

Character List

Jean Louise “Scout” Finch - The narrator and protagonist of the story. Scout lives with her father, Atticus, her brother, Jem, and their black cook, Calpurnia, in Maycomb. She is intelligent and, by the standards of her time and place, a tomboy. Scout has a combative streak and a basic faith in the goodness of the people in her community. As the novel progresses, this faith is tested by the hatred and prejudice that emerge during Tom Robinson’s trial. Scout eventually develops a more grown-up perspective that enables her to appreciate human goodness without ignoring human evil.

Atticus Finch - Scout and Jem’s father, a lawyer in Maycomb descended from an old local family. A widower with a dry sense of humor, Atticus has instilled in his children his strong sense of morality and justice. He is one of the few residents of Maycomb committed to racial equality. When he agrees to defend Tom Robinson, a black man charged with raping a white woman, he exposes himself and his family to the anger of the white community. With his strongly held convictions, wisdom, and empathy, Atticus functions as the novel’s moral backbone.

Jeremy Atticus “Jem” Finch - Scout’s brother and constant playmate at the beginning of the story. Jem is something of a typical American boy, refusing to back down from dares and fantasizing about playing football. Four years older than Scout, he gradually separates himself from her games, but he remains her close companion and protector throughout the novel. Jem moves into adolescence during the story, and his ideals are shaken badly by the evil and injustice that he perceives during the trial of Tom Robinson.

Arthur “Boo” Radley - A recluse who never sets foot outside his house, Boo dominates the imaginations of Jem, Scout, and Dill. He is a powerful symbol of goodness swathed in an initial shroud of creepiness, leaving little presents for Scout and Jem and emerging at an opportune moment to save the children. An intelligent child emotionally damaged by his cruel father, Boo provides an example of the threat that evil poses to innocence and goodness. He is one of the novel’s “mockingbirds,” a good person injured by the evil of mankind.

Bob Ewell - A drunken, mostly unemployed member of Maycomb’s poorest family. In his knowingly wrongful accusation that Tom Robinson raped his daughter, Ewell represents the dark side of the South: ignorance, poverty, squalor, and hate-filled racial prejudice.

Charles Baker “Dill” Harris - Jem and Scout’s summer neighbor and friend. Dill is a diminutive, confident boy with an active imagination. He becomes fascinated with Boo Radley and represents the perspective of childhood innocence throughout the novel.

Miss Maudie Atkinson - The Finches’ neighbor, a sharp-tongued widow, and an old friend of the family. Miss Maudie is almost the same age as Atticus’s younger brother, Jack. She shares Atticus’s passion for justice and is the children’s best friend among Maycomb’s adults.

Calpurnia - The Finches’ black cook. Calpurnia is a stern disciplinarian and the children’s bridge between the white world and her own black community.

Aunt Alexandra - Atticus's sister, a strong-willed woman with a fierce devotion to her family. Alexandra is the perfect Southern lady, and her commitment to propriety and tradition often leads her to clash with Scout.

Mayella Ewell - Bob Ewell's abused, lonely, unhappy daughter. Though one can pity Mayella because of her overbearing father, one cannot pardon her for her shameful indictment of Tom Robinson.

Tom Robinson - The black field hand accused of rape. Tom is one of the novel's "mockingbirds," an important symbol of innocence destroyed by evil.

Link Deas - Tom Robinson's employer. In his willingness to look past race and praise the integrity of Tom's character, Deas epitomizes the opposite of prejudice.

Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose - An elderly, ill-tempered, racist woman who lives near the Finches. Although Jem believes that Mrs. Dubose is a thoroughly bad woman, Atticus admires her for the courage with which she battles her morphine addiction.

Nathan Radley - Boo Radley's older brother. Scout thinks that Nathan is similar to the deceased Mr. Radley, Boo and Nathan's father. Nathan cruelly cuts off an important element of Boo's relationship with Jem and Scout when he plugs up the knothole in which Boo leaves presents for the children.

Heck Tate - The sheriff of Maycomb and a major witness at Tom Robinson's trial. Heck is a decent man who tries to protect the innocent from danger.

Mr. Underwood - The publisher of Maycomb's newspaper. Mr. Underwood respects Atticus and proves his ally.

Mr. Dolphus Raymond - A wealthy white man who lives with his black mistress and mulatto children. Raymond pretends to be a drunk so that the citizens of Maycomb will have an explanation for his behavior. In reality, he is simply jaded by the hypocrisy of white society and prefers living among blacks.

Mr. Walter Cunningham - A poor farmer and part of the mob that seeks to lynch Tom Robinson at the jail. Mr. Cunningham displays his human goodness when Scout's politeness compels him to disperse the men at the jail.

Walter Cunningham - Son of Mr. Cunningham and classmate of Scout. Walter cannot afford lunch one day at school and accidentally gets Scout in trouble.