

# Saving sourdi writing assignment

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Gerrell Robinson May 17, 2007 English 193 Writing Assignment Human Struggle In May-Lee Chais' short story, " Saving Sourdi", and Langston Hughes' Poem, " Harlem" both explore human struggle through theme, symbolism, and tone. In " Saving Sourdi" theme shows how Chais' character Nea is resistant to change. When the story opens Nea is in the family restaurant with her sister Sourdi, Nea watches this man harass her sister. Nea grabs a knife and stabs the man. When Sourdi explains to Nea that she cannot function this way Nea simply tells Sourdi " I shoulda killed him! I shoulda killed that sucker! " (Chai 111). Sourdi tells Nea she can be this type of person , but being resistant to change Nea simply gets mad and says to Sourdi, " I was trying to protect you" ( Chai 112). This resistance in change results in Neas demise. Neas' will to protect often clouds her judgment and sometimes leads her into trouble because of her rash decisions. an example of Neas' clouded judgment would be the instance where she saw Sourdi with a black eye. Instead of Nea asking what happened.

Nea immediately suspected spousal abuse when in actuality it was a box of baby wipes that caused the bruised eye. Throughout both of these literary works symbolism is a recurring presence. In " Saving Sourdi" Nea takes on the form of the Naga. In Chinese culture the Naga was a magical serpent whom had a mouth so wide that it could swallow people whole. In Neas' circle of irrational decisions and overprotective nature her actions symbolically swallowed the people around her whole.

In the story Nea here's her mother talking to Sourdi about the strains of being a married woman. During the course of this conversation Nea overhears her sister crying. When Nea asks what happened to Sourdi. Her mother simply sweeps the question under the mat saying nothing happened. Immediately Nea figures that something has happened and calls Sourdi' childhood sweetheart Duke and says," Duke! It's important! It's Sourdi, she's in trouble" (Chai 118). Being the good friend that he is Duke rushes to help his childhood sweetheart.

Not knowing that he is being swallowed whole by Nea and another one of her hair brained schemes. The poem " Harlem" also symbolizes that a dream deferred can embody many different characteristics. " Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? "(Hughes 895). This quote symbolizes a person having a dream that they put on the back burner. By putting a dream on hold I becomes nothing more than a shriveled up memory rather than an active dream in action. In these two works of art the tone in both is upset in one and depressed in the other.

In " Saving Sourdi" Nea spends the entire story upset about her sisters blossoming into womanhood as well as the family life. In the story Nea, Duke, and Sourdi are in this field that Duke thought would be romantic. Instead of Duke getting the kiss that he hoped for he instead gets to chase Sourdi who is crying. When they finally catch Sourdi, Duke says to Sourdi he thought she would like this place. Nea immediately blurts out " We're city girls. Why would we like this hick stuff? " (Chai 113). Nea was not upset by the nice gesture that Duke made towards Sourdi.

Nea was mad that duke was trying to take her sister away from her. However in "Harlem" The speaker is more so depressed than anything. The speaker states " Maybe it sags like a heavy load. " (Hughes 895). If someone face or body sags then this body language would be interpreted as being in a depressed state. In both of these stories theme, tone, and symbolism shine brightly through the duration of these literary works. However, these stories highlight the human struggle to deal with life on a daily basis.