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Rebecca Siegert, AP English 12

Dear Senior,

Congratulations on reaching your Senior year! You have chosen to take AP English Literature and Composition as your twelfth grade English course, and I look forward to sharing the year with you. We need to be ready to jump right into the content of the course when you return in August; therefore, you have summer assignments that you need to complete, which are due on the second day of school (Friday, August 30th). **This assignment will not be accepted late, so if you do not have them printed and ready to turn in at the beginning of class on the second day of school, you are starting off the year with a zero.** It is not my responsibility to print your assignments for you, nor will I accept them via email.


There are two books you need to read this summer; both of these books are available for you to check out with your school ID from Rosemont's library beginning Tuesday, June 11th and continuing through Thursday, June 13th from 12:30-2:00. If you do not check them out by then, you are responsible for finding them yourself.

The first book, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines* by Thomas Foster, is non-fiction. Once you read this book, you need to write a response in MLA format. Your response is informal in the sense that I'm not giving you a prompt to guide you through, and that it can be written in a casual style; I just want you to tell me what you learned from the book, what you found interesting, what connections you made with it, etc. Your response should be **500-750 words** (please put a word count at the bottom of the page).

The second book you need to read is *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, which is fiction. I highly recommend that you read this novel after you read Foster's book because the ideas in his book will help you. **There will be a timed, in-class essay and quiz within the first few days of school based on the novel.** Lastly, I've attached study questions to guide you through the chapters. You don't need to turn these in, but they will be the basis of our discussion for the first few weeks. You need to try to answer all of the questions, but if there are ones that you are uncertain about, we will discuss them as we progress through the novel in September.

If you have questions about the summer assignments, please come and see me in E206, or email me over the summer (Rebecca-Siegert@scusd.edu). Also, if you have a friend who should have received the summer assignments but did not, please tell them to email me or check the school website. I'm looking forward to next year with you ☺

Sincerely,


Ms. Siegert

Their Eyes Were Watching God
Study Questions

Chapters 1-4

1. How are the dreams of men and women compared in the first paragraph of the novel?
2. What point-of-view is utilized at the beginning of the story?
3. How is the novel told “backwards” in a sense?
4. How long has Janie been gone?
5. Three motifs are introduced in the first chapter: the horizon, the porch, and Janie’s hair. Discuss each one.
6. Why does Hurston use phonetically spelled Southern dialect for dialogue?
7. Chapter two introduces one of the most important symbols of the novel, the pear tree. How is it a metaphor for Janie?
8. Why does Nanny force Janie to marry Logan Killicks?
9. Another important symbol, the gate, is introduced in chapter two. What is it symbolic of?
10. Nanny seems puzzled that Janie is unhappy in her marriage to Logan. How does Janie’s unhappiness show that she’s different from other black women?
11. Throughout the novel, Janie’s is often associated with nature. How is that evident in chapter three?
12. How is the reappearance of the gate at the end of chapter three an instance of foreshadowing?
13. There are two details that Janie associates with the demise of her marriage to Logan; what are they?
14. What does Joe Starks represent for Janie?
15. What do Joe and Janie appear to have in common?

Their Eyes Were Watching God
Study Questions

Chapters 5-8

1. Why is it important that chapter five begins with the narrator saying that Joe didn't use "speeches with rhymes"?
2. How does the relationship between Joe and Janie quickly change? How does the fact that he doesn't allow her to speak when he's elected affect their relationship?
3. How does Janie's position as mayor's wife distance her from the other women in the town?
4. How does chapter five make comments on white society through criticisms of Joe?
5. What happens with Henry Pitts?
6. What happens with Matt Bonner's mule? Does Joe really care about the mule?
7. How is the mule symbolic of Janie?
8. How is the porch personified?
9. After Joe hits her for a bad meal, Janie expresses no anger or hatred. What does she realize about their marriage? How is there still optimism in the passage where he hits her?
10. How much time passes between chapters six and seven? What is their marriage like?
11. Why does Joe begin to criticize Janie's age and looks so much?
12. What comment does Janie make that shows a turning point in her character? What gave her the strength?
13. How is Joe's refusal of Janie's food not only literal but also figurative?
14. In order to further herself in her journey towards self-discovery, why is it important that Janie tells Joe everything she does on his deathbed?
15. Why does Janie starch and iron her face?

Their Eyes Were Watching God
Study Questions

Chapters 9-12

1. How is Janie at the third denouement of her life?
2. Hurston uses ambiguity to describe Janie at the funeral. Is she literally behind a black veil? What else could it be?
3. How is the burning of the headrags symbolic?
4. Up to this point, there have been overlaps in the men in Janie's life. Why is important that Tea Cake doesn't enter until chapter ten?
5. Hurston carefully draws contrasts between Tea Cake and Joe; what are they?
6. How is Janie's character different from any other time in the novel up to this chapter?
7. When he walks her home, Janie momentarily worries for her safety, but the feeling passes; why?
8. How is a future relationship alluded to throughout the chapter?
9. Critics say that chapter eleven is truly about the real issues surrounding love: fear, doubt, sincerity, and sacrifice. How are those issues explored? Have these been experienced by Janie in her other marriages?
10. How does Tea Cake feel about Janie's hair? Why is that so important?
11. How does the symbol of the gate return? How is it different this time?
12. Tea Cake relies on nature to woo Janie; how does this show his compatibility with Janie?
13. Just as she personified Death in chapter nine, Hurston personifies Doubt in chapter eleven; how?
14. Logan and Joe never "courted" Janie; how does Tea Cake?
15. How do the townspeople feel about Janie's relationship with Tea Cake?

Their Eyes Were Watching God
Study Questions

Chapters 13-16

1. The love between Janie and Tea Cake is tested for the first time in chapter thirteen; additionally, they reveal more of their true selves to each other. How?
2. Summarize the story of Annie Tyler and Who Flung. Why does Janie think about it?
3. Janie obviously loved Tea Cake prior to this; what makes her love him even more?
4. Why does Tea Cake want to go to the Muck in the Everglades?
5. How does Janie come to fully appreciate the black culture of the Muck?
6. How is the flood foreshadowed in the descriptions of the Muck and Lake Okechobee?
7. Compare how Tea Cake is the leader of his community vs. how Joe was the leader of Eatonville.
8. Why does Tea Cake want Janie to work in the fields?
9. Jealousy is a universal emotion; how does it rear its head in chapter fifteen?
10. How does the issue with Nunkie reinforce the love between Tea Cake and Janie?
11. Why does Mrs. Turner seek out Janie's friendship? What does it say about her?
12. How does Janie have to defend black culture to Mrs. Turner?
13. Why would Hurston introduce a character like Mrs. Turner?
14. How is the contrast between a "white" God and a "black" God explored?
15. Why doesn't Tea Cake tell off Mr. Turner?

Their Eyes Were Watching God
Study Questions

Chapters 17-20

1. The previous chapter celebrated black culture. How does Hurston explore some of the questionable actions of black culture in chapter seventeen?
2. Although she has been liberated by Tea Cake, how is Janie still oppressed?
3. After Tea Cake hits Janie, the men are jealous and the women are envious; why?
4. How do Tea Cake and Sop-de-Bottom attempt to run Mrs. Turner out of town? What comment is Hurston making about the types of people the Turners are by her choice of last name for them?
5. Why do the people believe a hurricane won't occur?
6. Why does Tea Cake decide to stay? How is his death foreshadowed?
7. What message does Hurston send about being in touch with God's signals and messages, as the Indians and the Bahamans are?
8. Tea Cake has forgotten to listen to God; why? What overtook his roots and connection to religion? When does he finally watch God? What about Janie?
9. Describe what happens in the hurricane and subsequent flood (I know this is a lot for a single question).
10. How does Hurston comment on society through Tea Cake's comment about Jim Crow laws when he's helping to bury the bodies?
11. Why is it ironic that Tea Cake taught Janie how to shoot?
12. How have Janie's overalls become a new symbol?
13. How is the court scene ironic, in terms of the jury?
14. Why does Janie leave the Muck?
15. What does Janie ultimately realize that everyone must do in order to find themselves?