

Everyday Use

Analysis Questions

1. If you review all of the descriptions of both Maggie and Dee, they serve as foils to one another (characters that serve as opposites of one another to accentuate the differences). What are at least three ways that they are shown to be opposites of one another?
2. How does the TV “dream” in paragraph 3 and the end of paragraph 4 further support/accentuate other parts of the story/characterization? Explain your answer by using textual evidence from other places in the story.
3. Discuss the significance of the two sisters’ reactions to the old house burning down. First, briefly mention how each one reacted. Second, discuss how this further supports/accentuates other parts of the story/characterization. Explain your answer by using textual evidence from other places in the story.
4. In paragraph 14 on page 3, it ends with the sentence “She read to them.” This sentence doesn’t feel like it fits in with the rest of the paragraph and this sentence is not meant literally. If this is

the case, it is meant as a reference to something that we learned earlier in the story. Find that reference, make sense of what that paragraph is saying, and then use that knowledge to explain what the author actually means by “She read to them.” Explain your reasoning by discussing how the other paragraph from the story helps make sense of it.

5. Go back through the story and look specifically the places where the mother calls both Dee and her maybe-husband. You’ll notice that what she calls them changes a bit throughout the story.
 - a. First, look at Dee’s boyfriend/maybe-husband. (See paragraphs 20, 22, 33, 42, 44, 46 & 50.) First, what different things does she call him? Second, what does that convey about the mother’s feelings toward him? Third, support your reasoning for your answer fully.

 - b. Second, look at what the mother calls Dee and how it changes. (See paragraphs 26, 28, 30, 38, 40, 44, 45, 51, 53, 55, 56, 60, 62, 63, 69, 72, 77, & 78.) First, what different things does she call her? Second, what does this progression of names seem to suggest about the mother’s thoughts/feelings about her daughter and the events in the story? Third and finally, support your answer fully.