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Humanities

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**Never Forget**

“Always look where you're going, but never forget where you came from.” People change as they get older, their views on the world and on life change, but no one can change their past. In *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros, a young innocent girl without much knowledge, named Esperanza grows up in a shameful neighborhood, wanting to escape her life. She gets older she starts to have more knowledge of what is happening, and eventually becomes self confident. In the beginning, Esperanza wants to escape her life, however by the end she becomes self-assured and wants to come back to Mango Street in order to give the people a voice.

Esperanza starts out without much knowledge and struggles with self-definition. For example, after Elenita told her about her home in her heart, she became disappointed and didn’t get it. “Only I don’t get it.… A new house, a house made of heart.” (Cisneros 64) Esperanza doesn’t have much knowledge because she didn’t get what Elenita meant. She didn’t know that the home of her heart was the house that she lived in now. In addition, Esperanza not only does she not have much knowledge, but she struggles with self-definition. Esperanza’s struggle to define herself and underscores her every action and encounter. Esperanza wants to change her name so that she can define herself on her own terms, instead of accepting a name that expresses her family heritage. She wants to separate herself from her family in order to create her own life. “I would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.” (Cisneros 11).

Esperanza learns as she grows becoming self-confident, and wants to come back to Mango. For example, Esperanza doesn’t want to be like everyone else and wait for the ball and chain. “I have decided not to grow up tame like the others who lay their necks on the threshold waiting for the ball and chain.” (Cisneros 88)  “I am the one who leaves the table like a man, without putting back the chair or picking up the plate.” (Cisneros 89) This shows that she becomes self-confident because she doesn’t want to be like the others, she doesn’t want to be “rescued” and escape, knowing that if she does, she will be like the others, looking out the window. She wants to be her own; she doesn’t want to take care of others but herself. In addition, Esperanza wants to come back to give the people a voice. “They will not know I have gone away to come back. For the ones I left behind. For the ones who cannot out.” (Cisneros 110) Esperanza has gone away to help the people by giving them a voice, throughout her writing, She wants to help the people become better, to go back to her home of her heart, who is her identity. Esperanza doesn’t want to turn like those people from the hills, who forget about the people who struggle, and she will help Mango because of those unforgettable memories she had.

Throughout the story Esperanza grows and develops into a better and stronger person than she was when the book first began. In the beginning she has little understanding of what’s happening and struggles with self-confidence. She is unsure of herself. However, towards the end Esperanza becomes more powerful and decides to change her lifestyle in order to help Mango. She decides not to settle for the life put in front of her, and sets goals for herself that she hopes to achieve.