“Thank you, Ma’am” Kolin Krewinkel

Period ¾

“She bent down enough to permit him to stop and pick up her purse. Then she said, “Now ain’t you ashamed of yourself?” “Thank you, M’am,” written by Langston Hughes, transforms a thieving young boy into an appreciative, mature boy by a woman who forces him to realize the wrongs he has committed. As a result of the woman’s overpowering nature, tough love, and the child’s desperation for these things, he is transformed from delinquent to respectful boy.

First off, the woman’s pushy, though from-the-heart nature effectively forces the boy to be convinced of what she says. For example, when he first attempts to steal her purse, she publically embarrasses him using strong language, such as, “Now ain’t you ashamed of yourself?” This shows that her personality is strong and unapologetic. Furthermore, it demonstrates her conviction and unique personality that had the power to transform the boy. In addition, on the street, she says, “But you put yourself in contact with me… When I get through with you, sir, you are going to remember Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones.” This demonstrates her powerful nature by showing that she is relentless and wants to make an impact on the boy. Additionally, it shows her relentless attitude is confident and won’t take no for an answer; she will teach the boy a lesson. This attitude makes up another key aspect of Mrs. Jones.

Next, the tough love Mrs. Luella Jones gives the boy helps to change the boy. When the boy says, “There’s nobody home at my house,” she replies, “Then we’ll eat.” Her snappy attitude demonstrates a kind of tough love the boy has never received before. This helps to make him realize the wrong he’s done while still providing him with what’s necessary. Moreover, she advises him, “…shoes come by devilish like that [purse snatching] will burn your feet.” Though she gives him the ability to get what he desires, she still gives him advice. This out-of-family abrasiveness gives him the guidance he needs to change his morality. Finally, the absence of this kind of love helps to change the boy.

As a result of the absence of family in the boy’s life, the experience with Mrs. Jones is especially important. This is proved when she inquires if he’s eaten, and he replies, “There’s nobody home at my house.” This proves the interaction with Mrs. Jones especially valuable. In addition, the absence of this kind of love makes the boy respect Mrs. Jones even more. In the street, Mrs. Jones inquires, “Ain’t you got nobody home to tell you to wash your face?” When the boy replies “no,” it makes them both realize that the care she will provide is valued. Furthermore, it shows the boy’s desperation for such care, which she’ll provide for him, because of her caring nature. These factors all contribute to the boy’s change from thief to respectful young adult.

Due to the aggressive nature of Mrs. Jones, her tough love, and the absence of it from the boy’s life, he is transformed from his thieving old-self to a new, improved, respectful boy. The valued nature of the love and attention Mrs. Jones gives to the unaided boy helps to restore his morality, transforming him. This demonstrates the power one person can have a lonely person in need.x