

JEM: Morning, Mr. Stevens. How do you do?

(A man rides by on a mule and waves to the children, and they wave back. A wagonload of ladies rides past. They wear cotton sunbonnets and dresses with long sleeves. A bearded man in a wool hat drives them. A wagonload of stern-faced citizens comes by next.)

SCOUT: Did you ever see so many people? Just like on Saturday . . .

(JEM suddenly gets up.)

Where you goin'?

JEM: I can't stand it any longer. I'm goin' downtown to the courthouse to watch.

SCOUT: You better not! You know what Atticus said.

JEM: I don't care if he did. I'm not gonna miss the most excitin' thing that ever happened in this town!

(They all look at each other and start toward town.)

EXTERIOR: COURTHOUSE SQUARE. DAY.

It is deserted, as everyone is inside watching the trial. SCOUT, JEM, and DILL come into the square. They stand looking up at the courthouse. They all start toward the entrance. SCOUT, JEM, and DILL go up the stairs toward the entrance.

INTERIOR: ENTRANCE HALL OF COURTHOUSE. DAY.

When they get to the entrance, JEM peeks through the hole of the door. He looks back at the other two. REVEREND SYKES, the black Baptist preacher, comes up the stairs. The children go over to him.

JEM: It's packed solid. They're standin' all along the back. . . . Reverend!

SYKES: Yes?

JEM: Reverend Sykes, are you goin' upstairs?

EXTERIOR: STREET IN FRONT OF FINCH HOUSE. EARLY MORNING. DAY.

People are coming from all parts of the county for the trial. It is like Saturday. Wagons carrying country people on the way to the trial stream past the house. Some men ride horseback. SCOUT, JEM, and DILL sit on the curb of the sidewalk watching the wagons and the horses go by.

SYKES: Yes, I am.

(*He starts up the stairs and they follow him.*)

INTERIOR: COLORED BALCONY OF COURTHOUSE.

REVEREND SYKES enters the colored balcony with JEM, DILL, and SCOUT. He leads them among the black people in the gallery. Four blacks in the front row get up and give them their seats when they see them come in.

SYKES: Brother John, thanks for holding my seat.

(*They sit down and peer over the balcony. The colored balcony runs along three walls of the courtroom like a second-story veranda, and from it the children see everything.*)

(*The jury sits to the left under long windows. Sunburned, lanky, they are nearly all farmers, but this is only natural. Townfolk rarely sit on juries. They are either struck or excused. The circuit solicitor and another man, ATTICUS, and TOM ROBINSON sit at tables with their backs to the children. Just inside the railing, which divides the spectators from the court, the witnesses sit in cowhide-bottomed chairs. JUDGE TAYLOR is on the bench, looking like a sleepy old shark.*)

(JEM, SCOUT, DILL, and REVEREND SYKES are listening intently.)

BAILIFF: This court is now in session. Everybody rise.

(*The JUDGE bangs his gavel.*)

INTERIOR: COURTROOM. LATER.

The solicitor MR. GILMER is questioning the sheriff HECK TATE.

TATE: On the night of August twenty-first I was just leavin' my office to go home when Bob . . . Mr. Ewell . . . come in, very excited, he was. And he said, get to his house quick as I could . . . that his girl had been raped. I got in

my car and went out there as fast as I could. She was pretty well beat up. I asked her if Tom Robinson beat her like that. She said, "Yes, he did." I asked if he'd taken advantage of her and she said, "Yes, he did." That's all there was to it.

GILMER: Thank you.

(ATTICUS is sitting behind his table, his chair skewed to one side, his legs crossed, and one arm is resting on the back of the chair.)

JUDGE: Any questions, Atticus?

ATTICUS: Yes Sir. Did anybody call a doctor, Sheriff?

TATE: No Sir.

ATTICUS: Why not?

TATE: Well, I didn't think it was necessary. She was pretty well beat up. Something sho' happened. It was obvious.

ATTICUS: Now, Sheriff, you say that she was mighty beat up. In what way?

TATE: Well, she was beaten around the head. There were bruises already comin' on her arms. She had a black eye startin' an' . . .

ATTICUS: Which eye?

TATE: Let's see . . . (*Blinks and runs his hand through his hair. He points to an invisible person five inches in front of him.*) It was her left.

ATTICUS: Well, now, was that, was her left facing you . . . or lookin' the way that you were?

TATE: Oh, yes . . . that . . . would make it her right eye. It was her right eye, Mr. Finch. Now I remember. She was beaten up on that side of her face.

(HECK TATE blinks again and then turns and looks at TOM ROBINSON as if something had been made clear to him at the same time. TOM ROBINSON raises his head. Something has been made clear to ATTICUS, too, and he gets to his feet. He walks toward HECK TATE.)

ATTICUS: Which side, again, Heck?

TATE: The right side. She had bruises on her arms and she showed me her neck. There were definite finger marks on her gullet.

ATTICUS: All around her neck? At the back of her throat?

TATE: I'd say they were all around.

(ATTICUS nods to MR. GILMER as he sits down. MR. GILMER shakes his head at the JUDGE. The JUDGE nods to TATE, who rises stiffly and steps down from the witness stand.)

JUDGE: Witness may be excused.

BAILIFF (booming out): Robert E. Lee Ewell . . .

(BOB EWELL rises and struts to the stand. He raises his right hand, puts his left on the Bible, and is sworn in as a witness.)

Place your hand on the Bible, please. Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothin' but the truth, so help you God?

EWELL: I do.

BAILIFF: Sit down.

(MR. GILMER addresses EWELL.)

GILMER: Now, Mr. Ewell . . . will you tell us, just in your own words, what happened on August twenty-first.

EWELL: Well, that night I was comin' in from the woods with a load of kindlin', and I heard Mayella screamin' as I got

to the fence. So I dropped my kindlin', and I run into the fence. But when I got loose, I run up to the window and I seen him with my Mayella!

(The rest of the testimony is drowned out by the people in the courtroom, who begin to murmur with excitement. JUDGE TAYLOR begins to bang his desk with his gavel. HECK TATE goes to the aisle, trying to quiet the crowd. ATTICUS is on his feet, whispering to the JUDGE. The spectators finally quiet down, and MR. GILMER continues.)

GILMER: What did you do after you saw the defendant?

EWELL: I ran around the house tryin' to get in, but he done run through the front door just ahead o' me. But I seen who it was, all right. I seen him. And I run in the house and po' Mayella was layin' on the floor squallin'. Then I run for Mr. Tate just as quick as I could.

GILMER: Uh huh. Thank you, Mr. Ewell.

(MR. GILMER sits down. ATTICUS rises and goes to the stand and faces EWELL.)

ATTICUS: Would you mind if I just ask you a few questions, Mr. Ewell?

EWELL: No Sir, Mr. Finch, I sho' wouldn't.

ATTICUS: Folks were doin' a lot of runnin' that night. Let's see, now, you say that you ran to the window, you ran inside, you ran to Mayella, and you ran to the sheriff. Now, did you, during all the runnin', run for a doctor?

EWELL: There weren't no need to. I seen who done it.

ATTICUS: Now, Mr. Ewell . . . you've heard the sheriff's testimony. Do you agree with his description of Mayella's injuries?

EWELL: I agree with everything Mr. Tate said. Her eye was blacked. She was mighty beat up . . . mighty.

ATTICUS: Now, Mr. Ewell, can you . . . er . . . can you read and write?

EWELL: Yes Mr. Finch. I can read and I can write.

ATTICUS: Good . . . then will you write your name, please. Write there, and show us?

(ATTICUS takes paper and pen out of his coat. He hands them to EWELL. EWELL looks up and sees ATTICUS and JUDGE TAYLOR looking at him intently.)

EWELL: Well, what's so interestin'?

JUDGE: You're left-handed, Mr. Ewell.

(EWELL turns angrily to the JUDGE.)

EWELL: Well, what's that got to do with it, Judge? I'm a God-fearin' man. That Atticus Finch is tryin' to take advantage of me. You got to watch lawyers like Atticus Finch.

JUDGE (hanging his gavel): Quiet, Sir! Now the witness may take his seat.

(EWELL sullenly leaves the witness stand.)

BAILIFF: Mayella Violet Ewell . . .

(A silence comes over the court as MAYELLA EWELL walks to the witness stand. She is a thick-bodied girl, accustomed to strenuous labor.)

Put your hand on the Bible, please. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

(MAYELLA nods. MR. GILMER rises and begins to question her.)

GILMER: Now, Mayella, suppose you tell us just what happened, huh?

MAYELLA (clearing her throat): Well, Sir . . . I was sittin' on the porch, and . . . and he comes along. Uh, there's this old chifforobe in the yard . . . and I . . . I said, "You come up here, boy, and bust up this chifforobe, and I'll give you a nickel." So he . . . he come on in the yard and I go into the house to get him the nickel and I turn around, and 'fore I know it, he's on me . . . and I fought and hollered . . . but he had me around the neck, and he hit me again and again, and the next thing I knew, Papa was in the room, a-standin' over me, hollerin', "Who done it, who done it?"

GILMER: Thank you, Mayella. Your witness, Atticus.

(GILMER walks away. ATTICUS gets up smiling. He opens his coat, books his thumbs in his vest, walks slowly across the room to the windows.)

ATTICUS: Miss Mayella, is your father good to you? I mean, is he easy to get along with?

MAYELLA: He does tol'able . . .

ATTICUS: Except when he's drinking?

(A pause. She glares at ATTICUS.)

When he's riled, has he ever beaten you?

(MAYELLA looks in Ewell's direction.)

MAYELLA: My pa's never touched a hair o' my head in my life.

(Atticus' glasses slip a little and he pushes them back on his head.)

ATTICUS: Now, you say that you asked Tom to come in and chop up a . . . what was it?

MAYELLA: A chifforobe.

ATTICUS: Was this the first time that you ever asked him to come inside the fence?

MAYELLA (*acting confused and shrugging*): Yes.

ATTICUS: Didn't you ever ask him to come inside the fence before?

MAYELLA (*evasively*): I mighta.

ATTICUS: But can you remember any other occasion?

MAYELLA (*shaking her head*): No!

ATTICUS: You say, "He caught me and he choked me and he took advantage of me," is that right?

(MAYELLA *nods her head.*)

Do you remember his beating you about the face?

MAYELLA (*hesitating*): No, I don't recollect if he hit me. I . . . mean . . . yes! He hit me . . . he hit me!

ATTICUS (*turning*): Thank you! Now, will you identify the man who beat you?

MAYELLA (*pointing to TOM*): I most certainly will . . . sittin' right yonder.

ATTICUS: Tom, will you stand up, please? Let's let Mayella have a good look at you.

(TOM ROBINSON *rises to his feet. It is our first good look at him. He is thirty. ATTICUS goes to the table and picks up a water glass.*)

Tom, will you please catch this?

(ATTICUS *throws the glass. TOM is standing at the defense table. He catches the glass with his right hand.*)

Thank you.

(ATTICUS *walks to TOM and takes the glass.*)

Now then, this time will you please catch it with your left hand?

TOM: I can't, Sir.

ATTICUS: Why can't you?

TOM: I can't use my left hand at all. I got it caught in a cotton gin when I was twelve years old. All my muscles were torn loose.

(*There are murmurs from the crowd in the courtroom. The JUDGE pounds his gavel.*)

ATTICUS: Is this the man who raped you?

MAYELLA: He most certainly is.

ATTICUS: How?

MAYELLA: I don't know how. He done . . . it . . . (*She starts to sob.*) He just done it.

ATTICUS: You have testified that he choked you and he beat you. You didn't say that he sneaked up behind you and knocked you out cold, but that you turned and there he was. Do you want to tell us what really happened?

MAYELLA: I got somethin' to say. And then I ain't gonna say no more. (*She looks in Tom's direction.*) He took advantage of me.

(ATTICUS *glances in Mayella's direction with a grim expression. She shouts and gestures with her hands as she speaks.*)

An' if you fine, fancy gentlemen ain't gonna do nothin' about it, then you're just a bunch of lousy, yellow, stinkin' cowards, the . . . the whole bunch of you, and your fancy airs don't come to nothin'. Your Ma'am in and your Miss Mayellarin'—it don't come to nothin', Mr. Finch. Not . . . no . . .

(*She bursts into real tears. Her shoulders shake with angry bearing sobs. ATTICUS has bit her in a way that is not clear to him, but he has*

had no pleasure in doing it. He sits with his head down. MAYELLA runs as EWELL and a man grab her.)

EWELL: You sit down there!

MAN: Come on, girl.

(EWELL holds Mayella's arms and starts for his seat. EWELL helps MAYELLA to her seat. She bides her head as EWELL sits down.)

(The JUDGE looks in Atticus' direction.)

JUDGE: Atticus? Mr. Gilmer?

GILMER *(rising)*: The State rests, Judge.

BAILIFF: Tom Robinson, take the stand.

(TOM stands up and goes to the witness chair.)

Put your hand on the Bible.

(TOM puts his hand on the Bible.)

Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

TOM: I do.

BAILIFF: Sit down!

(The BAILIFF turns away as TOM starts to sit. ATTICUS starts toward the JUDGE and TOM.)

ATTICUS: Tom, were you acquainted with Mayella Violet Ewell?

TOM: Yes Sir. I had to pass her place goin' to and from the field every day.

ATTICUS: Is there any other way to go?

TOM *(shaking his head)*: No Sir. None's I know of.

ATTICUS: Did she ever speak to you?

TOM: Why, yes Sir. I'd tip m' hat when I'd go by, and one day she ask me to come inside the fence and bust up a chif-forobe for her. She give me the hatchet and I broke it up and then she said, "I reckon I'll hafta give you a nickel, won't I?" And I said, "No Ma'am, there ain't no charge." Then I went home. Mr. Finch, that was way last spring, way over a year ago.

ATTICUS: And did you ever go on the place again?

TOM: Yes Sir.

ATTICUS: When?

TOM: Well, I went lots of times. Seemed like every time I passed by yonder, she'd have some little somethin' for me to do . . . choppin' kindlin', totin' water for her.

ATTICUS: What happened to you on the evening of August twenty-first of last year?

TOM: Mr. Finch, I was goin' home as usual that evenin' and I passed the Ewell place. Miss Mayella were on the porch like she said she were.

(The spectators, white and colored, all lean forward. It is very quiet in the room.)

An' she said for me to come there and help her a minute. Well, I went inside the fence and I looked aroun' for some kindlin' to work on, but I didn't see none. An' then she said to come in the house, she . . . she has a door needs fixin' . . . so I follow her inside an' looked at the door an' it looked all right, an' she shut the door. All the time I was wonderin' why it was so quiet like . . . an' it come to me, there was not a child on the place, an' I said to Miss Mayella, where are the chil'ren? An' she said, they all gone to get ice cream. She said it took her a slap year to save seb'm nickels, but she done it, an' they all gone to town.

(TOM runs his hands over his face. He is obviously very uncomfortable.)

ARTICUS: What did you say then?

TOM: Oh, I . . . I said somethin' like, "Why Miss Mayella, that's right nice o' you to treat 'em." An' she said, "You think so?" Well, I said I best be goin', I couldn't do nothin' for her, an' she said, oh, yes I could. An' I ask her what, and she said to jus' step on the chair yonder an' git that box down from on top of the chifforobe. So I done what she told me, and I was reachin' when the next thing I knew she . . . grabbed me aroun' the legs. She scared me so bad I hopped down an' turned the chair over. That was the only thing, only furniture 'sturbed in that room, Mr. Finch, I swear, when I left it.

ARTICUS: And what happened after you turned the chair over?

(TOM comes to a dead stop. He glances at ARTICUS, then at the jury.)

TOM? You've sworn to tell the whole truth. Will you do it? What happened after that?

TOM (running his hand nervously over his mouth): Mr. Finch, I got down off the chair, and I turned around an' she sorta jumped on me. She hugged me aroun' the waist. She reached up an' kissed me on the face. She said she never kissed a grown man before an' she might as well kiss me. She says for me to kiss her back.

(TOM shakes his head with his eyes closed, as he reacts to this ordeal.)

And I said, Miss Mayella, let me outta here, an' I tried to run, when Mr. Ewell cussed at me from the window an' says he's gonna kill her.

ARTICUS: And what happened after that?

TOM: I was runnin' so fast, I don't know what happened.

ARTICUS: Tom, did you rape Mayella Ewell?

TOM: I did not, Sir.

ARTICUS: Did you harm her in any way?

TOM: I . . . I did not, Sir.

(ARTICUS turns and walks to his desk. GILMER rises and goes to the witness chair.)

GILMER: Robinson, you're pretty good at bustin' up chifforobes and kindlin' with one hand, aren't you? Strong enough to choke the breath out of a woman and sling her to the floor?

TOM (meekly): I never done that, Sir.

GILMER: But you're strong enough to.

TOM: I reckon so, Sir.

GILMER: Uh huh. How come you're so all-fired anxious to do that woman's chores?

(TOM hesitates. He searches for an answer.)

TOM: Looks like she didn't have nobody to help her. Like I said . . .

GILMER: With Mr. Ewell and seven children on the place? You did all this choppin' and work out of sheer goodness, boy? You're a mighty good fella, it seems. Did all that for not one penny.

TOM: Yes, Sir. I felt right sorry for her. She seemed . . .

GILMER: You felt sorry for her? A white woman? You felt sorry for her?

(TOM realizes his mistake. He shifts uncomfortably in his chair.)

INTERIOR: COURTROOM. LATER—SAME DAY.

ATTICUS rises and walks toward the jury. They watch with no show of emotion. As ATTICUS talks, he looks into the eyes of the men of the jury as if to find one to encourage him.

ATTICUS: To begin with, this case should never have come to trial. 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 on the testimony of two witnesses . . . whose evidence has not only been called into serious question on cross-examination, but has been flatly contradicted by the defendant. There is circumstantial evidence to indicate that Mayella Ewell was beaten savagely by someone who led almost exclusively with his left. And Tom Robinson now sits before you having taken the oath with his right hand, the only good hand he possesses. I have nothing but pity in my heart for the chief witness for the State. She is a victim of cruel poverty and ignorance. But my pity does not extend so far as to her putting a man's life at stake, which she has done in an effort to get rid of her own guilt. Now, I say guilt, gentlemen, because it was guilt that motivated her. She has committed no crime, she has merely broken a rigid and time-honored code of our society. A code so severe that whoever breaks it is hounded from our midst as unfit to live with. She must destroy the evidence of her offense. But what was the evidence of her offense? Tom Robinson, a human being. She must put Tom Robinson away from her. Tom Robinson was for her a daily reminder of what she did. And what did she do? She tempted a Negro. She was white, and she tempted a Negro. She did something that in our society is unspeakable. She kissed a black man. Not an old uncle, but a strong, young Negro man. No code mattered to her before she broke it, but it came crashing down on her

afterwards. The witnesses for the State, with the exception of the Sheriff of Maycomb County, have presented themselves to you gentlemen, to this court, in the cynical confidence that their testimony would not be doubted. Confident that you gentlemen would go along with them on the assumption, the evil assumption, that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral beings, all Negro men are not to be trusted around our women. An assumption one associates with minds of their caliber, and which is in itself, gentlemen, a lie, which I do not need to point out to you. And so, a quiet, humble, respectable Negro, who has had the unmitigated temerity to feel sorry for a white woman, has had to put his word against two white people. The defendant is not guilty, but somebody in this courtroom is. Now, gentlemen, in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts all men are created equal.

(The faces of the men of the jury haven't changed expression. Atticus' face begins to perspire. He wipes it with a handkerchief.)

I'm no idealist to believe firmly in the integrity of our courts and in the jury system. That is no ideal to me. It is a living, working reality. Now I am confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence that you have heard, come to a decision, and restore this man to his family. In the name of God, do your duty. In the name of God, believe Tom Robinson.

(ATTICUS turns away from the jury. He walks and sits down next to TOM at the table.)

INTERIOR: BALCONY OF COURTROOM—SEVERAL HOURS LATER. NIGHT.

JEM is leaning on the rail of the balcony. REVEREND SYKES is behind him, with DILL sleeping next to him. The REVEREND fans himself with his hat.

JEM: How long has the jury been out now, Reverend?

SYKES: Let's see. . . . (He pulls out his pocket watch and looks at it.) Almost two hours now.

JEM: I think that's an awful good sign, don't you?

(REVEREND SYKES doesn't answer him.)

INTERIOR: COURTROOM. NIGHT.

The jury comes back into the courtroom. TOM is brought in and walks toward ATTICUS. The jailer unlocks the handcuffs from TOM. TOM sits next to ATTICUS. The BAILIFF enters the courtroom, followed by the JUDGE.

BAILIFF: Court's now in session. Everybody rise.

(The group in the courtroom rises. The JUDGE climbs to his chair and sits down. The spectators are then seated.)

JUDGE: Gentlemen of the jury, have you reached a verdict?

FOREMAN: We have, your honor.

JUDGE: Will the defendant please rise and face the jury. . . .

(TOM ROBINSON rises and faces the jury.)

What is your verdict?

FOREMAN: We find the defendant guilty as charged.

(TOM sits down beside ATTICUS.)

JUDGE: Gentlemen, this jury is dismissed.

BAILIFF: Court's adjourned.

(The JUDGE rises and exits through the door. The crowd murmurs and begins to disperse. The jailer moves to TOM and puts handcuffs on him. ATTICUS walks with TOM.)

ATTICUS: I'll go to see Helen first thing in the morning. I told her not to be disappointed, we'd probably lose this time.

(TOM looks at him but doesn't answer.)

Tom . . .

(ATTICUS turns from the door and walks to his table. He starts to gather up the papers on his desk. He puts them in his briefcase. He starts to leave the courtroom. He walks down the middle aisle. SCOUT is leaning over the rail watching her father and the people below. As ATTICUS walks down the aisle, the Negroes in the balcony start to rise until all are standing. SCOUT is so busy watching ATTICUS that she isn't aware of this. REVEREND SYKES taps her on the shoulder.)

SYKES: Miss Jean Louise . . . Miss Jean Louise.

(SCOUT looks around.)

Miss Jean Louise, stand up, your father's passin'.

(SCOUT rises. The REVEREND puts his arm around her. Everyone in the colored balcony remains standing until ATTICUS exits out the courtroom door.)

