

Rewrite a chapter of
'to kill a mockingbird'
from jem's viewpoint
essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

When I came home from school, I found Scout with a wad in her mouth. I asked her where she had got it from.

“ I found it.”

“ Don't eat things you find, Scout.” Honestly, it could have been anywhere.

“ This wasn't on the ground, it was in a tree.”

Which still came to the same thing - it could have been anywhere. I growled.

“ Well it was,” she said. “ It was sticking in that tree yonder, the one comin' from school.”

Since when did she start arguin' back? Boo could have poisoned it or used it as bait to get her!

“ Spit it out right now!” I shouted. It was for her own good.

She spat it out, still arguing. “ I've been chewing it all afternoon and I ain't dead yet, not even sick.”

I stamped my foot at that. “ Don't you know you're not supposed to even touch the trees over there? You'll get killed if you do!”

“ You touched the house once!”

“ That was different! You go gargle - right now, you hear me?”

“ Ain't neither, it'll take the taste outa me mouth.”

She was starting to get on my nerves now. " You don't ' n I'll tell Calpurnia on you!"

Finally, she decided to do as I had said. I don't know what has gotten into her recently. Anyway, summer was coming, and summer meant Dill. I couldn't wait to get our ' See-Boo-Radley' plans into action. I don't think Scout should join in this time; I'm starting to think she's a bit too young.

It was the last day of school and Scout and I were walking home from school. " Reckon old Dill'li be coming home tomorrow," she said.

" Probably day after," I said. " Mis'sippi turns 'em loose a day later."

As we came to the live oaks at the Radley place Scout raised her finger to point to the knot-hole where I saw something small and shiny, like tinfoil. What could it be? My mind pulsed with possibilities. Boo had put it there...

" I see it, Scout! I see it-"

I looked around, reached up, and carefully pocketed the tiny shiny package. We ran home, and on the front porch we looked at a small patchworked box with tiny bits of foil collected from chewing-gum wrappers. It was the kind of box wedding rings came in, purple velvet with a minute catch. I flicked it open and saw two polished pennies inside, one on top of the other. I looked at them more closely.

" Indian-heads," I said. " Nineteen-six and Scout, one of 'em's nineteen-hundred. These are real old."

"Nineteen-hundred" she echoed. "say-"

"Hush a minute, I'm thinkin'."

"Jem, you reckon that's somebody's hidin'-place?"

"Naw, don't anybody much but us pass by there, unless it's some grown person's-"

"Grown folks don't have hidin'-places. You reckon we ought to keep 'em, Jem?"

"I don't know what we could do, Scout. Who'd we give 'em back to? I know for a fact don't anybody go by there - Cecil goes by the back street an' all the way around town to get home."

Cecile Jacobs, who lived at the far end of our street next door to the post office, walked a total of one mile per school day to avoid the Radley Place and old Mrs Henry Layafette Dubose. Mrs Dubose lived two doors up the street from us; neighbourhood (and my) opinion was unanimous that Mrs Dubose was the meanest old woman who had ever lived. I couldn't go by her place without taking Atticus with me.

"What you reckon we do, Jem?"

I was wondering the same thing myself. This was money, real money. This was not, say, like getting a milk squirt from Maudie Atkinson's cow. I felt like showing Atticus, but I had a feeling he may have made me put them back.

" Tell you what," I said to Scout. " We'll keep 'em until school starts, then go around and ask everybody if they're theirs. They're some bus child's, maybe - he was too taken up with gettin' outa school today an' forgot 'em. These are somebody's, I know that. See how they've been slicked up? They've been saved."

" Yeah, but why should somebody wanta put away chewing-gum like that? You know it doesn't last."

Hmmph. Add questioning to arguing.

" I don't know, Scout. But these are important to somebody..."

" How's that, Jem...?"

" Well, Indian-heads - well, they come from the Indians. They're real strong magic, they make you have good luck. Not like fried chicken when you're not lookin' for it, but things like long life ' n' good health, ' n' passin' six weeks tests...these are real valuable to somebody. I'm gonna put 'em in my trunk."

My gaze turned to the Radley Place. It's as if its got a magnetic field or somethin'. I started thinking about Boo in there...did he put the coins there? Does he want me to find it? I couldn't wait to show Dill. Two days left.

Dill arrived in a blaze of glory; he had ridden the train by himself from Meridian to Maycomb Junction where he has been met by nice Miss Rachel in Maycomb's taxi. He had eaten dinner in the diner, he had seen two twins hitched together get off the train in Bay St Louis. I didn't believe that one, and I tried to trick him into tellin' the truth but he wouldn't. He was still

shorter than Scout, no heavier, and he had said he had seen his father, which for some reason made me think of mum.

I miss mum.

Dill was at his stories again.

" I helped engineer for a while," he said, yawning.

" In a pig's ear you did, Dill. Hush," I said. " What'll we play today?"

I was dying of impatience to tell Dill what Boo had left for me, but right now Scout was with us so I knew I would have to wait.

" Tom and Sam and Dick," said Dill. " Let's go in the front yard." Dill wanted the Rover Boys because there were three respectable parts. He was clearly tired of being our character man.

" I'm tired of those. Make us up one, Jem," Scout groaned.

" I'm tired of makin' 'em up."

And it's true. I always have to make them up, but then again I am the best at doing so.

We strolled to the front yard, where Dill stood looking down the street at the mysterious face of the Radley Place. " I - smell - death," he said. " I do, I mean it," he said. Scout told him to shut up. I think she was just scared.

" Dill if you don't hush I'll knock you bow-legged. I mean it, now -" she started.

" Yawl hush," I said angrily " you act like you believe in Hot Steams."

" You act like you don't," Scout answered back. I was now waiting for Dill to say ' what's a Hot Steam?'

" What's a Hot Steam?" asked Dill, unpredictably.

" Haven't you ever walked along a lonesome road at night and passed by a hot place?" I asked him. " A Hot Steam's somebody who can't get to heaven, just wallows around on lonesome roads an' if you walk through him, when you does you'll be one too, an' you'll go around at night suckin' people's breath."

Another question was coming, I could feel it.

" How can you keep from passing through one?"

Although he din't show it, I think he was gettin' scared coz he looked at me with his eyes all wide. I laughed to myself, this should be good.

" You can't," I said, nearly whispering as if one was coming right now. Maybe we could turn this into a play. " Sometimes, sometimes they stretch all the way across the road, and there's no escapin'."

" Don't you believe a word he says, Dill," Scout said. " Calpurnia says that's nigger-talk."

Dill seemed to be comforted by this, the colour started to return to his drained face. Little sisters! I scowled my meanest scowl at Scout, then thought about the day ahead.

" Well, are we gonna play or not?"

" Let's roll in the tyre," Scout suggested.

I sighed. " You know I'm too big."

" You c'n push."

She slapped the tyre up to the front yard. " I'm first," she said.

" But I just got here, I should be first!" Dill protested.

Hmm...with me as the arbitrator, I had a little revenge seeking idea. I let Scout go first, and waited until she had rolled herself up inside. Then I pushed her with all my force. Good.

What happened next I didn't expect at all. I forgave Scout at once when I saw she had rolled right into the Radley's gate! She was just lying there, as if she didn't know what was happening.

" Come on, Scout, don't just lie there! Get the tyre! Bring it with you! Ain't you got no sense at all?" I realized I was screaming.

And guess what? She didn't bring the tyre. I asked her why she didn't, and she argued back, asking why I couldn't get it. I could, that wasn't the point. But she thought she was challenging me. As if.

" Go on, it ain't far inside the gate. Why, you even touched the house once, remember?"

If she thought I was scared, she was wrong. Of course I wasn't, but I didn't like the way she was making me out to be some sort of chicken. I gave her an angry look, then got the tyre. It wasn't a big deal, she was just acting like a g-irl.

" See there?" I said. " Nothin' to it. I swear Scout, sometimes you act so much like a girl it's mortifyin'."