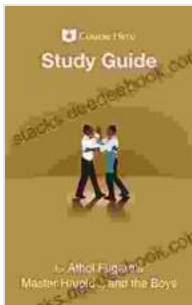


Study Guide for Athol Fugard's *Master Harold and the Boys*: Course Hero Study Guides

Athol Fugard's *Master Harold and the Boys* is a powerful and moving drama that explores the complexities of race, identity, and friendship in apartheid-era South Africa. First performed in 1982, the play has since become a classic of world literature, studied and performed around the globe.



Study Guide for Athol Fugard's *Master Harold... and the Boys* (Course Hero Study Guides) by Course Hero

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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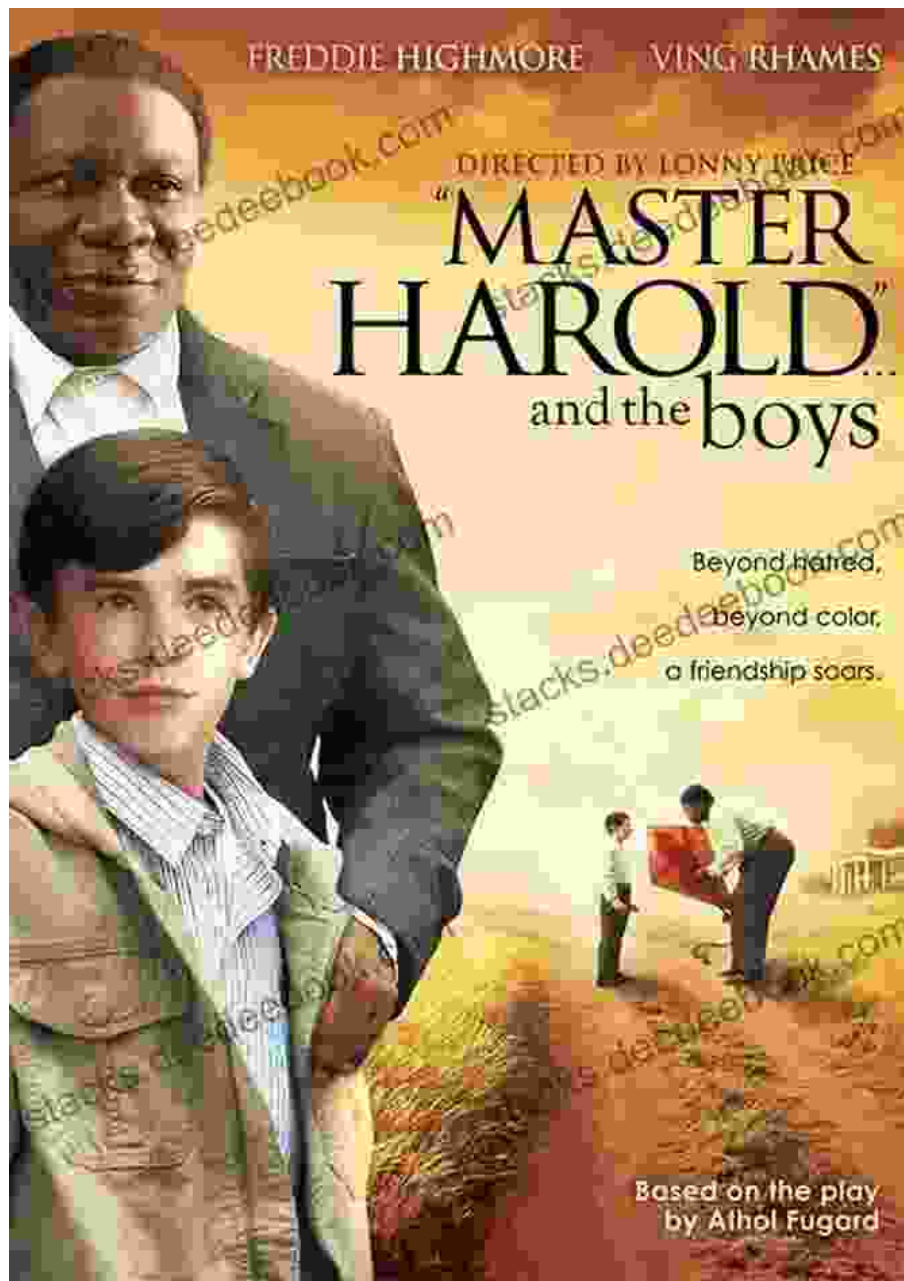


This comprehensive study guide provides a detailed analysis of *Master Harold and the Boys*, including:

- Character Profiles
- Themes and Symbolism
- Historical Context
- Critical Reception
- Study Questions

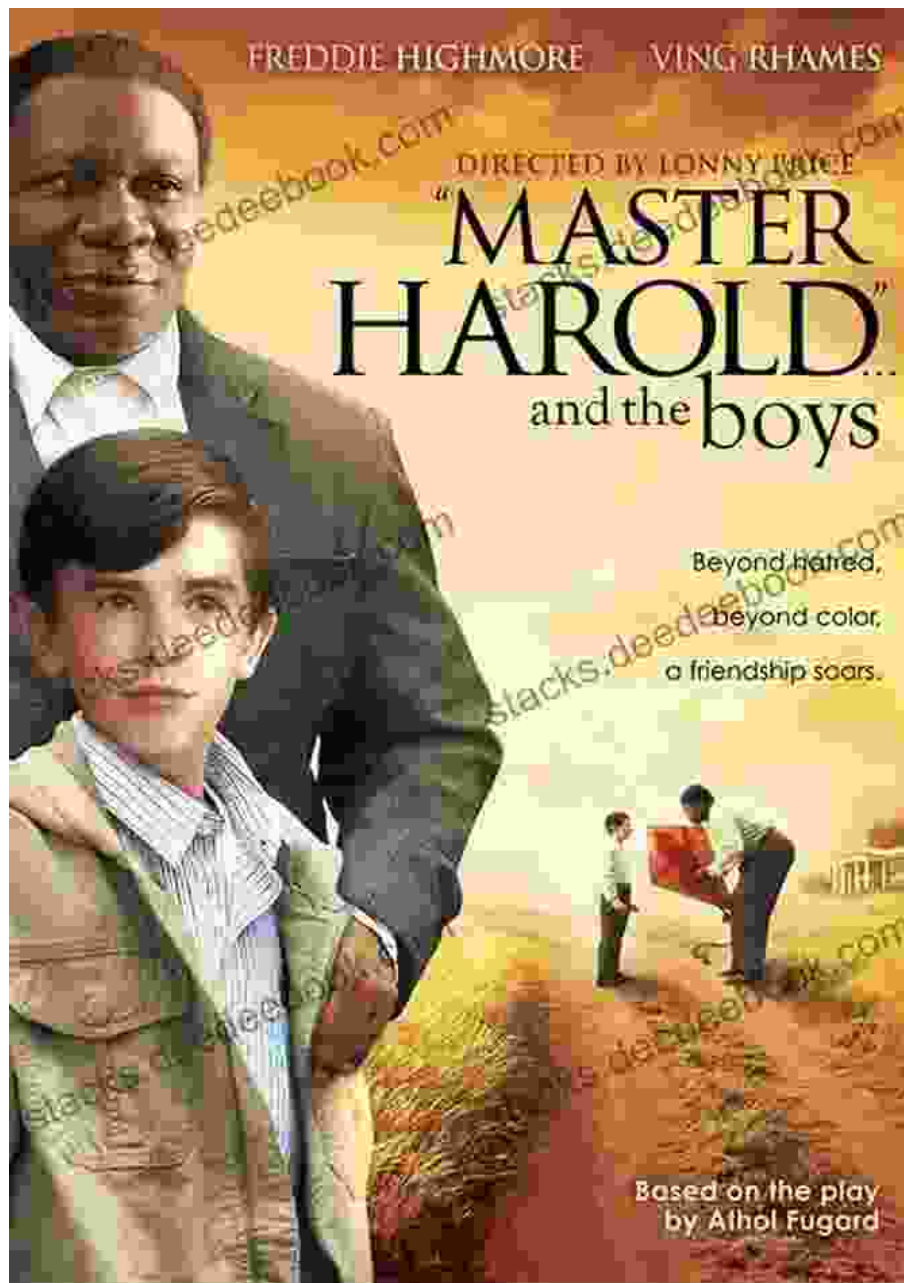
Character Profiles

Hally (Hallyne)



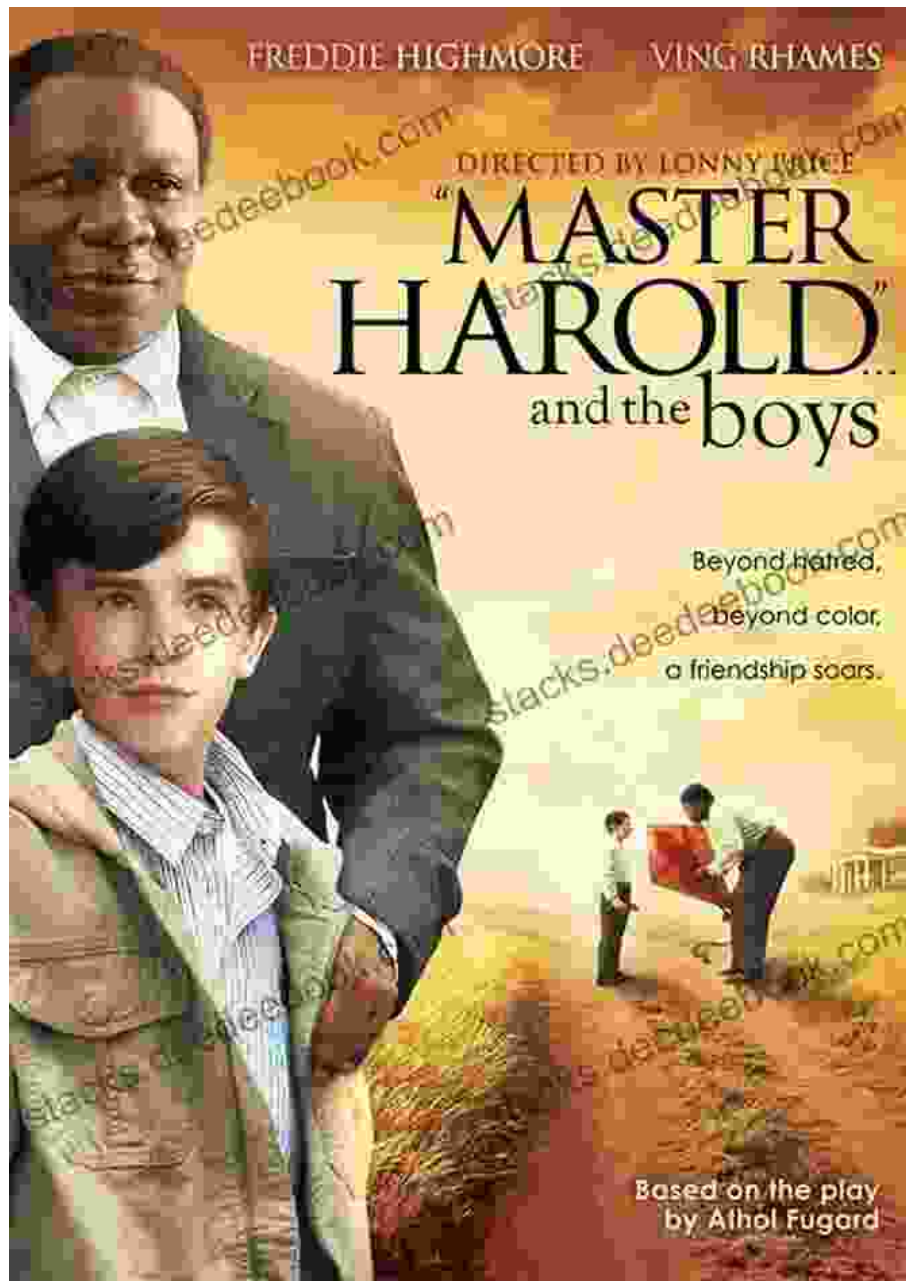
Hally is a young, black woman who works as a housekeeper for Mr. and Mrs. Krog. She is a kind and compassionate person, but she is also aware of the harsh realities of apartheid South Africa. Hally is a complex character who struggles with her own identity and place in society.

Sam (Samuels)



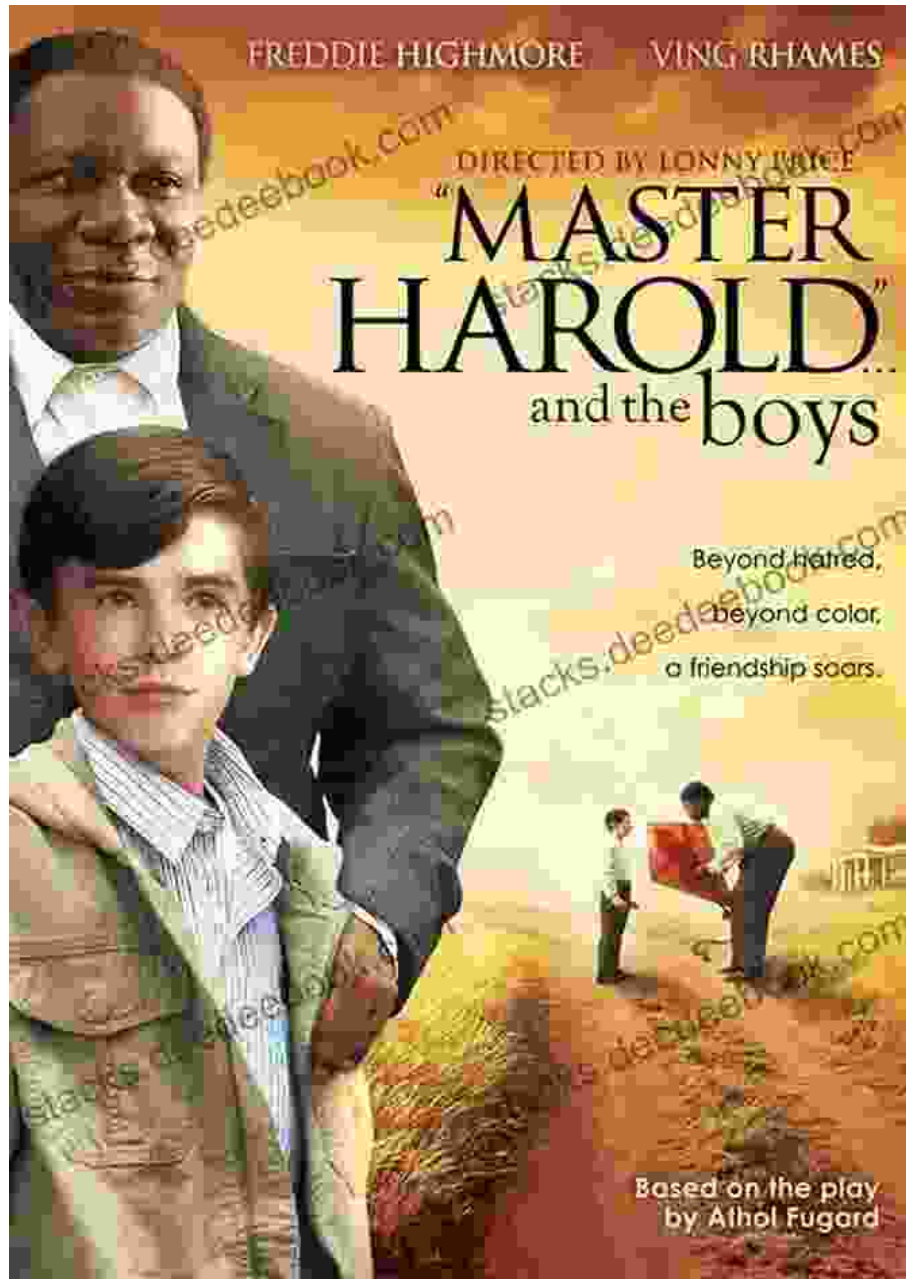
Sam is a young, black man who works as a gardener for Mr. and Mrs. Krog. He is a proud and independent person, but he is also aware of the limitations that apartheid places on his life. Sam is a complex character who struggles with his own identity and place in society.

Willie (William)



Willie is a young, colored boy who works as a waiter at the Krog family's tea room. He is a bright and ambitious young man, but he is also aware of the challenges that he faces as a colored person in apartheid South Africa. Willie is a complex character who struggles with his own identity and place in society.

Master Harold (Hally's son)



Master Harold is a young, white man who is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Krog. He is a complex and contradictory character. On the one hand, he is a kind and compassionate person who cares deeply for Hally, Sam, and Willie. On the other hand, he is also a product of his society, and he often treats Hally, Sam, and Willie in a condescending and disrespectful manner.

Themes and Symbolism

Apartheid

Master Harold and the Boys is set in apartheid-era South Africa, and the play explores the devastating effects of apartheid on the lives of all South Africans. The play shows how apartheid creates a system of racial hierarchy that privileges white people over black people and colored people. It also shows how apartheid dehumanizes black people and colored people, and how it makes it difficult for them to live full and meaningful lives.

Race and Identity

Master Harold and the Boys explores the complex issue of race and identity in apartheid South Africa. The play shows how race is used to divide people and to create a system of oppression. It also shows how people can transcend racial barriers and form deep and meaningful friendships. The play ultimately asks the question of what it means to be a human being, and it suggests that true humanity is not defined by race or color, but by one's actions and character.

Friendship

Master Harold and the Boys is a play about friendship. The play shows how friendship can transcend racial barriers and create a sense of belonging. It also shows how friendship can be tested and broken by the pressures of society. The play ultimately asks the question of what it means to be a true friend, and it suggests that true friendship is based on mutual respect, understanding, and compassion.

Symbols

Master Harold and the Boys is rich in symbolism. Some of the most important symbols in the play include:

- **The piano:** The piano is a symbol of music and art. It is also a symbol of the power of the white ruling class in apartheid South Africa. The piano is used to create a sense of separation between the white Krog family and the black servants.
- **The tea room:** The tea room is a symbol of the social and racial divide in apartheid South Africa. The tea room is a place where white people can socialize and relax, while black people are only allowed to work there.
- **The garden:** The garden is a symbol of hope and renewal. It is a place where the black servants can find peace and solace from the harsh realities of apartheid.

Historical Context

Master Harold and the Boys is set in apartheid-era South Africa. Apartheid was a system of racial segregation that was enforced by the white-minority government of South Africa from 1948 to 1994. Apartheid laws segregated black people and colored people from white people in all aspects of life, including education, housing, employment, and transportation.

Apartheid was a brutal and oppressive system that caused great suffering for black people and colored people. However, apartheid also led to a growing movement for social and political change. In 1994, apartheid was finally abolished, and South Africa became a multi-racial democracy.

Critical Reception

Master Harold and the Boys has been critically acclaimed since its premiere in 1982. The play has won numerous awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1983. Critics have praised the play for its powerful and moving story, its complex characters, and its exploration of important social and political issues.

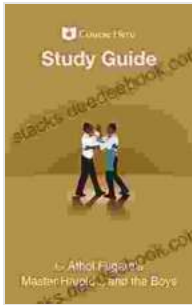
Master Harold and the Boys is considered to be one of the most important plays of the 20th century. It is a play that continues to resonate with audiences around the world, and it is a play that deserves to be studied and performed for generations to come.

Study Questions

The following study questions can help you to further understand *Master Harold and the Boys*:

- What are the main themes of *Master Harold and the Boys*?
- How does the play explore the effects of apartheid on the lives of black people and colored people?
- How does the play explore the complex issue of race and identity?
- What are the main symbols in the play?
- What is the significance of the historical context of the play?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the play?
- How has the play been interpreted and performed over the years?
- What are the play's most famous quotes?
- What are the most important critical essays and reviews of the play?

- How can the play be used in the classroom to teach about apartheid, race, and identity?



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