

Thank you ma'am



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authorLangston Hughes
settingtime: 1950s place: Black Harlem New York
POVthird person omniscientMrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones
She was a large woman with a large purse, large personality, large name, large attitude and, most of all, a large heart. She is an African American woman who is strict, but she deeply cares about the choices of others (Roger). She works in a beauty salon in a hotel and lives in a small room inside an apartment building. RogerA fourteen or fifteen year old African American boy who is skinny, wearing tennis shoes and blue jeans. He has dirt on his face and uncombed hair. Roger is neglected which leads to his poor choices. All the boy wants is a pair of blue suede shoes, and he initially tries to get them by stealing from other people. Then he learns a lesson about honesty which presumably he will take with him. Internal ConflictAfter meeting Mrs. Jones, Roger struggles between taking the easy way out and being a person of integrity, who knows right from wrong. This example is shown when Roger struggles to make the correct decision about whether or not to bolt out the open door. External ConflictRoger tries to steal Mrs. Jones's purse, and this choice leads to the initial person vs. person conflict between them. Mrs. Jones does not appreciate Roger's trying to steal her pocketbook, but on the other hand, Roger does not want to get yelled at and taken away to her home. In the beginning they conflict with each other; however, in the end, they share the same point of view. Plot SummaryMrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones, a large woman with a large personality, is walking late at night in Black Harlem, NYC, when she is attacked by a scrawny boy by the name of Roger. Mrs. Jones easily catches the boy, who tried to steal her pocketbook and takes him to her home. There, she teaches him the importance of remaining an honorable person even in difficult situations and

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warns Roger about the effects of stealing Exposition Roger tries to steal her purse, and Mrs. Jones get the upper hand in the scuffle Rising Action Mrs. Jones takes Roger to her house. He struggles at first to escape, but when she cleans him off and talks to him, he calms down. They have dinner and conversations, and she teaches him a lesson. Climaxis when Mrs. Jones, after teaching Roger his lesson, offers him the 10 dollars (that he tried to steal) to buy a pair of blue suede shoes. This action touches the reader's heart because of the kindness shown to a complete stranger. It is the highest point of emotional intensity in the story. Falling Action After Mrs. Luella gives Roger the money for the shoes, she basically pushes him out the door. Resolution At the end of "Thank You, M'am", Roger leaves without being able to thank Mrs. Jones properly. This doesn't really matter because they both understand that she has taught him a life lesson and that her work is done.

Themegenerally, is the values of honor, respect, gratefulness, and doing the right thing. There is also the idea of charity and the power of forgiveness. Allusion to Christianity when Mrs. Jones helps Roger by cleaning him (baptism), feeding him, clothing him (shoes), and teaching him. She will not, however, crucify him (judge or punish him) as evidenced by the lack of a hammer and nails in her purse. Symbolism The open door symbolizes that Mrs. Jones trusts Roger not to run away. He can leave anytime that he wants to, but he stays because he realizes that she is a good person who respects him and has a valuable lesson to teach him. The closed door symbolizes that Roger is on his own now, so it is up to him to decide to make the right choices from now on. Her work is done. She knows that she made a positive impact on the boy, and she doesn't really need his thanks. Irony the reader does not suspect that Mrs. Jones will be kind to Roger (after their

confrontation. This also occurs in the opening scene when the thief ends up as the prisoner of his victim. Dialect is used almost exclusively to tell the story. The characters in the story speak with poor grammar and an informal tone and some slang, reflecting the speech in Black Harlem, NYC at a certain point in history and giving insight into the setting. The dialect also makes the reader feel closer to the action and more connected to the characters.

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