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I Stand Here Ironing: The short story by Tillie Olsen, I Stand Here Ironing, is an example of a mother daughter struggle. From what I understand, the young mother initially has a rough life, and can barely keep track of herself and her daughter, Emily.

====-Category: book reportsPaper Title: I Stand Here IroningText: The short story by Tillie Olsen, I Stand Here Ironing, is an example of another daughter struggle. From what I understand, the young mother initially has a rough life, and can barely keep track of herself and her daughter, Emily. Because the mother must work to support them, she always put Emily into other people's care, and even had to send her away for several different periods.

This caused the distance between the mother and Emily to become greater, even to the point that Emily does not like physical affection such as hugs from her mother. The mother loves her daughter greatly, but she does not have the means of providing for her child as she would like to. As there are other children and husbands added to the family, Emily seems to move farther from them all. As Emily grows older, the mother is regretful of the way Emily has grown up. The mother says, We were poor and could not afford for her the soil of easy growth (pg 29). The mother criticizes and blames herself for this, causing tension in their already stressful relationship. The mother is obviously suffering from guilt and wretched memories of Emily suffering.

Emily, too, is suffering. We see her stiffness towards all that care for her, her quietness in her daily duties, and her feelings of worthlessness towards herself. She feels that she is extremely ugly and stupid, and constantly compares herself to her adorable younger sister, Susan, who has the perfect Shirley Temple image. This is why, in the beginning of the story, someone who cares about Emily, is asking her mother how he/she can help Emily. And, as the mother stands there ironing, she contemplates her daughter and the troubles that they have. The constant motion of the ironing is like a sedative to the mother, as it calms her greatly. Because ironing is such a monotonous job, the mother has time to think her disturbing thoughts.

Thus, the theme of coming to terms with and overcoming the past hardships emerges. Personally, I have a hard time relating to the whole story. I can understand, but I can't really internalize them.

I suppose that it just is an example of a basic dysfunctional mother-daughter relationship. The story does a good job of showing a mother's anguish over her daughter, and a depressed teenager who is struggling to overcome her unhappy childhood.

