

Literary Essay to "Eleven"

By Maxwell

Some people think that growing up is fun, or exciting, having birthday parties and blowing out candles. But smart kids know that growing up is not all fun. Your old clothes don't fit anymore, and you can't play the same games, and you need to worry about new things, like money or work. In the story, "Eleven," by Sandra Cisneros, Rachel comes to an understanding of what being eleven really feels like.

Rachel comes to understand that when you are eleven, you are also ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one. In the story, Rachel sits at her desk, staring at the nasty red sweater Mrs. Price made her keep. She was disgusted with it, and wanted to cry like she was three. She tried not to let her three come out though. Why did she want to cry over a sweater? She thought she was eleven, old enough not to cry over something silly like a sweater. She then realizes that she was not just eleven, but ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and one. There are other sections of the story where Rachel understands that when you are eleven, you're also all the ages inside. For example, she says "when you are scared and need to sit on your Mama's lap, that is the part of you that is still five." And "When

you say something stupid, that is the part of you that is still ten." Another section of the story where Rachel sees that she has all the ages is "When you are sad and need to cry, that is the part of you that is still three." And one more place is when she blabbed and stuttered to Mrs. Price when she wanted to say something. That was the part of her that was still four. Her understanding that when you are eleven you are also all the ages inside is important because the way Sandra Cisneros stretches out "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1" instead of just saying "all the other ages"—she really wants to show that that is the most important part.

Something else that Rachel comes to understand is that turning eleven can be a let down I see this in the text here: Rachel expected to feel eleven on her birthday as soon as she woke up. But she did not. She opened her eyes and everything was just like yesterday but it was today. She went to school and expected to feel like a big eleven year old, but instead has a terrible day. Mrs. Price forces her to wear a nasty, disgusting sweater. She cries in front of the whole class like she was three. At the end of the day, she just wanted it to be gone and forgotten. Other parts in the text where I see that Rachel understands being eleven can be a letdown are "You don't feel eleven. Not right away. It takes a few days, weeks even, sometimes even months until you say

eleven when they ask you." And "You are not smart eleven. Not until you are almost twelve." And when she realizes that she does not know what to do when Mrs. Prices forces her to wear the sweater. She does not have enough ages yet. I can really tell that Rachel does not feel eleven because Rachel says "I'm eleven" or a variation on that a lot, and that shows that she really has to remind herself, because that is not the way she feels. Also, Sandra Cisneros made a list of examples at the end of the story of things that are far away like "I wish I was 102 or anything but eleven" and "far away like a runaway balloon" or like "a teeny tiny little o in the sky." This really shows how much Rachel wants the day to be over with. Because she did not have a happy birthday. She had a letdown birthday.

Literature can help you understand things better. For example, I have come, through Rachel's thoughts and experiences, to a conclusion that growing up is not all birthday parties and blowing out candles. And I have learned that I should appreciate being young, while I am.