

Name of Student

Professor's Name

Course Code

Date

Self-Reflection on Writing the Fiction Essay

Growing up and maturing into an adult is a significant character development in one's life. The connection I received from both short stories that show character development are familial bond of sisterhood, struggling through life, learning to work hard, take on new challenges exploring and going through hardships and responsibilities. A short story entitled "Saving Sourdi", by May-lee Chai is dynamic and gripping piece of fiction, which is told from the perspective of Sourdi's sister, Nea. They are daughters to a single mom who juggles to work two jobs, paying the bills and caring for her two girls. In the story, the reader finds Nea and Sourdi to be always dreaming about living in "the real America". The girls had moved from place to place all their lives in hopes to find a place where they could live comfortably and be a family: "When we moved to South Dakota, I thought we'd find the real America, the one where we were supposed to be, not the hot sweaty" (Chai 121). The point connects with Sourdi's transformation into an adult faster than her younger sister can grasp.

The first true test of sisterhood was demonstrated at the beginning of the story where the bond between Nea and Sourdi was unbreakable, something they believed would never change. While the girls were working at their family restaurant one night, there was an incident. Few

male customers got drunk and became belligerent. The situation escalated to the point where one man grabbed Sourdi tightly and would not let go. The girls were terrified. Their mom was not there, and the girls were clueless on how to properly handle the situation. Nea reacted based on her first instinct. She grabbed a knife and stabbed the man in the arm: "I was trying to protect you" Nea exclaims (Chai 123). This shows just how far Nea was willing to go and protect her sister showing the bond and some responsibility she puts on herself to protect her sister.

Another point that I found relatable was the bond between the girls where they were close with each other while growing up. They would tell each other everything and created an inseparable bond: "I'd climb into Sourdi's bed, claiming that I couldn't sleep, curling into a ball beside my older sister" (Chai, 123). They spent several nights whispering to each other, showing that bond and being as close as the typical sisters would be telling each other secrets, expressing their emotions about kids at school, or even how their day went. They loved spending time together and being around one another.

Sourdi's character started to change as she grew, a change that also became noticeable to her sister Nea. Nea began to notice a change in Sourdi as she began to grow older and mature into a teenager. She started dating and grew feelings for a boy named Duke. He was first introduced to Nea while he was working at the family's restaurant. Nea was even a witness to Sourdi's first kiss with Duke. Sourdi was not embarrassed to have her younger sister around when she was spending time with her boyfriend. Most older sisters would never want to have their younger sister around especially when they're on a date which again demonstrates how close the girls were and how they were open to share their experiences with one another.

Things suddenly took a turn for the worst when Sourdi got married to an evil man. He started abusing her sister. Nea had her suspicions from the start, but her assumptions grew into the truth. Nea began to realize that things were serious between Sourdi and her husband. Nea barely spoke to her sister for months which was the longest they had gone without speaking to each other. Nea grew angry when she realized her sister's husband started to answer her phone for her. This totally threw her off. She was suspicious before, but this only fueled her fire even more: "The next morning, Sunday, I called first thing, but then he picked up, my sister's husband" (Chai 128). Considering that Sourdi was not able to answer her phone, immediately triggered Nea to know something was not right.

After arriving at Sourdi's home, Nea and Duke were shocked by what they saw. Sourdi had a bruise on her face and the remains of a black eye. Nea was in utter shock when she arrived: "I couldn't believe how dense my sister had become. We used to be able to communicate without words" (Chai 132). Sourdi has grown and transformed into an adult right before Nea's eyes. It appears Nea was not ready for her sister to grow up and essentially leave her behind. She most likely believed that she would continue to be close with her sister forever. Realistically this is not always true. The girl's mother mentioned to Nea that Sourdi is an adult, and she is not coming back to live with them: "She's a married woman. She has her own family now" (Chai 129).

According to the article by Julie Beck, there are several different ways to determine when an individual becomes an adult. One of the most common responses to this question is when someone has children. In the article, Beck mentions "The Big Three Criteria". The three traits that an adult should possess are taking responsibility for self, making decisions on their own, and finally being financially independent: "It's not that you can't be an adult unless you have kids.

But for people who do, it often seems to be that flip-the-switch moment” (Beck). This can be related to Sourdi’s situation. She was young when she got married and began to start her own family. In her families’ eyes, she was considered an adult. They believed that once she got married and started a family of her own, she was now an adult.

Furthermore, the bond between two sisters is always believed to be unbreakable. No matter what sisters go through, they can always return to each other and know they are there for life. Unfortunately, this was not true in this short story. The girls were inseparable at the beginning of the story, then at the end of the story they were barely speaking and ended it on rough terms. Sourdi changed her whole perspective on her family at the end of the story. She had always been so close with her sister Nea, and they told each other everything. This story demonstrates how one person can easily affect another and their relationships. Also, how important it is to love and care for our loved ones while we have them.

Works Cited

Beck, Julie. "When Do You Become an Adult?" *The Atlantic*, 5 Jan. 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/01/when-are-you-really-an-adult/422487/>.

Chai, May-lee. *Glamorous Asians: Short Stories & Essays*. University Press, 2004.

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