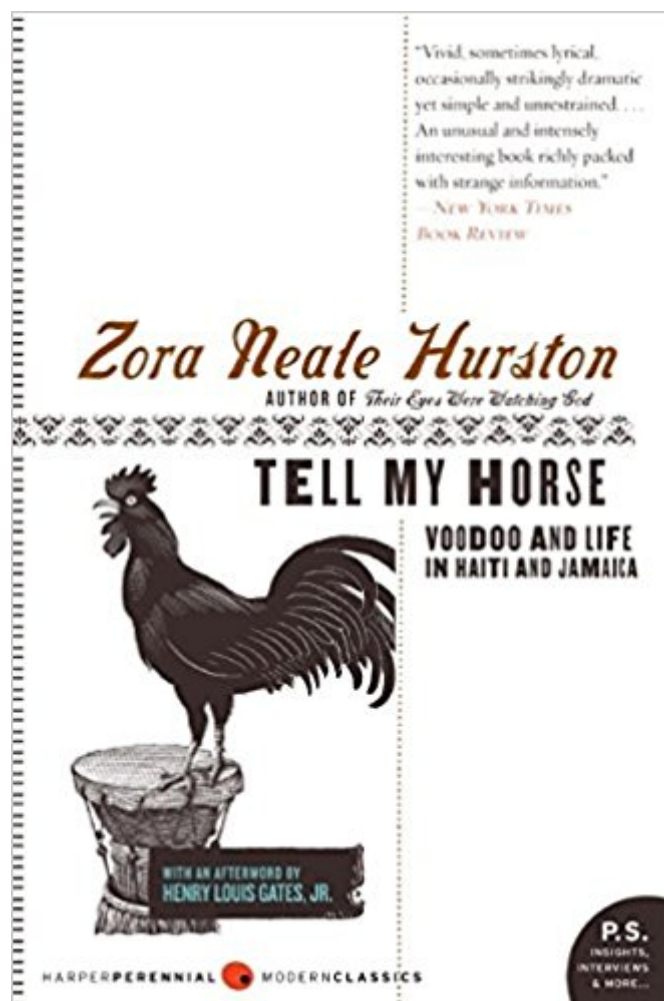


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Tell My Horse: Voodoo And Life In Haiti And Jamaica



Synopsis

Based on acclaimed author Zora Neale Hurston's personal experiences in Haiti and Jamaica where she participated as an initiate rather than just an observer during her visits in the 1930s Tell My Horse is a fascinating firsthand account of the mysteries of Voodoo. An invaluable resource and remarkable guide to Voodoo practices, rituals, and beliefs, it is a travelogue into a dark, mystical world that offers a vividly authentic picture of ceremonies, customs, and superstitions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Zora Neale Hurston, the author of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, was deemed "one of the greatest writers of our time" by Toni Morrison. With the publication of *Lies and Other Tall Tales*, *The Skull Talks Back*, and *What's the Hurry, Fox?* new generations will be introduced to Hurston's legacy. She was born in Notasulga, Alabama, in 1891, and died in 1960.

Although most of those who recognize Zora Neal Hurston's name think of her fiction, Hurston was also an anthropologist, a student of Franz Boas, one of the last great public intellectuals in the 20th century. This wonderful, unique monograph provides a history of key events and impressions of daily life in Haiti in a beautiful, accessible manner. History, politics, and Voodoo are the main topics, and each is covered in a way that is both readable and informative. Hurston's voice is uncommon as an anthropologist (there were not many black women anthropologists at the time), and her narrative weaves observation with interpretations smoothly and beautifully, so that it has about it the feel of a folktale, with scenes joyous, haunting, horrible, and at times, downright creepy. Hurston, who did not often (if ever) say why she was there, was truly a part

of the daily lives of the people with whom she stayed, and she withheld information about why she was there because she knew that if she told the people, she would see a performance of people's lives, rather than actual lives, staged dances rather than real dances. Hurston also brings us a superb example of participant observation, and she makes no pretense that she can somehow get data that is completely uninformed by her presence. Neither does she accept stated perceptions at face value, but rather, challenges them when she feels it is appropriate. Consequently, her grasp of what is going on around her is much stronger. One critique I do have is that Hurston makes sweeping, reductionist statements that betray her positionality (an educated black woman from the United States) in some aspects. I am not saying she wasn't reflective, as there are many comments throughout the book that lead me to believe she was, but rather, that reflectiveness isn't ever explicitly stated. For those who enjoy political intrigue, reading about the death of Leconte (chapter 9) might prove quite enjoyable. Leconte isn't the only memorable character in the book, even if, historically speaking, he may be the best known. Or perhaps that nod goes to Vilbrun Sam. In any case, there is also the buffoon president, his Voodoo priestess daughter, and her husband the goat. Oh, and zombies. The layout of Hurston's book sets the reader up for the world in which voodoo is at work at that period of time in history, in all places, at all levels of society, leading up to the title chapter, "Go Tell My Horse," which refers to the "mounting" (or possession) of a person by a loa. Whether for enjoyment or assignment (although I do hope those aren't mutually exclusive), *Go Tell My Horse* is an enjoyable, fascinating observation of Haiti in the first half of the 20th century, and I highly recommend you give it a read.

This book has changed my life. As a speaker who presents talks on Zora Neale Hurston, I highly recommend this text. The remembrances about Zora's life in Haiti are remarkable and will certainly add to your research. When I found the text on , I bought the book right away. When I took the text to a conference, I was delighted to see how other Professors who were surprised to see the publication.

This book is as mysterious and thought-provoking as expected from the author. As always, she presents the reader with a point of view that is very personal, and so deeply informed. I don't believe anyone else could have had the range of resources she did on the subjects. I knew very little about Voodoo, or the history of Jamaica and Haiti. I trust Ms. Hurston to have given us an insightful, if brief overview of the state of affairs at that time, in these places. The photos are remarkable.

Fascinating. A must read!

Interesting

Wonderful inside perspective into Haiti and Jamaica's culture, very well written by a very knowledgeable observer. Simply amazing reading for anyone interested in the Caribbean, its culture and traditions

It's Zora Neale Hurston

Thought this might be a little dry reading, but it was good. It held my interest, and was very interesting.

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