dialect but also in the contrasting classical lyricism of some passages that bond life, love and sensuality together with natural imagery like trees, celestial bodies, seas and shores, which brings enchanting reminiscences of the melodic British Romantic Poets, creating a counter effect for the drumming rawness
of the allegorical vernacular. "Janie saw her life like a great tree in leaf with the things suffered, things done and undone. Dawn and doom was in the branches of the pear tree, where the bees
hum and disappear in the hidden crevices of its blossoms, she understands the mystery of sexuality. "She was stretched on her back beneath the pear tree soaking in the alto chant of the visiting bees, the gold of the sun and the painting breath of the breeze when the inaudible voice of it all came to her. She saw a dust-bearing bee sink into the
sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in every blossom and frothing with delight. So this was marriage!" (p. 24) But the trodden path of life will show Janie that marriage doesn't compel love like the sun the day. Forced to marry Mr.
Killicks, an older farmer who is supposed to offer her the security Nanny so much covets for, passionate Janie discovers that some bees stifle the female spirit, which is screaming out loud to be acknowledged to apparently deaf ears. Defying convention and showing uncommon valor, Janie rebels against stupor and elopes with Joe Starks, an ambitious
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man who has plans to become a "big voice" in Eatonville. Unaware at first of Joe's chauvinism, Janie believes to have found a worthy companion and marries him only to discover throughout the years that her second husband has tyrannical opinions about the role of women in society. Relegated to a mere personal possession, Janie witnesses her own voice drown into the vast ocean of isolation and degradation. Both Killicks and Starks profane that pear tree ignoring the over-ripe fruit that has been waiting to be cherished as it deserved and it is not until many years later, when Janie becomes a forty years old and attractive widow, that Tea Cake appears disguised as the bee that blossoming Janie has been waiting for during all her life, making her soul crawl out from its hiding place. "He could be a bee to a blossom - a pear tree blossom in the spring. He seemed to be crushing around him. He was a glance from God." (p.161) And so Janie's

melody is finally listened to and her soul sings cloud-high along Tea Cake's sweet-scented one while they both stare at the dark waters, while their eyes are watching God. But nature, as life, can be miraculous one minute and treacherous the next, and Janie will have to face the tide of misfortune and swim with courage in order not to be dragged by the relentless currents of injustice and despair. Zora Neale Hurston writes with the vivid force of the unheard and the defeated, revealing uncomfortable truths about race and gender while kissing each one of her words with uncanny lyricism and giving voice to the silenced by the weight of history. The shores are waiting to be shaped by the sea of love and waves of memories will sweep the tragedy of mortality imprinting a permanent image on a never-ending horizon. It's only a matter of keeping the watch in the darkness, trusting that God is looking back. "Love is lak de sea. It's uh movin' thing, but still and all, it takes its shape from de shore it meets, and it's different with every shore." (p. 284) February 23, 2021A re-read. Of everything I've ever read, I may love its ending more than the ending of any other novel: "Here was peace. She pulled in her horizon like a great fish-net. Pulled it from around the waist of the world and draped it over her shoulder. So much of life in its meshes! She called in her soul to come and see." October 3, 2022As Darla Dykstra stated in her review, in audio form this book is transformed into a "superstar". Ruby Dee put out a magical performance when she narrated this book. It added so very much to hear all the dialects pronounced correctly. (I wonder if there's an audio version of Huckleberry Finn narrated by Ossie Davis.) I miss Ruby Dee and her husband Ossie Davis, but with performances like this their contribution to our culture can continue on. November 20, 2016I am not African American, and no matter what genuine empathy is in my heart, there is no way a white woman can truly understand the life experiences and the collective family experiences of my girlfriends and guy friends who are in fact black. But reading this classic by Zora Hurston let me pretend to do so for a while. Wow, what a book! When Ms. Hurston, born in 1891, wrote this, she had already attended Howard University and Barnard College studying anthropology and attended Columbia for graduate studies in the field. She also taught for some years at North Carolina College for Negroes. She was on the staff of a little place called THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS too. Long story short, for a woman of color to break through these sorts of barriers during this time in American history? Incredible. Ms Hurston's mom and dad, both former slaves, had to be the proudest parents ever. So when she wrote this story about Janie, granddaughter of a former slave, we might expect some huge accomplishments written about this main character. But Ms. Hurston - always the anthropologist - wrote Janie's story in rural Florida. Although the novel takes place nearly 100 years ago, I can see her description of certain people fitting those living around us today: "People ugly from ignorance and broken from being poor...Much of Janie's tale is set in a little town that was founded by, organized by, and lived in by people of color. The town is real, and it is where the author grew up in South Florida myself and had no idea! My ignorance of history is shameful. As to the story, we see Janie's life plotted out for her by the grandmother who loves her and wants her protected. But when that protection means being married off to an older man, one Janie does not love but who owns plenty of property, she initially acquiesces but still pines for the feeling of deep love. As a young girl, she lies under a pear tree one spring day smelling the sweet, heady perfume of its blossoms and sees drowsy bees, laden with pollen, as they lumber between the pistols and stamens, nuzzling into the petals. For the rest of her days, this image will define love for Janie. When opportunity arrives by chance to offer her a shot at deep love, Janie does not hesitate, and she goes. Leaves. Sets out for parts unknown, only with those blossoms and nectar to sustain her. I'll skip the plot elements and forego a book report for you, but will comment that one thing that really surprised me was the introduction of a character called Mrs. Turner. She is the voice for, I suppose, a certain section of the black population who prided themselves in those days on their physically Caucasian-looking characteristics. Lighter skin, more aquiline profiles, smoother hair. Although at this section of the book, Janie is a very happily married woman, Mrs. Turner wants to introduce her brother to Janie, as he is as light skinned as she is, and she disregards Janie's husband Tea Cake because of his dark complexion. In real life, I've had conversations touching on this subject with friends who are African American, but it has made me squirm. But reading this book, by myself, allowed me to gawk openly and to wince. No matter how many personal stories my black friends have told me over the years- being shadowed by salespeople at the department store, getting shoddy service from waiters who were overly obsequious to white diners all around, being asked about inner city successes (this was directed to a co-worker friend who had grown up with more money than God - truly affluent - but because she was black, the men in the car with us assumed she had overcome some sort of ghetto nightmare), etc - there is no way for me to walk in their shoes. Thank you, Zora Hurston, for letting me pretend to do so for awhile this week. NOTE: unless you are a native Southerner, reading the text of this book might be a challenge. The author wrote dialogue colloquially and somewhat phonetically, just as was done in Wuthering Heights. I'm not just a Southerner but live in south Louisiana where the "vat" accent is commonplace, so after about five pages, it was pretty easy for me to follow. It was the same with me for Wuthering Heights (Irish grandparents and a Scottish step-dad). That said, if reading vernacular that is unfamiliar can cause you to toss the book aside, please check out the FREE AUDIO of this book from Hoopla (you need a library card). Ruby Dee is the narrator, and oh-my-gawd is the audio amazing. If you want to read a classic but are as lazy as I can sometimes be, let Ruby Dee is the narrator, and oh-my-gawd is the audio amazing. If you want to read a classic but are as lazy as I can sometimes be, let Ruby Dee is the narrator, and oh-my-gawd is the audio amazing. If you want to read a classic but are as lazy as I can sometimes be, let Ruby Dee is the narrator, and oh-my-gawd is the audio amazing. of 22,981 reviewsGet help and learn more about the design. Zora Neale Hurston was born on Jan. 7, 1891, in Notasulga, Alabama. Hurston moved with her family to Eatonville, Florida, when she was still a toddler. Her writings reveal no recollection of her Alabama beginnings. For Hurston, Eatonville was always home. Growing up in Eatonville, in an eight-room house on five acres of land, Zora had a relatively happy childhood, despite frequent clashes with her preacher-father. Her mother died in 1904. Zora was only 13 years old. After Lucy Hurston's death, Zora's father remarried quickly and seemed to have little time or money for his children. Zora worked a series of menial jobs over the ensuing years, struggled to finish her schooling, and eventually joined a Gilbert & Sullivan traveling troupe as a maid to the lead singer. In 1917, she turned up in Baltimore; by then, she was 26 years old and still hadn't finished high school. Needing to present herself as a teenager to qualify for free public schooling, she lopped 10 years off her life--giving her age as 16 and the year of her birth as 1901. Once gone, those years were never restored: From that moment forward, Hurston would always present herself as at least 10 years younger than she actually was. Zora also had a fiery intellect, and an infectious sense of humor. Zora used these talents--and dozens more--to elbow her way into the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, befriending such luminaries as poet Langston Hughes and popular singer/actress Ethel Waters. By 1935, Hurston--who'd graduated from Barnard College in 1928-had published several short stories and articles, as well as a novel (Jonah's Gourd Vine) and a well-received collection of black Southern folklore (Mules and Men). But the late 1930s and early '40s marked the real zenith of her career. She published her masterwork, Their Eyes Were Watching God, in 1937; Tell My Horse, her study of Caribbean Voodoo practices, in 1938; and another masterful novel, Moses, Man of the Mountain, in 1939. When her autobiography, Dust Tracks on a Road, was published in 1942, Hurston finally received the well-earned acclaim that had long eluded her. That year, she was profiled in Who's Who in America, Current Biography and Twentieth Century Authors. She went on to publish another novel, Seraph on the Suwanee, in 1948. Still, Hurston never received the financial rewards she deserved. So when she died on Jan. 28, 1960--at age 69, after suffering a stroke--her neighbors in Fort Pierce, Florida, had to take up a collection for her funeral. The collection didn't yield enough to pay for a headstone, however, so Hurston was buried in a grave that remained unmarked until 1973. That summer, a young writer named Alice Walker traveled to Fort Pierce to place a marker on the grave of the author who had so inspired her own work. Walker entered the snake-infested cemetery where Hurston's remains had been laid to rest. Wading through waisthigh weeds, she soon stumbled upon a sunken rectangular patch of ground that she determined to be Hurston's grave. Walker chose a plain gray headstone. Borrowing from a Jean Toomer poem, she dressed the marker up with a fitting epitaph: "Zora Neale Hurston: A Genius of the South."