

permission? (The JUDGE nods, and ATTICUS takes off his coat and vest and puts them on his chair.)

JEM (startled). Never saw him do that before.

SCOUT (equally impressed). Me either. (They are all leaning forward. ATTICUS looks directly out to the audience which is where the imaginary jury sits.)

ATTICUS (still upstage at his table). Gentlemen, this case is not a difficult one, it requires no minute sifting of complicated facts. This case is as simple as black and white. (He starts slowly front.) The state has not produced one iota of evidence that the crime Tom Robinson is charged with ever took place. It has relied instead upon the testimony of two witnesses — witnesses whose testimony has not only been called into serious question on cross-examination, but has been flatly contradicted by the defendant. (Looks back at MAYELLA.) I have nothing but pity in my heart for the chief witness for the state. But my pity does not extend to her putting a man's life at stake. And this is what she's done — done it in an effort to get rid of her guilt! I say guilt, because it was guilt that motivated her. She committed no crime, but she broke a rigid code of our society, a code so severe that whoever breaks it is hounded from our midst as unfit to live with. She's the victim of cruel poverty and ignorance, but she knew full well the enormity of her offense and she persisted in it. (He pauses and takes a breath.) She persisted and her subsequent reaction is something every child has done — she tried to put the evidence of her offense away, out of sight. What was the evidence? Not a stolen toy to be hidden. The evidence that must be destroyed is Tom Robinson, a human being. Tom Robinson, a daily reminder of what she did. What did she do? She tempted a Negro. She

did something that in our society is unspeakable. She's white and she tempted a Negro. Not an old uncle, but a strong, young black man. No code mattered to her before she broke it — but it came crashing down on her afterwards! Her father saw what happened. And what did he do? (Looking at EWELL.) There is circumstantial evidence to the effect that Mayella Ewell was beaten savagely by someone who led almost exclusively with his left hand.

BOB EWELL (rising, fists clenched; furious). Damn you ta—— (JUDGE TAYLOR raps sharply for order, and HECK TATE motions EWELL down while ATTICUS watches, unimpressed.)

ATTICUS. Then Mr. Ewell swore out a warrant, no doubt signing it with his left hand, and Tom Robinson now sits before you, having taken the oath with the only good hand he possesses — his right hand!

BOB EWELL (back on his feet; raging). You trickin' lyin'——

JUDGE TAYLOR (rapping hard; angry). Shut your mouth, sir, or you'll be fined for contempt!

ATTICUS (as EWELL is forced back into his seat by HECK TATE). So a quiet, respectable Negro man who had the unmitigated temerity to feel sorry for a white woman is on trial for his life. He's had to put his word against his two white accusers. I need not remind you of their conduct here in court — their cynical confidence that you gentlemen would go along with them on the assumption — the evil assumption — that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral, an assumption one associates with minds of their caliber. However, you know the truth — and the truth is, some Negroes lie, and some Negro men are not to be trusted around women — black or white. And so with some white men. This is a truth that applies to the entire human race, and to no particular race. (He pauses to