

The Inherit the Wind Study Guide: A Comprehensive Analysis

Jerome Lawrence and Robert Lee's play, "Inherit the Wind," is a powerful and thought-provoking drama that explores the clash between science and religion, and the dangers of intolerance and censorship. First performed in 1955, the play was inspired by the real-life Scopes Trial of 1925, in which a Tennessee teacher was put on trial for teaching evolution in violation of state law.

This study guide provides a comprehensive analysis of "Inherit the Wind," including an overview of the play's characters, themes, and historical context. It also includes a detailed scene-by-scene summary and analysis, as well as discussion questions and writing prompts to help you delve deeper into the play's meaning.

Henry Drummond - A renowned defense attorney who comes to Hillsboro to defend Bertram Cates. Drummond is a brilliant and charismatic lawyer who believes deeply in the principles of free speech and religious tolerance.



Study Guide for Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's *Inherit the Wind* (Course Hero Study Guides) by Tania Griffith

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 912 KB

Print length : 32 pages

Lending : Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Paperback : 28 pages

Item Weight : 2.72 ounces

Dimensions : 8 x 0.07 x 10 inches



Matthew Harrison Brady - A three-time presidential candidate and former Secretary of State who serves as the prosecutor in the trial. Brady is a staunch defender of traditional values and religious authority, and he sees the trial as an opportunity to crush the forces of secularism and evolution.

Bertram Cates - A young high school science teacher who is put on trial for teaching evolution. Cates is a dedicated and passionate educator who believes in the importance of teaching students about the latest scientific theories.

Rachel Brown - Bertram Cates' fiancée. Rachel is a devout Christian who struggles to reconcile her religious beliefs with her love for Bertram.

Reverend Jeremiah Brown - Rachel's father and a prominent minister in Hillsboro. Brown is a fervent believer in biblical literalism and sees the trial as a battle between good and evil.

E.K. Hornbeck - A cynical and opportunistic newspaper reporter who covers the trial. Hornbeck is more interested in sensationalism than in the truth, and he uses his platform to fan the flames of intolerance.

The conflict between science and religion - "Inherit the Wind" explores the fundamental conflict between science and religion, and the challenges that arise when these two worldviews collide. The play raises questions

about the nature of truth, the limits of free speech, and the dangers of religious extremism.

The importance of free speech and religious tolerance - The play also emphasizes the importance of free speech and religious tolerance. It argues that people should be free to express their own beliefs, even if those beliefs are unpopular or controversial. The play also warns against the dangers of censorship and intolerance, and the corrosive effects they can have on society.

The power of the media - The play also explores the power of the media, and the role it can play in shaping public opinion. The character of E.K. Hornbeck represents the worst aspects of the media, as he uses his platform to sensationalize the trial and fan the flames of intolerance. However, the play also shows that the media can be a force for good, as it can help to inform the public about important issues and hold those in power accountable.

"Inherit the Wind" is set against the backdrop of the Scopes Trial of 1925. The trial was a major turning point in the history of the United States, as it brought the issue of evolution to the forefront of public debate. The trial also highlighted the deep divisions between religious and secular forces in American society.

The Scopes Trial was a direct result of the passage of the Butler Act in Tennessee, which made it illegal to teach evolution in public schools. John Scopes, a young high school science teacher, was arrested for violating the law after he taught a lesson on evolution. The trial that followed was a

media circus, with national newspapers and magazines covering every detail.

The trial ended with Scopes being convicted and fined. However, the trial also had a profound impact on American society. The trial helped to raise awareness of the issue of evolution, and it also sparked a debate about the role of religion in public education.

Act I

- Scene 1: The play opens in Hillsboro, Tennessee, in the summer of 1925. The town is abuzz with excitement over the upcoming trial of Bertram Cates.
- Scene 2: Henry Drummond arrives in Hillsboro and meets with Bertram Cates. Drummond agrees to defend Cates in the trial.
- Scene 3: Matthew Harrison Brady arrives in Hillsboro and meets with Reverend Jeremiah Brown. Brady promises Brown that he will crush the forces of secularism and evolution.

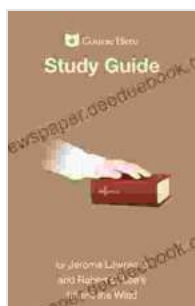
Act II

- Scene 1: The trial begins. Drummond delivers a powerful opening statement in which he argues that the Butler Act is unconstitutional.
- Scene 2: Brady cross-examines Cates and tries to discredit him as a witness. Drummond objects to Brady's tactics, and the judge sustains the objections.
- Scene 3: Rachel Brown testifies on behalf of the prosecution. She admits that she loves Bertram, but she believes that he is wrong to

teach evolution.

Act III

- Scene 1: Drummond calls expert witnesses to testify on behalf of the defense. The witnesses include a geologist, a biologist, and an anthropologist.
- Scene 2: Brady calls expert witnesses to testify on behalf



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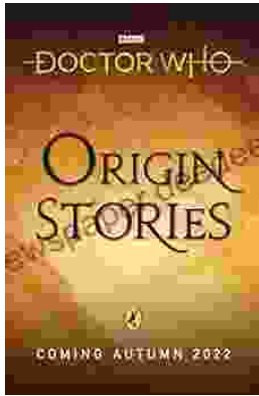
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