

Nella larsen "passing"



Nella Larsen "Passing" Passing - Characters Irene - Brian

Clare - John (Jack) Passing - Plot Overview Irene gets mail from Clare - flashback to last time:

Irene was visiting Chicago and saw Clare on top of fancy hotel (Irene is passing)

Clare calls Irene to hang w/her and Gertrude

Clare's husband John is very racist

Back to present:

Clare comes to Irene's house

Clare wants to join Irene at negro dance

Clare realizes colored people are great

Irene worries about John finding out Clare's passing

Irene tempted to tell John

Irene worried Clare & Brian having affair

Irene & Felise go DT, run into John

Claire, Irene, Brian go to Felise's party

-John storms in, calls Clare out

-Clare falls out window & dies
What is passing? someone with AA ancestry that appears white and pretends to be so
Eugenicsthe belief and practice of improving the genetic quality of the human population
One Drop Ruleif you have one drop of black blood, you are black.
Nella Larsen - aboutwhite mother, danish west-indian father

could have passed herself, but didn't

pioneered " psychological fiction"

-heightened interest in all things psychological

-modernist moment

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- "third person focalized" narration
Clare vs. Irene grew up together, took very different paths

Irene wants us to believe Clare is selfish, cold, hard, catlike, manipulative, superior... but really Clare = Irene

Clare = race betrayer = Irene

Clare = selfish, manipulative = Irene

Clare = superior = Irene

Irene = "defender of race" NOT

Clare, Brian, Irene
Evidence of an affair? Not really...

A theory of suppressed desire:

Irene wants Clare. Irene is passing in a different dimension. This repression animates her in the text - she kills Clare (probably)

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