Richard Wright Essay, Research Paper

The Man Who Was Almost a Man

In The Man Who Was Almost a Man by Richard Wright, the main character

Dave expresses his needs to be acknowledged as an adult. Yet he also exhibits his immaturity and the fact that he is not yet an adult and can not handle adult problems. His actions lead him into trouble that proves the fact that he is still an adolescent who can not handle problems of the adult world.

The characters around Dave make him feel like he is still a child. His wants to purchase a gun to feel more powerful. In the beginning of this story, Dave talks about how a gun would change the way people acted towards him. He feels that if he owns this power, the men in the fields who work with him will have more respect for him, and his mother will start treating him as an adult. Dave feels as if he is surrounded by people who treat him as a child and he does not like this at all. You ain t nothing but a boy. You don t need a gun. This statement said by Joe, is the main reason why Dave truly wants a gun, to feel independent.

Even though Dave wants to be acknowledged as an adult, his actions are very immature and childlike. The act of cornering his mother for a gun is one good example of immaturity. Dave feels as though he can not ask his dad for the gun for fear of rejection, a perfect example of immaturity. Daves defiance to his mother s rules is another example of immaturity. Dave s mother agrees to allow Dave to buy the gun as long as he promises to bring it straight to her. He agrees to this, yet he does not go along with her wish. The next morning, Dave set out to the fields early to shoot his gun. He

ends up accidentally killing Mr. Hawkins mule, Jenny. The way Dave goes about dealing with this problem is childish. He panics and decides to lie about what really did happen. He makes up a story which he knows nobody will believe, yet he feels that if everyone does in fact believe him he can avoid his problems more easily.

At the end of the story, Dave decides to run away from his problems by running away from everything. His punishment for killing the mule was to pay Mr. Hawkins fifty dollars. Dave carelessly decides at the end, to jump on the next train leaving with his gun. All of these actions prove how immature Dave really is. His thirst for independence is lost due to his lack of maturity.