

Fences Act 1, Scene 3 Assignment

In the following scene, Cory asks his father a provocative question: “How come you ain’t never liked me?” Troy responds with varied emotions as he explains to his son that as a father his responsibility is to care for his child, not to like him.

Watch both versions of the scene closely. Compare the effectiveness and complexity of Troy and his relationship with his son as portrayed by both Denzel Washington and James Earl Jones. Consider such devices as body language, staging, tone of voice, physical appearance, gestures, etc.

Complete the comparison/contrast chart. In the middle column, choose a point of comparison such as the physical appearance of the characters. Then, under each actor’s name, explain how that particular aspect influences the effectiveness of the portrayal or how it changes the audience’s understanding of the character. You should have a minimum of 5 sentences in each box in Columns 1 and 3. You need 3 different points of comparison.

James Earl Jones	Point of Comparison	Denzel Washington
Discuss how Jones’ <u>physical appearance</u> changes your understanding of Troy’s character. Be sure to reference how <u>physical appearance</u> influences the audience’s perception of Troy. (minimum of 5 sentences)	Physical appearance	Discuss how Washington’s <u>physical appearance</u> changes your understanding of Troy’s character. Be sure to reference how <u>physical appearance</u> influences the audience’s perception of Troy. (minimum of 5 sentences)

This assignment will be a quiz grade. You should work with a partner and turn in 1 chart per group; be sure to include both names. If there is an odd number of people in the class, one group may have 3 people. You may use notebook paper if you prefer not to write in the graphic organizer.

CORY: Yessir. (*Pause.*) Can I ask you a question?

TROY: What the hell you wanna ask me? Mr. Stawicki the one you got the questions for.

CORY: How come you ain't never liked me?

TROY: Liked you? Who the hell say I got to like you? What law is there say I got to like you? Wanna stand up in my face and ask a damn fool-ass question like that. Talking about liking somebody. Come here, boy, when I talk to you. (CORY *comes* over to where TROY is working. He stands *slouched* over and TROY *shoves* him on *his shoulder*.) Straighten up, goddamn it! I asked you a question . What law is there say I got to like you?

CORY: None.

TROY: Well, alright then! Don't you eat every day? *(Pause.)* Answer me when I talk to you! Don't you eat every day?

CORY: Yeah.

TROY: Nigger, as long as you in my house, you put that sir on the end of it when you talk to me!

CORY: Yes . . . sir.

TROY: You eat every day?

CORY: Yessir!

TROY: Got a roof over your head.

CORY: Yessir!

TROY: Got clothes on your back.

CORY: Yessir.

TROY: Why you think that is?

CORY: Cause of you.

TROY: Aw, hell I know it's cause of me . . . but why do you thing that is?

CORY: *(Hesitant.)* Cause you like me.

TROY: Like you? I go out of here every morning . . . bust my butt . . . putting up with them crackers every day . . . cause I like you? You about the biggest fool I ever saw. *(Pause.)* It's my job. It's my responsibility! You understand that? A man got to take care of his family. You live in my house . . . sleep you behind on my bedclothes . . . fill you belly up with my food. . . cause you my son. You my flesh and blood. Not cause I like you! Cause it's my duty to take care of you. I owe a responsibility to you!

Let's get this straight right here . . . before it go along any further . . . I ain't got to like you. Mr. Rand don't give me my money come payday cause he likes me. He gives me cause he owe me. I done give you everything I had to give you. I gave you your life! Me and your mama worked that out between us. And liking your black ass wasn't part of the bargain. Don't you try and go through life worrying about if somebody like you or not. You best be making sure they doing right by you. You understand what I'm saying, boy?

CORY: Yessir.

TROY: Then get the hell out of my face, and get on down to that A&P.

Act 1, Scene 3 Comparison/Contrast Chart

James Earl Jones	Point of Comparison or Contrast	Denzel Washington

