

To kill a mockingbird questions

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



Scout's comments and reactions towards Jem play a huge roll in Jem accepting Dill's dare. Jem states that he isn't scared of the Radley Place because he passes their house everyday on the way to school. However, Scout responds saying you're " Always runnin'"(Lee 14). Because Scout likes to taunt her older brother, Jem feels the need to put her in her place and prove to her he is the cool older brother. Jem doesn't want to look like a coward in front of his little sister, as Scout looks up to Jem.

Many rumors around Maycomb hint to idea that Boo Radley is very capable of violence. In his teen years, Boo became acquainted with what many would call " the wrong crowd". This crowd was "...the nearest thing to a gang ever seen in Maycomb" (Lee 10). Although no violence was witnessed, the gang did do enough to get in trouble with the law, causing Boo's father to keep him in the house for as long as anyone could remember. In addition, another rumor was passed by Miss Stephanie Crawford. According to her, in Boo's later years, while scrapbooking, "...Mr. Radley passed by, [and] Boo drove the scissors into his parent's leg..." (Lee 12). While this rumor is not known for sure, it definitely contributes to the mystery behind Boo Radley.

After Boo Radley's incident, Boo's father, Mr. Radley, held certain that Boo was no criminal and that he not be charged. However, even though Boo was not charged and sent to jail, he still suffered. They decided "...Boo was [to be] locked in the courthouse basement" (Lee 12). Boo was locked up for 15 years. Therefore, Boo has also been a victim of abuse from his family.

Miss Caroline Fisher shares very different views on education than Atticus because she believes that if a child is going to learn it must be from

someone of higher education, like her. Because Atticus teaches Scout to read every night, Miss Caroline is disgusted. When "...she discovered I [Scout] was literate [she] looked at me with more than faint distaste" (Lee 19). She tells Scout that her father must not teach her anything else, however because Atticus believes there is no harm being done, he tells Scout that they will continue reading, just without Miss Caroline's knowledge.

A small compromise I have made with my parents was to clean my room before going out with friends. Although I was angry because I wanted to leave right away, it was very rewarding in the end. I learned a valuable lesson which is that we have to give a little to get a little. It benefited my parents as well because they no longer had to look at a messy room and were able to teach me responsibility.

Months had passed and it seemed Jem and Scout had completely forgotten about Boo Radley. However, right before Dill was to return to Maycomb for the summer, something spiked their interest. While passing a tree in the Radley lot, Scout noticed " Some tinfoil was sticking in a knot-hole...and [she] withdrew two pieces of chewing gum..." (Lee 37). As time went on, more and more gifts appeared, causing the two of them to wonder if the hole was somebody's hiding spot or if the gifts were really left for them.

Many instances and details reveal the fact that Boo watches Scout and Jem very closely. For instance, one of their favorite games to play in the summer with Dill was to impersonate the Radley's. One day while they were playing, Scout looked over at the Radley house and swore she heard " Someone inside the house was laughing" (Lee 45). Another instance that occurred was

when Jem and Scout found another present in the tree. They found two small figures carved in soap. “ They were almost perfect miniatures of two children...[then] Jem looked from the girl-doll to me. The girl-doll wore bangs. So did I [Scout]” (Lee 67). Scout realized the figures were of them, proving someone clearly watches them closely for little details.

Jem didn't want Atticus returning the blanket Boo put on Scout because he was afraid and ashamed. Jem thought Boo would tell Atticus all the secrets they had been hiding and Atticus would be furious. However, Jem got built up with guilt that “ He began pouring out our secrets right and left in total disregard for my safety if not his own...” (Lee 81). Jem was also afraid that Atticus would be mad at Boo for watching them and taking an interest in them that he says “ Atticus, I swear to God he ain't ever harmed us, he ain't ever hurt us...” (Lee 81). Atticus realizes how much this meant to Jem that he agrees they should keep the blanket and maybe Jem can return it someday.

At one point in the book, Scout spends a lot of time with her neighbor Miss Maudie and a lot is learned about her character. When Scout asks Miss Maudie if she thinks Boo Radley is alive, Miss Maudie responds saying “ His name's Arthur and he's alive” (Lee 48). Miss Maudie does not like to listen to rumors or to judge people, she finds out for herself. In addition, although Miss Maudie is a Baptist, she does not take the Bible too literally like foot-washing Baptists. She says “ Foot-washers believe anything that's pleasure is a sin” (Lee 49). Instead Miss Maudie does what makes her happy and cares for her flowers.

It is very difficult to maintain the same behavior in private that one practices in public because a proper etiquette is required when out in public. For instance, the way I talk to my teachers is different than the way I talk to my siblings or even my parents. When I talk to at home I am more comfortable and I am able to let loose. However, when talking to my teachers I am more mature and sophisticated so they take me seriously.

Because Atticus is defending Tom Robinson, a Negro, Jem and Scout have many questions as to why he is doing it. Atticus responds stating "...if I didn't I couldn't hold up my head in town, I couldn't represent this county legislature, I couldn't even tell you or Jem not to do something again" (Lee 86). If Atticus weren't to take this case he would be a coward and not a good role model to his children. In addition, winning this case is not even an expectation to Atticus. He tells Scout " Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win" (Lee 87). Atticus is saying that even though no black man has won before, due to prejudice, it is no reason to give up.

After Aunt Alexandra comes to stay with Scout, Jem, and Atticus for a while, Jem asks Scout not to antagonize Aunt Alexandra like she usually does. This is because Atticus has been stressed out about his case and Jem says "...he's got a lot on his mind now, without us worrying him" (Lee 156). Jem doesn't want to give Atticus another thing to worry about so he asks Scout to behave herself for the time being. He wants to save Atticus from more unneeded trouble.

After going to church with Calpurnia, Jem and Scout get to see how she acts around other black people. They realize that many colored people don't know how to read or write and that Calpurnia was one of four black people in the church that did. "The idea that she had a separate existence outside our household was a novel one, to say nothing of her having command of two languages" (Lee 143). When around colored people Calpurnia talks differently than when around Scout and Jem because she doesn't want to sound like she thinks she is better than the other colored people just because she has a higher education. After attending church with Calpurnia, Jem and Scout seem to respect her more.

Before Mrs. Dubose's death, Jem and Scout just see her as a mean old lady that yells at them. However, after her death Atticus tells them that she was a morphine addict and she wanted to stop using it before she died so she was in a lot of pain. Atticus explains saying, "I wanted you to see something about her-I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand" (Lee 128). Jem and Scout finally understand who she is, an incredibly strong woman, who wanted to fight her addiction.

The ability to conform to a group's style of expression or behavior can sometimes be advantageous in that you don't make anyone feel left out. When Calpurnia goes to her church she talks "less-educated" so she fits in with everybody else. She tells Scout, "You're not gonna change any of them by talkin' right, they've got to want to learn themselves, and when they don't want to learn there's nothing you can do but keep your mouth shut or

talk their language" (Lee 143). It's not always a bad thing to change to fit someone else's style, it can clearly also be advantageous.

The Saturday evening and Sunday morning before Tom Robinson's trial, many of Atticus' acquaintances confer with him because they wanted to discuss with him about moving Tom to the county jail. Atticus, however, doesn't want this to happen because it will cause a fuss in Maycomb and possibly harm Tom so he says " Trial'll probably be Monday. You can keep him one night, can't you?" (Lee 165). Atticus did not want any extra commotion for Tom before the trial so he therefore wanted Tom to stay where he is.

In chapters 17 and 18, a greater description of the Ewells is given, allowing a clearer picture to be created. The Ewells are a poor family that live behind the town garbage dump in an old Negro cabin and near the colored people. In addition none of the Ewell children had a very good education because " No truant officers could keep their numerous offspring in school..." (Lee 193). On top of that, the home life for the children was not good at all. During Tom's trial, Atticus asked Mayella Ewell, one of the children, many questions concerning her father and what it's like at home proving this to be correct. For instance, "...there was strong suspicion that Papa drank it up...he sometimes went off in the swamp for days and came home sick..." (Lee 208). Bob Ewell also made the kids stay home because he needed them to work instead of getting a good education.

One day Scout came home just in time to hear Atticus saying to Aunt Alexandra, "...in favor of Southern womanhood as much as anybody, but not

for preserving polite fiction at the expense of human life..." (Lee 167). What Atticus means by this is he does not believe it is right to protect Mayella's virtue just to be polite because a man's life is at stake. Therefore "polite fiction" is when someone hides the truth in order to protect another person.

The way Tom Robinson conducts himself on the witness stand is very polite and caring which is ironic because it seems as though he should be cruel and disgusting due to the fact that he is being accused of rape. As Scout was watching the trial she comes to the conclusion that Tom was a "... respectable Negro, and a respectable Negro would never go up into somebody's yard of his own violation" (Lee 219). This is ironic because Tom was being accused of breaking into a white home and raping a young girl, when he comes across as a very nice man.

I have felt that my friend was not telling the truth although I actually didn't know the truth myself. She told me that she had seen and really liked a movie that I said was my favorite, however, when I asked her questions about it, her responses were very vague and she wouldn't look me in the eye. That is what caused me to suspect otherwise. Although it wasn't a big deal if she were lying or not, telling the truth and being yourself is always the best way to go.

During the trial Dill and Scout go outside only to find Mr. Dolphus Raymond. They soon learn that Mr. Raymond is completely different than what they thought. After sipping from his paper bag, they learn that he is not a drunk, he only drinks coca-cola. After they realize this, Mr. Raymond says to them, "You little folks won't tell on me now, will you? It'd ruin my reputation if you

did" (Lee 227). Mr. Raymond likes his reputation because people use it as an excuse as to why he maybe a little off. He likes the ways he lives and this way no one questions it.

After the trial Bob Ewell is very angry for making him look bad so he throws insults and very rude remarks towards Atticus. This does not bother Atticus though because he says, "...if spitting in my face and threatening me saved Mayella Ewell one extra beating, that's something I'd gladly take" (Lee 249). Atticus would much rather have Bob Ewell be mad at him because he doesn't want him to take his anger out on his children anymore. He would gladly take Bob Ewell's violence if it protects young children.

While Atticus is giving his final speech, he removes his coat and unbuttons his collar and vest. While Scout is watching she says that he never does this, not even at home, and "...this was the equivalent of him standing before us stark naked" (Lee 230). He wanted the jury to see that he had laid everything out on the table and he wanted to talk to them in a more comfortable manner, as if they were friends just talking about their day. By his actions, Atticus tries to bring himself closer to the level of the people in the jury.

After the trial something changed in Jem and he tells Scout, " I think I'm beginning to understand why Boo Radley's stayed shut up in the house all this time...it's because he wants to stay inside" (Lee 259). After the trial Jem realized how cruel and judgmental people can be. After all the evidence was laid out basically proving Tom Robinson to be innocent, the jury still said he was guilty due to his color. Jem comes to the conclusion that maybe Boo

wants to stay inside because it's safe and comfortable. No one can look at him with judgment and he can't hear their whispers from inside.

Although I do not directly know of someone who has fought against injustice, I do know of some famous examples, like Martin Luther King Jr. Most people are not willing to fight openly for the justice of others because they are afraid of the outcome and they don't want to put themselves out there. However, Martin Luther King stood up for what he believed in, even when close to nobody had his back. It takes real courage to fight against injustice and that is why most people aren't willing to do it.

Soon after Tom Robinson was determined guilty and went to jail, Atticus received word that Tom had died. Tom was shot trying to climb the fence to escape. The guards called him to stop but he didn't so they fired a few shots in the air and finally shot him. Tom was shot seventeen times. After hearing this, Atticus determined "...Tom was tired of white men's chances and preferred to take his own" (Lee 269). Tom no longer wanted to wait around for a white man to determine what would happen to him for the rest of this life, he decided to take his life in his own hands and take the risk.

Atticus's explanation as to why Bob Ewell was holding a grudge was that Atticus got everyone in Maycomb to believe in their hearts that Tom was innocent. He made Bob Ewell look bad to his town. Atticus says, " He thought he'd be a hero, but all he got for his pain was...was, okay, we'll convict this Negro but get back to your dump" (Lee 287). Bob Ewell thought people would be gracious to him that he put a horrible Negro in jail, however, everyone now knows that all he did was put an innocent caring man in jail

and that Bob is the real bad guy. All of Maycomb ended up hating Mr. Ewell because of Atticus.

When Scout and Aunt Alexandra first found out about Tom Robinson's death, they were in the middle of a lunch with a bunch of ladies. Scout admired how strong Aunt Alexandra was when she kept in her emotion and continued her lunch that she thought to herself, "...if Aunty could be a lady at a time like this, so could I" (Lee 271). Scout looked up to her in that moment and realized you can still be strong and have courage if you are lady; being a lady does not have to be a bad thing. Aunt Alexandra's reaction to the news shows respect for Atticus and the Negro community.

When Scout asks Jem what he thinks about Miss Gates's opinions Jem becomes furious because the trial is a very sensitive subject for him. He was very angry and sad when Tom was found guilty and Scout had just brought back all those emotions. When she asked Atticus what she had done he said, "...Jem was trying hard to forget something, but what he was really doing was storing it away for a while, until enough time passed" (Lee 283). Jem was only mad because he really wanted Tom to be a free man, he was not angry at Scout.

I do not believe it would have been better to tell the other ladies about the death of Tom Robinson because it would have only caused fuss. I'm sure many of the ladies at Aunt Alexandra's lunch do not particularly like colored people and this information would have only caused arguments. In addition, Scout was able to see how strong Aunt Alexandra could be and finally accepted that being a lady isn't actually that bad.

During the pageant Scout was late on her part and Mrs. Merriwether was very mean about it so Scout felt awful and embarrassed. After the show she did not want to risk walking in front of the audience so Jem "...consented to wait backstage with me until the audience left" (Lee 297). Scout also did not want to take her costume off because she didn't want everybody to see her face she was so embarrassed. She said, " I could hide my mortification under it" (Lee 297). She used the costume as protection from everybody.

Atticus believes Jem stabbed Bob Ewell and thinks Mr. Tate is just letting him off and doesn't want his case to go to court. Atticus says, " I don't want him growing up with a whisper about him, I don't want anybody saying, ' Jem Finch...his daddy paid a mint to get him out of that'" (Lee 314). Atticus doesn't want people thinking Jem is somehow superior to others. He doesn't want him growing up with people making rude remarks about him.

The author does not reveal the identity of the man who carried Jem home because she wants the reader to think about it. She gives the description of, " They were white hands that had never seen the sun, so white they stood out garishly against the cream wall..." (Lee 310). The author is giving a detailed description so that the reader connects it with what was said earlier about the Radley's. In addition, the author wants you to know the identity of the person at the same time Scout does.

The argument between Heck Tate and Atticus is ironic because they both know the truth of what happened, Boo killed Bob Ewell. However, they are arguing about whose story to go with. They aren't arguing about what really happened, but what lie to tell, making this situation very ironic because both

of their jobs have to do with the law. Atticus is a lawyer and Heck Tate is the sheriff. Finally they decide to go with Heck Tate's when he says, " Bob Ewell fell on his knife. I can prove it" (Lee 314).

When Rosa Parks would not give up her seat on the bus she chose not to follow the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law. Although she technically had to give up her seat to a white because she was black, she did what she thought was right. Whites should not have had any privileges over blacks and she stood up for what she believed in. By her doing this she was able to show other black people that they too can stand up for themselves.