To kill a Mockingbird

by Harper Lee

(Adapted book. Advanced level)

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

We could never forget the events that had led to my brother Jem's injury. His elbow was so badly broken that when it healed, his left arm was somewhat shorter than his right and when he stood or walked, the back of his hand was at right angles to his body, his thumb parallel to his thigh. But as he was able to play football jut as well as before the accident, he was seldom self-conscious about that injury. He was nearly thirteen then.

When we grew older and looked back on the years of our childhood, we sometimes discussed the events that had happened before that accident. I think that the Ewells started it all, but Jem, who was four years my senior, said that it started that summer when Dill came to us and suggested that we should make Boo Radley come out.

I couldn't agree with him. I advised him to take a broader view and to begin with Simon Finch because where would we be if he hadn't come to live in Alabama? We

were at the age when we didn't settle our arguments with fist-fights any longer, so we consulted Atticus. Our father said we were both right.

We were Southerners, so it was a source of shame to some members of the family that we had no recorded ancestors on either side of the Battle of Hastings. All we had was Simon Finch from Cornwall. Simon called himself a Methodist. In England, Methodists were persecuted by their more liberal brethren, so he worked his way across the Atlantic to Philadelphia, thence to Jamaica, thence to Mobile, and up the Saint Stephens. He practiced medicine there and made a lot of money. Simon called himself a Methodist, and he knew that it was not for the glory of God to buy and wear expensive clothes and gold things. So he had forgotten his teacher's opinion on the possession of human chattels and bought three slaves and with their help established a homestead on the banks of the Alabama River some forty miles above Saint Stephens. He returned to Saint Stephens only once, to find a wife. Simon lived to a very old age and died rich.

The men in the family usually remained on Simon's homestead, Finch's Landing, and made their living from cotton. The place was self-sufficient: modest in comparison with the empires around it, the Landing nevertheless produced everything necessary for life except ice, wheat flour, and clothes. Those were brought by riverboats from Mobile.

In the war between the North and the South Simon's descendants lost everything except their land, but the

tradition of living on the land remained until the twentieth century, when my father, Atticus Finch, went to Montgomery to study law, and his younger brother went to Boston to study medicine. Their sister Alexandra was the Finch who remained at the Landing: she married a man who seldom said anything and spent most of his time in a hammock by the river.

When my father was admitted to the bar, he returned to Maycomb and began his practice. Maycomb, some twenty miles east of Finch's Landing, was the county seat of Maycomb County. Atticus's office in the courthouse contained little more than a hat rack, a spittoon, a checkerboard and an unsullied Code of Alabama. His first two clients were the last two persons who were hanged in the Maycomb County jail. Atticus had advised them to plead Guilty to second-degree murder and save their lives, but they were Haverfords, in Maycomb County a name synonymous with jackass. The Haverfords had murdered Maycomb's best blacksmith. They mistakenly accused him of the wrongful detention of a mare and killed him in the presence of three witnesses, and insisted that "the-son-of-a-bitch- had-invited-it" was a good enough defense for anybody. They didn't listen to Atticus and pleaded Not Guilty to first-degree murder, so there was nothing much Atticus could do for his clients except be present at their departure, an occasion that was probably the beginning of my father's deep dislike for the practice of criminal law.

During his first five years in Maycomb, Atticus practiced economy more than anything; for several years

thereafter he invested his earnings in his brother's education. John Hale Finch was ten years younger than my father, and chose to study medicine at a time when cotton growing didn't bring profit; but after Uncle Jack started working, Atticus got not a bad income from the law. He liked Maycomb, he was born and grew up in Maycomb County; he knew his people, they knew him, and because of Simon Finch's industry, Atticus was related by blood or marriage to nearly every family in the town.

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 mud; grass grew on the sidewalks, the courthouse went to decline in the square. Somehow, it was hotter then: a black dog suffered on a summer's day. Men's starched collars wilted by nine in the morning. Ladies bathed before noon, after their three-o'clock naps, and by nightfall were like soft teacakes with frostings of sweat and sweet talcum.

People moved slowly then. They walked slowly across the square, slowly went in and out of the stores around it, took their time about everything. A day was twenty-four hours long but seemed longer. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: President Franklin Roosevelt had promised that there was nothing to fear except fear itself.

We lived on the main residential street in town - Atticus, Jem and I, plus Calpumia, our cook. Jem and I found our father satisfactory: he played with us, read to us, and treated us with polite detachment.

Calpumia was something different. She had been with us ever since Jem was born, and she was a tyrant. She was always ordering me out of the kitchen, asking me why I couldn't behave as well as Jem when she knew that he was older, and she was always calling me home when I wasn't ready to come. Our battles were epic and one-sided. Calpumia always won, just because Atticus always took her side.

Our mother died when I was two, so I never felt her absence. She was from Montgomery; Atticus met her when he was first elected to the state legislature. He was middle-aged then, she was fifteen years his junior. Jem was the product of their first year of marriage; four years later, I was born, and two years later, our mother died from a sudden heart attack. They said it ran in her family.

When I was almost six and Jem was nearly ten, our summertime boundaries were within calling distance of Calpurnia. We were not allowed to go further than Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose's house two doors to the north of us, and the Radley Place three doors to the south. We never broke them. In the Radley Place an unknown creature lived, just the description of whom made us behave for a very long time; Mrs. Dubose was real hell.

That summer Dill came to us.

One morning we were beginning our day's play in the back yard, and there he was. He was sitting in Miss Rachel Haverford's yard, next door to us. We stared at him until he spoke:

"Hey."

"Hey yourself," said Jem pleasantly.

"I'm Charles Baker Harris," he said.

Jem brushed his hair back to get a better look. "Why don't you come over, Charles Baker Harris?" he said. "Lord, what a name."

"It's not any funnier than yours. Aunt Rachel says that your name's Jeremy Atticus Finch."

Jem frowned. "I'm big enough for mine," he said. "Your name's longer'n you are."

"Folks call me Dill," said Dill and tried to get to our yard under the fence

"Do better if you go over it instead of under it," I said.

"Where'd you come from?"

Dill said he was from Meridian, Mississippi, but originally his family was from Maycomb County. Now he was spending the summer with his aunt, Miss Rachel, and would be spending every summer in Maycomb from now on. He told us that his mother worked for a photographer in Meridian, and she had entered his picture in a Beautiful Child contest and won five dollars. She gave the money to Dill. He went to the movies twenty times on it. Jem asked him if he had ever seen anything good.

Dill had seen Dracula. Jem looked at him with the beginning of respect. "Tell it to us," he said.

Dill's appearance was peculiar. He wore blue linen shorts that buttoned to his shirt, his hair was snow white and looked like duck fluff; he was a year my senior but I was much taller than he. When he told us the old story, his blue eyes lighted and darkened; his laugh was sudden and happy.

When Dill finished Dracula story, and Jem said that the movie sounded better than the book, I asked Dill where his father was: "You ain't said anything about him."

"I haven't got one."

"Is he dead?"

"No..."

"Then if he's not dead you've got one, haven't you?"

Dill blushed and Jem told me to stop. It was a sign that he had found Dill acceptable. After that, the summer passed as usual: we improved our tree house that rested between two giant trees in the back yard, fussed, performed our own plays based on the works of Oliver Optic, Victor Appleton, and Edgar Rice Burroughs. In that, we were lucky to have Dill. He played the character parts, which formerly Jem made me play - the ape in Tarzan, Mr. Crabtree in The Rover Boys, Mr. Damon in Tom Swift. Thus, we came to know Dill as a pocket Merlin, whose head was full of eccentric plans and fancies.

But by the end of August we had got bored by our repertoire, and then Dill offered to make Boo Radley come out.

Dill became very curious about the Radley Place after we had told him about a malevolent phantom that lived in the house. Jem and I had never seen him, but people said he went out at night when there was no moon, and peeped in windows. Any undisclosed small crimes in Maycomb were his work. Once the town was terrorized by a series of awful nocturnal events: people's chickens and household pets were found mutilated. Although Crazy Addie was guilty, people still looked at the Radley Place. A Negro didn't pass the Radley Place at night, he chose the opposite sidewalk and whistled as he walked. The Maycomb school grounds bordered on the back of the Radley lot; tall pecan trees shook their fruit into the schoolyard from the Radley chicken yard, but the children didn't pick up the nuts: Radley pecans could kill you. A baseball that got into the Radley yard was a lost ball and no questions were asked.

The unhappiness of that house began many years before Jem and I were born. Mr. Radley and his wife had lived there with their two sons as long as anybody could remember, but although they were welcome anywhere in town, the Radleys kept to themselves. It was unusual for Maycomb. They did not go to church, Maycomb's main recreation; they worshiped at home; Mrs. Radley seldom if ever crossed the street for a mid-morning coffee break with her neighbors, and certainly never joined any circle. Mr. Radley walked to town at eleven-thirty every morning and came back at twelve. Sometimes he carried a brown paper bag. The neighbors thought that the family groceries were in that bag. I never knew how old Mr. Radley made his

living - Jem said he "bought cotton," a polite term for doing nothing.

Another thing different from Maycomb's ways: the shutters and doors of the Radley house were closed on Sundays. In Maycomb, closed doors meant illness and cold weather only. Of all days Sunday was the day for formal afternoon visiting: ladies wore corsets, men wore coats, and children wore shoes. But no neighbor ever went up the Radley front steps and called, "He-y," on a Sunday afternoon. The Radley house had no screen doors. I once asked Atticus if it ever had any; Atticus said yes, but before I was born.

According to neighborhood legend, when the younger Radley boy was in his teens he became acquainted with some of the Cunninghams from Old Sarum, a very large and confusing tribe that lived in the northern part of the county, and they formed a group that worried the town: they hung around the barbershop; they rode the bus to Abbottsville on Sundays and went to the movies; they attended dances at the county's riverside gambling house; they experimented with whiskey. Nobody in Maycomb had nerve enough to tell Mr. Radley that his boy was a part of the wrong crowd.

One night the boys backed around the square in a small-borrowed car, resisted arrest by Maycomb's ancient beadle, Mr. Conner, and locked him in the courthouse outhouse. The town decided that something had to be done. Mr. Conner knew the boys and he said that they wouldn't get away with it, so the boys came before the judge on

charges of disorderly conduct, assault and battery, and using dirty language in the presence and hearing of a female. The judge asked Mr. Conner why he included the last charge; Mr. Conner said that they cursed so loudly that he was sure every lady in Maycomb heard them. The judge decided to send the boys to the state industrial school, where boys were sometimes sent for no other reason than to give them food and shelter: it wasn't a prison and it wasn't disgrace. But Mr. Radley thought it was. He asked the judge to let his son Arthur go free and promised that Arthur would never give trouble again. The judge was glad to do so.

The other boys attended the industrial school and received the best secondary education in the state. The doors of the Radley house were closed on weekdays as well as Sundays, and Mr. Radley's boy was not seen again for fifteen years.

Jem remembered that one day Boo Radley was seen by several people, but not by Jem. He said that Atticus never talked much about the Radleys: when Jem asked him questions, Atticus told him to mind his own business and let the Radleys mind theirs, they had a right to; but on that day, when it happened, Atticus shook his head and said, "Mm, mm, mm."

Most of his information Jem received from Miss Stephanie Crawford, who said she knew the whole thing. According to Miss Stephanie, Boo was cutting some articles from The Maycomh Tribune when his father entered the living room. As Mr. Radley passed by, Boo

drove the scissors into his parent's leg, pulled them out, wiped them on his pants, and continued his activities.

Mrs. Radley ran into the street and screamed that Arthur was killing them all, but when the sheriff arrived, Boo was still sitting in the living room, cutting up the Tribune. He was thirty-three years old then.

Mr. Radley refused to send Boo to an asylum. Boo wasn't crazy, he was high-strung at times. It was all right to shut him up, Mr. Radley agreed, but without any charges: he was not a criminal. The sheriff didn't want to put him in jail alongside Negroes, so Boo was locked in the courthouse basement.

But Miss Stephanie Crawford said that some of the town council told Mr. Radley that if he didn't take Boo back, Boo would die of mold from the dampness. Besides, Boo could not live forever at the expense of the county. So Boo was brought home, but nobody ever saw him again.

What I can remember is that Mrs. Radley sometimes opened the front door, walked to the edge of the porch, and poured water on her flowers. But every day Jem and I saw Mr. Radley when he walked to and from town. He never spoke to us. When he passed we looked at the ground and said, "Good morning, sir," and he coughed in reply. Mr. Radley's elder son lived in Pensacola; he came home at Christmas, and he was one of the few persons who ever entered or left the place. People said that after Mr. Radley took Arthur home, the house died.

One day Atticus ordered us to make no sound in the yard and told Calpumia to watch us in his absence. Mr. Radley was dying.

He took his time about it. Wooden sawhorses blocked the road at each end of the Radley lot, straw was put down on the sidewalk, traffic was directed to the back street. Dr. Reynolds parked his car in front of our house and walked to the Radley's every time he called. Jem and I tiptoed around the yard for days. At last, the sawhorses were taken away, and we watched from the front porch when Mr. Radley made his final journey past our house.

"There goes the meanest man ever God blew breath into," murmured Calpumia, and she spat meditatively into the yard. We looked at her in surprise, for Calpurnia seldom commented on the ways of white people.

The neighborhood thought that when Mr. Radley died, Boo would come out, but Boo's elder brother returned from Pensacola and took Mr. Radley's place. The only difference between him and his father was their ages. Jem said Mr. Nathan Radley "bought cotton," too. Mr. Nathan spoke to us, however, when we said good morning.

When we told Dill about the Radleys, he wanted to know more.

"It's interesting what he does in there. It's interesting what he looks like," he said.

Jem gave a reasonable description of Boo: Boo was about six-and-a-half feet tall; he dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that's why his hands were

bloodstained - if you ate an animal raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long scar that ran across his face; his teeth were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped, and he drooled most of the time.

"Let's try to make him come out," said Dill. "I'd like to see what he looks like."

Jem said if Dill wanted to get himself killed, all he had to do was go up and knock on the front door.

Our first raid happened only because Dill bet Jem that Jem wouldn't get any farther than the Radley gate. In all his life, Jem had never declined a challenge.

Jem thought about it for three days. I think he loved honor more than his head. "You're afraid," Dill said, the first day. "Ain't afraid, just respectful," Jem said. The next day Dill said, "You're too afraid even to put your big toe in the front yard." Jem said, "I ain't, I'd passed the Radley Place every school day of my life."

"Always runnin'," I said.

But Dill got him the third day, when he told Jem that folks in Meridian certainly weren't as afraid as the folks in Maycomb, that he'd never seen such timid folks as the ones in Maycomb. That was enough.

Jem marched into the street at once, but stopped at the light-pole, at the corner opposite the Radley house and looked at the gate.

"I hope you've got it through your head that he'll kill us each and every one, Dill Harris," said Jem, when we

joined him. "Don't blame me when he gouges your eyes out. You started it, remember."

"You're still afraid," murmured Dill patiently.

Jem said that he wasn't afraid of anything; he just wanted to think of a way to make Boo come out which wouldn't be dangerous for us. Besides, Jem had to think of his little sister. When he said that, I knew that he was afraid.

Jem stood in thought so long that Dill decided to make his task easier: "I won't say that you're afraid if you just go up and touch the house."

Jem brightened. "Touch the house, that all?"

"Yeah, that's all," said Dill. "He'll probably come out after you when he sees you in the yard, then Scout 'n' me'll jump on him and hold him down till we can tell him we ain't gonna hurt him."

We left the comer, crossed the street, and stopped at the gate.

"Well go on," said Dill, "Scout and I are right behind you."

"I'm going," said Jem, "don't hurry me."

He walked to the corner of the lot, then back again, frowning, as if deciding how best to come into the yard.

Then I laughed at him.

Jem opened the gate and ran to the side of the house, touched it with his palm and ran past us, without looking

back. Dill and I followed on his heels. When we were safely on our porch, we looked back.

The old house was the same, tired and depressed, but as we stared down the street we thought that we saw how an inside shutter moved. Almost invisible movement and the house was still.

CHAPTER TWO

At the beginning of September Dill returned to Meridian. At first, I missed him very much, but then I remembered that I would be starting to school in a week. I never looked forward more to anything in my life. In wintertime I had spent hours in the tree house, looking over at the schoolyard through a two-power telescope Jem had given me. I had watched schoolchildren and learned their games. I wanted to join them so much.

Jem agreed to take me to school the first day. It was usually done by one's parents, but Atticus had said that Jem would be delighted to show me where my room was. I think some money changed hands for this agreement: as we ran around the corner past the Radley Place, I heard an unfamiliar jingle in Jem's pockets. When we walked through the schoolyard, Jem explained that during school hours I was not to bother him, I was not to ask him to play together or tag along behind him at recess and noon. I was to stay with the first grade and he would stay with the fifth. In short, I was to leave him alone.

"You mean we can't play anymore?" I asked.

"We'll do like we always do at home," he said, "but you'll see - school's different."

It certainly was. Before the first morning was over, Miss Caroline Fisher, our teacher, made me stand in front of the class and patted the palm of my hand with a ruler, then made me stand in the comer until noon.

Miss Caroline was no more than twenty-one. She had dark red hair, pink cheeks, and wore dark red fingernail polish. She also wore high-heeled shoes and a red-and-white-striped dress. She looked and smelled like a peppermint drop. She boarded across the street one door down from us in Miss Maudie Atkinson's upstairs front room, and when Miss Maudie introduced us to her, Jem was in a haze for days.

Miss Caroline printed her name on the blackboard and said, "This says I am Miss Caroline Fisher. I am from North Alabama, from Winston County." The class murmured worriedly, whether she would show the peculiarities typical of that region. (When Alabama seceded from the Union on January 11, 1861, Winston County seceded from Alabama, and every child in Maycomb County knew it.) North Alabama was full of steel companies, Republicans, professors, and other persons of no background.

Miss Caroline began the day by reading us a story about cats. The cats had long conversations with one another; they wore pretty little clothes and lived in a warm house beneath a kitchen stove. By the time Mrs. Cat went into the drugstore to buy a chocolate mouse, the class was fidgeting in their seats. Miss Caroline was unaware that the denim-shirted and floursack-skirted first grade, most of whom had chopped cotton and fed hogs from the time they were able to walk, were immune to imaginative literature. Miss Caroline came to the end of the story and said, "Oh, my, wasn't that nice?"

Then she went to the blackboard and printed the alphabet in big letters, turned to the class and asked, "Does anybody know what these are?"

Everybody did because most of the first grade were repeating a year.

I think she chose me because she knew my name; as I read the alphabet a line appeared between her eyebrows. Then she made me read most of My First Reader and discovered that I was literate. She frowned and told me to tell my father not to teach me anymore.

"It's best to begin reading with a fresh mind. You tell him I'll take over from here. Your father does not know how to teach. You can have a seat now."

At recess, Jem asked me how I was getting along. I told him.

"If I didn't have to stay I'd leave. Jem, that damn lady says that Atticus's been teaching me to read and must stop it-"

"Don't worry, Scout," Jem comforted me. "Our teacher says Miss Caroline's introducing a new way of teaching. She learned about it in college. It'll be in all the grades soon. You don't have to learn much out of books that way - it's like if you want to learn about cows, you go milk one, see?"

"Yeah Jem, but I don't want to study cows, I-"

"Sure you do. You have to know about cows, they're a big part of life in Maycomb County."

I just asked Jem if he'd lost his mind.

"I'm just trying to tell you the new way they're teachin' the first grade, stubborn. It's the Dewey Decimal System."

On the recommendation of the Dewey Decimal System, Miss Caroline showed us cards on which were printed "the," "cat," "rat," "man," and "you." No comment was expected of us, and the class looked at these cards in silence. I was bored, so I began a letter to Dill. Miss Caroline saw it and told me to tell my father to stop teaching me. "Besides," she said, "we don't write in the first grade, we print. You won't learn to write until you're in the third grade."

It was Calpumia's fault. On rainy days, so that I didn't bother her, she set me writing tasks: she scrawled the alphabet across the top of a tablet, then copied out a chapter of the Bible beneath. If I copied her writing satisfactorily, she rewarded me with an open-faced sandwich of bread and butter and sugar.

I n Calpurnia's teaching, there was no sentimentality: I seldom pleased her and she seldom rewarded me.

"Everybody who goes home to lunch hold up your hands," said Miss Caroline, breaking into my thoughts about Calpumia's fault.

The town children did so, and she looked us over.

"Everybody who brings his lunch put it on top of his desk."

When Miss Caroline saw that there was no lunch on Walter Cunningham's desk, she asked if he had forgotten it. Walter didn't say anything; he just looked straight ahead.

"Did you forget your lunch this morning?" asked Miss Caroline again.

"Ye'm," he finally muttered.

Miss Caroline went to her desk and opened her purse. "Here's a quarter," she said to Walter. "Go and eat downtown today. You can pay me back tomorrow."

Walter shook his head. "Nome thank you ma'am," he said softly.

Miss Caroline's got impatient. "Here Walter, come get it."

Walter shook his head again.

When Walter shook his head a third, time someone whispered, "Go on and tell her, Scout."

"Miss Caroline, he's a Cunningham," I said.

"What, Jean Louise?"

Miss Caroline didn't understand what was clear enough to the rest of us: Walter Cunningham didn't forget his lunch, he didn't have any. He had none today and he wouldn't have any tomorrow or the next day. He had probably never seen three quarters together at the same time in his life.

I tried again: "Walter's one of the Cunninghams, Miss Caroline."

"I beg your pardon, Jean Louise?"

"Well, ma'am, the Cunninghams never take anything they can't pay back. They live on what they have. They don't have much, but they get along on it."

I knew about the Cunningham's situation because Walter's father was one of Atticus's clients. After a sad conversation in our living room one night about his problem, before Mr. Cunningham left he said, "Mr. Finch, I don't know when I'll ever be able to pay you."

"Let that be the least of your worries, Walter," Atticus said.

When I asked Atticus if Mr. Cunningham would ever pay us, he said, "Not in money, but before the end of the year I'll have been paid. You watch."

We watched. One morning Jem and I found a load of stove wood in the back yard. Later, a sack of nuts appeared on the back steps. That spring when we found a sack full of turnip, Atticus said that Mr. Cunningham had more than paid him.

"Why does he pay you like that?" I asked.

"Because he has no money."

"Are we poor, Atticus?"

Atticus nodded. "We are indeed."

Jem's nose wrinkled. "Are we as poor as the Cunninghams?"

"Not exactly. The Cunninghams are farmers, and the crisis hit them hardest."

Atticus said that professional people were poor because the farmers were poor. Maycomb County was farm country, so doctors and dentists and lawyers were seldom paid in cash.

"Did you know," said Atticus, "that Dr. Reynolds works the same way? He charges some folks a bushel of potatoes for delivery of a baby."

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to explain things as well as Atticus, so I said, "You're shamin' him, Miss Caroline. Walter hasn't got a quarter at home to bring you, and you can't use any stove wood."

Miss Caroline stood still, then grabbed me by the collar and hauled me back to her desk. "Jean Louise, I've had about enough of you this morning," she said. "You're starting off on the wrong foot in every way, my dear. Hold out your hand."

I thought she was going to spit in it: it was a usual method of making oral bargains in Maycomb. Not knowing what bargain we had made, I turned to the class for an answer, but the class looked back at me in puzzlement. Miss Caroline picked up her ruler, gave me half a dozen quick little pats, then told me to stand in the corner. A storm of laughter broke out when the class finally understood that Miss Caroline had whipped me.

The laughter stopped only when Miss Blount, a native Maycombian not yet acquainted with the mysteries of the

Decimal System, appeared at the door with hands on hips and announced: "If I hear another sound from this room I'll burn up everybody in it. Miss Caroline, the sixth grade cannot concentrate on the pyramids for all this noise!"

The bell saved me from the comer. The class went out for lunch. Miss Caroline sat down at her table and buried her head in her arms. If she had been friendlier toward me, I would have felt sorry for her. She was a pretty little thing.

CHAPTER THREE

In the schoolyard, I kicked Walter Cunningham down and was rubbing his nose in the dirt when Jem came by and told me to stop. "You're bigger'n he is," he said.

"He's as old as you, nearly," I said. "Because of him I started off on the wrong foot."

"Let him go, Scout. Why?"

"He didn't have any lunch," I said, and told Jem what had happened in class.

Walter had stood up and was quietly listening to Jem and me. "Your daddy Mr. Walter Cunningham from Old Sarum?" Jem asked, and Walter nodded.

My brother suddenly smiled at him and said, "Come on home to dinner with us, Walter, we'd be glad to have you." Walter's face brightened, then darkened.

Jem said, "Our daddy's a friend of your daddy's. Scout here, she's crazy - she won't fight you anymore."

When we came home, Jem ran to the kitchen and asked Calpumia to set an extra plate, we had company. Atticus greeted Walter and began a discussion about crops.

"I can't pass the first grade, Mr. Finch, because I've had to stay out every spring an' help Papa with the choppin', but there's another one at the house now that's field size."

"Did you pay a bushel of potatoes for him?" I asked, but Atticus shook his head at me.

While Walter put food on his plate, he and Atticus talked together like two men, to the wonderment of Jem and me. Atticus was talking about farm problems when Walter asked if there was any syrup in the house. Atticus called Calpumia, who returned with the syrup. Walter poured syrup on his vegetables and meat with a generous hand. He would probably have poured it into his milk glass if I hadn't asked what the same hill he was doing.

Walter quickly put his hands in his lap and bowed his head.

Atticus shook his head at me. "But he's drowned his dinner in syrup," I protested. "He's poured it all over-"

Calpurnia asked me to come to the kitchen.

She was very angry. "There's some folks who don't eat like us," she whispered, "but you ought not to contradict 'em at the table when they don't. That boy's your company and if he wants to eat up the table cloth you let him, you hear?"

"He ain't company, Cal, he's just a Cunningham-"

"Shut your mouth! Doesn't matter who they are, anybody who sets foot in this house's your company, and don't you let me catch you commentin' on their ways like you were so high and mighty! You folks might be better'n the Cunninghams but it comes to nothin' the way you're shamin' 'em - if you can't behave at the table you can just sit here and eat in the kitchen!"

During the afternoon class, standing in the middle of the room, Miss Caroline suddenly screamed, "It's alive!"

All the boys rushed as one to her assistance. Lord, I thought, she's afraid of a mouse. Little Chuck Little said, "Which way did he go, Miss Caroline? Tell us where he went, quick! D.C.-" he turned to a boy behind him - "D.C., shut the door and we'll catch him. Quick, ma'am, where'd he go?"

Miss Caroline pointed her finger not at the floor, but to a hulking individual unknown to me. Little Chuck said gently, "You mean him, ma'am? Yessum, he's alive. Did he frighten you some way?"

"I was just walking by when it crawled out of his hair," Miss Caroline said in a horrified voice.

Little Chuck smiled broadly. "There's no need to be afraid of a louse, ma'am. Ain't you ever seen one? Now don't you be afraid, you just go back to your table and teach us some more." Little Chuck Little was another member of the population who didn't know where his next meal was coming from, but he was a born gentleman. He put his hand under her elbow and led Miss Caroline to the front of the room. "Now don't you worry, ma'am," he said. "There's no need to be afraid of a louse. I'll just fetch you some cool water."

The louse's host didn't show any interest in the excitement around him. He found his guest in the hair above his forehead and crushed it between his thumb and forefinger.

When Little Chuck brought water, Miss Caroline drank it and finally found her voice. "What is your name, son?" she asked softly.

"Well, Burris," said Miss Caroline, "I think you'd better go home and wash your hair."

She read for a moment from a thick book on her table. "Burris go home and wash your hair with lye soap. When you've done that, put some kerosene on your head."

"What for, missus?"

"To get rid of the lice. You see, Burris, the other children might catch them, and you wouldn't want that, would you?"

The boy stood up. He was the filthiest human I had ever seen. His neck was dark gray, the backs of his hands were rusty, and his fingernails were black. No one had noticed him, probably, because Miss Caroline and I had entertained the class most of the morning.

"And Burris," said Miss Caroline, "please bathe yourself before you come back tomorrow."

The boy laughed. "You ain't sendin' me home, missus. I was going to leave myself - I've done my time for this year."

As Miss Caroline didn't understand what the boy meant, one of the elderly members of the class explained to her that the Ewell boys came the first day every year and then left. He said, "The truant lady officer gets them here because she threatens them with the sheriff, but she can't

hold them. So she just gets their names on the roll and runs them here the first day, and reckons that she's carried out the law. And the teachers mark them absent the rest of the year..."

"But what about their parents?" asked Miss Caroline.

"Ain't got no mother," was the answer, "and their pa's right quarrelsome."

Burris Ewell was pleased by the explanation. "Been cornin' to the first day o' the first grade her three years now," he said, pleased with himself. "Reckon if I'm smart this year they'll promote me to the second..."

When Miss Caroline told him to sit down, I knew that she had made a serious mistake. The boy got angry.

"You try and make me, missus."

Little Chuck Little got to his feet. "Let him go, ma'am," he said.

"He's a mean one, a really mean one. He'll start somethin', and there's some little folks here."

He was very small, but when Burris Ewell turned toward him, Little Chuck's right hand went to his pocket. "Watch your step, Burris," he said. "I'd sooner kill you than look at you. Go home now."

It seemed that Burris was afraid of a child half his height. Miss Caroline said quickly: "Burris go home or I'll call the principal. I'll have to report this, anyway."

The boy snorted and went unhurriedly to the door.

When he was safely at the door, he turned and shouted: "Report and be damned to ye! No of a schoolteacher can make me do nothin'! You just remember that, missus, you ain't makin' me go nowhere!"

He waited until he was sure that she was crying, then he left the building.

We all tried to comfort her in our various ways. He was a real mean one... you needn't teach folks like that... those ain't Maycomb's ways, Miss Caroline, not really... now don't you worry, ma'am. Miss Caroline, why don't you read us a story? That cat thing was really fine this mornin'...

Miss Caroline smiled, blew her nose, said, "Thank you, darlings," opened a book and mystified the first grade with a long story about a frog that lived in a hall.

My thoughts on the way home past the Radley Place were as gloomy as the house. If all the school days were as dramatic as the first day, perhaps it would be entertaining, but I didn't want to spend nine months without reading and writing.

By late afternoon, when Jem and I ran to meet Atticus coming home from work, I knew what I wanted to do. We usually ran to meet Atticus as soon as we saw him round the post office comer in the distance. It seemed that Atticus had forgotten my noontime bad behavior; he was full of questions about school. I answered in monosyllables and he did not press me.

Calpumia was kind to me that evening: she let me stay in the kitchen while she cooked supper. "Shut your

eyes and open your mouth and I'll give you a surprise," she said.

She seldom made crackling bread. She usually said that she had no time for it, but with both of us at school today had been an easy day for her. She knew I loved crackling bread.

"I missed you today," she said and kissed me. "The house got so lonesome that I had to turn on the radio about two o'clock." I decided that Calpumia was sorry for the way she acted at lunch, but was stubborn and didn't want to admit it.

After supper, Atticus sat down with the paper and called, "Scout, ready to read?" The Lord sent me more than I could bear, and I went to the front porch. Atticus followed me.

"Something wrong, Scout?"

I told Atticus about the day at school and said, "Miss Caroline said you taught me all wrong, so we can't ever read any more, ever. Please don't send me back, please sir."

Atticus said that Miss Caroline couldn't learn the ways of Maycomb in one day and we couldn't hold her responsible for what she didn't know.

I said, "I didn't know that it was better not to read to her, and she held me responsible - listen Atticus, I don't have to go to school!" Suddenly I had an idea. "Burris Ewell, remember? He just goes to school the first day. The

truant lady reckons she's carried out the law when she gets his name on the roll-"

"You can't do that, Scout," Atticus said. "Sometimes it's better to ignore the law a little in special cases. In your case, the law works. So to school you must go."

"I don't see why I have to when he doesn't."

"Then listen."

Atticus said the Ewells had been the shame of Maycomb for three generations. None of them had ever done an honest day's work. They were people, but they lived like animals. "They can go to school if they want an education. There are ways of keeping them in school by force, but it's silly to force people like the Ewells into a new environment," said Atticus.

"If I didn't go to school tomorrow, you'd force me to."

"You, Miss Scout Finch, are of the common folk. You must obey the law," said Atticus dryly. He said that the Ewells were members of an exclusive society made up of Ewells. The common folk didn't pay attention to some of the Ewells' activities. They didn't have to go to school, for one thing. Another thing, Mr. Bob Ewell, Burris's father, was permitted to hunt and trap out of season.

I knew that hunting out of season was against the law in Maycomb County.

"It's against the law," said my father, "but when a man spends his relief checks on green whiskey, his children go

hungry. So landowners around here pretend that they don't know about their father's hunting activities."

"Mr. Ewell shouldn't do that-"

"Of course he shouldn't, but he'll never change his ways. But must his children go hungry because of that?"

"No sir," I murmured. Then I said that if I continued to go to school, we wouldn't be able to read any more..."

Atticus said, "If you agree that it's necessary to go to school, we'll go on reading every night as usual. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes sir!"

"Let's make our bargain without the usual formality," Atticus said, when I prepared to spit.

As I opened the front screen door Atticus said, "By the way, Scout, you'd better not say anything at school about our agreement."

"Why not?"

"I have a feeling that if you tell Miss Caroline that we read every night, she'll get after me, and I wouldn't want her after me."

CHAPTER FOUR

The Dewey Decimal System, as Jem called it, was school wide by the end of my first year, so I had no chance to compare it with other teaching techniques. I could only look around me: Atticus and my uncle, who didn't go to school and were taught at home, knew everything - at least, what one didn't know the other did. Jem, educated on a half-Decimal half-Duncecap basis, functioned effectively alone or in a group, but Jem was a poor example: no educational system could stop him from getting at books. As for me, I knew nothing except what I learned from Time magazine and reading everything, I could lay hands on at home, but as I moved slowly along the treadmill of the Maycomb County school system, I got the impression that I was being cheated out of something. I didn't know what it was, but I did not think that twelve years of boredom was exactly what the state wanted for me.

Jem had to stay at school longer than I, so I had to go home alone. I ran by the Radley Place as fast as I could, not stopping until I reached the safety of our front porch. One afternoon as I raced by, something caught my eye and caught it in such a way that I took a deep breath, a long look around, and went back.

There were two oak trees at the edge of the Radley lot; their roots reached out into the side-road and made it bumpy. Something about one of the trees attracted my attention.

Some tinfoil was glinting in a knothole just above my eye level. I stood on tiptoe, hastily looked around once more, and took out two pieces of chewing gum without 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 put it into my mouth: Wrigley's Double-Mint.

When Jem came home, I told him that I'd found it in the tree at the edge of the Radley Place.

"Spit it out right now, Scout!"

I spat it out. The taste was weakening, anyway. "I've been chewin' it all afternoon and I ain't dead yet, not even sick." Jem stamped his foot. "Don't you know you mustn't 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?"

"No, it'll take the taste out of my mouth."

"Then I'll tell Calpumia on you!"

I didn't want a battle with Calpurnia, so I did as Jem told me.

Summer was on the way. We were waiting for it. Summer was our best season: it was sleeping on the back screened porch in cots, or trying to sleep in the tree house; summer was everything good to eat; it was a thousand colors in landscape; but most of all, summer was Dill.

On the last day of school, Jem and I walked home together. As we came to the oak trees at the Radley Place, we saw another piece of tinfoil in the knothole of one tree. Jem looked around, reached up, and quickly pocketed a small shiny package. We ran home, and on the front porch, Jem opened a small box. Inside were two polished pennies, one on top of the other. Jem examined them.

"Indian-heads," he said. "Nineteen-six and Scout, one of 'cm's nineteen-hundred. These are really old."

"You reckon we ought to keep 'em, Jem?"

"I don't know what we could do, Scout. I know for a fact I hat nobody goes by there."

"What you reckon we ought to do, Jem?"

"Tell you what," said Jem. "We'll keep 'em till school starts, then go around and ask everybody if they're theirs. These are somebody's, I know that. See how they've been polished? They've been saved."

"Yeah, but why should somebody want to put away chewing gum like that? It can't stay fresh long."

"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 strong magic, they make you have good luck like long life and good health, and passin' six-weeks tests... these are really valuable to somebody. I'm gonna put 'em in my trunk."

Before Jem went to his room, he looked for a long time at the Radley Place.

Two days later Dill arrived in a blaze of glory: he had ridden the train by himself from Meridian to Maycomb Junction where he had been met by Miss Rachel in Maycomb's one taxi; he had eaten dinner in the diner. Instead of the awful blue shorts that were buttoned to his shirts, he wore real short pants with a belt; he was somewhat heavier, no taller, and said he had seen his father. Dill's father was taller than ours, he had a black beard (pointed), and was president of the L and N Railroad.

"I helped the engineer for a while," said Dill, yawning.

"In a pig's ear you did, Dill. Shut up," said Jem. "What'll we play today?"

"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," I said. I was tired of playing Tom Rover, who suddenly lost his memory in the middle of a movie and was out of the script until the end, when he was found in Alaska.

"Make us up one, Jem," I said.

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

Our first days of freedom, and we were tired. I wondered what the summer would bring.

We went to the front yard, where Dill stood looking down the street at the dark face of the Radley Place. "I - smell - death," he said. "I do, I mean it," he said, when I told him to shut up.

"You mean when somebody's dyin' you can smell it?"

"No, I mean I can smell somebody an' tell if they're gonna die. An old lady taught me how." Dill sniffed me. "Jean - Louise - Finch, you are going to die in three days."

"Dill, if you don't shut up, I'll knock you bowlegged. I mean it, now-"

"Stop, Scout," said Jem, "you act like you believe in Hot Steams."

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

"Haven't you ever walked along a lonesome road at night and passed by a hot place?" Jem asked Dill. "A Hot Steam's somebody who can't get to heaven, just goes around on lonesome roads an' if you walk through him, when you die you'll be one too and-"

"How can you keep from passing through one?"

"You can't," said Jem. "Sometimes they stretch all the way across the road, but if you have to go through one you

say, 'Angel-bright, life-in-death; get off the road, don't suck my breath."

"Don't you listen to him, Dill," I said. "Calpurnia says l hat's nigger-talk."

Jem frowned darkly at me, but said, "Well, are we gonna play anything or not?"

"Let's roll in the tire," I suggested.

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

"You can push."

I ran to the back yard and pulled an old car tire from under I he house. I rolled it up to the front yard. "I'm first," I said.

Dill wanted to be first because he just got here, but Jem awarded me first push with an extra time for Dill, and I folded myself inside the tire.

Jem didn't like that I'd contradicted him on Hot Steams, so he pushed the tire down the sidewalk with all his force, Ground, sky and houses merged into a mad palette, my ears were throbbing, I was suffocating. I could not put out my hands to stop, they were blocked between my chest and knees. I could only hope that Jem would outrun the tire and me, or that the lire would bump into something in the sidewalk and stop. I heard him behind me, running and shouting.

The tire bumped on gravel, rolled across the road, crashed into a barrier and popped me like a cork onto the

ground. I lay on the ground, unable to move, and heard Jem's voice: "Scout, get away from there, come on!"

I raised my head and stared at the Radley Place steps in front of me. I froze.

"Come on, Scout, don't just he there!" Jem was screaming. "Get up and get the tire!"

When I was able to move, I ran back to them as fast as my shaking knees would carry me.

"Why didn't you bring the tire?" Jem shouted.

"Why don't you get it?" I screamed.

Jem was silent.

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

Jem looked at me angrily, ran into the Radley yard and brought the tire back.

"See there?" He said triumphantly. "Nothin' to it. Sometimes, Scout, you act so much like a girl."

There was more to it than he knew, but I decided not to tell him.

Calpurnia appeared in the front door and said, "Lemonade time! You all get in out of that hot sun before you fry alive!" Lemonade in the middle of the morning was a summertime ritual.

After he drank his second glassful, Jem announced, "I know what we are going to play. Something new, something different."

"What?" asked Dill.

"Boo Radley."

It was clear that Jem wanted to demonstrate his fearless heroism, to show that he wasn't afraid of Radleys in any shape or form.

"Boo Radley? How?" asked Dill.

Jem said, "Scout, you can be Mrs. Radley-"

"I don't think I will. I don't think-"

"Still scared?" Dill said.9

"He can get out at night when we're all asleep..." I said.

Jem hissed. "Scout, how's he gonna know what we're doin'? Besides, I don't think he's still there. He died years ago and they stuffed him up the chimney."

Dill said, "Jem, you and me can play and Scout can watch it she's scared."

I was sure Boo Radley was inside that house, but I couldn't prove it, so I didn't say anything.

Jem parceled out our roles: I was Mrs. Radley, and all I had to do was come out and sweep the porch. Dill was old Mr. Radley: he walked up and down the sidewalk and coughed when Jem spoke to him. Jem, naturally, was Boo: he went under the front steps and shrieked and howled from time to time.

Every day we added new dialogue and plot, polished and perfected our small play.

I reluctantly played various ladies who entered the script. I never thought it, as much fun as Tarzan, and I played that summer with great anxiety despite Jem's assurances that Boo Radley was dead and nothing would get me, with him and Calpurnia there in the daytime and Atticus home at night.

Jem was a born hero.

It was a melancholy little drama, made from bits of gossip and neighborhood legend: Mrs. Radley had been beautiful until she married Mr. Radley and lost all her money. She also lost most of her teeth, her hair, and her right forefinger (Dill's contribution. Boo bit it off one night when he couldn't find my cats and squirrels for his dinner.); she sat in the living room and cried most of the time, while Boo slowly destroyed all the furniture in the house.

The three of us were the boys who got into trouble; I was the judge, for a change; Dill led Jem away and crammed him beneath the steps, poking him with the brushbroom. Jem reappeared when needed in the shapes of the sheriff, various townsfolk, and Miss Stephanie Crawford, who had more to say about the Radleys than anybody in Maycomb.

When it was time to play Boo's big scene, Jem would go into the house and steal the scissors when Calpumia's back was turned, then sit in the swing and cut up newspapers. Dill would walk by, cough at Jem, and Jem would fake a plunge into I fill's thigh. From where I stood, it looked real.

One day we were so busily playing Chapter XXV, Book II of One Man's Family, we did not see Atticus standing on the sidewalk looking at us.

"What are you all playing?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Jem.

"Give me those scissors," Atticus said. "Does this by any chance have anything to do with the Radleys?"

"No sir," said Jem, reddening.

"I hope it doesn't," he said shortly, and went inside the house.

We went to the back yard. Dill asked Jem if we could play anymore.

"I don't know. Atticus didn't say we couldn't-"

"Jem," I said, "I think Atticus knows it anyway."

"No, he doesn't. If he did, he'd say he did."

I was not so sure, but Jem told me I was being a girl, that girls always imagined things, that's why other people hated them so, and if I started behaving like one I could just go off and find some girl to play with.

"All right, you just keep it up then," I said. "You'll find out."

I wanted to stop the game not only because of Atticus's arrival. That day when I rolled into the Radley front yard, I had heard a low sound, so low that I could not have heard it from the sidewalk. Someone inside the house was laughing. But I said nothing about it to the boys.

CHAPTER FIVE

We stopped the game for a while. However, Jem still said that Atticus hadn't said we couldn't, therefore we could; and if Atticus ever said we couldn't, Jem had thought of a way around it: he would simply change the names of the characters and then we couldn't be accused of playing anything.

Dill was in hearty agreement with this plan of action. Dill was disappointing me anyway, following Jem about. He had asked me earlier in the summer to marry him, then he soon forgot about it. He marked me as his property, said I was the only girl he would ever love, then he neglected me. I beat him up twice but it did no good, he only grew closer to Jem. They .pent days together in the tree house, called me only when they needed a third party. But I stayed away from their more foolish schemes for a while, and after being called a girl, I spent most of I he remaining twilights that summer sitting with Miss Maudie Atkinson on her front porch.

Miss Maudie was a widow. Most of her days she worked with her flowers in her front yard. Until Jem and Dill excluded me from their plans, Miss Maudie was only another lady in the neighborhood, but a kind-hearted person. She allowed us to play on her lawn if we kept out of her azaleas, and we could lively run in her large back yard. We seldom spoke to her, but loin and Dill drove me closer to her with their behavior.

Miss Maudie made the best cakes in the neighborhood.

Every time she baked, she made a big cake and three little ones, and she would call across the street: "Jem Finch, Scout I inch, Charles Baker Harris, come here!" She always called us by all our names.

In summertime, twilights are long and peaceful. Miss Maudie and I often sat silently on her porch. We watched the sunset and birds flying low over the neighborhood and disappearing behind the schoolhouse rooftops.

"Miss Maudie," I said one evening, "do you think Boo Radley's still alive?"

"His name's Arthur and he's alive," she said. She was rocking slowly in her big oak chair. "Do you smell my mimosa? It's like angels' breath this evening."

"Yessum. How do you know?"

"Know what, child?"

"That B - Mr. Arthur's still alive?"

"What a strange question. I know he's alive, Jean Louise, because I haven't seen him carried out yet."

"Maybe he died and they stuffed him up the chimney."

"Where did you get such an idea?"

"Jem said that he thought so."

"S-ss-ss. He gets more like Jack Finch every day."

Miss Maudie and Uncle Jack Finch, Atticus's brother, were nearly the same age, they had grown up together at Finch's Landing. Miss Maudie was the daughter of a neighboring landowner, Dr. Frank Buford. Dr. Buford's profession was medicine and his passion was anything that grew in the ground, so he stayed poor. Uncle Jack Finch satisfied his passion for digging in his window boxes in Nashville and stayed rich. Uncle Jack stayed with us every Christmas, and every Christmas he yelled across the street to Miss Maudie that she should come and marry him. Miss Maudie yelled back, "Call a little louder, Jack Finch, and they'll hear you at the post office, I haven't heard you yet!" Jem and I thought this a strange way to ask for a lady's hand in marriage, but then Uncle Jack was rather strange. He said he was trying to get Miss Maudie's goat, that he had been trying unsuccessfully for forty years, that he was the last person in the world Miss Maudie would marry but the first person she would tease, and the best defense to her was active offense, all of which we understood clearly.

"Arthur Radley just stays in the house, that's all," said Miss Maudie.

"Why doesn't he want to come out?"

Miss Maudie said, "You know that story as well as I do."

"But nobody ever told me why."

Miss Maudie tried to explain. "You know old Mr. Radley was a foot-washing Baptist-"

"But you're a Baptist too. Don't you all believe in foot-washing?"

"We do. At home in the bathtub. But foot-washers believe that any pleasure is a sin. Some of them came out of the woods one Saturday and passed by this place and told me that I and my flowers were going to hell."

"Your flowers, too?"

"Yes ma'am, They'd bum right with me. They thought I spent too much time in God's outdoors and not enough time inside the house reading the Bible."

"That ain't right, Miss Maudie. You're the best lady I know."

Miss Maudie smiled. "Thank you ma'am. Thing is, foot- washers think women are a sin by definition. They take the Bible literally, you know. And sometimes the Bible in the hand of one man is worse than a whiskey bottle in the hand of - oh, of your father."

I was shocked. "Atticus doesn't drink whiskey. He said he drank some one time and didn't like it," I said.

Miss Maudie laughed. "Wasn't talking about your father," she said. "I just wanted to say that if Atticus Finch drank until he was drunk he wouldn't be as hard as some men are at their best. There are some people who're so busy worrying about the next world that they've never learned to live in this one, and you can look down the street and see the results."

"Do you think that all those things they say about B - Mr. Arthur are true?"

"What things?"

I told her. Miss Maudie said those stories were made up by colored folks and by Miss Stephanie Crawford.

"Stephanie Crawford even told me once that she woke up in the middle of the night and he was looking in the window at her. I said what did you do, Stephanie, move over in the bed and make room for him? That shut her up for a while."

I was sure it did. Miss Maudie's voice could shut anybody up.

"No, child," she said, "that is a sad house. I remember Arthur Radley when he was a boy. He always spoke nicely to me, no matter what folks said he did. Spoke as nicely as he knew how."

"You reckon he's crazy?"

Miss Maudie shook her head. "If he's not, he should be by now. We never really know the things that happen to people. What happens in houses behind closed doors, what secrets -"

"Atticus doesn't ever do anything to Jem and me in the house that he doesn't do in the yard," I said, feeling it my duty to defend my parent.

"Dear child, I wasn't even thinking about your father. I know that Atticus Finch is the same in his house as he is on the public streets."

Next morning Jem and Dill told me about their new plan. "We are going to give a note to Boo Radley," Jem said calmly.

He was going to put the note on the end of a fishing pole and stick it through the shutters. There was one loose shutter. If anyone came along, Dill would ring my mother's silver dinner bell.

Jem said to me, "You'll watch the back end of the lot and Dill's gonna watch the front of the house an' up the street, an' if anybody comes he'll ring the bell. That clear?"

"All right then. What'd you write him?"

Dill said, "We're askin' him politely to come out sometimes, and tell us what he does in there - we said we wouldn't hurt him and we'd buy him an ice cream."

"You've gone crazy, he'll kill us!"

Dill said, "It's my idea. I reckon if he comes out and sits with us sometimes, he might feel better."

"How do you know he doesn't feel well?"

"Well, how'd you feel if you'd been shut up for a hundred years with nothin' but cats to eat?"

So, the three of us walked toward the old house. Dill remained at the light-pole on the front comer of the lot, and Jem and I walked down the sidewalk parallel to the side of the house. I walked beyond Jem and stood where I could see around the corner.

"All clear," I said. "Not a soul in sight."

Jem looked up the sidewalk to Dill, who nodded.

Jem attached the note to the end of the fishing pole and pushed it across the yard toward one window. The note fell down on to the ground. Jem jabbed it up and again tried to put it on the windowsill. I left my post and went to him.

"Can't get it off the pole," he muttered, "or if I got it off I can't make it stay. Go back down the street, Scout."

I returned and looked around the corner at the empty road. From time to time, I looked back at Jem, who was patiently trying to place the note. I was looking down the street when the dinner bell rang.

I turned around expecting to see Boo Radley and his bloody fangs; instead, I saw Dill ringing the bell with all his force in Atticus's face.

Jem looked so awful that I didn't have the heart to tell him I told him so. He trudged along, dragging the pole behind him on the sidewalk.

Atticus said, "Stop ringing that bell."

Dill stopped the bell; in the silence that followed, I wished he'd start ringing it again. Atticus pushed his hat to the back of his head and put his hands on his hips. "Jem," he said, "what were you doing?"

"We were just tryin' to give a letter to Mr. Radley, sir."

"Let me see it."

Jem held out a filthy piece of paper. Atticus took it and tried to read it. "Why do you ask Mr. Radley to come out?"

Dill said, "We thought he might enjoy us..." and stopped when Atticus looked at him.

"Son," he said to Jem, "I'm going to tell you something and tell you one time: don't torment that man. That goes for the other two of you."

If Mr. Radley wanted to come out, he would. If he wanted to stay inside his own house, he had the right to stay inside free from the attentions of curious children. The civil way to communicate with another person was by the front door instead of a side window? So, we were to stay away from that house until we were invited there, we were not to play a foolish game and make fun of anybody on this street or in this town -

"We weren't makin' fun of him, we weren't laughin' at him," said Jem, "we were just-"

"So that was what you were doing, wasn't it?"

"Makin 'fun of him?"

"No," said Atticus, "putting his life's history on display for the edification of the neighborhood."

"I didn't say we were doin' that, I didn't say it!"

Atticus smiled dryly. "You just told me," he said. "You stop this nonsense right now, every one of you."

Jem looked at him with his mouth open.

"You want to be a lawyer, don't you?" Our father tried not to smile.

Jem was silent. When Atticus went inside the house for a file he had forgotten to take to work that morning, Jem finally understood that Atticus had played the oldest lawyer's trick on him. He waited until Atticus left the house and walked toward town. When Atticus was out of earshot, Jem yelled after him: "I thought I wanted to be a lawyer but I ain't so sure now!"

CHAPTER SIX

Atticus allowed us to go over and sit by Miss Rachel's fish pool with Dill, as this was his last night in Maycomb. "Tell him so long for me, and we'll see him next summer."

A gigantic moon was rising behind Miss Maudie's house. Dill said, "I know what, let's go for a walk."

He sounded fishy to me. Nobody in Maycomb just went for a walk. "Whereto, Dill?"

Dill jerked his head in a southerly direction.

When I protested, Jem said sweetly, "You don't have to come along Angel May."

"You shouldn't go. Remember-"

"Scout, we ain't gonna do anything, we're just goin' to the street light and back." It seemed that Jem only remembered one message from Atticus: the example in the art of cross-examination.

We walked silently down the sidewalk. After a while Jem said, "Why don't you go on home, Scout?"

"What are you gonna do?"

Dill and Jem were simply going to peep in the window with the loose shutter and see if they could get a look at Boo Radley, and if I didn't want to go with them I could go straight home and keep my mouth shut, that was all.

"But why did you wait till tonight?"

Because nobody could see them at night, because Atticus would be deep in a book and wouldn't hear anything, because if Boo Radley killed them they'd miss school instead of vacation, and because it was easier to see inside a dark house in the dark than in the daytime, did I understand?

"Jem, please-"

"Scout, I'm tellin' you for the last time, shut your mouth or go home. You're gettin' more like a girl every day!"

That left me no option. I joined them. We decided that it was better to go under the high wire fence at the back of the Radley lot, we stood less chance of being seen.

Fist Jem held up the bottom wire for Dill and me, then I held up the wire for Jem. It was a tight squeeze for him. "Don't make a sound," he whispered.

Stealthily, we came to the gate that divided the garden from the back yard. Jem touched it. The gate squeaked.

"Spit on it," whispered Dill.

We spat ourselves dry, and Jem opened the gate slowly. We were in the back yard. We crept to the side of the house, around to the window with the hanging shutter. The sill was several inches taller than Jem. We decided to make a saddle for Dill. Jem grabbed his left wrist and my right wrist, I grabbed my left wrist and Jem's right wrist, we crouched, and Dill sat on our saddle. We raised him and he caught the windowsill.

After we lowered him to the ground, Jem asked, "What'd you see?"

"Nothing. Curtains. There's a little light way off somewhere, though."

"Let's get away from here," Jem whispered. "Let's go 'round in back again. Sh-h," he warned me, as I wanted to protest.

There were two windows on the back porch of the house.

"Let's try the back window," Dill said.

"Dill, no," I said.

Dill stopped and let Jem go ahead. When Jem put his foot on the bottom step, the step squeaked. I le stood still, then slowly tried again. The step was silent. When lie got on the porch, Jem dropped to his knees. He crawled to the window, raised his head and looked in.

Then I saw the shadow. It was the shadow of a man with a hat on. The back porch was bathed in moonlight, and the shadow moved across the porch toward Jem.

Dill saw it next. He put his hands to his face.

When it crossed Jem, Jem saw it. He put his arms over his head and froze.

The shadow stopped, then turned and moved back across Jem, walked along the porch and off the side of the house, returning as it had come.

Jem jumped off the porch and galloped toward us. He opened the gate, and we ran to the wire fence. Suddenly the roar of a shotgun shattered the neighborhood. We all dropped down. "Fence by the schoolyard! - hurry, Scout!" Jem's voice was breathless.

Jem held the bottom wire; Dill and I rolled through and were halfway to the shelter of the schoolyard's oak tree when we felt that Jem was not with us. We ran back and saw that his pants got caught in the wire. He kicked his pants off and ran to the oak tree in his shorts.

Jem didn't let us stay long there: "We gotta get home, they'll miss us."

We ran to our back fence and stopped only when we were in our back yard. When our breath became normal, the three of us walked quietly to the front yard. We looked down the street and saw a circle of neighbors at the Radley front gate.

"We better go down there," said Jem. "They'll think it's funny if we don't show up."

Mr. Nathan Radley was standing inside his gate, a shotgun in his arm. Atticus was standing beside Miss Maudie and Miss Stephanie Crawford. Miss Rachel and Mr. Avery were nearby. None of them saw us.

We stopped beside Miss Maudie and she looked around. "Where were you all, didn't you hear the shot?"

"What happened?" asked Jem.

"Mr. Radley shot at a Negro in his chicken patch."

"Oh. Did he shoot him?"

"No," said Miss Stephanie. "Shot in the air. Scared him pale, though. Says if anybody sees a white nigger around, that's the one. Says if he hears another sound in that patch, he won't aim high, be it dog, nigger, or - Jem Finch!"

"Ma'am?" asked Jem.

Atticus spoke. "Where're your pants, son?"

"Pants, sir?"

I sighed. It was no use. In his shorts before God and everybody.

"Ah - Mr. Finch?"

Dill's eyes widened, his fat cherub face grew rounder. "What is it, Dill?" asked Atticus.

"Ah - I won them from him," he said vaguely.

"Won them? How?"

Dill said that we had played strip poker by the fish poo, and he had won Jem's pants.

Jem and I felt easier. The neighbors seemed satisfied: they all stood still. But what was strip poker?

We had no chance to find out: Miss Rachel went off like the town fire siren: "Oo-o-o Jee-sus, Dill Harris! Gambling by my fish pool? I'll strip-poker you, sir!"

Atticus said, "Just a minute, Miss Rachel, I've never heard of 'em doing that before. Were you all playing cards?"

Jem answered quickly, "No sir, just with matches."

I admired my brother. Matches were dangerous, but cards were fatal.

"Jem, Scout," said Atticus, "I don't want to hear of poker in any form again. Go and get your pants, Jem."

"Don't worry. Dill," said Jem, as we ran up the sidewalk, "she ain't gonna get you. He'll talk her out of it. That was fast thinkin', son. Listen... you hear?"

We stopped, and heard Atticus's voice: "...not serious... they all go through it, Miss Rachel..."

Dill was comforted, but Jem and I weren't. There was the problem of Jem's pants.

I couldn't sleep well that night. We were sleeping on the back porch. Sometime between sleep and wakefulness, I heard Jem's voice.

"Sleep, Little Three-Eyes?"

"Are you crazy?"

"Sh-h. Atticus's light's out."

In the moonlight, I saw that Jem was standing up.

"I'm goin' after 'em," he said.

I sat upright. "You can't. I won't let you."

He was putting on his shirt. "I've got to. I - it's like this, Scout," he said. "Atticus ain't ever whipped me since I can remember. I want to keep it that way."

I tried to talk him out of it, but it was no use. I opened the back door and watched his white shirt disappearing in the darkness. I knew he would go through the backyard and then across the schoolyard and around to the fence. It would take longer, so it was not time to worry yet.

I waited until it was time to worry and listened for Mr. Radley's shotgun. It didn't come. Then there he Was, returning to me. His white shirt went over the back fence and slowly grew larger. He came up the back steps, closed the door behind him, and sat on his cot. Wordlessly, he held up his pants. He lay down, and for a while, his cot trembled. Soon he was still. I did not hear any sound.

CHAPTER SEVEN

School started. The second grade was as bad as the first, only worse - they still flashed cards at you and didn't let you read or write. The best thing about the second grade was that this year I had to stay as late as Jem, and we usually walked home together at three o'clock.

As we went home one afternoon, Jem told me, for the first time, how he had found his pants that night. "They were folded across the fence... like they were expectin' me, and they'd been sewed up."

"Sewed up?"

"But not like a lady sewed 'em, like somethin' I'd try to do. It's almost like-"

"- somebody knew you were cornin' back for 'em."

"Like somebody was reading my mind... like somebody knew what I was gonna do."

When we reached our tree, we saw a ball of gray twine in the knothole.

I said that it was somebody's hiding place and we shouldn't take it.

"Okay, you may be right," said Jem. "Maybe, it's some little kid's place - hides his things from the bigger folks.

We went home. Next morning the twine was where we had left it. When it was still there on the third day, Jem

pocketed it. From then on, we considered everything we found in the knothole our property.

In October, our knothole stopped us again. Something white was inside this time. I pulled out two small figures made of soap. One was the figure of a boy, the other wore a dress. They were almost perfect miniatures of two children. The boy had on shorts, and a lock of soapy hair fell to his eyebrows. I looked up at Jem. A lock of straight brown hair fell downwards from his part. I had never noticed it before.

Jem looked from the girl-doll to me. The girl-doll wore bangs. So did I.

"These are us," he said.

"Who did 'em, you reckon?"

Jem stared at me so long I asked what was the matter, but got "Nothing, Scout", for an answer. At home, Jem put the dolls in his trunk. Less than two weeks later, we found a whole package of chewing gum. Jem decided to forget that everything on the Radley Place was poison, and we enjoyed it. Then we found a tarnished medal in the knothole. Jem showed it to Atticus, who said that it, was a spelling medal, that before we were born, the Maycomb County schools had spelling contests and awarded medals to the winners. Jem asked Atticus if he remembered anybody who ever won such medal, and Atticus said no.

Our biggest prize appeared four days later. It was a pocket watch that didn't work, on a chain with an aluminum knife.

Jem and I decided to write a thank-you letter and put it in the knothole.

"Dear sir," Jem wrote. "We appreciate everything which you have put into the tree for us. Yours very truly, Jem Finch." And I signed, "Jean Louise Finch (Scout)."

Next morning on the way to school, we found that someone had filled our knothole with cement.

"Don't you cry, now, Scout... don't cry now, don't you worry-" Jem tried to calm me all the way to school.

When we went home for dinner, Jem stood on the steps of the porch and looked down the street. "Hasn't passed by yet," he said when I joined him.

Next day Jem stood on the steps again and was rewarded.

"Hidy do, Mr. Nathan," he said.

"Morning Jem, Scout," said Mr. Radley, as he went by. "Mr. Radley, ah - did you put cement in that hole in that tree down yonder?"

"Yes," Mr. Radley turned around. "I filled it up."

"Why'd you do it, sir?"

"Tree's dying. You plug 'em with cement when they're sick. You ought to know that, Jem."

As usual, we met Atticus coming home from work that evening. When we were at our steps, Jem said, "Atticus, look down yonder at that tree, please sir."

"What tree, son?"

"The one on the comer of the Radley lot."

"Yes?"

"Is that tree dyin'?"

"Why no, son, I don't think so. Look at the leaves, they're all green and full, no brown patches anywhere-"

"It ain't even sick?"

"That tree's as healthy as you are, Jem. Why?"

"Mr. Nathan Radley said it was dyin'."

"Well maybe it is. I'm sure Mr. Radley knows more about his trees than we do."

Atticus left us on the porch. Jem stood by a pillar with his back to me for a long time, saying nothing.

I waited for him. When we went in the house, I saw that he had been crying; his face was dirty in the right places.

CHAPTER EIGHT

In South Alabama, winter sometimes doesn't come at all; autumn turns to a spring a few days long, then summer comes again.

But that year autumn turned to winter. We had two weeks of the coldest weather since 1885, Atticus said.

One morning I awoke, looked out the window and nearly died of fright. My screams brought Atticus from his bathroom half-shaven.

"The world's endin', Atticus! Please do something-!" I dragged him to the window and pointed.

"No it's not," he said. "It's snowing."

Jem had never seen snow either, but he knew what it was. He wanted to know if the snow would go on falling. Atticus said he didn't know any more about snow than Jem did. "But I think, if it's watery like that, it'll turn to rain."

The telephone rang and Atticus left the breakfast table to answer it. "That was Eula May," he said when he returned. "I quote - As it has not snowed in Maycomb County since 1885, there will be no school today'."

Eula May was Maycomb's chief telephone operator. He duties included making public announcements, wedding invitations, setting off the fire siren, and giving first-aid instructions when Dr. Reynolds was away.

When Atticus finally called us to order and asked us to look at our plates instead of out the windows, Jem asked, "How do you make a snowman?"

Atticus said that he didn't want to disappoint us, but he thought that there wouldn't be enough snow for a snowball, even.

When we ran to the back yard, it was covered with a very thin layer of soggy snow. Jem said if we waited until it snowed some more, we could scrape it all up for a snowman. I caught a fat flake with my tongue. It burned.

"Jem, it's hot!"

"No, it ain't, it's so cold it bums. Now don't eat it, Scout, you're wasting it. Let it come down."

"But I want to walk in it."

"I know what, we can go walk over at Miss Maudie's."

Jem hopped across the front yard. I followed in his tracks.

Miss Maudie was covering her azaleas with some bags. Jem asked her if we could borrow some of her snow.

"Heavens alive, take it all!" Miss Maudie's eyes narrowed. "Jem Finch, what are you going to do with my snow?"

"You'll see," said Jem, and we carried as much snow as we could from Miss Maudie's yard to ours.

"What are we gonna do, Jem?" I asked.

"You'll see," he said. "Now get the basket and haul all the snow from the back yard to the front. Walk back in your tracks," he warned.

Jem himself began digging earth in the back yard. When we had five baskets of earth and two baskets of snow, Jem said we were ready to begin. He constructed a torso from dirt, then he made a big stomach below the figure's waistline.

His eyes were laughing, and he said, "Mr. Avery's sort of shaped like a snowman, ain't he?" Mr. Avery lived on our street, and he said that the cold weather was our fault: we hadn't behaved well.

Jem scooped up some snow and began plastering it on. He permitted me to cover only the back, saving the public parts for himself. Gradually Mr. Avery turned white.

For eyes, nose, mouth, and buttons Jem used bits of wood.

"It's lovely, Jem," I said. "Looks almost like he'd talk to you."

When Atticus saw Jem's creation, he said, "I didn't know how you were going to do it, but from now on I'll never worry about what'll become of you, son, you'll always have an idea."

Our father stepped back, looked at the snowman a while, then laughed. "Son, I can't tell what you're going to be - an engineer, a lawyer, or a portrait painter. This is a near libel here in the front yard. We've got to disguise this fellow."

Atticus advised Jem to hone down his creation's front a little, add a broom and put an apron on him.

Jem explained that if he did, the snowman would become dirty and not a snowman.

"I don't care what you do, but do something," said Atticus. "You can't make caricatures of the neighbors."

"I know what!" said Jem. He ran across the street, disappeared into Miss Maudie's back yard and returned triumphant. He put her sunhat on the snowman's head and jammed her hedge-clippers into his arm. Atticus said that would be fine.

Miss Maudie opened her front door and came out on the porch. She looked across the street at us. Suddenly she laughed. "Jem Finch," she called. "You devil, bring me back my hat, sir!"

Jem looked up at Atticus, who shook his head. "She's just fussing," he said. "She's really impressed with your creation."

Atticus walked over to Miss Maudie's sidewalk, where they started an arm-waving conversation. I caught only one phrase of it: "...constructed an absolute morphodite in that yard! Atticus, you'll never raise 'em!"

The snow stopped in the afternoon, the temperature dropped. Calpurnia kept every fireplace in the house burning, but we were cold. Before I went to sleep, Atticus put more coal on the fire in my room. He said the thermometer registered sixteen, that it was the coldest night in his memory, and that our snowman outside was frozen solid.

In the middle of the night, Atticus woke me up. He told me to get dressed quickly and to put on my bathrobe and coat. Jem was standing beside Atticus. He was holding his overcoat closed at the neck.

"Hurry, honey," said Atticus.

I understood that there was trouble in our street.

"Whose is it?"

"Miss Maudie's, honey," said Atticus gently.

At the front door, we saw that Miss Maudie's dining room was on fire.

Atticus told us to go down the street and stand in front of the Radley Place, to keep out of the way.

The street filled with men and cars while fire silently devoured Miss Maudie's house. As the night was very cold, the motor of the old fire truck didn't start, and a crowd of men pushed it from town.

The men of Maycomb took furniture from Miss Maudie's house to a yard across the street. I saw that Atticus was carrying Miss Maudie's heavy oak rocking chair, which she liked most of all.

Suddenly I noticed that smoke was rolling off our house and Miss Rachel's house like fog off a riverbank, and men were pulling hoses toward them. Behind us, the fire truck from Abbottsville screamed around the comer and stopped in front of our house.

"That book..." I said.

"What?" said Jem.

"That Tom Swift book, it ain't mine, it's Dill's..."

"Don't worry, Scout," said Jem. He pointed. "Look there."

In a group of neighbors, Atticus was standing with his hands in his overcoat pockets. Miss Maudie was beside him.

"See there, he's not worried yet," said Jem.

The Abbottsville fire truck began pumping water on our house; a man on the roof pointed to places that needed it most. Our Absolute Morphodite went black and turned to muddy heap with Miss Maudie's sunhat on top. In the heat between our house, Miss Rachel's and Miss Maudie's, the men had long ago took off coats and bathrobes, but I felt that I was slowly freezing where I stood. By dancing a little, I could feel my feet.

Another fire truck appeared and stopped in front of Miss Stephanie Crawford's.

Miss Maudie's tin roof stopped the flames. Roaring, the house collapsed. Men on top of the adjacent houses were beating out sparks and burning chunks of wood by blankets.

It was dawn before the men began to leave, first one by one, then in groups. They pushed the Maycomb fire truck back to town, the Abbottsville truck and the third one departed.

Atticus led us home. He said that Miss Maudie would stay with Miss Stephanie for the time being.

"Anybody want some hot chocolate?" he asked. I shuddered when Atticus started a fire in the kitchen stove.

As we drank our cocoa, I noticed that Atticus was looking at me, first with curiosity, then with sternness. "I thought I told you and Jem to stay in front of the Radley Place," he said.

"Why, we did. We stayed-"

"Then whose blanket is that? It isn't ours."

I looked down and saw that I was wearing a brown woolen blanket around my shoulders.

"Atticus, I don't know, sir... I-"

I turned to Jem for an answer, but he was even more surprised than I. He said we did exactly as Atticus had told us, we stood down by the Radley gate away from everybody, we didn't move an inch - Jem stopped.

"Mr. Nathan was at the fire," he said, "I saw him, he was helping with the furniture - Atticus, I swear..."

"That's all right, son." Atticus grinned slowly. "Looks like all of Maycomb was out tonight, in one way or another. Jem, get some wrapping paper from the pantry and we'll-"

"Atticus, no sir!"

And Jem told our father everything, all our secrets, knothole, pants and all.

"... Mr. Nathan put cement in that tree, Atticus, just to stop it - he's crazy, I reckon, like they say, but Atticus, I swear to God he hasn't ever hurt us, he could have cut my throat from ear to ear that night but he tried to mend my pants instead... he hasn't ever hurt us, Atticus-"

"Whoa, son," Atticus said, very gently. "You're right. We'd better keep this blanket to ourselves. Someday, maybe, Scout can thank him for covering her up."

"Thank who?" I asked.

"Boo Radley. Just think, Scout," Jem said, "if you'd just turned around, you'd a seen him."

Atticus allowed us not to go to school that day, after a sleepless night. Calpumia told us to try and clean up the front yard.

Miss Maudie's sunhat was covered with a thin layer of ice, and we had to dig under the dirt for her hedge-clippers. We found her in her back yard, gazing at her frozen charred azaleas.

"We're bringing back your things, Miss Maudie," said Jem. "We're awfully sorry."

Miss Maudie looked around, and the shadow of her old smile crossed her face. "Always wanted a smaller house, Jem Finch. Gives me more yard. Just think, I'll have more room for my azaleas now!"

"But I began.

"Don't you worry about me, Jean Louise Finch. Why, I'll build me a little house and take me a couple of roomers and - gracious, I'll have the finest yard in Alabama!"

It was another cold day. Miss Maudie's nose was a very strange color, and I asked about it.

"I've been out here since six o'clock," she said. "Should be frozen by now." She showed us her palms, brown with dirt and dried blood.

Jem said that we could help her.

Miss Maudie said, "Thank you sir, but you've got a job of your own over there." She pointed to our yard.

"You mean the Morphodite?" I asked. "Shoot, we can rake him up in a jiffy."

Miss Maudie stared down at me, her lips were moving silently. Suddenly she put her hands to her head and whooped. When we left her, she was still laughing.

Jem said he didn't know what was the matter with her - that was just Miss Maudie.

CHAPTER NINE

One day Cecil Jacobs announced in the schoolyard that Scout Finch's daddy defended niggers. I denied it, but told Jem. "What'd he mean sayin' that?" I asked.

"Nothing," Jem said. "Ask Atticus, he'll tell you."

When I asked Atticus in the evening, he explained that he was defending a Negro, Tom Robinson by name, who was a member of Calpumia's church. Cal knew his family well and said that they were good folks. But the talk around town was that Atticus shouldn't do much about defending this man.

"If you shouldn't be defendin' him, then why are you doin' it?"

"For a number of reasons," said Atticus. "The main one is, if I didn't I couldn't hold up my head in town, I couldn't represent this county in the legislature, I couldn't even tell you or Jem not to do something again."

Then Atticus told me that every lawyer had at least one case in his lifetime that affected him personally. Tom Robinson's case was such case for him.

"You might hear some ugly talk about it at school, but do one thing for me," Atticus said, "you just hold your head high and keep those fists down. No matter what anybody says to you, don't you let 'em get your goat. Try fighting with your head for a change... You have a good head."

"Atticus, are we going to win it?"

"No, honey."

"Then why-"

"There's no reason not to try to win," Atticus said.

Next day in the schoolyard, when Cecil Jacobs said that my father was a disgrace and that nigger ought to hang, I didn't fight him. For the first time I walked away from a fight. I didn't want to let Atticus down. I stayed away from fights for three weeks. Then Christmas catastrophe came.

For Jem and me there were two sides to Christmas. The good side was the tree and Uncle Jack Finch. Every Christmas Eve day we met Uncle Jack at Maycomb Junction, and he spent a week with us.

The other side was the Christmas day at Finch's Landing with Aunt Alexandra, Uncle Jimmy and Francis. Francis was their grandson whose parents brought him to Finch's Landing every Christmas. Francis Hancock was a year older than I, and we liked absolutely different things. Aunt Alexandra was Atticus's sister, but they were absolutely different.

When we met Uncle Jack at the station on Christmas Eve day, he had two long packages with him. I asked him what was in those packages; he said that it was none of my business.

Uncle Jack was a doctor, but he never behaved like a doctor. Whenever he removed a splinter from a foot, for example, he always told us exactly what he was going to do, how much it would hurt, and explained the use of any instruments he used. One Christmas I had a very bad splinter in my foot and didn't let anybody come near me.

When Uncle Jack caught me, he told me a funny story about a preacher who hated going to church so much that every day he stood at his gate in his dressing-gown, smoked and delivered five-minute sermons to any passers-by who desired spiritual comfort. I interrupted him and asked him to let me know when he would pull the splinter out, but Uncle Jack held up a bloody splinter in a pair of tweezers and said that he pulled it out while I was laughing.

At supper that evening when I asked him to pass the damn ham, please, Uncle Jack pointed at me. "See me afterwards, young lady," he said.

When supper was over, Uncle Jack took me to the living room and talked to me.

"You like words like damn and hell now, don't you?"

I said I reckoned so.

"Well I don't," said Uncle Jack, "not unless there's extreme provocation connected with 'em. I'll be here a week, and I don't want to hear any words like that while I'm here. Scout, you'll get in trouble if you go around saying things like that. You want to grow up to be a lady, don't you?"

I said not particularly.

"Of course you do. Now let's get to the tree."

We decorated the tree until bedtime. Next morning we found those two long packages under the tree. They were from Atticus, who had written Uncle Jack to get them for us, and they were what we had asked for.

"Don't point them in the house," said Atticus, when Jem aimed at a picture on the wall.

He didn't allow us to take our air rifles to the Landing (I had already begun to think of shooting Francis) and said if we made one wrong move with them, he'd take them away from us for good.

When we arrived at the Landing, Aunt Alexandra kissed Uncle Jack, Francis kissed Uncle Jack, Uncle Jimmy shook hands silently with Uncle Jack. Jem and I gave our presents to Francis, who gave us a present. Jem felt his age and stayed near the adults. I had to stay with our cousin Francis.

After an excellent Christmas dinner (Aunt Alexandra was a very good cook) the adults went to the living room and sat around in a sleepy condition. Jem lay on the floor, and I went to the back yard.

Francis sat beside me on the back steps.

"What'd you get for Christmas?" I asked politely.

"Just what I asked for," he said. Francis had asked for a pair of knee-pants, a red leather book sack, five shirts and a bow tie.

"That's nice," I lied. "Jem and I got air rifles, and Jem got a chemistry set-"

"A toy one, I reckon."

"No, a real one. He's gonna make me some invisible ink, and I'm gonna write to Dill in it."

"Dill?"

"Yeah. Don't say anything about it yet, but we're gonna get married as soon as we're big enough. He asked me last summer."

"You mean that shorty who stays with Miss Rachel every summer?"

"That's exactly who I mean."

"I know all about him," said Francis. And he said that Dill had no home and his relatives passed him from one to another, Miss Rachel, as one of them, kept him every summer.

I didn't believe him.

Francis said, "You're very foolish sometimes, Jean Louise. You don't understand, I reckon."

"What do you mean?"

"If Uncle Atticus lets you run around with stray dogs, that's his own business, as Grandma says, so it ain't your fault. I guess it ain't your fault if Uncle Atticus is a nigger-lover besides, but Grandma says we'll never be able to walk the streets of Maycomb again. He's ruinin' the family, that's what he's doin'."

Francis rose quickly and ran to the old kitchen that stood in the back yard. At a safe distance he called, "He's nothin' but a nigger-lover!"

"He is not!" I roared. I jumped off the steps and ran after him. It was easy to catch Francis.

"I don't know what you're talkin' about, but you better take it back this red hot minute!"

Francis jerked loose and sped into the old kitchen.

"Nigger-lover!" he yelled from the kitchen.

I went back to the steps. I could wait patiently. The rule is - say nothing, and he will become curious and come out. Francis appeared at the kitchen door. "You still mad, Jean Louise?" he asked.

"Nothing to speak of," I said.

He jumped into the yard and kept his distance. Jem appeared on the porch, looked at us, and went away. Francis climbed the mimosa tree, came down, put his hands in his pockets and walked around the yard. Then he looked at me carefully, decided that I had calmed down, and said softly, "Nigger-lover..."

This time, I cut my knuckle to the bone on his front teeth. I didn't have time for another blow: Uncle Jack pinned my arms to my sides and said, "Stand still!"

Aunt Alexandra, Atticus, Jem, and Uncle Jimmy had come to the back porch when Francis started yelling.

"Who started this?" said Uncle Jack.

Francis and I pointed at each other. "Grandma," he cried, "she called me a whore-lady and jumped on me!"

"Is that true, Scout?" said Uncle Jack.

"I reckon so."

"I told you you'd get in trouble if you used words like that? I told you, didn't I?"

"Yes sir, but

"Well, you're in trouble now."

I turned to run but Uncle Jack was quicker: I was suddenly looking at an ant with a breadcrumb in the grass. Uncle Jack spanked my rear end quite hard. I ran to Atticus for comfort, but he said I had invited it myself and it was high time we went home. I got into the back seat of the car without saying goodbye to anyone, and at home, I ran to my room and slammed the door. Jem tried to say something nice, but I didn't let him in.

When Uncle Jack knocked on the door, I told him to go away. He said if I talked like that, he'd spank me again, so I was quiet. When he entered the room, I went to a comer and turned my back on him. "Scout," he said, "do you still hate me?"

"Go on, please sir."

Uncle Jack said that he had only done what he had promised to do if I continued to use bad words.

I told him that he wasn't fair because he hadn't given me a chance to tell him my side of it.

"When Jem an' I fuss, Atticus doesn't ever just listen to Jem's side of it, he hears mine too. And then, you told me never to use words like that except in ex-extreme provocation, and Francis provoked me extremely."

"What was your side of it, Scout?"

"Francis called Atticus a nigger-lover and a lot more. Said Atticus would be the ruination of the family, and I swear before God, Uncle Jack, if I'll sit there and let him say somethin' about Atticus."

Uncle Jack got very angry with Francis. "I think I'll go out there tonight. Alexandra should know about this. Wait till I get my hands on that boy..."

"Uncle Jack, please promise me somethin', please sir. Promise you won't tell Atticus about this. He - he asked me not to get mad at anything I heard about him, so let him think we were fightin' about somethin' else instead. Please promise..."

"But Francis mustn't get away with something like that-"

"He didn't. You reckon you could bandage my hand? It's still bleeding some."

"Of course I will, baby. There's no hand I would be more happy to bandage. Will you come this way?"

Uncle Jack gallantly bowed me to the bathroom. While he cleaned and bandaged my knuckles, he entertained me with a funny story. "There now," he said. "You'll have a very unladylike scar on your wedding-ring finger."

"Thank you sir. Uncle Jack?"

"Ma'am?"

"What's a whore-lady?"

Uncle Jack told me a long tale about an old Prime Minister who sat in the House of Commons and blew feathers in the air and tried to keep them there, when all around him men were losing their heads. I think he was trying to answer my question, but he made no sense whatsoever.

Later, when I got out of bed and went down the hall for a drink of water, I heard Atticus and Uncle Jack in the living room. They discussed the events of the day, and Uncle Jack didn't tell Atticus my side of it, even when Atticus said, "Scout's got to learn to keep her head and learn soon. She and Jem will have to learn some ugly things pretty soon. I'm not worried about Jem. He is getting older and can keep his head. A good thing is that Scout more and more follows his example now. But she needs assistance sometimes."

"Atticus, how bad is this going to be? You haven't had too much chance to discuss it."

"It couldn't be worse, Jack. The only thing we've got is a black man's word against the Ewells'. I don't expect that the jury'll take Tom Robinson's word against the Ewells'."

"What are you going to do, then?"

"Before I finish, I'm going to jar the jury a bit - I think we'll have a chance on appeal. I really can't tell at this stage, Jack. You know what's going to happen as well as I do, Jack, and I hope and pray that I can get Jem and Scout through it without bitterness, and most of all, without catching Maycomb's usual disease. I can't understand why

reasonable people go mad when anything involves a Negro... I just hope that Jem and Scout come to me for their answers instead of listening to the town. I hope they trust me enough... Jean Louise?"

My scalp jumped. "Sir?"

"Go to bed."

I ran to my room and went to bed. Uncle Jack was a prince of a fellow, didn't let me down. But how did Atticus know that I was listening? Only many years later I understood: he wished that I heard every word he said.

CHAPTER TEN

Atticus was feeble: he was nearly fifty. He was much older than the parents of our classmates, and Jem and I couldn't say anything about him when they said, "My father-"

Our father didn't do anything. He worked in an office, not in a drugstore. Atticus did not drive a dump truck for the county, he was not the sheriff, he did not farm, work in a garage, or do anything that could possibly awaken the admiration of anyone. Besides that, he wore glasses.

He did not do the things that our schoolmates' fathers did: he never went hunting or fishing, he did not play poker or drink or smoke. He sat in the living room and read.

That year, however, the school full of talk about the case of Tom Robinson, and that Atticus was going to defend him. The talk was not complimentary at all.

When he gave us our air rifles, Atticus refused to teach us to shoot. Uncle Jack instructed us; he said, "Shoot all the jays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

Atticus never before said that it was a sin to do something, and I asked Miss Maudie about it.

"Your father's right," she said. "Mockingbirds only make music that we enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing, just sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

When I said to Miss Maudie that only old people lived on our street, like Mrs. Dubose, Miss Rachel, and she and Atticus were old too, she said, "You're lucky, you know. You and Jem have the benefit of your father's age. If your father was thirty you'd find life quite different."

"I sure would. Atticus can't do anything..."

"You'd be surprised," said Miss Maudie. "There's life in him yet."

"What can he do?"

"Well, did you know he's the best checker-player in this town? Why, down at the Landing when we were growing up, Atticus Finch could beat everybody on both sides of the river."

"Good Lord, Miss Maudie, Jem and me beat him all the time."

"It's about time you found out it's because he lets you. Did you know he can play a Jew's Harp?"

It made me even more ashamed of him.

"Well," Miss Maudie said, "it seems that nothing makes you proud of him. Can't everybody play a Jew's Harp. Now keep out of the way of the carpenters. You'd better go home, I'll be in my azaleas and can't watch you. Some board might hit you."

I went to the back yard and found that Jem was shooting cans. I returned to the front yard and in two hours, I constructed a complicated breastwork at the side of the porch. It consisted of a tire, an orange crate, a large basket,

the porch chairs, and a small U.S. flag Jem gave me from a popcorn box.

When Atticus came home to dinner, I was aiming across the street from behind of my breastwork. "What are you shooting at?"

"Miss Maudie's rear end."

Atticus turned and saw that my generous target was bending over her azaleas. He pushed his hat to the back of his head and crossed the street. "Maudie," he called, "I thought I'd better warn you. You're in great danger."

Miss Maudie straightened up and looked toward me. She said, "Atticus, you are a devil from hell."

When Atticus returned, he told me to break camp. "Don't you ever point that gun at anybody again," he said.

One February Saturday, Jem and I went with our air rifles to see if we could find a rabbit or a squirrel. We had gone about five hundred yards beyond the Radley Place when Jem pointed to a dog in the distance. It was old Tim Johnson, the property of Mr. Harry Johnson who drove the Mobile bus and lived on the southern edge of town. Tim was the pet of Maycomb. "What's he doing?"

"I don't know, Scout. We better go home."

"Aw Jem, it's February."

"I don't care, I'm gonna tell Cal."

We ran home and into the kitchen. Jem told Calpurnia that something was wrong with Tim Johnson, he looked

sick. Jem said that Tim was breathing hard and moseying, and he was coming our way.

Calpurnia came out into the yard and followed us beyond the Radley Place and looked where Jem pointed.

Tim Johnson was not much more than a small spot in the distance, but he was closer to us. He walked unsteadily, as if his right legs were shorter than his left legs.

Calpurnia stared, then grabbed us by the shoulders and ran us home. She shut the wood door behind us, went to the telephone and shouted, "Gimme Mr. Finch's office!"

"Mr. Finch!" she shouted. "This is Cal. I swear to God there's a mad dog down the street - he's comin' this way, yes sir, he's - old Tim Johnson, yes sir... yes sir... yes -"

She hung up, then made another call. "Miss Eula May, can you call Miss Rachel and Miss Stephanie Crawford and whoever's got a phone on this street and tell 'em a mad dog's cornin'? Please ma'am!"

Calpumia listened. "I know it's February, Miss Eula May, but I know a mad dog when I see one. Please, ma'am, hurry!"

As Calpumia sprinted back, a black Ford turned into the driveway. Atticus and Mr. Heck Tate, the sheriff of Maycomb County, got out. Mr. Tate carried a heavy rifle. Atticus told us to stay inside. He asked Calpumia where Tim Johnson was.

"He ought a be here by now," Calpumia said, and pointed down the street.

"Not runnin', is he?" asked Mr. Tate.

"Now sir, he's in the twitchin' stage, Mr. Heck."

I thought mad dogs had foam at the mouth, galloped, jumped at throats, and I thought they did it in August. If Tim Johnson had behaved thus, I would have been less frightened.

Nothing is more deadly than an empty, waiting street. The trees were still, the mockingbirds were silent, the carpenters at Miss Maudie's house had disappeared. Miss Stephanie Crawford and Miss Maudie stood behind the glass window of Miss Crawford's front door. Tim Johnson stopped in front of the Radley's house.

"There he is," Mr. Tate said softly. "He's mad all right, Mr. Finch."

Atticus said, "He's within range, Heck. You better get him before he goes down the side street - Lord knows who's around the comer."

"Take him, Mr. Finch." Mr. Tate handed the rifle to Atticus; Jem and I nearly fainted.

"Don't waste time, Heck," said Atticus. "Go on."

"Mr. Finch, this is a one-shot job. Look where he is! Miss and you'll go straight into the Radley house! I can't shoot that well and you know it!"

"I haven't shot a gun in thirty years-"

Mr. Tate almost threw the rifle at Atticus. "I'd feel much better if you did now," he said.

In a fog, Jem and I watched how our father took the gun and walked out into the middle of the street.

When Atticus raised his glasses Calpurnia murmured, "Sweet Jesus, help him," and put her hands to her cheeks.

Atticus pushed his glasses to his forehead; they slipped down, and he dropped them in the street.

In front of the Radley gate, Tim Johnson had finally turned himself around and continued his original course up our street. He made two steps forward, then stopped and raised his head. His body stiffened.

With movements so swift that they seemed simultaneous, Atticus pulled the trigger as he brought the gun to his shoulder.

The rifle cracked. Tim Johnson leaped and fell down on the sidewalk in a brown-and-white heap. He didn't know what hit him.

Mr. Tate jumped off the porch and ran to the Radley Place. He stopped in front of the dog, looked at him and tapped his finger on his forehead above his left eye. "You were a little to the right, Mr. Finch," he called.

"Always was," answered Atticus.

He picked up his glasses, ground the broken lenses to powder under his heel, and went to Mr. Tate and stood looking down at Tim Johnson.

Doors opened one by one, and the neighborhood slowly came alive. Miss Maudie walked down the steps with Miss Stephanie Crawford. But Atticus told us not to

go near the dog because he was as dangerous dead as he was alive.

When Mr. Tate and Atticus returned to the yard, Mr. Tate was smiling. "I'll tell Zeebo to collect him," he said. "You haven't forgotten much, Mr. Finch. They say it never leaves you." Atticus was silent.

"I saw that, One-Shot Finch!" It was Miss Maudie. They looked at one another but said nothing.

When Atticus and the sheriff drove back to town, Jem and I went to Miss Stephanie's front steps.

Jem was nearly paralysed by what he had seen. Now he became vaguely articulate: '"do you see him, Scout?... an' it looked like that gun was a part of him... an' he did it so quick, like... I have to aim for ten minutes 'fore I can hit somethin'..."

"Well now, Miss Jean Louise," Miss Maudie said, "still think your father can't do anything? Still ashamed of him?"

"Nome," I said meekly.

Miss Maudie said that when Atticus was a boy, his nickname was 01' One-Shot, that if he shot fifteen times and hit fourteen doves, he'd say he had wasted ammunition.

"Wonder why he never goes huntin' now," I said.

"Maybe I can tell you," said Miss Maudie. "Your father is civilized in his heart. Marksmanship's a gift of God, a talent. Of course, you have to practice a lot, but shootin's different from playing the piano or the like. I

think maybe he put his gun down when he realized that God had given him an unfair advantage over most living things. I think he decided that he wouldn't shoot till he had to, and he had to today."

"He could be proud of it," I said.

"People in their right minds never take pride in their talents," said Miss Maudie.

When we went home, I said, "There is something to talk about at school on Monday. Not everybody's daddy is the deadest shot in Maycomb County."

"Don't say anything about it, Scout," Jem said. "If he was proud of it, he would've told us."

"Maybe he just forgot," I said.

"No, Scout, you don't understand. Atticus is really old, but I wouldn't care if he couldn't do anything - I wouldn't care if he could do nothing at all."

Jem picked up a stone and threw it joyfully at the garage. He ran after it and called back: "Atticus is a gentleman, just like me!"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

When Jem and I ran to meet Atticus after work, we had to pass by Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose's house. She was very old; she spent most of each day in bed and the rest of it in a wheelchair. They said that she kept a pistol hidden among her shawls.

Mrs. Dubose was always displeased with us. Jem and I were afraid of her and hated her. If she was on the porch when we passed, she usually said something unpleasant about our behavior and predicted that we wouldn't come to anything good when we grew up.

We could do nothing to please her. If I said as sunnily as I could, "Hey, Mrs. Dubose," her an answer was, "Don't you say hey to me, you ugly girl! You say good afternoon, Mrs. Dubose!"

When Jem complained to Atticus, our father usually said, "She's an old lady and she's ill. You just hold your head high and be a gentleman. Don't get mad at whatever she says to you." When the three of us came to her house, Atticus always took off his hat, waved gallantly to her and said, "Good evening, Mrs. Dubose! You look like a picture this evening." He spoke to her a little about the courthouse news, put on his hat and raised me to his shoulders in her very presence, and we went home in the twilight. At such times, I thought that my father was the bravest man who ever lived.

Jem got some money for his twelfth birthday and we went to town in the early afternoon. Jem wanted to buy a

miniature steam engine for himself and a twirling baton for me.

Mrs. Dubose was on her porch when we went by. She shouted her usual insulting words about Jem and me. Jem whispered. "Don't pay any attention to her, Scout, just hold your head high and be a gentleman."

But Mrs. Dubose shouted, "Your father's no better than the niggers and trash that he works for!"

Jem went red in the face. We heard many insults about Atticus at school, but this was the first one from an adult.

In town, Jem bought his steam engine and a baton for me. On the way home, he was silent. When we approached Mrs. Dubose's house, she was not on the porch. Suddenly Jem grabbed my baton and ran into Mrs. Dubose's front yard. For a few minutes, he simply went mad and forgot everything Atticus had said.

He did not stop until he had cut the tops off every camellia bush in Mrs. Dubose's front yard, until the ground was covered with green buds and leaves. He bent my baton against his knee, broke it in two and threw it down.

That evening we didn't go to meet Atticus from work. We sat silently in the living room and waited.

The front door slammed.

"Jem!" Atticus' voice was like the winter wind.

Atticus switched on the ceiling light in the living room and found us there. He carried my baton in one hand. Camellia buds were in his other hand.

"Jem," he said, "are you responsible for this?"

"Yes sir."

"Why'd you do it?"

Jem said softly, "She said you worked for niggers and trash."

Atticus said that Jem's behavior was inexcusable. "You should go and have a talk with Mrs. Dubose," he said. "Come straight home afterward."

Atticus picked up the Mobile Press and sat down in the rocking chair.

"You don't care what happens to him," I said. "Maybe she'll shoot him. And he was just defending you."

Atticus said that in summer, things would get even worse, but he couldn't go against his conscience. "I couldn't go to church and worship God if I didn't try to help that man," he said.

Jem looked upset when he returned from Mrs. Debose'. He had cleaned up the front yard and promised to work every Saturday and help the camellia bushes grow again, but Mrs. Debose told him to come every afternoon after school and on Saturdays for a month, and read to her aloud for two hours.

"Atticus, do I have to do it?"

"Certainly."

The following Monday afternoon Jem and I went to Mrs. Dubose's house.

Jessie, her Negro girl, opened the door.

"Is that you, Jem Finch?" she said. "You got your sister with you. I don't know-"

"Let 'em both in, Jessie," said Mrs. Dubose. "So you brought that dirty little sister of yours, did you?" was her greeting.

Jem said quietly, "My sister ain't dirty and I ain't scared of you," although I noticed that his knees were shaking.

She told Jem to begin reading.

We sat down by her bed, Jem opened Ivanhoe and began reading. She looked horrible, and I tried not to look at her. When Jem came to a word he didn't know, he missed it out, but Mrs. Dubose stopped him and made him spell it out. Soon her corrections grew fewer and fewer, and stopped. She was not listening. I looked toward the bed.

Mrs. Debose' head moved slowly from side to side. Her lips were wet. From time to time, she opened her mouth wide. Suddenly, the alarm clock that stood on the bedside table went off and Jessie came in.

"It's time for her medicine," she said. "You all go home."

It was only three forty-five when we got home, so Jem and I played in the back yard until it was time to meet Atticus. Atticus had two yellow pencils for me and a football magazine for Jem. I think it was a silent reward for our first day's session with Mrs. Dubose.

And so it went on: every afternoon we went to Mrs. Debose's house; Jem read to her; she corrected him, then her fits started, then the alarm clock rang, and Jessy told us to go home.

Every day the alarm clock went off later and later, and then the day came when it didn't ring at all. Mrs. Dubose didn't have any fits and let us go home with the words "That'll do."

One afternoon, when Mrs. Dubose said, "That'll do," she added, "And that's all. Good-day to you."

It was over. We were free. It was spring. The days grew longer, and we had more time to play.

Over a month passed. Mrs. Dubose was never on the porch any more when we passed by.

One evening, Atticus was called to Mrs. Dubose's. It was long past my bedtime when he came home.

"What'd she want?" asked Jem.

"She's dead, son," said Atticus. "She died a few minutes ago."

"Oh," said Jem. "Well."

"Well is right," said Atticus. "She's not suffering any more. She was sick for a long time. Son, didn't you know what her fits were?"

Jem shook his head.

Atticus explained that Mrs. Dubose had taken morphine as a painkiller for years and had become a morphine addict. When Dr. Reynolds told her she had only a few months to live, she asked Atticus to make her will. Her business affairs were in perfect order but she said, "There's still one thing out of order."

She said she was going to leave this world bound to nothing and nobody. She wanted to break herself of her addiction before she died, and she did it. While Jem was reading to her, she could listen to him at first, but when the pain grew stronger, all her will power was concentrated on that alarm clock.

Jem asked, "Did she die free?"

"As the mountain air," said Atticus.

Atticus said that the main reason why he had made Jem go and read to Mrs. Debose was because he wanted to show him what real courage was - not a man with a gun in his hand. "It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you go to the end no matter what. You seldom win, but sometimes you do. Mrs. Dubose won. According to her views, she died bound to nothing and nobody. She was the bravest person I ever knew."

PART TWO

CHAPTER TWELVE

That summer Jem changed a lot and very quickly. He didn't want to play with me and often told me to leave him alone. When I complained to Atticus and Calpumia, they just said that Jem was growing and I was to be patient with him and not to disturb him. Then I received a letter from Dill. He had a new father, and they planned to build a fishing boat, so he wasn't going to come to Maycomb. I felt very sad about it for two days.

The state legislature session began in Montgomery, and Atticus left us for two weeks. The Governor was worried by the situation in the state; there were sit-down strikes in Birmingham; bread lines in the cities grew longer, people in the country grew poorer. But these events were far from the world of Jem and me.

On Saturday, Calpumia said that as our father was not at home and couldn't take us to church on Sunday, she was going to take us to her church with her.

First Purchase African Church was outside the southern town limits. It was called First Purchase because it was paid for from the first earnings of freed slaves. Negroes worshiped in it on Sundays and white men gambled in it on weekdays.

The churchyard was full of brightly dressed Negroes. When they saw Jem and me with Calpumia, they parted

and made a small pathway to the church door for us. But one woman behind us said that white children had no place in the Negro church.

Calpumia said, "It's the same God, ain't it?"

Jem said, "Let's go home, Cal, they don't want us here-" But one of the men stepped from the crowd. It was Zeebo, the garbage collector. "Mister Jem," he said, "we're mighty glad to have you all here." Calpumia led us to the church door where Reverend Sykes greeted us and led us to the front row.

Reverend Sykes said, "Brethren and sisters, we are especially glad to have company with us this morning. Mister and Miss Finch. You all know their father. Before I begin I will make an announcement." He said, "You all know of Brother Tom Robinson's trouble. He has been a faithful member of First Purchase since he was a boy. Today's collection and the collections for the next three Sundays will go to Helen - his wife, to help her out at home."

Then the church started. The surprising thing was: they didn't have any hymn-books in the church. Zeebo had an old hymnbook and he read lines from it. A hundred voices repeated line for line after him. (Calpumia told us afterwards that most Negroes couldn't read, so there was no need for hymn-books.)

After hymns, Reverend Sykes made his sermon. It was not different from our church practice. When Reverend Sykes closed his sermon, he said it was time for morning

collection. That procedure was strange for Jem and me. The congregation, one by one, came up to the table where Reverend stood and put their nickels and dimes into a coffee can. We had our dimes, but Calpumia told us to keep them and gave us the money from her purse. We dropped the dimes into the can and received a soft, "Thank you, thank you."

To our surprise, Reverend Sykes turned the can over onto the table, counted the coins, and said, "This is not enough, we must have ten dollars. You know that Helen can't leave her children and go to work while Tom's in jail. If everybody gives one more dime, we'll have it"

The congregation didn't move. Reverend Sykes told someone in the back of the church. "Alec, shut the doors. Nobody leaves here till we have ten dollars."

Calpumia wanted to give us more money but Jem whispered that we would put our dimes.

Reverend Sykes said again, "Those, who haven't got children, make a sacrifice and give one more dime. Then we'll have it."

It took some time, but finally, the ten dollars was collected.

On the way back home, I asked Calpurnia why Helen couldn't find work while Tom Robinson was in jail.

Calpumia said, "Folks don't want to - to have anything to do with any of his family because of what folks say Tom's done."

When I wanted to know just what he had done, Calpumia sighed.

"Old Mr. Bob Ewell said that Tom had raped his daughter an' had him arrested an' put in jail-"

I remembered that Atticus called the Ewells absolute trash. He never said so about anybody else.

"Well, if everybody in Maycomb knows what kind of folks the Ewells are, they'd be glad to give Helen work... what's rape, Cal?"

"It's somethin' you'll have to ask Mr. Finch about," she said. "He can explain it better than I can."

Jem said, "We know that you can read, Cal. Where'd you go to school?"

"Let's see now, who taught me my letters? It was Miss Maudie Atkinson's aunt, old Miss Buford."

"Cal, did you teach Zeebo?"

"Yeah, Mister Jem. There wasn't a school even when he was a boy. I made him learn, though."

Zeebo was Calpurnia's eldest son.

I said, "Cal, can I come to see you sometimes?"

She looked down at me. "See me, honey? You see me every day."

"Out to your house," I said. "Sometimes after work? Atticus can get me."

"Any time you want to," she said. "We'd be glad to have you."

We were on the sidewalk by the Radley Place. Jem pointed to our porch. "Look yonder!"

I looked down the street. Aunt Alexandra was sitting in a rocking chair on our porch exactly as if she had sat there every day of her life.

Aunt Alexandra said that she had come to stay with us for a while. "For a while" in Maycomb meant anything from three days to thirty years. Jem and I exchanged glances.

"Your father and I decided that it would be best for you to have some feminine influence," she said to me.

I had an idea, however, that Aunt Alexandra's appearance on the scene was not so much Atticus's decision as hers. Aunty always knew What Is Best For The Family, and I think her arrival was in that category.

Maycomb welcomed her. Miss Maudie Atkinson baked a cake; Miss Stephanie Crawford came for long visits with Aunt Alexandra, and Aunt Alexandra made most of the talking. Miss Rachel had Aunty over for coffee in the afternoons, and Mr. Nathan Radley even came into the front yard and said he was glad to see her.

Aunt Alexandra joined all ladies' Societies and Clubs in Maycomb and actively participated in the life of the county. She was sure of her family superiority over all and everyone, always knew what is right and what is wrong.

She disapproved of my and Jem's behavior and said that it was our father's fault: he hadn't taught us to be proud of the Finch Family.

One evening before bedtime, Atticus came to Jem's room where we were sitting and said, "Your aunt has asked me to tell you and Jean Louise that you are not from run-of-the-mill people, that you are the product of several generations' gentle breeding and you must try to behave like the little lady and gentleman that you are."

Jem and I looked at each other in silence. For no reason I began to cry. This was not my father. My father never thought these thoughts. My father never spoke so. Aunt Alexandra had made him do this, somehow.

"Atticus, is all this behavin' an' stuff gonna make things different? I mean are you-?"

Atticus put his hand on my head. "Don't you worry about anything," he said. "It's not time to worry."

We didn't hear about the Finch family from Aunt Alexandra anymore, but as we went to town on Saturdays, we sometimes heard, "There's his chillun," or, "Yonder's some Finches." One evening, when we all were in the living room, I told Atticus about our visit to First Purchase Church and asked him if I could come out to Calpurnia's house some afternoon. "Atticus, I'll go next Sunday if it's all right, can I?"

"You may not," Aunt Alexandra said.

"I didn't ask you!" I said.

Atticus said very sternly, "Apologize to your aunt." After I said "I'm sorry, Aunty," Atticus said, "Let's get this clear: you do as Calpumia tells you, you do as I tell you, and as long as your aunt's in this house, you will do as she tells you. Understand?"

I understood, turned and left the living room as if I wanted to go to the bathroom. I stayed there some time. On the way, back I stopped in the hall. In the living room, an angry discussion was going on. According to Aunt Alexandra, Calpumia's influence was not good for us, and especially for me. She said, "We don't need her now."

Atticus said calmly, "Alexandra, Calpumia's not leaving this house until she wants to. We still need Cal as much as we ever did." He also said that she was a faithful member of our family and that her standards of upbringing were pretty good.

"And another thing," Atticus said, "the children love her." Atticus had returned to his newspaper and Aunt Alexandra was angrily pushing her needle through her embroidery when I entered the living room. Jem got up and led me from the living room to his room. He closed the door. His face was very serious.

Jem asked me not to antagonize Aunty because Atticus had enough problems without domestic troubles. But I didn't understand him. I got mad because I thought he was telling me what to do.

"You tryin' to tell me what to do? Who do you think you are?"

"Now I mean it, Scout, you antagonize Aunty and I'll - I'll spank you."

That was too much. "You damn morphodite, I'll kill you!" My fist landed on his mouth. And the fight started. We were still struggling when Atticus separated us.

"That's all," he said. "Both of you go to bed right now."

"Taah!" I said at Jem. He was being sent to bed at my bedtime.

"Who started it?" asked Atticus.

"Jem did. He was tryin' to tell me what to do. I don't have to obey him now, do I?"

Atticus smiled. "Let's leave it at this: you obey Jem whenever he can make you. Fair enough?"

Aunt Alexandra was present but silent, and when she went down the hall with Atticus we heard her words "... just what I've been telling you about." That united us again.

As I closed the door between our rooms, Jem said, "Night, Scout."

"Night," I answered and went across the room to turn on the light. As I passed the bed, I stepped on something warm and springy. When I switched on the light and looked at the floor by the bed, that something was not there. I called Jem.

"I think there's a snake under my bed. Can you come look?"

Jem brought the broom from the kitchen. "You better get up on the bed," he said. Our houses were built on stone blocks a few feet above the ground, and the entry of reptiles was not unknown. One morning, Miss Rachel Haverford once found a snake in her bedroom closet when she went to hang up her negligee. Ever since that time it was her excuse for a glass of whiskey every morning.

Jem probed with the broom under the bed. No snake came out. Jem probed again.

"Do snakes grunt?"

"It ain't a snake," Jem said. "It's somebody."

Suddenly Dill's head appeared from under the bed. He said, "Hey."

We were speechless.

"Got anything to eat?" asked Dill.

I went to the kitchen and brought him some milk and half a pan of corn bread left over from supper. Dill ate it hungrily. I finally found my voice. "How'd you get here?"

Dill had run away from home. He had taken thirteen dollars from his mother's purse for the train ticket. But he had to walk ten or eleven miles from the station. He didn't want to be found by the authorities, so he didn't walk along the highway, but through the bushes. He said that he had been under the bed for two hours. At first, he had wanted to come out and help me beat Jem, as Jem had grown far taller, but he knew Mr. Finch would break it up soon, so he

thought it best to stay where he was. He was tired, very dirty, and home.

"I think you ought to let your mother know where you are," said Jem. He went to call Atticus.

When Atticus came, Dill's face went white.

I said, "It's okay, Dill. He won't bother you. You ain't scared of Atticus."

"I'm not scared..." Dill muttered.

"Just hungry, I'm sure." Atticus said in his usual voice. "Scout, we can do better than a pan of cold com bread, can't we?"

"Mr. Finch, don't tell Aunt Rachel, don't make me go back, please sir! I'll run off again...!"

"Whoa, son," said Atticus. "Nobody's going to make you go anywhere but to bed pretty soon. I'm just going over to tell Miss Rachel you're here and ask her if you could spend the night with us - you'd like that, wouldn't you? And for goodness' sake put some of the county back where it belongs, the soil erosion's bad enough as it is."

Dill stared at my father's back as Atticus left the room. "He's tryin' to be funny," I said. "He means take a bath. See, I told you he wouldn't bother you."

Everything worked out well. Dill was to spend the night with us. When we were back in my room, I asked him why he had run away. He said that his mother and his new father were kind to him, bought him presents, gave him

money for picture shows, but they were not interested in him, they didn't need him, they didn't want his company.

"They get on a lot better without me, I can't help them any. They buy me everything I want, but it's now-you've-got-it-go- play-with-it. You've got a roomful of things. I-got-you-that- book-so-go-read-it." Dill tried to deepen his voice. "You're not a boy. Boys get out and play baseball with other boys, they don't stay around the house and bother their folks."

Dill's voice was his own again: "Oh, they kiss you and hug you good night and good mornin' and good-bye and tell you they love you - Scout, let's get us a baby."

"Where?"

"There is a man who knows of a foggy island where babies sleep. He breathes life into them..."

Dill was slowly talking himself to sleep, but suddenly I remembered a dark house with sad brown doors.

"Dill?"

"Mm?"

"Why do you reckon Boo Radley has never run off?" Dill sighed a long sigh and turned away from me.

"Maybe he doesn't have anywhere to run off to..."

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Dill's mother wrote a long forgiving letter to him and he stayed with Miss Rachel. We spent one usual summer week together. Then a nightmare started.

One evening after supper, Mr. Heck Tate knocked on the front door and said that some men asked Atticus to come out.

In Maycomb, grown men stood outside in the front yard for only two reasons: death and politics. Jem and I went to the front door to learn who had died. But Atticus told us to stay in the house.

Jem turned out the living room lights and pressed his nose to a window screen. Aunt Alexandra protested. "Just for a second, Aunty, let's see who it is," he said.

Dill and I went to another window. A crowd of men was standing around Atticus. They were all talking at once. From what they were saying, it was clear that they were afraid of some trouble at Maycomb jail where Tom Robinson was kept.

"This is Saturday," Atticus said. "Trial'll probably be Monday. You can keep him one night, can't you?"

Mr. Link Deas said, "We don't expect any trouble here. I'm worried about that Old Sarum bunch. You know how they do when they get drunk."

Then Mr. Link Deas added, "Why did you touch it in the first place? You're going to lose everything from this, Atticus. I mean everything."

Atticus said, "Do you really think so? Link, that boy might go to the electric chair, but he's not going till the truth's told." Atticus's voice was even. "And you know what the truth is."

A murmur started among the group of men, and they moved nearer to Atticus.

Suddenly Jem screamed, "Atticus, the telephone's ringing!"

"Well, answer it, son," called Atticus.

The men laughed and moved away from Atticus; they were people we saw every day: merchants, in-town farmers; Dr. Reynolds was there; so was Mr. Avery.

When Atticus came back, he went to his chair and picked up the evening paper.

"They were after you, weren't they?" Jem went to him. "They wanted to get you, didn't they?"

Atticus lowered the paper and said gently, "No son, those were our friends."

Later in the evening, when we were in Jem's room, he said, "Scout... I'm scared about Atticus. Somebody might hurt him."

Next day was Sunday. In the interval between Sunday School and Church when the congregation stretched its legs, I saw that Atticus was standing in the yard with another group of men. Mr. Heck Tate was present, who never went to church. Even Mr. Underwood was there. Mr. Underwood was the owner, editor, and printer of The

Maycomb Tribune. His days were spent at his linotype, where he refreshed himself from time to time from an ever-present gallon jug of cherry wine. He seldom gathered news; people brought it to him. It was said that he made up every edition of The Maycomb Tribune out of his own head and wrote it down on the linotype. Something very serious happened if Mr. Underwood had left his house.

In the evening, after supper, Atticus did something that interested us: he came into the living room with a long electrical extension cable. There was a light bulb on the end.

"I'm going out for a while," he said. "You folks will be in bed when I come back, so I'll say good night now."

He put his hat on and went out the back door. He took the car. It was unusual: he never used the car in Maycomb.

Later on, I said good night to my aunt and brother and was reading a book when I heard unusual sounds in Jem's room. I knew his go-to-bed noises so well that I knocked on his door: "Why ain't you going to bed?"

"I'm goin' downtown for a while." He was changing his pants.

I said that I would go with him. Jem didn't want to fight me because he didn't want to antagonize Aunty, so he agreed to take me with him.

When Aunty's light went out, we walked quietly down the back steps. There was no moon in the sky.

"Dill'll want a come," I whispered.

"So he will," said Jem gloomily.

We went through Miss Rachel's back yard to Dill's window. Jem whistled and Dill's face appeared at the screen. Five minutes later, he was with us. Only when we were on the sidewalk, he asked, "What's up?" I said that Jem wanted to look around.

"I've just got this feeling," Jem said, "just this feeling."

We came to the post office corner. The south side of the square was deserted. A light shone in the county toilet, otherwise that side of the courthouse was dark. Atticus's office was in the courthouse when he began his law practice, but after several years of it, he moved to quieter quarters in the Maycomb Bank building. When we rounded the comer of the square, we saw the car parked in front of the bank. But it was dark inside the building, and the door was locked.

Jem said, "Let's go up the street. Maybe he's visitin' Mr. Underwood."

Mr. Underwood lived above The Maycomb Tribune office. He just looked out his upstairs window and got all the courthouse and jailhouse news for his paper. The newspaper office building was the last in the row of buildings on the north side of the square, just on the northwest comer of the square, and the second from that comer was the Maycomb jail. It was not on a lonely hill, but stood between Tyndal's Hardware Store and The Maycomb Tribune office.

The jail was in darkness, but over the jail door, a bare bulb on a long extension cord was burning. Under that bulb, Atticus was sitting in one of his office chairs, and he was reading.

I wanted to run to him, but Jem caught me. "Don't go to him," he said, "he might not like it. He's all right, let's go home. I just wanted to see where he was."

Suddenly four dusty cars came in from a side street; they were moving slowly in a line. They went around the square, passed the bank building, and stopped in front of the jail.

Nobody got out. Atticus looked up from his newspaper. He closed it, folded it slowly, and pushed his hat to the back of his head. He was clearly expecting them.

We ran silently to Tyndal's Hardware door. We were not seen from there, but we could see and hear well.

In ones and twos, men got out of the cars. They moved toward the jail door. Atticus remained where he was. The men hid him from our view.

"He in there, Mr. Finch?" a man said.

"He is," Atticus answered, "and he's asleep. Don't wake him up."

A comic aspect of an unfunny situation followed: the men talked in near-whispers.

"You know what we want," another man said. "Get aside from the door, Mr. Finch."

"You can turn around and go home again, Walter," Atticus said pleasantly. "Heck Tate's around somewhere."

One of the men said that the sheriff and his men were out of town and wouldn't be back till morning.

My father's voice was still calm. "That changes things, doesn't it?"

"It does," another voice said.

"Do you really think so?"

This was Atticus's usual question when he was going to win us at checkers. I couldn't miss it. I ran as fast as I could to Atticus. Jem screamed and tried to catch me, but I was faster than he and Dill. I pushed my way through dark smelly bodies and ran into the circle of light.

"Hey, Atticus!"

I thought he would have a fine surprise, but I saw fear in his eyes, and it stayed there when Dill and Jem ran into the light.

There was a smell of whiskey and pigpen about, and I saw that I was among strangers. These men were not the people I saw last night.

Atticus got up from his chair, but he was moving slowly, like an old man. He put the newspaper down very carefully. His fingers were trembling a little.

"Go home, Jem," he said. "Take Scout and Dill home."

Jem didn't move. Atticus repeated the words three times, but Jem shook his head.

"I'll send him home," a big man said, and grabbed Jem by the collar. He jerked Jem nearly off his feet.

"Don't you touch him!" I kicked the man swiftly. I was surprised when he fell back in real pain. I wanted to kick his shin, but aimed too high.

"That'll do, Scout." Atticus put his hand on my shoulder. "Don't kick folks," he said.

"Nobody gonna do that to Jem," I said.

In the middle of this strange crowd, Atticus tried to make Jem obey him. But Jem refused to go again and again. I felt that

Jem had his own reasons for doing as he did. I tried to find a familiar face in that crowd, and I saw one.

"Hey, Mr. Cunningham."

The man did not hear me, it seemed.

"Hey, Mr. Cunningham. How's your property situation?"

Mr. Walter Cunningham's legal affairs were well known to me; Atticus had once explained them. The big man seemed uncomfortable; he cleared his throat and looked away. My friendly attempt had no success.

"Don't you remember me, Mr. Cunningham? I'm Jean Louise Finch. You brought us some nuts one time, remember?"

The man said nothing again.

"I go to school with Walter," I began again. "He's your boy, ain't he? Ain't he, sir?"

Mr. Cunningham was moved to a faint nod. He did know me, after all.

"He's in my grade," I said, "and he does right well. He's a good boy," I added, "a real nice boy. We brought him home for dinner one time. Maybe he told you about me, I beat him up one time but he was real nice about it. Tell him hey for me, won't you?"

Atticus had said that polite people talked about things interesting to other people, not to themselves. Mr. Cunningham showed no interest in his son, so I turned to his legal affairs again. I tried to make him feel at home.

"This property situation of yours is bad," I was informing him, when I saw that all the men were looking at me, some had their mouths half-open. Atticus was also looking at me, his mouth, even, was half-open, a manner he had once called bad. Our eyes met and he shut it.

"Well, Atticus, I was just sayin' to Mr. Cunningham that his property situation is bad an' all that, but you said not to worry, it takes a long time sometimes... that you all would work it out together..." I had a feeling that I had made an idiotic mistake. These legal affairs seemed all right enough for living room talk.

The men were silent and quite still. They were all looking at me, and I couldn't stand it any longer.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

Atticus said nothing. I looked around and at Mr. Cunningham. His face was without expression, but suddenly he took me by both shoulders.

"I'll tell him you said hey, little lady," he said.

Then he addressed the crowd. "Let's clear out," he called. "Let's get going, boys."

The men went back to their old cars and left.

I looked around. Atticus had gone to the jail and was standing with his face to the wall. I went to him and pulled his sleeve. "Can we go home now?" He nodded, took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and blew his nose loudly.

"Mr. Finch?"

A low voice came from the darkness above: "They gone?"

Atticus stepped back and looked up. "They've gone," he said. "Get some sleep, Tom. They won't bother you anymore."

Another voice, from the direction of The Maycomb Tribune office, sounded in the night: "You're damn right, they won't. Had you covered all the time, Atticus."

In the window above The Maycomb Tribune office, Mr. Underwood and a double-barreled shotgun were seen.

Atticus and Mr. Underwood talked a little, then Atticus returned to the jail, switched off the light above the

door, and picked up his chair. Dill offered to carry it for him. He had not said a word the whole time.

Dill, with the chair, and I walked far behind Atticus and Jem. I thought that Atticus was angry with him for not going home, but I was wrong. As they passed under a streetlight, Atticus put out his hand and massaged Jem's hair. It was his gesture of affection.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Next morning, at breakfast, Aunt Alexandra drank coffee and radiated waves of disapproval. Children who went out at night were a disgrace to the family. Atticus said he was very glad his disgraces had come along, but Aunty said, "Nonsense, Mr. Underwood was there all the time."

"You know, it's a funny thing about Braxton Underwood," said Atticus. "He despises Negroes, won't have one near him."

Calpumia was serving Aunt Alexandra more coffee. When she returned to the kitchen, Aunty said, "Don't talk like that in front of Calpurnia. You said Braxton Underwood despises Negroes right in front of her."

"Well, I'm sure Cal knows it. Everybody in Maycomb knows it. And Calpurnia knows what she means to this family."

I said, "I thought Mr. Cunningham was a friend of ours. You told me a long time ago he was."

"He still is."

"But last night he wanted to hurt you."

Atticus placed his fork beside his knife and pushed his plate aside. "Mr. Cunningham's basically a good man," he said, "last night he was part of a mob, but still a man. Every mob in every little Southern town is always made up of people that you know - doesn't say much for them, does it?"

Jem agreed: "Not much at all."

"And an eight-year-old girl brought them to their senses, didn't she?" said Atticus. "That shows something - that a gang of wild animals can be stopped, simply because they're still human. You children last night made Walter Cunningham stand in my shoes for a minute. That was enough."

Atticus was going to court. He asked Jem not to go to town, and left the house.

Dill ran into the dining room. "It's all over town this morning," he announced, "all about how we held off a hundred folks with our bare hands..."

"It was not a hundred folks," Aunt Alexandra said, "and nobody held anybody off. It was just a nest of those Cunninghams, drunk and disorderly."

"Aw, Aunty, that's just Dill's way," said Jem. He signaled us to follow him.

"You all stay in the yard today," she said, as we went to the front porch.

It was like Saturday. People from the south end of the county passed our house in an unhurried but steady stream. Jem told Dill about people that went by.

A wagonload of unusually stern-faced people appeared. When they pointed to Miss Maudie Atkinson's yard, full of summer flowers, Miss Maudie herself came out on the porch. The foot-washers expressed their usual disapproval of her flowers.

We stayed at home until noon. Atticus came home to dinner and said that they'd picked the jury in the morning. After dinner, we stopped by for Dill and went to town.

The courthouse square was full of picnic groups. People were sitting on newspapers, eating biscuit and drinking warm milk from fruit jars. Some people were eating cold chicken and cold fried pork chops. There were many children and even babies.

In a far comer of the square, the Negroes sat quietly in the sun. They were dining on sardines, crackers, and Cola. Mr. Dolphus Raymond sat with them. Dill asked Jem why he was sitting with the colored folks.

"Always does. He likes 'em better'n he likes us, I reckon. He's got a colored woman and all sorts of mixed children."

"He doesn't look like trash," said Dill.

"He's not, he owns all one side of the riverbank down there, and he's from a really old family."

Jem told Dill Mr. Raymond's story. Mr. Raymond was going to marry one of the white ladies. They were going to have a great wedding, but they didn't - after the rehearsal the bride went upstairs and shot herself. Nobody ever knew quite why except Mr. Dolphus. They said it was because she found out about his colored woman, he reckoned he could keep her and get married too. He's been sort of drunk ever since. But he was really good to his children. Half-white, half-colored children don't belong

anywhere. But Mr. Dolphus sent two of his up north. They don't mind them in the north.

Some signal showed the people on the square that it was time to go into the courthouse. The Negroes and Mr. Dolphus Raymond waited patiently at the doors behind the white families.

There were so many people in the courthouse that we weren't able to find seats downstairs. Reverend Sykes took us to the balcony. Four Negroes rose and gave us their front-row seats.

The Colored balcony ran along three walls of the courtroom like a second-story veranda, and from it, we could see everything.

The witness stand was to the right of Judge Taylor, and when we got to our seats, Mr. Heck Tate was already on it.

Mr. Tate said, "It was the night of November twenty-first. I was just leaving my office to go home when Mr. Ewell came in, very excited he was, and asked me to go to his house quick, some nigger'd raped his girl."

"Did you go?"

"Certainly. Got in the car and went out as fast as I could."

"And what did you find?"

"She was lying on the floor in the middle of the front room. She was pretty well beaten up. I asked her who hurt her and she said it was Tom Robinson."

Judge Taylor, who had been concentrating on his fingernails, looked up as if he was expecting an objection, but Atticus was quiet.

"She said that he had beaten her up and taken advantage of her. So I went down to Robinson's house and brought him back. She identified him as the one, so I took him in. That's all there was to it."

Judge Taylor said, "Any questions, Atticus?"

"Did you call a doctor, Sheriff? Did anybody call a doctor?" asked Atticus.

"No sir. Something bad happened, it was clear," said Mr. Tate.

"Sheriff," Atticus was saying, "you say she was badly beaten up. In what way?"

"Well, she was beaten around the head. There were already bruises cornin' on her arms, and it happened about thirty minutes before-"

"How do you know?"

Mr. Tate grinned. "Sorry, that's what they said. Anyway, she was pretty bruised up when I got there, and she had a black eye cornin'."

Atticus wanted to know which eye it was. At first Mr. Tate said it was the left eye, but after some questions Atticus asked, it became clear that the girl's right eye had been hurt.

Mr. Tate looked around at Tom Robinson. It was clear that he had understood something.

Atticus said, "Sheriff, please repeat what you said."

"It was her right eye, I said. Mr. Finch, but she had more bruises. She showed me her neck. There were definite finger marks on it."

"All around her throat? At the back of her neck?"

"I'd say they were all around, Mr. Finch."

"You would?"

"Yes sir, she had a small throat, anybody could-"

"Just answer the question yes or no, please, Sheriff," said Atticus dryly, and Mr. Tate fell silent.

Then Mr. Ewell was called.

"...Robert E. Lee Ewell!"

A little man rose and went to the stand. His face and neck were red. He had no chin; it looked as if his chin was part of his neck.

In every small town, there were families like the Ewells. People like the Ewells always lived as guests of the county in good times and in the years of deep depression. Truant officers could never keep their numerous offspring in school; public health officers could never free them from various worms and the diseases caused by dirty surroundings.

Maycomb's Ewells lived behind the town garbage dump in what was once a Negro cabin. It was in a very bad condition.

Its windows were simply open spaces in the walls, which in the summertime were covered with dirty pieces of gauze to keep out the varmints that came to have dinner on Maycomb's garbage. But the Ewells left very little for the varmints: every day they checked the dump for food leftovers.

A barricade built with the help of various broken things the Ewells found in the dump served as a fence around a dirty yard. In the yard there were the remains of a Model-T Ford (on blocks), a broken dentist's chair, an very old icebox, and a lot of smaller things: old shoes, worn-out table radios, picture frames, and fruit jars, among which thin orange chickens pecked hopefully.

But in one corner of the yard, at the fence, there were six jars with beautiful red geraniums, so beautiful as if they belonged to Miss Maudie Atkinson. People said they were Mayella Ewell's.

Nobody could say how many children were on the place. Some people said six, others said nine; there were always several dirty-faced ones at the windows when anyone passed by. Nobody passed by except at Christmas, when the churches delivered baskets, and when the mayor of Maycomb asked us to help the garbage collector and dump our own trees and trash.

When Atticus went to the dump last Christmas, he took us with him. A dirt road ran from the highway past the dump, down to a small Negro settlement some five hundred yards from the Ewells. It was necessary either to back out to the highway or go to the end of the road and turn around; most people turned around in the Negroes' front yards. In the frosty December dusk, their cabins looked clean and comfortable; pale blue smoke was rising from the chimneys, and doorways were glowing amber from the fires inside. There were delicious smells of cooking. All the aromas disappeared when we rode back past the Ewell residence.

Nothing could make the little man on the witness stand any better than his nearest neighbors except that if he was washed with soap in very hot water, his skin was white.

"Mr. Robert Ewell?" asked Mr. Gilmer, the prosecutor.

"That's m'name, cap'n," said the witness.

"Are you the father of Mayella Ewell?" was the next question.

"Yes sir," Mr. Ewell said.

"Mr. Ewell, would you tell us in your own words what happened on the evening of November twenty-first, please?" When Mr. Ewell began his story, he used so many rude words that Judge Taylor had to interrupt him several times and ask him to use civilized language.

According to Mr. Ewell, he was returning from the woods with a load of kindling and just as he got to the fence, he heard Mayella's screams inside the house.

"I ran up to the window and I seen -" Mr. Ewell's face grew scarlet. He stood up and pointed his finger at Tom Robinson. I seen that black nigger yonder on my Mayella!"

At those words disorder started in the courtroom. Judge Taylor had to use his gavel, but he hammered fully five minutes. Atticus was on his feet, he was saying something to him, Mr. Heck Tate as first officer of the county stood in the middle aisle and tried to calm the courtroom. Behind us, there was an angry low groan from the colored people.

When the courtroom was quiet, Judge Taylor asked, "Mr. Ewell, did you see that the defendant was having sexual intercourse with your daughter?"

"Yes, I did."

"You say you were at the window?" asked Mr. Gilmer. "Yes sir."

"Did you have a clear view of the room?"

"Yes sir."

"How did the room look?"

"Well, it looked like there was a fight."

"What did you do when you saw the defendant?"

"Well, I run around the house to get in, but he run out the front door just ahead of me. I sawed who he was, all

right. I didn't run after him because I was too distracted about Mayella. I run in the house and she was lyin' on the floor and screamin'."

"Then what did you do?"

"Why, I run for Tate quick as I could. I knowed who it was, all right, lived down yonder in that nigger-nest, passed the house every day. Jedge, I've asked this county for fifteen years to clean out that nest down yonder. It's dangerous to live near them, and they're devaluin' my property-"

"Thank you, Mr. Ewell," said Mr. Gilmer hurriedly.

The witness quickly stepped down from the stand and ran right into Atticus, who had risen to question him. Judge Taylor permitted the court to laugh.

"Just a minute, sir," said Atticus pleasantly. "Could I ask you a question or two?"

Atticus said that Mr. Ewell had done a lot of running that night. He wanted to know if Mr. Ewell had run for a doctor too.

"Was no need to. I seen what happened and who done it," Mr. Ewell said.

"No, I mean her physical condition. Did you not think she needed a doctor for her injuries?"

The witness said he never thought of it, he had never called a doctor to any of his children in his life, and if he had it would have cost him five dollars.

Then Atticus asked Mr. Ewell if he had heard what the sheriff had said about his daughter's injuries and if he agreed with the sheriff's words.

"Oh yeah," said the witness. "I hold with everything Tate said. Her eye was blacked and she was mighty beat up."

Atticus's next question was: "Mr. Ewell, can you read and write?"

Mr. Gilmer interrupted. "Objection," he said. "Can't see what witness's literacy has to do with the case."

Atticus said, "Judge, if you'll allow the question plus another one you'll soon see."

"All right, let's see," said Judge Taylor, "but make sure we see, Atticus. Overruled."

Atticus asked Mr. Ewell to write his name on an envelope so that the jury could see. And when he wrote his name, everybody saw that Mr. Ewell was left-handed.

When Atticus finished with his questions, Mr. Gilmer asked Mr. Ewell one more question. "About your writing with your left hand, are you ambidextrous, Mr. Ewell?"

"I most positively am not, I can use one hand good as the other. One hand good as the other," he added, and looked angrily at the defense table.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

"Mayella Violet Ewell -!"

A young girl walked to the witness stand. She had a strong body of a hard working person. She looked as if she tried to keep clean, and I remembered the row of red geraniums in the Ewell yard.

Mr. Gilmer asked Mayella to tell the jury in her own words what happened on the evening of November twenty-first of last year, just in her own words, please.

Mayella was silent.

"Where were you at dusk on that evening?" began Mr. Gilmer patiently.

"On the porch."

"What were you doing on the porch?"

"Nothin'."

Judge Taylor said, "Just tell us what happened. You can do that, can't you?"

Mayella suddenly started to cry. Judge Taylor let her cry for a while, then he said, "That's enough now. Don't be 'fraid of anybody here, as long as you tell the truth. What are you scared of?"

Mayella pointed at Atticus. "Scared he'll do me like he done Papa, tryin' to make him out left handed..."

Judge Taylor looked puzzled. "How old are you?" he asked.

"Nineteen-and-a-half," Mayella said.

Judge Taylor said, "Mr. Finch isn't going to scare you. And if he tried, I'm here to stop him. Now you're a big girl, so you just sit up straight and tell us what happened to you. You can do that, can't you?"

Mayella gave Atticus a final fearful glance and began to speak. According to her words, when Tom Robinson was passing by their place, she told him to come into the yard and chop up an old wardrobe for her. Her father told her to do it while he was in the woods, but she wasn't feeling strong enough then.

"I said come here, nigger, and bust up this chiffarobe for me, I gotta nickel for you. I went in the house to get him the nickel and I turned around an' 'fore I knew it he was on me. Just run up behind me, he did. He got me round the neck, he was sayin' dirt - I fought'n'screamed, but he had me round the neck. He hit me agin an'agin, he chunked me on the floor an' choked me'n took advantage of me."

"Did you scream?" asked Mr. Gilmer. "Did you scream and fight back?"

"Reckon I did, kicked and screamed loud as I could."

"Then what happened?"

"I don't remember too good, but next thing I knew Papa was standin' over me and shoutin' who done it, who done it? Then I sorta fainted an' the next thing I knew Mr. Tate was pullin' me up off a the floor and leadin' me to the water bucket."

There was something stealthy about Mayella, like a steady-eyed cat with a twitchy tail.

"You say you fought him off as hard as you could?" asked Mr. Gilmer.

"I positively did," Mayella echoed her father.

"You are positive that he took full advantage of you?"

Mayella's face contorted, and I was afraid that she would cry again. Instead, she said, "He done what he was after."

Then it was Atticus's turn to question Mayella.

"Miss Mayella," he said, smiling, "I won't try to scare you for a while, not yet. Let's just get acquainted. I might ask you things you've already said before, but you'll give me an answer, won't you?"

"Won't answer you as long as you laugh at me," Mayella said.

"Ma'am?" asked Atticus, surprised.

"You're makin' fun o'me."

Judge Taylor said, "Mr. Finch is not making fun of you. What's the matter with you?"

Mayella looked angrily at Atticus and said to the judge: "He keeps on callin' me ma'am an' sayin' Miss Mayella. He's making fun of me."

"That's just Mr. Finch's way," Judge Taylor explained. "He's not trying to laugh at you, he's trying to be polite."

Perhaps nobody called her "ma'am," or "Miss Mayella" in her life. What was her life like? I soon found out.

From her answers to his questions, Atticus was quietly building up before the jury a picture of the Ewells' home life. There were seven brothers and sisters in the family. Mayella was the oldest. Their mother died long ago. The relief check from the county couldn't feed the family, and Papa drank up most of it anyway - he sometimes went off in the swamp for days and came home sick; they seldom needed shoes because the weather wasn't cold enough, but when it was, you could make shoes from strips of old tires; the younger children always had colds and suffered from chronic itch; there was a lady who came around sometimes and asked Mayella why she didn't stay in school - she wrote down the answer; Mayella went to school for two or three years, so she could read and write as Papa, two members of the family who could write and read was enough, there was no need for the rest of them to learn - Papa needed them at home.

Atticus asked if Mayella had friends of her age. Mayella got angry again. "You makin' fun o'me agin, Mr. Finch?"

Atticus didn't say anything: her question was the answer to his.

"Do you love your father, Miss Mayella?" was his next question.

"Love him, what you mean?"

"I mean, is he good to you, is he easy to get along with?"

"He's tolerable, 'cept when -"

"Except when?"

Mayella looked at her father, who sat up straight in his chair and waited for her to answer.

"Except when nothin'," said Mayella. "I said he's tolerable."

"Except when he's drinking?" asked Atticus so gently that Mayella nodded.

"When he's drunk, has he ever beaten you?"

Mayella looked around, up at the judge. "Answer the question, Miss Mayella," said Judge Taylor.

"My pa's never touched a hair o'my head in my life," she said firmly. "He never touched me."

Atticus said, "We've had a good visit, Miss Mayella, and now we'd better get to the case. You say you asked Tom Robinson to come chop up a - what was it?"

"An old wardrobe, full of drawers on one side."

"Did you know who he was, where he lived?"

Mayella nodded. "I knowed who he was, he passed the house every day."

When Atticus asked if it was the first time that Mayella asked Tom to come inside the fence, she jumped

slightly. Atticus repeated the question. "Didn't you ever ask him to come inside the fence before?"

She was prepared now. "I did not, I certainly did not."

"One did not's enough," said Atticus calmly. "You never asked him to do any jobs for you before?"

"Maybe," said Mayella. "There was several niggers around."

"Can you remember any other occasions?"

"No."

"All right, now to what happened. You said Tom Robinson was behind you in the room when you turned around, that right?"

"Yes."

"You said he 'got you around the neck and was saying dirt' - is that right?"

"'t's right."

"Was he beating you about the face?"

Mayella was silent.

"You seem sure enough that he choked you. All this time you were fighting back, remember? You 'kicked and screamed as loud as you could.' Was he beating you about the face?" Mayella was silent. She looked at Mr. Gilmer. Atticus repeated the question several times.

"No, I don't remember if he hit me. I mean yes I do, he hit me."

"Was your last sentence your answer?"

"Huh? Yes, he hit - I just don't remember, I just don't remember... it all happened so fast."

"Don't you cry, young woman-" Judge Taylor began, but Atticus said, "Let her cry if she wants to, Judge. We've got all the time in the world."

Mayella sobbed angrily and looked at Atticus. "I'll answer any question you got-"

"That's fine," said Atticus. "There're only a few more. Miss Mayella, you've said that the defendant hit you, grabbed you around the neck, choked you, and took advantage of you. Will you identify the man who raped you?"

"I will, that's him right yonder."

Atticus turned to the defendant. "Tom, stand up. Let Miss Mayella have a good long look at you. Is this the man, Miss Mayella?"

When Tom Robinson stood up, we could see that his left arm was fully twelve inches shorter than his right, and hung dead at his side. It ended in a small shriveldy hand, and from as far away as the balcony I could see that it was no use to him.

"Scout," whispered Jem. "Scout, look! Reverend, he's crippled!"

Reverend Sykes whispered, "He got it caught in a cotton gin, caught it in Mr. Dolphus Raymond's cotton gin

when he was a boy... tore all the muscles loose from his bones-" Atticus said, "Is this the man who raped you?"

"It most certainly is."

Atticus's next question was one word long. "How?" Mayella was furious. "I don't know how he done it, but he done it - I said it all happened so fast I-"

"Now let's consider this calmly-" began Atticus, but Mr. Gilmer interrupted with an objection. He said that Atticus was browbeating the witness.

Judge Taylor laughed. "Oh sit down, Horace, he's doing nothing of the sort. If anything, the witness's browbeating Atticus."

Judge Taylor was the only person in the courtroom who laughed. Even the babies were silent.

Atticus said, "Miss Mayella, you've testified that the defendant choked and beat you - you didn't say that he came up behind you and knocked you cold, but you turned around and there he was-" Atticus returned to his table, do you wish to change any of your testimony?"

"You mean to say something that didn't happen?"

"No ma'am, to say something that did happen. Tell us once more, please, what happened?"

"I told'ja what happened."

"You testified that you turned around and there he was. He choked you then?"

"Yes."

"Then he hit you?"

"I said he did."

"He blacked your left eye with his right fist?"

"I ducked and it glanced off." Mayella had finally seen the light.

"You're suddenly clear on this point. A while ago you couldn't remember too well, could you?"

"I said he hit me."

"All right. He choked you, he hit you, then he raped you, that right?"

"It most certainly is."

"You're a strong girl, what were you doing all the time, just standing there?"

"I told'ja I screamed'n'kicked'n'fought -"

"All right, why didn't you run?"

"I tried..."

"Tried to? What kept you from it?"

"I - he knocked me down. That's what he did, he knocked me down'n got on top of me."

"You were screaming all this time?"

"I certainly was."

"Then why didn't the other children hear you? Where were they? At the dump?"

No answer.

"Or you didn't think to scream until you saw your father in the window then, did you?"

No answer.

"Did you scream first at your father instead of at Tom Robinson? Was that it?"

No answer.

"Who beat you up? Tom Robinson or your father?"

No answer.

"What did your father see in the window, the crime of rape or the best defense to it? Why don't you tell the truth, child, didn't Bob Ewell beat you up?"

Atticus sat down. He looked tired and ill. Mayella's face was a mixture of terror and fury.

Suddenly she started to speak. "I got somethin' to say," she said.

Atticus raised his head. "Do you want to tell us what happened?" His voice was full of compassion.

But Mayella did not hear it. "I got somethin' to say an' then I ain't gonna say no more. That nigger yonder took advantage of me an' if you fine fancy gentlemen don't wanta do nothin' about it then you're all yellow stinkin' cowards, stinkin' cowards. Your fancy airs don't come to nothin' - your ma'amin' and Miss Mayellerin' don't come to nothin', Mr. Finch-"

Then she started to cry. Her shoulders shook with angry sobs. Somehow, Atticus had hit her hard, but it gave

him no pleasure to do so. When Mayella walked by Atticus's table, she looked at him with hatred.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

After a short break, Tom Robinson was called to the witness stand.

Thomas Robinson lifted his left arm with the help of his right hand. He guided his arm to the Bible and his rubber-like left hand found contact with it. As he raised his right hand, the useless one slipped off the Bible and hit the clerk's table. He was trying again, when Judge Taylor growled, "That'll do, Tom." Tom took the oath and stepped into the witness chair. From his answers to Atticus's questions, we learned that he was twenty- five years old; he was married with three children; he once had been in jail for thirty days for disorderly conduct: he had got in a fight with another man, who had tried to cut him.

"Were you both convicted?" Atticus asked.

"Yes suh, I had to serve because I couldn't pay the fine. Other fellow paid his."

Dill asked Jem what Atticus was doing. Jem said that Atticus was showing the jury that Tom had nothing to hide.

"Were you acquainted with Mayella Violet Ewell?" asked Atticus.

"Yes suh, I had to pass her place goin' to and from work every day."

"Tom, did she ever speak to you?"

"Why, yes suh, I tipped m'hat when I passed by, and one day she asked me to come inside the fence and chop up a wardrobe for her."

"When did she ask you to chop up the wardrobe?"

"Mr. Finch, it was last spring. I remember it because it was choppin' time and I had my hoe with me. I said that I didn't have nothin' but this hoe, but she said she had an axe. I broke up the wardrobe. She wanted to give me a nickel, but I said, 'No ma'am, you don't have to pay me.' Then I went home. Mr. Finch that was last spring, over a year ago."

Tom said also that Mayella had often asked him to do something for her: to chop kindling, to bring water for her red flowers. He had been glad to help her because Mr. Ewell and other children never helped her, and he had never taken any money from her; he knew that she had very little money.

"Where were the other children when you worked for her?"

"They were always around, all over the place. Some of 'em watched me work, some of'em sat in the window."

"Did Miss Mayella talk to you?"

"Yes sir, she talked to me."

As Tom Robinson gave his testimony, it came to me that Mayella Ewell was the loneliest person in the world. She was even lonelier than Boo Radley, who had not been out of the house in twenty-five years. When Atticus asked her about her friends, she didn't understand what he meant, then she thought he was making fun of her. She was as sad, I thought, as a mixed child: white people didn't want her

company because she lived among pigs; Negroes couldn't be her company because she was white. She couldn't live like Mr. Dolphus Raymond, who preferred the company of Negroes, because she didn't own a riverbank and she wasn't from a fine old family. Nobody said, "That's just their way," about the Ewells. Maycomb gave them Christmas baskets, welfare money, and turned away from them. Tom Robinson was probably the only person who was ever good to her. But she said that he took advantage of her, and when she stood up she looked at him as if he were dirt beneath her feet.

"Did you ever," Atticus interrupted my thoughts, "at any time, go on the Ewell property without an invitation from one of them?"

"No suh, Mr. Finch, I never did."

"Tom, what happened to you on the evening of November twenty-first of last year?"

Tom was a black-velvet Negro, not shiny, but soft black velvet. The whites of his eyes shone in his face, and when he spoke, we saw flashes of his teeth. If he hadn't been crippled, he would have been a fine example of a man.

Tom said that he was going home as usual that evening, and when he passed the Ewell place Miss Mayella was on the porch.

She asked him to come into the front room and help her fix the door. He checked the door and it was in order. Then Miss Mayella shut the door. Tom saw no children on

the place. He asked where the children were, and Miss Mayella laughed and said that they had gone to town to get ice creams. She had saved seven nickels, it had taken her the whole year, but she had done it.

"What did you say then, Tom?" asked Atticus.

"I said somethin' like, why Miss Mayella, that's right clever o'you to treat 'em. An' she said, 'You think so?' I don't think she understood what I was thinkin' - I meant it was clever of her to save like that, an' nice of her to treat 'em."

"I understand you, Tom. Go on," said Atticus.

"Well, I said I'd better go: the door was all right, there was nothing to do. But she asked me to stand on the chair yonder and get that box down from the top of the wardrobe."

"Not the same wardrobe you chopped up?" asked Atticus.

The witness smiled. "Naw suh, another one. Almost as tall as the room. So I done what she told me, an' I was just reachin' when the next thing I knows she - she'd grabbed me round the legs, grabbed me round th' legs, Mr. Finch. She scared me so much I hopped down an' turned the chair over - that was the only thing, only furniture, disturbed in that room, Mr. Finch, when I left it. I swear before God."

"What happened after you turned the chair over?"

Tom Robinson got silent. He looked at Atticus, then at the jury, then at Mr. Underwood sitting across the room.

"Tom, you're sworn to tell the whole truth. Will you tell it?"

Tom ran his hand nervously over his mouth.

"Answer the question," said Judge Taylor.

"Mr. Finch, I got down off that chair an' turned around an' she sort of jumped on me."

"Jumped on you? Violently?"

"No suh, she - she hugged me. She hugged me round the waist."

Judge Taylor's gavel quickly restored order.

"Then what did she do?"

The witness swallowed hard. "She reached up an' kissed my cheek. She says she never kissed a grown man before an' she might as well kiss a nigger. She says what her papa do to her don't count. She says, 'Kiss me back, nigger.' I say Miss Mayella let me outa here an' tried to run but she got her back to the door. I didn't wanta push and harm her, Mr. Finch, an' I say let me pass, but just when I say it Mr. Ewell yonder screamed through th' window."

"What did he say?"

Tom Robinson swallowed again, and his eyes widened. "Somethin' not right to say - not right for these folks'n children to hear-"

"What did he say, Tom? You must tell the jury what he said."

Tom Robinson shut his eyes. "He says you goddamn whore, I'll kill ya."

Atticus asked Tom to whom Mr. Ewell was speaking, and Tom said that he was looking at and speaking to Miss Mayella.

"Then what happened?"

"Mr. Finch, I was runnin' so fast I didn't know what happened."

It was clear that Tom didn't rape Mayella Ewell. He just tried to resist her advances and didn't want to be rude to her. Later, Atticus explained to me the difficulty of Tom's situation: he couldn't strike a white woman under any circumstances and expect to live long, so he took the first opportunity to run - a sure sign of guilt.

"Why did you run?"

"I was scared, suh."

"Why were you scared?"

"Mr. Finch, if you was a nigger like me, you'd be scared, too."

Atticus sat down. Mr. Gilmer was making his way to the witness stand, but before he got there, Mr. Link Deas rose from the audience and announced:

"I just want to say one thing right now. You all must know - that boy's worked for me eight years an' I haven't had any trouble outa him. Not a bit."

Judge Taylor got angry and told Mr. Deas to leave the courtroom. And he told the secretary not to write down Mr. Deas's words and the jury to ignore the interruption. Mr. Deas was not a witness to the case; he was just breaking the order. Then Judge Taylor said, "Go ahead, Mr. Gilmer."

Mr. Gilmer asked Tom again about his thirty days in jail for disorderly conduct.

I understood that Mr. Gilmer wanted to show the jury that anyone who was convicted of disorderly conduct was able to take advantage of Mayella Ewell.

"Robinson, you're pretty good at chopping up wardrobes and kindling with one hand, aren't you?"

"Yes, suh, I reckon so."

"Strong enough to choke the breath out of a woman and knock her down to the floor?"

"I never done that, suh."

"But you are strong enough to?"

"I reckon so, suh."

"Had your eye on her a long time, hadn't you, boy?"

"No suh, I never looked at her."

"Then you were just polite when you did all those jobs for her, weren't you, boy?"

"I was just tryin' to help her out, suh."

"But you had chores at home after your regular work, didn't you?"

"Yes suh."

"Why didn't you do them instead of Miss Ewell's?"

"I done 'em both, suh."

"Why were you so eager to do that woman's chores?"

Tom Robinson thought a little how best to answer. "Looked like she had nobody to help her, like I says-"

"With Mr. Ewell and seven children on the place, boy?"

"Well, I says it looked like they never help her none. I tried to help her, I says."

Mr. Gilmer smiled grimly at the jury. "You're such a good fellow, it seems - did all this for no money at all?"

"Yes, suh. I felt right sorry for her, she tried more'n the rest of 'em-"

"You felt sorry for her, you felt sorry for her?" It seemed Mr. Gilmer was ready to rise to the ceiling.

Below the balcony, nobody liked Tom Robinson's answer. The witness understood his mistake and moved uncomfortably in the chair. But the damage was done. Mr. Gilmer paused a long time.

"Now you went by the house as usual, last November twenty-first," he said, "and she asked you to come in and chop up a wardrobe?"

"No suh - she asked me to help her inside the house-"

"She says she asked you to chop up a wardrobe, is that right?"

"No suh, it ain't."

"Then you say she's lying, boy?"

Atticus was on his feet, but Tom Robinson didn't need him. "I don't say she's lyin', Mr. Gilmer, I say she's mistaken in her mind."

To the next ten questions, as Mr. Gilmer went through Mayella's version of events, the witness's steady answer was that she was mistaken in her mind.

"You're very frank about everything, why did you run so fast?"

"I says I was scared, suh."

"If you weren't guilty, why were you scared?"

"Like I says before, it weren't safe for any nigger to be in a - fix like that."

"But you weren't in a fix - you testified that you were resisting Miss Ewell. Were you so scared that she'd hurt you, you ran, a big man like you?"

"No suh, I was scared I'd be in court, just like I am now."

"Scared of arrest for what you did?"

"No suh scared of arrest for what I didn't do."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

I didn't hear more of Mr. Gilmer's cross-examination, because Jem made me take Dill out. For some reason Dill had started crying and couldn't stop. When we went out and sat down under a tree, Dill told me that he couldn't stand the attitude of Mr. Gilmer to Tom, it made him sick. I tried to explain to him that it was prosecutor's job. I also said that most lawyers act that way with Negroes.

"Mr. Finch doesn't."

"He's not an example, Dill, he's-" I remembered what Miss Maudie Atkinson had said: "He's the same in the courtroom as he is on the public streets."

"That's not what I mean," said Dill.

"I know what you mean, boy," said a voice behind us. It belonged to Mr. Dolphus Raymond. He was sitting on the other side of the tree trunk. "You aren't thin-skinned, it just makes you sick, doesn't it?"

"Come on round here, son, I got something that'll help your stomach."

He offered Dill his paper sack with straws in it. "Drink it, it'll calm you."

Jem said that Mr. Raymond had whiskey in that sack, so I told Dill to be careful. But Dill drank through the straws, smiled, and said, "Scout, it's Coca-Cola."

Mr. Raymond said, "You little folks won't tell anybody, will you? It'd ruin my reputation if you did."

I asked him why he made everybody believe that he drank whiskey through those straws all the time.

"It's very simple," he said. "Some folks don't like the way I live. I could tell them to go to hell and say I don't care if they don't like it. I do say I don't care if they don't like it - but I don't tell them to go to hell, understand?"

Dill and I didn't understand.

"I try to give 'em a reason. It helps folks if they find a reason. When I come to town, and it's seldom, if I sway a little and drink out of this sack, folks can say Dolphus Raymond's in the clutches of whiskey - that's why he won't change his ways. He can't help himself, that's why he lives the way he does. They could never, never understand that I live like I do because that's the way I want to live."

"Why did you tell us your secret?" I asked.

"Because you're children and you can understand it," he said, "and because I heard that one-"

He jerked his head at Dill: "He's still very young. Let him get a little older and he won't get sick and cry. Maybe he'll see that things are not quite right, but he won't cry."

"Cry about what, Mr. Raymond?" Dill asked.

"Cry about the real hell that people create for other people - without even thinking. Cry about the hell white people create for colored folks, and don't even stop to think that they're people, too."

"Atticus says cheatin' a colored man is ten times worse than cheatin' a white man," I muttered.

"Miss Jean Louise," Mr. Raymond said, "you don't know that your pa's not a run-of-the-mill man, you'll understand it in a few years - you haven't seen enough of the world yet. You haven't even seen this town, but you can go back inside the courthouse and see."

We returned to our seats in the balcony.

Atticus was halfway through his speech to the jury. Mr. Gilmer had made his speech already.

Jem whispered, "We're gonna win, Scout. I don't see how we can't. He's been at it 'bout five minutes. He made it clear and easy to understand."

We looked down. Atticus walked slowly up and down in front of the jury, and they were attentive: their heads were up, and they looked at him.

"Gentlemen," he said. Jem and I looked at each other: Atticus was talking to the jury as if they were folks on the post office comer.

"Gentlemen," he was saying, "I would like to remind you that this case is not difficult, it is as simple as black and white.

There are no complicated facts. This case should never have come to trial at all. The state has not produced one iota of medical evidence that the crime Tom Robinson is charged with ever took place. It has relied instead upon the testimony of two witnesses whose evidence has been shown during cross- examination as highly questionable,

and has been absolutely contradicted by the defendant. The defendant is not guilty, but somebody in this courtroom is.

The chief witness for the state has a hard life and I have pity for her, but my pity stops at the fact that she wants to take a man's life in an effort to rid herself of her own guilt.

I say guilt, gentlemen, because she was motivated by guilt. She has committed no crime, she has simply broken an old and severe code of our society, a code so severe that to break it is to become an outcast in our society. She is the victim of severe poverty and ignorance, but I cannot pity her: she is white. She knew very well the great seriousness of her offense, but her desires were stronger than the code, and she broke it. And then she did something that every child has done - she tried to put the evidence of her offense away from her. What was the evidence of her offense? Tom Robinson, a human being. She must put Tom Robinson away from her. What was her offense? She was white and she tempted a Negro. She thought nothing of the code and the offense until her father saw it.

Her father saw it, and we know from the testimony of the defendant how her father had called her. What did her father do? We don't know, but there is circumstantial evidence that shows that Mayella Ewell was beaten badly by someone who did it almost exclusively with his left hand. We do know in part what Mr. Ewell did: he did what any God-fearing, respectable white man would do under the circumstances - he asked for a warrant, and no doubt signed it with his left hand, and Tom Robinson now sits

before you, and he took the oath with the only good hand he has - his right hand.

And now a quiet, decent, modest Negro who had the impudence to 'feel sorry' for a white woman has had to testify against two white people. You saw and heard them in this court, gentlemen. They are full of the cynical confidence that you, gentlemen, will have no doubt in their testimony, they are sure that you, gentlemen, agree that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral beings, that all Negro men are not to be trusted around our women.

Gentlemen, we know that it's a black lie. You know the truth, and the truth is this: some Negroes lie, some Negroes are immoral, some Negro men are not to be trusted around women - black or white. But this is true of the human race in general, not of a particular race of men."

Atticus paused and took out his handkerchief. Then he took off his glasses and wiped them. His face was shining with sweat. It was very unusual.

"Before I finish, I'd like to say a few words about a phrase of Thomas Jefferson. He once said that all men are created equal. Now, in 1935, some people like to use this phrase out of context, for all conditions. For example, the people who run public education promote the stupid and idle along with the diligent - because all men are created equal, educators seriously say, the children left behind suffer awful feelings of inferiority. We know that all men are not created equal in everything - some people are cleverer than others, some people have more opportunity

because they're born with it, some men make more money than others, some ladies make better cakes - some people are born more gifted than most men.

But in one human institution a poor man is equal to a millionaire, the stupid man equal to a genius, and the ignorant man equal to any college president. That institution, gentlemen, is a court. It can be the Supreme Court of the United States or this honorable court, which you serve. In our courts, all men are created equal.

I'm no idealist, I know that our courts and the jury system are not ideal. Gentlemen, a court is no better than each man of you on this jury. I am sure, gentlemen, that you will study without passion the evidence you have heard, come to a decision, and return this defendant to his family. In the name of God, do your duty."

As Atticus turned away from the jury, he said something softly, more to himself than to the court. I asked Jem, "What'd he say?"

I think he said, "In the name of God, believe him."

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Suddenly we saw Calpumia in the courtroom below. She brought an envelope for Atticus. We froze in our seats.

Atticus opened the envelope, read the note, and said, "Judge, I - this note is from my sister. She says my children are missing, haven't been seen since noon... I... could you-"

"I know where they are, Atticus." Mr. Underwood spoke up. "They're right up yonder in the colored balcony - been there since one-eighteen p.m."

Our father turned around and looked up. "Jem, come down from there," he called.

When we came downstairs, Jem said excitedly, "We've won, haven't we?"

"I've no idea," said Atticus shortly. He told us to go home with Calpumia and get supper, and stay at home. Jem asked him to let us come back and hear the verdict. Atticus allowed us to return after supper.

"If the jury's still out, you can wait with us. But I think it'll be over before you get back."

"You think they'll free him that fast?" asked Jem.

Atticus opened his mouth to answer, but shut it and left us.

When we went outside, the streetlights were already on.

Aunt Alexandra met us and nearly fainted when Calpumia told her where we were. I reckon it hurt her when

we told her that Atticus allowed us to come back, because she didn't say a word during supper.

In an hour, we were back. Reverend Sykes had saved our places. The courtroom was exactly as we had left it - full of people, only the jury box was empty, and the defendant was gone. Reverend Sykes told us that Atticus and Mr. Gilmer had done some more talking, then Judge Taylor had talked to the ' jury.

"What did he say?" asked Jem.

"Well, he said if you believe this, then you'll have to return one verdict, but if you believe this, you'll have to return another one. I thought he was leanin' a little towards our side."

Jem was sure that Atticus had won, and he said so to Reverend Sykes.

"Now don't you be so confident, Mr. Jem. No jury has ever decided in favor of a colored man over a white man..." But Jem began to explain his ideas on the law about rape: it wasn't rape if she let you, but she had to be eighteen - in Alabama, that is - and Mayella was nineteen. You had to kick and scream, you had to be knocked stone cold. If you were under eighteen, you didn't have to go through all this. Reverend Sykes reminded Jem of my presence and said that it wasn't good for little lady's ears.

Jem stopped and asked, "What time is it, Reverend?"

"Gettin' on toward eight."

I looked down. Atticus was walking around with his hands in his pockets: he made a tour of the windows, then walked by the jury box. He looked in it, inspected Judge Taylor on his throne, then went back to where he started. I waved to him. He nodded, and resumed his tour.

Mr. Gilmer was talking to Mr. Underwood at the windows. Bert, the court secretary, was chain-smoking: he sat back with his feet on the table.

But the officers of the court, - Atticus, Mr. Gilmer, Judge Taylor sound asleep, and Bert, were the only ones whose behavior seemed normal. I had never seen a crowded courtroom so still. They sat as if they were in church. In the balcony, the Negroes sat and stood around us with biblical patience.

The old courthouse clock struck eight. When it struck eleven, I was nearly asleep. Dill was sound asleep, his head on Jem's shoulder, and Jem was quiet.

"Ain't it a long time?" I asked him.

"Sure is, Scout," he said happily.

"Well, you say it as if it's only five minutes."

Jem raised his eyebrows. "There are things you don't understand," he said, and I was too tired to argue.

But I felt suddenly cold and shivered, though the night was hot. The feeling grew until the atmosphere in the courtroom was exactly the same as on a cold February morning, when the mockingbirds were still, and the carpenters had stopped work on Miss Maudie's new house,

and every wood door in the neighborhood was shut as the doors of the Radley Place. A waiting, empty street and the courtroom was full of people. A hot summer night was no different from a winter morning when Mr. Heck Tate said to Atticus, "Take him, Mr. Finch..."

But Mr. Tate, who had entered the courtroom, said, "This court will come to order." And the heads below us jerked up. Mr. Tate left the room and returned with Tom Robinson. He led Tom to his place beside Atticus, and stood there. Judge Taylor was sitting up straight, looking at the empty jury box.

A jury never looks at a defendant it has convicted, and when this jury came in, not one of them looked at Tom Robinson. The foreman handed a piece of paper to Mr. Tate who handed it to the clerk who handed it to the judge...

I closed my eyes. Judge Taylor was polling the jury: "Guilty... guilty... guilty... guilty..." I looked at Jem: his shoulders jerked at each "guilty". Judge Taylor was saying something. Atticus was pushing papers from the table into his briefcase. He closed it, went to the court secretary and said something, nodded to Mr. Gilmer, and then went to Tom Robinson. He put his hand on Tom's shoulder and whispered something to him. Then he walked quickly down the middle aisle toward the exit.

"Miss Jean Louise?"

I looked around. All around us and in the balcony on the opposite wall, the Negroes were standing. Reverend

Sykes said, "Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father's passin'."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Jem's face was wet with angry tears as we walked through the cheerful crowd. "It ain't right," he muttered, all the way to the comer of the square where Atticus was waiting. Atticus looked as usual, as if nothing had happened.

"It ain't right, Atticus," said Jem.

"No son, it's not right."

We walked home.

Aunt Alexandra was waiting up. "I'm sorry, brother," she murmured. She had never called Atticus "brother" before, and I looked at Jem, but he was not listening. He looked up at Atticus, then down at the floor. Could he think Atticus somehow responsible for Tom Robinson's conviction?

"Is he all right?" Aunty asked.

"He'll be soon," said Atticus. "It was a little too strong for him." Our father sighed. "I'm going to bed," he said. "If l don't wake up in the morning, don't call me."

"It wasn't wise to let them-"

"This is their home, sister," said Atticus. "We've made it this way for them, they might as well learn to cope with it."

"But they don't have to go to the courthouse-"

"It's just as much Maycomb County as missionary teas."

"Atticus-" Aunt Alexandra's eyes were worried. "I didn't think you would turn bitter over this."

"I'm not bitter, just tired. I'm going to bed."

Jem stopped him. "Atticus-"

He turned in the doorway. "What, son?"

"How could they do it, how could they?"

"I don't know, but they did it. They've done it before and they did it tonight and they'll do it again and when they do it - seems that only children weep. Good night."

But in the morning Atticus got up early, as usual, and was in the living room behind his newspaper when we came in. He understood the question on Jem's sleepy face.

"It's not time to worry yet," Atticus said, as we went to the dining room. "There'll be an appeal, you can count on that. Cal, what's all this?" He was looking at his breakfast plate.

Calpurnia said, "Tom Robinson's daddy sent you this chicken this morning."

"Tell him I'm proud to get it - bet they don't have chicken for breakfast at the White House. What are these?"

"Rolls," said Calpurnia. "Estelle down at the hotel sent 'em."

As Atticus looked up at her, puzzled, she said, "You better come and see what's in the kitchen, Mr. Finch."

The kitchen table was loaded with hunks of salt pork, tomatoes, beans. Calpurnia said, "This was all 'round the

back steps when I got here this morning. They - they appreciate what you did, Mr. Finch. They - they aren't oversteppin' themselves, are they?"

Atticus's eyes filled with tears. He did not speak for a moment. "Tell them I'm very grateful," he said. "Tell them - tell them they must never do this again. Times are too hard..."

Atticus went to the dining room and excused himself to Aunt Alexandra, put on his hat and went to town.

Dill joined us for breakfast, so Calpurnia left Atticus's uneaten breakfast on the table. After breakfast, we went to the front porch. Miss Stephanie Crawford was busy talking to Miss Maudie Atkinson and Mr. Avery. They looked around at us and went on talking.

Miss Maudie shouted, "Jem Finch, come here."

Dill and I went with him. Miss Stephanie was full of curiosity. She wanted to know who gave us permission to go to court. She wanted to know how we felt about our daddy's defeat.

Miss Maudie stopped her and said she wasn't going to spend all the morning on the porch. "Jem Finch," she said, "I want to know if you and your colleagues can eat some cake. I got up at five to make it, so you better say yes. Excuse us, Stephanie. Good morning, Mr. Avery."

In the kitchen, while we were eating the cake, Miss Maudie sat quietly and watched us.

Suddenly she spoke: "Don't worry, Jem. Things are never as bad as they seem."

She paused and we waited.

"I simply want to tell you that there are some men in this world who were born to do our unpleasant jobs for us. Your father's one of them."

Jem was looking at his half-eaten cake. "It always seemed to me that Maycomb folks were the best folks in the world."

Miss Maudie said, "We're the most protected folks in the world because life so seldom calls us to be Christians, but when it happens, we've got men like Atticus to go for us."

Jem smiled sadly. "I wish there were more people who thought that."

"You'd be surprised how many of us do."

"Who?" Jem's voice rose. "Who in this town did one thing to help Tom Robinson, just who?"

"His colored friends for one thing, and people like us. People like Judge Taylor. People like Mr. Heck Tate. Judge Taylor had his reasons when he named Atticus to defend that boy."

This was a thought. Defenses appointed by court were usually given to young Maxwell Green, who needed the experience, but not this time.

"You think about that," Miss Maudie continued. "It was no accident. I was sittin' there on the porch last night, waiting. I waited and waited to see you all come down the sidewalk, and as I waited I thought, Atticus Finch won't win, he can't win, but he's the only man in these parts who can keep a jury out so long in a case like that. And I thought to myself, well, we're making a step - it's just a very little step, but it's a step."

When we left Miss Maudie's house, we saw that Miss Stephanie and Mr. Avery were still in the street, and Miss Rachel was with them. They were all very excited.

Something was wrong. Miss Rachel caught Dill's shoulder. "You get on in the back yard and stay there," she said. "There's danger a'comin'."

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Haven't you heard yet? It's all over town-"

At that moment, Aunt Alexandra came to the door and called us, but she was too late. Miss Stephanie had the pleasure to tell us: this morning Mr. Bob Ewell stopped Atticus on the post office corner, spat in his face, and told him he'd get him if it took the rest of his life.

CHAPTER TWELVE

All that Atticus said about it was: "I wish Bob Ewell wouldn't chew tobacco."

Miss Stephanie Crawford, however, described it in great detail. Atticus was leaving the post office when Mr. Ewell came up to him, cursed him, spat on him, and threatened to kill him. Miss Stephanie said that Atticus didn't bat an eyelid, just took out his handkerchief and wiped his face and stood there and let Mr. Ewell call him names she could never repeat. Mr. Ewell was a veteran of some little known war; that plus Atticus's peaceful reaction probably helped him to inquire, "Too proud to fight, you nigger-lovin' bastard?" According to Miss Stephanie Atticus said, "No, too old," put his hands in his pockets and walked on. Miss Stephanie said you had to say that of Atticus Finch, he could be right dry sometimes.

Jem and I were worried and asked Atticus to carry a gun. He said, "Nonsense."

Dill said that an appeal to Atticus's better nature might work: after all, we would starve if Mr. Ewell killed him, and we would be brought up exclusively by Aunt Alexandra, and we all knew that she would fire Calpurnia at once. Jem said it might work if I cried and cried like a little girl. That didn't work either.

But he noticed that we didn't behave normally, didn't eat, took little interest in our normal activities, Atticus understood how deeply frightened we were. One night he asked, "What's bothering you, son?"

Jem said, "Mr. Ewell."

"What has happened?"

"Nothing's happened. We're scared for you. When a man says he's gonna kill you, looks like he means it."

"He meant it when he said it," said Atticus. "Jem, see if you can stand in Bob Ewell's shoes a minute. Nobody will believe him after that trial, if anybody ever did. The man had to take it out on somebody, men like him always do. So if spitting in my face and threatening me saved Mayella Ewell one extra beating, that's something I'll gladly take."

Aunt Alexandra entered the room as Atticus was saying, "There's nothing to fear from Bob Ewell now, he got it all out of his system that morning."

"I wouldn't be so sure of that, Atticus," she said. "Those people will do anything out of hatred."

"What on earth could Ewell do to me, sister?"

"Something stealthy," Aunt Alexandra said. "You may count on that."

"Nobody has much chance to be stealthy in Maycomb," Atticus answered.

After that, we were not afraid and enjoyed our usual summer games. Atticus said that nothing would happen to Tom Robinson until the higher court reviewed his case, and that there was a good chance that Tom would go free, or have a new trial.

"If he loses his appeal," I asked one evening, "what'll happen to him?"

"He'll go to the electric chair," said Atticus, "but the Governor may commute his sentence. Not time to worry yet, Scout. We've got a good chance."

Jem's opinion was that the jury wasn't right. Tom didn't kill anybody even if he was guilty. He didn't take anybody's life.

Atticus said that rape was a capital crime in Alabama, and he had nothing against that law, but his opinion was that nobody should be given a death sentence on circumstantial evidence. Atticus saw that I was listening and looked at me and made it easier. I mean, before a man is sentenced to death for murder, for example, there should be one or two eyewitnesses. Someone should be able to say, 'Yes, I was there and saw how he pulled the trigger.' In the absence of eye-witnesses there's always a doubt, there's always the possibility that he's innocent."

Jem said, "Then it was the jury's fault. We oughta do away with juries. Tom wasn't guilty in the first place and they said he was."

"If you had been on that jury, son, and eleven other boys like you, Tom would be a free man," said Atticus. "In everyday life, those twelve men, Tom's jury, are reasonable people, but you saw that something had come between them and reason. There's something in our world that makes men lose their heads. In our courts, when it's a white

man's word against a black man's, the white man always wins. These are the ugly facts of life."

Jem repeated again, "That's not right. You just can't convict a man on evidence like that - you can't."

"You couldn't, but they could and did. As you grow older, you'll see that white men cheat black men every day of your life, but let me tell you something and don't you forget it - whenever a white man does that to a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine his family is, that white man is trash."

That last word crashed on our ears. I looked at Atticus. He was speaking with great feeling. "I hate it when a low-grade white man takes advantage of a Negro's ignorance. This can't go on all the time. Someday we're going to pay the bill for it. I hope it's not in your time, children."

Jem had another question. He wanted to know why there were never anybody from Maycomb on a jury, they all came from out in the woods. Atticus said that Maycomb citizens weren't interested, and another reason was that they were afraid that their vote might become known. The members of the jury have to make up their minds and say their opinion about something. Men don't like to do that. Sometimes it's unpleasant.

Jem said, "Tom's jury surely made up its mind in a hurry."

"No it didn't," Atticus, said, "That jury took a few hours. An inevitable verdict, maybe, but usually it takes

'em just a few minutes." He smiled and looked at us. "There was one fellow on the jury who wanted to let Tom go free. It took a long time to make him change his decision."

"But a jury's vote's secret," Jem said.

Atticus smiled again. "Yes, I can't tell you who he was, but I'll tell you this much. He was one of your Old Sarum friends..."

"One of the Cunninghams?" Jem was surprised. "I didn't see any of'em on the jury... you're jokin'." Atticus said it was one the Cunninghams' relatives.

Jem said, "One minute they're tryin' to kill him and the next they're tryin' to let him go... I'll never understand those folks as long as I live."

Atticus said you just had to know 'em. He said the Cunninghams hadn't taken anything from anybody since they migrated to the New World. He also said that if you had their respect, they were on your side. Atticus said he had a feeling that they left the jail that night with considerable respect for the Finches.

Atticus went to his room to read his newspaper. Aunt Alexandra was making a rug and not watching us, but she was listening.

I remembered the incident with young Walter Cunningham at school and said, "Soon's school starts. I'm gonna ask Walter home to dinner. He can stay over sometimes after school, too. Atticus could drive him back

to Old Sarum. Maybe he could spend the night with us sometime, okay, Jem?"

"We'll see about that," Aunt Alexandra said. Those words were always a threat, never a promise. I turned to her. "Why not, Aunty? They're good folks."

She looked at me over her glasses. "Jean Louise, there is no doubt in my mind that they're good folks. But they're not our kind of folks. Finch women aren't interested in that sort of people."

"Aun-ty," said Jem, "she ain't nine yet."

"She may as well learn it now."

I thought that perhaps Aunt Alexandra had come to live with us because she wanted to help us choose our friends. I decided to argue: "If they're good folks, then why can't I be nice to Walter?"

"I didn't say not to be nice to him. You should be friendly and polite to him, you should be polite to everybody, dear. But you don't have to invite him home."

"But I want to play with Walter, Aunty, why can't I?"

She took off her glasses and looked at me. "I'll tell you why," she said. "Because - he - is - trash, that's why you can't play with him. I'll not let you pick up his habits and learn Lord-knows what. Besides, they are fond of drinking in that family."

I got furious and started cry. Jem led me to his bedroom and gave me a chewing gum.

"Scout, don't let Aunty antagonize you."

It seemed only yesterday that he was telling me not to antagonize Aunty.

"She doesn't know girls, not girls like you," said Jem, "She's trying to make you a lady. Can't you learn to sew or somethin'?"

"Hell no. She just doesn't like me, and I don't care. I cried because of Walter Cunningham. That boy's not trash, Jem. He ain't like the Ewells."

Jem switched on the reading light, sat on his bed and told me what he thought. His idea was that there are four kinds of folks in Maycomb County: the ordinary kind like us and the neighbors, the kind like the Cunninghams out in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and the Negroes. Our kind of folks don't like the Cunninghams, the Cunninghams don't like the Ewells, and the Ewells hate and despise the colored folks."

I said, "Tom's jury was made up of folks like the Cunninghams. Why then didn't they let Tom go because of their dislike of the Ewells?"

Instead of the answer, Jem said that Atticus liked pot liquor better'n any man he had ever seen.

"Then that makes us like the Cunninghams," I said. "I can't see why Aunty-"

"No, we're still different somehow. Atticus said one time that Aunty thinks so much of the family because all we've got is background and not a dime to our names."

I remembered that Atticus had told me one time that all that talk about Old Family was foolish because everybody's family's just as old as everybody else's. Jem thought that background didn't mean Old Family. He said that background was how long your family had known how to read and write. I didn't think so.

"Well then, how do you explain why the Cunninghams are different? Mr. Walter can hardly sign his name, I've seen him. We've just been readin' and writin' longer'n they have."

"No, everybody has to learn, nobody is born knowin' how to write and read. That Walter is clever, he lags behind sometimes because he has to miss school and help his daddy. No, Jem, I think there's just one kind of folks. Folks."

Jem was silent for a while. Then he said, "If there's just one kind of folks, why can't they get along with each other? Why do they despise each other? Scout, I think I'm beginning to understand that Boo Radley's stayed in the house all this time because he wants to stay inside."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

It was the end of August. Dill was to leave for Meridian next day. Today he was off with Jem at Barker's Eddy. Jem was teaching him to swim. I couldn't come because they said they were going in naked. They had spent two afternoons at the creek, and, so I divided the lonely hours between Calpurnia and Miss Maudie.

Today Aunt Alexandra's missionary circle gathered in our house. I was in the kitchen with Calpurnia. Mrs. Grace Merriweather was giving a report in the living room on the awful lives of some tribe. After her report, the ladies went to the dining room for refreshments. Calpurnia was serving them. When she opened the door, I could hear their voices: "Why, Alexandra, I never saw such charlotte... just lovely... the preacher's wife's..."

They became quiet, and I knew they had all been served. Calpurnia returned and put my mother's heavy silver coffee jug on a tray. She allowed me to carry it into the dining room: "Careful now, it's heavy. Don't look at it and you won't spill it."

My journey was successful: Aunt Alexandra smiled brilliantly. "Stay with us, Jean Louise," she said. This was a part of her campaign to teach me to be a lady.

I took a seat beside Miss Maudie. Miss Stephanie Crawford called from across the room, "Watch going to be when you grow up, Jean Louise? I thought you wanted to be a lawyer, you've already begun going to court." The

ladies laughed. Miss Stephanie asked again, "Don't you want to grow up to be a lawyer?"

Miss Maudie's hand touched mine and I answered, "No, ma'am, just a lady."

Miss Stephanie looked at me with doubt, decided that I wasn't impertinent, and said, "Well, you won't get very far until you start wearing dresses more often."

Miss Maudie's hand touched mine again, and I said nothing.

Mrs. Grace Merriweather sat on my left, and I thought that it would be polite to talk to her. I found a topic of interest to her. "What did you all study this afternoon?" I asked.

Mrs. Merriweather's large brown eyes always filled with tears when she spoke of the oppressed.

"The poverty... the darkness... the immorality... You know, when the church gave me that trip to the camp grounds, I said to myself, when I go home I'm going to give a course on this tribe and that's just what I'm doing."

"Yes ma'am."

"Jean Louise," Mrs. Merriweather said, "you are a fortunate girl. You live in a Christian home with Christian folks in a Christian town. Out there in that land there's only sin and poverty."

"Yes ma'am."

"Sin and poverty - what was that, Gertrude?" Mrs. Merriweather turned to the lady beside her.

"Oh that. Well, I always say forgive and forget, forgive and forget. The church ought to help her lead a Christian life for those children. Some of the men ought to go out there and tell that preacher to encourage her."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Merriweather," I interrupted, "are you all talking about Mayella Ewell?"

"May -? No, child. That darky's wife. Tom's wife, Tom-"

"Robinson, ma'am."

Mrs. Merriweather turned back to her neighbor. "I truly believe, Gertrude," she continued, "If we just let them know that we forgive 'em, that we've forgotten it, then this whole thing'll pass."

"Ah - Mrs. Merriweather," I interrupted again, "what'll pass?"

Mrs. Merriweather turned to me. "Nothing, Jean Louise," she said, "the cooks and field hands are just dissatisfied, but they're calming down now - they grumbled all next day after that trial."

Mrs. Merriweather turned to her neighbor again: "Gertrude, I tell you it just ruins your day to have a displeased darky in the kitchen. Their mouths go down to here. You know what I said to my Sophy, Gertrude? I said, 'Sophy,' I said, 'you simply are not being a Christian today. Jesus Christ never grumbled and complained,' and you

know, it did her good. She took her eyes off that floor and said, 'Nome, Miz Merriweather, Jesus never grumbled.' I tell you, Gertrude, it is always good to witness for the Lord."

Mrs. Gertrude Farrow nodded. "Grace," she said, "it's just like I was telling Brother Hutson the other day. 'Brother Hutson,' I said, 'it looks like we're fighting a losing battle. I said, 'It doesn't matter to them one bit. We can educate them till we're blue in the face, we can try to make Christians out of them till we drop, but there's no lady safe in her bed these nights.' He said to me, 'Mrs. Farrow, I don't know what we're coming to down here.' I told him that was certainly a fact."

Mrs. Merriweather spoke again. "Gertrude," she said, "I tell you there are some good people in this town who think they're doing right, but they're mistaken. Now I'm not going to say who, but some of 'em in this town thought they were doing the right thing, but they just excited them. That's all they did. Perhaps, it looked like the right thing to do at the time, I'm sure I don't know, but displeased... dissatisfied... I tell you if my Sophy'd stayed that way another day I'd have fired her. It's never entered that woolly head of hers that I only keep her because this depression is on, and she needs her dollar and a quarter every week."

"His food doesn't stick in the throat, does it?" Miss Maudie's voice was icy.

"Maudie, I'm sure I don't know what you mean," said Mrs. Merriweather.

"I'm sure you do," Miss Maudie said shortly.

She said no more. Something had made her very angry, and her gray eyes were as cold as her voice. Mrs. Merriweather reddened, glanced at me, and looked away. I could not see Mrs. Farrow.

Aunt Alexandra got up from the table, quickly passed more refreshments, and engaged Mrs. Merriweather and Mrs. Gates in active conversation. She looked at Miss Maudie with deep gratitude, and I wondered at the world of women. Miss Maudie and Aunt Alexandra had never been friends, and now Aunty was silently thanking her for something. For what, I knew not. I was glad to learn that Aunt Alexandra could feel gratitude for help given. There was no doubt about it, I must soon enter this world, where on its surface sweet-smelling ladies rocked slowly, fanned gently, and drank cool water.

But I was more at home in my father's world, in the world of men. There was something about them that I instinctively liked... they weren't -

"Hypocrites, Mrs. Perkins, born hypocrites," Mrs. Merriweather was saying. "At least we don't have that sin on our shoulders down here. People up in the North set 'em free, but they don't sit at the table with 'em. At least we don't say to 'em yes you're as good as we are but stay away from us. Down here, we just say you live your way and we'll live ours. I think that woman, that Mrs. Roosevelt's lost her mind - just plain lost her mind when she came

down to Birmingham and tried to sit with 'em. If I was the Mayor of Birmingham I'd-"

I wished I was the Governor of Alabama for one day: I'd let Tom Robinson go so fast that the Missionary Society wouldn't have time to catch its breath. Miss Rachel's cook was in the kitchen with Calpumia the other day. Calpumia said that Atticus told her that Tom had lost hope on the day they took him to prison. She said Atticus tried to explain things to him, and that he must do his best not to lose hope because Atticus was doing his best to get him free. Miss Rachel's cook asked Calpumia why didn't Atticus just say yes, you'll go free - it would be a big comfort to Tom. Calpumia said, "Because you ain't familiar with the law. First thing you learn when you're in a lawin' family is that there ain't any definite answers to anything. Mr. Finch cannot say something is so when he doesn't know for sure it's so."

The front door slammed and I heard Atticus's footsteps in the hall. I was surprised: on Missionary Society days, he usually came home very late.

He stopped in the doorway. His hat was in his hand, and his face was white.

"Excuse me, ladies," he said. "Go right ahead with your meeting, don't let me disturb you. Alexandra, could you come to the kitchen a minute? I want to borrow Calpumia for a while."

He went to the kitchen. Aunt Alexandra and I followed him. The dining room door opened again and

Miss Maudie joined us. Calpumia had half risen from her chair.

Atticus asked Calpumia to go to Helen Robinson's house with him. "Tom's dead," he said.

Aunt Alexandra put her hands to her mouth.

"They shot him," said Atticus. "He was running. It was during their exercise period. They said he just rushed to the fence and started climbing over. Right in front of them. The guards fired a few shots in the air, then to kill. They got him just as he went over the fence. They said if he'd had two good arms he'd have made it, he was moving that fast. Seventeen bullet holes in him. They didn't have to shoot him that much. Cal, come out with me and help me tell Helen."

"Yes sir," she murmured. Miss Maudie helped Calpumia untie her apron.

Atticus said, "We had such a good chance. I told him what I thought, but I couldn't in truth say that we had more than a good chance. I think Tom was tired of white men's chances and decided to take his own. Ready, Cal?"

When Atticus and Calpumia left, Aunt Alexandra sat down in Calpumia's chair and put her hands to her face. She sat quite still. In the dining room, the ladies chattered happily.

Aunt Alexandra took her hands away from her face. She looked tired.

"I can't say I approve of everything he does, Maudie, but he's my brother, and I just want to know when this will end." Her voice rose: "It tears him to pieces. He doesn't show it much, but it tears him to pieces... what else do they want from him, Maudie, what else?"

"What does who want, Alexandra?" Miss Maudie asked.

"This town. They're willingly letting him do what they're too afraid to do themselves - they might lose a nickel. They're willingly letting him ruin his health and do what they're afraid to do, they're-"

"Be quiet, they'll hear you," said Miss Maudie. "Think of it this way, Alexandra. Whether Maycomb knows it or not, we're paying the highest tribute we can pay a man. We trust him to do right. It's that simple."

"Who?" Aunt Alexandra asked, just like Jem.

"The group of people in this town who think that fair play is not for White Only; the group of people who say a fair trial is for everybody, not just us."

I was shaking and couldn't stop. I remembered the exercise yard at the prison. It was the size of a football field.

"Stop that shaking," commanded Miss Maudie, and I stopped. "Get up, Alexandra, we've left 'em long enough." Aunt Alexandra stood up, wiped her nose with her handkerchief, patted her hair, and said, "Do I show it?"

"Not a sign," said Miss Maudie. "Are you together again, Jean Louise?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Then let's join the ladies."

Aunt Alexandra was ahead of me, her head went up as she went through the door.

Miss Maudie and Aunt Alexandra went around the dining room among the laughing women, refilled coffee cups and passed cakes as if nothing had happened except temporary absence of Calpumia.

Aunt Alexandra looked across the room at me and smiled. She looked at a tray of cookies on the table and nodded at them. I carefully picked up the tray and walked to Mrs. Merriweather. With my best company manners, I asked her if she would have some.

After all, if Aunty could be a lady at a time like this, so could I.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

September had come, but it was still very hot, and we were still sleeping on the back screen porch.

I lay on my back and waited for sleep, and while waiting I thought of Dill. He had left us on the first of the month and promised that he would return as soon as school was over - he was sure that his folks had got the general idea that he liked to spend his summers in Maycomb. Miss Rachel took us with them in the taxi to Maycomb Junction, and Dill waved to us from the train window until he was out of sight. The last two days of his time with us, Jem had taught him to swim - Taught him to swim. I suddenly remembered what Dill had told me.

Barker's Eddy is at the end of a dirt road off the Meridian highway about a mile from town. Swimmers usually hitchhike to it, and the short walk to the creek is easy, but they don't stay there till dusk, when the traffic is light, and it's difficult to catch a ride.

Dill and Jem had just come to the highway when they saw Atticus's car. He didn't see them, so they both waved. Atticus finally saw them and stopped, but he said, "You'd better catch a ride back. I won't be going home for a while." Calpumia was in the back seat.

Jem protested, and Atticus said, "All right, you can come with us if you stay in the car."

On the way to Tom Robinson's, Atticus told them what had happened.

Dill said a crowd of black children were playing marbles in Tom's front yard. Atticus parked the car and got out. Calpurnia followed him through the front gate.

Dill heard that he asked one of the children, "Where's your mother, Sam?" and Sam said, "She down at Sis Stevens's, Mr. Finch. Shall I run and call her?"

Dill said Atticus looked uncertain, then he said yes, and Sam ran off. "Go on with your game, boys," Atticus said to the children.

A little girl came to the cabin door and was looking at Atticus. Her hair was a mass of tiny pigtails, each of them ended in a bright bow. She grinned from ear to ear and walked toward our father, but the steps were too high for her. Dill said Atticus went to her, took off his hat, and offered her his finger. She grabbed it and he helped her down the steps. Then he gave her to Calpumia.

Dill said when Helen came up, she said, "Evenin? Mr. Finch, won't you have a seat?" But she didn't say any more. Neither did Atticus.

"Scout," said Dill, "she just fell down in the dirt. Just fell down in the dirt."

Dill said Calpumia and Atticus lifted Helen to her feet and half carried, half walked her to the cabin. They stayed inside a long time, and Atticus came out alone. When they drove back by the dump, some of the Ewells shouted at them, but Dill didn't catch what they said.

Maycomb talked about Tom's death for perhaps two days. To Maycomb, Tom's death was typical. Typical of a nigger's mentality to have no plan, no thought for the future, just run blind first chance he saw. Funny thing, Atticus Finch might've got him off free, but wait-? Hell no. You know how they are. Robinson boy was legally married, they say he was clean, went to church and all that, but nigger always comes out in 'em.

But in The Maycomb Tribune's editorial, Mr. B. B. Underwood was at his most bitter. He was writing so that children could understand. Mr. Underwood simply thought that it was a sin to kill cripples, be they standing, sitting, or running from jail. He wrote that Tom's death was like the senseless killing of songbirds by hunters and children, and Maycomb said that he was trying to write a poetical editorial so that The Montgomery Advertiser reprinted it.

At first, I didn't understand why Mr. Underwood had called Tom's death a senseless killing - his trial had been open; my father had fought for him all the way. Then Mr. Underwood's words became clear: Atticus had used every lawful means to save Tom Robinson, but in the secret courts of men's hearts Atticus had no case. Tom was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed.

The name Ewell made me sick. Maycomb knew Mr. Ewell's views on Tom's death at once through that gossip channel, Miss Stephanie Crawford. Miss Stephanie told Aunt Alexandra in Jem's presence that Mr. Ewell's words were: it made one down and about two more to go. Jem

told me not to be afraid, Mr. Ewell was more hot gas than anything. Jem also told me that if I let Atticus know that I knew, Jem would personally never speak to me again.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

School started. Every day we had to pass by the Radley Place again. Jem was in the seventh grade and went to high school; I was now in the third grade, and our routines were different. I only walked to school with Jem in the mornings and saw him at mealtimes. After school, he went out for football, and most afternoons he was seldom home before dark.

I wasn't afraid of The Radley Place though it was no less gloomy. We could still see Mr. Nathan Radley when he walked to and from town on a clear day; Boo wasn't carried out yet, so he was there, inside the house. When I passed by the old place, I sometimes felt sorry for what we had done to him. I thought that it had been an agony to Arthur Radley when we were peeping through his shutters, delivering greetings on the end of a fishing-pole, walking in his yard at night.

But at the same time I remembered. Two Indian-head pennies, chewing gum, soap dolls, a rusty medal, a broken watch and chain. I stopped and looked at the tree one afternoon: the cement patch was turning yellow.

I still looked for him each time I went by. In my imagination, I saw him as I was passing by: he was sitting in the swing and I was saying, "Hidy do, Mr. Arthur." And he was saying, "Evening, Jean Louise, right pretty weather we're having, isn't it?" But I knew it was just fantasy; we would never see him.

So many things had happened to us, Boo Radley was the least of our fears. Atticus said he didn't see how anything else could happen, that after some time passed, people would forget Tom Robinson's case.

Perhaps Atticus was right, but the events of the summer hung over us like smoke in a closed room. I was under the impression that the adults in Maycomb explained to their children that a parent like Atticus was not our fault, so their children must be nice to us in spite of him. As a result, we had to hold our heads high and be a gentleman and a lady. But one thing I could never understand: in spite of Atticus's shortcomings as a parent, people re-elected him to the state legislature that year, as usual, without opposition. I decided that people were just strange, and never thought about them.

But one day in school I had to think about them again. It was during a Current Events period. The idea of that practice was that each child told some newspaper article to the class. This practice was to help children have good posture, choose right words, strengthen their memory. After standing alone in front of other children, a child was more than ever eager to return to the Group.

The idea was deep, but as usual, in Maycomb it didn't work very well. In the first place, few rural children could get newspapers, so most of Current Events work was done by the town children, and the bus children were sure that the town children got all the attention anyway.

Few of the children knew what a Current Event was. Little Chuck Little, a hundred years old in his knowledge of cows and their habits, was halfway through his clip story when Miss Gates stopped him: "Charles, that is not a current event. That is an advertisement."

But Cecil Jacobs knew what a Current Event was. When his turn came, he went to the front of the room and began, "Old Hitler-"

"Adolf Hitler, Cecil," said Miss Gates. "You should never begin with Old anybody."

"Yes ma'am," he said. "Old Adolf Hitler has been after the Jews and he's putting' 'em in prisons and he's taking away all their property and he doesn't let 'em out of the country and he's washing' all the idiots and-"

"Washing the idiots?"

"Yes ma'am, Miss Gates, I reckon they don't have sense enough to wash themselves, I don't reckon an idiot could keep his self-clean. Well anyway, Hitler's started a program to gather up all the half-Jews too and he wants to register 'em in case they want to make him any trouble and I think this is a bad thing and that's my current event."

"Very good, Cecil," said Miss Gates.

A hand went up in the back of the room. "How can Hitler just put a lot of folks in a pen like that? The government can stop him."

"Hitler is the government," said Miss Gates. She wanted to make education dynamic, so she went to the

blackboard and printed DEMOCRACY in large letters. "Democracy," she said. "Does anybody have a definition?"

"Us," somebody said.

I remembered an old campaign slogan Atticus had once told me about and raised my hand.

"What do you think it means, Jean Louise?"

"Equal rights for all, special privileges for none," I quoted.

"Very good, Jean Louise, very good," Miss Gates smiled. In front of DEMOCRACY, she printed WE ARE A. "Now class, say it all together, 'We are a democracy.'"

We said it. Miss Gates continued, "The difference between America and Germany is that we are a democracy and Germany is a dictatorship. We don't believe in persecuting anybody. There are no better people in the world than the Jews, and it's a mystery to me why Hitler doesn't think so."

Someone in the middle of the room said, "Why don't they like the Jews, you reckon, Miss Gates?"

"I don't know, Henry. They contribute to every society they live in, and most of all, they are a deeply religious people. Hitler's trying to do away with religion, so maybe he doesn't like them for that reason."

Cecil spoke up. "Well I don't know for certain," he said, "they say that they change money or somethin', but that ain't no reason to persecute 'em. They're white, ain't they?"

Miss Gates said, "When you get to high school, Cecil, you'll learn that the Jews have been persecuted since the beginning of history, even driven out of their own country. It's one of the most tragic stories in history. Time for arithmetic, children."

I had never liked arithmetic, so I spent the period looking out the window, thinking. Something was wrong. Miss Gates said that Hitler was doing awful things. She got really red in the face about it, but I remembered that when she was coming out of the courthouse the night of Tom Robinson's trial, she said to Miss Stephanie Crawford, "It's time somebody taught 'em a lesson, they're gettin' way above themselves, an' the next thing they think they can do is marry us." How can you hate Hitler so much an' then turn around and be ugly about folk's right at home? I couldn't understand that.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

By the middle of October things were back to usual in Maycomb, as Atticus said they would. Only three things out of the ordinary happened, and they did not directly concern us - the Finches - but in a way, they did.

The first thing was that Mr. Bob Ewell got and lost a job during a few days. He was probably unique in the history of the nineteen-thirties: he was the only man who was fired from the WPA (Works Projects Administration, US, 1935-1943) for laziness. I think his short period of fame brought on a shorter period of labor effort, but his job lasted only as long as his ill fame: Mr. Ewell was forgotten just as Tom Robinson. He again went to the welfare office for his check every week, and each time when he received, he muttered that the bastards who thought they ran this town didn't permit an honest man to make a living. Ruth Jones, the welfare lady, said that Mr. Ewell openly accused Atticus of getting his job. She was so upset that she walked down to Atticus's office and told him about it. Atticus told Miss Ruth not to worry, that if Bob Ewell wanted to discuss Atticus's "getting" his job, he knew the way to the office.

The second thing happened to Judge Taylor. Judge Taylor liked to spend his Sunday nights in his study while his wife went to church. One Sunday night, when he was reading his favorite book, he heard a scratching noise. "Hush," he said to Ann Taylor, his dog. But the dog wasn't in the room; the scratching noise was coming from the back of the house. Judge Taylor went to the back porch to let

Ann out and saw that the screen door was open. He didn't see anybody, only a shadow on the comer of the house. When Mrs. Taylor came home from church, her husband was reading his favorite book and there was a shotgun across his lap.

The third thing happened to Helen Robinson, Tom's widow. Mr. Link Deas, Tom's employer, didn't forget Tom. He gave Helen a job. Mr. Link Deas didn't really need her, but he said he felt right bad about the way things turned out. Calpumia said it was hard on Helen, because she could not use the public road, which ran past the Ewells' place, and had to walk nearly a mile out of her way. The first time she tried to use the public road, the Ewells, according to Helen, threw "chunks" at her. Mr. Link Deas finally saw that Helen was coming to work each morning from the wrong direction, and dragged the reason out of her. He told her to come by his store that afternoon before she left. She did, and Mr. Link closed his store and walked Helen home. He walked her the short way, by the Ewells. On his way back, Mr. Link stopped at their gate. There was nobody in the yard, and the windows, normally full of children, were empty.

"Ewell!" Mr. Link called, "I know you're all there on the floor! Now hear me, Bob Ewell: if I hear once more that my girl Helen isn't able to walk this road, I'll have you in jail before sundown!" Mr. Link spat in the dust and walked home.

Helen went to work next morning and used the public road. Nobody chunked at her, but when she passed Ewell

house, she looked around. Mr. Ewell was walking behind her. He was saying dirty words. Helen was frightened. When she reached Mr. Link's house, she telephoned Mr. Link at his store, which was not too far from his house. Mr. Link came out of his store and saw that Mr. Ewell was leaning on the fence. Mr. Ewell said, "Don't you look at me, Link Deas, like I was dirt. I ain't jumped your-"

"First, Ewell, get your stinkin' carcass off my property. You're leanin' on it an' I can't afford fresh paint for it. Second, stay away from my cook or I'll have you in jail for assault-"

"I ain't touched her. Link Deas, and ain't going to touch no nigger!"

"You don't have to touch her, it's enough to make her afraid, an' if assault ain't enough, I'll get you in jail on the Ladies' Law, so get outa my sight! If you don't think that I mean it, just trouble that girl again!"

Helen reported no further trouble.

Aunt Alexandra was seriously worried by these events. "That man hates everybody connected with that case. I don't understand why he has so much hatred - he had his way in court, didn't he?"

"I think I understand," said Atticus. "It might be because he knows in his heart that very few people in Maycomb really believed his and Mayella's tales. He thought he'd be a hero, but he only got this: okay, we'll convict this Negro but get back to your dump. He's expressed his feelings to nearly everybody now, so he

ought to be satisfied. He'll calm down when the weather changes."

"But why should he try to burgle John Taylor's house?"

Atticus smiled. "But I can guess. I proved him a liar but John made him look like a fool. John looked at him as if he were a three-legged chicken or a square egg. Don't tell me judges don't try to influence juries."

By the end of October, Maycomb was itself again. Just the same as last year and the year before that. But parents decided to make Halloween an organized event.

Until then, Halloween in Maycomb was a completely unorganized affair. Each child did what he wanted to do. If a child needed help, other children helped. But parents thought things went too far last year, when Miss Tutti and Miss Frutti were troubled.

Misses Tutti and Frutti Barber were unmarried sisters, who lived together. Their house had a cellar. No other house in Maycomb had a cellar. People said that the Barber ladies were Republicans, who migrated from Clanton, Alabama, in 1911. Their ways were strange to us, and why they wanted a cellar nobody knew, but they wanted one and they dug one, and they had to chase generations of children out of it for the rest of their lives.

Misses Tutti and Frutti (their names were Sarah and Frances), besides their Yankee ways, were both deaf. Miss Tutti denied it and lived in a world of silence, but Miss

Frutti, who didn't want to miss anything, used an ear trumpet so big that Jem called it a loudspeaker.

At Halloween, some wicked children had waited until the Misses Barber were fast asleep, entered their living room (only the Radleys locked up at night), and stealthily carried every piece of furniture into the cellar.

At dawn next morning, the Misses Barber's neighbors were awaken by the cry "I heard 'em!"

"Heard a truck at the door! Stomped around like horses. They're in New Orleans by now!"

Miss Tutti was sure that fur sellers who came through town two days ago had stolen their furniture. "Dark they were," she said. "Syrians."

Miss Frutti asked Mr. Tate to bring the hounds and help locate their furniture. Mr. Tate started the dogs off at the Misses Barber's front steps, and they ran around to the back of the house and barked at the cellar door. Mr. Tate guessed the truth. By noontime that day, no barefooted, children were seen in Maycomb and nobody took off his shoes until the hounds were taken away.

So the Maycomb ladies decided to organize a Halloween party at the high-school auditorium: a performance the grownups and games for the children; a prize of twenty-five cents for the best Halloween costume.

Mrs. Grace Merriweather had composed an original performance entitled Maycomb County. She thought it would be very nice if some of the children represented the

county's agricultural products in their costumes: Cecil Jacobs would be a cow; Agnes Boone would make a lovely bean, another child would be a peanut, I would be a ham, and so on.

We were to go on the stage when Mrs. Merriweather (not only the author, but the narrator) called us. When she called out, "Pork," that was my turn. Then we all were to sing, "Maycomb County, Maycomb County, we will all be true to thee," and Mrs. Merriweather was to put the state flag on the stage.

My costume was not much of a problem. Mrs. Crenshaw, the local seamstress, took some chicken wire and bent it into the shape of a piece of ham. She covered it with brown cloth, and painted it like ham. I could duck under and someone was to pull this thing down over my head. It came almost to my knees. Mrs. Crenshaw thoughtfully left two peepholes for me. She did a fine job. Jem said I looked exactly like a ham with legs. But there were several discomforts: it was hot, it was narrow; if my nose itched I couldn't scratch, and I could not get out of it without help.

When Halloween came, I thought that the whole family would be present at my performance. But Atticus was so tired; he had been in Montgomery for a week and had come home late that afternoon. He told me to ask Jem to escort me.

Aunt Alexandra was also very tired: she'd been decorating the stage all afternoon and simply had to go to

bed early. She said that it would be nice if I gave the family a preview in the living room. So Jem helped me into my costume, stood at the living room door, called out "Po-ork," and I marched in. Atticus and Aunt Alexandra were delighted.

I repeated my part for Calpumia in the kitchen and she said I was wonderful.

Jem agreed to escort me. So we started on our longest journey together.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

It was unusually warm for the last day of October. The streetlights were on. There was no moon.

Jem was carrying my ham costume. I thought he was very gallant.

We were in front of the Radley Place. "It is a scary place, ain't it?" I said. "Boo doesn't mean anybody any harm, but I'm right glad you're along."

Jem said, "Perhaps Boo isn't at home. Listen."

High above us in the darkness a mocking-bird was singing his repertoire in happy ignorance of whose tree he sat in.

We turned off the road and entered the schoolyard. It was pitch dark

"How do you know where we're now, Jem?" I asked, when we had gone a few steps.

"I can tell we're under the big oak because we're passin' through a cool spot."

We walked very slowly so as not to bump into the tree. It was a very old oak at the far end of the schoolyard near the Radley lot.

"Why haven't you brought the flashlight, Jem?"

"Didn't know it was this dark. It's because of the clouds."

Someone jumped at us.

A circle of light shot in our faces, and Cecil Jacobs jumped merrily behind it. "Ha-a-a, gotcha!" he shouted. "Thought you'd be cornin' along this way!"

"What are you doin' way out here by yourself, boy? Ain't you scared of Boo Radley?"

Cecil had come to the auditorium by car with his parents, hadn't seen us, then had risked down this far because he knew well we'd be coming along. But he thought Mr. pinch'd be with us.

Jem said that we weren't afraid to walk just around the comer by ourselves. But we agreed that he had given us a fright, and he could tell it all over the schoolhouse, that was his privilege.

Cecil said that he had put his cow costume behind the stage and I could do the same. The performance was to start later, and we could go to the hallway where the booths had been installed.

Jem thought this was an excellent idea. This way, he could go with people his own age.

Cecil and I each had thirty cents to spend at the Halloween party. We spent our first nickels on the House of Horrors, which scared us not at all; we entered the black room and the temporary ghoul in residence led us around and he made us touch several objects. He said they were parts of a human body. "Here's his eyes," we were told when we touched two peeled grapes on a saucer. "Here's his heart," which felt like raw liver. "These are his innards," and our hands were pushed into a plate of cold spaghetti.

Cecil and I visited several booths. We each bought a sack of Mrs. Judge Taylor's homemade cookies. I wanted to mouth- hunt for apples, but Cecil's mother said it wasn't sanitary to put your head in the same tub with others, so he told me.

We were in one of the booths when Mrs. Merriweather's runners came and told us to go backstage, it was time to get ready. The auditorium was filling with people; the Maycomb County High School band was in front below the stage.

Backstage, in the narrow passage, we saw a lot of people: adults in homemade three-corner hats, Confederate caps, Spanish-American War hats, and World War helmets. Children dressed as various agricultural products gathered around the one small window. Mrs. Merriweather helped me get inside my costume.

The band played the national anthem, and the audience rose. Then the drum sounded. Mrs. Merriweather, who stood beside the band, said: "Maycomb County Ad Astra Per Aspera." The drum boomed again. "That means," Mrs. Merriweather translated for the ignorant elements, "from the mud to the stars."

Mrs. Merriweather began to tell the history of Maycomb County. She said that it was older than the state, that it was a part of the Mississippi and Alabama Territories, that it was founded by the fearless Colonel Maycomb, for whom the county was named. She gave a thirty-minute description of Colonel Maycomb's exploits. I

discovered that if I bent my knees I could tuck them under my costume and more or less sit. I sat down, listened to Mrs. Merriweather's monotonous voice and was soon fast asleep.

They said later that Mrs. Merriweather was putting her all into the grand finale that she had sung softly, "Po-ork," in confidence that I would appear at once as pine trees and beans had done. She waited a few seconds, then called, "Po-ork?" When nothing materialized, she shouted, "Pork!"

Perhaps I heard her in my sleep, or the band playing Dixie woke me, but at the moment when Mrs. Merriweather triumphantly put the state flag on the stage, I made my entrance.

Mrs. Merriweather had a great success. Everybody was cheering and applauding. But she caught me backstage and told me I had ruined her performance. She made me feel awful, but when Jem came to take me home, he was sympathetic. He said I did all right, I just came in a little late, that was all. Jem was becoming almost as good as Atticus at making you feel right when things went wrong. Almost - not even Jem could make me go through that crowd, and he agreed to wait backstage with me until the audience left.

"You wanta take it off, Scout?" he asked.

"Naw, I'll just keep it on," I said. I could hide my shame under it.

"Want a ride home?" someone asked.

"No sir, thank you," Jem said. "It's just a little walk."

We went through the auditorium to the hallway, then down the steps. It was still black dark.

"Here Scout, let me hold onto the top of your costume. You might lose your balance."

When we began to cross the black schoolyard, the auditorium lights went off.

His fingers pressed the top of my costume, too hard, it seemed. I shook my head. "Jem, you don't hafta -"

"Hush a minute, Scout," he said.

We walked along silently. "Minute's up," I said. "Whatcha thinkin' about?" I turned to look at him, but he was nearly invisible.

"Thought I heard something," he said. "Stop a minute."

We stopped.

"Hear anything?" he asked.

"No."

We made a few steps and he made me stop again. The night was still. We listened.

Jem said, "I hear it when we're walkin' along, but when we stop I don't hear it."

"It's my costume. Aw, it's just Halloween got you..."

We began walking, and I heard that it was not my costume. Jem said that it must be Cecil again. So we

decided not to hurry and show him that we're not afraid. I couldn't understand how Cecil could follow us in this dark and not bump into us from behind. Jem said that the fat stripes on my costume were shining, so Cecil could see me and keep his distance.

I decided to show Cecil that we knew he was behind us and we were ready for him. "Cecil Jacobs is a big wet he-en!" I shouted suddenly. We stopped. There was no reaction. It was not like Cecil to be quiet for so long.

Jem said softly, "Scout, can you take that thing off?"

"I think so, but I ain't got much on under it."

"I've got your dress here."

"I can't get it on in the dark."

"Okay," he said, "never mind."

We walked slowly on. Jem said we were almost at the old oak. The tree was not far from the road, we could see the streetlight then.

We continued to move very slowly because it was difficult to walk fast and not hurt a toe on tree roots or stones, and I was barefooted (I had forgotten to put my shoes on and left them at school). Maybe the wind was rustling in the trees. But there wasn't any wind and there weren't any trees except the big oak.

Our company shuffled his feet, as if wearing heavy shoes. Whoever it was wore thick cotton pants; it was not the wind in the trees, it was the soft swish of cotton on cotton, wheek, with every step.

I felt cold sand under my feet and I knew we were near the big oak. Jem pressed my head. We stopped and listened.

This time, shuffle-foot had not stopped with us. His trousers swished softly and steadily. Then they stopped. He was running, running toward us with no child's steps.

"Run, Scout! Run! Run!" Jem screamed.

I tried to run and lost my balance: it was pitch dark and my arms were useless inside my costume.

"Jem, Jem, help me, Jem!"

I fell to the ground; the chicken wire ripped; I rolled as far as I could and tried to escape my wire prison. I heard the sounds of fight nearby. Then someone rolled against me and I felt Jem. He was up like lightning and pulling me with him but, though my head and shoulders were free, I was still inside the wire, and we didn't get very far.

We were nearly to the road when Jem's hand left me. He jerked backwards to the ground. More sounds of fight, and there came a dull crunching sound and Jem screamed.

I ran in the direction of Jem's scream and bumped into a big soft male stomach. Its owner said, "Uff!" and tried to catch my arms, but they were still inside the wire costume. His stomach was soft but his arms were like steel. He slowly squeezed the breath out of me. I could not move. Suddenly he jerked backwards and fell on the ground.

I stood there, unable to move. The noises of fight were dying; someone wheezed and the night was still again.

I heard a heavy breathing of a man, and he coughed awfully. I called Jem, but nobody answered.

The man was moving around, as if he was looking for something. He groaned and pulled something heavy along the ground. Then he walked heavily and unsteadily toward the road. It was dark and I couldn't see him, I only heard the sounds of his movements.

I went to where I thought he had been and felt along the ground with my toes. Presently I touched someone.

"Jem?"

My toes touched a face. It was a grown man's face. I smelled whiskey.

I went in the direction of the road. I was not sure, because I had been turned around so many times. But I found it and looked down to the street light. A man was passing under it, then around the comer. He was carrying Jem. Jem's arm was hanging unnaturally in front of him.

When I came to the comer, the man was crossing our front yard. Atticus ran down the steps, and together, he and the man took Jem inside.

Aunt Alexandra met me at the front door and pulled me along with her to the telephone. She looked at me worriedly, then called Dr. Reynolds and asked him to come to our house. Then Atticus came out of Jem's room and called the sheriff.

"Heck? Atticus Finch. Someone's been after my children. Jem's hurt. Between here and the schoolhouse. I

can't leave my boy. Run out there for me, please, and see if he's still there. Doubt if you'll find him now, but I'd like to see him if you find him. Thanks, Heck."

Atticus went back to Jem's room. Aunt Alexandra helped me out of my wire prison.

"Aunty, is Jem dead?"

"No - no, darling, he's unconscious. We won't know how badly he's hurt until Dr. Reynolds gets here. Jean Louise, what happened?"

"I don't know."

Aunty didn't ask me anything again. She brought me my overalls. "Put these on, darling," she said and gave me the clothes she most despised.

A car stopped in front of the house. I knew Dr. Reynolds's step almost as well as my father's. He had brought Jem and me into the world, had led us through every childhood disease. "You're still standing," he said. He knew every room in the house. He also knew that if I was in bad form, so was Jem.

After a long time Dr. Reynolds returned. "Is Jem dead?" I asked.

"I may be wrong, of course, but I think he's very alive," he said, "He's got a bump on the head just like yours, and a broken elbow. Somebody tried to tear his arm off... We can't do much tonight except try to make him as comfortable as we can. Don't worry, he'll be as god as new."

"Then he's not dead?"

"No-o! Go have a look at him, and when I come back, we'll get together and decide." While he was talking, Dr. Reynolds had been looking attentively at me. As nothing was wrong with me except the bump on the head, he soon left the house.

Then Mr. Heck Tate came, and we went to Jem's room. Jem was lying on his back. There was an ugly mark along one side of his face. His left arm elbow was bent slightly, but in the wrong direction. I called him, but Atticus said that he couldn't hear me because Dr. Reynolds had given him a strong sedative.

The man who brought Jem into the house was standing in a corner. I didn't know him.

Atticus was standing by Jem's bed. Mr. Heck Tate stood in the doorway.

"Come in, Heck," said Atticus. "Did you find anything?"

Mr. Tate looked at the man in the comer, nodded to him, then looked around the room - at Jem, at Aunt Alexandra, then at Atticus.

"Sit down, Mr. Finch," he said.

Atticus said, "Let's all sit down."

"Mr. Finch," said Mr. Tate, "tell you what I found. I found a little girl's dress - it's out there in my car. That your dress, Scout?"

"Yes sir, if it's a pink one," I said.

Mr. Tate looked around the room.

"What is it, Heck?" said Atticus.

Mr. Tate said, "Bob Ewell's lyin' on the ground under that tree with a kitchen knife in his breast. He's dead, Mr. Finch, he won't hurt these children again."

Mr. Tate asked me to tell them what had happened. In detail, I told them everything as I remembered.

"Mr. Tate, I was shut up in my costume but I could hear the footsteps. They walked when we walked and stopped when we stopped. Jem said he could see me because Mrs. Crenshaw put some kind of shiny paint on my costume. I was a ham."

"How's that?" asked Mr. Tate, surprised.

Atticus described my role to Mr. Tate, plus the construction of my costume. "When she came in," he said, "it was crushed to a pulp."

Mr. Tate said, "Let me see that costume, sir."

Atticus brought what was left of my costume. "This thing probably saved her life," Mr. Tate said. "Look."

He pointed with a long forefinger. A shiny clean line stood out on the dull wire. "Bob Ewell meant business," Mr. Tate, muttered.

"He was out of his mind," said Atticus.

"I don't like to contradict you, Mr. Finch - he wasn't crazy, he was mean as hell. A drunken skunk that was

brave to kill children. He'd never have met you face to face."

Atticus shook his head. "I can't understand a man who'd-"

"Mr. Finch, there's just some kind of men you have to shoot before you can say 'how'd you do' to them. Ewell was one of 'em."

Mr. Tate sighed. "We'd better go on. Scout, you heard him behind you-"

"Yes sir. When we got under the tree, something grabbed me an' crushed my costume..."

"And then?" Mr. Tate asked.

"Somebody was breathing heavily and - coughing awfully."

"Who was it?"

"Why there he is, Mr. Tate, he can tell you his name."

I wanted to point to the man in the comer, but remembered that it was impolite to point.

He was standing at the wall. As I turned to him, he pressed the palms of his hands against the wall. His hands and his face were very white, so white as if they had never seen the sun. He was very thin, his gray eyes were almost colorless and his hair was dead and thin. There were stains of sand on his pants and his shirt was tom.

I looked at him in silent wonderment. Then a timid smile appeared in his face, and my eyes filled with sudden tears.

"Hey, Boo," I said.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Atticus gently corrected me, "Mr. Arthur, honey. Jean Louise, this is Mr. Arthur Radley. I think he already knows you."

Mr. Heck Tate was looking intently at Boo through his glasses. He was going to say something when Dr. Reynolds came in. He was carrying a big package wrapped in newspaper. He put it down on Jem's desk and told us to leave the room.

Atticus looked at Boo and said, "Heck, let's go out on the front porch. There are plenty of chairs out there, and it's still warm enough."

At first, I was surprised that Atticus was inviting us to the front porch instead of the living room, then I understood. The living room lights were very bright.

Mr. Tate and Atticus went out. I said, "Come along, Mr. Arthur, you don't know the house real well. I'll just take you to the porch, sir."

He looked down at me and nodded. I led him to the porch and to the chair farthest from Atticus and Mr. Tate. It was in deep shadow. Boo would feel more comfortable in the dark.

"Won't you have a seat, Mr. Arthur? This rocking-chair's nice and comfortable."

Atticus was sitting in the swing, and Mr. Tate was in a chair next to him. The light from the living room windows was on them. I sat beside Boo.

"Well, Heck," Atticus was saying, "Jem's not quite thirteen... no, he's already thirteen - I can't remember. Anyway, it'll come before county court-"

"What will, Mr. Finch?" Mr. Tate said.

"Of course it was clear-cut self-defense, but I'll have to go to the office and look for-"

"Mr. Finch, do you think Jem killed Bob Ewell? Do you think that?"

"You heard what Scout said, there's no doubt about it. She said Jem got up and jerked him off her - he probably got hold of Ewell's knife somehow in the dark... we'll find out tomorrow."

Mr. Tate said that Jem hadn't stabbed Bob Ewell. Atticus said that he was grateful to Mr. Tate for his kindness, but he wouldn't agree to hush things up, he didn't live that way.

"Heck, you haven't said it, but I know what you're thinking. Thank you for it. Jean Louise-" he turned to me. "You said Jem jerked Mr. Ewell off you?"

"Yes sir, that's what I thought... I-"

"See there, Heck? Thank you from the bottom of my heart, but the best way is to have it all out in the open. Nobody will say 'Jem Finch... his daddy paid a mint to get him out of that'."

"Jem didn't stab Bob Ewell," Mr. Tate repeated, "Bob Ewell fell on his knife. He killed himself."

Atticus walked to the comer of the porch. His back was to us. He said that he couldn't turn a blind eye at something which was not true, that it would be against everything he was trying to teach us.

"Heck, if this thing's hushed up, I won't be able to meet my son's eye, and I'll know I've lost him. I don't want to lose him and Scout, because they're all I've got."

"Mr. Finch," Mr. Tate said firmly, "Bob Ewell fell on his knife. I can prove it."

Atticus turned around. He put his hands into his pockets, "Heck, can't you even try to see it my way? If my children don't trust me, they won't trust anybody. Jem and Scout know what happened. If they hear that I say downtown something different happened - Heck, I won't have them anymore. I can't live one way in town and another way in my home."

Mr. Tate said patiently, "He'd thrown Jem down, he stumbled over a root under that tree and - look, I can show you."

Mr. Tate took a long switchblade knife out of his side pocket. At that moment, Dr. Reynolds came to the door. The sheriff told him where the body of Mr. Ewell was and gave him his flashlight. Dr. Reynolds took the flashlight. "Is that the knife that killed him, Heck?"

"No sir, still in him. Looked like a kitchen knife from the handle. Ken ought to be there with the hearse by now, doctor, good night."

Mr. Tate opened the knife. "It was like this," he said. He held the knife and pretended to stumble; as he bent forward, his left arm went down in front of him. "See there? He fell down and his weight drove the knife in."

Mr. Tate closed the knife and put it back in his pocket. "Scout is eight years old," he said. "She was scared and didn't know exactly what happened."

Atticus shook his head. "I won't have it."

"I'm not thinking of Jem!" Mr. Tate exclaimed. "Mr. Finch, you've been through so much tonight no man should ever have to go through. Why you ain't in the bed from it I don't know, but I do know that this time you haven't been able to put two and two together, and we've got to solve this problem tonight because tomorrow'll be too late. Bob Ewell's got a kitchen knife in his breast."

Mr. Tate also said that no boy Jem's size with a broken arm could kill a grown man in the pitch dark.

Atticus asked, "Where'd you get that switchblade, Heck?"

"I took it off a drunken man downtown tonight. Ewell probably found that kitchen knife in the dump somewhere and honed it. Then he just waited for the opportunity..."

I was trying to remember. Mr. Ewell was on me... then he went down... Jem got up. At least I thought...

Atticus returned to the swing and sat down. His hands hung between his knees. He was looking at the floor.

Mr. Tate walked softly around the porch. "It is my decision, Mr. Finch, and my responsibility. If you don't agree with me, there's not much you can do about it. If you try, I'll call you a liar to your face. You know that your boy never stabbed Bob Ewell," he said slowly, "He only wanted to get him and his sister safely home."

Mr. Tate stopped in front of Atticus with his back to us. "I'm not a very good man, sir, but I am sheriff of Maycomb County. I'm nearly forty-three years old, and I've lived in this town all my life. Know everything that's happened here since before I was born. There's a black boy dead for no reason, and the man responsible for it is dead. Let the dead bury the dead this time, Mr. Finch."

Mr. Tate picked up his hat that was lying beside Atticus, and put it on.

"I'm sure it isn't against the law when a citizen does everything he can and prevents a crime. That is exactly what he did. But if you think that it's my duty to tell the town all about it and not hush it up, I'll tell you what'll happen then. All the ladies in Maycomb including my wife'll be knocking on his door bringing angel food cakes. As I see it, Mr. Finch, to take the one man who's done you and this town a great service and drag him with his shy ways into the limelight - to me, that's a sin. If it was any other man, it'd be different. But not this man, Mr. Finch."

Mr. Tate paused. He pulled his nose, then he massaged his left arm. "I may not be much, Mr. Finch, but

I'm still sheriff of Maycomb County and Bob Ewell fell on his knife. Good night, sir."

Mr. Tate left the porch and walked across the front yard. His car door slammed and he drove away.

Atticus was silent for a long time. Finally he spoke. "Scout," he said, "Mr. Ewell fell on his knife. Can you possibly understand?"

Atticus looked so sad and tired. I ran to him and hugged him and kissed him with all my might. "Yes sir, I understand," I reassured him. "Mr. Tate was right."

My father looked at me. "What do you mean?"

"Well, it would be like shooting a mockingbird, wouldn't it?"

Atticus rubbed his face in my hair. When he got up and walked across the porch, his youthful step had returned. Before he went inside the house, he stopped in front of Boo Radley. "Thank you for my children, Arthur," he said.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Boo, Radley got to his feet, but his awful cough began, and he had to sit down again. He pulled a handkerchief out of his hip pocket, coughed into it, then he wiped his forehead.

I could hardly believe that he had been sitting beside me all this time. He had not made a sound.

He got to his feet again. He didn't say a word but nodded toward the front door.

"You'd like to say good night to Jem, wouldn't you, Mr. Arthur? Come right in."

I led him to Jem's room. Aunt Alexandra was sitting by Jem's bed. "Come in, Arthur," she said. "He's still asleep. Dr. Reynolds gave him a heavy sedative." Aunty said that she needed to speak to Atticus and went out.

Boo had gone to a comer of the room and was looking at Jem from a distance. I took him by the hand (it was surprisingly warm in spite of its whiteness) and led him to Jem's bed.

Boo looked at Jem from head to foot with an expression of timid curiosity, as though he had never seen a boy before. His hand came up and then dropped to his side.

"You can stroke his head, Mr. Arthur, he's asleep. You couldn't if he was awake, though, he wouldn't let you..." I explained. Boo's hand came down lightly on Jem's hair.

I was beginning to understand his body English. He pressed my hand, and I understood that he wanted to leave.

I led him to the front porch. We stopped. He didn't let my hand out of his.

"Will you take me home?" His whisper was like the voice of a child afraid of the dark.

I put my foot on the top step and stopped. It was all right to lead him through our house, but I could never lead him home.

"Mr. Arthur, bend your arm down here, like that. That's right, sir."

He had to bend a little and I slipped my hand through his arm. If Miss Stephanie Crawford was watching from her upstairs window, she would see that Arthur Radley was escorting me down the sidewalk, as any gentleman would do.

We came to the streetlight on the comer, and I remembered how many times Dill had stood there by the pole and waited, and hoped to see Boo. I remembered how many times Jem and I had made this journey, but I entered the Radley front gate for the second time in my life. Boo and I walked up the steps to the porch. He gently let go of my hand, opened the door, went inside, and closed the door behind him. I never saw him again.

Neighbors give one another little presents from time to time. Boo was our neighbor. He gave us two soap dolls, a broken watch and chain, a pair of good-luck pennies, and

our lives. But we had given him nothing in return, and it made me sad.

I turned to go home and saw our neighborhood from the Radley's porch. There were Miss Maudie's, Miss Stephanie's - there was our house, I could see the porch swing - Miss Rachel's house was beyond us, I could see it well. I could even see Mrs. Dubose's.

Behind me, to the left of the brown door was a long shuttered window. I walked to it, stood in front of it, and turned around. In daylight, I thought, you could see as far as the post office comer.

I stood there and the night turned to daylight in my imagination... It was daytime and the neighborhood was busy. Miss Stephanie Crawford crossed the street to tell the latest gossip to Miss Rachel. Miss Maudie bent over her azaleas. It was summertime, and two children ran down the sidewalk toward a man in the distance. The man waved, and the children raced each other to him.

It was still summertime, and a boy with a fishing pole came closer. A man watched and waited on the sidewalk, with his hands on his hips. Summertime, and his children and their friend played a strange little drama of their own creation in the front yard.

It was fall, and his children ran to and fro around the comer, the day's joys and sorrows on their faces. They stopped at an oak tree. They're puzzled, apprehensive, delighted.

Winter and his children shivered at the front gate, silhouetted against a burning house. Winter and a man walked into the street, dropped his glasses, and shot a dog.

Summer and he watched his children's heart break. Autumn again, and Boo's children needed him.

Atticus was right. One time he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them. Just standing on the Radley porch was enough.

I went down the steps and into the street. Fine rain was falling. As I made my way home, I thought about Jem's reaction tomorrow. He'd be so mad he missed Boo's visit that he wouldn't speak to me for days. As I made my way home, I thought Jem and I would grow up, but there wasn't much else left that we could learn, except possibly algebra.

I entered the house. Aunt Alexandra had gone to bed, and Atticus's room was dark. I decided to look if Jem was awake. Atticus was sitting by Jem's bed. He was reading a book. He said that Jem wouldn't be awake until morning. It was late, and Atticus told me to go to bed, but I wanted to stay with him for a while. I sat on the floor at his feet. As soon as I sat down, I began to feel sleepy.

"Whatcha readin'?" I asked.

Atticus turned the book over. "Something of Jem's. Called The Gray Ghost."

I was suddenly awake. "Read it aloud, please, Atticus. It's real scary."

"No," he said. "You've had enough scary things for a while."

I said that Jem and I hadn't been scared. "Besides, nothin's real scary except in books."

Atticus decided not to say anything to that. He opened the book on the first page and read, "The Gray Ghost, by Seckatary Hawkins. Chapter One..."

I tried to stay awake, but the rain was softly falling and the room was warm. I fell asleep.

Seconds later, it seemed, Atticus lifted me to my feet and walked me to my room. He pulled off my overalls and put on my pajamas. I muttered, half asleep, "Heard every word you said, wasn't sleep at all..." He led me to the bed and sat me down. He lifted my legs and pulled the blanket over me.

"An' they thought Stoner's Boy did all those things, an' they chased him but they didn't know what he looked like, an' Atticus, when they finally saw him, he hadn't done any of those things... Atticus, he was real nice..."

He tucked the blanket around me.

"Many people are, Scout, when you finally see them."

He switched off the light and went into Jem's room. When Jem woke up in the morning, his father'd be sitting by his bed.

- THE END -

Hope you have enjoyed the reading!