Suzy Smartipants

Mrs. McLachlan

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I am Woman

The first person point of view of “Fleur” clearly amplifies the idea that female power is unyielding, as Pauline quietly observes the main character’s rise to self-realization. “I was not much to look at, so they never saw me,” Pauline said as she watched the men grow entranced by Fleur (Erdrich 658). This narrator’s sense of anonymity helps give an observational tone to the story; the reader understands Fleur better through another woman. Pauline seems to grow in power as she watches Fleur handling her life. When watching the men chase Fleur into the smokehouse, Pauline went “stiff with fear and couldn’t unlatch [herself] from the trestles or move at all” (661). Guilt flooded over her as she realized her unrequited female power; only then did she seem to understand she had any. Her impression of Fleur appears to change at that point, seeing her as an equal instead of a superior. “In my dreams, I look straight back at Fleur,” Pauline writes at the end of the story; “at the men … no longer the watcher on the dark sill, the skinny girl” (663). Feeling confident, Pauline now reflects back on her meeting with Fleur, and how it helped shaped her life. She tries to reconcile her fear of confronting the men that night with the strength of her new friend. By hearing the story in first person, the reader understands the power of women, both through the reliable narrator and the fearless protagonist, and how that power is uncompromising.

Works Cited

Erdrich, Louise. “Fleur.” *American Short Stories*. Ed. Eugene Current-Garcia and Bert Hitchcock. 6th ed. New York: Longman, 1997. 654-663.