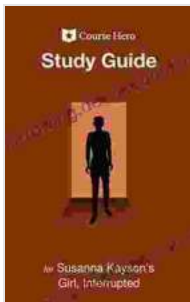


Study Guide for Susanna Kaysen's *Girl, Interrupted*

Plot Summary

Girl, Interrupted is a semi-autobiographical novel by Susanna Kaysen that tells the story of her 18-month stay in a psychiatric hospital in the 1960s. The novel begins with Kaysen's admission to the hospital after she is diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. She is initially placed in a locked ward, but she is eventually transferred to a more open ward where she meets a group of other young women with mental illness.



Study Guide for Susanna Kaysen's *Girl, Interrupted*

(Course Hero Study Guides) by Course Hero

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 915 KB

Screen Reader: Supported

Print length : 36 pages

Lending : Enabled



Kaysen struggles to adjust to life in the hospital. She is frequently depressed and anxious, and she has difficulty forming relationships with the other patients. However, she eventually begins to make progress with the help of her therapist, Dr. Wick. Dr. Wick encourages Kaysen to confront her past traumas, and she gradually begins to understand the roots of her mental illness.

Kaysen is eventually discharged from the hospital, but she continues to struggle with mental illness throughout her life. She experiences periods of depression and anxiety, and she has difficulty maintaining relationships. However, she also learns to cope with her illness and to live a full and meaningful life.

Character Analysis

Susanna Kaysen

Susanna Kaysen is the protagonist of *Girl, Interrupted*. She is a young woman who is diagnosed with borderline personality disorder and is admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Kaysen is intelligent and articulate, but she is also deeply troubled. She struggles with depression, anxiety, and self-harm. However, she is also resilient and determined to get better.

Polly Clark

Polly Clark is one of the other patients on the locked ward. She is a young woman who is diagnosed with schizophrenia. Polly is creative and imaginative, but she is also delusional and paranoid. She frequently experiences hallucinations and delusions, and she has difficulty distinguishing between reality and fantasy.

Georgina Tuskin

Georgina Tuskin is another one of the patients on the locked ward. She is a young woman who is diagnosed with anorexia nervosa. Georgina is beautiful and intelligent, but she is also deeply insecure. She has a distorted body image and is obsessed with losing weight. She frequently starves herself and exercises excessively.

Lisa Rowe

Lisa Rowe is one of the patients on the open ward. She is a young woman who is diagnosed with depression. Lisa is quiet and withdrawn, but she is also kind and compassionate. She is a good friend to Susanna and helps her to adjust to life in the hospital.

Themes

Mental Illness

Mental illness is a major theme in *Girl, Interrupted*. The novel explores the different ways that mental illness can affect people's lives. Kaysen and the other patients in the hospital struggle with a variety of mental illnesses, including borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, anorexia nervosa, and depression. The novel shows how these illnesses can cause people to experience hallucinations, delusions, anxiety, and depression.

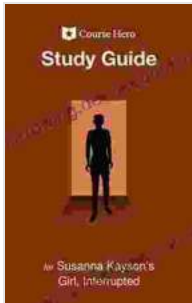
Trauma

Trauma is another major theme in *Girl, Interrupted*. Kaysen and the other patients in the hospital have all experienced some form of trauma in their lives. This trauma can be physical, emotional, or sexual. The novel shows how trauma can lead to the development of mental illness. It also shows how people can heal from trauma and move on with their lives.

Friendship

Friendship is a third major theme in *Girl, Interrupted*. Kaysen and the other patients in the hospital form strong bonds with each other. These friendships help them to cope with the challenges of mental illness. They also help them to find hope and healing.

Girl, Interrupted is a powerful and moving novel about mental illness, trauma, and friendship. Kaysen's honest and unflinching account of her experiences in a psychiatric hospital is both heartbreaking and inspiring. The novel is a valuable resource for anyone who is interested in learning more about mental illness or who has been affected by it personally.



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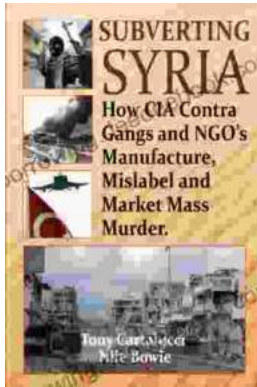
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