Snow Falling on Cedars Study Guide

Snow Falling on Cedars by David Guterson

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Contents

Introduction

David Guterson's reputation as a writer began with his first novel, *Snow Falling on Cedars.* It is a blend of courtroom drama and romance that takes place in a small town in Washington. Set in 1954, the novel examines the dynamics of the fictitious community of San Piedro Island after World War II. The past and present stories of many of the citizens of the small community spin off the central murder trial. Critics have embraced this novel for its sensitivity, vivid imagery, well-rounded characters, and thoughtful handling of difficult issues. Guterson admits that Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (which he assigned his high school students to read) was a major influence on his novel. He was inspired by the structure, which brings together separate stories, and the drama created by a raciallymotivated trial in a small community.

Snow Falling on Cedars went virtually unnoticed when it was released in hardback. Once it was published in paperback, however, the book's popularity gained momentum from word of mouth, and the book became a paperback bestseller. In fact, Guterson's novel became the fastest-selling book in Vintage Books' (the publisher that picked up the novel's paperback rights) history. Overseas, the novel also enjoyed best-selling status; *Snow Falling on Cedars* has been translated into fifteen languages. The success of the book enabled Guterson to quit his teaching job and focus on writing. In addition, the novel won the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association Award and the prestigious PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction in 1995.

Author Biography

David Guterson was born on May 4, 1956, in Seattle, Washington, the middle of five children to Murray (a criminal defense lawyer) and Shirley (a stayat- home mother) Guterson. He enjoyed a happy childhood and spent lots of time outdoors. Since then, he has grown into an award-winning author, a contributing editor to Harper's magazine, and a vocal advocate of homeschooling.

Guterson first became interested in writing while studying at the University of Washington, from which he earned his bachelor's degree in 1978. The next year, he married Robin Radwick, a high school classmate. The newlyweds moved to Rhode Island, where Guterson attended Brown University's creative writing program for one semester. During the year they spent in Rhode Island, the Gutersons lived in a cabin on a tree farm. Robin worked as a speech therapist while her husband wrote short stories. Upon returning to the Pacific Northwest, Guterson completed a master's degree in writing at the University of Washington in 1982. The couple then moved to Puget Sound where *Snow Falling on Cedars* (1994) takes place.

Guterson continued writing after taking a job as a high school English teacher on Puget Sound, a job he held for ten years. When he accompanied students on a class trip to see an exhibit about Japanese internment camps, Guterson was inspired to write *Cedars.* The novel was so successful that he was able to quit his teaching job in 1994 and concentrate on writing. His teaching days were not over, however, because he and his wife have homeschooled their four children: Taylor, Travis, Henry, and Angelica.

Plot Summary

Chapters One-Eleven

Snow Falling on Cedars opens in 1954 in the small town of Amity Hill. The fictitious island of San Piedro in Washington's Puget Sound is the setting of a trial. Kabuo Miyamoto is charged with the murder of a fellow fisherman, Carl Heine Jr.; Carl's body was discovered in his nets by the sheriff and his deputy. A fracture in Carl's skull cast suspicion on his death. Evidence points to Kabuo.

In addition to fishing, farming (especially strawberries) is a major industry on San Piedro. Many Japanese worked these fields and became members of the community. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, however, people of Japanese descent were sent away to internment camps. In 1954, there is still lingering distrust towards the Japanese and the prejudice is an unspoken but important force in Kabuo's trial.

Guterson structures his novel around the trial, the only event told in chronological order. As each witness takes the stand, Guterson allows the reader to enter that character's mind and witness important experiences□related to the trial or not□in his or her life. Guterson also introduces the reader to Ishmael Chambers, the town's newspaper reporter and a veteran of the war.

In his youth, Ishmael had been romantically involved with a beautiful Japanese girl named Hatsue Imada, who is now Kabuo's wife. Ishmael and Hatsue kept their relationship secret, meeting in a large hollow cedar in the woods. Hatsue felt guilty for keeping her romance hidden from her family. Ishmael was a romantic who believed that their love would conquer all obstacles. When Hatsue and her family were forced to go to the internment camp, Manzanar, the romance ended. Hatsue was ready to break off the relationship with Ishmael anyway (because she understood that their love could never survive), so she sent him a letter. Ishmael reacted with profound bitterness and hate.

Chapters Twelve-Twenty-Two

Guterson presents Ishmael's wartime experience, which includes, most notably, the loss of his arm. This experience sharpened Ishmael's feelings of bitterness and resentment. When he returned from the war, he occasionally saw Hatsue with Kabuo (whom she had married at Manzanar) and their children. Rather than move on with his life, Ishmael allowed his bitterness to consume him. At the beginning of Kabuo's trial, Ishmael sees the events as a potential opportunity to get back into Hatsue's life.

As the trial continues, details of a land deal gone wrong are revealed. In 1934, Kabuo's father, Zenhichi, made arrangements to secure seven acres of strawberry fields from Carl Heine Sr. Because foreign-born Japanese were not allowed to become citizens, and because only citizens could own land, Zenhichi and Carl Sr. worked out a lease-to-own arrangement so that the land would be paid for by the time American-born Kabuo

would be old enough to own it. Although Carl Sr. was a sympathetic man, his wife, Etta, disapproved of the deal and felt that the Japanese were beneath them. When the Japanese Americans were sent to the internment camps, Carl Sr. assured Zenhichi he was not to worry about the land. Carl Sr. died in 1944, however, and because Zenhichi missed the last two payments on the land, Etta sold it to someone else and returned Zenhichi's money. When Kabuo returned home and discovered what had happened, he was angry and offered to buy the seven acres from the new owner, but the new owner would not sell. Without land, Kabuo opted to support his family as a fisherman. Years later, the new landowner was no longer able to work the land and sold it back to Carl Jr. Kabuo spoke with Carl about the possibility of buying the land from him. Carl agreed to consider it. The facts of this land deal gave Kabuo apparent motive to kill Carl, which only made his case more difficult to defend.

Chapters Twenty-Three-Thirty-Two

As the trial nears its close, Ishmael visits the lighthouse to find weather information for the newspaper. He discovers the watchman's notes from the night of Carl's death, and they contain information that would exonerate Kabuo. A freighter had passed by Carl's boat, throwing off a powerful wall of water that would have knocked a man overboard. Ishmael keeps the notes until he decides whether to reveal his discovery or keep it secret. He hopes that if Kabuo is imprisoned or executed, he will be able to win Hatsue back.

While the jury wrestles with a verdict (eleven members vote "guilty" and one finds reasonable doubt), Ishmael reveals the contents of the notes. The jury is released, Kabuo is freed, and Ishmael is finally able to consider a new life for himself. He makes peace with his painful memories and begins looking to the future.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

It is a cold day on December 6, 1954 and Kabuo Miyamoto, a 31-year-old local fisherman, is on trial for the murder of Carl Heine Jr., another 31-year-old fisherman. Judge Llewellyn Fields is presiding over the trial, Alvin Hooks is prosecuting, and Nels Gudmundsson is the lawyer for the defense. Outside the courtroom, snowflakes are just beginning to fall on San Piedro Island.

In the courtroom, there are several out-of-town newspapermen reporting the trial and they are joined by Ishmael Chambers, a 31-year-old World War II veteran who lost an arm in the service. Ishmael is also the owner, publisher, and reporter for *The San Piedro Review*, the newspaper that serves the island.

San Piedro is a small island and almost everyone on the island knows everybody else. In fact, Ishmael knew Carl Heine Jr. and he knows Hatsue Miyamoto, Kabuo's wife. However, when he tried to talk to Hatsue outside the courtroom before the trial, Hatsue simply told him to go away.

Chapter 1 Analysis

Though Ishmael is friendly with Hatsue, Hatsue is cold toward him. The fact that Hatsue does not welcome the friendly overtures of Ishmael indicates the unhappy story of their earlier relationship.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

On September 16, 1954, Art Moran, the local sheriff, is in his office when he hears that Carl Heine's boat is adrift well after the hour that it should have returned to port. Knowing that this is some troublesome news, he and Abel Martinson, Art's young deputy, go out on the water to check it out.

The pair set out onto the water and eventually find Carl's boat empty and adrift with all its running lights on. The two men tie up to Carl's boat and board in order to look for Carl. However, for all their searching, there is no sign of Carl anywhere.

Knowing that no good can come from this, Art is upset. After all, Art knows the Heine family and he knows that Carl survived the sinking of the USS Canton during the battle for Okinawa. Unfortunately, it appears that fate has caught up with Carl and he has fallen overboard and drowned.

From experience with this sort of accident, Art knows that Carl's body is probably tangled up in his fishing net and he will have to reel it in to find him. Reluctantly, Art works the winch and, as he does, he sees that Carl's body has indeed gotten caught up in the fishing net and he carefully works the winch to take Carl on board. However, Abel has never had to deal with this sort of thing before and he vomits at the sight of Carl's body.

After Abel pulls himself together, the two men finish pulling in Carl's body and, as they do, Abel notices a deep gash and skull fracture on the side of Carl's head. However, Art simply attributes it to Carl banging his head on something while going overboard and he thinks no more about it.

Chapter 2 Analysis

The pointed mention of the gash and skull fracture on the side of Carl's head foreshadows their importance in the story. As well, Art's initial reaction of indifference shows that Carl banging his head on the railing while falling overboard could easily explain the head injury.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

Returning to the courtroom, Nels Gudmundsson, Kabuo's attorney, cross-examines Art on the stand. After some establish questions, Nels asks Art whether he finds it strange that Carl's boat started right up that morning. As Art thinks about Nels' point, he agrees that it was pretty strange, since running lights pull a lot of power from the battery and it seems like the batteries should have been drained by the time that Art and Abel arrived on the scene.

After Nels has made his point, he asks Art about the batteries on Carl's boat, and Art explains that he found one battery on board that does not match the battery wells on board. In fact, Carl had to bang out a flange in order to make the battery into the well. However, the battery that was put into place was actually designed for Kabuo's boat, showing that Kabuo may very well have been on the boat.

Moving on, Nels asks Art whether they had trouble bringing Carl's body on board while pulling in the net and Art admits that, yes, they had problems since Carl is a very big man. Hearing this, Nels ask whether Carl's head hit anything while they brought him on board. However, Art cannot be sure if Carl's head hit anything or not.

Chapter 3 Analysis

The story makes a point to mention Nels' powerful, piercing eye. In fact, Nels' powerful eye symbolizes his ability to see truth in people and events, as well as his ability to find what he is looking for. Furthermore, the fact that Nels has one bad eye and one good eye turn Nels into a symbolic Odin -- the Norse god of wisdom.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Judge Lew Fielding calls for a recess and almost everyone there leaves the courtroom except Ishmael, who stays behind to sit and think. He remembers how he was at first unable to believe that Carl Heine had died and how he called around before he finally got the confirmation he feared from Horace Whaley, the county coroner. Then, as Ishmael's reflections move back further, he remembers his father Arthur, who ran *The San Piedro Review* before and after he fought in World War I. In fact, Arthur Chambers ran his newspaper very well and always managed to stay fair and accurate in his reporting. Though Ishmael tries to run the newspaper as well as his father did, Ishmael battles against the cynicism and disillusionment he felt after he returned from World War II with only one arm. Finally, Ishmael's musings move to the day that he went to talk to Art Moran about Carl's death and, as he does, the story flashes back to September 17, 1954.

Ishmael goes to the docks in order to find Art Moran and ask him about Carl's death. As Ishmael approaches, Art is asking local fishermen what they saw the night of Carl's death, what time it happened, and where they were. However, when Ishmael arrives, Art wraps things up with the fishermen and pulls Ishmael aside. Then, as the two of them get some privacy, Art tells Ishmael that he is treating Carl's death as a murder and if Ishmael keeps the news quiet for the time being, he will tell Ishmael everything as soon as he knows it.

Chapter 4 Analysis

The story mentions two major battles in World War I in which Arthur Chambers fought. The first, the Battle of Saint-Mihiel, was a difficult battle in which American forces fought entirely independently for the first time. The second, the Battle of Belleau Wood, was a 26-day affair in which American forces took heavy losses while capturing well-defended German positions in the thick forest. The fact that Arthur Chambers fought in these battles shows that he was a brave man who did not back down from difficulty.

During Art's questioning of the fishermen at the dock, the fishermen often use the word "Jap" and, on top of that, claim that they cannot tell one Japanese person from another. These clearly racist statements illustrate the anti-Japanese racism held by the white people on the island.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

As Alvin Hooks questions Horace Whaley on the witness stand, the story flashes back to September 16, 1954 when Art Moran and Abel Martinson arrive at Horace's office with Carl's body. After leaving Carl with Horace, Art leaves almost immediately because he still needs to inform Carl's wife that her husband is dead. However, Art leaves Abel behind in another room in case Horace needs help with the autopsy, though Abel stays in another room so that he will not need to watch Horace cut into the body.

Once Horace has emptied Carl's pockets and undressed the body, he presses on Carl's chest in order to force out the contents of his lungs. This produces foam that clearly indicates that Carl drowned. However, as Horace continues his examination, he notices the skull wound above Carl's left ear. Carefully examining the wound, it immediately reminds Horace of the sort of wound that American soldiers received in World War II from bayonet-wielding Japanese soldiers. This immediately makes Horace think that a Japanese man trained in kendo must have struck Carl on the side of his head.

Continuing the autopsy, Horace peels back some of Carl's facial skin before calling for Abel. After Abel vomits at the sight of Carl's partially dissected face, he helps Horace as best he can. Fortunately, Art Moran returns just then, allowing Horace to point out the skull wound to him. Horace explains where he thinks the wound came from and goes to far as to tell Art that he should look for a "right-handed Jap" (59) if he wants to know who killed Carl.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Kendo, which is specifically mentioned in this chapter, is a Japanese martial art from the days of the samurai. Its practitioners were highly trained in the use of swords and, through this training, were very effective at using long, edged weapons such as the bayonet on the end of a rifle. The fact that kendo is pointed out so clearly foreshadows the importance of kendo on the rest of the story, particularly regarding Kabuo's training in the martial art.

The fact that all of the island's World War II veterans -- including Carl, Ishmael, and Horace -- fought in the Pacific theater further emphasizes the anti-Japanese racism on the island. This is particularly shown in Horace's reaction to the wound on the side of Carl's head. Because the wound reminds Horace of a kendo strike, he immediately assumes that it must have been a kendo strike that crushed Carl's skull.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

After Horace's testimony, Nels cross-examines him on several points before he finally comes to the wound above Carl's ear. In response to Nels' questions about he wound, Horace explains that a thin, flat object formed the cut precisely because the cut is thin and flat. However, Horace cannot give a definite answer as to just which object it might have been, nor can he say whether the wound occurred before or after Carl died.

Meanwhile, Art Moran, who is sitting in the gallery, remembers the day of Carl's death and, as he does so, the action flashes back to September 16, 1954 when Art arrives at the Heines' house. He has come there in order to tell Susan Marie about her husband's death, but he cannot bring himself to do it at first. After all, he knows Susan Marie from church and he always appreciated her kindness whenever they talked. But now he sits in Abel's borrowed truck, nervously chewing gum and screwing up his courage to tell her that her husband died at sea.

Finally, Art leaves the truck and regretfully informs Susan Marie that Carl died in an accident on the water. Susan Marie is, obviously, shocked at the news and she sits down on the stairs, rocking back and forth blankly. Unfortunately, Art cannot do anything for her, so he enters the house and calls Susan Marie's family so that she will have someone there to talk to.

Chapter 6 Analysis

Nels' cross-examination of Horace shows that there are several possible interpretations of the wound on the side of Carl's head and the cut on his hand. These significant holes foreshadow the revelation that Carl's head wound was actually caused by the railing and the cut on his hand actually put the blood on Kabuo's fishing gaff.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

It is 1883 on San Piedro Island and the first Japanese people arrive in order to make a life there. Though the Japanese population is very small at first, by 1900 there are over 300 Japanese people living on San Piedro, most of who had jumped ship from freighters and swam ashore. However, all of the Japanese men who come to the island eventually make their way to "Jap Town" (76) and live there, finding work in a variety of menial jobs, mostly in the local lumber mill.

Eventually the local lumber mill shuts down and, since strawberry farming is the biggest employer on the island, most of the Japanese people on the island become sharecroppers. Though these workers are poor, the men save their money carefully and send letters home saying that they are rich and their families should send wives for them. Unfortunately, the wives arrive on San Piedro Island to find that the Japanese are actually toiling in the fields for the "hakujin" (76) -- or, white people -- who own the farms. In fact, it seems that their only enjoyable day of the entire year is their day off for the community's Strawberry Festival. However, the day after the festival, all the Japanese on the island go right back to work.

Everything remains in this fairly stable state of equilibrium until Pearl Harbor is bombed. The surprise attack causes anti-Japanese sentiment to run rampant throughout the country, including San Piedro Island. This form of paranoia leads to the 849 Japanese people living on San Piedro to be sent to internment camps on March 29, 1942.

Returning to the courtroom, it is the morning recess of Kabuo's trial and his wife, Hatsue, has a chance to speak with her husband. In fact, it is the first time in 77 days that she has not been separated from her husband by the pane of glass in the jail's visiting room and both of them are glad to see each other's face without that intrusive obstacle. However, instead of speaking warmly with her husband, Hatsue tells her husband not to look so much like "one of Tojo's soldiers" (80)

The story then moves back to Hatsue's upbringing and the tutoring she received from Mrs. Shigemura, an instructor that Hatsue's parents brought in to help Hatsue remember what it is to be Japanese. In the course of her instruction, Mrs. Shigemura teaches Hatsue everything from how to walk, talk, and sit to many of the responsibilities of a Japanese woman such as the tea ceremony, calligraphy, and painting. The ultimate point of these teachings is to instill Hatsue with the Buddhist teachings of composure, mental calm, and acceptance of all things in life. However, Mrs. Shigemura also teaches Hatsue that the American way of life runs contrary to the ideals and Buddhism and Hatsue should avoid both American culture and the white people who inhabit it.

However, Hatsue does not avoid white people at all. In fact, when she is still young, Hatsue meets Ishmael Chambers out on the beach and he teaches her how to swim in

the ocean. Then, with her newfound skill, they enjoy their time together on the beach and out on the water surrounding the island. Then, one day, they kiss while they are swimming, which serious breaks of the rules set down by Mrs. Shigemura and Hatsue's parents.

However, on the night that Hatsue marries Kabuo in the Manzanar internment camp, she tells him that she has never kissed a boy before. That night, after Hatsue's parents had hustled her sisters out of the room in order to give the newlyweds some privacy, they make love as quietly as they can. However, despite Hatsue's protests, Kabuo leaves for the army eight days after their wedding.

Chapter 7 Analysis

The Japanese people sitting in the back of the courtroom set up a symbolic link between them and the black people of Montgomery, Alabama who were forced by law to sit in the backs of busses. Both the Japanese and the black people of Montgomery simply accepted the racism they were faced with and put up with it as though there was nothing they could do.

In World War II, almost all of the people in the United States of Japanese descent were sent to internment camps in the Southwest. The largest camp was Manzanar, where the Japanese people from San Piedro are sent.

When Hatsue tells Kabuo that he looks like one of "Tojo's soldiers" (80), she is referring to the Japanese soldiers who fought against the United States. The Tojo that she mentions is General Hideki Tojo, Japan's Prime Minister in World War II and the man principally blamed for Japan's actions in the war.

Hatsue is a woman caught between two worlds. She is of Japanese descent and she is given a tutor that instructs her in all the necessary skills and traits of a Japanese woman. However, she was born in the United States and lives there, so she is also a product of the environment that she finds herself in. Thus, she learns to act the role that is expected of her at the time. In fact, she becomes so good at playing these roles that everybody thinks that her outward face reflects her inner feelings.

The line "she would feel another boy's hardness deep inside her" (91), distinctly points out that her wedding night is not the first time that she has had sex. This foreshadows the story of Ishmael's abortive attempt to have sex with Hatsue.

Though Kabuo's decision to fight for the army of the country that put him into an internment camp, many men of Japanese descent actually did join the army in World War II. Most of the men were pulled from the internment camps and, in fact, most of them did feel honor-bound to show their loyalty to the United States. Most all of these men were put into an all-Japanese infantry division that distinguished itself in combat in Italy.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

The story moves back in time again, this time to the summer of 1941. Ishmael and Hatsue have been spending a lot of time together, but Ishmael never feels like he knows Hatsue at all. What Ishmael does know is that he really likes Hatsue and, one day, they finally kiss while they are sitting on the beach. However, when the kiss ends, Hatsue quickly runs away from Ishmael, leaving him utterly dismayed and confused.

No longer able to spend his days with Hatsue, Ishmael works odd jobs around the island during the day, but secretly spies on Hatsue's house at night. Hiding in the plants around the Imadas', he steadily moves closer and closer to the house every night until he is just a few yards away from the house. However, Ishmael stops going when he is almost caught by Hatsue's father during his nighttime spying session.

Eventually, strawberry season arrives and Ishmael sees Hatsue at Mr. Nitta's strawberry patch and the two of them have a brief, informal conversation that carefully avoids their shared kiss. However, at the end of the day, Ishmael secretly follows Hatsue toward her house in order to see a little bit more of her. As Hatsue works her way through the woods between the strawberry patch and her house, it begins to rain and she ducks into a hollowed-out cedar tree that she and Ishmael used to play in when they were younger.

Seeing Hatsue in their old tree, Ishmael pulls together the courage to approach her and she invites him in. Finally alone, the two of them have a chance to talk about their kiss and they both agree that their parents would be furious if they knew about it. However, as they lie together in the tree, they kiss again.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Ishmael's secret visits to Hatsue's home symbolize the secret love he has for her and his inability to come out into the open with it. As well, just as he is incapable of reaching the house, he is incapable of fully reaching Hatsue.

In this book, cedar trees symbolize the world of emotion and, especially, love. The symbolism appears in the fact that both are natural, beautiful, and a joy to all the senses. Every time cedar trees appear, such as the hollow cedar tree that Ishmael and Hatsue meet in, or the cedar railing around Hatsue's house, it is associated with love, or at least lust.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

As Etta Heine, Carl Heine Jr.'s mother, takes the stand, the story moves back to 1934 when she is living with her husband Carl Heine, Sr.; they and their son live on the 30 acres of land where they spend their time farming strawberries. Though they are not rich, they own their own land and live a decent life.

One day, Zenhichi Miyamoto, Kabuo's father, visits Carl Sr. with a proposition to purchase 7 acres of land from him so that Zenhichi can also farm strawberries. Hearing this, Etta is distinctly against the idea of selling land to any Japanese person because she considers them a bunch of lazy, underhanded swindlers. However, Carl Sr. considers the idea for a few days and eventually decides to sell them the 7 acres, in spite of Etta's protests.

Unfortunately, everything is turned upside down when the notice comes for all the San Piedro residents of Japanese ancestry to ship off to Manzanar. After receiving the notice, Zenhichi comes to visit the Heines' to discuss the land sale and determine a method of payment that will allow Zenhichi to keep control of the land. Zenhichi wants to put more money toward his land payment, but Carl Sr. will not take all of his savings just before he leaves for Manzanar. Instead, he offers an agreement to hold the land for him until he can make the payments again. Zenhichi, very pleased with the deal, agrees.

Unfortunately, Carl Sr. dies of a stroke while the Miyamotos are in Manzanar, putting Etta in charge of the land. Then, when Zenhichi misses the last two payments, Etta sells the entire farm to Ole Jurgensen and sends the Miyamotos' equity back to them.

Chapter 9 Analysis

Etta, a German, is symbolic of the double standard between white people and Japanese-Americans in World War II. The Japanese are sent to internment camps while Germans, such as the Etta Heine, are allowed to stay where they are.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

In courtroom, Alvin Hooks asks Etta if she ever saw Kabuo after that and she answers that she saw him in 1945. He came to her door and asked her about buying the 7 acres of land that his father had contracted to buy off of Carl, Sr. However, Etta told him that the land was not hers and she should ask Ole Jurgensen about it. Of course, Kabuo had already visited him and Ole told Kabuo to talk to Etta about it. However, Etta told Kabuo that she had nothing to do with the land and she slammed the door on him.

Following Hooks' questions, Nels cross-examines Etta and asks her about the price of the land sale to Ole. After Etta gives the figures, Nels points out that she made an extra $2500 selling the Miyamotos' land to Ole Jurgensen, showing that she had a distinct, monetary reason for not holding the land for the Miyamoto family.

After that, Etta is dismissed and Ole Jurgensen takes the stand. Hooks questions him about the 30 acres he bought from Etta and he says that she told him there was no claim on any part of the land. However, when Kabuo visited Ole and said that Etta stole his land, Ole simply told him to talk to Etta about the matter because he knew nothing about it.

After years of farming the land, Ole Jurgensen had a stroke and, unable to work the land anymore, he put his entire lot up for sale. When Carl Jr. saw that the land was for sale, he came and put money down on all 30 acres so that he could get his family's farm back. Then, after Carl Jr. had already put the money down, Kabuo arrived and offered to buy the 7 acres his father held. Ole, of course, told him to talk to Carl Jr. if he wanted to buy the land.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

After the court is dismissed for the evening, Kabuo Miyamoto sits in his cell looking into a mirror. He is trying to figure out why his wife said he looks like one of Tojo's soldiers but he cannot find the dangerous face that she described. However, without thinking about it, he suddenly sees a shockingly cold face staring back at him from the mirror. It is the face of a war veteran who has seen the rigors of combat and has hardened up from everything that he has seen and done. Kabuo does not want to look like this but he simply knows that that is just the way he is.

As Kabuo thinks about this cold face, the story flashes back to the day that he tells Hatsue that he is enlisting in the army. Though Hatsue does not understand why he would want to enlist, he simply explains that it is a matter of honor to him. At first, she argues against his decision, but three days later, she asks him to marry her.

The story moves back farther to a 7-year-old Kabuo just as he begins his kendo training. Zenhichi is Kabuo's instructor thanks to the fact that the Miyamotos come from a long line of samurai and Zenhichi is a kendo expert. In fact, Kabuo's great-grandfather was a samurai himself.

As the years pass, Kabuo continues training in kendo until he is actually better than his father. This is despite the fact that Kabuo is not as skilled as Zenhichi but, as others mention, Kabuo is able to pull from his dark side while he is in combat. However, it is not until he kills four German soldiers in Italy that he understands that he is indeed a warrior with the heart of a killer.

Chapter 11 Analysis

The defiant face of Kabuo symbolizes the defiant inner strength of warriors who have fought in combat. While these aspects are uncontrollable and seem perfectly natural to warriors, seeing such ugliness is distasteful to those who see it but do not understand it.

When Nels first arrives to speak with Kabuo, he doesn't talk about the case at first. Instead, he simply wants to play chess. As they play, Nels' ability to beat Kabuo with an aggressive attack symbolizes his ability to win in court by taking the offensive ruthlessly and not giving up until the contest is over.

Before the Miyamotos leave for Manzanar, Zenhichi buries his weapons in the ground, though the reason why he does this is not explained. This foreshadows the story of how government agents took away any traditionally Japanese objects from the Japanese people on the island.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

The story returns to 1941 and every day after Ishmael and Hatsue work the strawberry fields, they return to the hollow cedar tree. And with every daily rendezvous, Ishmael falls deeper and deeper in love with Hatsue. However, her impenetrable wall of seeming coldness leaves him in the dark as to what she is thinking. In fact, he is surprised when Hatsue says that they are doing something wrong by seeing each other. Hatsue explains that she is defying the will of her parents and that is evil, whereas Ishmael merely says that they are happy together and that is no bad thing. However, despite Hatsue's concerns, they continue to meet.

Eventually school starts again and Ishmael is once again surprised and put off by Hatsue's ability to utterly ignore him in the hallways. However, he gets used to it and eventually starts thinking of their outward coldness to each other as a sort of game they play together. By the time that Hatsue is crowned Strawberry Princess, Ishmael is able to act as though he does not care about her either way.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

The story moves to December 7, 1941 when Hatsue and her family are leaving the Buddhist temple on the island. As the family walks out into the open air, someone runs up and gives everyone there the news that Pearl Harbor was bombed. Though everyone is stunned and refuses to believe it at first, the Imadas, along with all the other families, run home and receive confirmation.

With the United States suddenly at war with Japan, San Piedro is gripped with a frantic fear of an attack on their own island. Armed men post themselves around Amity Harbor and fishing boats patrol the waters in order to be ready for a Japanese attack. Even Hatsue's father joins the hysteria when he pulls out his shotgun and checks the skies for planes. It is a sleepless night on San Piedro Island.

In the *San Piedro Review*, Ishmael's father reports on defense preparations and what to do in case of an air raid. However, Arthur Chambers also reports that the Japanese on the island have pledged their loyalty to America in order to prevent anti-Japanese hysteria from breaking out on the island. In fact, Arthur Chambers continues to report on the Japanese residents' loyalty to the United States, but the anti-Japanese hysteria that ensues following Pearl Harbor alienates many of the newspaper's readers and people cancel their subscriptions.

During all this excitement, Ishmael and Hatsue continue to meet in their cedar tree and, while they are there, they talk about the attack. Ishmael angrily complains about the Japanese, but Hatsue points out that she, herself, is Japanese. Furthermore, she observes that they are arresting Japanese people across the country and she predicts that trouble is coming. However, Ishmael is far too happy spending time with Hatsue to imagine that the two of them could ever be parted.

Chapter 13 Analysis

The hysteria of the people on San Piedro Island is representative of the overall hysteria of the United States after Pearl Harbor. As well, the reconnaissance plane that reports that some of the Japanese-owned strawberry fields point toward the navy's radio transmitter illustrates the anti-Japanese paranoia that swept the country. At that time, everyone along the West Coast lived in fear of Japanese bombs raining on their towns and cities and the backlash of anti-Japanese sentiment that it created caused the government to send people of Japanese descent to internment camps.

Arthur Chambers is an example of a white American who did not start hating people of Japanese ancestry after Pearl Harbor. He is an emblem of the fact that everyone did not go in for the mass hysteria of anti-Japanese sentiment and many people managed to keep level heads in the days following Pearl Harbor.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

On February 14, 1942, two government agents comes to the Imadas' home and confiscate all of their Japanese heirlooms, as well as the dynamite they use to remove stumps from their fields. Then they arrest Hisao and several other prominent Japanese men on the island and ship them off to prisons and internment camps in the central United States.

With her father arrested and her mother frantic, Hatsue walks through the woods in order to think about all the craziness that is happening around her. However, her musings are interrupted when Ishmael finds her out in the woods. Ishmael seizes on the opportunity and finally tells her that he loves her, but Hatsue does not think that there is any hope in a relationship between a Japanese girl and a white boy.

On March 21, 1942, the War Relocation Department tells the Japanese people on the island that they have 8 days to leave the island. With no choice in the matter, the Japanese families make plans as best they can for their homes and crops to be cared for while they are gone. However, some merely leave their homes empty and abandoned to be picked over once they are gone.

After the notice that the Japanese people are to be taken away, Ishmael and Hatsue meet in their tree on last time. In order to hang on to Hatsue, Ishmael concocts a plan to send letters back and forth from the internment camp. However, Hatsue does not think it will work at all and she simply wishes that Ishmael would finally give up on her. But, as they lie there, they begin kissing. Kissing leads to undressing. Undressing leads to sex in the hollowed out cedar tree. Then, just as Ishmael penetrates Hatsue, he asks her to marry him. However, when Hatsue hears his marriage proposal, she pulls away, dresses quickly and runs away.

Chapter 14 Analysis

Hatsue and Ishmael's near-sex symbolizes the way that they almost connected, but never did. In fact, it is Hatsue that kept Ishmael from connecting with her on a personal level in the same way that she stops the sex just as it begins.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

March 29, 1942 arrives and the Japanese families on the island are shipped off to Manzanar. Arriving at the camp, it is, of course, terrible. Dust gets into all the food, the latrines are filthy and people get sick from their typhoid shots. As well, the rooms are cramped and there is no privacy. Overall, everyone is miserable, including the Imada family.

After several days in the camp, a letter from San Piedro arrives, addressed to Hatsue. However, her sister Sumiko sees the envelope and, eager for news from home, she rips open the envelope and reads the contents. But, instead of a letter about home, it is actually a love letter to Hatsue from Ishmael. Sumiko is shocked and surprised but, instead of handing it off to Hatsue, she shows the letter to her mother. Reading the contest, Fujiko is, of course, furious at her daughter both for seeing a white boy and for lying to her mother about it.

Before dinner that night, a group of San Piedro boys, including Kabuo, arrive at the Imadas' room in the barracks in order to determine what kinds of furniture they will need. However, Kabuo also has an ulterior motive: He wants to see Hatsue.

After the boys leave, Fujiko confronts Hatsue about Ishmael's letter and her secret relationship with him. Knowing that there is no point in arguing, Hatsue simply apologizes for everything she has done. Then, still angry, Fujiko goes to the post office and tells them that she is to pick up all of their mail.

Once Fujiko has ensured that Hatsue cannot receive any more secret letters, Fujiko writes a letter of her own to Ishmael's parents telling them all about the relationship and the fact that they are never to write to each other ever again. However, Hatsue one-ups her mother by saying that she will write directly to Ishmael herself and break off the relationship once and for all. Hearing her daughter's resolve, Fujiko agrees to Hatsue's plan and allows her one final communication with Ishmael.

In the following days, Kabuo builds and delivers all the furniture that Fujiko requested and asks for permission to see Hatsue, which Fujiko grants. Hatsue, of course, realizes that her relationship with Ishmael is over and she cannot grieve for him forever. So she turns her thoughts away from Ishmael and starts seeing Kabuo.

Chapter 15 Analysis

The rough embrace and kiss that Kabuo applies to Hatsue symbolize his hardness and the fact that he is a rough man. However, he also wants to be a better kisser for Hatsue, which shows that he really does care for her and wants to be a better man for her.

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

Ishmael Chambers becomes a marine and is eventually assigned to a unit that is to invade the Tarawa atoll. As his unit prepares for the invasion, their commander tells them that the navy will destroy all Japanese resistance before the marines come ashore but the enlisted men are not convinced by their commander's optimism. In fact, on the night before the assault, one of the men in Ishmael's unit tells him to write a letter home in case he is killed in the assault. However, the only person Ishmael can think to write to is Hatsue and the only letter he can write is an angry one. But, instead of keeping the letter close, Ishmael crumples it up and throws it into the ocean.

The next morning, the assault begins and everything falls apart quickly. Almost everyone in Ishmael's boat was killed, leaving Ishmael on the beach with no idea where the rest of his unit is. Pinned down by relentless Japanese fire, Ishmael hides behind a wall of coconut logs and waits for the planned assault at nightfall.

Finally, night comes and the marines on the beach jump over the wall and charge the Japanese. However, when Ishmael jumps over the wall, he is hit in the upper arm, shattering the bone. Severely wounded, he is sent back to a hospital ship and, unfortunately, his arm is so damaged that the doctors have to amputate it above the elbow. Thus, Ishmael becomes a one-armed man.

Chapter 16 Analysis

Pvt. Willis, the radioman Ishmael replaces, symbolizes the racist as the angry, self-destructive idiot. During the battle for Guadalcanal, he shoots a Japanese corpse in the testicles and brags about it to his friends afterward. However, he is so stupid that he calls down mortar fire onto his own position and essentially kills himself with his own idiocy.

The invasion of Tarawa that was, indeed, nearly a complete disaster. Tarawa is a string of islands that form a corral atoll in the Pacific, and, during World War II, the Japanese were building an air base there. In order to take out the airbase, the marines stormed Tarawa, taking heavy casualties in the process. The island of Betio, where Ishmael lands, was the major island in the atoll chain.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Returning to December 6, 1954, the storm outside is wreaking havoc on the island. People are skidding on the roads and having accidents on the ice. Anyone who can manage to travel is stocking up on supplies to ride out the storm, but storeowners are working to prevent hoarding and stockpiling. However, everyone in the courtroom is still unaware of the problems outside because the trial is still going on.

In the courtroom, Art Moran returns to the stand and Alvin Hooks asks him about a set of mooring lines he presents as evidence. Art explains that Carl and Kabuo had very different and distinct mooring lines and, since each boat had one of the other's mooring lines on board, they prove that Carl and Kabuo met each other out on the water and tied up together.

Chapter 17 Analysis

The accidents and problems that the snow causes show that snow is not only the cause of accidents, but it is also symbolic of accident. Thus, by combining the symbolism of the cedar tree as the symbol of emotion, the title of the book, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, is the story of accidental events and their effects on the human heart. However, this point is not borne out fully until the last chapter.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

The story returns to Lew Fielding's chambers on September 17, 1954. Art Moran asks Lew Fielding for a search warrant for Kabuo's boat and he lists off the evidence showing that Kabuo may have killed Carl Heine. Though Judge Fielding is not altogether convinced of the case, he grants the search warrant.

At the docks, Kabuo is cleaning his boat in preparation for another night of fishing as Art and Abel arrive to serve the search warrant. After a thorough search of Kabuo's craft, they eventually come across the fishing gaff with Carl Heine's blood on it. Though Kabuo says that the blood there is from a fish, Art doesn't believe him and he arrests Kabuo for suspicion of killing Carl Heine Jr.

Chapter 18 Analysis

Though Judge Lew Fielding is not convinced of Kabuo's guilt in the death of Carl Heine, he still grants the search warrant. However, his careful limits on the search warrant show that he is impartial in the case and, therefore, a good judge.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

The trial resumes on December 7, 1954, with Dr. Whitman as the next witness for the prosecution. A hematologist (a blood specialist), he testifies that the blood on the handle of Kabuo's fishing gaff is B-positive, a rare blood type that matches Carl Heine's. This shows that the blood on the fishing gaff is almost assuredly Carl's.

In cross-examination, Nels asks Dr. Whitman if he found any bits of bone, scalp, or hair on the fishing gaff, but Whitman says that he didn't find anything like that on the gaff. Since these fragments of skull and scalp should be on object that was used to smash in someone's head, Nels asks him whether that would make it more likely that the blood came from Carl's head or from his hand. Reluctantly, Whitman admits that the lack of these additional tissues makes it more probable that the blood came from Carl's hand.

After Dr. Whitman's evidence and the testimony by three fishermen that Kabuo and Carl were in the same area the night that Carl died, Sgt. Victor Maples takes the stand. An old acquaintance of Kabuo's from the army, Sgt. Maples actually studied kendo with Kabuo for a short period of time. After explaining Kabuo's skill at kendo, Sgt. Maples testifies that Kabuo is indeed very capable of killing another man with a fishing gaff.

Chapter 19 Analysis

The events of this chapter take place on the 13th anniversary of Pearl Harbor. The fact that the events of the trial occur on this date symbolizes the fact that Sgt. Maples' testimony "Pearl Harbors" Kabuo's character and severely damages the case for the defense.

Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Susan Marie Heine, Carl's widow, takes the stand and the story flashes back to September 15, 1954, the day before Carl died. Kabuo comes to visit the Heines' in order to talk about buying the 7 acres that Zenhichi Miyamoto attempted to purchase from Carl Heine Sr. The two men go out into the fields to talk and, eventually, Carl returns alone and explains Kabuo's visit to Susan Marie. Though Carl told Kabuo that he would think about it, Kabuo walked off angrily.

Chapter 20 Analysis

The Heines' marriage is based almost entirely on sex and is, therefore, representative of sex as the key component in a happy marriage. Their excellent sex life ensures that they stay together and are happy.

Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

Nels cross-examines Susan Marie and presses her as to whether Carl gave Kabuo an absolute "no" on the land sale. Susan Marie says that she does not think so, but she did not actually hear any of their conversation to know for sure. Nels completes his questions and dismisses Susan Marie. Then, just as she leaves the stand, the power goes out in the courtroom.

Chapter 21 Analysis

The tree that knocks out the power at the end of the chapter foreshadows the severe damage wrought by the storm. As well, the fact that the snow led to the power being knocked out shows that accidents are taking a firmer hold on the island, the courtroom and, symbolically, on Kabuo's case.

Chapter 22

Chapter 22 Summary

In a fortunate twist of events, Susan Marie Heine is Hooks' last witness and the prosecution rests. So, the judge calls for a recess and everyone leaves the courtroom, including Ishmael.

After a running a few errands and taking pictures of the storm damage, Ishmael returns to the courtroom to learn that Judge Fielding has suspended until tomorrow due to the power problems. So, with nothing to report in the courtroom, Ishmael drives his DeSoto toward his mother's house and happens upon Hisao Imada and Hatsue as they are trying to get their car out of a ditch. Since this happy accident will allow him to talk to Hatsue again, Ishmael offers them a ride.

In the car on the way to the Imadas', Hatsue suddenly blurts out that Ishmael should report that the trial is unfair because the sergeant's testimony was unfair, and there should not even be a trial in the first place. Then she blames Ishmael for being part of the unfairness of it all, though she is not clear on why. Not expecting this extreme and personal attack, Ishmael says nothing until he drops off Hisao and Hatsue.

Chapter 22 Analysis

The overturned car that Ishmael passes on his drive is both the result of the storm and a symbol of the way that accident, on the island and in the court case, has overturned everything. However, since the owner of the car escaped unharmed, it foreshadows the fact that there will be no permanent, human damage in either the storm or in Kabuo's case.

Chapter 23

Chapter 23 Summary

With Kabuo's case suspended until tomorrow, Ishmael goes to the coast guard lighthouse in order to research the history of storms on the island. However, once Ishmael finds himself sitting there in front of a pile of weather records and radio transcripts, the story flashes back to the time shortly after the end of World War II.

Ishmael and Hatsue have both returned to San Piedro, though Ishmael has lost an arm and Hatsue is married to Kabuo. However, Ishmael still misses Hatsue and a chance encounter with her on the beach where they used to meet gives him a chance to talk to her. Unfortunately for Ishmael, Hatsue wants no part of Ishmael and refuses to so much as give him a much-needed hug. Then, once again, she walks away from him.

Returning the story to the coast guard station, Ishmael looks through the radio records that the post keeps and discovers that a large ship passed near Carl Heine's position on the night he died. In fact, the ship was large enough to give off a very large wake and Ishmael determines that it probably tossed around Carl's fishing boat so much that it threw Carl overboard, leading to his death. This radio transcript is exactly the proof that Kabuo needs in order to be free, but Ishmael has not yet decided what to do with it. So he steals a copy of the radio transcript, allowing him to determine what to do about it later.

Chapter 24

Chapter 24 Summary

Ishmael arrives at his mother's house, delivering some supplies that he bought in order to keep her safe and warm during the storm. However, Ishmael's mother, Helen, is doing fine, despite losing her heat and power. In fact, she is still energetic enough to chop wood, which she was doing before Ishmael arrived.

Once Ishmael is settled comfortably, Ishmael's mother tells her son that Kabuo was only arrested only because he is Japanese. Ishmael protests by pointing out the evidence that is clearly against Kabuo, but Helen Chambers dismisses it out of hand. Instead, she puts her faith in emotion and feeling instead of cold facts and she urges Ishmael to do the same.

That night, Ishmael rereads the letter that Hatsue wrote him from the internment camp and remembers how happy he was with her in the days before she was sent away. As he ponders these long ago events, he decides to write the article Hatsue wants him to write. However, his aim is not noble. He really only wants to make Hatsue feel like she owes him something.

Chapter 24 Analysis

Helen Chambers is the voice of reason in this book. This is shown through the fact that racism is a major portion of the book and her statement that Kabuo was only arrested because he is Japanese holds water. As well, the correctness of that statement gives weight to her statement that emotion is more important than facts.

Chapter 25

Chapter 25 Summary

Nels Gudmundsson calls Hatsue as his first witness and, as he does, the story moves to Kabuo and Hatsue just after they have their first child. Though the child brings them happiness, losing the 7 acres of land leaves Kabuo angry and bitter. Instead of being a strawberry farmer, Kabuo becomes a fisherman as he patiently waits for Ole Jurgensen to slow down and sell his farm.

The longed for day arrives and Kabuo rushes over to Ole's in order to buy the 7 acres. However, Kabuo was too late; Ole had already sold the entire farm to Carl Heine Jr. and Kabuo has to talk to Carl instead. Kabuo does so and then, finally, he returns home from a night of fishing and tells Hatsue that Carl agreed to sell the 7 acres. Hatsue and Kabuo are ecstatic, but their happiness is interrupted when they hear about Carl's death. Now it seems that he will never be able to buy the land.

Chapter 25 Analysis

The happiness of the Miyamotos on having a child provides further emphasis on Helen Chambers' statement that Ishmael should have children to be happy. Even though Kabuo is less than happy about losing the land that his father attempted to buy, he and his wife are still happy when their daughter is born.

Chapter 26

Chapter 26 Summary

Alvin Hooks cross-examines Hatsue, asking her why they didn't tell anyone about the land sale or tell the authorities about Kabuo and Carl's meeting on the water. Hatsue explains that telling people about it would cause suspicion to fall directly on Kabuo. Thus, they said nothing so that Kabuo would not find himself suspected of a murder he did not commit.

After Hooks dismisses Hatsue, Nels Gudmundsson calls Josiah Gillanders, the president of the San Piedro Gill-Netters' Association, to the stand. It his testimony, Josiah says that no fisherman would ever board another fisherman's boat unless there was an emergency. In fact, as Josiah says, it would be completely impossible for another man to board another fisherman's boat at sea without help from the person being boarded. However, in cross-examination, Hooks asks Josiah if it is possible for another fisherman to pretend to have an emergency in order to lure someone onto their boat and kill them. Hearing this idea, Josiah admits that it is possible.

Chapter 26 Analysis

The Miyamotos did not go to the police because of the understood racism on the island. This is shown in the fact that Kabuo was, in fact, arrested almost immediately upon suspicion of murdering Carl.

Chapter 27

Chapter 27 Summary

In a flashback to the time shortly after Kabuo was arrested, Kabuo holds to his story that he never saw Carl out on the water and certainly never boarded his boat. In fact, he holds to this story even when he is talking to Nels Gudmundsson, his attorney. However, Nels confronts Kabuo with evidence that shows he boarded the boat and Kabuo finally explains that he did not tell anyone about the meeting because no white man on the island will trust a Japanese man. However, Kabuo finally tells Nels what happened and, while he does so, the story moves back to the night that Kabuo meet Carl on the water.

Kabuo goes out to fish Ship Channel and, after several nights of slim success, Kabuo pulls in some big hauls, giving him hope that it will be a good night. However, as Kabuo continues his fishing, he comes across Carl Heine floating along, dead in the water.

Seeing that Carl's battery is dead, Kabuo gives Carl one of his two batteries so that Carl can finish his night and return to the harbor. And, while Carl uses Kabuo's fishing gaff to hammer out a flange in the battery well, he cuts his hand on the flange. However, Carl is undaunted and the cut bleeds all over Kabuo's fishing gaff, explaining how Carl's blood gets onto the handle.

When they finish fitting the battery and Carl is ready to go, Carl offers to sell Kabuo the 7 acres he wants. Finally able to buy the land he has wanted for so long, Kabuo happily agrees to the terms. It is not until the next day that he learns that Carl has died on the water.

Chapter 27 Analysis

The fact that Carl kept Kabuo's fishing rod shows that he does not always do what his mother tells him, allowing him to be different than his racist mother. As well, the fact that he feels guilty about keeping it shows that Carl is an honorable man and wants to do the right thing, such as sell Kabuo the land. Finally, the fishing rod is a symbolic link between the two men. Though Carl kept it quiet, he still has that bond with his friend from long ago.

Chapter 28

Chapter 28 Summary

Kabuo has just finished telling the court about his meeting with Carl and it is Alvin Hooks' turn to question Kabuo. Hooks asks Kabuo if he made any stops on the way to his boat the next day, and Kabuo says that he did not. Hearing exactly what he wanted to hear, Hooks points out that Kabuo had two batteries in his boat, not the one battery that would be expected if he hadn't stopped to pick up a replacement.

Realizing that he has been trapped, Kabuo then says that he must have had a spare battery in his shed. Of course, Hooks asks him why he has changed his story and Kabuo explains that he cannot remember every detail of events that happened several months ago. However, the damage is already done and Kabuo leaves the stand almost entirely defeated.

Chapter 28 Analysis

The way that Kabuo's watches the snow falling outside symbolizes his fearful fascination with the accident that now controls his life: the death of Carl Heine. Kabuo's entire concentration is focused on the snow for a moment, just as the only thing he can think about the rest of the time is Carl's death, because it has ruled his life since it occurred. As well, Kabuo cannot do anything about Carl's death any more than he can do something about the snow.

Chapter 29

Chapter 29 Summary

The case is drawing to a close and the two lawyers give their closing arguments. Hooks begins by describing Kabuo as a calculating, cold-blooded killer, while Nels recounts Kabuo's account of events and paints a picture of Kabuo as an honorable war hero who should not be judged by his Japanese heritage. After that, the judge gives his final instructions to the jury and then dismisses them to deliberate the verdict.

Chapter 30

Chapter 30 Summary

Much to the relief of the people in the courtroom, the electricity returns as the people assembled wait for the jury to return with the verdict. However, in the jury room, one lone juror, Alexander Van Ness, is not ready to give a guilty verdict. And, since the jurors must return a unanimous verdict in order to convict Kabuo, the court is adjourned for the evening.

Chapter 30 Analysis

The return of electricity to the courthouse symbolizes the fact that accident is no longer controlling events in the courtroom. This foreshadows Kabuo's freedom.

Chapter 31

Chapter 31 Summary

Ishmael goes back to his mother's house for the night and, after Helen Chambers goes to bed, Ishmael stays awake to think about everything that his father did in his life. He thinks about how Arthur Chambers ran a tight, fair newspaper and how he was always dedicated to finding the truth. Thinking about this, Ishmael finally makes up his mind to tell the truth about Carl's death. So, he walks over to the Imadas' and shows them the radio transcript as he explains how the ship that passed near Carl's boat could have caused his death.

Chapter 31 Analysis

Ishmael's mother is reading *Sense and Sensibility* when Ishmael arrives at her house. This symbolizes the fact that she provides both sense and sensibility when she talks to Ishmael.

When Ishmael remembers his father, he also recalls a long list of books that belonged to Arthur Chambers. The fact that Arthur Chambers was so well read symbolically shows that Arthur Chambers was both knowledgeable and wise. This is especially true considering that this symbol is being used in a book that takes itself very seriously and wants to bring both knowledge and wisdom to the reader.

Chapter 32

Chapter 32 Summary

The next day, Hatsue comes to Helen Chambers' house so she and Ishmael can examine Carl's boat together. However, when they arrive at the sheriff's office, Art tells Hatsue to go to the restaurant and wait there while Art and Ishmael go to the evidence warehouse and perform one last investigation of the boat.

As the two men check Carl's boat for any hint that Carl was killed accidentally, they find blood and hair on the railing. This shows that the railing, not Kabuo's fishing gaff, caused the deep gash in Carl's head. Finally, it is proved once and for all that Carl was killed in an accident, not by Kabuo. Once they present the evidence to the judge, charges against Kabuo are dropped.

Chapter 32 Analysis

The events in the sheriff's evidence warehouse are the climax of the novel. The search for evidence of an accident is both the most gripping section of the story, and the moment of crisis that brings about a resolution.

The final line of the book, "accident ruled every corner of the universe except the chambers of the human heart" (460) is the theme for the novel. This is shown through both the fact that Carl's accident dominated Kabuo's life and the way that snow caused so many accidents and problems on the island.

The use of the word "chambers" in the last line shows the symbolism of Ishmael's family name. They are not ruled by accidents that befall them; they rise above these accidents and use their hearts to make judgments. In fact, Helen Chambers herself tells Ishmael to trust to emotion rather than the weight of evidence when he judges Kabuo.

Characters

Helen Chambers

Helen is Ishmael's mother. The nature of their relationship is revealed toward the end of the book after Ishmael discovers evidence that exonerates Kabuo. Rather than tell her exactly what is bothering him (whether to reveal the evidence), Ishmael talks to his mother about God and about moving on with life after the war. When he asks her what he should do, she thinks he is asking for advice about his life, not about the trial. She encourages him to get married and start a family. This discussion about deeply personal matters shows that their relationship is a close one while the advice she gives Ishmael shows that she still mothers her adult son.

Ishmael Chambers

As the reporter for the island of San Piedro, Ishmael is covering the murder trial. He is a native of the island, thirty-one years old, tall, with a hardened expression. Ishmael's father, Arthur (who is deceased at the time of the trial), started the town's newspaper many years ago, so the boy learned the trade from his father. Arthur was a somewhat controversial figure when he was running the newspaper because of his sympathetic views toward the Japanese. Despite losing subscribers, throughout the war Arthur continued to publish the kind of newspaper of which he could be proud. His dedication and integrity seem to be carried out in the character of Ishmael. Ishmael also studied journalism in college.

Ishmael's interest in the trial is personal, however, because he shared an adolescent romance with the accused's wife, Hatsue. Although Ishmael believed that their love would last despite the social obstacles they faced, Hatsue knew that her future lay elsewhere. When she broke off the relationship, he reacted with bitterness, cynicism, and hate, feelings that were compounded when he lost his left arm in World War II.

At the beginning of the novel, Ishmael harbors feelings for Hatsue and sees the trial as an opportunity to work his way back into her life. In the end, he chooses selflessness over selfishness by revealing evidence exonerating Hatsue's husband. At this point, he makes the important choice to move on with his life and seek a better future.

Nels Gudmundsson

Nels is Kabuo's appointed defense attorney. He is a doddering seventy-nine-year-old man who is plagued by partial blindness, arthritis, and various other ailments. He wears bow ties and often loops his thumbs under his suspenders when he addresses a witness.

Nels has a strong sense of justice, a low tolerance for prejudice, and a keen mind. He is sensitive to the humanity of his client, which the reader sees when he insists on giving Kabuo and Hatsue a few private moments to speak. In court, he is able to draw important facts and observations out of witnesses without being aggressive, and he is forthright in his closing statement when he discourages the jury from allowing the trial to be about race.

Carl Heine Jr.

As the novel opens, Carl's recent death is the cause of a murder trial. He was a salmon fisherman whose death aboard his boat leads the sheriff to suspect murder. At the time of Carl's death, he had a wife and three children. Carl was a large, quiet man with an imposing stature and a tendency to brood.

The land deal at the center of the trial was made between Kabuo's father, Zenhichi, and Carl's father, both of whom are deceased at the time of the trial. When the land came into Carl's possession ten years after the war, Kabuo approached him about the possibility of buying the seven acres his father had originally tried to purchase. According to Kabuo, Carl agreed to consider it. Because Carl was not a farmer, he probably intended to make money from it by leasing it to other farmers.

Carl Heine Sr.

At the time of the trial, Carl Sr. is deceased. Carl Sr. made the arrangement with Zenhichi that would enable the Japanese man to make payments toward the land he was leasing so that Kabuo could own it someday (because Kabuo was Americanborn, he was entitled to own land.) Carl Sr. was an understanding and sympathetic man. Before Zenhichi was sent off to imprisonment, he assured Zenhichi that he need not worry about the land. Unfortunately, Carl Sr. died before Zenhichi returned from the camp.

Etta Heine

Etta is Carl Sr.'s widow, a Bavarian woman described as "stout, faded, and wind worn." Her distaste for the Japanese was evident before the war, and these feelings were only exacerbated by the fact that Japan was America's enemy during the war. She was rude to Zenhichi, and she detested the way her husband interacted with the Japanese and the Native Americans who came to work the strawberry fields. When her husband died, she took advantage of Zenhichi's inability to make the last two payments on his land and sold the land to another buyer. She never shows any sign of regret.

Susan Marie Heine

Susan Marie is Carl Jr.'s widow. She is a twenty-eight-year-old blonde woman who is involved in church activities. She looks fashionable in town, but plain at home. When she hears about her husband's death, she merely responds that she knew it would happen some day.

During her testimony, readers learn that Susan Marie believed that she and her husband were wellmatched and that he was a good father. Despite Carl's reticence, Susan Marie feels that she understood her husband. Readers also learn that beneath Susan Marie's tough exterior is a woman who possesses a strong sense of ethics; she admits that what she knows about her husband and Kabuo is only hearsay because she was not present during their interactions. This suggests that she does not seek vengeance.

Alvin Hooks

Alvin is the prosecuting attorney. He presents the facts of the case with convenient omissions to make Kabuo look guilty.

Fujiko Imada

Fujiko is Hatsue's mother. Whether or not Fujiko is still alive at the beginning of the novel is unclear, but a great deal is told of her life before and during the war. Fujiko strove to teach her five daughters good values and self-respect. Having come from Japan under false pretenses (she was led to believe that her husband-to-be was wealthy), she was initially resistant to her new way of life in America. She came to respect her husband, however, and endured many hardships with him until they were able to make a secure life. Knowing what hardship is like, she spoke to her daughters about keeping their dignity in difficult times. This speech reveals to the reader her basic distrust of Americans (especially men).

Hisao Imada

Hisao is Hatsue's father. From him, she learns to respect the unique traditions and qualities of her heritage. He shows her how to behave in a dignified way in the face of disaster, and he demonstrates, through his own marriage, the gender roles appropriate to her culture.

Abel Martinson

Abel is Art's (the sheriff) deputy. He is twentyfour years old, and his family is not from the island. Abel becomes sick when he first sees Carl Jr.'s body, but he still insists on helping and even assists with the autopsy.

Hatsue (Imada) Miyamoto

Hatsue is Kabuo's wife. She watches his trial with intensity and controlled emotion. She is thirtyone, graceful, tall, and thin. When her husband is taken into custody, she becomes terribly lonely. Although she enjoyed a teenage romance with Ishmael, she knew that their relationship would never survive. As a teenager, she was known for her great beauty and was crowned Princess of the Strawberry Festival in 1941. Hatsue's mother taught her to be a proper Japanese young lady and to value tradition and family. Because of her secret romance with Ishmael, Hatsue felt deep shame. She also understood that the cultural differences between them would never support a lasting relationship, so she ended it. She met Kabuo at Manzanar and fell in love with him. When they were married, she finally felt that everything was right.

Hatsue is sensitive, insightful, and humble. Caught between the Japanese culture of her family and the American culture of her home, she struggled in her youth to make sense of her identity. Hatsue is intelligent and aware of the differences between the Eastern and Western cultures. While her husband is on trial, she is devastated, yet she has the ability to advise her husband on how his expressionless manner probably makes him look guilty to the all-white jury.

Kabuo Miyamoto

As the novel opens, Kabuo stands accused of the murder of fellow fisherman Carl Heine Jr. Kabuo is composed, proud, and hard-working. He is physically strong and has angular facial features and short hair. His parents raised him to be a respectable Japanese man, teaching him their trade (strawberry farming) and *kendo*, the method of stick-fighting used by *samurai*. Kabuo's mind is strong, as seen in the description of his time spent in jail. Not only is he an excellent chess player, but he retains control of his surroundings by keeping his light bulb unscrewed so that he does not have to see his cell, allowing him to use his mind to maintain a sense of freedom.

Kabuo is unlike Hatsue in that he has never felt torn between two cultures; he adheres to his Japanese heritage while remaining capable of functioning in American society. As a young man, he admired Hatsue, but it was not until they were at Manzanar that he had the opportunity to pursue her romantically. There, he proved himself to be a reliable, thoughtful, and capable young man, and Hatsue's family was delighted at the union. Against Hatsue's wishes, he enlisted to fight in the war for the Americans as a matter of loyalty. The guilt he continues to feel for having killed three men in Europe haunts him, and his belief in karma leads him to understand his current persecution as a

consequence for committing murder during the war. When he returned from the war, he discovered that the land he expected to own on San Piedro had been sold to someone else. He was furious but remained in control of his emotions. He was eventually forced to find another way to support his wife and children, so he learned fishing.

Zenhichi Miyamoto

Zenhichi is Kabuo's father, who is no longer living at the time of the trial. He made an ill-fated land arrangement with Carl Heine Sr. to purchase seven acres of strawberry fields so that when Kabuo was old enough to own land, he would have it. Zenhichi was a hard-working man of honor who sought to treat people fairly and stand by his word. Despite Etta Heine's rudeness, Zenhichi was always polite and respectful to her.

Art Moran

Art is the county sheriff, who is described as "by nature an uneasy person." Despite never having planned on becoming a sheriff, Art believes in the American system of justice. He is thin, over fifty, balding, and chews Juicy Fruit gum con- stantly. He and his deputy discover the body of Carl Heine Jr. in his nets, and Art launches a murder investigation. Art is a longtime resident of the island, and he takes his job seriously. He is sensitive to those around him, including his inexperienced deputy, whom he knows has never seen a dead body. Although he dreads doing so, he insists on driving to Heine's house to tell Susan Marie about the death of her husband. Art is also able to get the close-knit fishermen to talk to him in a way they do not normally talk to non-fishermen.

Horace Whaley

Horace is one of three doctors on San Piedro and the only one willing to act as coroner. He is almost fifty years old, wears wire-rimmed glasses, and has bulging eyes and a port wine stain birthmark on the left side of his forehead. At the time of the novel, he has been the coroner for a number of years and is experienced at the job; he has recently applied this expertise to the case of Carl Heine Jr.'s death. He is one of many World War II veterans on the island, and when he saw the skull fracture on Carl's head, he told the sheriff to look for a Japanese man with a flat narrow object (like a gun butt) with blood on it. During the war, Horace was a medical officer for almost two years during which the extreme conditions and sleep deprivation had compromised his ability to care for the wounded. As a result, he blames himself for the men who died in his care.

Themes

Interracial Love

The love affair between Ishmael and Hatsue grew out of innocence and familiarity because they had known each other since they were very young. In fact, their first kiss was when they were ten years old. Romance bloomed when they were teenagers. They met secretly in a large hollow cedar tree where they talked and ventured slowly into a physical relationship. Because of the community (and larger society) in which they lived, they knew they must keep their relationship secret from everyone else, including their families. At school, they barely acknowledged each other. When Hatsue was sent to Manzanar, Ishmael devised a plan so that they could write to each other, but it required using false names and ruses. Because of the limits on their relationship, they never experienced the fullness of being young and in love.

Both Ishmael and Hatsue felt badly for keeping such a secret from their families, but Hatsue is bothered by this secret more than is Ishmael. She feels a deep sense of trust and loyalty to her family, so to hide her romance from them is distressing. Her choice to continue the relationship was selfish because she was involved in something she knew her parents would forbid her to see. Ishmael did not fully understand the cultural influences on Hatsue or how they affected her emotional unavailability to him, and so he never really grasped why she remained somewhat distant. He believed they could run away together and everything would be fine, while Hatsue knew that she could never leave her family responsibilities. Ishmael was a young dreamer, as the narrator explains in chapter twelve:

> Sometimes at night he would squeeze his eyes shut and imagine how it might be to marry her. It did not seem so farfetched to him that they might move to some other place in the world where this would be possible. He liked to think about being with Hatsue in some place like Switzerland or Italy or France. He gave his whole soul to love; he allowed himself to believe that his feelings for Hatsue had been somehow preordained. He had been meant to meet her on the beach as a child and then to pass his life with her.

Where Ishmael was a romantic, however, Hatsue was bound to the traditions of her culture. Not only did Ishmael and Hatsue face external social barriers to their romance, they also faced fundamental internalized cultural barriers that they were too young to handle.

Guilt

The theme of guilt runs throughout the novel, touching individual characters at various levels. Kabuo is on trial in court, the forum of determining guilt and innocence, although the reader comes to understand that what Kabuo is ultimately guilty of in this forum is being Japanese during a time when prejudice against the Japanese is common. Guterson shows that guilt is not always what it appears to be and that social institutions can be misused in the name of assigning guilt.

The true guilt in the novel occurs on a personal level as characters struggle to absolve themselves of what they see as their own guilt. Although Kabuo fought in Europe (and therefore did not fight the Japanese), he feels deep guilt for having killed other men. In fact, he believes that his current trial is the result of his having gone unpunished for committing murder during the war, as explained in chapter eleven: "He was a Buddhist and believed in the laws of karma, so it made sense to him that he might pay for his war murders: everything comes back to you, nothing is accidental." He recalls the time he killed a young German man, and muses, "And still there had been more murders after this, three more, less difficult than the first had been but murders nonetheless."

Hatsue feels guilty as an adolescent because she is involved with a *hakujin,* a white person. She knows that her family would disapprove, yet she continues to see him. This act of rebellion disturbs her at a fundamental level and only when she breaks off her relationship with Ishmael and marries Kabuo does she feel that everything is right.

Etta Heine is guilty of prejudice, yet she never acknowledges it to herself. She scoffs at her husband for making the deal with Zenhichi, Kabuo's father, which would allow him to purchase seven acres of strawberry fields. After her husband's death, Etta takes advantage of Zenhichi's absence (while he is at an internment camp) to renege on her husband's agreement. Her language makes it very clear that her motivation is racial; she wants to sell to a white man, not to a Japanese man.

Prejudice

Throughout *Snow Falling on Cedars* the harsh realities of prejudice are portrayed. It is seen not only in the present during the trial, but also in the community's past. The treatment the Japanese received at the hands of both the American government and the white members of their community reflects distrust bred by the war. Because of prejudice, many people did not judge Japanese Americans as individuals; instead, they were all treated as threats to the United States. The stripping of their belongings and rights and their forced internment were outward signs of the prevailing attitude of the time.

On an interpersonal level, prejudice is at work when Zenhichi loses his land and Kabuo is unable to right this wrong. In both cases, the men are at a disadvantage because of prejudice toward Japanese Americans. When Kabuo is charged with the murder of Carl, the community's lingering distrust of the Japanese becomes a heavy burden for Nels,

Kabuo's attorney, to bear. He knows that the evidence is only part of what the jury will use to determine Kabuo's innocence or guilt. The legal tradition that a person is innocent until proven guilty is turned upside-down because of prejudice.

In the romantic relationship between Hatsue and Ishmael, prejudice ultimately tears them apart. She knows that her family will never accept a non- Japanese man as her husband, and at a deeper level she knows that their differences are too great to allow a lifelong relationship. Knowing that the rest of the world will not accept them as a couple, Hatsue and Ishmael treat each other as casual acquaintances at school, and when Hatsue is sent to the internment camp, they must communicate by sneaking letters to each other. At every turn, the Japanese-American characters in the novel are forced to deal with prejudice.

Style

Setting

Guterson's descriptive passages about the settings of the novel have drawn a great deal of comment from critics and readers. Having lived in Washington for all but a year of his life, it is no wonder his descriptions of the landscapes are so rich and sensory. In chapter fourteen, Hatsue seeks solitude in the cedar woods:

> In spring great shafts of sun would split the canopy
> of trees and the litter fall of the forest would come
> floating down□twigs, seeds, needles, dust bark, all
> suspended in the hazy air□but now, in February, the
> woods felt black and the trees looked sodden and
> smelled pungently of rot. Hatsue went inland to
> where the cedars gave way to firs hung with lichen
> and moss. Everything was familiar and known to her
> here□the dead and dying cedars full of punky heartwood,
> the fallen, defeated trees as high as a house,
> the upturned root wads hung with vine maple, the
> toadstools, the ivy, the salal, the vanilla leaf, the low
> wet places full of devil's club.

Besides providing lush descriptive passages, Guterson often puts the features of his settings in motion to give them life and realism. In chapter eight, a peaceful scene is interrupted by the arrival of Ishmael and Hatsue:

> Where the path met the beach the madrona trees
> leaned out over the tidal water. Slender and sinuous,
> olive green, mahogany red, scarlet, and ash, they
> were weighted with broad, gleaming leaves and velvet
> berries and shaded the beach stones and mud flats.
> Hatsue and Ishmael flushed a roosting blue heron
> with feathers the hue of beach mud; it squawked once
> and, elongated wing tips wide, graceful even in sudden
> flight, crossed Miller Bay at a soaring angle to
> perch in the dead top of a far tree.

At times, Guterson gives his settings a history, which gives them a feeling of continuity. Rather than appearing as nice portraits, they seem more permanent, meaningful, and connected to the cycles of life and the town. In chapter one, he writes, "A few wind-whipped and decrepit Victorian mansions, remnants of a lost era of seagoing optimism, loomed out of the snowfall on the town's sporadic hills. Beyond them, cedars wove a steep mat of still green." Describing Carl Heine's house in chapter six, Art thinks,

It was precisely the sort of home Carl *would* build, he thought—blunt, tidy, gruffly respectable, and offering no affront to the world, though at the same time inviting nobody. . . . He had meant—or so word at church had been—to build an elaborate bungalow of the sort his father had built years before on the family farm at Island Center.

This description of the house not only tells something about the character of Carl, but also gives the house a history because it represents Carl's disappointment of not having built a home like his father's.

Omniscient Narrator

Snow Falling on Cedars provides an excellent example of an omniscient narrator. The narrator moves easily in and out of each character's thoughts, memories, and feelings, and then back to objective reporting of events. Guterson applies his imagination to a great deal of research to write with authority about the experience and expertise of each character. As a result, the narrator talks about fishing, farming, adolescent love, Ishmael's father's publishing ventures, wartime horrors, Japanese culture, the history of Amity Harbor, and autopsies. Within the courtroom alone, the narrator can reveal what the doddering Nels Gudmundsson is feeling in his arthritic bones in the same chapter as he follows a witness' testimony, complete with detailed memories.

An omniscient narrator is not confined to talking about the characters in the third person. In *Snow Falling on Cedars,* the narrator takes the reader into the minds of the characters, and these shifts in perspective are noted by the different voices of the characters. Hatsue's thoughts are expressed differently from Ishmael's, for example, and in these subtle differences the reader gets to know the characters. When Horace Whaley is thinking, he is doing so as a doctor and an experienced coroner, which is a different perspective from that of Nels Gudmundsson, who is an experienced attorney trying to achieve justice against the odds. To provide some separation, the narrator often refers to the characters by their entire names, rather than using familiar first names or nicknames. This subtle technique demonstrates that the narrator is not connected to any of the characters but is merely telling their stories from an objective distance.

When the narrator drifts into one of the character's minds, the story actually goes back in time to the event rather than relating the event as a memory. This allows the reader to know exactly what a character was thinking at a specific moment in the past. For example, in chapter two, Art and Abel are preparing to bring up Carl's nets from his boat. Art knows that Carl's body may be in the net, and he is concerned about his deputy. The narrator comments that Art knew that fishermen sometimes die out on their boats: "It was a part of things, part of the fabric of the place, and as sheriff he knew this well. He knew what bringing up the net really meant, and he knew Abel Martinson didn't."

Historical Context

The Internment of Japanese Americans

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. This attack on an American military base sent waves of panic across the country and political pressure led President Franklin Roosevelt to sign Executive Order 9006 on February 19, 1942, forcing citizens of Japanese descent to report to internment camps. On March 31, Japanese Americans along the West Coast were given their instructions to report for registration. The time allowed for preparation ranged from two days to two weeks. During this time, people had to make arrangements for their belongings, which usually meant selling it all at a fraction of its value. Many people took advantage of the Japanese Americans in this situation, including the government. Almost 2,000 internees were told that their cars would be stored safely, but the army soon offered to buy them for less than they were worth. Those who refused to sell were later informed that their cars had been requisitioned for the war effort. A study in 1983 estimated that the total value of lost property and income to the Japanese Americans during this period totaled more than six billion dollars.

In all, there were ten internment camps (sometimes referred to as "concentration camps" although they were not designed for extermination as they were in Germany). The first was southern California's Manzanar. Over the course of the war, the ten camps held approximately 120,000 people. Living conditions were harsh; the camps were surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by armed military personnel, and the internees lived in tiny apartments. Bathrooms and dining rooms were communal. When the internees were released, they were given twenty-five dollars and train fare home.

The cultural ramifications of the Japanese internment camps were significant. The traditional head of the household, the father, was undermined and disempowered. While some American-born Japanese citizens chose to prove their loyalty by enlisting to fight, others renounced their citizenship altogether. The difficult transition from a Japanese identity to a Japanese-American identity was muddied by the American government's treatment of its own citizens.

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan issued a formal apology to the wronged Japanese Americans, offering surviving internees $20,000 as a gesture of recompense.

Life in Puget Sound

The two main occupations in Puget Sound during the time period of the novel were farming and fishing. In both cases, the occupations were lifestyles as well as jobs. Farmers understood each other and fishermen understood each other, but the groups interacted mainly among themselves. As Guterson notes in the novel, fishermen are

somewhat solitary men who share a quiet fraternity with each other and are satisfied with only occasional interaction.

During the mid-twentieth century, fishermen in the Pacific Northwest often used gill nets to maximize their daily catches. These nets hung like curtains from the ships and trapped a multitude of fish by their gills. As the industry became more competitive, gill nets became so large that they caught turtles, dolphins, and birds in addition to fish. Environmentalist groups succeeded in getting such nets outlawed, so their use today is limited to those who use them illegally.

The farmers' lifestyle differed from fishermen's in a few important ways. Farmers were more social, occasionally organizing community events, such as the Strawberry Festival. Another difference was that the wives of fishermen had little to do with their husbands' work while farmers' wives often helped with the heavy demands of working the land. The hours worked by men in the two occupations were also very different. Although farmers got up early to begin the long day's duties, fishermen were often finishing around the time the farmers were beginning. Because of the swim patterns of the fish, fishermen had to get out on their boats very early in the morning, finishing around sunrise, while farmers began their day when the animals awoke and daylight made work possible.

Critical Overview

Critical reception of Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* has been overwhelmingly positive. The novel's evocative setting, courtroom drama, tender love story, language, believable characters, and portrayal of fear and prejudice have all earned critical acclaim. *Los Angeles Times* critic Michael Harris notes,

> David Guterson's haunting first novel works on at least two levels. It gives us a puzzle to solve□a whodunit complete with courtroom maneuvering and surprising turns of evidence□and at the same time it offers us a mystery, something altogether richer and deeper.

The unusual structure of the novel could easily be mishandled, but critics often note that Guterson intertwines the past with the present, the personal with the collective, and the various individual stories with control and grace. In a review of Guterson's short story collection and first novel, Philip Graham of the *Chicago Tribune* writes, "Guterson displays a fine eye for the mysteries of the human soul, creating dramatic moments that are often layered with social and historical complexities." Similarly, Susan Kenney of the *New York Times Book Review* praises the novel's "meticulously drawn legal drama" that provides only the outermost layer of this complex narrative. Only a few critics find that the novel lacks a compelling protagonist and loses momentum in all the detail. Malcolm Jones, Jr., of *Newsweek,* for example, writes that Guterson "loads□and sometimes overloads□his novel with lyrical touches, starting with that haiku-y title."

Perhaps because the novel is set in Guterson's native Washington, his ability to describe the setting is frequently praised by critics. Nancy Pate of the *Chicago Tribune* notes that Guterson "is particularly good at evoking a sense of place," noting that the details "give his story weight." Kim Hubbard of *People Weekly* comments that "the book's rhapsodic descriptions of the island's beauty came from the heart." In *Publishers Weekly* a critic refers to the book as "luxurious" for its small-town details and presentation of important themes within that context.

That Guterson took five years to complete this novel is not surprising given the level of detail he provides on the many aspects of life portrayed in his complex novel. His time seems to have been well spent because critics frequently comment on how realistic and accurate his descriptions are. These comments refer not only to the novel's setting, but also to fishing, farming, and other important processes and cultural forces present in the book. Kenney remarks on Guterson's ability to expertly balance so many details, warning the reader not to lose sight of what is at stake during the trial. She writes:

> Guterson has done his homework on everything from autopsies to Zen Buddhism, taking on the enormous risk of crossing boundaries not just of time, but of sex and culture as well. The result is a densely

packed, multifaceted work that sometimes hovers on the verge of digressiveness, but in Mr. Guterson's skilled hands never succumbs to the fragmentation that might well have marred such an ambitious undertaking. In fact, so compelling is the narrative that we almost lose sight of the central issue, which is, as the defense attorney Nels Gudmundsson reminds us in his summation, whether Kabuo Miyomoto is on trial for murder-even worse, will be found guilty-simply because he is Japanese.

The book's tone and ability to draw on the reader's emotions are also recognized among its strengths. Hubbard observes that the novel "manages to combine issues of prejudice and personal accountability with a crackling courtroom drama." In *Booklist* Dennis Dodge remarks, "Guterson's first novel is compellingly suspenseful on each of its several levels." Describing the novel as "poetic," the *Publishers Weekly* reviewer writes that it "beautifully captures the painful legacy of war and a community's struggle to deal with that pain."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Bussey holds a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies and a bachelor's degree in English literature. She is an independent writer specializ- ing in literature. In the following essay, she demonstrates how Ishmael Chambers would have experienced a different fate had he been more like Moby Dick*'s narrator, Ishmael.*

In many ways, Ishmael Chambers, the World War II veteran and small-town reporter in David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* is similar to his literary namesake in Herman Melville's classic *Moby Dick.* In fact, the two characters have enough in common to warrant a comparison in an effort to understand Ishmael Chambers better. Fundamentally, however, there are significant differences in the two characters' ways of understanding the world. If Ishmael Chambers had been more like Ishmael at this deeper level, he could have saved himself years of anger, resentment, and cynicism. It is likely that he would have married, had a family, and enjoyed the years he wasted on bitterness.

First, it is important to establish that there are enough substantial similarities between the two characters to justify a meaningful comparison. The first signal to the reader is the name itself. Ishmael is an unusual name, and most American readers immediately think of what is perhaps the most famous opening sentence in American literature: "Call me Ishmael." Briefly, the character of Ishmael in *Moby Dick* is a man who heads for the seas in search of adventure. Along the way, he befriends a cannibal, meets the crazed Captain Ahab (whose sole purpose in life is to kill the whale that took his leg), and survives a disastrous boat wreck. *Moby Dick* is such a cornerstone of American literature and the narrator's name is so memorable, Guterson (an English teacher) was certainly aware that readers would make a connection. Guterson's inclusion of a passage referring to *Moby Dick*'s Ishmael further assures the reader that the allusion is intentional. Melville's use of the name is a biblical allusion. The name means "God hears," which refers to both characters' eventual triumphs over seemingly insurmountable odds. Ishmael was the only survivor of Captain Ahab's ship that was lost at sea during Ahab's final pursuit of the whale. Ishmael Chambers fought in the South Pacific during World War II, seeing the rest of his group killed. Although he survived, he came close enough to death that he lost his left arm.

Beyond sharing a name and the meaning associated with it, these two characters have other similarities. They are both participants in a passionate pursuit that is not their own. Ishmael finds himself aboard Captain Ahab's ship, and Ahab is single-minded in his pursuit of the whale. Ishmael Chambers fights in World War II, a conflict so passionately pursued by world leaders that it ended with unparalleled atomic devastation. In both cases, the stakes are life and death. They are both then reporters (Ishmael Chambers being formally occupied as one), only witnesses to the events around them.

Both men are essentially alone in the world. Ishmael Chambers has no wife, no co-workers, and no close friends. He is able to talk to his mother, but is guarded even with her. Ishmael is unencumbered enough to set off for adventure, and his only friend is

made on the trip□the cannibal Queequeg. While Ishmael and Queequeg are friends, they are too dissimilar to bond at a deep level, and they do not have a history together. Just as Ishmael comes to see the very frightening and strange Queequeg as not so different that they cannot be friends, Ishmael Chambers sees Hatsue as more like him than unlike him. That she is Japanese and he is American is of little consequence to him because he prefers to focus on the person behind the ethnicity.

For all of these similarities, however, they differ dramatically in the ways in which they see the world and themselves in it. Ishmael seeks adventure, which indicates his impulse to be part of the world and to experience what the world has to offer him. He expects to venture into the unknown and be changed by it. In *Moby Dick,* he explains that he sees himself as an eagle that dives down, grasps what is needed, and returns to the sky. He sees himself as part of the pattern of the world and, therefore, as someone who is connected to the universe. Ishmael Chambers, on the other hand, would have been content never to have left the island of San Piedro. His plans after graduation are not to enlist for service, and the only reason he considers leaving San Piedro is to take Hatsue with him to a place where they can be together. The things that matter to him are in the small community of San Piedro. His adventure (the war) is a decision made for him and forced upon him, not an effort on his part to find adventure. When he returns, his bitterness is heightened by the changes that have taken place in his absence. Hatsue has married and had children, and he feels that everyone stares at him because of his rolled-up sleeve where his left arm once was. Although he never says so, it is clear that he would have been happier if he could have returned to a San Piedro in which nothing had changed since he left it.

Another fundamental difference between the two characters is that Ishmael is open to what the world offers, but Ishmael Chambers keeps himself closed off from the world. Ishmael is willing to see the world in new ways and to learn how other people and cultures think about life. Ishmael Chambers, on the other hand, is unable even to understand the deep cultural divide that keeps Hatsue distant from him. He imagines that the force of their love alone is sufficient to keep them together because he does not open himself up to learning about the culture of the woman he loves. When he goes to war, he is already bitter and cynical, so he avoids learning anything from his experiences or the other men.

Comparing Ishmael and Ishmael Chambers is important because it shows the reader how Ishmael Chambers' life could have been different. If he had been more like Ishmael, he would have seen himself not as a victim of the world but as a part of it. He would have understood that there are highs and lows in life, and that it was sometimes up to him to determine which direction he would take. Rather than stewing in cynicism and hate, he would have had the opportunity to see himself as a man with the power to climb back up to the sky, like the eagle. Instead, his perspective made him feel trapped and powerless. And if he had shared Ishmael's quality of being open to the world, he would have taken the initiative to understand Hatsue's situation better. While it is unlikely that this would have enabled them to stay together, it would have shown him why they were fated to part. His heart would have been broken, but the break may have been mutual and an act of love for each other's best interests. Instead, he perceived the

break-up as an act of violence committed against him by Hatsue, and he could not forgive her. Because he felt wronged by it, he was paralyzed by it. The hate that Ishmael Chambers felt after the war, both because of the break-up and because of the loss of his arm, incapacitated him for almost ten years. He wasted a decade of his youth in resentment rather than enjoying being back home from the war and pursuing a life for himself.

The irony of Ishmael Chambers' unnecessarily wasted years is that he was given an opportunity to change his course when he returned from the war. After the war, he attended a university, where he began taking literature classes. He took a course in American literature and read *Moby Dick.* He was even struck by the fact that he and the narrator shared the same name. The reader is told in chapter four:

> The next fall Ishmael took up American literature. Melville, Hawthorne, Twain. He was prepared, in his cynicism, to find *Moby Dick* unreadable□five hundred pages about chasing a whale?□but, as it turned out, it was entertaining. He read the whole thing in ten sittings in his booth at Day's and began pondering the whale's nature at an early juncture. The narrator, he found upon reading the first sentence, bore his own name□Ishmael. Ishmael was all right, but Ahab he could not respect and this ultimately undermined the book for him.

Apparently, Ishmael Chambers could not be taught a better way by his literary namesake, but had to learn his lessons by taking a painful and wasteful road for ten years. He met Ishmael in the pages of *Moby Dick,* and he liked him, but he was too distracted by what he found distasteful to see that an invaluable lesson lurked in the pages. The reader can perhaps find comfort in knowing that Ishmael Chambers did eventually find a better way to live by making peace with his past and taking responsibility for his future. Very often, this is the purpose of great literature, and if Ishmael Chambers missed it in reading *Moby Dick,* maybe modern readers will not miss it by reading *Snow Falling on Cedars.*

Source: Jennifer Bussey, Critical Essay on *Snow Falling on Cedars,* in *Novels for Students,* The Gale Group, 2002.

Critical Essay #2

In the following interview-essay, Guterson discusses influences, inspirations, and sense of place in his works.

David Guterson peers out at Miami's lapis Biscayne Bay as though straining to see something else—an island off Washington's dark Puget Sound, his home and the place of his haunting novel, *Snow Falling on Cedars.* "I'm not an urban person," he confesses in a crowded outdoor restaurant. "And I've been in cities endlessly for the past five or six weeks on this book tour. Cities produce in me melancholy or a tension I don't need."

Guterson, 39, received the 1995 PEN/Faulkner Award for *Snow Falling on Cedars.* "It is such an incredible honor," he says, but what coaxes forth his first smile is the thought of returning home to his wife and four children. "What sustains me is to be with my family and to write."

Amid laughing people in tropical colors, the author wears an olive jacket. It brings out his pale green eyes which still search the water. This quiet passion extant in Guterson shines through in *Cedars.* Set in 1954 on Washington's remote San Piedro Island, the novel begins with the mysterious death of a local fisherman. It rouses the community's postwar distrust of their Japanese- American neighbors, and the island's Kabuo Miyamoto is accused of the fisherman's murder. The incident also awakens feelings within Ishmael Chambers, the town's newspaperman who has long loved Kabuo's wife, Hatsue. What results is a taut, many-angled story, both rich and satisfying.

Guterson looks to Anton Chekhov and Jane Austen as models of style and structure, and though he has set his story in the past, it is not old fashioned. "My book is traditional. It runs counter to the post-modern spirit. A lot of writers are concerned with life in the '90s," he says, "I'm not. Post-modernism is dead because it didn't address human needs. The conventional story endures because it does. I'm interested in themes that endure from generation to generation. Fiction is socially meaningful. Every culture is sustained by certain central myths. At its heart, fiction's role is to see these roles and myths are sustained."

The author has also written the nonfiction book *Family Matters: Why Home-Schooling Makes Sense* and the short story collection *The Country Ahead of Us, The Country Behind,* being released in paper this spring. Guterson wrote the stories before his novel, and now when he looks at them, he feels "removed from them to the degree I feel removed from who I was in my twenties when I wrote them. The stories reflect my concerns at that time. *Snow Falling on Cedars* is the work of someone in his thirties."

It's true. Whereas Guterson's stories possess an emotional edge, his novel has a certain maturity, sweeping the reader away with its lush physical description. "The tide and the wind were pushing in hard now, and the current funneled through the mouth of the harbor; the green boughs and branches of the fallen trees lay scattered across the

clean snow. It occurred to Ishmael for the first time in his life that such destruction could be beautiful."

Guterson's gift of evoking a sense of place comes from his love of it. The islands off Puget Sound bear an almost mythic weight for him. "Hemingway said the only way to write about a place is to leave it. There's a certain nostalgia and romance in a place you left. But I don't need to leave to write about it. I don't think anyone but a native could have written this book."

One could argue, then, that with its graceful, restrained images of Japanese-American life, no one but a Nissei could have written it. A former teacher, Guterson conducted extensive research and interviews with the area's Japanese-Americans and so writes with authority about the Miyamotos and the other Japanese-Americans who were herded into internment camps. "It was made real to me. It's part of the history of where I live."

But *Snow Falling on Cedars* goes beyond ethnicity. Guterson explores humanity, penetrating the core of the human heart. "My work comes from inner disturbances, from seeing injustices and accidents and how they affect people's lives in a tragic way."

Guterson agrees one can make almost anything political, including his book, but he hopes it transcends both politics and history. With its evocatively Japanese title and its elegant, restrained prose, *Snow Falling on Cedars* reveals Guterson's affinity for Asian philosophy. "The sense that this world is an illusion, that desire is the root of suffering, the awareness of cause and effect□I have a great respect for all that," he says.

He endows his character Hatsue with this sense of tranquillity. "Hatsue explained her emotional reserve. . . didn't mean her heart was shallow. Her silence, she said, would express something if he would learn to listen to it." The same might be said for the author himself. "I think of myself as a really happy person," says Guterson, allowing himself his second fleeting smile of the afternoon. "What some people interpret as brooding melancholy is serenity. I don't feel required to grasp all the time."

What he does feel, what he works toward, is a sort of stillness, the stillness he creates for Hatsue, the stillness he needs to write. Guterson would rise at five a.m. to work on his novel, facing the blank page when it was still dark and the day's intrusions were distant.

While he has enjoyed writing nonfiction and short stories, Guterson is at work on another novel□the medium he feels best suited to in terms of temperament. He will still rise at five o'clock, but otherwise wants this new book to be nothing like his last one. "It must succeed in its own terms," he insists in the fading glow of afternoon. "It has to be just as powerful, though. It must have an impact on people."

It should resonate for readers the way the landscape of his home resonates for the author. "I grew up in Seattle, but I always knew I wanted to leave," says Guterson. "The greenness of the world, the play of light and living things, stretching endlessly and

regenerating season after season□to have that in daily life is so much more satisfying than buildings and people."

Source: Ellen Kanner, "A Wonderful Irony: The Quietest of Books Makes the Splashiest Debut," in *http://www. bookpage.com/9601bp/fiction/snowfallingoncedars.html,* January 25, 2001.

Critical Essay #3

In the following review, Yogi praises Guterson for his research but criticizes Snow Falling on Cedars *for its uneven pace and the underdevelopment of its main character.*

David Guterson's well-written first novel is at various moments a courtroom drama, an interracial love story and a war chronicle. Guterson melds these components into a novel that explores how individuals and communities abuse, retreat from or use their histories as motivating forces.

Set in 1954 on the fictional island of San Piedro near the San Juan Islands in Washington, *Snow Falling on Cedars* focuses on the trial of Kabuo Miyomoto, a *Nisei* (second-generation Japanese American) charged with the murder of a fellow fisherman and childhood friend, Carl Heine.

The novel unfolds to reveal complex relationships among the book's main characters: Kabuo; his wife, Hatsue; Carl Heine; and Ishmael Chambers, the local newspaper owner who is covering the trial.

Before the war, Miyomoto's father purchased land from Heine's father, and young Kabuo and Carl were friends. Hatsue and Ishmael were also childhood friends and adolescent sweethearts. The war, however, forever alters these relationships.

Hatsue and Kabuo are interned in Manzanar, where they fall in love and marry. Heine and Chambers see battle in the Pacific, and Kabuo joins the heroic 442nd all-Japanese American combat team to fight in Europe.

The characters return to San Piedro after the war and try to resume their lives. Kabuo discovers, however, that during the war, Heine's mother, motivated in part by racial prejudice, sold the Miyomotos' land to another farmer. Haunted by this injustice, Kabuo seeks to regain his family's land, creating a strain between him and Carl.

Chambers finds it difficult to readjust to life in San Piedro, in part due to the loss of an arm in the war. He takes over his father's newspaper but finds little meaning in his work. His reintegration is compounded by his lingering love for Hatsue.

The novel is well-researched and, for the most part, emotionally realistic. Guterson has a good eye for telling details and writes vividly about the verdant landscape of San Piedro, the profound distress of combat and the solitariness of fishermen at work.

But because the novel mixes genres, it moves at an uneven pace. Not surprisingly, the courtroom scenes move briskly and suspensefully. Other scenes, especially those focusing on Chambers' existential search for meaning, are more ponderous.

Most of the book is written from the various perspectives of the characters, a tricky and difficult narrative technique that Guterson generally employs with success. But in places

it means uneven character development, with some characters more convincingly drawn than others.

The novel's main flaw is the underdevelopment of Kabuo, ostensibly the story's main character. Guterson balances between exploding ethnic stereotypes and reinforcing them.

Kabuo is portrayed as stoic, strong and angry. Although he reveals emotional vulnerability in brief moments, his character could have benefited from more shading.

There are minor points in the novel that seem slightly inconsistent with Japanese American history. It seems unlikely, for example, that so many *Issei* (first-generation Japanese immigrants) would speak English as fluently as they do in the novel. The disintegration of family life in the Manzanar internment camp occurs a bit too quickly. Important distinctions between the *Nisei*-dominated Japanese American Citizens League and *Issei* organizations are not made.

Overall, though, this is an intriguing novel that explores the burdens of history and how random circumstances combined with ethnic stereotypes contribute to resulting troubles and tragedies.

Source: Stan Yogi, "A Friendship Shattered by War," in *San Francisco Chronicle,* January 1, 1995, p. 2.

Adaptations

Snow Falling on Cedars was adapted to audio by Random House in 1998. The abridged version is narrated by B. D. Wong, and the unabridged version is narrated by Peter Marinker.

In 1999, the novel was adapted to film by Universal Pictures. Directed by Scott Hicks, this well-received film starred Ethan Hawke as Ishmael and Youki Kudoh as Hatsue. In addition to an Oscar nomination for Best Cinematography, the film was nominated for an American Society of Cinematographers Award, and Golden Satellite Awards for Best Cinematography, Best Actress, and Best Picture. The film won a number of awards for Best Cinematography from city and state film critics' groups.

Topics for Further Study

Read about Japanese internment camps in the United States during World War II. Write a oneweek diary from the point of view of a teenager whose family is interned in one of these camps. As you write from this perspective, keep in mind such factors as the life you left behind, how other members of your family are affected, and how this experience may affect your future.

Guterson uses highly descriptive imagery in portraying the settings of *Snow Falling on Cedars.* Choose three locations that are familiar to you and write about them, using sensory details (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings) to give a reader a true sense of each place.

Not surprisingly, some Japanese Americans sought to right the injustices of their internment through the court system. The first case to reach the Supreme Court was as early as 1943 when Gordon Hirabayashi, a student at the University of Washington, disobeyed the curfew and refused to report for evacuation. Study this case and see if you are surprised by the Court's decision. Then pretend you are a member of the Court during this case and write an opinion (an official Court statement explaining a decision) in which you explain why you voted the way you did.

One of the novel's themes is that of interracial love. This is a theme that has been explored throughout America's history in a variety of media. Look for examples of this theme in film, literature, art, and drama. Try to find examples that portray different types of interracial romance, not only African American and Caucasian. Take what you learn and prepare a presentation for a class on cultural history in the United States. Why is this theme important in American history, and what do you see as the future of this source of controversy?

Compare and Contrast

1954: Wartime experiences figure largely into the lives of veterans who have returned home. Areas in which there is a sizeable Japanese- American population still feel the tension of reintegrating these citizens back into society after they return from internment camps.

Today: While wartime experiences continue to be important to veterans of World War II, the general population is most aware of them only around Veteran's Day and anniversaries of significant events in the war.

1954: Because of World War II, there is a lingering distrust of the Japanese by many people. As Japanese Americans return from internment camps, they face prejudices that were not present prior to the war.

Today: While most minority and ethnic groups face a degree of prejudice, the after-effects of World War II are rarely to blame for prejudice against Japanese Americans.

1954: Many Japanese Americans retain a link to their past in their spiritual lives by practicing meditation. This practice enables a person to achieve a heightened state of relaxation and focus, which often results in greater insight and the ability to be calm in difficult situations.

Today: Many Americans from a wide variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds have discovered meditation and incorporate it into their daily lives. While methods of meditation vary widely, the goals remain the same: relaxation, concentration, insight, and a sense of calm, or inner peace.

What Do I Read Next?

Guterson's *The Country Ahead of Us, the Country Behind* (1989) is a collection of ten short stories about middle-class suburbia. This collection was Guterson's first published book, and it received accolades from critics.

Joy Kowaga's award-winning *Obasan* (1994) is based on the author's personal experiences as a Japanese-Canadian girl during World War II. The story is about a young girl named Naomi who is relocated with her family during the war. As an adult, Naomi struggles to make peace with the injustices endured in her past.

Harper Lee's classic *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) is the story of a trial held in a small town in the South. Told from the point of view of a young girl named Scout, this novel explores themes of prejudice, justice, and small-town dynamics.

E. Annie Proulx's 1994 novel *The Shipping News* is the story of Quoyle, a Newfoundland fisherman who seems unimpressive to others, though not to the reader who witnesses his psychological and spiritual rebirth. Besides being an intriguing character study, this novel gives insight into the lifestyle and culture of fishermen.

In 1999, John Tateishi compiled the oral histories of thirty Japanese Americans who experienced the indignities of relocation camps during World War II. His book, *And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps,* preserves the individual accounts of the people who were forced to live in such camps.

Further Study

Brokaw, Tom, *The Greatest Generation,* Random House, 1998.

Brokaw recounts the firsthand experiences of World War II veterans and the women they left behind. The range of experiences and sentiments captured in this book are educational, moving, and inspiring. Also look for the video documentary featuring Brokaw's interviewees.

Guterson, David, *East of the Mountains,* Harcourt Brace, 2000.

This second novel by Guterson is about a widower in Seattle who discovers that he is dying of cancer. He decides to drive to the Cascades to take his life, but his plans are thwarted, and he begins reflecting on his life.

Houston, Jeanette, *Farewell to Manzanar,* Houghton Mifflin, 1973.

Houston's story of a young girl subjected to life in the internment camp of Manzanar is frequently recommended for its historical accuracy and its sensitive portrayal of one girl's experience. Although it is appropriate for nine- to twelve-year-old readers, this book is also appreciated by older students and adults.

Mantell, Suzanne, "The Rise of *Snow,*" in *Publishers Weekly,* Vol. 242, No. 51, December 18, 1995, pp. 21-22.

Mantell traces the unusual publishing history of *Snow Falling on Cedars,* including information about Guterson's history with his agent and editors' reactions to the novel. The article also explores theories as to why the novel became such a runaway paperback bestseller.

Mathews, Linda, "Amid the Cedars, Serenity and Success," in *New York Times,* February 29, 1996, pp. C1, C4.

Mathews's article includes an overview of the book and its influences and information about the author and his workspace. She also writes about how the success of *Snow Falling on Cedars* has (and has not) affected the author's life.z

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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