

# 8

## Lesson 8

### FOCUS: The Plot Unfolds

A novel's plot follows the events of the novel as they lead to a dramatic climax, a tragic realization, or a happy ending. The timing of such events can make a novel predictable and boring, or provocative and riveting.

Hurston has made deliberate choices about how to structure and pace the series of events to demonstrate one black woman's experience in Florida. In this lesson, map the events of the story to begin to assess the artistry of story-telling. The discussion of two major turning points from Lesson 7 should prepare your students for these activities.

#### Discussion Activities

In small groups, students will map a time line of the novel's major events. Define the beginning, middle, and end of the novel. How does Hurston build the drama? Groups should present their time lines to the class, discussing any discrepancies along the way.

Show the first or last 15 minutes of *Oprah Winfrey Presents: Their Eyes Were Watching God* (2005). What important plot points are omitted? How does the pacing of plot differ from a novel to a film? How are these choices complicated when a screenwriter is adapting a novel for film? This analysis can be expanded by watching the entire film (90 minutes).

#### Writing Exercise

Write your own conclusion to the novel, based on what you have read thus far. Remember that Janie narrates her story to Pheoby. Use at least one image or symbol to reach your happy, tragic, or ambiguous ending.

#### Homework

Chapters 17-20 (pp. 147-193). Why do you think Hurston chose her title? If you were required to change it, what title would you choose? What themes does your title suggest?