

Snow Falling on Cedars: A Comprehensive SparkNotes Literature Guide

David Guterson's 1994 novel, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and has captivated readers with its intricate plot, exploration of racial prejudice, and deeply human characters. This SparkNotes Literature Guide provides a comprehensive analysis of the novel, offering insights into its themes, characters, plot, and symbolism.



Snow Falling on Cedars (SparkNotes Literature Guide) (SparkNotes Literature Guide Series) by Baby Professor

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 211 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 72 pages
X-Ray for textbooks : Enabled



Themes

- **Racial prejudice:** The novel explores the deep-rooted racism in the fictional town of San Piedro Island towards its Japanese American residents, particularly during World War II.
- **Memory and the past:** Characters grapple with the memories of the past, both personal and historical, and how they shape their present.

- **Redemption and forgiveness:** Guterson examines the possibility of redemption and forgiveness in the wake of tragedy and injustice.

Characters

- **Ishmael Chambers:** The protagonist, a Japanese American fisherman accused of murdering a white fisherman.
- **Hatsue Imada:** Ishmael's wife, who is pregnant with their second child.
- **Nels Gudmundson:** The prosecutor in Ishmael's trial and a former friend.
- **Arthur Chambers:** Ishmael's father, who was imprisoned in a Japanese internment camp during World War II.
- **Etta Heine:** A white woman who testifies against Ishmael in court.

Plot

The novel begins with the arrest of Ishmael Chambers for the murder of Carl Heine, a white fisherman. The story unfolds through flashbacks as Ishmael's trial progresses, revealing the complex relationships between the characters and the deep-seated racial tensions that exist in the community.

As the trial unfolds, secrets are revealed, and the characters must confront their past and present actions. The jury's eventual verdict highlights the challenges of seeking justice in a society tainted by prejudice.

Symbolism

- **The snow:** The snow that falls throughout the novel represents purification and renewal, as well as the isolation and silence that permeate the community.

- **The cedars:** The tall, majestic cedars on San Pedro Island symbolize resilience and strength, as well as the enduring bonds between the characters.
- **The salmon:** The salmon fished by Ishmael and his fellow fishermen represent both sustenance and the cycle of life and death.

Snow Falling on Cedars is a powerful and thought-provoking novel that explores the complexities of human nature, the consequences of prejudice, and the enduring power of hope and resilience. This SparkNotes Literature Guide provides essential insights into the novel's themes, characters, plot, and symbolism, offering readers a deeper understanding of David Guterson's masterpiece.



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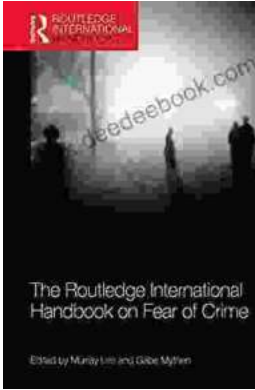
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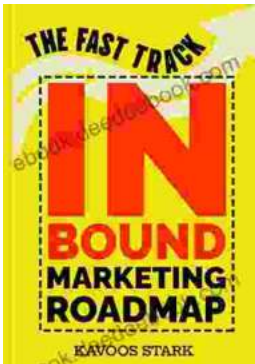
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