

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* Book Review by Alexandra Mar. 2025

If you're looking for a book that will completely immerse you in a world of love, self-discovery, and powerful storytelling, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston is the one. It's one of those books that sticks with you long after you turn the last page, and for good reason. The novel, first published in 1937, is an emotional and beautifully written story about a Black woman named Janie Crawford as she navigates life, love, and independence in the early 20th century South.

At its core, this book is about Janie's journey to find her own voice and happiness. We meet her as a young girl raised by her grandmother, who wants her to have a stable, secure life—something she believes can only be achieved through marriage. So, Janie is pushed into a relationship with an older man, Logan Killicks, who provides for her but doesn't offer the love and freedom she dreams of. From there, she moves on to two more relationships, each teaching her something new about herself and what she truly wants from life.

One of the most compelling parts of the novel is how Janie grows as a person through her experiences with each of her three husbands—Logan Killicks, Joe (Jody) Starks, and Tea Cake. Logan treats her like a worker rather than a wife, Jody tries to control and silence her, and Tea Cake, while imperfect, encourages her independence and brings passion into her life. Through these relationships, she learns that true love and happiness come from within, not just from others.

Hurston's writing is poetic, rich, and full of life. She uses dialect to bring her characters to life, making the dialogue feel incredibly authentic. While the Southern dialect might take a little getting used to, it adds so much depth to the characters and their world. Her descriptions of nature, emotions, and even small moments are so vivid that they make you feel like you're right there with Janie, watching the sun set over the horizon or feeling the warmth of a new romance.

One of my favorite parts of the book is the way Hurston describes Janie's longing and search for something more. Right from the start, when Janie watches the horizon and dreams of love, you can feel her yearning. The novel's symbolism—especially the pear tree—adds another layer to the storytelling. The pear tree represents Janie's ideal vision of love: natural, beautiful, and fulfilling. Throughout the book, she keeps chasing that dream, and it's inspiring to see her not settle for less.

Even though this book was written nearly 90 years ago, it still feels relevant today. Janie's struggle to find her own path in a world that constantly tries to dictate her choices is something that many people—especially young women—can relate to. The novel explores themes of love, freedom, gender roles, and resilience in a way that feels timeless.

Also, if you're into books with strong female protagonists, this one is a must-read. Janie isn't perfect, but she's real. She makes mistakes, gets hurt, but ultimately grows stronger and finds her own happiness on her own terms. Her journey is both heartbreaking and empowering.

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* isn't just a book; it's an experience. Hurston crafts a powerful story that makes you think about love, independence, and what it truly means to find your voice. While the dialect might be challenging at first, it's absolutely worth it. This book is a classic, and if you give it a chance, you'll see why.