

Sample AA Q20

To Kill a Mockingbird is set in ~~South~~ Maycomb, Alabama, Southern America in the 1930's. It is ~~not~~ narrated by Scout later on in life, looking back with a ~~not~~ retrospective narrative perspective.

At this time there were a lot of prejudices and beliefs, and a hierarchal structure based on colour, wealth, and family history. This is shown by Scout who narrates that 'it was a source of shame to some members of our family that we had no recorded ancestors on either side of the Battle of Hastings.' Such 'old families' take an important role in Maycomb society. Below these are the 'respectable' whites such as the Cunninghams, 'non-respectable' whites like the Ewells and 'respectable' blacks such as Calpurnia. At the very bottom are the 'niggers', non-respectable blacks. Early on in the novel, Scout meets a

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number of foils - including Walter Cunningham. Walter comes from a poor, but respectable and proud family who never make debts they can never pay. When Scout invites Walter over for dinner ~~for~~ (as he could not afford any lunch) he makes the most of this glorious chance to get some much-needed food down him.

As Scout looks on in bewilderment, Walter 'poured syrup on his vegetables and meat with a generous hand'. Scout then proceeds to ask him 'what the sam hill he was doing.' As she looks back,

Scout is thankful that she was 'spared the humiliation of facing them again' due to Calpurnia's timely interruption. Calpurnia then lectures ~~on how~~

Scout on how "There's some folk who don't eat like us... but you ain't called on to ~~and~~ contradict 'em... when they don't." ~~that's~~ ~~scout~~

~~that's~~ What the reader learns from this is that there are many different layers of Maycomb society and that just because Scout comes from an 'older' and better-off family she still has to be sensitive to other traditions and ways of life. Through this episode the reader learns why the Cunninghams behave like they do. They may be poor but can still hold their heads up high and take pride in themselves.

Scout also meets Burris Ewell - a 'non-respectable' white. Burris, like all the Ewells, only

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goes to school on the first day of every year. Burris calls the teacher a 'snot-nosed slut' and goes home, leaving Scout asking Atticus why this is the case. Atticus responds with "you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view." He then proceeds to tell Scout that the "Ewells had been the disgrace of Maycomb" and "none of them had done an honest day's work." However Mr. Bob Ewell, the father, "spends his relief cheques on green whiskey" and his children often go hungry. That's why Mr. Ewell was allowed to hunt out of season, and the reader learns this through Scout's encounters. As Atticus explains: "You, Miss Scout Finch, are of the common folk. You must obey the law." Whereas under certain circumstances it may be better to "bend the law a little in special cases." Through this the reader learns that individuals in Maycomb may be treated differently according to their social status.

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