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Reasons How April Raintree Find Her Identity

Culture is one of the most important part of one's identity. In the novel *April Raintree* by Beatrice Mosionier, it tells the story of a Metis named April, who do not accept her own heritage. Throughout the novel, April developed her relationship with Roger, April went to the Indian Powwow with her sister, Cheryl, and when Cheryl died, April found out about her nephew, Henry Liberty. These events helped April find her own identity.

April's relationship with Roger is a huge help for her to find her own identity. April lives with her sister after getting a divorce, then she met Roger again. After they catch up with each other's lives, Roger found that April is not proud of her own culture. Roger said, "I'm not going to tell you to be proud of what you are. Just don't be ashamed" (Mosionier 166). Roger's advice made April think that she could slowly work her way in embracing her culture. After Roger and April became friends, Roger has always been there for April to comfort and give April advice to help her from traumas. For example, when April tells Roger about her problems, Roger makes her feel accepted even after knowing what happened to April in the past. As Roger said, "well, believe me or not, I understand" (Mosionier 166). Roger always tris his best to understand and help April because that is what April needs. Roger's actions made April think that if someone like Roger could accept her, then she could also accept herself. With Roger's encouragement, April asked Cheryl to go to the Indian Powwow with her.

April asked Cheryl about the Indian Powwow and April wants to experience it. The Indian Powwow is a festival where different tribes come together to have fun by singing and dancing. During the event, April felt proud of her heritage. April always tried to fit into the white society and even if she

tries, she will still feel alienated. However, being around her people and family, April feel like she does not need to build herself a façade. As April said, "for the first time in my life, I felt as if all of that was part of me, as if I was part of it" (Mosionier 176). April always sees the stereotypes about their culture, but now that April got to appreciate their traditions, April felt proud of them, and this urged her accept who she is. Seeing more of their culture made April realize how good it feels to embrace her own heritage. In the white society, they were always treated unfairly and disrespectfully because of the stereotypes about them. Unlike in their community, everyone is welcome, and they treat each other with respect. April said, "I felt stirrings of pride, regret, and inner peace" (Mosionier 176). Seeing April's community get together and treating each other as families made her feel regret because she always lived on denying her culture by the stereotypes and not who they were behind those stereotypes. Later in the novel, Cheryl died, then she discovers that she has a nephew, Henry Liberty.

Cheryl's death affected April negatively, however, it was the opposite when April found out about Henry Liberty. While reading Cheryl's journal, April found out that the news of their mother's death destroyed Cheryl's self-identity. Cheryl's narratives help April to realize that to overcome the traumas of their past, she must accept her heritage because it is a big part of forming her new self. On Cheryl's last letter, she said "April, you have strength. Dream my dreams for me. Make them come true for me. Be proud of who you are, of what you and Henry Liberty are" (Mosionier 241). Cheryl's words thought April that she has the strength and it is not too late for her to accept her heritage and find her identity. April also found out that Cheryl gave birth to Henry Liberty. April and Cheryl grew up without their parents with them. Knowing that Cheryl is gone, April would not want the history to repeat itself for Henry because she knows how it feels to grow up without their parents. As April said, "Cheryl had died, but for Henry Liberty and me, there would be a tomorrow. I will strive for it. For my sister and her son" (Mosionier 242). April's nephew is the reason April was urged to accept her heritage to find her

better self and be a guardian for Henry. When April finally accepted her culture, she could finally experience true happiness. ✓

April developed her relationship with Roger, she then went to the Indian Powwow with her sister, Cheryl, and later found out about Henry Liberty when Cheryl died. When April spends time with Roger, he makes April feel accepted. Attending the Indian Powwow made April feel regret for denying her own culture. Cheryl's death affected April negatively, but when she found out about Henry Liberty, she was ready to accept herself. Accepting who you are, and your culture is important as it is a big factor that makes your identity. A famous quote was "it's better late than never", and finally April was able to find her identity. ✓

Formal Outline

I. **Thesis statement** - In the novel April Rainwater, April developed her relationship with Roger, April went to the powwow with Cheryl, and when Cheryl died, April found out about Henry Liberty.

II. **Topic sentence** - April's relationship with Roger helped her find her identity.

a. Roger's comforting words/advices

i. "I'm not going to tell you to be proud of what you are. Just don't be ashamed." (166)

b. Roger actually understand April.

i. "well, believe me or not, I understand" (166).

***Transition sentence** - April's relationship with Roger helped her, however, going to the Indian powwow made Cheryl feel proud of her own heritage.

III. **Topic sentence** - April asked Cheryl about the Indian Powwow and she wants to experience it.

a. For a short period of time April felt proud of her heritage

+ i. "For the first time in my life, I felt as if all of that was part of me, as if I was part of it." (176)

b. Seeing their culture made her realize how good it feels to embrace your own heritage.

i. "I was impressed by all the sights and sounds, I felt stirrings of pride, regret, and even inner peace" (176)

***Transition sentence** - Going to the Indian powwow with Cheryl made April see the beauty of their culture, but later she found out about Cheryl's son, Henry Liberty and her death.

IV. **Topic sentence** - Cheryl committed suicide and April found out about her son Henry Liberty.

a. Cheryl's journal and letters for April before she die.

i. "April you have strength. Dream my dreams for me. Make it all come true for me. Be proud of what you are, of what you and Henry Liberty are." (241)

b. April's urge to change and be better for her happiness and her son.

i. "Cheryl had died, but for Henry Liberty and me, there would be a new beginning. I would be better, I would strive to be better for my sister and her son. For my parents, for my people." (242)

***Concluding sentence** - When April finally accepted her culture, she could now experience true happiness.

V. **Conclusion** - Therefore, April's relationship with Roger, going to the powwow and Cheryl and her son, helped April find her identity.

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