

“The Treasure of Lemon Brown” - Analyze Character Changes

As you read, include evidence from the text that demonstrates Greg’s feelings and perspectives about his father and Lemon in the chart below.

	Greg’s initial feelings toward and perspective about...	Greg’s developing feelings toward and perspective about...	Greg’s final feelings toward and perspective about...
His father	<p>Greg is angry at his father because his father will not let him play basketball. His thoughts and actions suggest that he disagrees with his father’s perspective and feels that his father doesn’t understand him.</p> <p><u>Text evidence:</u> Greg thinks about his father’s lectures with negativity and boredom: “His father’s voice came to him again, first reading the letter the principal had sent to the house, then lecturing endlessly about his poor efforts in math.”</p> <p>“Greg sat in the small, pale green kitchen listening, knowing the lecture would end with his father saying he couldn’t play ball with the Scorpions.”</p> <p>Greg can’t stop thinking about his father’s recent lecture about not playing basketball: “His father’s</p>	<p>Lemon’s stories begin to cause Greg to think about his own father, even if he doesn’t fully agree with or understand his father.</p> <p><u>Text evidence:</u> When Lemon explains that his son valued the clippings about his father, he asked Greg, “isn’t that something?” In response, Greg shrugs and says that he guesses. Then Lemon responds:</p> <p>“You guess so?” Lemon Brown’s voice rose an octave as he started to put his treasure back into the plastic.</p> <p>“Well, you got to guess ‘cause you sure don’t know nothing. Don’t know enough to get home when it’s raining.”</p> <p>“I guess...I mean, you’re right.”</p>	<p>Greg realizes that his father is trying to show him how much he cares and protect him by having such strict rules and giving him lectures about working hard.</p> <p><u>Text evidence:</u> Greg knows that his father will lecture him when he gets home, but he decides he will not try to explain where he was/ what happened. He smiles at the thought of getting a lecture by his dad, which shows he understands why his dad is hard on him and has developed an appreciation for him.</p> <p>“Greg didn’t even want to think how late it was. He thought ahead of what his father would say and wondered if he should tell him about Lemon Brown....</p> <p>Greg pushed the button over the bell marked Ridley, thought of the</p>

	<p>words, like the distant thunder that now echoed through the streets of Harlem, still rumbled softly in his ears.”</p> <p>He’s so angry and disappointed that he choose to go out in the rain rather than listen to his father lecture him about something else. He also chooses to go in an abandoned, graffitied building rather than go home. “There was a flash of nearby lightning, and soon large drops of rain splashed onto his jeans. He stood to go upstairs, thought of the lecture that probably awaited him if he did anything except shut himself in his room with his math book, and started walking down the street instead.”</p> <p>Greg feels disconnected from his father and doesn’t understand why he tells the same stories about his accomplishments as a postal worker. “Greg had heard the story too many times to be interested now. “</p>	<p>This shows that Greg is starting to consider and understand what Lemon is trying to explain about the value of a relationship between father and son.</p>	<p>lecture he knew his father would give him, and smiled.”</p>
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Lemon	<p>Greg is skeptical of Lemon Brown’s claim that he has a treasure and does not believe he can harm him. He realizes he is likely a poor, homeless man who he has seen rooting through the trash before.</p> <p><u>Text evidence:</u> Greg realizes he has seen Lemon dig through the trash; the description of Lemon focuses on his disheveled and dirty appearance.”He had seen the man before, picking through the trash on the corner and pulling clothes out of a Salvation Army box. There was no sign of a razor that could “cut a week into nine days.”</p> <p>His words seem to taunt Lemon, or suggest that he doesn’t believe him: “I’m not looking for your treasure,”</p>	<p>Greg begins to trust Lemon Brown, or at least follow him and listen to his directions when the other men come in to steal from him.</p> <p><u>Text evidence:</u> Greg follows Lemon upstairs in the dark, and holds his hand. “The old man looked out, then beckoned frantically for Greg to follow him. For a moment Greg couldn’t move. The he found himself following Lemon Brown into the hallway and up the darkened stairs. Greg followed as closely as he could. The reached the top of the stairs, and Greg felt Lemon Brown’s hand first lying on his shoulder, then probing down his arm until he took Greg’s hand into his own as they crouched in the darkness.”</p>	<p>Greg takes a deeper interest in Lemon Brown’s well-being and safety, and is genuinely interested in learning from him based on the questions that he asks.</p> <p><u>Text evidence:</u> He calls him “Mr. Brown” instead of Lemon, which demonstrates a new and deeper respect.</p> <p>He asks Lemon several times if he is okay, and suggests that he leave for his safety. “You OK?” “Few bumps and bruises,” Lemon Brown said. “I think I’d better be going,” Greg said, his breath returning to normal. “You’d better leave, too, before they come back.”</p>

	<p>Greg answered, smiling. "If you have one."</p> <p>... "Sure," Greg said as he sat on the sofa and put one leg over the back. "What do you have, gold coins?"</p> <p>He also responds with sarcasm in a way that is somewhat disrespectful: "You told me your name was orange or lemon or something like that."</p> <p>"Lemon Brown," the old man said, pulling back his shoulders as he did so," they used to call me Sweet Lemon Brown."</p>	<p>Greg tries to get Lemon's attention and help him move to safety.</p> <p>Greg tries to help Lemon by making howling noises to scare the intruders: "Maybe, the thought came to Greg, the scene could be even eerier. Greg wet his lips, put his hands to his mouth and tried to make a sound. Nothing came out. He swallowed hard, wet his lips once more and howled as evenly as he could."</p>	<p>Greg shows curiosity by asking if he really has a treasure, and says that he would like to see it "If you want to show it to me," Greg shrugged.</p> <p>When Lemon corrects Greg, he tells him that he is right: "Yeah, I guess so," Greg said. "You guess so?" Lemon Brown's voice rose an octave as he started to put his treasure back into the plastic. "Well, you got to guess 'cause you sure don't know nothing. Don't know enough to get home when it's raining." "I guess...I mean, you're right."</p>
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Summarize the text.

(Day 1)

At the beginning of the text, Greg is upset that his father will not allow him to play basketball because of his failing grades in math. Instead of going inside to listen to another one of his father's lectures, Greg decides to go for a walk, even though the sky is cloudy and it's about to storm. When the rain begins, Greg steps into an abandoned building to take shelter from the storm. There, he finds an old man named Lemon Brown, who appears to be homeless and living or staying in the abandoned building. He asks Greg if he came looking for his "treasure," but Greg is incredulous that the man could have anything of value given his appearance. Greg and Lemon talk a little and Greg learns that Lemon is an old blues singer who used to travel the world and play shows. He gave up the blues after he didn't have anything to sing about.

(Day 2)

After this conversation, Greg and Lemon hear a noise and quickly realize that neighborhood boys have broken into the building. They overhear them talking about Lemon's "treasure" and suggest that Lemon must have something valuable like money that he is hiding. Lemon and Greg hide in the dark, and Greg takes Lemon's hand as he goes upstairs in the abandoned building to try and avoid the intruders. After a few minutes of hiding, Lemon stands at the top of the stairs and lunges for the boys; Greg makes noises that sound like howls to frighten the boys off. They succeed in getting the boys to run away, and when they realize they are safe, Lemon asks Greg if he wants to see his treasure. He pulls up his pant leg and shares newspaper clippings and a plastic harmonica. He tells Greg that he sent those clippings to his own son while he was at war; when his son died, they sent his belongings back to Lemon, and Lemon realized that his son treasured the clippings because they told him about his father's life and achievements. Lemon tries to help Greg understand that a father tries to share his accomplishments with his son so that his son can believe in himself in life. The talk helps Greg understand why his father is so hard on him, and he leaves Lemon and walks home and smiles when he thinks about the lecture he will get.

What does Greg's perspective on his father and Lemon in the beginning of the text reveal about Greg's personality? Cite text evidence to support your response.

Greg is angry at his father because he will not let him play basketball because of his poor grades. In addition, he is annoyed by his father's "lecturing endlessly about his poor efforts in math" and also doesn't understand why his dad constantly tells him of how hard he worked to pass the postal worker exam. Greg thinks that his father is out of touch and does not understand him or what he cares about. Likewise, when Greg meets Lemon, he doubts that someone who looks as poor and homeless as Lemon could possibly have a treasure worth sharing. He says to Lemo, "I'm not looking for your treasure... If you have one." He responds to Lemon by making fun of his name, which shows that he does not fully respect his elders or think that he has something to learn from them. Greg's responses to both his father and Lemon reveal that he is stubborn and doubts that those with more life experience can truly understand him or have valuable things from which he can learn.