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Chapter Summaries & Analyses Chapter 1. "Capital Offense," begins with a flash-forward to Anthony Ray Hinton's sentencing and the statement he makes before the sentencing. He wonders whether his imprisonment was the result of his own mistakes or simply "determined by being black and poor" in the South. He recounts the visits from his mother and from his best friend while awaiting trial at the county jail, thankful for their unwavering love and support. At the courthouse, the prosecutor Bob McGregor shows open hostility toward him, while the judge appears bored. Despite his discomfort in court, Hinton manages to deliver a heartfelt speech in which he forgives his accusers for charging him with murders he didn't commit and expresses confidence that God will set everything right. The judge sentences Hinton to death by electrocution, though Hinton considers the sentence a legal lynching. In Chapter 2, "All American," Hinton shifts back in time to his high school years when he is hoping to secure a baseball scholarship. As a Black athlete in newly integrated schools, Hinton faces racial discrimination from white spectators and competitors. He faces racism in his daily life as well, causing him and his best friend, Lester, to hide in ditches when unfamiliar cars pass them on the road. In Chapter 3, "A Two-Year Test Drive," Hinton fails to secure a baseball scholarship and finds employment in the coal mines where his father used to work and which Hinton dislikes intensely. As a young man, Hinton is a prodigious womanizer, admitting that his weakness has always been women. However, he has great respect for his mother, who is his main moral influence. Despite his upbringing character, Hinton makes mistakes, such as stealing a car while pretending to test drive it and then keeping it for two years. Eventually his guilt eats at him; remembering what his mother taught him, he confesses to the crime, for which he serves a short jail term followed by community service. He vows never to steal again. Chapter 4, "The Cooler Killer," begins in 1965 when a series of robberies and murders targeting fast-food restaurant managers occurs in Hinton's area. Although Hinton was working in a locked warehouse during one of the murders, he is arrested, and the police seize his mother's gun (which hasn't been fired in years) as evidence. Hinton cooperates with the police and shows no fear during his arrest because he knows he did nothing wrong. To show how racial injustice is central to his narrative, Hinton begins his memoir with incidents from his life following his arrest and leading up to his sentencing. The opening scenes at the county jail and in the courtroom show the beginning of Hinton's struggles with his personal faith, which he continues to insist that justice and divine evidence to the court. The opening description of the courtroom reflects the speed and underhandedness of the justice system, highlighting the racial bias in the trial of the accused. Through this situation, Hinton expresses his desire to be a better man. The scene is mirrored in the beginning of the baseball game in Chapter 2, when Hinton recounts a when he would sit and try to hit him, but Hinton would always keep calm and face his mother. Hinton attempts to maintain the same innocence in the courtroom as he did with his friends and family. Rather than being crushed by the death sentence, Hinton sees it as a chance because it means he has the right to appeal. Therefore, the death sentence, rather than an end, is the beginning of his fight for justice. Shifting to the circumstances of his youth, Hinton recounts his friendship with Lester, his strong relationship with his mother, and his fondness for womanizing, all of which are important to the unfolding narrative. While describing his womanizing habits, he mentions Reggie, an embittered rival who, unbeknownst to Hinton at the time, will return years later to exact his vengeance by wrongfully identifying Hinton as the Cooler Killer. During these early chapters, Hinton shows himself to be a man of contradicting values: godlessness but reckless with women, upstanding but prone to impulsive, dishonest acts, such as defrauding the car dealership. One of the major ironies of Hinton's story is that after he commits to living honestly, he is arrested for a crime he didn't commit. His relationship with his mother is also important, although she teaches him the dangers of the world, she also teaches him to trust and respect authority and a law that has no respect for him. Anthony Ray Hinton This Study Guide consists of approximately 57 pages of chapter summaries, quotes, character analysis, themes, and more—everything you need to sharpen your knowledge of The Sun Does Shine. This section contains 2,308 words (approx. 6 pages at 400 words per page) He was a poor man in a criminal justice system that treats you better if you are rich and guilty than if you are poor and innocent.... - Bryan Stevenson (Foreword) Importance: This quote highlights one of the main flaws in the legal and criminal justice system: the necessity of money in putting up an adequate defense. This is a particularly significant issue because the legal system is supposed to provide legal services for those who cannot afford them. However, as demonstrated in detail in Ray's story, the system is rigged against the poor and accused since the system is unwilling to provide the funds needed for proper representation. In this way, the State is able to stack the deck in its own favor when prosecuting the poor, since the poor are entirely dependent on the State for their representation. This is highlighted pointedly at the end of the first chapter when Ray notes that... (read more) This section contains 2,308 words (approx. 6 pages at 400 words per page) Copyrights The Sun Does Shine from BookRags. (c)2025 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved. Analysis: From the opening pages of The Sun Does Shine, this quote expresses how Anthony Ray Hinton was a victim of a prejudicial justice system. Although Hinton had a prior criminal record that made his conviction more likely, he was never violent and never committed a violent crime. He considers whether his life would have been different if he had made different choices, but the reality is that just being poor and Black in Alabama made it likely he would be victimized in some way. Both race and lack of money are key factors in his conviction and imprisonment. The white judge and jury rule against him despite a lack of evidence tying him to the crime and having little money makes it impossible for him to afford qualified professionals to defend him in court. Lack of money also makes the appeals process difficult, and Hinton must eventually rely on pro bono attorneys from the Equal Justice Initiative. This quote is also important because it contradicts what Hinton's mother taught him: to trust authority and believe in justice. Unfortunately, the justice system she believed in is a myth, and the reality is much more unfair. Analysis: As a young man, Hinton and his best friend, Lester Bailey, have no cars and thus must walk the long distance between their school and their homes. Because of racial discrimination, they are always in danger of being violently attacked or run over by white motorists. Therefore, when they see an unfamiliar car on the road, they hide in ditches until the car passes. Hinton makes this comment to Lester, speaking of how strange this routine is. What he doesn't realize is that these words will echo many times while he's incarcerated later in life. Despite the conditions of prison and life on death row, Hinton eventually adapts to them and even thrives, to an extent. Humans can adjust to and normalize even the most unspeakable conditions. On the reverse side, the perpetrators of injustice are also accustomed to such conditions, and prison guards can live their lives normally while enforcing inhuman punishments on inmates. Following his release from prison after nearly 30 years behind bars, Hinton finds freedom strange and frightening. He is so accustomed to sleeping in a cell that at first he sleeps on a bathroom floor because it feels like home to him. His choice illustrates the human capacity to adjust to unnatural conditions. Analysis: Lieutenant Acker represents a self-aware side of the racist Alabama justice system and makes clear that the truth is irrelevant where this unfair system is concerned. Unlike Prosecutor Bob McGregor, who assumes a sanctimonious posture toward Anthony Ray Hinton, Acker does not see Hinton as a Black man facing a white judge and jury. However, even in admitting Hinton's innocence, Lieutenant Acker also expresses his apathy toward this injustice. By saying that "one of your brothers did" the crime, he is suggesting kinship between Hinton and the Cooler Killer and possibly suggesting collective, community-based guilt, as if one Black man's crime is every Black man's crime. Acker is a willing participant in and upholder of a system he recognizes as unfair. Thus, Hinton speaks of Acker in his speech to the court and says that he is "praying" for Acker's soul. Acker may not be as vitriolic as McGregor, but he still upholds the same racist system. Analysis: When Hinton's trial begins, he wants a hero to save him, and he casts his public defender, Sheldon Perhacs, in the role. Because Perhacs's athletic build and slicked hair give him the appearance of a "mobster" or maybe even a boxer," Hinton compares him to Sylvester Stallone's (born 1946) character Rocky Balboa from the Rocky films. Meanwhile, Hinton imagines himself as Rocky's rival-turned-friend Apollo Creed. He imagines Perhacs fighting for his freedom and doing everything he can. In reality, Perhacs puts in minimum effort and botches the defense, while complaining about the meager \$1,000 he is paid to represent Hinton. The comparison works in another sense. Much in the same way that Hinton has a naive, rose-tinted view of the justice system, he also has not seen Rocky IV (1985), in which Apollo dies while Rocky, serving as his cornerman, throws in the towel too late to save his life. Hinton wants to believe in an idealized view of the world where truth and human goodness will rescue him from injustice. Hinton's legal salvation will only come 30 years later, thanks to Bryan Stevenson. When Hinton says he is "glad" he didn't know about Apollo Creed's fate, he is hinting that while his hope might have been foolish, it sustained him during a frightening and painful time. Analysis: Hinton's struggle with faith is the most important internal conflict in the memoir, as in his early years on death row he adopts a grim, fatalistic outlook. During this time, Hinton stays silent, not communicating with the guards or his fellow prisoners. Hinton is passive and withdrawn, hoping for a miracle while not believing any will come. Meanwhile, his friend Lester has married, and Hinton realizes the world is moving on without him. "God may sit high, but he wasn't looking low," he reflects. At the same time, another prisoner is crying and calling out to God. Hinton's compassion is reawakened, and he breaks his three years of silence to ask if the other man is all right. As it turns out, the man's mother has just died, and he is grieving. Hinton realizes that he still has a mother and that this man is worse off than he is. He also realizes he can still be compassionate and help others even from inside his cell. His compassion inspires the other inmates to offer their own condolences, leading to Hinton's expressing these words. Hinton's remark, an inversion of his earlier thought that God "wasn't looking low," is as much addressed to himself as it is to the other inmates. Hinton has to remind himself after three years of fear and solitude that hope still exists in the world. The quote also suggests that although death row is a "low" place, it is not only evil and despair; some good things can happen there, such as the sudden outpouring of sympathy from condemned men to a man who has suffered a great loss. Analysis: Henry Hays is transformed during his time on death row, and this quote encapsulates how the former Klansman comes to understand the enormity of his crime. Convicted of lynching a Black boy, Henry's racist parents, especially his father, brought him up to regard Black people as inferior and dangerous. However, after being befriended by Anthony Ray Hinton and other Black death row inmates, Henry changes and sees everything he was taught as a lie. As Hinton reflects, "Death row had been good for Henry," and "death row had saved his soul." When Henry expresses this thought, he is not only bemoaning the general oppression of Black people that limits their opportunities but also how his lynching cut short Michael Donald's life. It's also possible that Henry is reflecting on how his own life might have turned out differently had he not been raised to be a racist. If he had never killed Michael Donald, he wouldn't be on death row and might have lived a richer, fuller, less hate-filled life. Henry's thoughts here show that racism harms not only its victims but also its perpetrators, an argument consistent with Hinton's philosophy of forgiving and showing compassion even to evil people. Hinton can forgive Henry's terrible crime and even learn to love him like a brother, just as he can forgive the judge and prosecutor for sentencing him to die. Analysis: Unlike Anthony Ray Hinton's previous attorneys, Bryan Stevenson befriends Hinton and shows a genuine emotional investment in his future. The other quality that sets him apart from the others, especially Perhacs, is that Stevenson takes Hinton's ideas seriously and treats him as an equal. When Hinton works up to making a suggestion about their legal strategy, he's nervous, remembering Perhacs's dismissive comments when he tried to make suggestions. Stevenson, on the other hand, is eager to collaborate and to know Hinton's full story. Hinton suggests they hire a white, racist, but honest expert whom the Alabama court will take seriously and believe, an idea which Stevenson accepts. This first in-person meeting between the two men is the start of what will be a long friendship, a friendship only possible because of how Stevenson treats Hinton as he's longed to be treated: not only as an innocent man but as an innocent man worthy of being heard. That Stevenson, as a Black man, also understands what it's like not to be taken seriously or to be mistreated helps him empathize with Hinton. But ultimately, the trust he shows Hinton and his willingness to talk to him and not down to him make their friendship possible. By the end of the memoir, Hinton reflects that Stevenson is one of only two people he truly trusts. Analysis: A "four-letter word" refers to an offensive word or concept. As such, within the context of prison, hope can be a dangerous or unsavory concept for prisoners. Here Hinton is expressing that although hope can sustain a person through difficult times, it is also a potential source of anger. A person who hopes for a better future can still be hurt when that hope is denied, whereas someone who gives up inures themselves to pain. Hinton describes hope as something that "can tease a man by staying close but just out of reach." Early in his imprisonment and appeal process, Hinton still hoped he would be freed or that the real killer would confess. Now, almost 15 years later, Hinton is encouraged by his new attorney's competence and kindness, but remains afraid of allowing that same hope to hurt him again. While Hinton's hope expresses what he needs to be freed, it also expresses what he needs to be arrested. Anthony Ray Hinton and his friend Lester come to realize that pull and punishment are as essential to the system as hope and salvation. Hinton knows he had not been imagined when he entered the prison system. He expected to be a hero and to be a friend to his friends. He expected to be a part of the team and to be a part of the system. Decades later, Hinton has become wiser about how innocence and guilt work. He recognizes that many of the men on death row are as innocent and as innocent as that some are vicious killers. Even so, he treats them with compassion and kindness, and must treat them the same way because they are like a "strange family." But Hinton also comes to see that people are not entirely guilty of their own actions, which are shaped by events out of their control and beliefs impressed upon them by others. His friend Henry is a good example, as Henrylynch a Black boy because of the racist beliefs taught to him by his parents. However, when Hinton says everyone is "guilty" of something, he is also speaking from desperation in a time of weakness. He has become so used to living in the prison that he wonders whether he was meant to live there and whether this is not just punishment after all. What Hinton's comment hints at, though, is that not all people behind bars are evil, while not everyone who lives on the other side of the bars is virtuous. Analysis: Lester says this to Anthony Ray Hinton during a visit to Holman Prison. Hinton has begun to lose hope after a long struggle against the legal system, and Lester tries to reassure him. When he says the two of them are "walking home together," he is at once eliding the situation (one of them is behind bars, the other free) but also alluding to their childhood when they protected each other. Lester has remained a faithful friend, and here he tries to convince Hinton to maintain that same faith in himself and his chance for vindication and freedom. While alluding to those childhood walks, Lester makes clear they're "not kids anymore" and that rather than hide, like they did from the unfamiliar cars, they're going to stand up and fight together. This conversation is critical because it shows that Stevenson's idea and never have been released from prison. Last updated on 2023/11/24 The content based on English version Chapter 1 | Quotes from Pages 13-19Check The Sun Does Shine Chapter 1 SummaryThey may beat you now and then," Ray's mom used to tell him. "but that don't mean they have to break you. You don't change who you are and how you was raised for anyone. And I didn't raise no child to have a tantrum in the middle of a baseball field or anywhere. Anthony Ray HintonThey may beat you now and then," Ray's mom used to tell him, "but that don't mean they have to break you. You don't change who you are and how you was raised for anyone. And I didn't raise no child to have a tantrum in the middle of a baseball field or anywhere. 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