Summary of All God’s Chillun Got Wings

All God’s Chillun Got Wings is an absorbing story of man’s and woman’s struggle from the oppression of their social life where racial issue is rising. This play consists of two acts which the first act consists of four scenes and the second act consist of three scenes. In the first act draws the childhood and the adolescence and the second act draws marriage of Jim and Ella.

In this play, we can read how man and woman have to face racial issue as the consequence of prejudice, stereotype, and discrimination in society of black American. The racial issue affected the characters’ sense of self and it also influences their social behavior, psychology, health, and so on. For examples, Jim Harris destroys his innate, positive vitality by attempting to define himself through Ella’s eyes, which are those of a corrupt society; Jim believes that freedom and selfhood may be acquired through the external trappings of status and success. Ella Downey cannot accept herself as a wife of a Blackman, Jim Harris while she is a white skinned. It makes her be in loneliness, low self esteem, in fear, uncanny emotion, unsatisfactory relation with others, increasing anxiety and even madness. Hattie Harris becomes a tough girl and has an undefeated faith that someday there is a man who could struggle for their racial freedom. And she hopes Jim could realize her race’s dream. Hattie tries to save Jim’s self-respect and dignity by encouraging her
brother to leave Ella, study for the bar and become a lawyer. Hattie is afraid that someday Jim will break down too and get the same final like Ella. But Jim responds her angrily. However, Hattie fails to persuade Jim. Jim chooses self-sacrifice and self-destruction by staying with Ella. Hattie is disappointed to Jim and calls him as a ‘traitor to their race’. Joe becomes a weak man, give up to the condition.

In this play we can see that the characters give up to the condition because they could not defeat the social problems, the racial issue. They become victims of the societies cruelly.
Biography of Eugene O’Neill

Eugene O’Neill, an American author, was born on 16 October 1888 at the Barrette House, West 43rd street Broadway, New York city to an actor, James O’Neill and Mary Ellen ‘Ella’ O’Neill who is given morphine for pain during and after O’Neill’s birth and becomes addicted. He has two brothers, Jamie O’Neill and Edmund O’Neill. Edmund died in 1885 of measles contracted from Jamie.

It is not surprising that O’Neill can produces great literary works since from his youth, he has read much literary works such like Shakespeare’s, Victor Hugo’s, Tolstoy’s, etc. Beside that, he also joined actors and knows stages from his innocence because his father is an actor. O’Neill married three times with Kathleen Jenkins as his first wife, the second is Agnes Bolton, and the third is Catherine. O’Neill likes to move from one place to another place like New York, New Jersey, Provincetown, Spain, and Morocco. He begins drinking since 1903 and recovering in 1923. He also ever attempted to suicide in 1912 with overdose of sleeping drug Veronal but is saved by his roommate. His first literary work is sonnet which was written in 1909.

His family’s death came alternately. His father died in 1921 from cancer, the next year he lost his mother from addicted to morphine, and twelve months after that his brother, Jamie, died from stroke. It freed him to develop a family theme more fully than he at first intended.
In 1923, he wrote *All God’s Chillun Got Wings*, a study of the web of racial hatreds and spiritual longings that surround the marriage of a black man and a white woman. O’Neill began work on *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* in 1923 when George Jean Nathan asked him to write a one-act play for his new magazine, The American Mercury. The play expanded into a two-act play, was published in February 1924, so the text was readily available to readers and critics before the play opened on May 15 at the Provincetown Playhouse. *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* made him received hate mail and death threats from Ku Klux Klan and others. After that, the play was disappeared from stages. But *All God’s Chillun Got Wings* was performed one hundreds times.

His others play are Anna Christine, Desire Under the Elms, Mourning Becomes Electra, Long Days Journey into Night, etc. He is the only American dramatist awarded the Nobel Prize for literature for his *Anna Christine* in 1936. During his long carrier he wrote comedy, melodrama, and tragedy, and experimented with masks, expressionist settings, and the onstage speaking of inners thoughts. His plays are marked by their compassionate portrayal of man and woman, haunted by guilt and death, which are driven, ensnared, and sustained by dreams of love and forgiveness. He died in 27 November 1953 of pneumonia.