

Student Essay on Nightjohn

Nightjohn by Gary Paulsen

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Essay

The book Nightjohn written by Gary Paulsen and the movie directed by Charles Burnett. The book talks more about the black slaves and Nightjohn teaching Sarny how to read. The movie talks more about the whites.

Paulsen talks more about the blacks. Burnett talks about the whites mostly. The book explains more about slavery. The movie makes slavery appear very easygoing and mild. When the book makes it appear very real and how slavery actually was.

In the book it talks about pit schools and the movie doesn't even discuss them. In the movie Nightjohn gets sold but the book says that he ran away and became free and came back to teach in the pit schools. The kids found the pit schools by following Nightjohn's footprints that have toes missing. The toes missing are the ones that he got cut off for teaching some other slaves to read.

A similarity in the book and the movie is the phrase Nightjohn's tells some of the other slaves. He says words is freedom. All the white people got and we don't have is words if you know words you is free. in both the book and the movie Sarny tries to read every chance she gets but in the movie they over emphasize that she tries to read everything she sees.

In the movie Nightjohn starts writing a pass for a slave that wants to get free with his wife. Nightjohn gets caught doing something and is sold. Sarny writes the other pass for the other slave that wants to runaway with him so they can be together peacefully.

When the two slaves have escaped Waller comes into the church and threatens to shoot all of the slaves. In the book they weren't even allowed to pray. That I think wasn't very good on the play director because they weren't allowed to do anything religious in the book.

The movie and book Nightjohn are very different. I think they may even be two completely different stories. The movie and book don't relate very well at all, they are very different from each other. I think the book does a better job at explaining the reality of slavery.