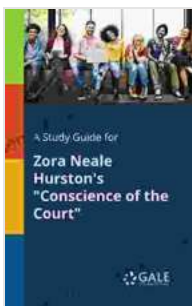


The Ultimate Study Guide for Zora Neale Hurston's "Conscience of the Court" Short Stories

Zora Neale Hurston's "Conscience of the Court" is a collection of eight captivating short stories that delve into the complexities of race, gender, and social justice in the American South. Published in 1942, these stories showcase Hurston's unique voice and masterful storytelling abilities. This comprehensive study guide will provide an in-depth analysis of each story, exploring the themes, characters, literary devices, and critical interpretations that have shaped our understanding of Hurston's literary legacy.



A Study Guide for Zora Neale Hurston's "Conscience of the Court" (Short Stories for Students) by ShiFio's Patterns

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 641 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 19 pages



Chapter 1: "Conscience of the Court"



Theme: The Hypocrisy of Southern Justice

The title story, "Conscience of the Court," exposes the inherent hypocrisy of the Southern justice system, which claims to uphold fairness and equality but in reality perpetuates racial prejudice and discrimination. Hurston cleverly uses the setting of a courtroom to highlight the biased treatment of African Americans, who are often denied their rights and denied the opportunity to seek justice.

Characters: Matt Addie, Lena, Mr. Norris

- **Matt Addie:** A young African American man who is unjustly accused of murder and sentenced to death.

- **Lena:** Matt Addie's wife, who desperately tries to prove his innocence.
- **Mr. Norris:** The white lawyer who reluctantly defends Matt Addie but ultimately fails to save him from the biased jury.

Literary Devices: Irony and Symbolism

- **Irony:** The story uses irony to expose the absurdity of the justice system, where the jurors who are supposed to represent conscience and fairness are actually the ones who perpetuate injustice.
- **Symbolism:** The courtroom itself becomes a symbol of the flawed nature of Southern justice, a place where justice is not always served.

Chapter 2: "Spunk"

Theme: The Power of Love and Self-Respect

"Spunk" is a poignant story of love, courage, and the indomitable spirit of a young woman named Spunk Banks. Despite facing poverty, discrimination, and violence, Spunk refuses to be defined by her circumstances. She embodies the power of love and self-respect, inspiring others to stand up for their rights.

Characters: Spunk Banks, Joe Bailey, Old Man Hoodoo

- **Spunk Banks:** A strong-willed and independent young woman who refuses to be bullied or controlled by anyone.
- **Joe Bailey:** Spunk's abusive husband, who tries to control and dominate her.
- **Old Man Hoodoo:** A wise and mysterious figure who helps Spunk find the strength to stand up for herself.

Literary Devices: Foreshadowing and Epiphany

- **Foreshadowing:** The story uses foreshadowing to hint at the tragic events that will unfold, building suspense and creating a sense of dread.
- **Epiphany:** Spunk experiences an epiphany when she realizes that she deserves to be treated with respect and that she has the power to change her life.

Chapter 3: "Sweat"

Theme: The Destructive Nature of Jealousy and Greed

"Sweat" is a chilling tale of jealousy, greed, and the destructive consequences of letting negative emotions consume one's life. Hurston masterfully depicts the slow and insidious way in which jealousy can poison a person's mind, leading to violence and tragedy.

Characters: Delia Jones, Sykes Jones, Bertha

- **Delia Jones:** A hardworking and devoted wife who tries to maintain her dignity and independence despite her husband's abusive behavior.
- **Sykes Jones:** Delia's jealous and possessive husband, who is consumed by greed and a desire for control.
- **Bertha:** A young woman who becomes the object of Sykes's affection, further fueling his jealousy and leading to a tragic end.

Literary Devices: Symbolism and Irony

- **Symbolism:** The washerwoman's sweat symbolizes the hard work and 苦劳 that Delia endures to support herself and her family.

- **Irony:** The story ends with a tragic irony, as Sykes's jealousy and greed ultimately lead to his own downfall.

Chapter 4: "The Gilded Six-Bits"

Theme: The Importance of Truth and Honesty

"The Gilded Six-Bits" is a heartwarming story about the importance of truth and honesty, even in the face of temptation. Hurston explores the moral dilemmas and consequences that arise when characters are faced with the choice between right and wrong.

Characters: Joe Banks, Missie May, Old Woman

- **Joe Banks:** A kind and honest young man who finds a lost coin and must decide whether to keep it or return it.
- **Missie May:** Joe's girlfriend, who urges him to keep the coin.
- **Old Woman:** The owner of the lost coin, who represents the importance of honesty and integrity.

Literary Devices: Foreshadowing and Moral Dilemma

- **Foreshadowing:** The story foreshadows the consequences that Joe will face if he chooses to keep the coin, building suspense and creating a sense of uncertainty.
- **Moral Dilemma:** Joe is faced with a difficult moral dilemma, as he must choose between his desire for money and his conscience.

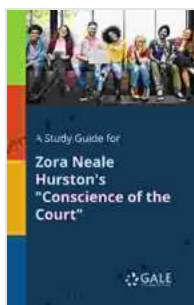
Chapter 5: "The Bone of Contention"

Theme: The Dangers of Prejudice and Conformity

"The Bone of Contention" is a thought-provoking story that explores the dangers of prejudice and conformity. Hurston shows how prejudice can lead to violence and how conformity can stifle individuality and creativity.

Characters: Mandy, Otis, John Pearson

- **Mandy:** A young woman who is ostracized by her community because she is seen as different.
- **Otis:** Mandy's husband, who tries to



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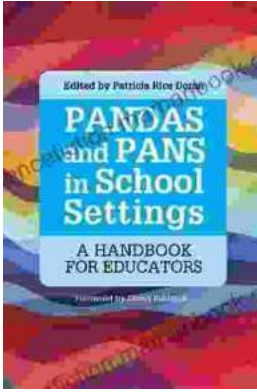
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