

# Ellen foster analysis essay



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Ellen Foster Ellen Foster's story is one of movement, from alienation and loneliness to acceptance and belonging. Ellen herself effects this major change by force of her own will. Realizing her own family "is and always has been crumbly old brick," not meant to stick together, she targets a "foster" family that looks nice and decides to belong to them. She saves her money and on Christmas Day appears on the foster family's doorstep, ready to present \$160 to her new mama and secure a place in the family.

Ellen does this because she is so lonely and always wanted a nice home where people took care of each other. In the beginning of the novel, Ellen's mother was very sick and her father was never home to take care of both of them. Ellen's father is always out drinking his life away and doesn't care about Ellen or her mother. Ellen is the one always by her mother's side and tries to help her every way she can. But once her mother dies, Ellen is practically on her own.

After her mother dies, her father doesn't even worry about Ellen and what she does or where she is. Ellen has to go through a long time of loneliness without her mother and father and no one else in her family is willing to look out for her or to care for her. Since Ellen doesn't know what a real family is like she goes to spy on her friend Mavis and her family. Since Ellen is so lonely she has to spy on her friend to see what it's like. Ellen has been through a lot of loneliness and does the best she can to take care of herself.

Before Ellen targets the foster family as the one she wants, she is nearly alone in the world — her own mama is dead, her father neglects and abuses her, her aunts and grandmother don't want her, and her only friend,

Starletta, is a little black girl who eats dirt and appears not to speak. While Starletta's parents are kind, Ellen is always aware they are "colored" and, in the context of the Southern town where they all live, she is not "supposed to" be friendly with them.

Her outsider status is emphasized by the fact that most of the happy families she knows are black and she "wanted one that's white." She feels she cannot be a part of either Starletta's or Mavis's families, both of whom are so supportive. Ellen's sense of herself as "not just a face in the crowd," but as someone deserving of a place in a loving family, finally enables her to find such a place and gain a sense of belonging. Ellen is finally now happy in her new home and doesn't have to go through loneliness again.