

To Kill a Mockingbird

Introduction

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To Kill a Mockingbird (TKAM) is a largely autobiographical novel written by Harper Lee.

Biography – the story of someone's life

Autobiography – the story of someone's life, told by that person

About the Author

Harper Lee

- Born Nelle Harper Lee, April 28, 1926
- Grew up during the Great Depression
– hard economic times
- Grew up in Monroeville, Alabama, in the heart of the South, where racial tension was high

Autobiographical Elements: Harper Lee v. Scout Finch

Born in Monroeville, Alabama

Grew up in 1930s

Father was a lawyer

Mother's maiden name = Finch

Born in Maycomb, Alabama

Grew up in 1930s

Father (Atticus) is a lawyer

Last name = Finch

Setting of *TKAM*

Setting is a very strong element in *TKAM*. It is linked with theme, character, and plot.

Time: 1930s, Great Depression era –

- Economic difficulties of this time caused problems for all classes of people
- There was a sharp division between blacks and whites in society

Place: Maycomb, Alabama – Alabama is renowned as a site of racial tension, historically

What is a Theme?

Theme – The controlling idea or meaning of a work of art.

Setting and Theme

Themes in the novel are based on the concept of racial prejudice which was so much a part of society at that time:

Lee stresses the need for human understanding to destroy the evils of racial prejudice.

Narrative Point of View

TKAM is told in the first person, from the point of view of Scout Finch, a young girl.

The story is not told by the younger Scout Finch. It is told by an older Scout, looking back. However, the point of view is mostly a first-person limited one; that is, limited to the knowledge of the younger Scout.

In this way, the narration presents a sort of “doubled” perspective on the events.

Question:

Why would the author choose to present a first-person limited point of view, rather than an omniscient one? What advantage is there to using the first-person limited?

Now that you have read Chapter one...

- What were your initial reactions?
- This novel deals with many social issues. Some may be very sensitive for people. We must be respectful.

- For the following list write a 1 beside the statement if you strongly agree, 2 if you agree, 3 for disagree, and 4 for strongly disagree.

1. All women/men are created equal
2. Girls should act like girls
3. It's okay to be different
4. Nobody is all bad or all good
5. Some words are so offensive that they should never be stated or written
6. Under our justice system, all citizens are treated fairly in our courts of law

7. “Sticks and Stones...” is true
8. Speaking standard grammar proves that a person is smart
9. A hero is born, not made
10. No one is above the law
11. Education is the great equalizer
12. When the law doesn't succeed in punishing criminals, citizens should do so.

Chapter one Vocabulary

- Assuaged
- Dictum
- Taciturn
- Unsullied
- Repertoire
- Malevolent

Chapter One Questions

1. Who is the narrator of this story and what is the advantage of having her?
2. What is the function of relating the family history at the outset of the novel?
3. Cite details to establish the setting of the novel.
4. Briefly explain why Boo is kept locked up. Describe the “legend” of Boo.

Chapter Two Vocabulary & Questions

- Indigenous
- Sojourn
- Vexations

1. What Satirical points are being made about education through Scout's experience in school?
2. Why does Scout explain Walter Cunningham's situation to Miss Caroline?

Chapter 3

Vocabulary:

- Erratic
 - Contentious
 - Fractious
1. Cite examples of contrast in Jem and Scout.
 2. Contrast Burris Ewell with the other children. What is the reason for the description?

Chapter 4 Vocabulary

- Vocabulary:
- Auspicious:
- What do Scout and Jem find in the hole in the tree?
Does either of them know how the objects got there?
What is learned about Jem and Scout from their diverse (different) reactions to the objects in the tree?
- Who did Dill spend his summers in Maycomb with?
Why do you think he tells false tales about his father?

Chapter 5 Vocabulary & Questions

- Cordiality
 - Edification
1. Discuss the introduction of Miss Maudie. What do the kids think of her?
 2. What does Miss Maudie say about Arthur Radley?
 3. Explain what Miss Maudie means by “But sometimes the Bible in the hand of one man is worse than a whiskey bottle in the hand of oh, of your father.”

Chapter 6

Vocabulary & Questions

■ Malignant

1. What is significant about Jem's decision to make a lone nocturnal return to the Radley place?
2. What is significant about the town's conclusion regarding the disturbances at the Radley's place?

Chapter 7 Vocabulary & Questions

- Vigil
- Palate
- Gnats

1. What did Jem reveal to Scout about his pants?
2. Name the five items which were left in the tree.
3. What do you begin to suspect about the Radley household?
4.
 - a) What was Nathan's reason for cementing up the hole?
 - b) What is the significance of the cement in the tree?
5. Why does Jem sit outside and quietly cry at the end of this chapter?

Chapter 8

Vocabulary:

- Aberrations
- Perpetrated
- Plaited

Questions:

- 1. What was the reason given for the bad weather? Who told the children this?
- 2. Why did Scout think that the world was coming to an end?
- 3. How did the children make a snowman? (give details)
- 4. Who did the snowman look like?
- 5. Why did Atticus wake Scout up in the middle of the night?
- 6. What strange thing happened to Scout?

Chapter 9

- Vocabulary:
- Ingenuous
- Remorseful
- Invective
- Jetty
- Questions:
- 1. Why did Scout get into a fight?
- 2. Why did Atticus feel he had to defend Tom Robinson?
- 3. What advice did Atticus give Scout?
- 4. Why was Scout so mad at Uncle Jack?

Chapter 10

- Vocabulary:

- Inconspicuous Articulate Peril

- Questions:

- 1. Explain Atticus' warning "it's a sin to kill a mockingbird".
- 2. What surprised Jem and Scout about Atticus?
- 3. What was Atticus' nickname when he was a boy?

Chapter 11

- Vocabulary:
- Apoplectic Palliation Oppressive

- Questions:
- 1. Why did Jem and Scout dislike Mrs. Dubose?
- 2. What did Jem do to “pay back” Mrs. Dubose for her comments?
- 3. What did Jem have to do to help make up for what he did?
- 4. What were the circumstances of Mrs. Dubose’ death?
- 5. What was Atticus’ definition of courage?

Chapter 12

- Ch12: Why does Calpurnia take Jem and Scout to her church?
- What does Reverend Sykes do to make sure that enough money is collected from the congregation?
- For what is the money to be used?
- In what way does this visit increase Scout's understanding of Calpurnia?
- Appalling frivolous boded

Chapter 14

- In what ways are the viewpoints of Atticus and Aunt Alexandra different?
- Why has Dill run away?
- Taut manacles erosion

Chapter 15

- Chapter 15
- Why does a group of men come to visit Atticus at his house?
- How does Jem break up the meeting?
- Why does a second group of men go to the jail?
- How does Scout manage to break up the crowd?
- Venue ominous futility
 uncouth