

# Reaction to, "my name is margaret"



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

This story reminds me of a sad time in our history when the people of this nation thought they could own another human being. I would like to say this time has passed, but we are barely able to hang on. We may have a bi-racial president, but there is still racism among the old south. Margaret was only a child and she was being groomed to be the help. It may have been on a different scale versus working in a field, but all the same. She talks about her experience and recalls the events in such a way that you are taken back and can almost see what she is describing.

I love the names in the essay, Miss Glory having been named Hallelujah. I felt horrible when Mrs. Cullinan changed her name to suit her friends. I do not even change the names of my animals. If they are named already it seems inhuman to call them by a different name. Mrs. Cullinan wanted to change Margaret to make it shorter, but oh my goodness is that ever degrading. The first time Mrs. Cullinan attempts to call her Mary, Miss Glory asks, "WHO? ... this is funny to me because she is trying to defend Margaret and express as much sympathetic dislike for the name change. Miss Glory even says she felt sorry for Margaret. I liked how Angelou described the old traditions that little ladies were trained in: learning to dance, sit and sip tea, and embroider. It reminds me of spending time to teach my daughters how to perform regular house hold chores and cook. We like to bake together, but soon my nine year old, Elyssa, will be in the kitchen helping with the cooking.

I started my son out kind of the same way. He started with how to cook eggs and boil water for ice tea. In this story Margaret is learning how to work and support herself and family for a living. She will be working in the upper class homes for employment and will have to serve a Lady of the House. In this

essay, Angelou also speaks of a Mr. Cullinan and his indiscretions, having not one but two children by a “ colored woman. ” They are quick to sympathize with Mrs. Cullinan, but still did not excuse her for her mannerisms.

She even writes a poem about this, “ pain and liveness. ” I would think there would be more understanding, but she is only a child in this story. In the end Mrs. Cullinan did finally agree her name was Margaret and Miss Glory who once felt sorry for Margaret now somewhat identified with Mrs. Cullinan. Miss Glory must have known before she even asked because she called her Mary. The best part was as Margaret walked out she left the front door open so all would hear the distressed Mrs. Cullinan who married beneath her status.