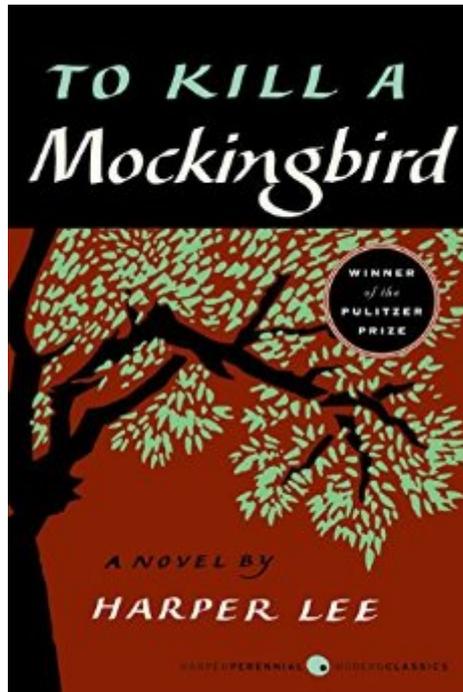


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To Kill A Mockingbird (Harperperennial Modern Classics)



Synopsis

Harper Lee's Pulitzer prize-winning masterwork of honor and injustice in the deep south and the heroism of one man in the face of blind and violent hatred, available now for the first time as an e-book. One of the best-loved stories of all time, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been translated into more than forty languages, sold more than thirty million copies worldwide, served as the basis for an enormously popular motion picture, and was voted one of the best novels of the twentieth century by librarians across the country. A gripping, heart-wrenching, and wholly remarkable tale of coming-of-age in a South poisoned by virulent prejudice, it views a world of great beauty and savage inequities through the eyes of a young girl, as her father—a crusading local lawyer—risks everything to defend a black man unjustly accused of a terrible crime.

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Customer Reviews

It hardly seems like 50 years since I picked up this book late one rainy night when it was first published, after my mom had been raving about the book for weeks, trying to get me to read it. Well, what the heck, the late movie was boring that evening and there was nothing else on the TV... next

thing I knew, it was two o'clock in the morning and I had just turned the final page on what was the most magical reading experience of my entire life. From the opening line, "When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow..." Lee hooks the reader with a deceptively simple story of a Southern family and a Southern town caught up in a cataclysmic moral crisis, and keeps us enthralled till the very last word. Lee's writing style is that of the storyteller who mesmerizes her audience telling a tale so simple, yet so compelling, that you never want it to end. Her narrator is Scout Finch, a delightfully devilish little tomboy who sees her world through the all-observant eyes of childhood. Scout is one of the most enchanting characters in modern American fiction. She's bright, funny, totally real; there's nothing contrived about her. She's someone we all knew in first or second grade, or wished we'd known. Scout lives with her brother Jem, four years her senior, her lawyer father Atticus, and their housekeeper Calpurnia, in a sleepy Alabama town where everybody knows or is related to everybody else. Lee spends the first half of the book drawing us into the life of the town and the Finch family, Scout's hilarious and problematic adjustment to first grade, and brings us into the mystery surrounding the notorious-yet-never-seen Boo Radley. The second half of the book is about the moral crisis that tears the town apart.

Oddly, I'd never read *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a high school student. Nor had I ever seen the famous film with Gregory Peck. Fortunately, I also avoided learning the entire plot through cultural osmosis. Sure, I knew who Boo Radley was-- didn't I? Atticus Finch... yeah, I know who that is... right? Boy, was I wrong. Last week I finally decided it'd been long enough, and I sank into Harper Lee's only novel with high expectations. And I was certainly not disappointed. With its slow, warm and evocative opening chapters, *Mockingbird* starts off like a sultry summer day in the South. Lee depicts a South of "whistling bob white," biscuits and warm milk, and ladies who on the hottest days bathe twice by noon and then douse themselves in lavender-smelling powder. Jean-Louise Finch, better known as Scout, narrates the story with the keen eye of an adult looking back on a childhood rich with incidents that shaped who she has become. Scout reminded me of some of Carson McCullers's heroines (*Member of the Wedding*, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*), but without the morbid loneliness and heartbreak. Scout might be described as a tomboy, but that would be doing her a disservice. Her adventures with her older brother Jem, and their diminutive friend Dill (real name: Charles Baker Harris. "Your name's longer'n you are," Jem points out) evoke the timeless place of childhood. As for Atticus Finch, what can one say about a father who seems to embody the greatest of virtues? He is tolerant, patient, kind, and understanding. He does not meddle with his children's affairs, he speaks to them as fellow adults (he allows them to call him "Atticus"), and his

skill as a lawyer is legendary. Lee presents Atticus in a tough and sensitive manner, so that his believability is paramount.

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