



Shadows of Abuse and Identity: Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*

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Abstract:

Toni Morrison, the Nobel Prize-winning American author, is renowned for her profound explorations of race, identity, and the complexities of the human experience. Her distinguished career includes literary classics such as *Beloved*, *Song of Solomon*, and *The Bluest Eye*, each characterized by its lyrical prose and unflinching examination of the African American experience. In 2015, Morrison enriched her oeuvre with the novel *God Help the Child*, continuing her thematic exploration through the story of Bride, a young African American woman confronting the traumas of her past. Set against the backdrop of contemporary America, the novel interweaves issues of race, beauty, and the legacy of parental influence. Central to the narrative is the relationship between Bride and her light-skinned mother, Sweetness, whose rejection and emotional abuse leave indelible marks on Bride's self-perception and relationships. As Bride embarks on a journey of self-discovery, she strives to overcome the impact of her upbringing and reclaim her identity. This article examines Morrison's continued exploration of racial and personal identity in *God Help the Child*, highlighting the novel's contributions to contemporary discussions on race and the enduring legacy of Morrison's work.

Keywords: Contemporary America, Sweetness, Abuse, Rejection, Self -discovery.