

Unexpected Lesson

When great teachers are mentioned, most people think of biology instructors, football coaches, Girl Scout leaders, and others in similar positions. **However**, some of the greatest teachers may be individuals not normally classified as teachers. **Roger**, a character in the short story, "Thank You, M'am" by Langston Hughes, encounters such an unusual teacher on a city sidewalk. **Because** she is a fearless, trustful, and a generous woman, Mrs. Jones teaches Roger a lesson he will remember.

Despite the fact that Roger is a would be thief, Mrs. Jones doesn't let fear overcome her. At about eleven o'clock one night, he runs up behind Mrs. Jones and tries to snatch her purse. When he falls down on the sidewalk, Mrs. Jones "simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue jeaned sitter" (78). While some women would have avoided confrontation with a stranger under similar circumstances, Mrs. Jones does not. She shook Roger "until his teeth rattled" and then demanded, "Pick up my pocketbook boy, and give it here." (78). Mrs. Jones shows no fear in her encounter with Roger.

Not only does Mrs. Jones display courage, but she also proves to be a trusting person. She decides that Roger needs to wash and to eat and that she will take him to her home in order to do so. "I got a great mind to wash your face for you," (78) she tells Roger. "You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right now is to wash your face. Are you hungry?" (78) In just a few words, she assumes the role of a teacher and a mother substitute. She not only takes Roger home but she also continues to display a trusting nature once they arrive. When she gets up to prepare supper, Mrs. Jones "did not watch the boy to see if he was going to run now, nor did she watch her purse which she left behind her on the daybed" (79). Roger begins to responds to Mrs. Jones in a positive way. Hughes tells the readers that Roger "did not want to be mistrusted now" (79). Her trust in Roger is beginning to create a relationship between them.

Mrs. Jones's generosity to Roger extends beyond her sharing a meal with him. Roger tells her that he tried to steal her purse in order to get money for a pair of blue suede shoes. Mrs. Jones then does a remarkable thing. She takes money from her purse and says, "Now here, take this ten dollars and buy yourself some blue suede shoes. And next time, do not make the mistake of latching onto my pocketbook nor nobody else's - because shoes come by devilish like that will burn your feet" (78). She bids him goodnight, and Roger wants to express his gratitude but cannot find words more eloquent than a simple "thank you." However, Hughes leaves the readers with the definite impression that Roger has been profoundly touched by the generosity of Mrs. Jones.

Some teachers are brilliant instructors due to their superior education. Others make excellent teachers because they are adept as communicators. Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones emerges not from a university but rather from a hotel beauty shop to become Roger's teacher. Her courage, trust, and generosity communicate more to Roger than mere words ever could.

Intro:

Hook: When great teachers are mentioned, most people think of biology instructors, football coaches, Girl Scout leaders, and others in similar positions. **However**, some of the greatest teachers may be individuals not normally classified as teachers.

Text Reference/ Plot Summary: Roger, a character in the short story, "Thank You, M'am" by Langston Hughes, encounters such an unusual teacher on a city sidewalk

Claim: Mrs. Jones teaches Roger a lesson he will remember.

Reasons: **Because** she is a fearless, trustful, and a generous woman,

Body 1:

Topic Sentence: Despite the fact that Roger is a would be thief, Mrs. Jones doesn't let fear overcome her.

Evidence:

Paraphrased: At about eleven o'clock one night, he runs up behind Mrs. Jones and tries to snatch her purse. When he falls down on the sidewalk,

Direct Quote: Mrs. Jones "simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue jeaned sitter" (78). "until his teeth rattled" and then demanded, "Pick up my pocketbook boy, and give it here." (78).

Explanation: While some women would have avoided confrontation with a stranger under similar circumstances, Mrs. Jones does not.

Transition Sentence: Mrs. Jones shows no fear in her encounter with Roger.

Body 2:

Topic Sentence: **Not only** does Mrs. Jones display courage, but she also proves to be a trusting person.

Evidence #1: I got a great mind to wash your face for you," (78) she tells Roger. "You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right now is to wash your face. Are you hungry?" (78)

Explanation #1: In just a few words, she assumes the role of a teacher and a mother substitute. She not only takes Roger home but she also continues to display a trusting nature once they arrive.

Evidence #2: When she gets up to prepare supper, Mrs. Jones "did not watch the boy to see if he was going to run now, nor did she watch her purse which she left behind her on the daybed" (79).

Explanation #2: Roger begins to responds to Mrs. Jones in a positive way.

Transition Sentence: Her trust in Roger is beginning to create a relationship between them.

Body 3:

Topic Sentence: Mrs. Jones's generosity to Roger extends beyond her sharing a meal with him.

Evidence: Now here, take this ten dollars and buy yourself some blue suede shoes. And next time, do not make the mistake of latching onto my pocketbook nor nobody else's - because shoes come by devilish like that will burn your feet" (78).

Explanation: She bids him goodnight, and Roger wants to express his gratitude but cannot find words more eloquent than a simple "thank you." **Transition Sentence:** However, Hughes leaves the readers with the definite impression that Roger has been profoundly touched by the generosity of Mrs. Jones.

Conclusion:

Tie back to hook: Some teachers are brilliant instructors due to their superior education. Others make excellent teachers because they are adept as communicators

Restating the Claim (in other words): Her courage, trust, and generosity communicate more to Roger than mere words ever could.