Alicia

Ms. Graham

EFP 11

June 13, 2023

One Pager – Expository Paragraph

In Angeline Boulley’s novel, *Firekeepers Daughter,* violence against Indigenous girls and women is highlighted throughout. The usage of colour symbolism creates a deeper meaning in the novel, for instance, the appearance of red: “In the late afternoon, the emcee announces one final special before the contest winners are named for each dance style and age category. As I make my way to the arena, he tells the story of the jingle dress…’The Jingle Dance represents healing. And the red dress symbolizes our women. So, todays Red Dress Jingle Dance Special is for all the Anishinaabe kwewag and kwezanswag, Indigenous women and girls who are murdered or missing. Their spirits taken too soon; lives cut short. For each one…mikwendaagozi. She is remembered” (Boulley 487). Daunis also uses the colour red in relation to her identity: “I am Red Bear Women. Bear Clan. From the Place of the Rapids. Keep out community strong. Our women safe. Our men whole. Our Elders laughing. And our children dreaming in the language” (Boulley 488). Additionally, colours like white, yellow, and black may also signify the Ojibwe medicine wheel, which symbolizes birth, growth, death, and regeneration in the novel. Furthermore, another significant aspect of the novel is the presence of Ojibwe Elders. All throughout the novel, Daunis gained notable knowledge from her community’s Elders, especially with her unusual relationship with Jamie Johnson: “‘I need you, Daunis. Help me find out if there is a plate set out for me at a feast somewhere. I do not think I can do it without you. ‘Something heavy drops inside me. Into a deep cavern, where Travis’s words to Lily bounce off jagged walls. *Tell me what to do and* *I’ll do it. I* *can’t do it without you. I need you.* ‘I can see our life together, Daunis. You can too, right? Granny June’s voice: *Things end how they start.* Jamie and me. We started with deception. I could end it with a lie. Tell him that I don’t see a future for us…I decide to stand in my truth. ‘I love you. Whoever you are. Wherever you came from. Without our names and stories…. I want you to be healthy. To find whatever is missing in your life, so you stop pretending. Stop putting yourself and others in dangerous situations.’ … More pain…I want us to be healthy and strong. On our own…Love means wanting you to have a good life, even if I’m not in it’” (Boulley 477). The presence of Elders in Daunis’s life influenced her to exercise good judgement and make the hard decision of letting Jamie go. Another compelling detail of the novel includes the reference of the flower, pansies. The incorporation of these flowers signifies Daunis’s journey of violence against Indigenous women, as they are mentioned in her mushroom picking on Duck Island, and her blanket party towards the end of the book. All these aspects are only the central and important characteristics representing *Firekeepers Daughter.* They represent the horrible violence against Indigenous women and girls, but also the perseverant fights that occur in Daunis’s community. Lastly, *Firekeepers Daughter* highlights the strength in girls, women and Elders coming together, to vocalize a world free from violence.