

# To kill a mockingbird chapters 1-4

Literature, American Literature



To Kill a Mockingbird- Harper Lee Reading Notes Part 1: Theme: The most prominent theme from chapters 1 to 4 is " Silence". This is a theme because the town that these four chapters are based in is a very taciturn town. Their main pastime was going to church. " They didn't go to church, Maycomb's principal recreation" (Lee 11). The dullness of this town was also very noticeable. " Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it. In rainy weather the streets turned to red slop; grass grew on the sidewalks, the courthouse sagged in the square. " (Lee 6). The summer was especially silent. " People moved slowly then. They ambled across the square, shuffled in and out of the stores around it, took their time about everything. A day was twenty-four hours but it seemed longer. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with. " (Lee 6) This also illuminates the fact that this book was based during the great depression, where there was " nothing to buy, and no money to buy it with". Character: Walter Cunningham, coming from a family with very little money had very little confidence, and Scout had a disliking for him. But Jem showed kindness by inviting him over for dinner. " Jem suddenly grinned at him. ' Come on home to dinner with us, Walter' he said. ' We'd be glad to have you'. " (Lee 30) Whilst walking to their home with them, Walter changed. " By the time we reached our front steps Walter had forgotten he was a Cunningham. " (Lee 31) Plot: Scout had an internal conflict when she was returning from school on one of the last days of school. She passed by the Radley house, and in a knothole in the oak trees, she saw two chewing gums. She at first wanted to chew them, but then she remembered that the Radley's had a dangerous reputation and that she wasn't to do it. " Some

tin foil was sticking in a knot-hole just above my eye level, winking at me in the afternoon sun. I stood on tiptoe, hastily looking around once more, reached into the hole, and withdrew two pieces of chewing gum minus their outer wrappers. My first impulse was to get it into my mouth as quickly as possible, but I remembered where I was. I ran home, and on our front porch I examined my loot. The gum looked fresh. I sniffed it and it smelled all right. I licked it and waited for a while. When I did not die I crammed it into my mouth: Wrigley's Double-Mint. " This shows that Scout had internal conflict with her curiosity of the unknown and the temptation to eat the gum, and the stories she had heard from Jem and other townfolk about the Radleys. He then told Jem, who scolded him and told him to spit it out and gargle.

Author's Style Lee uses repetition to describe what summer was to Scout. " Summer was on the way; Jem and I awaited it with impatience. Summer was our best season: it was sleeping on the back screened porch in cots, or trying to sleep in the treehouse; summer was everything good to eat; it was a thousand colors in a parched landscape; but most of all, summer was Dill. " (Lee 45) Scout connects " a thousand colors in a parched landscape" and " everything good to eat" to summer, which means that she loves summer, and she especially loves summer because then she can meet Dill. This adds to the writing because it uses motifs and imagery to paint a picture in the readers head of what summer is, in Scout's point of view. Quotation: " Jem's head at times was transparent: he had thought that up to make me understand he wasn't afraid of Radley in any shape or form, to contrast his own fearless heroism with my cowardice" (Lee 51) Jem thought up of a game to play with Dill and Scout, called " Boo Radley". This quote is a metaphor for

for when people make up things, and in this context, a "game" to prove to contrast a behavior or characteristic of someone. In this case, Jem's "fearless heroism" and Scout's "Cowardice". In fact, Scout is braver than Jem, as she took a risk when eating the chewing gum left in the knothole of the oak tree, and Jem was scared and scolded Scout for eating the chewing gum.