

A feminist view of
"everyday use" by
alice walker



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In Alice Walker's *Everyday Use*, Walker focuses on the mother, the narrator, and her two daughters, Dee and Maggie. The two girls are very different in personalities and identities. They both have different views of their heritage. I think it was clever of Alice Walker using the quilts to show how each girl felt about their heritage. Walker did a fantastic job at describing the mother. The mother is the narrator of the story and starts off dreaming about how she really wanted her family.

She was the kind of woman that had to be the mother and father figure. She tried raising her girls to be girls, but she worked like a man would. I am a big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands. In the winter I wear flannel nightgowns to bed and overalls during the day.

I can kill and clean a hog as mercilessly as a man" (Walker, 1973, para 5). She also had to take care of her youngest, Maggie, because she felt bad about Maggie getting burned in a house fire.

Maggie is thin, who has scars down her legs and arms. She refers to Maggie's walk as "chin on chest, eyes on ground, and feet in shuffle" (Walker, 1973, para. 2). This is describing Maggie as a self-conscious female. She is that way because of the fire and from her sister being so beautiful.

Dee in her eyes was perfect. I think she envied her. Dee has "nicer hair and a fuller figure" (Walker, 1973, para. 3). Dee went off to college to make something better of her, instead of living in a rundown house. Dee is described as a confident woman and a strong willed woman. She shows this strong willfulness when she tries to take the quilts from Maggie. Dee just wants the quilts for decoration. She would rather put it on a wall than to use

it for everyday use. She goes on to say that Maggie "probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use" (Walker, 1973, para. 14).

This just shows their difference in values of their heritage. Maggie would rather remember her heritage by using the quilts for everyday use, while Dee would just rather put them on display. In conclusion, this story shows how two sisters can be so different even if they grew up with the same upbringing. I think Maggie kept a hold of her heritage. I think Dee has forgotten her upbringing and this is what makes her so bitter about her heritage and sister. I think that it is important to remember that heritages are passed down from family and not something you just acquired the taste for in your everyday use.