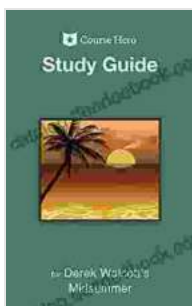


# A Comprehensive Study Guide for Derek Walcott's *Midsummer*

Derek Walcott's *Midsummer* is a complex and challenging play that has been praised for its lyrical beauty, its exploration of Caribbean history and culture, and its insightful commentary on postcolonialism. This study guide will provide you with the tools you need to understand and appreciate this important work of literature.

## Plot Summary

*Midsummer* is set on the Caribbean island of St. Lucia during the summer solstice. The play follows the lives of several characters, including a group of young people who are preparing for a Midsummer Night's Dream performance.



## Study Guide for Derek Walcott's *Midsummer* by Course Hero

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 963 KB

Print length : 32 pages

Lending : Enabled

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The play begins with the arrival of Harry Scobie, a white Englishman who has come to the island to research the history of slavery. Scobie's presence disrupts the lives of the islanders, and he eventually becomes the catalyst for a series of events that lead to tragedy.

## Characters

- **Harry Scobie:** A white Englishman who has come to the island to research the history of slavery. Scobie is a complex and enigmatic character, and his motives are never fully clear. He is both attracted to and repelled by the island and its people, and he ultimately becomes a symbol of the destructive effects of colonialism.
- **Helen:** A young black woman who is preparing for a Midsummer Night's Dream performance. Helen is a strong and independent character, but she is also haunted by the history of slavery and the legacy of colonialism.
- **George:** A young black man who is also preparing for a Midsummer Night's Dream performance. George is a talented actor, but he is struggling to find his place in the world. He is torn between his desire to stay on the island and his desire to escape to a better life.
- **Ma Kilman:** An elderly black woman who is the matriarch of the island. Ma Kilman is a wise and respected figure, and she provides a sense of stability and continuity in a world that is constantly changing.

## Themes

- **Postcolonialism:** *Midsummer* is a powerful exploration of the effects of colonialism on the Caribbean. The play shows how colonialism has damaged the island's culture and economy, and it also examines the psychological effects of colonialism on the island's people.
- **History and Memory:** *Midsummer* is also a play about history and memory. The play shows how the past continues to shape the present, and it also explores the importance of remembering and learning from the past.

- **Identity:** *Midsummer* is a play about identity, both personal and national. The play shows how the characters are struggling to find their place in the world, and it also explores the importance of self-acceptance and self-discovery.

## Symbols

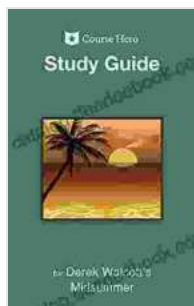
- **The Midsummer Night's Dream performance:** The Midsummer Night's Dream performance is a symbol of hope and possibility. It shows how the characters are trying to create a better world for themselves and their children.
- **The sea:** The sea is a symbol of both danger and opportunity. The sea represents the unknown and the unpredictable, and it is also a reminder of the island's connection to the wider world.
- **The sugarcane fields:** The sugarcane fields are a symbol of the island's history of slavery and colonialism. The fields are a reminder of the suffering that the island's people have endured, and they also represent the island's dependence on the outside world.

## Literary Devices

- **Lyrical Language:** *Midsummer* is written in a lyrical and poetic style. The play's language is full of imagery and metaphor, and it creates a vivid and evocative atmosphere.
- **Stream of Consciousness:** *Midsummer* makes use of stream of consciousness to reveal the characters' inner thoughts and feelings. This technique allows the reader to experience the characters' thoughts and emotions in real time.

- **Folklore and Myth:** *Midsummer* incorporates elements of folklore and myth into its narrative. This adds a layer of richness and complexity to the play, and it also helps to connect the play to the island's history and culture.

*Midsummer* is a challenging and rewarding play that offers a unique perspective on the Caribbean experience. The play's exploration of postcolonialism, history, memory, and identity make it a valuable addition to any literature curriculum.



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