

Courage to kill a
mockingbird



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Andrew Phan Mr. Geil English 2H Per. 4 14 September 2011 To Kill a Mockingbird “ Don’t judge a book by it’s cover. ” “ Everything has it’s beauty, but not everyone sees it. ” “ Appearances can be deceiving. ” No matter how you say it, looking beyond appearance is something you have to know how to do. If you don’t, you might as well associate yourself with the people living in Maycomb in the 1930’s in the novel To Kill a Mockingbird. In this novel by Harper Lee, two children learn how to look beyond a person’s appearance through their fellow townspeople’s rash decisions and stereotyping. As Mr. Dolphus Raymond was an evil man I accepted his invitation reluctantly. Somehow, I didn’t think Atticus would like it if we became friendly with Mr. Raymond, and I knew Aunt Alexandra wouldn’t. ‘ Here,’ he said, offering Dill his paper sack with straws in it. ‘ Take a good sip, it” quieten you. ‘ Dill sucked on the straws, smiled, and pulled at length. ‘ Hee hee,’ said Mr. Raymond, eventually taking delight in corrupting a child. ‘ Dill, you watch out now,’ I warned. Dill released the straws and grinned. ‘ Scout, it’s nothing but Coca-Cola. ” (To Kill a Mockingbird Chapter 20 pg. 267) As you can see in this passage, everyone ijudged this man, Dolphus Raymond, without even talking to him. The whole town thought he was just a drunk. Harper Lee even had the reader convinced Dolphus was just a drunk man. Dolphus turned out to be much more than meets the eye. His apparent sack of “ beer” is just Coca-Cola! But, since nobody bothered to ever get to know him or ask him about his sack other than his family, everyone just labeled him as the town drunk.

But, really, even though it was a small act of kindness, it was an act of kindness nonetheless, which showed that the “ town drunk” was actually a

nice man who knew the townspeople would never understand him or look beyond his appearance. Dolphus Raymond is the first person I think of when I associate To Kill a Mockingbird with looking beyond appearance, but you can't forget an important character that is the reason for the conflict in this novel: Tom Robinson. His left arm was fully twelve inches shorter than his right, and hung dead at his side. " (To Kill a Mockingbird Chapter 18 pg. 248) Now, Tom Robinson isn't really seen rather than imagined up until he is described in court. With the " nigger lover" insults being thrown at Atticus over and over again, it's not hard to imagine what Scout was thinking this Tom Robinson who was ruining her father's name looked like. The typical thing to think is a " dirty negro. " As in a mischievous looking, ugly, despicable, beady eyed black man.

Just because he is black and going to court for something, that was what was thought of Tom Robinson before and maybe even still during the trial. The guy was crippled though! By the time he stood up to defend his life, it is pretty obvious Tom Robinson couldn't hurt a fly. Yet, even if the townspeople realized he wasn't what they had imagined, the repeating " Guilty" s were still muttered. This only happened because of the color of his skin. Just because Tom Robinson was black, he was guilty of a crime he obviously did not commit. The evidence ALL pointed to Mr.

Bob Ewell, yet Tom Robinson was still found guilty. There was no explanation for it other than the shade of his skin. If the jury could have just looked past his skin color, then maybe Tom Robinson would have been a free man, and this novel would've been different. But, their stereotypes for blacks stuck with them, and they sent an innocent man to his death. I can't even begin to

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imagine cases like Tom's in real life just because of race. There are so many ways to say it, but to make it simple, looking beyond appearance stops evil like stereotyping and racism.

Unfortunately, not many characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are capable of this. It led to lies, crying, and an innocent man's death. In the end, if the people of Maycomb could have just looked past Tom Robinson's skin, maybe this story would have had a much happier ending, and maybe we as humans could imagine that nobody judges others by appearances. Unfortunately, this is not true, but novels are this are helping the cause. There's beauty in everything, but sometimes people just can't see it.