



St. Petersburg after a 1935 hurricane.

“Well,” he said humbly,
“reckon you never
‘spected tuh come tuh
dis when you took up
wid me, didja?”

“Once upon uh time, Ah
never ‘spected nothin’,
Tea Cake...But you
come ‘long and made
somethin’ outa me.”

Part 1

Symbolism -or- “There’s a hurricane in the middle of my chapter!”

In Chapter 18 a massive hurricane roars through the muck where Tea Cake and Janie have been living and working for the past two years.

- What could the hurricane be a symbol of?

HINT: THINK ABOUT HOW IT IS SYMBOLIC OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JANIE AND TEA CAKE, AS WELL AS WHAT IT DOES FOR THEM.

During the hurricane Janie is nearly killed by an angry dog, but Tea Cake intervenes and saves her. As they seek shelter Hurston writes,

... they found a place to sleep. It was just that. No place to live at all. Just sleep. Tea Cake looked all around and sat heavily on one side of the bed.

[167 Hurston]

- What inferences can you make about the affect of the hurricane and subsequent dog fight have had on Tea Cake ? What do you anticipate happening as a result of this?

Part 2

Hurston writes,

They huddled closer and stared at the door. They just didn’t use another part of their bodies, and they didn’t look at anything but the door. The time was past for asking the white folks what to look for through that door. Six eyes were questioning *God*.

[159 Hurston]

- It is easy to see why their eyes were questioning God in this situation, but what do you think the significance of the novel’s title is, based on what you’ve read thus far?