**Life Lessons – Synthesis Essay**

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They aren’t just teachers, they are people too. This is something a lot of people don’t realize. These people are the main caretakers of us for 12 to 13 years of our lives. Each taking turns teaching us things not only for school purposes but also life lessons. Two short stories are being compared and contrasted in this essay to help with the thesis statement that will be written on the bottom of this paragraph. The stories are: A Teachers Reward written by Robert Phillips and Long, Long After School which was written by Ernest Buckler. A Teacher Reward is about a man named Raybe comes to an old woman’s house. She used to be the mans teacher. She doesn’t remember him. She tries to guess and the two talk when finally she remembers. He had been in jail and just got out. She used to hit his hand for doing bad things. Even if it wasn’t his fault. Blamed her for everything and took out a hammer to hit her hand. Ends without knowing what really happened. Long, Long After School takes place with a teacher named miss Thretheway. The story is set in a cemetery where the teacher has passed away. Past students come to the sad day. One of the students is Wes; an African American boy. He talked to our point of view character about how this teacher wasn’t just a teacher to him rather she made things easier for him even though he had darker skin. Which was a big problem back when the story took place around the assumed time of the 1950s. Each of these stories stem from a very similar theme. The theme of growing up and finding who one really is as a person and to society. Growing up is a part of life. A thing one must do in truly discovering who they are. But one does not get anywhere without others to help or push that discovery into becoming a reality.

To begin this deduction of reasoning, let start with the story A Teachers Reward. Raybe was a boy that had a lot of horrible unfortunate events take place in his life at such a young age. Blocks built up so high and fell so quickly that it hurt him in the long run. There is one person he blames the most for the way his life turned out. His grade school teacher. She broke the hope in him. One of those blocks that hurt him in the fall wad the way that teacher treated Raybe. She didn’t make him feel safe at a place he came to learn and grow. This teacher was supposed to be a guardian away from home. But she wasn’t. Not to him. “My folks are dead. They were dead when I was your student, if you’ll remember. Grandfather died too. I lived with an aunt. She’s dead now.’ ‘Oh, I’m sorry. I don’t think I realized at the time—‘

‘No, I don’t think you did...” The woman didn’t even realize he was getting bad grades for a reason and let alone that his family was all gone basically. People have their strength and weaknesses in subjects but there is always something they are good at. If that isn’t even showing in their work then it would be smart and a part of ones job to check on their students well being. Another example was how he started hanging with the bad crowd all a sudden and doing drugs. “I remember you! You were no good to start with. No motivation. No follow through. I knew just where you’d end up. You’ve run true to form” Then why didn’t she try and help him!? Not just classify the boy as a failure. Try or understand. Do something other then not caring.

Second focus of this essay is the following short; Long, Long After School. Wes is now a full grown man who is quiet successful. However, in his younger years he wasn’t as successful. Not only in school but as a person he wasn’t very well liked due to the colour of his skin. Also set in a time where equality rights weren’t a huge factor and you were judged by the colour of your skin, race and sexuality. "I didn't know whether an old maids blood would be any good to a fine young specimen like you, Wes, or not" she made him feel equal and loved in a very inspiring way of friendship. Something he needed. during this hard time in trying to fit in with kids his age or find a young love moment someone was very helpful. Miss Threthway made Wes feel included and loved in a kind friendship. Knowing she was there made school and life easier and a lot better. “She was so beautiful” Wes says this to the narrator of the story. He disagrees though not realizing Wes was viewing his love of her personality and being that made her not only beautiful inside but on the outside as well.

Two short stories were read and deconstructed in finding similar and different aspects that connected both of them. Similarities run through the idea of teachers and others in our lives aiding in who one will be as a person in todays future. The difference being the effect it took on both Wes and Raybe. Wes’s teacher being beneficial and understanding him and what he’s about while Raybe’s teacher not paying a wink of attention towards his problems and life which resulted in a criminal style of living.

In closing of this essay the thesis statement that was in the introduction will be stated once more. Growing up is a part of life. A thing one must do in truly discovering who they are. But one does not get anywhere without others to help or push that discovery into becoming a reality. Both boys dealt with this matter in their stories. One sadly took a negative shot and the other was a success and became a well rounded part of society. Furthermore, Wes and Raybe had received life lessons that constructed the people they are today.