

# Mrs.turner cutting the grass

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

As the past history of Mrs. Turner unfolds, the reader is left gasping at the many dalliances and infinities of this ordinary woman. Indeed, this story is a testimony to the belief that behind simple facades lie some of the most interesting lives. The story begins simply enough with Mrs. Turner going through a routine task and the reader is led to believe that she is going to be confronted with a neighborly fight, but soon we find ourselves in the youth of Mrs. Turner. Carol Shields, with a quick turn of phrase talks of the peccadilloes of Mrs. Turner youth, her subsequent fleeing to New York, her abandonment of her child, her return to her home town and the final settling down into domesticity.

1. Trait I

2. Carelessness

3. Carelessness was indeed one of Mrs. Turner's unusual traits. This is very apparent when we see her mowing the lawn. The grass flies around her but she does not use a catcher, to the dismay of the Saschers, her next-door neighbor. Her extensive use of pesticides to control the weeds is another instance of carelessness she exhibits.

4. Again, we see Mrs. Turner's careless and casual attitude which results in her pregnancy which she carried so far as to even abandon her little baby, unmindful of what would happen to it. Her physical appearance is also hastily put together as evinced from the following phrases that go to describe this attitude saying she had an "ancient pair of shorts", paired with a halter top. She has on her feet a pair of "crepe-soled sandals" and covers her head with her dead husband's golf cap.

5. This trait of the carelessness of Mrs. Turner gets her often into trouble and makes her a person of contempt and disgust to all those around her. Her pregnancy was the result of a careless dalliance, which ultimately made her leave New York because she found that she could not take care of a baby by herself.
6. Turner was a woman not used to doing things for others and in that sense, we could label her a selfish person and it was this carelessness coupled with the selfish nature that made her move back to Winnipeg into the remorseful arms of her father. It is her return to Winnipeg that makes her life what it is and invests her character with a sadly comic aura.

### III Trait II

1. Secrecy
2. Turner is a woman of many secrets and in spite of her pretensions of being airheaded, she knows how to keep all her intimate details to herself. Her time in New York is one of those unsavory chapters of her life of which even her closest people-like her parents and sisters do not know anything about it.
3. It could be the desire to keep her past under wraps that makes Mrs. Turner chose a life of boring domesticity in a little town. From her past life, we know that she is a spirited girl who would not think twice before setting off to make a life of her own. But it is this sheer knack of keeping secrets that helps her to marry a good man and to rebuild her life in the town of her childhood, among family and friends.

4. Her secrecy could be attributed to her practical nature, which teaches her that certain aspects of one's life cannot be revealed to our nearest and dearest also.

#### IV. Trait III The banality of her life

1. Turner's life in spite of its colorful past was nothing short of banal in the years after the death of her husband. As she herself said, she was far from rich, but a little thriftiness in her lifestyle, assured for her a trip every spring. In the course of years, she had traveled to the many corners of the globe but she could not shake off the commonality of her persona. This trait is brought forth through the Professor's poem "A Day At The Golden Pavilion" where he narrates how three Midwestern lady tourists, in the Golden Pavilion at Kyoto could talk only about where to go next for their vacation, instead of enjoying the transcendental beauty of the immaculate masterpiece of architecture.
2. The Turner sisters remind the Professor of the three furies of classical literature, with their incessant talk and loud behavior. It alienates the trio from the other tourists and at the end of the story, Mrs. Turner becomes a tool to create laughter. She is the unwitting comedian in the Professor's poetry readings. For the students, she is an excellent caricature of the gross and uncouth tourists they have met during their trips. When Mrs. Turner travels, even to an exotic place like Japan all that she sees is the carrots and lettuce growing side by side.
3. The banality of her existence brings the reader back to the realization that whatever adventures Mrs. Turner may have had in her life, she is

at the end of it all, just another old housewife, whose life is a litany of mundane chores.

#### 4. Conclusion

'Mrs. Turner Cutting the Grass' is an interesting study of a character, rich in foibles and odd habits which endear her to her readers, although the same cannot be said for the people who actually meet her personally. In the deft prose of Carol Shields, a fat widow from Winnipeg becomes “ something kaleidoscopic” ( The New York Times )