

## Exercise

I. Give brief answers to the following questions, using your own words as much as possible:

- 1) In real life what kind of woman is the mother
- 2) What kind of woman would Dee like her mother to be?
- 3) How does the mother act when she meets a strange white man?
- 4) What kind of girl is Maggie?
- 5) Why do you think colored people asked fewer questions in 1927?
- 6) Why does the mother say Dee will never bring her friends to visit them? What does this tell about Dee? Give other instances to prove your point.
- 7) Why did Dee want the quilt so much?
- 8) Why did Maggie want the quilt?
- 9) Why did Dee visit her mother and sister?
- 10) What is the mother's feeling toward Dee? How is it changed in the course of the story?
- 11) What is implied by the subtitle 'for your grandmama'?

II. Paraphrase:

- 1) She thinks her sister has held life always in the palm of one hand
- 2) "no" is a word the world never learned to say to her
- 3) Johnny Carson has much to do to keep up with my quick and witty tongue.
- 4) It seems to me I have talked to them always with one foot raised in flight
- 5) She washed us in a river of make-believe
- 6) Burned us with a lot of knowledge we didn't necessarily need to know
- 7) Like good looks and money, quickness passed her by.
- 8) A dress to the ground, in this hot weather.
- 9) You can see me trying to move a second or two before I make it.
- 10) Anyhow, he soon gives up on Maggie.
- 11) Though, in fact, I probably could have carried it back beyond the Civil War through the branches.
- 12) Every once in a while he and Wangero sent eye signals over my head.
- 13) Less than that.
- 14) This was the way she knew God to work.

III. Translate the following into Chinese:

1) In real life I am a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands. In the winter I wear flannel nightgowns to bed and overalls during the day. I can kill and clean a hog as mercilessly as a man. My fat keeps me hot in zero weather. I can work outside all day, breaking ice to get water for washing; I can eat pork liver cooked over the open fire minutes after it comes steaming from the hog. One winter I knocked a bull calf straight in the brain between the eyes with a sledge hammer and had the meat hung up to chill before nightfall. But of course all this does not show on television. I am the way my daughter would want me to be: a hundred pounds lighter, my skin like an uncooked barley pancake. My hair glistens in the hot bright lights. Johnny Carson has much to do to keep up with my quick and witty tongue.

2) But that is a mistake. I know even before I wake up. Who ever knew a Johnson with a quick tongue? Who can even imagine me looking a strange white man in the

eye? It seems to me I have talked to them always with one foot raised in flight, with my head turned in whichever way is farthest from them. Dee, though. She would always look anyone in the eye, Hesitation was no part of her nature.

3) I used to think she hated Maggie, too. But that was before we raised the money, the church and me, to send her to Augusta to school. She used to read to us without pity; forcing words, lies, other folks' habits, whole lives upon us two, sitting trapped and ignorant underneath her voice. She washed us in a river of make-believe, burned us with a lot of knowledge we didn't necessarily need to know. Pressed us to her with the serious way she read, to shove us away at just the moment, like dimwits, we seemed about to understand.

4) I never had an education myself. After second grade the school was closed down. Don't ask me why: in 1927 colored asked fewer questions than they do now. Sometimes Maggie reads to me. She stumbles along good-naturedly but can't see well. She knows she is not bright. Like good looks and money, quickness passed her by. She will marry John Thomas (who has mossy teeth in an earnest face) and then I'll be free to sit here and I guess just sing church songs to myself. Although I never was a good singer. Never could carry a tune. I was always better at a man's job. I used to love to milk till I was hooked in the side in '49. Cows are soothing and slow and don't bother you, unless you try to milk them the wrong way.

IV. Replace the following italicized words with more formal words or expressions:

- 1) even though she has told me once that she thinks orchids are tacky flowers.
- 2) like dimwits, we seem to understand. ( )
- 3) and hanging from his chin like a kinky mule tail ( )
- 4) Impressed with her they worshiped her well-turned phrases
- 5) I heard Maggie go "Uhhnnh" again. ( )
- 6) It looks like Asalamalakim wants to shake hands but want to do it fancy. ( )
- 7) "Well," said Asalamalakim, "There you are." ( )
- 8) After I tripped over it two or three times he told me to just call him Hakim-a-barber. ( )
- 9) "You must belong to the beef-cattle people down the road," I said. ( )
- 10) She talked a blue streak over the sweet potatoes. ( )

V. Complete the following elliptical sentences:

- 1) Dee, though.
- 2) Never could carry a tune.
- 3) Like when you see the wriggling end of a snake just in front of your foot on the road.
- 4) Dee, next. A dress down to the ground, in this hot weather.
- 5) Earrings gold, too, and hanging down to her shoulders.
- 6) "No, Mama," she says. "Not 'Dee, ' Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo!"
- 7) "Why shouldn't I?" I asked.
- 8) Always too busy: feeding the cattle, fixing the fences, putting up salt-lick shelters, throwing down the hay.
- 9) "Uncle Buddy whittle that, too?" asked the barber.
- 10) "Imagine!" she breathed again, clutching them to her bosom.

VI. The following sentences all contain metaphors or similes. Explain their meaning in plain, non-figurative language.

1) I am the way my daughter would want me to be: ... my skin like an uncooked barley pancake.

2) It seems to me I have talked to them always with one foot raised in flight.

3) Impressed with her they worshiped her well-turned phrases, the cute shape, the scalding humor that erupted like bubbles in lye.

4) He flew to marry a cheap city girl from a family of ignorant flashy people.

5) And she stops and tries to dig a well in the sand with her toe.

6) "Maggie's brain is like an elephant's," Wangero said, laughing.

7) You didn't even have to look close to see where hands pushing the dasher up and down to make butter had left a kind of sink in the wood.

8) "Mama, " Wangero said, sweet as a bird.

9) She gasped like a bee had stung her.

10) It's really a new day for us.

VII. Explain how the meaning of the sentences is affected when the italicized words are replaced by the words in brackets. Pay attention to the shades of meaning of the words.

1) It is like an extended living room. (large)

2) She will stand hopelessly in corners, homely and ashamed of the burn scars down her arms and legs. (helplessly, embarrassed by)

3) Dee and I are suddenly brought together on a TV program of this sort. (like this one)

4) Out of a dark and soft-seated limousine I am ushered into a bright room filled with many people. (car)

5) Furtive boys in pink shirts hanging about on washday after school. (sly)

6) Bracelets dangling and making noises when she moves her arms up to shake the folds of the dress out of her armpits. (hanging)

7) After dinner Dee (Wangero) went to the trunk at the foot of my bed and started rifling through it. (suitcase, searching)

8) "Imagine!" she breathed again, clutching them closely to her bosom. (breathed)

VIII. The following are rhetorical questions requiring no answers.

Turn them into statements without changing the main ideas.

1) A pleasant surprise, of course: What would they do if parent and child came on the show only to curse out and insult each other?

2) Who ever knew a Johnson with a quick tongue?

3) Who can ever imagine me looking a strange white man in the eye?

4) Why don't you do a dance around the ashes?

5) "Why don't you take one or two of the others?" I asked.

IX. Choose the appropriate set phrase from the list below for each blank. Make changes where necessary.

to put up

to bring up

to bring together

to crop up

to keep up with

to hand down

out of style

with a style

to stick to

by hand

to hang

to hang about

to hang down

to hang back

to carry back

1) Serious trouble\_\_\_\_\_ when Martin thought the problem of his college

education was solved.

- 2) The soldiers \_\_\_\_\_ barricades of live wire around the whole area.
- 3) The work that Group A is doing is too difficult for me. I'm afraid that I won't be able to \_\_\_\_\_ them.
- 4) That matter was \_\_\_\_\_ at the Committee meeting that very afternoon.
- 5) I'm not sure that John and Mary can be \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) He noticed several furtive and rough-looking guys \_\_\_\_\_ the bus stop.
- 7) Everyone approved of the project but when we asked for volunteers they all \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) A colored reproduction of Raphael \_\_\_\_\_ on the wall over the fireplace.
- 9) The waterfall was running down from the high cliff so smoothly that it looked like a piece of silver cloth \_\_\_\_\_ from the sky.
- 10) These ceremonies have been \_\_\_\_\_ through the centuries, and remain practically unchanged.
- 11) What surprised me most was the amount of work still done \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) You can put that frock away, for it is already \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) All the paintings were exquisite. It was obvious that the artist did every one of them \_\_\_\_\_
- 14) Did the letter arrive or through the post?
- 15) I've got some glue my fingers.
- 16) The sound of the seagull me to my childhood holidays to the seaside.

X. The narrator uses a number of images of animals in describing people or things. Point them out and then put them into Chinese.

XI. The narrator says, "I never had an education myself." What are some of the characteristics of her use of language (such as choice of words, sentence structure and grammar) that suit this background of hers?

XII. Translate the following sentences into English, (using the following words or expressions- to look sb. in the eyes, to burn ... to the ground, to match, over, despite, to confront, to recompose, to imagine, to stick to, to trace ... to):

- 1) 一场大火把贫民区三百多座房子夷为平地。
- 2) 只要你为人正直，不怕失去什么，那你对任何人都不会畏惧。
- 3) 尽管发了水灾，今年的农业生产损失并不严重。
- 4) 这件衬衫与裙子的颜色和式样都不相配。
- 5) 咱们一边喝咖啡一边谈这件事吧。
- 6) 我怎么也不能想象你能做出不光彩的事来。
- 7) 他无法想象为什么人们反对他的看法。
- 8) 这位官员在下汽车时碰到两个恐怖分子。
- 9) 只要我们坚持这些原则，我们就会成功。
- 10) 这个消息使她大为震惊，但她很快就镇定了下来。
- 11) 这段引文的来源很难查找到。
- 12) 他们的生活方式可以追溯到一千多年前他们的祖先所开创的古老传统。

XIII. Topic for oral work: Compare the three women in the story.

XIV. Write a short composition on: My Family

## Key to Exercises

- 1) 在现实生活中,我是一个大块头、大骨架的妇女,有着干人活儿的粗糙双手。冬天睡觉时我穿着绒布睡衣;白天身穿套头工作衫。我能像男人一样狠狠地宰猪并收拾干净。我的一身脂肪使我在寒冬也保持温暖。我能整天在户外干活儿,敲碎冰块,取水洗衣。我能吃在明火上烧热的猪肝,而这猪肝还冒着热气,从刚宰死的猪身上切下来的。有一年冬天,我用一把大铁锤砍倒一头公牛,锤子正打在小牛两眼之间的大脑上。天黑之前,我把牛肉挂起来凉着。不过,这一切当然都没有在电视上出现过。我的女儿希望我的样子是:体重减去一百磅,皮肤像下锅煎之前的大麦面饼那样细腻光滑,头发在炽热耀眼的灯光下闪闪发亮。而且,我有一日伶牙俐齿,能够妙语连珠。就连乔纳,卡森也望尘莫及。
- 2) 可是,这是个错误,我还没醒来之前就知道了。谁听说约翰逊家的人有伶牙俐齿?谁能想像我敢直视一个陌生的白人?和他们讲话时,我总是紧张不安,随时准备溜走。我的头总是转到离他们最远的方向。不过,迪伊就不这样。她对任何人都不会畏惧。犹豫不决不属于她的本性。
- 3) 过去我以为她也讨厌玛吉。但是那是在教堂和我筹钱送她去奥古斯塔上学之前。那时她常给我们读点什么,读时毫无同情之心,将文字、谎言、别人的习惯以及整个生活强加于我们。我和玛吉毫无办法,一无所知地困坐在那里,她的声音凌驾于我们之上。她对我们灌输一大堆编造的事物以及我们不需要掌握的知识。她严肃地强迫我们听她读书,又正好在我们俩人像傻瓜一样,看上去似懂非懂的时刻把我们挥之而去。
- 4) 我自己从未受过教育。在我上完小学二年级时,学校关门了。别问我为什么:1927年时有色人种不像现在问这么多问题。有时玛吉给我读些东西。她温厚地结结巴巴地读着,因为她看不清楚。她知道自己不聪明。正如娇好的相貌和金钱一样,机敏也与她无缘。不久她就要嫁给约翰·汤马斯(他有一张诚实的面孔和一口像长了苔的牙齿)。玛吉结婚后,我将闲坐在家里,也许只对自己唱唱教堂歌曲,尽管我从来唱不好,总是走调。我对干男人活儿倒是更在行。我一向喜欢挤牛奶,直到,1949年我的肋部被牛顶伤了为止。母牛生性恬静、动作缓慢,不会伤害人,除非你给她挤奶时动作不得法。

## IV

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|---|--|
| 1) inelegant  | 2) a stupid person; a simpleton                    |
| 3) tightly curled   | 4) expressed or worded well; felicitous            |
| 5) say (used to describe dialogue) and elaborate way                            | 6) as if/shake hands in a fancy                    |
| 7) I knew you couldn't trace it further back.                                   | 8) mispronounced, failed to pronounce it correctly |
| 9) people who breed and fatten cattle for meat ; 10) talked much and rapidly" . |  |

## V

- 1) Dee, however, is not like me.
- 2) I could never carry a tune.
- 3) It was like the reaction you have when you see the wriggling end of a snake just in front of your foot on the road.
- 4) Dee comes out of the car next. She is wearing a dress long enough to touch the ground, in spite of this hot weather.
- 5) Her earrings are gold. too and they are hanging down to her shoulders
- 6) "No, mama," she says "My name is not Dee now. It has changed into Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo!"
- 7) "Why shouldn't I call you by your new name?"

- 8) Those people were always too busy...
- 9) "Did Uncle Buddy whittle that one, too?" asked the Barber.
- 10) "Imagine that she did all the stitching by hand!" she breathed again, clutching them to her bosom.

#### VI.

- 1) ...my complexion had a smooth and creamy texture.
- 2) ...uncomfortably and nervously, wanting to get away as soon as possible
- 3) the quick and great humor that would make everybody laugh immediately
- 4) he wasted no time in marrying a contemptible city girl from a family of ignorant ostentatious and vulgar people
- 5) ...move her feet in great discomfort
- 6) "Maggie's memory is very good," Wangero said, laughing.
- 7) ...slightly sunken areas
- 8) "Mama," Wangero said in an extremely sweet voice.
- 9) She breathed suddenly in painful surprise
- 10) For us colored people, this is a new era, and we must seize our opportunities.

#### VII.

- 1) *Extended* means enlarged by adding to the original space. *Large* means enclosing much space; 'spacious.
- 2) *Hopelessly* means without hope or expectation for solving a situation. *Helpless* means lacking help or protection.
- 3) *Ashamed* means feeling humiliated or embarrassed from a sense of inferiority. *Embarrassed* means feeling ill at ease so as to result in a loss of composure.
- 4) A *limousine* is a large, luxurious car, esp. one driven by a chauffeur and with a glass partition separating the driver and the passengers. A *car* is any kind of automobile.
- 5) *Furtive* means doing or acting in a stealthy manner and generally suggests a reprehensible objective.. *Sly* means skillful at trickery or deceit.
- 6) *Dangling* means to hang swinging loosely. *Hanging* means to attach to something above with no support from below.
- 7) A *trunk* is a large reinforced box or chest, used in traveling or for storage; it may be made of wood and other materials.  
A *suitcase* is a travel case for clothing, usually made of leather or leather like materials.  
*Rifling* means to ransack and rob; pillage and plunder. Here the mother uses this word in exaggeration to show her displeasure with Dee's action. *search* is a general word without such emotional colors.
- 8) *Breathe* means saying something softly, murmuring, whispering. *Breathe again* is a set phrase, meaning having a feeling of relief or reassurance.

#### VIII.

- 1) A pleasant surprise, of course. This is much better than a situation in which the parent and child came on the show only to curse out and insult each other. ...
- 2) None of the Johnsons had a quick tongue.
- 3) I could never possibly look a strange white man in the eye.
- 4) I know you hated the house and so you are very glad to see the house being burnt down.
- 5) You may take one or two of the other quilts.

#### IX.

- 1) cropped up
- 2) put up
- 3) keep up with,
- 4) brought

up

- |                     |                  |              |            |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|------------|
| 5) brought together | 6) hanging about | 7) hung back | 8) hung    |
| 9) hanging down,    | 10) handed down  | 11) by hand  | 12) out of |

style

- |                  |             |              |             |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| 13) with a style | 14) by hand | 15) stuck to | 16) carried |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|

back

**XI.**

- 1) A big fire burned to the ground more than 300 homes in the slum neighborhood.
- 2) If you are upright-and not afraid of losing anything, you will be able to look anyone in the eye.
- 3) Despite the flood, the losses in agricultural production were not that serious.
- 4) This blouse doesn't match the color or the style of the skirt.
- 5) Let's talk about the matter over a cup of coffee.
- 6) I can't imagine you doing disgraceful things.
- 7) He couldn't imagine why people were opposed to his suggestions.
- 8) Stepping off from the car, the official was confronted by two terrorists.
- 9) As long as we stick to these principles, we will surely be successful.
- 10) She was shocked at the news, but before long she recomposed herself.
- 11) It is very difficult to trace this quotation to its source.
- 12) Their way of life could be traced to the ancient traditions handed down to them by their ancestors more than one thousand years ago.