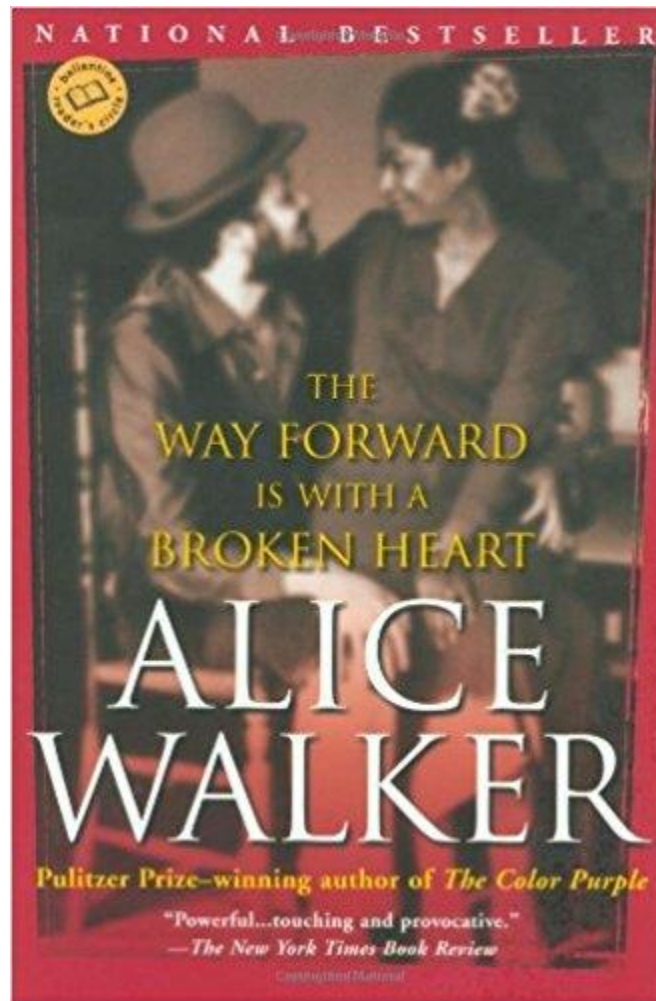


**Broken Relationship in Alice Walker's  
*The Way Forward is With a Broken Heart***

**N. Saranya, M.Phil. Scholar**

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African-America literature is produced by the writings of African descents in America. It is about the pain and sufferings of the Africans and the difficulty and violence in America. It was dominated by autobiographical spiritual narratives, before the high point of slave narratives which defines the rights and freedom owned by slaves and so the genre is called slave narratives. The beginning of the literature and arts was influenced by the writers of North in Great

Migration from Jamaica and Caribbean Islands. African-American writers were recognized by great awards including Noble Prize to Toni Morrison. They have explored the themes and issues such as the role of African-American in the American society are African-American culture, racism, slavery and social equality along with the oral forms such as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, and blues.

African-American struggles to claim their freedom, democracy and equality. In the time of Civil War, they introduced slave narratives published by pseudonym in order to write about the gender-based violence and what they have experienced.

After the Civil War, Reconstruction offered a brief respite from the violence of racism which pervade the years ago during the Civil War. Jim Crow raised the laws in South America. Booker. T. Washington and W. E. B. Dubois offered different theoretical perspectives on the future Black writers in America. They both have composed important essays about social mobility and access to employment and education. Washington's *Up From Slavery* (1901) and DuBois's *Souls of Black Flok* (1903) become canonical in tracing the literary and political histories of African-Americans. Few notable poems of Claude McKay's "If We Must Die" deals with civil rights and racial prejudice, addresses ongoing violence of Jim Crow in America. And few more writings were as deals with the racial prejudice and suggesting the legal violence to individual rights leads to murder. Racism pervades the American consciousness, recent decades, significant female voices have emerged such as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison. The Pulitzer Prize such as *The Color Purple* (1982) by Alice Walker is an epistolary novel depicted segregated existence in Georgia in 1930s and *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison brings the injuries of slavery in contemporary during the period of American Civil War. Their notable novels were won Noble Prize in literature. The writings of African-American literature novels, poems, and plays were waiting to discover an individual's own self.

Broken relationship means break up of a close relationship and they became stranger in their future lives. Or it may be the relationship broken up from their own ancestors. There may be the generation never know about the past generations and they do not have any communication with each other.

Alice Malsenior Walker was born on February 9, 1944 in Putnam, Georgia. Now Walker lives in Northern California. She is an African-American novelist, short story writer, poet, and political activist. She won the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award for her novel *The Color Purple* (1982) and it was preceded by *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970) and *Meridian* (1976) is a semi-autobiography. Her other best-selling books includes *By The Light of My Father's Smile*, and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* and *The Temple of My Familiar*. And she wrote three collections of short stories, three collections of essays, six volumes of poetry and several children's books. Her books have been translated into more than two dozen languages. Walker was inspired by Hurston, whose work and life influenced her subject matter.

Walker published *The Way Forward is with a Broken Heart* (2000) as compilation of several stories. It is a semi-autobiographical novel and it is exhausted from her own struggle for racial and sexual equality. The novel deals with interracial marriage and as soon it ends in

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divorce and broken relationship with her husband, friends and others. The stories were more self-indulgent and repetitions. That is middle-aged women who are all inhabitant recovering from a relationship, sorrows of their own mistakes in their lives and demanding understanding.

The novel *The Way Forward is with a Broken Heart* is begins with the story “To My Young Husband” takes from the dairy and it explores the true events of Walker’s life. She tells the stories to her daughter. She relates herself with Tatala, the protagonist of the story. It describes the memory of the marriage life, with a white man, Jewish, Civil rights lawyer and the life in Mississippi and in Brooklyn “Days when the white white walls, cool against the brutal summer heat, were more bars than walls” (1). It represents the violence of the whites, Walker compared the seasons to show the whites really they are not cool but they are brutally behaving with Africans. Walker’s experience in Brooklyn “black and white Southern and Brooklyn Yiddish accents-which always felt as if over grandparents were joking with each other-we’d crumple over our plates laughing, as tears came to our eyes.” (2) this represents their sorrows, they do not have anything to laugh in their lives.

Even though she had hard times in those places, but she had good times with her husband. They understood each other and they spent their times happily, Walker wonders about their love. But after a decade they were separated by the interracial society. Because the blacks believed that they should not marry any white against to their race. Walker said that it is a magical-marriage that ends in magical-divorce. The blacks want to show their own identity. But during the slavery period there were “more mixed-race children” (46) are seen. That is “Those were the masters that they had off the slave women.” (46) And in the reconstruction period “white and black folks” (46) were fell in love. She feels heartbroken to live without her husband.

In the other story “Kindred Spirits” Walker describes about Rosa’s life and she compared herself with Rosa including her pain and emotions. She is going to visit her aunt Lily with her sister Barbara, whose grandfather has died. She feels it is a sentimental journey and she connects the past. Rosa was married to Ivan, but they got divorce as soon. After the divorce Ivan married a Jewish girl. Walker imagined about her husband who has divorced her and he may be married and began to live with a Jewish girl. Rosa do not want to disturb Ivan’s life. “Living with a nice Jewish girl, at last.” (65) And so she feels pain and hurt for herself. Even in Barbara’s marriage life Rosa seems her own sister lives in a abusive marriage. So Barbara never walks to her husband’s home because of regular beating and abuse and she refused to live with her husband.

Walker introduces Orelia and John, another fictitious couple in the other story. They lived peacefully and happily. But Orelia fails to understand John it is the sad things of their relationship “she was unable to expect the best from him.” (88) John thought sometimes that is his fault. Orelia believes that men did not do their best in relation to woman. She does not made her good relationship with her brothers except Raymond, because the other brothers were insensitive, wild and ugly. She nicknamed them “Rhino”. She will not trust any man so she hurts her feelings and also John “no matter how much she loved him.” (89)

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Belinda, Orelia's friend who had married a judge and they had two children. Then they were separated, and he never comes to see their children. After that Belinda fallen love with Jhon but takes care of them and he spends time with her children. He takes them to baseball games, movies and the ballet but he feels very guilty when he thinks of Orelia and her love. Then he left Belinda and children one night. And at last Jhon rejoins with Orelia and lives with her. She tries to forgive his past sins.

In the story "There Was a River" Walker describes about broken relationship of two friends Angel and Sally "A year or so after she broke up her friendship with Sally, she broke up with Angel." (135) In the "Big Sister, Little Sister" story Auntie Putt-Putt was treated as a slave to her husband Uncle Loaf. She is searching for her own freedom. Walker said this with the black's life that is "The black people had traditionally been so profoundly oppressed by the brutality of the white ones," (143).

Walker ends with "The Way Forward is with a Broken Heart" she is telling about her husband in her youth that he lost his way from "down or earth from sky" (241) and she thinks that the life of black children were starving. And also she tells the reason of her heart aches are "starvation, war, assassination" (243) and the strangeness' of husband that she had in her earlier age. These are all makes her to feel "Heart Broken" but she never give up her hope and leads to heal the broken hearted and she stepping her "Way Forward" to the future.

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