

To Kill a Mockingbird
Written by
Harper Lee

The book To Kill a Mockingbird was written by Harper Lee. It was published in 1960 then it went on to win the Pulitzer prize in 1961 and was later made into an Academy Award winning film.

Harper Lee always considered her book to be a simple love story. Today it is regarded as a masterpiece of American Literature.

There are so many characters in this book that I can't name all of them. Here are most of the characters.

The Finch family contains of Atticus (The head of the household), Aunt Alexandra (Atticus's sister), (Jem) Jeremy (The oldest of Atticus's two children), (Scout) Jean Louise (The youngest of the two . She also tries to be a boy by doing boy things). And you can't forget their black maid. Her name is Calpurnia.

Miss Rachael is Dill's aunt that lives in Maycomb. Dill is a friends with Jem and Scout. According to Scout they are married. (Boo) Arthur Radley is the person that takes Jem back to his house after Jem gets hurt by Bob Ewell. Tom Robinson is a black man that was accused of raping Mayella Ewell. Bob Ewell is Mayella's father. He is out for revenge on Atticus for what he did to him and his daughter. Mayella is Bob's daughter who supposedly got raped by Tom Robinson. Judge Taylor is the Judge of Maycomb County. Heck Tate is the county law official.

I think the protagonist in the story is Atticus Finch because he has the main part and he has the biggest decision to make. The decision being whether to defend or not to defend Tom Robinson.

To Kill a Mockingbird is set in Maycomb County, an imaginary district in Southern Alabama. The time is the early 1930s, the years of the Great Depression when poverty and unemployment were widespread in the United States.

The story begins during the summer when Scout and Jem meet a new playmate named Dill who has come from Mississippi to spend the summer with his Aunt Rachael. Dill is fascinated by the neighborhood gossip about "Boo" Radley. Egged on by Dill, Jem and Scout try to think up ways to lure him out of his house.

Soon it is Summer again , and Dill returns for another visit. The children's plans for making contact with Boo Radley grew bolder this year, and on Dill's last night they decide to sneak up onto the Radley porch and spy on Boo. Jem goes first, but just as he reaches the window, Nathan Radley catches site of them and scares them off with a blast from a shot gun.

Jem realizes that Boo is not a monster after all, but has been playing along with them. Scout does not figure this out until the winter, on the night that the house of their neighbor burns to the ground. While Scout is standing outside in the cold, someone sneaks up behind her and places a blanket around her. Later, Scout and Jem realize that there was only one person in town who has not already at work fighting the fire and that was Boo.

Now that Jem and Scout realize that Boo is basically a kind person, their interest in the Radley family begins to fade. In the meantime, they learn that their father has become the defense lawyer for Tom Robinson, who is charged with

raping Mayella Ewell.

As the trial of Tom Robinson grows nearer, the children become more aware of the strong feeling it has aroused in everyone in Maycomb. One day their housekeeper takes Jem and Scout to visit her church, and the children realize for the first time that the black parishioners are supporting Tom Robinson's wife.

Two nights before the trial is to start, a group of men come to the Finch house to tell Atticus about threats against Tom Robinson's life. Atticus spends the next night camped out at the jail to defend Tom from the mob. Jem, Scout and Dill go downtown to check on Atticus and arrive at the same time as a group of men, who have come to kill Tom. Scout recognizes one of the men in the group as Walter Cunningham. Her friendliness embarrasses the man so much that he and the mob leave.

The next day, at the trial, Atticus' questions make it clear that Mayella and her father are lying about the rape. Nevertheless the jury convict him because their prejudices prevent them from taking a black man's word against two whites. Atticus is now a hero in the black community of Maycomb, but Bob Ewell, vows to "get" Atticus for showing him up as a liar in front of the whole town.

Tom Robinson has given up hope and tries to flee the prison, but while doing it he gets caught and shot.

By the time Halloween comes around, the Finch family has begun to put Tom's death behind them. There is a pageant planned and Scout much to her dismay has been cast as a ham. After the pageant Scout decides to walk home still dressed in her bulky costume, with Jem leading the way. The cowardly Bob Ewell, seeing an opportunity to get revenge on Atticus through his children. He follows the children down a dark street and tries to kill them. In the side. It is none other than Boo Radley, who had seen the attack from his window. Boo stabs Bob Ewell to death, and carries the wounded Jem home.

The sheriff decides to file a report that Bob fell on his own knife and died, thus sparing Boo the publicity that would be sure to follow.

Scout never sees Boo again after that night, but she has learned that he was a good man all along. She has learned a lesson about understanding and tolerance. And through the sheriff's action she sees that sometimes there can be justice and compassion in the world.

The title of the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a key to some themes in the novel. The title is first explained in Chapter 10 at the time that Jem and Scout have just received air rifles for Christmas. Atticus tells his children that it is a sin to shoot a mockingbird. Later Miss Maudie explains that Atticus meant that Mockingbirds are harmless creatures who do nothing but sing for enjoyment.

It is easy to see that the "mockingbird" in this story is Tom Robinson a harmless man who becomes a victim of racial prejudice. Like the mockingbird, Tom has never done wrong to anyone. Even the jurors who sentence him to death have nothing personal against him. They find him guilty mostly because they feel that to take the word of a black man over two whites would threaten the system they live under, the system of segregation. Tom himself is guilty of nothing but being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

