

To Kill a Mockingbird

To Kill a Mockingbird is definitely an excellent novel in that it portrays life and the role of racism in the 1930's. A reader may not interpret several aspects in and of the book through just the plain text. Boo Radley, Atticus, and the title represent three such things.

Not really disclosed to the reader until the end of the book, Arthur "Boo" Radley plays an important role in the development of both Scout and Jem. In the beginning of the story, Jem, Scout, and Dill fabricate horror stories about Boo. They find Boo as a character of their amusement, and one who has no feelings whatsoever. They tried to get a peep at him, just to see what Boo looked like. Scout connects Boo with the Mockingbird. Mrs. Maudie defines a mockingbird as one who "...don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us" (94). Boo is exactly that. Boo is the person who put a blanket around Scout and Jem when it was cold. Boo was the one putting "gifts" in the tree. Boo even sewed up Jem's pants that tore on Dill's last night. Boo was the one who saved their lives. On the contrary to Scout's primary belief, Boo never harms anyone. Scout also realizes that she wrongfully treated Boo when she thinks about the gifts in the tree. She never gave anything back to Boo, except love at the end. When Scout escorts Arthur home and stands on his front porch, she sees the same street she saw, just from an entirely different perspective. Scout learns what a Mockingbird is, and who represents one.

Arthur Radley not only plays an important role in developing Scout and Jem, but helps in developing the novel. Boo can be divided into three stages. Primitively, Boo is Scout's worst nightmare. However, the author hints at Boo actually existing as a nice person when he places things in the tree. The secondary stage is when Mrs. Maudie's house burned to the ground. As Scout and Jem were standing

near Boo's house, it must have been rather cold. So, Boo places a warm and snug blanket around Scout and Jem, to keep them warm. This scene shows Boo's more sensitive and caring side of him, and shows that he really has changed after stabbing his father. The last and definitely most important stage is when he kills Bob Ewell to save Scout and Jem. This stage portrays Boo as the hero and one who has indefinitely changed his personality and attitudes. After the final stage, Boo does not deserve to be locked up inside his house.

Atticus Finch is a man of strong morals. He follows them exclusively, and does not hold up to the Finch family name, as defined by Aunt Alexandria. Atticus is the most pure and good-hearted person one may ever `see.` Although it does not seem like it, Scout will evolve into her father; Jem will not. Scout finally understand all the things he says. For example, in the beginning Atticus tells Scout, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it" (34). She then realizes that Mrs. Caroline did not know Maycomb, and could not just learn it in one day. Scout comes to terms that it was wrong to become upset with Mrs. Caroline. Scout learns several other lessons. For example, on page 94, Atticus says his most important line in the book, "...remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird." Through clarifications from Mrs. Maudie, Scout accepts her father's words. Atticus also teaches his kids a lesson when he defends Tom Robinson, an innocent black person. Although Atticus knew from the instant he accepted the case that Tom had no chance, he had to do his duty as an honest and impartial citizen of Maycomb. Atticus poured his heart into defending Atticus, and did a damn fine job. He taught his kids the right thing, that all individuals are created equal. If Aunt Alexandria had raised Scout and Jem, they might have not cried at the end of the trial; they would not want to hurt the Finch family reputation. It was Atticus who received a standing ovation from the Black's Balcony. It is because of Atticus' good heart that Cal's black church accepted the children. Atticus has probably built a better name for his family than Aunt Alexandria would have, had

she lived with the Finches.

Before reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the title itself means nothing. The title is the foundation of a house. It is just a slob of cement, and cannot be interpreted. While reading the book, pieces of wood

fit together and the house starts to stand up. After reading the book, the house is fully painted and decorated. The landscaping is complete, and the house is beautiful.

Several things and people represent the "Mockingbird" throughout the novel. The understanding of the "Mockingbird" can be seen in three steps. The first step is in chapter 10. Atticus tells Jem to never shoot a mockingbird, because it causes no harm. At this point, neither Jem nor Scout understand what Atticus is saying. Secondly, Scout finds a roly-poly in chapter 25. In answer to Scout's desire to kill the bug, Jem says, "Because they don't bother you..." (241). At this second stage, Jem, not yet Scout, has understood Atticus' holy words. The last depiction is in the final chapters of the book. This "Mockingbird" is Arthur "Boo" Radley. Boo ends up to save both Jem and Scout's lives, by killing Bob Ewell. At this final stage in the book, Scout, as well as Jem, understands Atticus and his saying. Scout realizes life.

To Kill a Mockingbird is a very inspirational book. Not only is it a book for pleasure, it shows us today how far we have come, and yet the long journey ahead. Boo Radley and Atticus were very important characters, for both the developments of kids in the book and reader. The title is something that can be interpreted in many ways. Each one will be different, based on the reader's philosophy and beliefs.