**Berry -**Literature Notes

**SUMMARY**  
Berry is about a young black man called Millberry Jones who is employee at Dr. Renfield's Home for Crippled Children. He was reluctantly employed by Mrs. Osborn, the housekeeper, because the Scandinavian kitchen boy had left without notice, leaving her no choice in hiring Berry. Her reluctance to hire Berry stemmed from his race, initiating questions like where he would sleep? How would the other servants react to the presence of a Negro? She had a meeting with Dr. Renfield and they decided to hire Millberry on a reduced salary. He was overworked and underpaid, but took solace in the children, whom he loved. An unfortunate incident occurred, however, where a child fell from his wheel chair while in the care of Berry. The result was that Berry was fired and given no salary for the week that he had worked.  
  
**SETTING**

* Dr. Renfiled's Home for Crippled Children
* New Jersey coast

**CHARACTERS**  
***Millbury Jones (Berry)***

* A Black male, approximately 20 years old.
* Described as good natured and strong.
* Poor and uneducated.
* Very observant and intuitive about people and places.
* Very good with children due to his gentleness.

***Mrs. Osborn***

* The housekeeper at the children's home.
* Rumoured to be in love with Dr. Renfield.
* Very high handed with her staff, but docile with Dr. Renfield.
* Displays racist characteristics in subtle forms.

***Dr. Renfield***

* Rumoured to have romantic affairs with his female staff.
* Berry observes that the Home is 'Doc Renfield's own private gyp game' (Hughes, p. 162), meaning that he runs his establishment for his own profit, instead of a desire to take genuine care of the children.
* He is blatantly racist.

**THEMES**  
***Racism***  
This theme is apparent when Berry was being considered for employment at the Home. Mrs. Osborn was concerned about where Berry would sleep, implying that he could not sleep with the white servants because he was considered to be beneath them. His salary was also cut due to his race, and he was overworked, with no discussions of days off, 'everybody was imposing on him in that taken-for-granted way white folks do with Negro help.' (Hughes, 162). Even more importantly, when the unfortunate accident occurred with the child, there was no attempt at discerning what had occurred that led to the incident, but blame was laid on the obvious person - Berry. As a result, he was relieved of his job a hail of racist slurs.   
  
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