

# Good spunk by zora neale hurston essay example

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Spunk is a short story written by Zora Neale Hurston. It tells of a supernatural story of African-American folk life. It is a story about a difference between two men over a woman. The woman in question was married to Joe Kanty but was committing adultery with the town bully known as Spunk Banks. Spunk was feared by the people including Joe Kanty a man he was adulterating with his wife but he got the courage of confronting him despite his bully character. Spunk killed him in the confrontation but later on in the story, Joe comes back to haunt Spunk which resulted to his death. The story is about a conflict between Joe Kanty and Spunk Banks over Lena who was Joe's wife. The story progresses into a revenge whereby Spunk is killed by an evil spirit which he believes to be Joe. However, superstition plays a very important role in Hurston's tale as Spunk claim that he is haunted by Joe Kanty's ghost.

Just like Hurston's other stories, Spunk deals with the nature of marriage and the struggle between a strong man and a weak man. The setting of the story is in a rural all-black southern town whereby the people of the town speak in Southern African American dialect. Hurston wanted the reader to understand the kind of marriages blacks have and how adultery is apparent in the marriages. The themes in Spunk reflect the lives of the people in the South at the time the short story was written. Events in the story are happenings that happen in a normal society. Masculinity and power are common in the short story as Zora Hurston uses different literary devices for the reader to be able to analyze these themes in the story. Spunk and Lena are having an affair and they are not afraid to parade it for the town people to see them. In addition, Lena is ready to Marry Spunk even after he kills her husband Joe.

Hurston in her short story Spunk, combines elements of the supernatural and acts of revenge. Joe Kanty is murdered by Spunk and he comes back to hunt him in revenge for taking his wife and for killing him. Spunk commits adultery with another mans wife and makes their adulterous affair known to the entire pole in their town. Joe decides to go fight him but he eventually kills him. Joe was tormented by his love for his wife who was cheating on him with another man and this betrayal led him into fighting the man and he ended up dead. He tried revenging while still alive and even after his death. Spunk believes in the supernatural. He can be seen confessing that it was Joe who killed him he says "'It was Joe, 'Lige-the dirty sneak shoved me . . . he didn't dare come to mah face . . . but Ah'll git the son-of-a-wood louse soon's Ah get there an' make hell too hot for him. . . . Ah felt him shove me' "(Hurston 31). Spunk was pushed by a black bob-cat and he died. He believed that Joe lived in the body of the black bob cat. The aspect that Spunk's believes in the supernatural whereby he believes that Joe lived in The body of the black bob-cat depicts voodoo in the deep mythical cultural roots of the people of the town. The people of the town believed in the supernatural and Spunk was not an exception even after being a bully and being feared by everyone. Spunk believes in people coming back like evil spirits just like the people in town. He claimed that an evil spirit killed him and that evil spirit was Joe. This gives the story a supernatural twist.

The conflict in Spunk is very realistic and well represented in the story. It is a man versus man conflict that is always very prevalent in the society. It s a major conflict in the story and has also been a major conflict in the society whereby men fight to see who is the greatest among them. Spunk and Joe

fought over a woman and all of them ended up dead. According to Bily (134), Hurston offers a unique style of writing whereby he explores deep Southern tradition adultery and beliefs in the supernatural. She presents animosity between two characters fighting for one woman and later on one kills the other and the remaining one believes that he was being killed by the other one's ghost. Hurston explores the pain and suffering a man can go through after losing his wife to another man. He says " He stood there silent for a long moment staring blankly, with his Adam's apple twitching nervously up and down his throat. One could actually see the pain he was suffering, his eyes, his face, his hands, and even the dejected slump of his shoulders" (Hurston 98). This description of Joe Kanty while Spunk took away his wife tells the reader how painful it is for one to lose a wife. These things happen in the society and are unknown and Hurston used her writing skills to make them known to his readers.

Spunk is a short story that depicts what happens in our tradition society. Men fighting over women in order to prove to each other who is great. Joe Kanty fought for his wife but unfortunately, he was killed by Spunk Banks. It did not end there as he came back in the body of a black cat as Spunk alleges and kills him. Hurston was trying to show to the reader what social life is like in the Southern region and how they believe in superstition.

## **Works Cited**

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