

Unveiling the Hidden Depths: Study Guide For Alice Walker Everyday Use

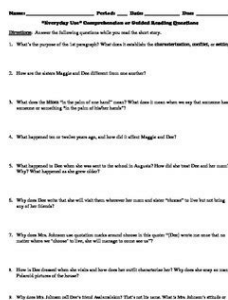


Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" is a powerful and thought-provoking short story that explores themes of heritage, identity, and the African American experience. Through her compelling storytelling and rich symbolism, Walker challenges societal norms and invites readers to question the true meaning of cultural

heritage. This study guide will delve into the depths of this literary masterpiece and provide you with valuable insights and analysis.

Understanding the Storyteller: Alice Walker

Alice Walker is a highly acclaimed American writer and activist, best known for her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "The Color Purple". Raised in a poor family in rural Georgia, Walker's own experiences greatly influenced her writing. With a keen eye for social injustices and a deep understanding of the African American culture, Walker's voice shines throughout "Everyday Use". Her unique perspective and poetic prose make this story a must-read for anyone interested in exploring the complexities of cultural heritage.



Study Guide for Alice Walker's Everyday Use

by Course Hero ([Print Replica] Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 599 KB

Print length : 28 pages

Lending : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported



Plot Summary: A Tale of Two Daughters

"Everyday Use" revolves around the conflict between a mother, Mrs. Johnson, and her two daughters, Maggie and Dee. The story takes place in the 1960s, when the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing.

Maggie, the younger daughter, is portrayed as shy, unassuming, and unsure of herself. She has burn scars on her body from a house fire, which have left her

physically and emotionally scarred. Despite her lack of confidence, Maggie possesses a deep appreciation for her cultural heritage.

Dee, on the other hand, is the educated and worldly older daughter who has distanced herself from her roots. She has changed her name to Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo, embracing her African heritage as a way to express her newfound identity. Dee is determined to collect the family's handmade quilts and other artifacts for display, believing that they are merely cultural artifacts to be admired rather than cherished heirlooms.

As the story unfolds, Mrs. Johnson must make a difficult decision, torn between her two daughters' conflicting ideologies. The climax of the story comes when Dee asks for the family's cherished quilts, leading to a confrontation that challenges the meaning of cultural heritage and the value of preserving traditions.

Themes Explored: Heritage, Identity, and Cultural Appropriation

"Everyday Use" delves into the complex themes of heritage, identity, and cultural appropriation. Through the contrasting characters of Maggie and Dee, Walker explores the multifaceted nature of cultural heritage and its significance in shaping individual identities.

Walker challenges the notion of cultural appropriation, suggesting that true appreciation of one's heritage requires more than adopting superficial elements. She highlights the importance of understanding the historical context and personal connection to cultural artifacts, emphasizing the weight of lived experiences and family traditions.

Symbolism: Uncovering the Layers

Alice Walker masterfully employs symbolism throughout "Everyday Use" to enrich the narrative and convey deeper meanings. The quilts, in particular, serve as a powerful symbol of heritage and familial bonds. Through the quilts, Walker explores the idea that heritage is not something to be put on display, but a living, breathing entity that should be cherished and passed down.

The house fire, which scarred Maggie, represents the turbulent history African Americans have endured. It symbolizes their struggle for identity and the resilience they have developed in the face of adversity.

Analyzing the Writing Style and Structure

Alice Walker's writing style in "Everyday Use" is characterized by its lyrical quality and deeply reflective tone. Her vivid descriptions and attention to detail immerse readers in the rural Southern setting, allowing them to experience the story on multiple sensory levels.

The structure of the story is relatively simple, with a clear exposition, rising action, climax, and denouement. However, Walker expertly weaves in backstory and flashbacks to provide readers with a well-rounded understanding of the characters' motivations and relationships.

Discussion Questions and Further Exploration

To fully appreciate the nuances of "Everyday Use", it is essential to engage with the story on a deeper level. Here are some discussion questions to consider:

- How does Maggie's physical and emotional scarring shape her character and her understanding of heritage?
- What factors contribute to Dee's disconnect from her cultural roots, and how does her new identity align with the broader discourse of the Civil Rights

Movement?

- How does the conflict between the characters mirror the broader societal tensions of the time?
- What parallels can be drawn between the quilts and African American heritage in general?

As you explore these questions, remember to connect them back to the larger themes of heritage, identity, and cultural appropriation.

Unlocking the Depths: Why We Should Study "Everyday Use"

Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" is a literary masterpiece that demands attention and thoughtful analysis. By studying this short story, readers gain a deeper understanding of the African American experience, the complexities of cultural heritage, and the power of storytelling to challenge societal norms.

This study guide has provided an overview of the story's plot, themes, symbolism, writing style, and structure. It has also sparked discussion questions to encourage further exploration and critical thinking. By delving into the hidden depths of "Everyday Use", readers unlock a rich tapestry of ideas and insights that enrich their understanding of literature and the world around them.

So, embark on this literary journey, immerse yourself in the vivid world created by Alice Walker, and uncover the hidden depths of "Everyday Use". Your understanding of cultural heritage will be forever transformed.

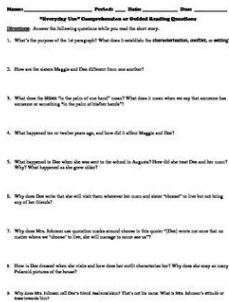
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Course Hero Study Guides: Get Unstuck!

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Course Hero Study Guide for Everyday Use includes:

- An infographic depicting the plot and main characters
- A chapter-by-chapter summary and analysis
- Key quotes
- An overview, context, plot summary, characters, symbols, themes, and bio of Alice Walker



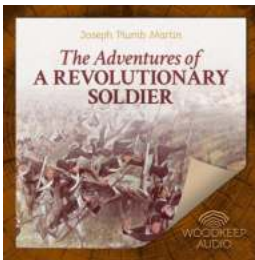
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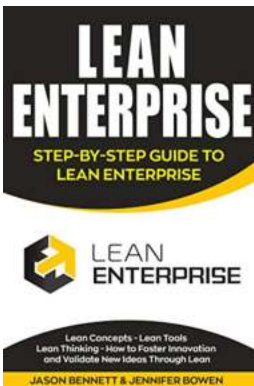
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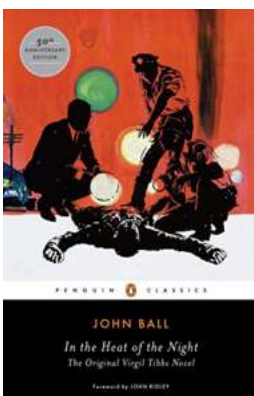
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