

Red from green essay sample

Life



Growing up is not easy. Slowly fighting to discover who we are and finding the harsh truths about life, that we all inevitably will have to someday be able to stand on our own two feet, while in the process discovering things about ourselves such as our sexuality and where we want to head in life. Maile Meloy shows this crossroad in life with our protagonist, who is in the process of discovering herself. She is forced to see herself and her father in a different light after a float trip “down the river” where a grown man shows an interest in her. Sam, just a sophomore realises that there is more to life than the simple troubles of a 15 year old girl.

The story is narrated from the perspective of an outside narrator (or 3rd person perspective), however it is focused around the thoughts of our protagonist Sam. Sam is a 15-year old American teenager from Montana who is about to start her sophomore year. The story is set around the four people in the Avon rafts: Sam, the protagonist, her father, her uncle, Harry, and his client, Layton. The story takes place at a river, where these four people are on a float trip down the river. Through the trip Layton is getting more and more interested in Sam. Her interest in him grows until she lets him seduce her. They go for walk and Layton teaches Sam how to shoot with a gun. Things then get heated as Layton tries to go further, but nothing serious happens.

Sam’s mother died before the story begins, however this has only created a great strong bond between her and her father, who live alone together. Though Sam loves her father a lot, she still wants to leave to a boarding school and we see signs of distress from the father because of this, as he does not want to be left alone. She had not decided to take the offer to the

boarding school yet and she was unsure how her father felt about it, “Applying had been her father’s idea, but now he looked dismayed every time the subject came up” (l. 6-7). Sam and her father had been on this kind of float trip many times before, although this time her uncle and his client joined them.

She thought the purpose of the trip was to gain the goodwill of this new client, “...it was the feeling she got – that they were going for the client” (l. 15). The client, Layton, very quickly made an impression on her by complimenting her teeth which it seems she is not used to, this is made clear later when she ponders on his compliment, “ And she was wondering if she really had perfect teeth, and if anyone but adults would ever care” (l. 62-63). Layton plays a major role in the development of Sam and her father’s relationship. Because of him she becomes aware of her own sexuality, “ His attention was different...” (l. 65). He is also the reason why Sam sees her father in a different light after the events on the river. There are two main themes in this story, one being “ growing up/being a teenager” and the other “ father/Daughter relationship”.

Sam is about to go from being a child to being a grown up adult and this development brings a lot of confusion to Sam. The identity crisis which begins in the late teenage years comes often because you are lost in the middle of being a child and adult. We see this when Sam’s true feelings about becoming a sophomore soon “ In the fall, she would soon be a sophomore, which sounded very old to her.” (L. 4-5). Besides the identity crisis, teenagers face a frustration over their sexuality. Teenagers suddenly realise that someone is interested in them as a woman – or a man. Sam has <https://assignbuster.com/red-from-green-essay-sample/>

never experienced a man who is sexual attracted to her. So when Layton shows her his interest, she does not know how to react.

The title of the story is very symbolic as it hints towards Sam's decision to give Layton the "red light". She was giving him the "green light", was letting him seduce her until things got out of hand until she realised that she was not ready for it, that is where the green light decipitates and the red light comes forth. Or "Red from green". Red light is usually used to describe stopping fx. a red light on the street. In this case the red light is when Sam pushes Layton away and stops their intimate interaction. The story requires more than one reading to fully understand the main idea. It is complicated and hides the main points and thus requires you to read between the lines.

I believe that the story is focused around Sam's inner thoughts, or more precisely about her inner debate on whether she should go to boarding school or stay with her father. At the end of the story we see that she has finally made her decision but still hoping that her father will beg her to stay, which shows that she is still conflicted. We also see that she is wondering whether her father had known what was going to happen between her and Layton. This question leaves her in a state of dejection and discord. Through the story we realise together with Sam that as we grow up we have to decide whether to leave our parents. We have to break the bonds of our old relationships to make new ones. We have to decide what we want do and were we want to be. We have to discover ourselves and others, spiritually and physically. And it is indeed true: growing up is not easy