

American lit



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Rodman the Keeper

Author Constance Fenimore Woolson Rodman the Keeper

Date of Publication 1800s after Civil War. Rodman the Keeper

Principal Characters John Rodman: Keeper. Kind hearted colonel, craves solitude does not even want a dog his cemetery is a more cheerful place, alone because he is living in the South and is a northern traitor, empathetic and wants everybody to be memorialized, disciplined because it gives him purpose. He talks to the dead and makes up stories about them, like Blank Rodman who must be a relative. With the conversations he has with the made up soldiers he is conflicted about what to do with De Rosset because they ask him not to let him walk on their heads.

Pomp: Negro servant, always proud of his masters trying to save face.

Bettina: Owner of the house. The waste of the south, angry/resentful. Very beautiful but badly affected by the war and trying to keep her head up she is dismissive of Rodman and she would rather he live with broke family than a better off Rodman. She cares too she went to the grave and it appears as if she was paying her respects. She remembers how the war took her family made her mother cry and made her family poor.

Ward De Rosset: Crippled Confederate soldier very proud referred to as proud poverty.

Rodman the Keeper

Summary John Rodman is a keeper for the dead soldiers that fought in the same civil war he did. He cares deeply but removes himself to be alone in the cemetery. One day Rodman runs into a crippled ex confederate and tries

to do everything in his power to aid him. Rodman has De Rosset live with him and he meets his cousin Bettina who is angry that a Yankee is watching over her cousin. Rodman the Keeper

Themes Civil War: Everyone was happy to fight until they were faced with the harsh realities of war. Rodman remembers leaving for the war and the enthusiasm and girls waving handkerchiefs for him.

North vs. South: The Southerners are worse off than he is but they are still very proud.

Reconstruction: After the destruction would the north and south be able to come together like this semi friendship.

Life in the Iron-Mills

Author Rebecca Harding Davis Life in the Iron Mills

Date of Publication 1860s. Growth of technology and industry and mass immigration and a post civil war. Different cultures, new writers, new market for magazines and newspapers. Life in the Iron Mills

Principal Characters Narrator: trying to educate the middle/upper class about the despairing life of the working class.

Hugh Wolfe: Does not really fit in with the working class or the business people. In his free time he does art and he is called an animal. Breaks his art work because he doesn't think much of it. Struggles with what to do with the money.

Deborah: Hugh's cousin. Housewife mentality, hunchback, wants constant affirmation. Walks in rain at night with little to no rest to bring Hugh food that he doesn't even want.

Clarke: The son of one of the mill owners. The first time he truly notices their faces.

Doctor May: Town-physicians. Notices the face of the workers look like Dante's vision. Put on a fake smile to "talk to these people" Don't see them as equals. Does not care when he reads about it.

Life in the Iron Mills

Summary The city is rampant with smoke, nothing but smoke and despair. It's like Hell. Hugh and his cousin Deb live in a broke down place. Deb is worried that Hugh hasn't eaten before work so she brings him dinner in the pouring rain. No one really thought much of Deb. They aren't very nice to Hugh either. Hugh makes art in his spare time. Some important owners come and they kind of bougie. They see Hugh's art and tell him that he can be anything then leave. Deb steals money from one of them. They are both torn about, but decide to keep it. Hugh and Deb go to prison, Hugh for much longer. Hugh struggles with depression and then kills himself. Life in the Iron Mills

Themes Class struggle middle/upper middle: They are living in Hell like Dante's Inferno. They are called Dante's vision. Hugh's soul is filthy. They aren't seen as equals. They realize there is a problem but when asked whose fault it is they say it isn't theirs and move on. Blinded to the plight of the working man.

Environmental factors affecting the poor: There seems to be nowhere out, can hardly even see where you are because of the smoke. Industrial pollution. The narrator points out that there is not a horror movie that would terrify the reader more than tragedies of the working class. Feels as if death if the release.

Disenfranchisement of the American Dream: Assume that everyone can be rich refers to the American system as a ladder that anyone can climb. They tell Hugh that just because he has a talent that makes him better than his situation and that's the only advise they give him. Believes their only way out was money because that's all that's flaunted. They are told to work hard, well dam, how much harder could they work?

A White Heron

Author Sarah Orne Jewett A White Heron

Date of Publication 1880s. Industrial revolution A White Heron

Principal Characters Sylvia: Little girl. Afraid of people, use to live in the mills.

Mrs. Tilley: Sylvia's grandmother watches her.

Young Man: Comes into the forest in need for the white heron.

A White Heron

Summary Sylvia is chasing after one of her grandmother's cow. She runs into a strange man. He stays with them, he is nice, and offers them money if they can help him find the white heron. Sylvia warms up to him. Sylvia know where the bird is and goes to visit it. She chooses not to tell the young man where the bird is and he leaves. A White Heron

ThemesInnocence: She believes the stranger is an enemy. She overcomes her loss of innocence by saving the White Heron.

Industrial Revolution/Urbanization: Good move for her to move from the mills to the country because manufacturing towns were crowded and stifling. The man represents urbanization, it isn't necessarily evil but comes with consequences. Just like the man would have killed the Heron urbanization takes away the beauty, solitude, and uniqueness of countries. Unlike the young man, who leaves, industrialization doesn't go away.

Local color writing: The imagery is amazing. Last tree of its generation, unique animals. Environment is a healing experience for Sylvia.

The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

AuthorMark TwainThe Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

Date of Publication1860s Andrew Jackson and Daniel Webster presidency
raceThe Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

Principle CharactersSimon Wheeler: Narrator's friend

Leonidas W. Smiley: The gambling man with the animals.

Andrew Jackson: The dog that Smiley uses to fight. He's small but he wins every time. But loses to a dog with no legs would have been a great fighter if he hadn't died he had no opportunities.

Dan'l Webster: A frog that Smiley catches and teaches to jump really high.

The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

SummaryThe Narrator goes to visit a friend and his friend begins to tell him

this long story about a man names Leonidas W. Smiley who loves to gamble and wins with his animals all the time. Andrew Jackson was a great dog fighter he had until he dies then he catches Dan'l Webster, a frog that he teaches to jump really high. One day Smiley challenges a man to a frog jumping contest and the man cheats and beats him. The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

ThemesPolitics: It's a game and satire.

Andrew Jackson preached as if he were for the people but a complete dictator and the trail of tears. Daniel Webster was an elitist of the north.

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets

AuthorStephen CraneMaggie: A Girl of the Streets

Date of Publications1890s. Mass immigration. Housing tenement crisis.

Naturalism a realistic approach to how life was for the working class in these dire situations. Crammed, built quickly and effortlessly with not protection or thoughts of safety for the inhabitants. Socio economic conditions. Maggie: A Girl of the Streets

Principle CharactersJimmie: Mag's older brother. Has this God-complex, feels that everyone is out to get him. Struggles with his inner thoughts for reason.

Pete: Dates Mag for a little while. Nonchalant about everything.

Mag: Jimmie's sister. Tries not to let her environment get the best of her.

She's still sweet and naive, but passive. Believes Pete is a " Knight". Not like the others in her home.

Mary: Jimmie and Mag's mother. Alcoholic.

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets

Summary Jimmie and Pete are little rascals. The household of this family is terrible. Mom is a villain. Mag and Pete got a thing going on. Mag leaves to live with Pete. Jimmie doesn't like this and Pete and him get into a fight. Jimmie and his mother believe that Maggie abandoned them but they offer her nothing. Pete leaves her and she has to go back to her family, but they kick her out. Maggie dies to prostitution or something and her mother and brother are not remorseful. Maggie: A Girl of the Streets

Themes Working class: Vicious cycle. When Maggie tries to leave she is seen as bad guy for not helping out. They all feel as if they are constantly in war with everything and everyone around them.

Gender roles: She was ruined, has to live a prostitute, dies because no one think she deserves saving even though she was better than everyone she knew.

Passing

Author Nella Larsen **Passing**

Date of Publication 1920s. After the recession, race issues. **Passing.** **Passing**

Summary Clare keeps writing to Irene. Irene remembers how she bumped into Clare in Chicago. Irene goes home with Clare and Clare's husband has no idea she's passing and calls her Nig as a joke. Clare is not happy but she puts on a front. Irene is not happy with her husband either. Clare joins them at one of their functions. Irene's family loves Clare but Irene can not stand her. Irene runs into John but does not want to expose Clare. At one of the functions, Irene pushes Clare out of the window. **Passing**

Principle Characters Irene Redfield: Doesn't really care about Clare.

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Clare Kendry: Irene's friend who passes. Always got what she wanted. But she isn't happy with her lifestyle. Only goes to the function when she finds out white people go to. Sleeping with Irene's husband and hanging out with her kids when she's not around. She's selfish and flippant about how her actions will affect her or others.

Brian Redfield: Irenes good for nothing husband. Greedy for things he'll never have. Gets on Irene's nerve.

John Bellew: Clare's racist ass husband.

Passing

ThemesSystemic racism ONAMERICAN LIT SPECIFICALLY FOR YOUFOR
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