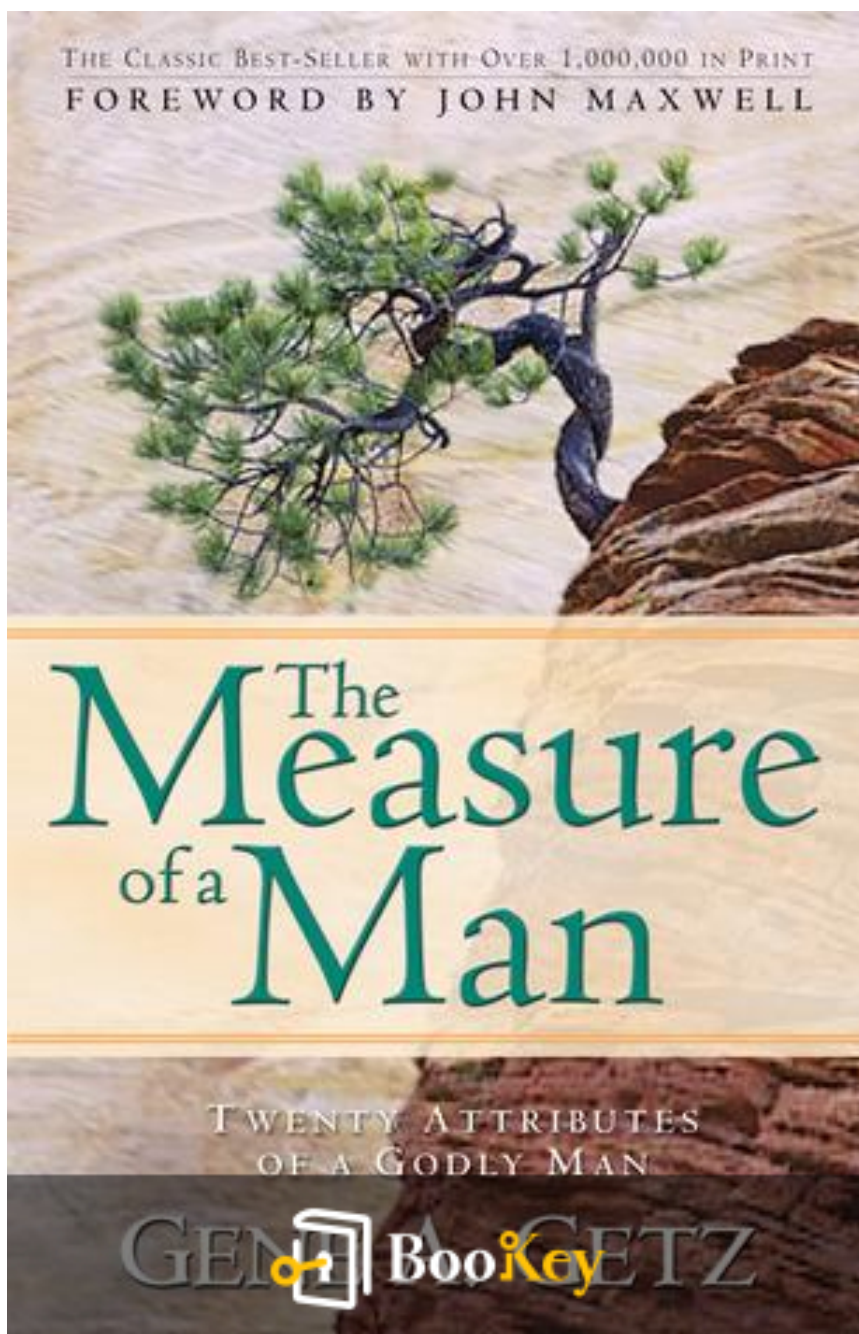


# The Measure Of A Man PDF (Limited Copy)

Sidney Poitier



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# **The Measure Of A Man Summary**

Reflections on a Life of Integrity and Artistic Courage

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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## About the book

In the introspective memoir "The Measure of a Man," celebrated actor Sidney Poitier offers a profound reflection on his extraordinary life and career, highlighting how his experiences have shaped not only his professional journey but also his personal philosophy. Poitier, a trailblazer in Hollywood and the first African American to win an Academy Award for Best Actor, draws upon the core values instilled in him by his Bahamian parents.

The memoir delves into themes of character, sacrifice, and integrity—hallmarks of Poitier's work and life. Through his narrative, he articulates the significance of portraying positive figures in film and the moral responsibility that comes with it. Poitier's roles often transcended entertainment; they conveyed messages of dignity, resilience, and respect, reflecting his commitment to uplift the representation of African Americans in cinema.

As he navigates through personal challenges and triumphs, Poitier shares intimate insights into his roles not only as an artist but also as a man, husband, and father. He emphasizes the importance of truth and passion in both career and life, illustrating how these principles guided him through the complexities of his journey.

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"The Measure of a Man" ultimately serves as a celebration of a life devoted to meaningful contributions both onscreen and in the world at large, inviting readers to understand the legacy of a man who continually sought balance, purpose, and moral clarity.

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## About the author

In this chapter, we delve into the life and legacy of Sidney Poitier, a trailblazer in the film industry and a significant cultural figure. Poitier, born in the Bahamas, became a symbol of change and inspiration. In 1964, he made history as the first Bahamian to win the Academy Award for Best Actor for his role in "Lilies of the Field," a film that showcased not only his exceptional talent but also the growing representation of Black actors in Hollywood during a time of significant social change.

Poitier's achievements extended beyond his Oscar win. He broke numerous barriers in a predominantly white industry, paving the way for future generations of actors from diverse backgrounds. His performances often challenged racial stereotypes and highlighted the complexities of the human experience, resonating with audiences across the globe.

The chapter also highlights his later achievements, particularly receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009, one of the highest civilian honors in the United States. This accolade underscores the immense impact he had not just in film, but also as a cultural ambassador and an advocate for civil rights.

Through these milestones, Poitier's journey reflects broader themes of perseverance, dignity, and the ongoing struggle for equality in the arts,

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making him a pivotal figure in both cinematic history and social progress. This narrative weaves together the essence of his contributions, establishing a comprehensive understanding of his remarkable influence on American culture and beyond.

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## Chapter 1 Summary: Acknowledgments

In the Acknowledgments section of his book, Sidney Poitier offers heartfelt gratitude to several individuals who played pivotal roles in bringing his writing to fruition. He begins by thanking Diane Gedymin from HarperSanFrancisco for her unwavering support and keen insight into the human experience, which inspired him throughout the writing journey. Poitier acknowledges Liz Perle for her encouragement and ability to challenge him to reach new heights, playing a crucial role in completing the manuscript.

He expresses appreciation for his editor, William Patrick, whose expertise proved invaluable in enhancing the clarity and organization of his work. Finally, Poitier acknowledges the essential contributions of his assistant, Susan Garrison, for managing the practical aspects of his workload, and he pays tribute to his friend Charley Blackwell. Blackwell's profound knowledge and stimulating discussions greatly enriched the writing process, allowing Poitier to delve deeper into the themes and ideas he wished to explore. Through these acknowledgments, Poitier not only recognizes the individuals who supported him but also highlights the collaborative nature of the creative process.

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## Chapter 2 Summary: Introduction

### INTRODUCTION

The author begins by reflecting on his previous writings about Hollywood, expressing a profound desire to delve into broader life lessons gained over seventy years. He recognizes the importance of values such as integrity, commitment, faith, and forgiveness, emphasizing the significance of simplicity and the pursuit of meaningful joys in life.

In his exploration, the author does not position himself as a definitive source of answers; instead, he approaches this work as an introspective journey. He contemplates how well he embodies the values he advocates while navigating the complexities of his life.

Recognizing the common practice among spiritual writers of using storytelling as a means of conveying wisdom, the author feels his extensive career in Hollywood uniquely equips him to share impactful narratives. He reflects on notable films he worked on, like "Lilies of the Field" and "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," which resonate with audiences and provide a relatable backdrop for discussing contemporary values and life lessons.

Ultimately, the author acknowledges that his personal background and the

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rich experiences shaped by his heritage give him an authentic lens through which to view modern life. This perspective allows him to address contemporary issues without the need for distant explorations, reinforcing the significance of his insights as grounded in real-life experiences.

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# Chapter 3 Summary: The Idyll

## The Idyll: Summary

### Late Night Reflections

The chapter opens with Sidney Poitier in a quiet moment, grappling with feelings of dissatisfaction despite his comfortable surroundings. Alone in his room late at night, he experiences a sense of emptiness as he aimlessly channels through television programs, questioning the meaning of his leisure time and seeking greater fulfillment.

### Memories of Cat Island

In an effort to clear his mind, Poitier's thoughts drift back to his idyllic childhood on Cat Island in the Bahamas. He paints a vivid picture of a life rich in nature, familial bonds, and the absence of modern distractions. Memories flood back of evenings spent on the porch, where stories flowed freely, creating a tapestry of warmth and love among family members.

### Childhood Freedom and Challenges

Poitier recalls the freedom of his youth, where exploration came with its

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own set of challenges—getting stung by wasps and learning to swim through the tough love of his mother. Each experience contributed to his survival instincts, shaping his character and deepening his appreciation for the environment that surrounded him.

### **The Contrast with Modern Upbringing**

Reflecting on the simplicity of his childhood, Poitier draws a stark contrast to the hyper-stimulating environment faced by today's children. He argues that the unencumbered experiences of youth play a crucial role in emotional and cognitive development, suggesting that the simplicity he enjoyed is essential for forming a solid character.

### **Connection to Family Legacy**

Poitier emphasizes the importance of familial connections, sharing poignant memories of his mother's nurturing presence. He conveys how the wisdom imparted by his family transcended words, establishing strong, enduring bonds that have influenced his journey.

### **Pursuit of Dreams**

As a young boy, Poitier dreamt of becoming a cowboy after being captivated by his first Western film. His sister's encouragement serves as a reminder of

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the vital role familial support plays in nurturing dreams and aspirations, ultimately encouraging him to pursue his ambitions.

### **The Journey to Nassau**

The family's move from Cat Island to Nassau marks a significant turning point in Poitier's life. With a mix of excitement and trepidation, he anticipates the allure of modernity and new experiences while feeling the weight of leaving behind his cherished childhood simplicity.

### **Reflections on Identity**

Poitier contemplates his identity in relation to race and self-perception, recognizing that his upbringing on Cat Island sheltered him from racial discrimination. While he cherishes the beauty of his childhood, he also acknowledges the harsh realities he would face as he steps into the wider world.

### **Conclusion: The Quest for Meaning**

The chapter concludes with Poitier pondering the complexities of life and the eternal search for meaning. Armed with the lessons from his youth and the love of his family, he prepares to navigate the intricate landscape of experiences that lie ahead, embracing both the joy and struggle of human

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existence.

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# Chapter 4: Departures

## Summary of Chapter 4: Departures

### Return to the Bahamas and Reflection on Solitude

In the 1970s, while residing in the picturesque Bahamas, Sidney Poitier often found solace in his small boat. During one fishing trip, he experienced a poignant moment of vulnerability when he lost a significant catch. This incident forced him to confront the dangers of the open water, symbolizing the inherent risks of life itself. This reflection prompted a newfound caution in his boating adventures and a broader contemplation of life's uncertainties.

### Transition from Childhood to Urban Life

Poitier reminisces about his transition from the tranquil pace of childhood to the bustling urban life of Nassau. This shift compelled him to mature swiftly, and by age fourteen, he felt an acute sense of lost innocence as he began to leave behind the joyous camaraderie of his youth. He contrasts these nostalgic memories with the harsher realities of the world he was entering, marking a significant turning point in his life.

### Encountering Race and Class

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As a young boy in Nassau, Poitier's early experiences with race were formative. He forged a friendship with a white boy named Carl, who delivered harsh truths about racial inequality that resonated deeply with Poitier. A significant event occurred when he was assaulted by a young white man, an encounter that starkly exposed him to the realities of racism and social stratification. It was during these moments that Poitier began to understand the complex dynamics of race and class, not only within the black community but also among the white population in Nassau.

### **Struggles and Overcoming Adversities**

Faced with financial hardships and obstacles in the educational system, Poitier drew strength from the resilience of his parents. They nurtured his aspirations, emphasizing the importance of hard work and education. However, due to challenging circumstances, Poitier had to abandon school at the age of thirteen, ultimately moving to Miami to live with his brother.

### **Experiences in Miami and Jim Crow Laws**

In Miami, Poitier confronted the grim realities of Jim Crow laws, marking a stark contrast to his life in the Bahamas. A particularly humiliating incident involving a white woman served as his first direct encounter with blatant discrimination, deeply challenging his sense of pride. Yet, despite such

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societal oppression, he remained unwavering in his determination to assert his identity and reject feelings of inferiority.

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# Chapter 5 Summary: The Time of Ashes

## THE TIME OF ASHES

In this chapter, Sidney Poitier reflects on a transformative and challenging period in his life, aptly named the "time of ashes." This phase marks profound struggles and self-discovery during his early years in New York City, culminating in his eventual connection with the American Negro Theatre, a pivotal moment that offers hope and direction.

### Struggles and Survival

Poitier recounts the harsh realities he faced upon arriving in New York, where he learned invaluable lessons about resilience and survival. He navigated a city bustling with opportunity yet fraught with challenges, all while grappling with the complexities of his identity as a Black man striving to find his place. These experiences deeply shaped him, fostering a sense of wisdom and mercy born from adversity.

### Encounter with Jojo

A significant encounter with a co-worker named Jojo Sutton serves as a turning point in Poitier's understanding of human interactions. One day in

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the woods, Jojo threatens him with a knife, exposing Poitier to fear and intimidation. This encounter forces him to confront the darker aspects of human behavior and instills in him a heightened awareness of self-defense, both physically and emotionally.

## **Military Experience**

Compounding his struggles, Poitier faces the severe realities of his first winter in New York, which prompts him to enlist in the Army. His military journey is fraught with complications, culminating in an assault charge against a senior officer, leading to a psychiatric evaluation. This experience forces him to grapple with his character and the serious ramifications of his actions, marking a challenging chapter in his life.

## **Turning Point in Acting**

After his discharge, Poitier finds himself back in dire circumstances, working as a dishwasher. However, he stumbles upon a help-wanted ad for the American Negro Theatre, igniting his passion for acting. Despite initial rejections stemming from a lack of formal training, Poitier commits to self-improvement, dedicating himself to learning and honing his craft, including improving his reading skills.

## **Rise in Theatre and Film**

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His relentless determination eventually pays off, leading to a breakthrough in his acting career. After enduring numerous setbacks, including a challenging debut in Broadway's "Lysistrata," Poitier begins to gain recognition and opportunities. This marks a significant turning point, as he transitions into film roles that further establish his presence and pave the way for future success.

### **Honoring Family Legacy**

Throughout his journey, Poitier remains deeply connected to the values imparted by his parents, emphasizing dignity and integrity in his work. He navigates the complexities of the entertainment industry with a steadfast commitment to honoring his family's legacy while remaining true to his authentic self.

In conclusion, Poitier's "time of ashes" symbolizes a transformative period filled with struggle, growth, and self-discovery that ultimately leads him to success. His journey is a profound testament to resilience and the enduring influence of his family's values on his life and career.

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# Chapter 6 Summary: Life in Black and White

## LIFE IN BLACK AND WHITE

### Introduction to Political Education

In 1943, Sidney Poitier's journey of political awakening began in Harlem, New York—a neighborhood whose residents, primarily Black, were acutely aware of their marginalization in a landscape dominated by white political power. In this vibrant community, the citizens understood their role as a disposable labor force and recognized the hollow promises made by those in authority, which shaped their collective skepticism towards political systems.

### The Allure of Harlem

Harlem was not only a cultural epicenter, known for its rich tapestry of music, cuisine, and entertainment, but it also served as a beacon of hope and aspiration. Establishments like Minton's and the Apollo Theater epitomized the neighborhood's vibrant life. Baron Smith, a prominent figure who straddled the worlds of Harlem and Nassau, represented the complex interplay between dreams and illusions that characterized life in Harlem.

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## **Lessons from the Community**

A pivotal moment in Poitier's education occurred through an interaction with Baron Smith, who surprised young boys sneaking into a movie theater. Rather than chastising them, Baron imparted a valuable lesson about honesty, showcasing the generosity and deep sense of community that permeated Harlem, despite the challenges of daily life.

## **Emergence of Political Voices**

As he matured, Poitier sought guidance from influential voices like Paul Robeson and Langston Hughes, who became instrumental in shaping his understanding of race relations and political ideologies. These figures not only served as mentors but also broadened his perspective on the Black experience in America, allowing him to navigate the complexities of identity and activism.

## **Relationship with Louise**

A significant relationship with Louise, a talented actress, further enriched Poitier's understanding of self-definition and societal perception. Their discussions underscored the importance of language and identity in navigating life, central themes that influenced Poitier's personal journey and shaped his views on race and social expectations.

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## **The Experience of Being an Outsider**

Throughout his life, Poitier grappled with the notion of being an outsider, frequently moving between diverse communities and racial environments. These experiences taught him to adapt while remaining true to himself, fostering resilience and independence amid societal pressures.

## **Navigating the Entertainment Industry**

Transitioning into Hollywood, Poitier encountered a film industry rife with racism, often finding himself as the sole Black individual in predominantly white spaces. Despite facing discrimination, he maintained his dignity and integrity, famously refusing to sign loyalty oaths that contradicted his values and the principles upheld by figures like Paul Robeson.

## **The Rise of Civil Rights Awareness**

As Poitier's career progressed, his awareness of the burgeoning civil rights movement deepened. Everyday incidents, such as being relegated to the margins of a restaurant, illuminated the pervasive societal injustices confronting Black Americans. Poitier's life choices became emblematic of a broader struggle for equality, reflecting the urgent call for change.

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## Conclusion

By 1955, Sidney Poitier epitomized the challenges and aspirations of many African Americans navigating a racially divided society. His life story laid the groundwork for the civil rights movement, ultimately inspiring leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. Poitier's narrative reveals the intricate balance between personal identity and societal constraints, alongside the relentless pursuit of dignity and justice.

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# Chapter 7 Summary: A Patch of Blue

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 7: A PATCH OF BLUE

In this chapter, Brent Staples and Sidney Poitier navigate the crucial intersection of race, representation, and social commentary in American media and education, shedding light on the stark disparities in perceptions of racial issues.

### **Influence of Race in Education and Media**

Brent Staples begins by addressing the stark contrast in how society perceives the challenges faced by white and black youth. Citing the film "Blackboard Jungle," which explores themes of courage and belonging in racially diverse settings, he highlights the disconnect between cinematic narratives and critical viewpoints, particularly referencing Clare Booth Luce's responses. Through this lens, Staples argues that racial issues should not be regarded as separate or 'other,' emphasizing the shared struggles across racial lines.

### **Poitier's Early Career Struggles**

Sidney Poitier recounts his experiences following the success of

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"Blackboard Jungle." Despite financial gains, his venture into the restaurant business faced setbacks, forcing him to seek manual labor. Influenced by his father's teachings on the importance of family responsibility, Poitier pursued acting not merely as a career but as a duty—validating his place in a predominantly white industry while grappling with the expectations placed upon him as a black actor.

### **Film as Social Commentary**

Poitier elaborates on his role in "The Defiant Ones," a film that tackles themes of racial unity and shared humanity amidst the racial tensions of the 1960s. Although it garnered some criticism, the film's intent to foster empathy across racial boundaries resonated with audiences. Poitier reflects on the complex nature of racial relations and believes that the film's enduring message of tolerance continues to be relevant, highlighting the potential for cinema to incite social change.

### **A Patch of Blue and Its Cultural Impact**

Approached for the role in "A Patch of Blue," Poitier underscores the significance of depicting a respectful and dignified bond between a blind white woman and a black man during the civil rights movement. His awareness of the sensitive context motivated him to create a narrative that champions authentic human connections. The collaboration with a talented

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ensemble further enriched the film, marking a pivotal moment in Hollywood's portrayal of black characters and their narratives.

## **Reflections on Legacy and Racial Representation**

Concluding the chapter, Poitier pays tribute to the legacy of black actors who paved the way despite overwhelming challenges in a historically biased industry. He acknowledges both their struggles and triumphs as foundational to his own success and that of future black artists. Poitier's reflections emphasize the importance of honoring these contributions while recognizing that the fight for racial equality and representation continues, underscoring the lasting impact of the past on the present landscape of film and society.

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# Chapter 8: Why do White Folks Love Sidney Poitier So?

## Chapter 8 Summary: Why Do White Folks Love Sidney Poitier So?

### Context of 1968

In 1968, America was engulfed in social upheaval, marked by the tragic assassinations of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. and presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy. In the midst of this turmoil, Sidney Poitier emerged as a significant figure in cinema, enjoying remarkable success with several box office hits. Despite his achievements, Poitier faced criticism from within the black community. Many viewed his roles as overly accommodating to white audiences, which led to accusations of him being an “Uncle Tom,” a derogatory term for compliance with oppressive racial norms.

### Criticism and Roles

Poitier's portrayals often featured dignified and intelligent characters that conformed to white societal standards. This led to a broader conversation about the representation of black individuals in film and the expectations they faced to gain acceptance. The dissatisfaction stemmed from a desire for more radical portrayals that authentically expressed black identity and anger,

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contrasting sharply with Poitier's polished image.

## **Film Production Dynamics**

During the production of "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," director Stanley Kramer made the strategic decision to withhold the film's provocative subject—interracial marriage—from Columbia Pictures, anticipating potential backlash during a time when such relationships were socially taboo. The film, featuring Poitier alongside established stars Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn, sparked discussions about race relations and the societal implications of their on-screen collaboration.

## **Interpersonal Dynamics**

Poitier recounts his early interactions with Hepburn and Tracy, noting an atmosphere laden with scrutiny, which illustrated the societal discomfort surrounding interracial dynamics. He believed their hesitance was rooted in a sincere effort to navigate an unfamiliar and sensitive topic rather than any malicious intent.

## **Reactions to Social Injustice**

Poitier reflects on the nature of anger as a legitimate response to social injustice, advocating for the transformation of that anger into constructive

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action rather than destruction. He shares his personal journey through feelings of anger and the process of forgiveness, drawing inspiring parallels to leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela, who also championed these values.

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# Chapter 9 Summary: Destruction or Resurrection?

## Seven Destruction or Resurrection?

### The Nature of Stardom and Personal Reflection

In this chapter, Sidney Poitier examines the intricate nature of fame within the film industry. As an iconic figure, he reflects on the dual burden of being celebrated while also becoming a mythical representation in the cultural consciousness. Poitier considers how the camera captures not just performances, but the deeper emotional truths of an actor, revealing contradictions beneath the surface. This introspection sets the stage for his journey through stardom and personal growth.

### The Actor's Craft and Learning Process

Poitier shares valuable lessons learned throughout his extensive career in Hollywood, underscoring the significance of mentorship and collaboration with fellow actors. He recounts his transformative experience on the set of *\*In the Heat of the Night\**, where he evolved from a performer to someone who grasped the profound emotional connections that inform authentic acting. This evolution highlights the importance of not merely playing a role, but fully inhabiting it.

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## **Understanding Emotion and Technique**

Moving deeper into the essence of performance, Poitier distinguishes between everyday emotions and those portrayed on-screen. He asserts that effective acting necessitates tapping into one's sense memory—an actor's reservoir of genuine feelings—enabling characters to spring to life with authenticity. This exploration of emotional depth emphasizes the necessity for actors to bridge their internal realities with their external expressions.

## **Struggles with Acting Techniques**

Reflecting on his formative years, Poitier critiques prevalent misconceptions about acting that impeded his progress. He stresses the importance for actors to delve beyond superficial techniques, advocating for a deeper understanding of human experiences and responses. By recognizing that true artistry lies in portraying authentic human emotions rather than just memorization of lines, Poitier redefines the acting craft.

## **Conflict in Artistic Vision**

In discussing his role in *\*A Raisin in the Sun\**, Poitier articulates the tensions that arose among cast members regarding the narrative focus. He champions the viewpoint of the son's journey over that of the mother,

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believing that highlighting the son's potential for tragedy or redemption would forge a more compelling connection with the audience. This artistic conflict illustrates the challenges actors face in aligning personal visions with collaborative storytelling.

## **Lessons and Challenges in Performance**

Poitier reflects on the emotional challenges during the production of *\*A Raisin in the Sun\**, particularly in relation to his dynamic with the actress portraying the mother. He candidly addresses the toll of artistic disagreements, recognizing how unresolved conflicts can hinder both performances and the mental health of the cast. This chapter underscores the fragile balance between personal expression and collective artistry in theater.

## **The Essence of Acting and Legacy**

Concluding his reflection, Poitier articulates his philosophy on the art of acting, emphasizing the value of authenticity and the transformative potential of performance. He posits that an actor's journey is shaped by personal experiences, family bonds, and an unwavering commitment to the craft. This legacy not only influences the actor's path but also resonates with audiences across generations, illustrating how performance can transcend time and continue to inspire.

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# Chapter 10 Summary: Legacies

## EIGHT LEGACIES

### Vacation in Acapulco

The narrative opens with Sidney Poitier reflecting on a carefree vacation in Acapulco alongside his agent, Marty Baum. Their time by the ocean initially epitomizes joy as they swim and frolic in the waves. However, tranquility quickly turns to turmoil when they find themselves caught in powerful currents, highlighting the transition from bliss to struggle.

### Near-Drowning Experience

As they attempt to return to shore, Poitier and Baum confront terrifying turbulence that pulls them deeper into the sea, igniting a profound sense of panic. In their desperate fight for safety, they turn to prayer, contemplating their lives and the legacies they hope to leave behind. This near-drowning experience serves as a catalyst for Poitier's deeper reflections on existence and legacy.

### Reflection on Life and Legacy

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Emerging from the water, Poitier embarks on a journey of introspection, emphasizing that life's essence is defined by love, work, and family connections. His reflections lead him to the realization of the vital role that parental legacies play in shaping future generations, turning his thoughts to the moral and ethical values imparted by his own parents.

### **Inheritance of Land**

Poitier shares insights into the historical context surrounding land ownership for Black families in the Bahamas, illuminating his family's legacy and the hope of reclaiming a beachfront property tied to his father's history as a caretaker. This narrative deepens his sense of connection to his ancestry and the importance of knowing one's roots.

### **Changing Perspectives on Wealth**

Divulging his personal journey from poverty to becoming a celebrated actor, Poitier reveals how his upbringing profoundly influences his relationship with wealth. He underscores the importance of responsibility and a healthy perspective on financial success, demonstrating how life experiences can reshape views on wealth.

### **Parenting and Values**

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The chapter transitions to Poitier's experiences as a father, particularly the trials he faced during tough times. He stresses the commitment to be present for his children and the guidance he draws from friends and the teachings of his father, which highlight the profound responsibilities that come with parenthood.

### **Challenges of Relationships**

Poitier candidly addresses the strains in his relationship with his daughter Beverly, which include periods of estrangement and her struggles with identity. His determination to reconnect physically embodies the essential role of communication and commitment in overcoming familial hardships.

### **Lessons from Teachers**

Another pivotal element of Poitier's story is his recollection of a remarkable teacher, Mr. Fox, who instilled values of dignity and self-respect, paralleling lessons from his own upbringing. This section spotlights the crucial role of educators in influencing character development and shaping lives.

### **Courage in Parenting**

The narrative culminates in discussions about the courage and steadfastness required for effective parenting, epitomized by his brother Cyril, who

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supported his family doggedly. Poitier raises concerns about the contemporary generation and the societal structures that either aid or challenge the commitments of family life.

## **Legacy of Daughters**

Poitier concludes with reflections on his feelings of pride regarding his daughters, asserting that his greatest investment in the future lies in their lives and potential. Acknowledging the responsibilities of those who have been fortunate, he captures a profound sense of duty not only to his family but also to his community and future generations, ensuring that his legacy endures.

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# Chapter 11 Summary: Stargazing

## NOSTALGIC REFLECTIONS ON CAT ISLAND

### Childhood Memories and Discoveries

The narrator fondly recalls his formative years spent on Cat Island, a serene locale where he explored the beach and was captivated by the natural beauty surrounding him, particularly the graceful stingrays gliding through the water. During these idyllic walks, he noticed strange spots in the sky, which he later realized were optical illusions caused by an ailment affecting his vision.

### A Growing Fascination with the Universe

As the narrator learned to read, he stumbled upon terminology related to astronomy, sparking an enduring fascination with the stars and the vast universe beyond his childhood innocence. This newfound knowledge illuminated the fact that stars, like our sun, are immense celestial bodies, reshaping his understanding of his place in a far broader cosmos.

### Meeting Carl Sagan

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His reflections deepen as he recalls his friendship with the renowned astronomer Carl Sagan, a man who maintained a child's sense of wonder despite his scientific rigor. Sagan instilled in the narrator a profound belief in the power of science to unveil the mysteries of the universe, merging faith with empirical inquiry in a compelling tapestry of knowledge.

### **Personal Beliefs and Reflections**

The narrator shares his belief in an expansive, immeasurable consciousness that transcends human comprehension, resembling a spiritual essence that permeates everything. He emphasizes the importance of personal accountability in the journey of self-improvement and advocates for a life that aligns with the natural order, drawing parallels to the moral frameworks found in Judeo-Christian teachings.

### **Nature as a Teacher**

In his quest for wisdom, the narrator finds inspiration in the natural world, observing how instinct guides animals in their behaviors. He asserts that humanity, too, can learn valuable lessons from nature, using the instinctive actions of a lion as a metaphor for the harmony that exists when one lives in accordance with the innate laws of the environment.

### **The Creation of "Lilies of the Field"**

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Turning to his career, the narrator recounts the challenges and triumphs of creating the film "Lilies of the Field." Collaborating with director Ralph Nelson, they faced tight budgets and various obstacles, yet the film emerged as a critical success. This achievement earned the narrator an Academy Award, deeply resonating with audiences and solidifying his place in cinematic history.

### **The Illusion of Modern Life**

Amidst personal triumphs, the narrator laments society's growing disconnection from nature in an increasingly complicated modern life. He warns that this alienation can lead to a significant decline in spiritual fulfillment, urging readers to seek intimacy with the natural world.

### **Cultural Perspectives on Religion**

The narrator contrasts his early experiences with religion on Cat Island against the commercial values encountered in Nassau. He reflects on the profound mysteries of existence, including divinity and spirituality, expressing curiosity about different expressions of faith, inspired by experiences in local "Jumper churches" where lively worship and community engagement flourish.

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## Exploring the Unknown

In a contemplative conclusion, the narrator ponders just how to grasp the essence of God, the nature of worship, and a yearning to comprehend the unseen forces that shape life and consciousness. His journey is not merely nostalgic but a profound exploration of existence itself, inviting readers to share in his search for understanding amidst the mysteries of the universe.

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# Chapter 12: The Nature of Opposites

## ### The Nature of Opposites

### #### Identity and Reflection

The author embarks on a profound journey of self-discovery, grappling with the foundational question, "Who are you?" He chronicles his transition from the innocence of childhood to the complexities of adulthood, emphasizing how his identity has been shaped by his upbringing, family influences, and societal norms. Early on, he experienced a sense of wonder and possibility, but as he matured, he faced the constraints imposed by the world around him—constraints that sought to confine his dreams and ambitions within societal expectations.

### #### Imagination vs. Reality

In this chapter, Poitier emphasizes the critical role of imagination during his formative years, viewing it as a driving force that inspired him to aspire beyond his surroundings. He acknowledges, however, the inherent challenges of translating these dreams into tangible realities—challenges that require hard work, determination, and personal accountability. Additionally, he candidly reflects on the darker facets of human nature, including cruelty and indifference, which he encountered as he ventured into a broader world, reminding readers that the journey of self-actualization is



often fraught with difficulties.

#### #### Self-Examination and Family Legacy

Poitier takes a deeper look into his family dynamics, particularly focusing on his father's character and the complexities of human flaws. He wrestles with the dualities of his father's nature and how they resonate within his own identity. This introspection evolves as he confronts his own vulnerabilities in the wake of his battle with cancer, highlighting the impact of societal expectations on one's public persona. Through this journey, he seeks to understand the intricacies of personal legacy and its effect on self-perception.

#### #### The Illusion of Progress

Challenging the assumption that humanity can collectively commit to goodness and justice, Poitier reassesses his previous beliefs about the innate nobility of people. He unveils the complexities of human behavior and the intricate dynamics of society, arguing that the duality of nature is essential for defining existence. Recognizing the necessity of opposites, he articulates that understanding these contrasts is essential for a nuanced perspective on life.

#### #### Hope and Reality

In conversations with a friend, Poitier explores the delicate balance between hope and truth. He recognizes that hope is crucial for survival and

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motivation but asserts that it must be anchored in a realistic acknowledgment of life's challenges. He posits that while dreams fuel our aspirations, they must also evolve in alignment with our life experiences. This chapter underscores that hope is not only about desire but also about developing personal definitions of comfort and fulfillment amid life's trials.

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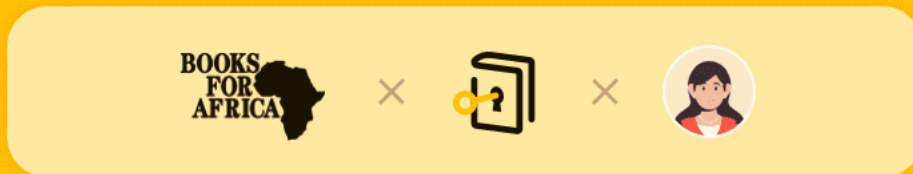




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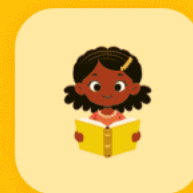
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# Chapter 13 Summary: The Measure of a Man

## The Measure of a Man

### Introduction to Theater Magic

In the realm of professional theater, audiences are often whisked away to enchanting worlds, a journey vividly recounted by Sidney Poitier through his own artistic evolution. Over the years, as he transitioned from theater to film and embraced family life, he found the magic of stage acting fading from his consciousness.

### Rediscovering the Magic

A pivotal moment struck at the Mark Taper Forum when Poitier witnessed actress Anna DeVere Smith's stunning performance. Her mesmerizing ability to transport the audience to new realms reignited Poitier's long-dormant passion for theater, stirring within him a deep desire to reconnect with his artistic roots.

### The Pantomime Experience

Reflecting on his early career, Poitier fondly recalls his introduction to

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pantomime—a form of expression that relies purely on body language and facial expressions to communicate emotions. Though captivated by this silent art form and envisioning performances in nightclubs, he ultimately veered toward a prosperous film career, shelving these creative aspirations.

## **Introspection and Challenges**

The magic of that revelatory evening catalyzed Poitier's introspection, prompting him to confront his past dreams and the challenges he had unwittingly sidelined. This realization ignited a determination to embrace risks and push the boundaries of his craft, fueling his ambitions for a return to the stage.

## **Preparing for a One-Man Show**

With renewed vigor and purpose, Poitier embarked on the ambitious journey of crafting a one-man show that encapsulated his life experiences. He enlisted the support of Charley Blackwell, a trusted friend and experienced theater professional, marking the beginning of a collaborative effort that promised to be deeply personal.

## **Facing Health Challenges**

As Poitier and Blackwell delved into the scriptwriting process, they were

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both confronted with serious health issues, including battles with cancer. Their persistence continued despite these adversities until the devastating loss of Blackwell to the disease, which left Poitier grappling with profound grief and the haunting reality of their shared unrealized dream.

### **Reflections on Life and Legacy**

In moments of solitude, Poitier reflects on the unyielding human quest for meaning and the poignant tragedies of dreams left unfulfilled. He voices a profound understanding that life is unpredictable and emphasizes the necessity of taking personal responsibility for one's journey while fostering a relentless urge to create, despite inevitable failures and setbacks.

### **Embracing Imperfection and Courage**

In his concluding thoughts, Poitier acknowledges the imperfections that characterize human existence and the ongoing struggle against them. He champions the pursuit of practical dreams and values that motivate a courageous life, ultimately affirming that the desire to express oneself and create remains a core facet of his identity. Through this journey, he seeks to inspire others to embrace their own aspirations, no matter the obstacles encountered.

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# Chapter 14 Summary: Index

## Summary of Chapter 14: The Measure of a Man by Sidney Poitier

In Chapter 14, Sidney Poitier reflects on the remarkable journey of his acting career, marked by significant achievements, including winning the Academy Award for Best Actor in 1964. This success was not merely a personal triumph but a revolutionary step in breaking racial barriers within the film industry. Poitier shares how his early ambitions were fueled by a determination to succeed while upholding high personal standards in his craft. Influential mentors played a pivotal role in shaping his artistic vision, guiding him in conveying profound, meaningful messages through his roles.

Poitier also delves into the depths of his identity, tracing his roots back to Cat Island in the Bahamas. He discusses his upbringing and the powerful impact of his parents on his character and values. The chapter unveils his struggles with feelings of anger and disillusionment, reflective of a broader human struggle that contrasts with his pursuit of acting. These challenges informed his perspective on life and helped cultivate a nuanced approach to his performances.

Addressing the pervasive racism he encountered in Hollywood and society at large, Poitier sheds light on the barriers he faced as an outsider. He

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recounts experiences of discrimination, emphasizing the importance of resilience in overcoming such challenges. Furthermore, he acknowledges the significant influence of the Civil Rights Movement on his work, positioning his career within a larger struggle for racial equality.

Poitier's exploration of spirituality reveals a deep contemplation of life's interconnectedness and the search for meaning. He underscores the values of integrity, compassion, and hope, which have consistently informed both his personal and professional endeavors. Such principles guided his choices and interactions throughout his life.

As the chapter draws to a close, Poitier reflects on the legacy he aspires to leave for future generations. He stresses the importance of cultural influence, the lessons carved from his experiences, and his commitment to authentic representations in the arts. With a heartfelt nod to his family and the foundational values they instilled in him, Poitier ultimately provides an inspiring testimony to a life dedicated to excellence and meaningful contributions to society.

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# Chapter 15 Summary: About the Author

## About the Author: Sidney Poitier

Sidney Poitier is a legendary figure in film history, celebrated for breaking racial barriers in Hollywood. In 1964, he made history by becoming the first Black actor to win the Academy Award for Best Actor for his outstanding performance in *Lilies of the Field*, a film that illuminated the challenges and triumphs faced by Black Americans.

Throughout his illustrious career, Poitier starred in numerous influential films, including *The Defiant Ones*, which addressed themes of racial tension and camaraderie; *A Patch of Blue*, a poignant story of love transcending societal barriers; *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, a groundbreaking exploration of interracial marriage; and *To Sir, With Love*, which highlighted the transformative power of education and mentorship.

His work has not only garnered numerous accolades but also inspired generations of actors and filmmakers. In recognition of his significant contributions to cinema and his humanitarian efforts, Poitier received the Life Achievement Award from the Screen Actors Guild. His legacy continues to resonate, making him a pivotal figure in both film and cultural

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## Chapter 16: Copyright Notice

In this chapter, titled "Copyright Information," the author, Sidney Poitier, emphasizes the importance of intellectual property rights with respect to his work, "The Measure of a Man." It establishes that all rights are safeguarded under both International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions, which protect authors and creators from unauthorized use and ensure they retain control over their work.

The following section, "Access Rights," clarifies the permissions granted to readers. Individuals are allowed a non-exclusive and non-transferable right to access and read the e-book. This means that while readers can enjoy the content, they cannot share their access with others.

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Lastly, the "Publisher Details" provide a comprehensive overview of HarperCollins, the publishing entity responsible for the book's distribution. This section lists regional information for various countries, including

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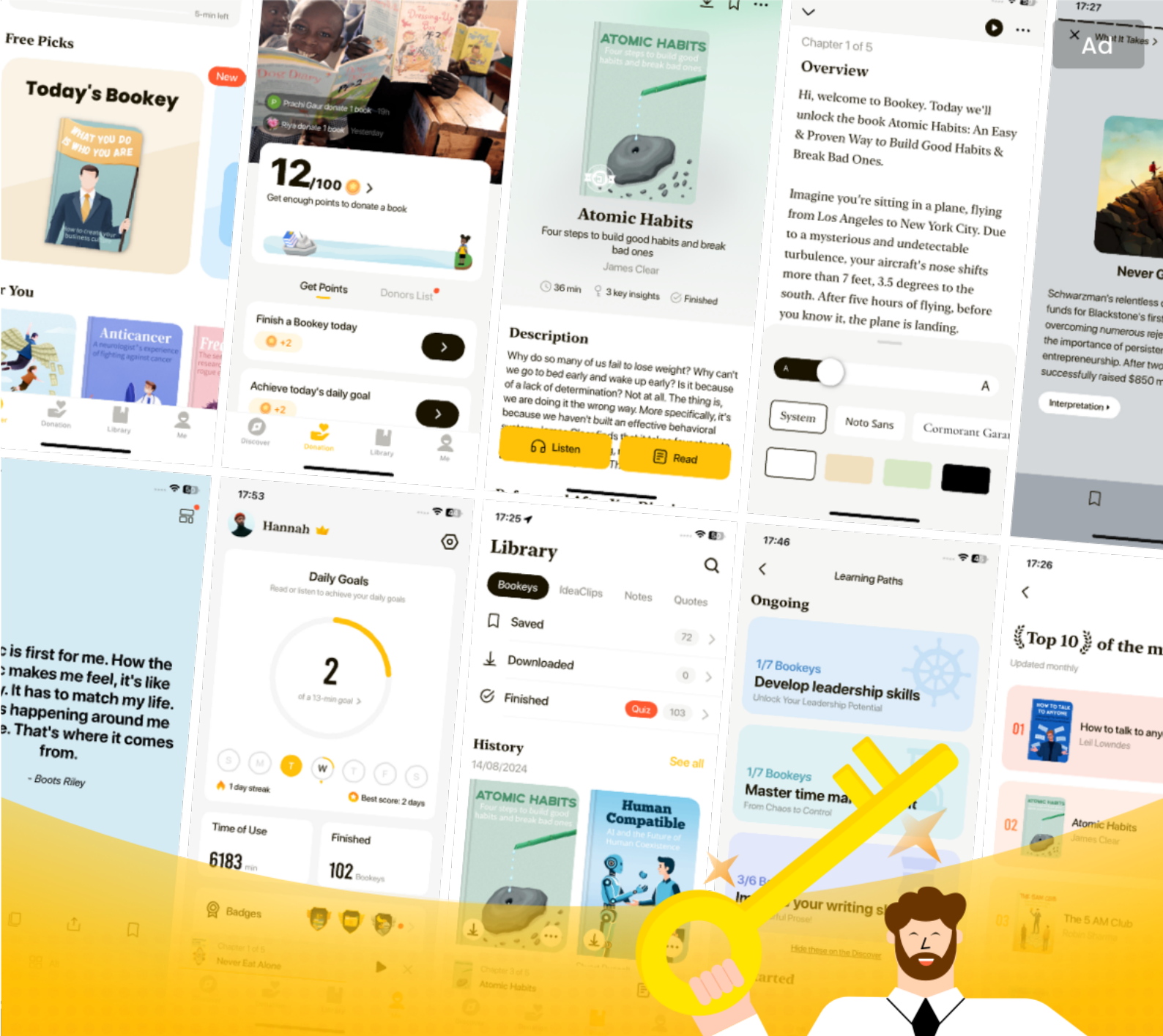
Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, along with web addresses for readers who may wish to seek additional information regarding the book or publishing standards.

In summary, this chapter serves as a reminder of the legal frameworks that protect literary works, ensuring that readers understand their rights and responsibilities while engaging with "The Measure of a Man."

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# Chapter 17 Summary: About the Publisher

## Chapter 17: Publisher Information Summary

In this chapter, the focus shifts to the essential details of the publishing houses that bring the book to readers across various regions. Each section outlines the locations and contact information for HarperCollins Publishers in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, highlighting their global reach and commitment to distributing literature internationally.

In Australia, the publisher is HarperCollins Publishers (Australia) Pty. Ltd., located in Pymble, NSW. Readers can find more information by visiting their dedicated website.

Similarly, in Canada, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. operates from their office at 55 Avenue Road, Suite 2900 in Toronto. Their online presence can be explored through the Canadian website.

In New Zealand, readers are served by HarperCollins Publishers (New Zealand) Limited, headquartered in Auckland, also featuring its own regional website.

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The United Kingdom's HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. is based in London, specifically at 77-85 Fulham Palace Road, with an accessible website for UK readers.

Lastly, the United States branch, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., is situated at 10 East 53rd Street in New York City, offering a comprehensive website for American readers.

Overall, this chapter emphasizes the interconnectedness of global literature and the role of HarperCollins Publishers in facilitating access to a diverse array of books for audiences around the world.

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