

To kill a mockingbird

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Is it possible to shed innocence without losing hope? In *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, a 10-year-old boy named Jem proves that it just may be so. Throughout the novel, Jem, Scout's brother, is trying to comprehend in his own mind the darker parts of human nature. Within the small Southern town he lives in, Jem battles with racism, justice, and bravery. It is not until the end of the novel that Jem better understands the world, and is one step closer to becoming a grown man.

Justice, by definition, means fairness. In the case of Tom Robinson, whom Jem's father Atticus is defending, fairness is something that is not to be granted. Jem is devastated after realizing that justice does not always prevail. After Jem sees Tom be destroyed completely inequitably, he begins to question the ways of humanity. "... If there's just one kind of folks, why can't they get along with each other? If they're all alike, why do they go out of their way to despise each other? Scout, I think I'm beginning to understand something. 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" (227, Jem).

Jem eventually gets an understanding of people. He does not, however, lose hope. He remains steady to the silent promise he made to Atticus, the promise of justice for all people. Jem learns many lessons from Atticus on bravery and cowardice. After Atticus shoots the mad dog, Jem receives a lesson on how guns do not make a man brave, but " when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see through it no matter what" (112-Atticus).

Jem is sent to read to Mrs. Dubose after destroying her plants, and observes one kind of true bravery. Mrs. Dubose was battling a morphine addiction, which she quit in order to stay true to herself in not being addicted to anything when she dies. Jem himself shows bravery early on in the book, when he refuses to leave his father's side at the jailhouse. In the end, Jem understands the true meaning of bravery.

Jem discovers the truth behind prejudice and racism, the harsh but true reality of 'all men being created equal', and a sense of bravery. All the while, he manages to never lose faith, and grows both physically and mentally throughout the novel. The experiences made Jem calmer, and ready to take on the harsh realities of life.