

# Their eyes were watching god research paper examples

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Their eyes were watching God is a novel written by Zora Neale Hurston. It tells of a story of Janie Crawford's search for self fulfillment and love. The protagonist Janie Crawford tells her story to her friend Pheoby so that she can later tell it to the rest of the community on her behalf. Janie was born as a result of rape whereby her mother was raped by her school teacher. After giving birth to Janie, she ran away and left Janie under her grandmother's care who later forced Janie to marry an old man Logan Killicks. Janie got married to three different men, Logan Killicks, Jody Starks (Joe) and Vergible Woods (Tea Cake). Janie got involved with three different men who at one point her husbands.

Janie's journey begins with her marriage to Logan Killicks through a forced marriage. This marriage was arranged by her grandmother and even though she resisted, she ended up marrying him. Janie's first husband mistreated her with forcing her into hard labor. Her marriage to Killicks was not fulfilling because she never loved him yet she desired to have a marriage full of happiness and love. Logan Killicks forced her to work very hard on the farm and he even made her do men's chores (Hurston 89). Janie never loved Logan Killicks and she felt miserable in their marriage. He was inconsiderate and never valued her aspirations and hopes since he treated her as an infant and worker rather than as a wife.

Janie's second marriage was to Jody Starks (Joe). This marriage was an escape because Janie was escaping from Logan's mistreatment of hard labor on the farm. Janie found change in this marriage but she never found the love she desired. Even though Starks was full of jealousy, he protected Janie and gave her a good wealthy life. Janie felt that Starks gave her everything

she needed including wealth, money and class but could not give her the love she longed for. She believed that love was natural and she could not feel it with Starks, he only gave her security and status but not the love she desired. Starks used to silence her anytime she wanted to air out her opinions, she had no say in what they did. Starks died from a kidney failure and left Janie with the store and all the wealth they had acquired.

Janie's third marriage was to Woods also known as Tea Cake in the entire book. Janie got so many suitors after Starks death but she fell in love with Tea Cake. Tea Cake was a drifter and gambler. She sold the store Starks left her after meeting Tea Cake and they moved together to Jacksonville where they got married. Janie found the fulfillment she desired in this marriage. She got all the love and everything she had missed in the previous marriages in her marriage to Tea Cake. Tea Cake loved her the way she was and she loved him too. They did everything and spent time together, fished together and even went hunting together. She got the kind of everlasting love that she was longing for all her life in Tea Cake. She felt a natural love between the two of them and this brought satisfaction and fulfillment to her. She was happy because she was now married to the man she fell in love with compared to the other marriages where there was no love. Janie was looking for her "bee for her blossom" and she felt that she had gotten her bee she was searching for when she met Tea Cake (Hurstons 123).

Tea Cake died after contracting rabies. He was bitten by a mad dog as he tried to rescue Janie from drowning after they had both survived the Hurricane that had hit Everglades where they stayed. Tea Cake was shot by Janie with a rifle in self defense when he tried to shoot her with a pistol. He

could not bear the pain he was going through and out of this pain he opted to kill Janie. Even though Janie was charged with murder, she was later acquitted after being proven innocent since she acted in self defense. Janie gave Tea Cake a lavish burial because she loved him so much. Killing him was an act of love because she could not bear seeing him suffer. Janie was very heartbroken at Tea Cake's funeral. Tea Cake was the only man that Janie ever loved and he brought fulfillment and happiness in her life. Although she was heart broken, she still consoled herself that at least she had a chance to be with the man that she loved. After the funeral, Janie felt that Tea Cake was still with her and this still satisfied her (Hurstons 218). She still loved Tea Cake even after his death, she never stopped loving him. Tea Cake had given her the true love that she was searching and longed for. Janie cherished all the moments she had shared with Tea Cake (Hurstons 227).

If Tea Cake did not die prematurely, Janie's wealth would not have affected the happiness of their relationship because they loved each other so much. Janie loved Tea Cake and he loved her too, they loved doing everything together and wealth could not have affected their happiness in future. Janie's desire was happiness and fulfillment and she had found it so she never cared about any other thing including her wealth as long as she had the love she desired and had longed for. All that mattered to her was self fulfillment and love and Janie found it in the man she ever loved Tea Cake.

## Works Cited

Hurstons, Zora, Neale. *Their eyes were watching God*. New York: Perennial Classics, 2006. Print.

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