

# The symbol in "the man who was almost a man"

[Business](#)



" Howdy, Dave! Whutcha want?"(Wright). That is what Mistah Joe had been asking Dave while Dave searched to be a man. Dave only wanted one thing and that was to be treated like a man and not be ridiculed while working or be treated as a baby while at home.

In the story, " A Man Who Was Almost a Man," Richard Wright explains the struggles of a boy named Dave who wants nothing less than having the same rights, respect and freedoms as any other American. This story is a representation of the earlier African American struggle in the US. If a man really intends on doing what they want or need to do in order to prove something to him or anybody else, than that man will do something along the lines of what Dave did in this story to prove their point and at the end of the day they will be who they wanted to be, no matter what anybody else thought about them. Wright used good character analysis, dialogue, and symbols throughout the story to catch the reader's attention and give the reader thoughts about the setting, time period, theme and what the characters were going through." Could kill a man with a gun like this. Kill anybody, black or white.

And if he were holding his gun in his hand, nobody could run over him; they would have to respect him."(Wright). In Richard Wright's The man Who Was Almost a Man, Wright uses the character's background in the story in order to get a feel for what Dave is feeling and why he is thinking the way he is. In the story, Dave acts on getting a gun in order to gain power for himself over his co-workers on the plantation, along with power over the whites who are also commonly known as higher class or his boss. " Ah'll tell yuh, Mistah Joe, ef yuh promise yuh won't tell.

“(Wright) To Dave the thought that if he was able to bear a weapon in his hand than he is enabled to kill. Although, Dave never actually killed anybody, he felt the need to still runaway at the end of the story so that he could feel empowered because that was what felt right to Dave, empowerment. Dave just wanted to not be treated as a young kid for once and hold his own ground, whether or not it meant killing somebody.” Ahead the long rails were glinting in the moonlight, stretching away, away to somewhere, somewhere where he could be a man.”(Wright).

This was a description of Dave’s everyday mentality towards his situations and setting of life. All that Dave wanted to do was be treated as an adult and not be forced to obey his parents. He wanted freedom of his own choice and realistic opportunities. In the story, Wright uses dialogue with a southern accent and non-educated grammatical sense of language to suit the period of time and race. “ Ain nothin wrong, Ma. Ahm almos a man now.

Ah wans a gun,” (Wright), is a phrase that Dave tries to convince his ma with in the process of becoming an even bigger man by buying a gun to empower himself. Dave’s parents thought of him as a foolish immature kid for even thinking about getting a gun, but the forceful level of interruption from Dave’s parents is exactly the reason why he thinks he needs more freedoms and self-responsibilities.” Ahh ddinn gggo tt sshoot hher...Ah ssswear ffo gawd Ahh ddin.... Ah wuz atryin t sssee ef the old gggun would sshoot-“(Wright) Dave, even though he really didn’t even know how to use his new power, wanted to test it out and feel the actual power that the gun carried and could give to him. The gun was supposed to add respect and power to Dave’s “ new” personality, but instead it brings punishment and <https://assignbuster.com/the-symbol-in-the-man-who-was-almost-a-man/>

embarrassment. As a result of Dave trying to act as an adult, he kills one of his boss' mule while playing around with the gun.

He then has to pay for his mistakes and wrong doing by paying his boss his pay of two dollars a month for twenty-five months until he reaches his payment of fifty dollars. The gun, to Dave, was supposed to make him feel more mature, but from how he acted with it and by disobeying his mother and killing an innocent mule, his father now has less respect for Dave than he did before. Dave's father punished his son for what he had done. All Dave had wanted was to be in a place where he would be treated like a man and not ridiculed, but in the end, he loses respect and is punished, just like a kid would be. In order to prove to himself that he is indeed a man, he goes into the woods to uncover the gun that he had buried earlier that day, shot the gun ' till the clip went empty, hopped onto a nearby train, and road through the night to somewhere that he would be a man. The Gun gave Dave courage, pride, confidence and respect for himself.

Everything a man needs to be a man. In conclusion, Wright shows the true significance of Dave's thoughts and actions throughout the story. He uses Dialogue to show relationships between David and others characters, whether or not he likes them. Character background in the story was useful for the reader to let them gather an image of the setting, time period and reasoning for the story. To follow that, the author also uses great symbolic objects in the story, which provides the reader with potential to hate the symbol or understand the symbol. The symbol could have been a bad one or could have been a good one depending on how the reader interpreted the story.

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