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And the Winner Is

It is like a boxing match that you never realize is going on. It is the battle of nature vs. nurture. In the left corner, you have a mind of your own (nature). In the right corner, you have peer and environmental influences (nurture). Who will win?

The problem of being a product of your environment is portrayed by Doug MacRay in the book Prince of Thieves by Chuck Hogan. MacRay is finally trying to turn his life around to pursue a relationship with Claire. However, it is not easy when he looks at his low-life friends and knows that they are a mirror image of him. He then has to face the struggle of leaving his friends behind. He will not only be leaving his friends behind, but he will also be leaving a part of himself behind.

MacRay had some sort of attraction to Claire. Once she decided to give him a chance, he wanted to change. If he had never met Claire, he most likely would not have to think twice about doing something deviant again. The choice to change for the better was not only for Claire, but it was also for himself. In this round, it looks like nature wins.

MacRay's sponsor, Frank G., has a different view of Claire. "The way you first told me about her, I knew. This girl is your disease, Doug" (Hogan 501). Frank G. thinks that Claire is out of MacRay's league. According to him, she is, "Everything you want but can't have.

You've poured all your hopes into this person who can't be with you, am I right? *She's too good*" (Hogan 501). Despite Frank's comments, MacRay still wanted to make something work with Claire. MacRay needs to understand that Frank G. is only trying to help him. He did not go against Frank G. for himself, he did it for Claire. By going against his wishes, MacRay handed this round to nurture.

MacRay seemed to be the most popular person among his friends. Usually, the most popular person in a peer group feels pressured to do deviant things. They feel like they have to set the example (Allen et al. 1). The people and things around you make you change the way you see things (Popp 24). MacRay always carefully planned out the robberies and the rest of the group looked up to him for that. However, when he looks at them, he is disappointed. He knows that he hangs around with people that are not good for him or trying to help him in any way. Therefore, when he looks at himself, it is as if he is not even trying to help himself in any way. Frank G. had told him, "Take a good long look around. Because those faces you see staring back, that's you" (Hogan 93). Therefore, nurture takes this one also.

In the beginning, MacRay loved being with his friends. However, once Claire came into the picture, things began to change. He tried adapting to living his life around Claire and how she viewed the environment. His friends noticed the change and did not approve of Claire. However, that did not stop him. He knew that he had to leave his friends behind. He said, "Well, my friends' they are my family" (Hogan 91). To reassure him, Frank G. told him, "People grow up and leave their families, guy. They move on" (Hogan 91). That is why MacRay agreed to do the last job, because it would be some sort of closure between him and his "family." As he was planning to leave his crew for Claire, nurture wins once again.

Suppose MacRay and his crew grew up in different areas. They would all be different people and have different lifestyles. They would not have to show off for each other or try to show each other up.

So, who wins this gruesome battle? Well, the victory is practically handed to nurture with a score of three to one. However, this could have been prevented if MacRay would stop trying to please everyone but himself.

Works Cited

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