

"A Teacher's Reward Project"- Digital Project

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Legend:

Vocabulary words: **Pink**

Plot Points: **Grey**

Character Profiles: **Blue**

Setting: **Orange**

Foreshadowing: **Green**

Conflict: **Purple**

Character Types: **Red**

Irony: **Dark Blue**

Author Background: **Yellow**

Literary Devices: **Brown**

Thematic Statements: **Dark Green**

A Teacher's Reward

Robert Phillips

'What'd you say your name was?' the old lady asked through the screen door. He stood on the dark porch.

'Raybe. Raybe Simpson. You taught me in the third grade, remember?' 'Simpson... Simpson. Yes, I suppose so,' she said. Her hand remained on the latch.

'Of course you do. I was the boy with the white hair. "Old Whitehead", my grandfather used to call me, though you wouldn't know that. I sat in the front row. You used to rap my knuckles with your ruler, remember?'

'Oh, I rapped a lot of knuckles in my time. Boys will be boys. Still, the white hair, the front row...' Her voice trailed off as she made an almost audible effort to engage the ancient machinery of her memory.

'Sure you remember,' he said. "'Miss Scofield never forgets a name.'" That's what all the older kids told us. That's what all the other teachers said. "Miss Scofield never forgets a name."

'Of course she doesn't. I never forgot a pupil's name in forty-eight years of teaching. Come right in.' She unlatched the screen door and swung it wide. The spring creaked.

'I can't stay long. I was in town for the day and thought I'd look you up. You were such a good teacher. I've never forgotten what you did for me.' 'Well, now, I consider that right kindly of you.' She looked him up and down through wire-rimmed spectacles. 'Just when was it I taught you?' 'Nineteen thirty-eight. Out at the old school.'

'Ah, yes. The old school. A pity about that fire.'

'I heard something about it burning down. But I've been away. When was that fire?'

'Oh, years ago. A year or two before I retired. After that I couldn't teach in the new brick schoolhouse they built. Something about the place. Too cold, too bright. And the classroom was so long. A body couldn't hardly see from the one end of it to the other...' She made a helpless gesture with her hand. He watched the hand in its motion: tiny, fragile, transparent, a network of blue veins running clearly beneath the surface; the skin hung in wrinkles like wet crepe paper. Denison paper, it had been called, when he was in school. (Foreshadowing and Characters)

'That's rough. But you must have been about ready to retire anyhow, weren't you?' Her watery blue eyes snapped. 'I should say not! All my life I've had a real calling for teaching. A real calling. I always said I would teach until I dropped in my tracks. It's such a rewarding field. A teacher gets her reward in something other than money... It was just that new red-brick schoolhouse! The lights were too bright, new-fangled fluorescent lights, bright yellow. And the room was too long...' Her gaze dared him to contradict her. 'I don't think much of these modern buildings, either.'

'Boxes,' she said firmly. 'Come again?' 'Boxes, boxes, nothing but boxes, that's all they are. I don't know what we're coming to, I declare. Well, now, Mr—'

'Simpson. Mr Simpson. But you can call me Raybe, like you always did.' 'Yes. Raybe. That's a nice name. Somehow it has an honest sound. Really, the things people name their children these days! There's one family named their children Cindy, Heidi and Dawn. They sound like creatures out of Walt Disney. The last year I taught, I had a student named Crystal. A little girl named Crystal! Why not name her Silverware, or China? And a boy named Jet. That was his first name, Jet. Or was it Astronaut? I don't know. Whatever it was it was terrible.'

'You once called me Baby-Raybe, and it caught on. That's what all the kids called me after that.'

'Did I? Oh, dear. Well, you must have done something babyish at the time.' A shaft of silence fell between them. At last she smiled, as if to herself, and said cheerily, 'I was just fixing to have some tea before you happened by. Would you like some nice hot tea?'

'Well, I wasn't fixing to stay long, like I said.' He shuffled his feet.

'It'll only take a second. The kettle's been on all this time.' She seemed to have her heart set, and he was not one to disappoint.

'Okay, if you're having some.'

'Good. Do you take lemon or cream?'

'Neither. Actually I don't drink much tea. I'll just try it plain. With sugar.

I've got a sweet tooth.'

'A sweet tooth! Let me see. Is that one of the things I remember about you?'

Raybe Simpson, a sweet tooth? No, I don't think so. One of the boys always used to eat Baby Ruth candy bars right in class. The minute my back was



Emotional setting- The story made the reader's feel a sense of suspense, tenseness and uneasiness examples of suspense include when Raybe and Miss Scofield were arguing and Raybe became aggressive, which caused him to act aggressively. Also in the moment where Raybe held the hammer above her hands. Examples of a tense feeling is when Raybe starts blaming Mrs. Scofield. For everything and he explains how he has been to prison. Lastly, examples of uneasiness is when Raybe and Mrs. Scofield start talking about Nathan Pillsbury. and the writing on the chalkboard, how it wasn't actually Raybe.

Physical setting - The story begins when Raybe is standing on the dark porch in front of Mrs. Scofield's house. This also creates an emotional setting as a suspenseful and creepy mood by showing the awaiting of Mrs. Scofield death by Raybe.



This indirectly states that Mrs. Scofield has a very stereotypical view of people as she believes all boys act a certain way, as well as her idea of the "good kid" which always isn't the case.

Mrs. Scofield actually didn't remember Raybe however by still welcoming him into her home indirectly says that Mrs. Scofield loves attention and by Raybe showing up after that many years boosted her ego therefore she didn't even think about the worst case scenario which occurred.

This is an example of imagery because it creates a mental picture in the reader's head. Mrs. Scofield is describing the new classrooms and how they are so long that it is hard to see the other end. The author uses imagery to further enhance the reader's knowledge and understanding of what something looks like.

How Raybe describes Mrs. Scofield indirectly gives the readers a visual of her appearance. Miss Scofield is described using the words fragile, wrinkles and clear blue veins which indirectly states she is an elderly lady.

He watched the hand in its motion. This was foreshadowing that he had something planned to do with her knuckles. In some way he had to get his revenge.

This is an example of a simile because it is comparing two things using like or as. The author is comparing the wrinkly skin of Mrs. Scofield to wet crepe paper. This also creates a sense of imagery which helps the reader understand and imagine what something looks like.

New-fangled: something of a new kind

This phrase by Mrs. Scofield indirectly presents her as a very opinionated person who is also very judgemental over things that do not matter in the grand scheme. She is also not afraid to express her strong opinion to someone she had essentially just met.

Raybe: dynamic character, he seems harmless at beginning of the story and that he is just coming to visit his old teacher however goes through a dramatic change, where he then

turned he'd sneak another Baby Ruth out of his desk. But that wasn't you was it?'
 'No.'
 'I didn't think it was you,' she said quickly. 'I called it the blackboard. Did you know, in that new school building, it was green?'
 'What was green?'
 'The blackboard was green. And the chalk was yellow. Something about it being easier on the children's eyes. And they had the nerve to call them blackboards, too, mind you. How do you expect children to learn if you call what's green, black?'
 'Hmmm.'
 She was getting down two dainty cups with pink roses painted on them. She put them on a tin tray and placed a sugar bowl between them. The bowl was cracked down the middle and had been taped with Scotch tape, which had yellowed. When the tea was finally ready, they adjourned to the living room. The parlor, she called it.
 'Well, how've you been, Miss Scofield?' he asked.
 'Can't complain, except for a little arthritis in my hands. Can't complain.'
 'Good.' He studied her hands, then glanced around. 'Nice little place you got here.' He took a sip of the tea, found it strong and bitter, added two more heaping spoons of sugar.
 'Well, it's small, of course, but it serves me. It serves me.' She settled back in her [rocker](#).
 'You still Miss Scofield?'
 'How's that?' She leaned forward on her chair, as if to position her ear closer to the source.
 'I asked you, your name still **Miss Scofield**? You never got married?'
 'Mercy no. I've always been an unclaimed blessing. That's what I've always called myself. "An unclaimed blessing.'" She smiled sweetly.
 'You still live alone, I take it.'
 'Yes indeed. I did once have a cat. A greedy old alley cat named Tom. But he died. Overeating did it, I think. Ate me out of house and home, pretty near.'
 'You don't say.'
 'Oh, yes indeed. He'd eat anything. Belly got big as a basketball, nearabout. He was good company, though. Sometimes I miss that old Tom.' 'I should think so.'
 An old-fashioned clock chimed overhead.
 'What business did you say you were in, Mr Simp... Raybe?'
 'Didn't say.'
 'That's right, you didn't say. Well, just what is it?'
 'Right now I'm unemployed.'
 She set her teacup upon a lace [doily](#) on the tabletop and made a little face of disapproval. 'Unemployed. I see. Then how do you get along?'
 'Oh, I manage, one way or the other. **I've been pretty well taken care of these last ten years. I been away.**'
 'You're living with your folks? Is that it?' Encouragement bloomed on Her cheeks.
 '**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... That's all right, Miss Scofield. You had a lot of students to look after.'
 'Yes, but still and all, it's unlike me not to have remembered or known that one of my boys was an orphan. You don't mind if I use that word, do you, Mr... Raybe? Lots of people are sensitive about words.'
 'I don't mind. I'm not sensitive.'
 'No, I should think not. You're certainly a big boy, now. And what happened to all that hair? **Why, you're as bald as a baby.**' Looking at his head, she laughed a laugh as scattered as buckshot. 'My, you must be hot in that jacket. Why don't you take it off? It looks very heavy.'
 'I'll keep it on, if you don't mind.'
 'Don't mind a bit, so long's you're comfortable.' What did he have in that jacket, she wondered. He was carrying something in there.
 'I'm just fine,' he said, patting the jacket. She began to rock in her chair and looked around the meagre room to check its presentability to unexpected company. Maybe he had his dinner in there, in a paper poke, and was too embarrassed to show it.
 'Well, now, what do you remember about our year together that I may have forgotten? Were you in **Jay McMaster**'s class? Jay was a lovely boy. So polite. You can always tell good breeding—'
 'He was a year or two ahead of me. You're getting close, though.'
 'Well, of course I am. How about **Nathan Pillsbury**? The dentist's son. He was in your class, wasn't he?'
 'That's right.'
 'See!' She exclaimed triumphantly. 'Another lovely boy. His parents had a swimming pool. One Christmas Nathan brought me an enormous poinsettia plant. It filled the room, nearly.'
 '**He was in my class, all right. He was the teacher's pet, you might say.**' Raybe observed her over the rim of his bitter cup. He looked at her [knuckles](#).
 'Nathan, my pet? Nathan Pillsbury? I don't remember any such thing. Besides, I never played favourites. That's a bad practice.' She worked her lips to and fro.
 'So's rapping people's knuckles,' he laughed, putting his half-full cup on the floor. She laughed her scattered little laugh again.
 'Oh, come now, Raybe. Surely it was deserved, if indeed I ever did rap your knuckles.'

presents himself as the ex con he is and smashes his teachers knuckles with a hammer. The reader's first impression of Raybe makes him seem incapable of doing such an action however with emotions and rage he changes into a person that is fully capable of terrible things.

[Rocker](#): a rocking chair

Miss Scofield: Static Character, Mrs. Scofield does not undergo a change within the story. She forgets who Raybe was when she taught him as a child, however when Raybe arrived he made her question her teachings and personal self however her attitude and perspective of Raybe does not change and neither does she. She continues to be the same judgmental character and labelled she gave Raybe as a child returned back.

This is an example of onomatopoeia because the author used the word "chimed" to describe the sound the old-fashioned clock was making. The word used to describe the sound is very close to the sound that the old fashioned clock actually makes. This creates a sense of sound for the reader and further enables them to understand the details of the story.

[Doily](#): a small decorative, lace mat ; used for dessert.

Verbal: Raybe is saying that he has been in prison for the past 10 years and that's how he was being taken care of. However, Mrs. Scofield believes he hasn't been in jail and has been with his parents or other immediate family, even though they are all dead. This is verbal irony because Raybe is directly saying that he has been taken care of in the past 10 years but is indirectly saying that he actually has been in jail.

This directly states that Raybe had a rough childhood, as he grew up with no parents living with his aunt, most likely the reason as to why his life unfolded in a negative manner.

This is an example of a simile because it is comparing two things using "as." In this case, Mrs. Scofield is comparing Raybe's bald head to a baby's bald head. This way, the reader can create of image in their own head of what Raybe looks like.

Jay McMaster: flat character, he is a minor character that the reader doesn't know anything about.

Nathan Pillsbury: flat character as well, the reader doesn't know anything about him.

This was hinting that maybe Mrs. Scofield actually did rap Raybe's knuckles for no reason, she thought that it was Raybe that wrote all the nasty things on the wall but it turned out to be Nathan, that is why he became a teacher's pet.

'You rapped them, all right,' he said soberly.

'Did I? Did I really? Yes, I suppose I did. What was it for, do you remember? Passing notes? Gawking out the window?'

'Wasn't for any one thing. You did it lots of times. Dozens of times.' He cleared his throat.

'Did I? Mercy me. It doesn't seem to me that I did. I only rapped knuckles upon extreme provocation, you know. Extreme provocation.' She took a healthy swallow of tea. What was it she especially remembered about this boy? Something. It nagged at her. She couldn't remember what it was. Some trait of personality.

'You did it lots of times,' he continued. 'In front of the whole class. They laughed at me.'

'I did? Goodness, what a memory! Well, it doesn't seem to have done you any harm. A little discipline never hurt anybody... What was it you said you've been doing professionally?'

'I been in prison,' he said with a pale smile. He watched her mouth draw downward.

'Prison? You've been in prison? Oh, I see, it's a joke.' She tried to laugh. Again, but this time the little outburst wouldn't scatter.

'You try staying behind those walls for ten years and see if you think it's a joke.' He fumbled in his pocket for a pack of cigarettes, withdrew a smoke and slowly lit it. He blew a smoke ring across the table.

'Well, I must say! You're certainly the only boy I ever had that...that ended up in prison! But I'm sure there were... circumstances... leading up to that. I'm sure you're a fine lad, through it all.' She worked her lips faster now. Her gaze travelled to the window that looked out upon the night.

'Yeah, there were circumstances, as you call it. Very special circumstances.' He blew an enormous smoke ring her way. The old woman began to cough. 'It's the smoke. I'm not used to people smoking around me. Do you mind refraining?'

'Yeah, I do mind,' he said roughly. 'I'm going to finish this cigarette, no matter what.'

'Well, if you must, you must,' she said nervously, half-rising. 'But let me just open that window a little—'

'SIT BACK DOWN IN THAT CHAIR!'

She fell back into the rocker.

'Now, you listen to me, you old bitch,' he began.

'Don't call me names. Don't you dare! How dare you? No wonder you were behind bars. A common jailbird. A degenerate. No respect for your elders.'

'Shut up, grandma.' He tossed the cigarette butt to the floor and ground it out on what looked like an oriental rug. Her eyes bulged.

'I remember you very clearly, now,' she exclaimed, her hands to her brow.

'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.' Her gaze was defiant.

'Shut your mouth, bitch,' he said quietly, beginning at last to unzip his leather jacket.

'I will not, I'll have my say. You were a troublemaker, too. I remember the day you wrote nasty, nasty words on the wall in the supply closet. Horrible words. And then when I went back to get papers to distribute, I saw those words. I had to read them, and I knew who wrote them, all right.'

'I didn't write them.'

'Oh, you wrote them, all right. And I whacked your knuckles good with a ruler, if I remember right.'

'You whacked my knuckles good, but I didn't write those words.'

'Did!'

'Didn't.' They sounded like a pair of school children. He squirmed out of the jacket.

'I never made mistakes of that kind,' she said softly, watching him shed the jacket. 'I knew just who needed strict discipline in my class.'

He stood before her now, holding the heavy jacket in his hand. Underneath He wore only a tee shirt of some rough gray linsey-woolsey material. She saw that his arms were heavily muscled, and he saw that she saw. She was positive she could smell the odour of the prison upon him, though the closest she had come to a prison was reading Dickens.

'I never made mistakes,' she repeated feebly. 'And now, you'd better put That coat right back on and leave. Go back to wherever you came from.'

'Can't do that just yet, bitch. I got a score to settle.'

'Score? To settle?' She placed her hands upon the rocker arms for support.

'Yeah. I had a long time to figure it all out. Ten years to figure it out. Lots of nights I'd lie there on that board of a bed in that puke-hole and I'd try to piece it all together. How I come to be there. Was it my aunt? Naw, she did the best she could without any money. Was it the fellas I took up with in high school? Naw, something happened before that, or I'd never have taken up with the likes of them in the first place, that rocky crowd. And then one night it came to me. You were the one.'

'Me? The one? The one for what?' Her lips worked furiously now, in and out like a bellows. Her hands tightly gripped the rocker's spindle arms.

'The one who sent me there. Because you picked on me all the time. Made me out worse than I was. You never gave me the chance the others had. The other kids left me out of things, because you were always saying I was bad. And you always told me I was dirty. Just because my aunt couldn't keep me in clean shirts like some of the others. You punished me for everything that happened. But the worst was the day of the words on the all. You hit me so hard my knuckles bled. My hands were sore as boils for weeks.'

'That's an exaggeration.'

'No it isn't. They're my hands, I ought to know. And do you know who wrote those words on the closet wall? Do you know?' he screamed, putting his face

Indirectly explains that Raybe has been up to bad things as he was caught and brought to prison.

This indirectly shows Raybe's snapping temper as he freaks out at Mrs. Scofield. It also tells us he is violent and has no idea what respect is as he refers to her as an "old bitch." It is foreshadowing that it he was going to start telling Mrs. Scofield how he really felt.

Degenerate: to be below a normal or desired level.

Mrs. scofield had a huge ego, she was extremely confident regarding her profession as she states she never forgets anyone and never makes mistakes.

Linsey-woolsey: a coarse type of fabric.

This directly states that Raybe was a muscular man who was probably fit.

Feebly: weak from age or sickness.

Person vs Person: external conflict between Mrs. Scofield and Raybe, where different perspectives of one another lead to a conflict between the two. This conflict unfortunately ends with violence as Raybe believed he had a score to settle.. This conflict is not super present at the beginning of the story however, as the plot goes on, Raybe begins to change, making the person vs person conflict the main conflict within the story.

Person vs Self: internal conflict as Raybe had blamed everything negative that happened to him on Mrs. Scofield, his teacher of many years ago. Since Raybe had many other attributes that Made him the person he grew up to be. he needed someone to blame in order to make his bad feelings towards himself go away, creating an internal conflict within Raybe. As a result he chooses to return to Mrs. Scofield's house to plot his revenge.

Mrs. Scofield never had sympathy for the actions she did to Raybe and due to her huge ego never saw the bad in it. Instead she always blamed Raybe for giving her a reason to due so she believes she is such a good person she'd never do anything like that.

right down next to hers.

'No, who?' she whispered, breathless with fright.

'Nathan Pillsbury, that's who! He shouted, clenching his teeth and shaking Her frail body within his grasp. 'Nathan Pillsbury, Nathan Pillsbury!'

'Let me go,' she whimpered. 'Let me go.'

'I'll let you go after my score is settled'

The old woman's eyes rolled towards the black, unseeing windows.

'What are you going to do to me? She rasped.

'Just settle, lady,' he said, taking the hammer from his jacket. 'Now, put your hands on the tabletop.'

'My hands? On the tabletop?' she whispered.

'On the tabletop,' he repeated **pedantically**, a teacher. 'Like this.' He made two fists and placed them squarely on the surface. She refused.

'Like this!' he yelled, wrenching her quivering hands and forcing them to the tabletop. Then with his free hand he raised the hammer. (Irony and Literary Devices)

For once, he finished something.

Situational: When Mrs. Scofield wrapped Raybe's knuckles because she thought he drew all over the closet when it was actually Nathan Pillsbury. This is situational irony because Mrs. Scofield punished Raybe for something he did not do, thinking that she has a reason to rap his knuckles. However, Raybe never wrote on the closet and still got punished for it.

Physical Setting- At the end of the story, Raybe forces Mrs. Scofield's hands onto the table. This is taking place in the living room on the coffee table that Mrs. Scofield and Raybe first sat down beside while drinking their tea and talking about their lives.

Pedantically: overly concerned about small details.

Situational: At the end of the story, Raybe is about to hit Mrs. Scofield's hands showing that he has the power. When Raybe was a younger boy and a student of Mrs. Scofield, she had the power when she used to rap his knuckles. This is situational irony because Mrs. Scofield did not expect that Raybe would be in control over her being that she used to be the one that was in control over him.

This is an example of cacophony because it uses strong, harsh sounds. Raybe is forcing Mrs. Scofield's hands onto the table in a violent matter and this is shown through the author's writing.

Plot Points

Exposition - An ex student comes back to visit his old teacher. After she lets him in, they talk about how they have been over a cup of tea made by the host. Finally Raybe ends up snapping and telling Mrs. Scofield how he really feels and that she was the reason he ended up in prison. Raybe decides he is not leaving without getting his revenge.

Rising Action #1 - When Raybe finds Mrs. Scofield's house and she decides to let him in. They then proceed to talk about their lives over some tea that Mrs. Scofield had made.

Rising Action #2 - Another rising action was when Raybe finally decided to snap and let out all his anger. He starts by saying "SIT BACK DOWN IN THAT CHAIR." This was the turning point in the story, Mrs. Scofield thought she was a good teacher until Raybe broke it to her that she wasn't the whole time.

Climax - The climax of "A Teacher's Reward" is when Raybe tells Mrs. Scofield who actually wrote the nasty things on the wall. It turned out being the teacher's pet after all, Nathan Pillsbury.

Falling Action - The falling action is when Raybe has Mrs. Scofield trapped and her begging for him to let her go. He then proceeds to get his revenge that he has been seeking for a long time.

Denouement - Raybe forces Mrs. Scofield to put her hands on the desk. He then proceeds to carry out the revenge he has been planning for more than 10 years.

Thematic Statement:

One's actions, when done wrong or poorly, can have a negative impact on the lives of others.

- Mrs. Scofield was an abusive teacher that physically and emotionally hurt people. She did her job poorly by not treating the children right and for that she affected them, especially Raybe. Raybe ended up going to jail because of the way Mrs. Scofield treated him and that has a huge impact on his life.

One has to deal with problems in a civil matter or else one will fall down the wrong path.

- If Raybe dealt with the abuse from Mrs. Scofield in a different way then he would have not turned out the way he did and would most probably have not gone to prison. He could have talked to someone or gotten help rather than expressing himself in a negative matter that ended in him doing something illegal and going to jail for it.

One has to learn from one's mistakes in order to succeed and be happy.

- Mrs. Scofield was and is not a nice person and because of this she has no husband, friends, or anyone to be with her. Mrs. Scofield states that, "Mercy no. I've always been an unclaimed blessing. That's what I've always called myself. "An unclaimed blessing." This is showing that she has never had companionship because of her crude behavior.

One may experience revenge on past negative actions.

- Mrs. Scofield was physically abusive and portrayed violent actions on her students. Because of this it made Raybe who he is now which caused him to have revenge on Mrs. Scofield. He was violent to Mrs. Scofield when he pushed her back in the chair, yelled at her, called her crude names, and everything leading up to him holding her hand over the table with a hammer ready to hit on her hand.