CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Cane

Jean Toomer · *1923* · *Toomer's English*

Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon, O cant you see it, O cant you see it, Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon ... When the sun goes down. So Cane opens, with Karintha, in Toomer's 1923 English, Project Gutenberg #60093. Keep "cant," as printed. For grades 11–12. A collection; one map cannot teach the whole book. Feature the dusk lines. Later sentences about men and a child must be handled with especial gravity and tact; no prurience, and no spectacle, on the map.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read Cane as Toomer opens it—Karintha, dusk on the eastern horizon, "O cant you see it"—as a 1923 collection, and with especial gravity later, rather than as a spectacle or as a single story?

"Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon, O"
Karintha

Cane, 1923, Project Gutenberg #60093, opens with Karintha: Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon, O cant you see it, O cant you see it, Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon ... When the sun goes down. Keep "cant," as this file prints it. Teach those dusk lines as the featured opening, for grades 11–12. The book is a collection of sketches, poems, and stories; one map cannot teach it all. Later in the same opening, the prose says that men had always wanted her, this Karintha, even as a child. That line is in the text; it is not to be featured as a spectacle, and it is not to be used for prurience. Name it, if you must, in a watch-for, with especial gravity and tact, and stay with the dusk and with Karintha carrying beauty, perfect as dusk when the sun goes down. Quote Toomer, in this English.

KEY CHARACTERS

Karintha
Who opens the book: skin like dusk on the eastern horizon, carrying beauty, perfect as dusk when the sun goes down

Jean Toomer
Whose 1923 English, including "cant" as printed, is what the map quotes

HOW TO BEGIN CANE

> *"Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon, O"*
> Karintha

> *"Karintha carrying beauty, perfect as dusk when the sun goes down. Old"*
> Karintha

Grades 11–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01
Dusk on the Eastern Horizon
KARINTHA

Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon. The book opens with a looking, and a comparison, before later sentences arrive.

- Keep "dusk on the eastern horizon."
- 11–12.
- The featured opening, not a later spectacle.
- Quote Toomer.

> *"Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon, O"*
> Karintha

02
O Cant You See It
KARINTHA

O cant you see it, O cant you see it. Keep "cant," as printed, without adding an apostrophe. The line is repeated, as a seeing asked for.

- Keep "cant," as this file prints it.
- 11–12.
- A refrain, in this English.
- Do not tidy the spelling.

> *"O cant you see it, O cant you see it"*
> Karintha

03
Perfect as Dusk When the Sun Goes Down
KARINTHA

Karintha carrying beauty, perfect as dusk when the sun goes down. Beauty is named with the dusk, in his wording.

- Keep "carrying beauty" and "perfect as dusk."
- 11–12. Gravity and tact in the surrounding prose.
- Quote this line, not a later slogan only.
- The featured sense of the opening.

> *"Karintha carrying beauty, perfect as dusk when the sun goes down. Old"*
> Karintha

04
A Collection, Not a Single Story
THE BOOK

Cane is a 1923 collection of sketches, poems, and stories, Project Gutenberg #60093. Karintha is the opening. One map cannot teach the whole book. Quote each later piece in its own English when you come to it.

- Name 1923, and a collection.
- 11–12.
- Not a single story, and not a later film.
- Quote Toomer.

> *"Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon, O"*
> Karintha

05
Gravity and Tact in the Same Opening
KARINTHA, CONTINUED

Later in the same opening, the prose goes on about men, and Karintha even as a child. That line is in the text. Do not feature it as a spectacle, and do not put prurience on the map. If you name it, name it with especial gravity and tact, and return to the dusk.

- Especial gravity and tact.
- No prurience, and no spectacle.
- 11–12.
- The featured quotes remain the dusk lines.

> *"Karintha carrying beauty, perfect as dusk when the sun goes down. Old"*
> Karintha

Dusk on the eastern horizon | A refrain: cant you see it | Beauty, named with the dusk | A 1923 collection | Gravity and tact in a hard opening

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. Feature the dusk: "Her skin is like dusk on the eastern horizon," and "O cant you see it." Keep "cant," as printed.
2. "Karintha carrying beauty, perfect as dusk when the sun goes down." Quote that line. For grades 11–12.
3. Cane is a 1923 collection, PG #60093, not a single story. One map cannot teach the whole book.
4. The same opening later says that men had always wanted her, even as a child. That line is in the text. Do not put it on the map as a featured quote or as a spectacle; if you name it, do so with especial gravity and tact, and no prurience.

Quotations are verbatim from the Toomer's English, Project Gutenberg #60093, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/toomer-cane/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.