

Honour and loyalty in "to kill a mockingbird"

Experience, Human Nature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Throughout the novel "To Kill a Mockingbird", Harper Lee presented many examples to the reader regarding honour and loyalty. Harper developed the traits of honour and loyalty through her portrayal of the characters; Atticus Finch, Arthur "Boo" Radley, and Calpurnia. Atticus Finch was a distinguished symbol of honour and loyalty. He was a man who honoured his well-kept reputation in the town of Macomb and stayed loyal to the people close to him. One example of Atticus' honourable character was when Bob Ewell committed the fallacious act of spitting in his face. Atticus kept full composure, and walked away, instead of fighting with Bob.

This showed how Atticus did not want his reputation in Macomb to diminish. He explained to Jem that he had "destroyed his (Bob Ewells') last shred of credibility at that trial" (Harper Lee, 1960, p. 218). He also explained to Jem how "spitting in my face and threatening me saved Mayella Ewell one extra beating" (Harper Lee, 1960, p. 218). This demonstrated honour in Atticus as he cared for Mayella, putting aside how harshly she had treated Atticus and Tom Robinson in the past. Loyalty was displayed when Atticus made the vital decision to take on the Tom Robinson case.

He fully defended Tom no matter what others would say. Atticus took the case for another reason; he believed inequality and thought that black and white people were to be treated equally. Atticus honoured Ms. Dubose and showed respect by speaking kindly of her all the time. Although the children told Atticus how she treated them, he still greeted Ms. Dubose; "good evening Ms. Dubose! You look like a picture this evening." (Harper Lee, 1960, P. 109). It took great honour for Atticus to be this respectful towards Ms. Dubose, considering how disrespectfully she treated Jem and Scout.

Read also [How Powerful Do You Find Atticus Finch's Closing Speech?](#)

Another character who showed honour and loyalty in "To a Kill a Mockingbird" was Arthur "Boo" Radley. During the initial stages of the novel, Boo kept leaving little things in the tree for the children to take. He was acting honourable and trying to befriend them, as they acted seemed of him. Additionally, Boo put a blanket around Scout during the fire. At first, Scout thought it was Jem who had put the blanket around her, but when she found out it was Boo, she was surprised, and started to think differently of him. Jem told Scout that she was "so busy looking at the fire, she didn't know it when he put the blanket around her" (Harper Lee, 1960, p. 72). Arthur Radley was honourable towards the Finch family by killing Bob Ewell. Bob had caused many problems for the Finch family, and was the cause of Tom Robinson's death, which followed after the court case. His actions proved as justice for the Tom Robinson Case, as well as for the assault on the children (which left Jem with a broken arm). Lastly, Calpurnia was also a significant character in this novel who illustrated honour and loyalty. She took Jem and Scout to an African American church.

The children were not welcomed warmly. Calpurnia stayed loyal to the children, and fully defended them when everyone else wanted them out. A woman from the church was displeased with the fact that Calpurnia had brought these children to their church. Immediately, Calpurnia backed the children, saying that there was absolutely no difference between white or black people, so the children were to have every right to stay in the church. As a "mother figure", Calpurnia was a very good influence on both of the

children, she taught them how to be honourable to people, and to respect others.

When Walter Cunningham went over to the Finch's for supper, Scout made a comment on the way Walter was pouring syrup all over his dinner. Calpurnia took Scout straight to the kitchen and told her that " Yo' folks might be better'n the Cunningham's but it don't count for nothin' the way you're disgracin' 'em" (Harper Lee, 1960, p. 31). After the stern vituperation, Scout went back to the table and was more respectful towards Walter. Calpurnia had also worked with the Finch family for much of her life, which showed her loyalty for them, and the respect she had gained from Atticus.

After Calpurnia was told to leave the Finch home, Atticus strongly defended her by telling Alexandra that she was a " faithful member of the family and she'd (Alexandra) would have to accept things the way they were. " (Harper Lee, 1960, p. 147) In conclusion, Atticus Finch, Boo Radley, and Calpurnia were three significant characters who clearly demonstrated honour and loyalty throughout " How to Kill a Mockingbird". They also played important roles in helping the children to become loyal and honourable.