

In Thank You, Mam, What Is The First Thing Mrs. Jones Tells Roger To Do? A. Eat Dinner B. Wash His Face

In Thank You, Mam, What Is The First Thing Mrs. Jones Tells Roger To Do? A. Eat Dinner B. Wash His Face, understanding the initial instructions given by Mrs. Jones to Roger is crucial for analyzing the story's themes, character dynamics, and moral lessons. This question highlights a pivotal moment in Langston Hughes' short story, which explores themes of trust, kindness, and redemption. In this comprehensive article, we will delve into the details of this key moment, interpret its significance, and examine how it sets the tone for the entire narrative.

Introduction to "Thank You, Mam" and Its Central Themes

"Thank You, Mam" is a short story written by Langston Hughes that captures a meaningful encounter between a young boy, Roger, and a caring woman, Mrs. Jones. The story unfolds in a single evening and revolves around themes of compassion, second chances, and moral growth. It presents a rare glimpse into the power of kindness and the importance of understanding others.

The central incident involves Roger attempting to steal Mrs. Jones' purse, which leads to a series of interactions that ultimately influence his outlook on life. The story emphasizes the importance of empathy and the influence that a caring adult can have on a child's development.

The Significance of Mrs. Jones's First Words to Roger

The initial instructions given by Mrs. Jones are a crucial part of the story's progression. When Mrs. Jones catches Roger attempting to steal her purse, she chooses a compassionate approach rather than punishment. Her response and subsequent instructions to Roger reveal her character and set the foundation for the moral lesson of the story.

What Does Mrs. Jones Tell Roger to Do First?

The question at the heart of this discussion is: **In Thank You, Mam, What Is The First Thing Mrs. Jones Tells Roger To Do? A. Eat Dinner B. Wash His Face.**

The correct answer is B. Wash His Face.

This instruction is significant because it indicates Mrs. Jones's immediate concern for Roger's well-being and her desire to nurture his dignity and hygiene. It also reflects her understanding that outward appearances and cleanliness can be symbols of self-respect and personal care.

Analyzing Mrs. Jones's First Instruction in Depth

The Context of the Instruction

After catching Roger attempting to steal her purse, Mrs. Jones does not react with anger or punishment. Instead, she pulls him into her home, offers him food, and begins a conversation. Her first instruction to Roger—to wash his face—comes after she has fed him and is trying to establish trust.

This moment signifies her recognition of Roger's circumstances and her attempt to help him regain dignity. Telling him to wash his face is a gentle, caring gesture that shows her understanding of the importance of personal hygiene and self-respect.

Why Wash His Face?

The act of washing one's face is often associated with cleansing, renewal, and preparing oneself to face the world with dignity. Mrs. Jones's instruction can be interpreted as a metaphor for Roger's opportunity to start anew, leaving behind his previous mistake.

Additionally, this action helps Roger feel cared for and respected, which can have a profound impact on his self-esteem and moral development. It emphasizes the story's moral lesson that kindness can inspire positive change.

The Contrast Between "Eat Dinner" and "Wash His Face"

While both options—eating dinner and washing his face—are plausible instructions in a caring context, they serve different symbolic and practical purposes within the story.

Option A: Eat Dinner

- Suggests providing nourishment and comfort.
- Focuses on satisfying physical hunger.

- Represents care and nurturing.

Option B: Wash His Face

- Focuses on personal hygiene and dignity.
- Symbolizes renewal and self-respect.
- Encourages self-care and moral reflection.

In the story, Mrs. Jones's emphasis on washing his face aligns more with her intention to instill a sense of dignity and self-worth in Roger, beyond merely feeding him.

The Impact of Mrs. Jones's First Instruction on the Story's Moral Lesson

Mrs. Jones's instruction to wash Roger's face is more than just a practical suggestion; it is a symbolic act that underscores the story's core message:

- Self-Respect: Encouraging Roger to clean himself up fosters a sense of self-respect.
- Second Chances: It demonstrates her willingness to give Roger an opportunity to change.
- Empathy and Trust: Her caring approach shows how understanding and kindness can influence a child's behavior.

This moment sets the tone for the subsequent interactions, where Mrs. Jones continues to treat Roger with respect and compassion, ultimately leading to a moral awakening for the young boy.

Key Points in the Context of "Thank You, Mam"

To better understand the significance of Mrs. Jones's first instruction, here are some key points:

1. Mrs. Jones's approach contrasts with typical juvenile justice, emphasizing kindness over punishment.
2. The instruction to wash his face symbolizes a fresh start and personal dignity.
3. Mrs. Jones's actions demonstrate the importance of compassion in moral education.
4. The story highlights how small acts of kindness can have profound impacts on young individuals.

Conclusion: The Power of Compassion in "Thank You, Mam"

In conclusion, the first thing Mrs. Jones tells Roger to do—"Wash His Face"—is a deliberate and meaningful choice that encapsulates the story's themes of dignity, redemption, and kindness. It reflects her understanding that personal hygiene and self-respect are vital components of moral growth. By instructing Roger to wash his face, Mrs. Jones provides him with an opportunity to see himself in a new light and to consider the possibility of change.

Understanding this moment enhances our appreciation of Langston Hughes's storytelling and the enduring lesson that compassion and empathy can transform lives. Whether it is through simple acts like washing one's face or sharing a meal, kindness has the power to inspire hope and foster moral development in others.

Final Thoughts

For readers exploring "Thank You, Mam," recognizing the significance of Mrs. Jones's first instruction to Roger—"Wash His Face"—is essential to grasping the story's moral depth. It serves as a reminder that small gestures of kindness can lead to meaningful change, encouraging us all to approach others with empathy and understanding.

Remember: When analyzing literary stories, paying attention to key moments like this provides deeper insights into characters, themes, and moral lessons that resonate beyond the pages of the story.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the first thing Mrs. Jones tells Roger to do in 'Thank You, Mam'?

Wash His Face

In the story 'Thank You, Mam,' what are the two options given for what Mrs. Jones asks Roger to do first?

Eat Dinner or Wash His Face

Which action does Mrs. Jones emphasize first when speaking to Roger in 'Thank You, Mam'?

Wash His Face

Is the first instruction Mrs. Jones gives Roger in 'Thank You, Mam' to eat dinner or wash his face?

Wash His Face

Why does Mrs. Jones tell Roger to wash his face at the beginning of 'Thank You, Mam'?

Because she wants him to clean himself up before anything else happens.

In 'Thank You, Mam,' what is the initial request Mrs. Jones makes to Roger?

She asks him to wash his face.

Does Mrs. Jones ask Roger to eat dinner or wash his face first in the story?

Wash His Face

What is the significance of Mrs. Jones telling Roger to wash his face first in 'Thank You, Mam'?

It shows her concern for his appearance and helps establish trust between them.

Additional Resources

In Thank You, Mam, What Is The First Thing Mrs. Jones Tells Roger To Do? A. Eat Dinner
B. Wash His Face

Understanding the pivotal moments and character interactions in Langston Hughes' classic short story Thank You, Mam offers rich insights into themes of compassion, trust, and moral growth. A key detail that often sparks discussion is the initial instruction Mrs. Jones gives Roger—specifically, her telling him to do either Eat Dinner or Wash His Face. Exploring this moment in depth reveals much about her character, her intentions, and the story's underlying messages.

The Context of the Story

Before delving into the specific question, it's essential to understand the overall context:

- Setting: The story unfolds on a late evening in an urban neighborhood, emphasizing themes of hardship and human connection.

- Main Characters:
- Mrs. Jones: A large woman with a compassionate heart, who unexpectedly chooses kindness over judgment.
- Roger: A young boy, possibly around 14, who attempts to steal Mrs. Jones' purse, leading to an encounter that becomes transformative.
- Themes: Forgiveness, trust, the importance of kindness, and moral education.

The Incident Leading to Mrs. Jones' Instructions

The story begins with Roger attempting to snatch Mrs. Jones' purse as she walks home. When she catches him, instead of reacting with anger or calling the police, she surprises him by:

- Taking him to her home
- Offering him food
- Engaging with him kindly and firmly

This sequence sets the stage for understanding her subsequent instructions—particularly the first thing she tells Roger to do.

What Is The First Thing Mrs. Jones Tells Roger To Do?

The core question is: When Mrs. Jones sees Roger in her home, what does she tell him to do first?

The correct answer is:

B. Wash His Face

Deep Dive Into The Instruction: "Wash Your Face"

Why Does Mrs. Jones Prioritize Washing Roger's Face?

- Hygiene and Appearance:

Mrs. Jones notices that Roger's face is dirty, likely from the street or his attempt at theft. She recognizes that his appearance reflects his circumstances and possibly his emotional state.

- Symbolism of Cleansing:

Telling Roger to wash his face is not merely about hygiene; it symbolizes an opportunity for renewal. It signifies washing away the dirt of guilt or shame, and perhaps, a chance for him to start afresh.

- Practical Consideration:

It's a simple yet meaningful act—cleaning oneself can soothe anxiety, restore dignity, and

prepare him for meaningful conversation.

The Moment in the Story

- When Mrs. Jones instructs Roger to wash his face, she demonstrates her understanding that small acts of self-care can have profound effects on a person's confidence and outlook.
- The act of washing his face also serves as a gentle way to break the initial tension and begins the process of trust-building.

Comparing the Options: Eat Dinner vs. Wash His Face

Let's analyze both options to understand their significance and why Mrs. Jones chooses to focus on washing his face first.

1. Eat Dinner

- Possible Interpretation:

Mrs. Jones might have offered or suggested that Roger eat, emphasizing care and nurturing.

- Why It's Less Likely as the First Instruction:

While she does prepare food and insists he eats later, the story emphasizes cleanliness and self-respect before offering him food.

- Symbolic Significance:

Eating could symbolize nourishment and acceptance, but it is a subsequent step after initial trust and hygiene have been established.

2. Wash His Face

- Primary Focus in the Text:

The story explicitly mentions Mrs. Jones telling Roger to wash his face as the first step.

- Why It's the First Instruction:

It's immediate, tangible, and reflects her practical approach—addressing basic needs and dignity at once.

- Symbolism & Thematic Relevance:

Washing the face acts as a metaphor for cleansing guilt and starting anew, aligning with Hughes' themes of redemption and second chances.

The Significance of the First Instruction in the Broader Narrative

Building Trust and Respect

Mrs. Jones's instruction to wash his face is foundational in fostering a trusting environment:

- Respect for Personal Dignity:

She recognizes that Roger's appearance and demeanor are signs of his inner state. Addressing his hygiene shows respect and concern.

- Encouraging Self-Respect:

By prompting him to wash his face, she encourages him to take responsibility for himself, promoting self-respect.

Demonstrating Practical Compassion

- Rather than lecturing or punishing, Mrs. Jones takes pragmatic steps—like asking him to wash his face—to show her care in a simple, effective way.

- This act exemplifies her approach: kindness combined with practical action.

Setting the Stage for Moral Reflection

- The act of washing his face prepares Roger mentally and emotionally for the subsequent steps—acceptance of her kindness, sharing a meal, and perhaps, contemplating his choices.

The Impact of Mrs. Jones's First Instruction on Roger

Immediate Effects

- Physical Cleansing:

Roger's face physically becomes cleaner, which can psychologically symbolize a cleansing of guilt or shame.

- Psychological Shift:

The simple act helps Roger feel more comfortable, less defensive, and more receptive to Mrs. Jones's kindness.

Long-term Reflection

- The story suggests that small acts of kindness—like washing one's face—can have lasting effects on a person's sense of worth and morality.

- Roger's subsequent gratitude and the trust he develops are rooted in moments like this initial instruction, which affirm his dignity.

Cultural and Literary Significance

In the broader context of Hughes' work and American literature:

- The instruction to wash his face underscores themes of compassion transcending social and economic barriers.
- It highlights the importance of basic human respect in moral education.
- Hughes often emphasizes the dignity of ordinary people, and this moment encapsulates that message.

Concluding Reflection: Why Is The First Instruction So Important?

In summary, Mrs. Jones's instruction to Roger to wash his face is more than a simple request. It embodies:

- An act of kindness rooted in respect and dignity.
- A symbolic gesture for renewal and moral cleansing.
- An essential step in building trust and fostering moral growth.

Understanding this detail enriches our appreciation of the story's themes—particularly the power of compassion and the importance of treating others with kindness, regardless of their past actions.

Final Words

In the narrative of Thank You, Mam, the choice of what Mrs. Jones says to Roger first reveals her character and the story's deeper message. The fact that she tells him to wash his face—option B—demonstrates her belief in personal dignity, the potential for redemption, and the transformative power of kindness. It's a small yet profound gesture that encapsulates the story's core values and leaves a lasting impression on both Roger and the reader.

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