

A cream cracker  
under the settee:  
dramatic monologue  
by alan bennett



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A Cream Cracker Under The Settee is a dramatic monologue written by Alan Bennett in 1987 for television, as part of his Talking Heads series for the BBC. In A Cream Cracker Under the Settee Alan Bennett has addressed the issue of elderly people in our society and how they are treated by others. It revolves 75-year old Doris on an ordinary day in her house. The play begins after her fall from the buffet and her reflecting on the events that led up to it. The reason the writer uses a monologue is to emphasis to the readers that 'Doris' (the narrator) is totally alone and this play tries to emphasis how elderly people are neglected in society and people see them as a problem. This play in mainly about a old woman called 'Doris' and she talks about how society in thinking of old people as not as important in the world and old people being second class citizens. This play was written in 1987 and at that time new technology was being introduced and old people were feeling out of place in society because they felt they could not keep up. Moreover the message that the writer tries to tell us is why old people don't have as much respect as they used to and why they are neglected compared to the new generations. The issue of treatment of the elderly are often discussed as it is seen as quite a sensitive issue that is commonly sidestepped. This could possibly be due to the fact that the vast majority of young and/or middle-aged people fear growing old in our society because people associate it with the loss of your life, your happiness and your dignity . Cream Cracker reflects many of these fears as Doris is shown to be alone and slightly pitiful in her life. This is how many people see what will happen towards the ends of their lives but do not want to acknowledge this fact. Although old age should perhaps be seen as a time to impart wisdom and past experiences upon the younger generation it is actually seen as a time where you can no longer

<https://assignbuster.com/a-cream-cracker-under-the-settee-dramatic-monologue-by-alan-bennett/>

Doris is a tragic character but also a comic one. The way this is portrayed is when she says " were cracked Wilfred". In this quote a metaphor is used to possibly suggests that Doris feel that her relationship had 'Cracked', this is tragic because she lived alone and she is old so she doesn't have much to do and no one to talk to. Moreover it could mean that she has gone mad when she speaks to the 'cracked' photograph, this could also imply that Doris is feeling like she want's to join him in dieing. This quote could also imply the fact that Doris and Wilfred had cracked apart by Wilfred going a separate was (dieing) and Doris staying alone. This makes the reader feel sad and sympathy for Doris as she is a comic character so we have mixed feeling because we are faced with a character who is both funny and sad at the same time, this would be called a bitter sweet feeling. People in society nowadays think of old as waste of space and that often they are treated with no respect. Bennett keeps Doris interesting by making her a comic person at depressing times, also she has something to say in everyday life and makes it humorous, however she does not mean to in the way that she says " I wouldn't care if they were my leaves. They're not my leaves. They're next door's leaves we don't have any leaves i know that for a fact". The device used in this quote is humor. She makes the reader laugh, but does not intend to do so. This quote is humorous, because she is always thinking of ways to tell the reader that what isn't hers, isn't hers, and she doesn't want to have anything to do with what isn't hers. Bennett creates sympathy in Doris . The way he does this i by stating " I must have fallen asleep bacause when i woke up she'd gone. I wanted to see to him. Wraping him in news paper as if he was dirty. He wasn't dirty, little thing." This quote emphasis the pathos of Doris's life because Zulema has taken Doris's child and thrown him away

<https://assignbuster.com/a-cream-cracker-under-the-settee-dramatic-monologue-by-alan-bennett/>

wrapped in newspaper. This makes the reader feel sympathy because the reader feels sorry for Doris and thinks of how she must feel. This quote had devices such as repetition, when she repeats dirty. When a baby is born, people don't think of it as dirty but like, more clean and pure. Bennett uses language devices, such as Idioms to make Doris seem realistic by saying "I've got umpteen pillowcases". The reader is shown that Doris doesn't always use proper English language. It also gives an imagination to the reader. This makes the reader feel that Doris is similar to the everyday person and also tell us that she is not an upper class person, she is the same in society as most people. She is a mainly calm woman, from the north who speaks in a down to earth manner. Bennett uses Dramatic devices such as Bathos to make Doris seem realistic when she says "They ought to get their priorities right. They want learning that on their instruction course, shouting Jesus and leaving gates all open. It's hypocrisy that is. It is in my book anyway. 'Love God and close all gates'. Bathos means that when a person says something that builds up and the reader is expecting something towards a big finish, but suddenly drops, a good example of this is when Doris says 'Love God and close all gates'. This is also known as anti-climax. Moreover it links something big like 'God' to something small like 'Gates'. This makes the reader feel slight humor and also feels as if she has no perspective of what things are important and not.