

Marigolds: poverty and small ghetto town essay



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After reading the story "Marigolds", a question popped up. This question was why did Lizabeth destroy Miss Lottie's marigolds.

Lizabeth, as a child, lived in a small ghetto town with dust covering mostly everything. The only color she could remember besides brown was the "brilliant splash of sunny yellow against the dust-Miss Lottie's marigolds" (Collier, p. 124). One day, in the middle of the night, she goes over to Miss Lottie's shack and destroys the flowers. Lizabeth lost control over herself that day because of three reasons. First reason is that she misses her mother who is never home because she has to work so much.

Second reason is that she is going through that time in life when a teenager figures out who they truly are inside and grow in to an adult. The third reason is that she is tired of the poverty and having to live in the ghetto. This story takes place during the Depression, when finding work was nearly impossible. Even without the Depression, African Americans had a hard time trying to find a job. Lizabeth and her family were African Americans, living in a poverty stricken community made up of broken down houses and shacks.

While Lizabeth's mother went to work every morning, her father would go out searching for work. It was routine for her mother to go to work early and come home late. It was also routine for her father to go out early searching for work and come home in time for dinner still without a job. Lizabeth would still be sleeping when her mother woke up and be in bed by time she came home.

The only thing she ever saw of her mother was the food she provided the family with. Lizabeth had a "great need for [her] mother who was never

there” (Collier P. 129). Missing her mother so much caused her to unleash emotions that made her destroy the flowers.

A girl growing up to become a woman needs a woman to teach her how to become one. Elizabeth barely had a mother to teach her how to grow up to become a woman and was scared about doing it on her own. With having only a father and a brother as family, there was no female figure in her life. She realized she didn’t want to be an annoying child anymore and decided she wanted to grow up and become a woman. This new feeling of growing up confused and scared Elizabeth.

She felt the “ bewilderment of being neither child nor woman and yet both at once” (Collier p. 129). She was confused with what it took in order to become a woman and she was scared that she wasn’t ready to do what it took. This stress on Elizabeth was the second reason why she had a mental breakdown. Elizabeth’s hometown was nothing but shacks and small houses with a lot of dust everywhere.

Most people worked hard for the American Dream, but it was more like a miracle than a goal. These people were always hungry, and worked from day to night to try and put food on the table. Elizabeth hated being poor. Being poor meant always being hungry, or having a mother that has to work more hours than she sleeps in order to feed her family. She felt ashamed that she had to live in such a harsh environment.

“ The hopelessness of [their] poverty and degradation” caused Elizabeth to cause demolition of the bright yellow flowers (Collier p. 129). Elizabeth destroyed the only beauty that the community had left. This destruction was <https://assignbuster.com/marigolds-poverty-and-small-ghetto-town-essay/>

caused from holding in emotions until finally one night she burst. These emotions were from the feelings of missing her mother, growing up, and living in poverty. The combination of these emotions is the answer to the question of why Lizabeth destroyed Miss Lottie's marigolds.