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The test short story summary

Here are some plans to help with your revision for your timed critical essay on 23rd of March. First Plan: Setting TARTSS intro - 'The Test' by Angelica Gibbs. This story is set in the 1950s Southern States of America, a time when Jim Crow Laws were enforced and racism was prevalent. The author uses this setting to convey the theme of racism and shows how it affects the protagonist, Marion. Second Plan: Setting inside car with Mrs E. In this part of the story, we see Marian's character being portrayed as responsible and worthy. However, the society she lives in prevents her from being paid fairly for her work. Third Plan: Setting inside car with the examiner. The isolated setting of the car makes Marian feel vulnerable and isolated. The examiner's behavior is also significant, using diminutive forms of Marion's name to show disrespect towards her. This is a deliberate attempt to provoke her and make her lose nerve during the test. The story of 'The Test' skillfully employs foreshadowing and symbolism to convey the significance of the bridge setting, warning the reader of the dangers Marian faces. The ominous sign on the bridge reads: "Proceed with caution. Dangerous in slippery weather," indicating that Marian is navigating treacherous terrain both physically and metaphorically. The bridge serves as a potent symbol for equality, representing the long and arduous journey Marian must undertake to gain acceptance into the society that excludes her. As Marian stalls while crossing the bridge, it becomes evident that her path to equality will be marked by setbacks and challenges. However, just when she nears her goal, Marian's resolve crumbles in the face of the examiner's cruelty, rendering her incapable of achieving her objective. The setting at this moment is crucial, as it underscores the gravity of the test for Marian. In a pivotal turn of events, the examiner's anger boils over upon Marian's outburst, prompting him to scribble "Four random crosses" on her paper. The use of the word "random" is noteworthy, implying that the examiner seeks to underscore the arbitrary nature of his actions, and perhaps even justify his cruelty as an unfortunate but unavoidable consequence. The narrative concludes with Marian returning home in defeat, no longer the driven individual she once was. Her failure to pass the test has left her demoralized and lacking in determination. Finally, Marian says "damn"? This event significantly affects her, and it's essential to consider its impact in relation to racism and subtlety. The story highlights this theme through its setting, which adds to the tension between Marian and the driving instructor, Mrs. E. The story is set in the USA, with a history of slavery, which influences both the instructors' attitudes and assumptions. However, it's also set inside Mrs. E's car, making Marian even more vulnerable while Mrs. E feels more powerful. This setting creates a sense of power imbalance between the two characters, which affects how we perceive them. The setting also plays a crucial role in conveying the theme of racism. The story highlights the importance of context and subtlety in portraying this issue. The author effectively uses word choice and symbolism to convey the message. Regarding the ending of the story, it raises questions about the impact of societal pressures on individuals, Marian's struggles with crossing the bridge of equality serve as a powerful reminder of the challenges faced by those fighting against racism. You're only as good as half your worth. The setting is crucial here because we see Mrs. E relying on M to pass her test. This shows that Mrs. E trusts Marian and believes she deserves to pass. Inside the car with the examiner, things take a dark turn. He begins to be overfamiliar with Marian, using diminutive forms of her name like 'Mandy' or 'Mandy-Lou.' This suggests he doesn't regard her as his equal, making himself seem more powerful. The isolated setting allows his disrespect to grow, and he starts showing his true racist colors by calling Marian a derogatory term. The driving test is symbolic of Marian's independence and acceptance into society. As she approaches the bridge, the setting becomes increasingly important. A sign reads "Proceed with caution. Dangerous in slippery weather," hinting that Marian is on treacherous ground. The bridge represents the barrier to equality, and Marian's struggle to cross it illustrates the lengthy process of achieving equality. However, just as M seems close to crossing the bridge, she can't take the examiner's disrespect anymore and cries out "Damn you!" This ruins her chances of gaining equality. The final setting is significant because the story ends where it began - back in the car with Mrs. E. Marian has lost her determination, and her defeat is palpable as she doesn't drive home. (Note: I've kept the original text's language and structure while summarizing the main points.) Angelica Gibbs masterfully employs literary devices in "The Test" to elicit sympathy from the reader for Marian, a young black woman re-taking her driving test. The narrative conveys Marian as a trustworthy and diligent individual. However, upon stepping into the instructor's car, she is subjected to racist and inappropriate comments that ultimately lead to her failure. Marian's soft voice was laced with an unaccented tone as she spoke to Mrs. Ericson about her preference for a white companion when meeting new people. However, Mrs. Ericson remained unconvinced and shifted uncomfortably in her seat. As they drove through the suburban streets, Marian navigated through the crowded boulevard, where many cars were headed towards the beaches on the hot June day. "Do you want me to drive?" Mrs. Ericson asked, referring to Marian's tendency to get anxious during driving. "I'd be happy if you're feeling stressed." Marian declined, and instead, they chatted quietly about her learner's permit and the driving test she had taken earlier. When the inspectors arrived, Marian pulled over, displaying her documents: a permit, car registration, and birth certificate. As they waited for their turn, Mrs. Ericson expressed her desire to hire Marian as a driver for her children, which would simplify things at home. Marian's face lit up with excitement at the prospect, but Mrs. Ericson reassured her that she was worth much more than what she was being paid. The inspectors arrived, and despite initial reservations, they were pleasant and welcoming, especially one who didn't seem to mind their company. Marian drove smoothly alongside Mrs. Ericson, feeling a sense of freedom with the inspector's guidance. As they cruised down the street, the inspector jotted down notes in his compact notebook. He asked Marian her age, to which she replied, "Twenty-seven." The inspector cast a sideways glance at her before posing another question, this time about the number of children she might have. Marian remained silent. At the next corner, the inspector instructed her to park between a truck and a green Buick, squeezing into the tight space with some maneuvering. He then inquired about her driving experience, to which she replied that she had driven for three years with a license from Pennsylvania. The inspector's curiosity was piqued as he asked why she wanted to drive a car, to which Marian responded by mentioning her employer's need for her to transport their children to and from school. The inspector's line of questioning became more pointed, asking if she snuck out at night to meet someone younger, but Marian denied this, laughing along with him. He then had her perform a series of driving tasks, including turning around in the middle of a block, navigating through heavy traffic on Main Street, and stopping and starting on a bridge over railroad tracks. As they drove off the bridge, the inspector was taken aback by her ability to read signs and recalled that she had graduated from college last year, his amusement causing him to lose control. The final test, however, proved more challenging for Marian as her foot slipped off the clutch pedal, stalling the engine. Her frustration boiled over into a curse at the inspector, who lost his joviality immediately, instructing her to return to the starting point and making four black crosses on her application form. Mrs. Ericson was waiting patiently by the curb when Marian pulled up, but the tension between them was palpable as they exchanged a knowing glance.