

# THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD: MOVIE VERSION

Study Guide compares the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston to the movie version *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (2005) starring Halle Berry.



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**SAMPLE THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD: MOVIE VERSION**

**THE MOVIE VERSION OF THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD IS NOT LIKE THE BOOK by Zora Neale Hurston**

**RECOMMENDED MOVIE:** *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (2005) starring Halle Berry. The film leaves out some characters and parts of the plot, but is a solid representation of the novel. Some dialogue is directly from the novel. Halle Berry is a perfect choice to portray the main character Janie.

**HOW ACCURATE IS THE MOVIE VERSION OF THE BOOK?**

**Plot:** ★★☆☆☆      **Characters:** ★★★★★      **Setting:** ★★★★★

**Structure:** ★★★★★      **Symbols:** ★★★★★      **Theme:** ★★★★★

**WHAT'S IN THE BOOK THAT'S NOT IN THE MOVIE?**

The Washburn family, Alphabet, Nanny's life as a runaway slave, Leafy, the yellow mule dragging-out, root doctor, poison rumor, Who Flung, Tea Cake's guitar, blue satin dress, Tea Cake's party, Nunkie's flirtation, Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Turner's brother, the destruction of Turner's restaurant, Tea Cake's gambling, the cow, Tea Cake's burial of the dead in Palm Beach, Janie's arrest and trial, Tea Cake's funeral, seed packet, Lige, Walter Stone, Sop-de-Bottom, Bootyny, Stew Beef, Dockery, Sterett, and Coodemay .

**WHAT'S IN THE MOVIE THAT'S NOT IN THE BOOK?**

Janie's floating in the water, pigs, monogrammed handkerchief, Hezekiah's gossiping, Janie's piano lesson, Tea Cake's denim jacket, Tea Cake's harmonica.

**WHAT'S THE SAME?**

Nanny, pear tree, Logan Killicks, Joe Starks's business success, head rags, the lamp-lighting ceremony, Janie and Tea Cake's romance, life on the muck, Seminole Indians, the hurricane, dog bite, death scene.

## **SAMPLE *THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD*: MOVIE VERSION**

### **THE MOVIE: SUMMARY**

The following is a scene-by-scene comparison of the movie to the corresponding chapters in the book.

### **THE MOVIE: CHAPTER 1**

At sunset, neighbors in Eatonville, Florida sit on their porches gossiping about Janie, an attractive widow walking toward them. (**ACCURATE**) The neighbors are unaware that Janie has survived a hurricane and is returning from burying the dead. (**ACCURATE**) The neighbors wonder why she is wearing muddy overalls. (**ACCURATE**) They wonder what she will do with the money the old man (her second husband Joe Starks) left her. (**ACCURATE**) They wonder what happened to the young man named Tea Cake who used to be her sweetheart. (**ACCURATE**) When Janie reaches the porches she says, “Afternoon ladies,” and walks directly to the gate of her house. (**ACCURATE**, but in the book Janie says, “Good evenin’.”)

After Janie enters her house, the women on the porches continue to gossip and criticize Janie for not stopping to chat with them. (**ACCURATE**) They wonder if she will get back together with her young boyfriend Tea Cake. (**ACCURATE**) One of the women tells someone to go get Janie’s best friend Pheoby Watson. (**ERROR**: In the book Pheoby is on the porch and is the only woman who defends her friend Janie)

As Janie enters her house, she picks a rose. (**ERROR**: Not in the book) Once inside, Janie sits at the piano and plays. (**ERROR**: Not in the book) She looks at the photograph of her husband Joe and her. (**ERROR**: Not in the book)

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