

# Claras day assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

This short story by Penelope Lively called "Scalar's Day" discusses how a fifteen-year-old girl tries to find herself while she tries to live up to her mother's expectation. This assignment will discuss the characterization of Clara, the relationship between Clara and her mother, the theme identity. In both the story and a picture by Nielsen Staröbeak called "A double life of the artist's wife" and why Penelope Lively has chosen to call the short story "Scalar's Day". "Scalar's Day" takes place in London around the sass's which we decide in the light of the fact that we have to do with a girl's school, which there still is in England. The Head writes a letter to Scalar's mother about her doings and the general technology is not very modern, e. G. The coffee is made on the stove. Clara comes from a to some extent a wealthy family since she goes to a girl's school, we do not hear it is private but the fact that Clara went to an interview with the Head, indicates it must be a private girl's school.

Clara is a very independent and strong girl, but she hunger for love, acceptance and support from her mother. She seems like a good and loyal girl, who does what people expect from her and who does not do anything out of the ordinary, she does to stand out. Clara does well in school and she is told from the Head, that she will not have any problems with her O-levels, when she finishes. She spends most time with two girls called Liz and Stephanie, but they are only mentioned as her friends. Clara lives alone with her mother in London, since her parents are divorced.

Her mother's friend Stan lives more or less with them and the mother spends most of her time with him and she adjusts her schedule after his. We do not hear anything about Scalar's father or any other family members, which

could indicate that she does not even contact with him and she is an only child. The mother/daughter relationship is an obvious theme in this short story and we get to see it the following ways: The mother does not seem very interested in Clara and she does not pay any attention to her daughter. The day of the nude episode at Scarlar's school, Clara comes home to her mother, who had the afternoon of.

The mother asked if there were any news, Clara answered no, and the mother just continued to read her magazine. If the mother knew her daughter, she would be able to see something had happened and the fact that Clara was hiding something from her. The biggest problem between mother and daughter is the fact that the mother does not accept her daughter's way of being. When the Head's letter arrived and Scarlar's mother read it her reaction to what Clara did was "Honestly, sweetie, I wouldn't have thought you had it in you." (l. 0) Scarlar's mother was so surprised by the news the Head wrote to her about the episode at the school assembly, that she first does not believe it and she actually says to Stan, that it has to be a joke. Just after the mother said that, she starts telling embarrassing stories about how private Clara is and she makes fun of her own daughter right in front of her. To finish it off the response to the whole situation was to break down crying, because she yet again wasn't able to get some attention, respect and loving care from her mother.

Another major theme in "Scarlar's Day" is identity. Since Clara is fifteen she is a teenager and Penelope Lively pictures Clara as a girl who stands on the border between being a child and being an adult. The episode in the beginning of the short story, where Clara walks naked through the school

assembly, is an example of how Clara tries to find herself, by doing something so unlike her. When the Head speaks with Clara afterwards and they talk about whether Clara was trying to attract attention or not Clara answers: " Well, I would, wouldn't I? Doing a thing like that.

I mean - you'd be bound to. " (l. 29) On Nielsen Starëbees oil paint " A double portrait of the artist's life", you see a woman who looks herself in the mirror. But the woman in the mirror is naked and has her hair loose. The woman who faces her own reflection from the mirror wears a shirt and a vest and her hair is pulled back. You are not able to see much of the woman's facial expression since you see her in profile, but the art you see seems strict but also modest. On the reflection you can see the woman's eyes, which tells us more about her.

The eyes look right at you and you see uncertainty, shyness and too some extent fear. The nudity in both the story and the picture symbolizes the ' naked' person, the person you are on the inside. Clara as well as the woman on the painting has a shell and they both hide them behind a facade, but when they stand naked, they show us as readers and spectators the real them. Clara and the woman are symbols on the rest of us. Most people try to keep up an appearance so they can keep some distance to people and they also keep the appearance up in order to protect themselves from being hurt.

Most people do it just to save themselves from hurt feelings and problems, but when you put up a facade some people think others will like them more because they act like the rest of the crowd. That is in the most cases not the right thing to do, but we are so afraid of standing out, that we accept to

become someone who we are not. The story is called " 'Scalar's Day' " which is kind of ironic, because Clara is so quiet and she blends in with the rest of the crowd and she never does anything unexpected.

So the author has decided to call the story, where Clara does something very much out of the ordinary, " 'Scalar's Day' " because people finally give her some attention and she is noticed as a student at her school. On this specific day Clara got her fifteen minutes of fame. " 'Scalar's Day' " as well as the picture painted by Nielsen Starëbeak shows two persons who tries to find their identity, but who also hides behind a facade in order to protect themselves. Clara lives with her mother and the mother's boyfriend in the sass's London while she goes to a girl's school. At the same time she struggles in order to et her mother's accept and love.

On top of everything she is right in the middle of a very hard period of her life because she is in her teenage years where everything is a little bit more difficult to manage because so many things happen. The two women are perfect examples of the rest of the world, and they show fabulously what we all do, when we try to find ourselves. We hide inside ourselves and we try only to let people in who we feel we can trust. Clara does something she would never have done in order to find herself and to get accept from her mother. Many people do that try to break away from all known and ' normal'.