**Thank You M’am** by Langston Huges

**Summary**

"Thank You, M'am" is a short story by Langston Hughes that tells the story of a young boy named Roger who tries to steal a purse from a woman named Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones. She walks down a deserted street at 11 o’clock at night on her way back home from work. Suddenly, a boy shows up behind her and tries to steal her purse. The purse is big and heavy, and because of its weight, the boy loses balance and falls to the ground. Mrs. Jones kicks Roger and asks him to give her back the purse. Roger is ashamed and scared. He tells her that he didn’t mean to steal her purse, that he just wants to buy blue suede shoes but Mrs. Jones doesn’t believe him. He tells her that he has no one at home. So instead of turning him in or reacting with anger, Mrs. Jones catches him and takes him to her home.

At her home, Mrs. Jones leaves her door open and asks Roger to go wash his face. Roger can run away but instead, he decides to do what Mrs. Jones asked. She talks to Roger, feeds him, and shows him kindness and understanding. She reveals that she, too, has done things she’s not proud of in the past. Before sending Roger on his way, she gives him money to buy the shoes he wanted. She walks him to the door and tells him she hopes he will behave himself. Roger feels shocked and grateful but the only words that come to mind are “Thank You, M’am”.

**VOCABULARY**

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| **RECEPTIVE** | **PRODUCTIVE** |
| balance  purse  rattled  sidewalk  strap  tug  slung  snatch  to bother  to drag  frail  to jerk  permit  pocketbook  to pop out  rear  to stoop  struggle  sweat  to whisper  barely  to drip  embarrass  to frown  pause  presentable  screen  to wonder  ashamed  make a dash for it  make a mistake  release  shake  trust  devilish way | balance  purse  sidewalk  strap  snatch  to bother  to drag  pocketbook  struggle  sweat  to whisper  barely  embarrass-embarrassed  ashamed  to frown  pause  presentable  to wonder  make a dash for it  make a mistake  release  shake  trust  to treat |

**QUESTIONS**

1. Choose one character and explain why you would/would not like to have him/her as a friend.
2. Write how you would feel if you were Roger.
3. Pick a scene in which you disagreed how a character handled a situation/person and rewrite

it in the way you think it should have happened.

1. What choices did the characters have? What choice did they make? Why?
2. Which character changes and which doesn’t? How is the character’s change important in the

story?

1. Read the three short extracts from the story. Choose one and explain what made it

interesting for you.

1. Did you like the end of the story? Why did you like it? If you did not like it, how would

you change it?