Argumentative Mentor Text—Day 3

Prompt: What does the monkey garden symbolize? (Target Task from Unit 4, Lesson 15)

The garden in "The Monkey Garden" symbolizes the transition from childhood to the teenage years and Esperanza's loss of innocence. Initially, the garden is described as a beautiful, magical place where children can play independently, "far away from where **our** mothers could find **us"** (95). It is a place where Esperanza feels free to "run too, up and down and through the monkey garden, fast as the boys" (96). Playing and pretending are activities usually associated with childhood. Even though people tell Esperanza that "**she** was getting too old to play the games" (96), she does not seem to care. However, Esperanza loses her innocence when she realizes that Sally does not want to be saved from the boys but actually likes kissing them. At this moment, Esperanza understands that her peers have already left childhood behind and that she must also. Although Esperanza tries to hold onto her innocence, which is represented by the beautiful, well-cared-for garden. However, she observes the garden becoming overgrown as it "began tak[ing] over **itself**" (95). This change in the garden represents Esperanza's loss of innocence. She mourns the loss as she realizes that childhood cannot last forever.

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