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English Composition I

12 April 2014

True Strength: Standing Up For What’s Right

Standing up to others can be difficult. This can be even more challenging when forced to stand alone. In the play “Twelve Angry Men”, a jury votes eleven to one to sentence a boy to death for murder. There are a lot of people who throughout the play prove that their character is strong but Juror 8 has to be the strongest by far.

 Juror 8 is the only juror that has the strength to stand up alone and defend this kid’s life and do his best to poke as many holes in this case as possible. He does this by disproving theory after theory making them look stupid. One of them that he completely disproves is the apparent motive he had to kill his father. A witness said that they heard the boy and his father fighting and heard him scream “I’m going to kill you”. “You said it revealed a motive for the killing. The prosecuting attorney said the same thing. Well, I don’t think it’s a very strong motive. This boy has been hit so many times in his life that violence is practically a normal state of affairs for him. I can’t see two slaps in the face provoking him into committing murder”. (17) He’s trying to get the point across that the boy has been beat up on a daily basis, two slaps wouldn’t make him go crazy and murder his own father. Juror 8 is the only one with the courage to think different and vocalize the indifference in his thoughts. It takes a lot of unnoticed strength to do so.

He is a very unique human being in the sense of the way he thinks. He is the only one of the jurors that is strong enough to pay attention to everything throughout the case and look at it from the boy’s perspective and actually consider the facts not being the way they seem. He does anything in his power to defend this kid because he genuinely believes he is innocent. “I kept putting myself in the boy’s place. I would have asked for another lawyer, I think. I mean, if I was on trial for my life I’d want my lawyer to tear the prosecution witness to shreds, or at least to try. Look, there was one alleged eyewitness to this killing. Someone else claims he heard the killing and then saw the boy running out afterward. There was a lot of circumstantial evidence, but actually those two witnesses were the entire case for the prosecution. Suppose they’re wrong?” (20) Nobody thought twice about the “facts” in front of them because the situation seemed so believable to everyone in the court room, except Juror 8. Something seems off in his mind. Everything is too obvious that it makes him feel uneasy about this case. This is due to his strength to pay attention to every detail and look at things from a different perspective to make sure his vote is the correct one.

Juror 8 is the only juror in this entire play that has the strength to actually go out and take a walk through the boy’s neighborhood at night to get an idea of what this kid deals with on a day-to-day basis after sitting in the courtroom for hours listening to the case. Most people would’ve been so excited to get out of jury duty that when they leave, they just go on with their normal day. Juror 8 decides to not do so. By the time he got home and did what he needed to do, it was dark. The case was still on his mind so he decided to take a stroll through the boy’s neighborhood and get a perspective on this boy’s life. At this point in the play, all of the jurors are inspecting the knife used to kill the boy’s father. Everyone continues to say how rare the knife is, how it’s a one-of-a-kind and no other knife looks similar. The boy supposedly showed his friend that knife 3 hours prior to the murder, and then it fell out of the hole in his pocket while he was walking. Juror 8 wants to prove that the knife used to kill his father is anything but rare. “He slams the exact knife on the table; everyone is in shock. ‘I was walking for a couple hours last night, just thinking. I walked through the boy’s neighborhood. The knife comes from a little pawnshop three blocks from his house. It costs six dollars.” (23) This proves that there are multiple replicas of this exact knife throughout his neighborhood. Therefore, this knife could belong to a number of different people in his neighborhood, especially since it’s so cheap. Juror 8 showing how strong he is by proving every theory they muster up, completely wrong.

Even when people think standing up to others is difficult, it could always be worse. Individuals could be forced to do it completely on their own. Throughout the play “Twelve Angry Men” the jury ends up voting eleven to one once again but in the opposite verdict, “not guilty”. A lot of the characters in this play prove that they’re strong in different ways. Juror 8 is the strongest by far, as he proves in this entire play by fully convincing almost everyone in the jury room to change their vote.