

Student Essay on Alike in Affluence, Different in Dignity

Alike in Affluence, Different in Dignity by Harper Lee

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Essay

Alike in Affluence, Different in Dignity

Walter Cunningham and Burris Ewell are both poor boys, but while Walter carries himself with a sense of pride and is a gentleman, Burris is "a hard-down mean one." Although Walter comes from an indigent family, he refuses to take anything he cannot pay back. When Ms. Caroline tries to give Walter a quarter for lunch, he resolutely refuses to accept it. Through this small incident, Walter displays his stubborn pride and reflects that while he may be poor, he is not inferior to anyone and will not be treated as if he were from a lower class. Walter also uncovers his gentleness when he allows Scout to "rub his nose in the dirt" without showing signs of fighting back. Burris, on the other hand, is the complete opposite. Contentious and vile, Burris displays his aggressiveness by insulting and defying the teacher on the first day of school. He is extremely rude, and speaks to Ms. Caroline using profane language including phrases such as "snot-nosed slut of a schoolteacher." Burris's speech reveals his despicable character, and his maliciousness in intentionally making a teacher cry. Burris is also extremely ignorant, being proud of the fact that he has been coming to first grade for three years. He does not realize that he can never improve his life or end up better than his father unless he pursues education, and shows not the remotest sign of wanting to become educated. Walter, on the other hand, shows a yearning to learn and become educated. Although he has never even seen syrup before in his life, Walter is intelligent and apt to learning. He reveals some of his intelligence when he comes to Scout's home for dinner and carries on a conversation with Atticus about crops which neither Jem nor Scout could follow. In conclusion, Walter and Burris are just like seeds that are planted within the same environment, but respond in different ways and produce different harvests when reaped.