

The Stone Angel

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hagar shipley age 90 tells the story of her life and in so doing tries to come to terms with how the very qualities which sustained her have deprived her of joy mingling past and present she maintains pride in the face of senility while recalling the life she led as a rebellious young bride and later as a grieving mother

susan s efforts to become a saint after receiving a message from a stone angel on a tombstone are aided by her loyal east indian friend rab

a study guide for margaret laurence s the stone angel excerpted from gale s acclaimed novels for students this concise study guide includes plot summary character analysis author biography study questions historical context suggestions for further reading and much more for any literature project trust novels for students for all of your research needs

although at times painfully insecure about her creative ability and achievement margaret laurence nevertheless remained fiercely loyal to her artistic vision an archetypal vision of loss exile and redemption that sought comprehensive expression in the epic mode that shapes the bible dante s divine comedy milton s paradise lost and ultimately the manawaka world of hagar shipley rachel cameron stacey macaindra and morag gunn paul comeau traces the development of margaret laurence s epic voice

from its tentative beginnings in her african fiction to its culmination in the epic manawaka cycle a dantesque journey through an infernal state of self destructive pride out of a purgatorial paralysis of self doubt and on to a kind of paradisaal fulfillment in self knowledge laurence discovered in epic a fitting mode at once to requite her debt to the ancestors and to break free of their influence to portray the world through the sight of her own eyes in so doing she became the enduring epic voice of a country and a generation

margaret laurence is justly famous for her manawaka cycle of canadian novels but her work extends from canada to africa and includes poetry and prose children s and adult literature memoir and travel writing

a compelling journey seen through the eyes of a woman nearing the end of her life at ninety hagar shipley speaks movingly of the perils of growing old and reflects with bitterness humor and a painful awareness of her own frailties on the life she has led from her childhood as the daughter of a respected merchant to her rebellious marriage hagar has fought a long and sometimes misguided battle for independence and respect in the course of examining and trying to understand the shape her life has taken her divided feelings about her husband her passionate attachment to one son and her neglect of another she is sometimes regretful but rarely penitent asking forgiveness from neither god nor those around her she must still wrestle with her own nature pride was my wilderness and the demon that led me there was fear she has been afraid of being unrespectable afraid of needing too much afraid of giving too much and her pride is both disturbing and inspiring 500 great books by women review by sonja larsen

in a postmodern and postcolonial age how do we approach the writing of margaret laurence challenging territory demands of the reader a re evaluation of the basic assumptions that underlie their understanding of laurence s life and writing by addressing the full range of her writing laurence is presented as canadian colonial and postcolonial subject as feminist humanist and political active individual and as essayist translator journalist memoir writer and fiction writer the essays stake out a critical territory as well as offer a challenge to territory previously mapped by the criticism in addition to charting critical space never before traced

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