To Kill a Mockingbird Reading Guide Part 2

**Chapter 22**

1. Atticus lost the case, yet the black community has reacted with generosity, filling his kitchen with food. Why did people drop off so much food?

**This is their way of thanking Atticus for doing the best job he could in defending Tom. These folks don’t have much, but they’ll give what they have to show their appreciation to Atticus.**

2. Explain how Atticus's character has influenced Jem. Identify evidence that supports Jem's reaction to the guilty verdict.   
**The children deal with the outcome of the trial in different ways. Jem was extremely affected by the guilty verdict and was crying at the end of it. Worried, Jem constantly was asking Atticus questions about what was going to happen after. Dill was not very affected by the verdict and neither was Scout, although they both had certainly thought that they would have won the trial and knew that the verdict had been unfair.**

3. At the end of the chapter, what do we discover happened to Atticus that morning?

**Bob Ewell found Atticus downtown, spit in his face, and threatened that “he’d get him if it took the rest of his life.” Atticus is now a target.**

**Chapter 23**   
1. How does Atticus react to Bob Ewell’s threat against him?

**He uses dry humor to try to diffuse the situation.**

2. In thinking about the injustices faced by Tom and other members of the African-American community, Atticus says, “Don’t fool youselves – it’s all adding up and one of these days we’re going to pay the bill for it. I hope it’s not in you children’s time.” What is his concern/prediction about the future?

**Atticus knows that a group of people can be mistreated/put down for only so long. He hints here about an uprising, which may turn ugly and violent. If we don’t treat the minority community well, a major problem will eventually explode, he suggests.**

3. Why don't Maycomb citizens sit on juries in their town?   
**Atticus says that the jurors are always from the country because there would be a conflict of interest among the people of the town.  For instance, if the owner of the town grocery store was on the jury and sided with the defendant or the prosecution, then the town grocery store may lose business and customers if others did not like the way the grocer voted during a trial.  This could be said with any business person in town.**

4. Why does Scout want to befriend Walter Cunningham now (after learning more about the inner workings of the trial)?   
**After the Robinson trial, we learn that it was a Cunningham on the jury who stood up for Tom. This would have been a courageous thing to do in Maycomb at this time period. However, Atticus explains that not only will the entire Cunningham clan nottake charity, but they are loyal:**

**...once you earned their respect they were for you tooth and nail. Atticus said he had a feeling...that they left the jail that night with considerable respect for the Finches.**

**In light of this news, Scout thinks:**

**I remembered the...occasion when I rushed to young Walter Cunningham's defense. Now I was glad I'd done it.**

**It was a Cunningham who had stood up against the rest of the jurors, fighting for Tom's acquittal. Jem and Scout are amazed, but Scout now sees the Cunninghams with respect—they may be poor, but they're "good folks." Scout dismisses thoughts of beating him up, and plans to be nicer to Walter in the future.**

1. Why does Aunt Alexandra accept that the Cunninghams may be good but are not "our kind of folks"? Do you think that people should mix only with others of the same social class and/or race? Are class/race-divisions good or bad for societies?   
   **Scout's Aunt Alexandra is very proud of her family heritage. Simon Finch was one of the earliest settlers in the area, and Alexandra is proud of several other past family members (though she tended to exaggerate about their credentials). She was fond of sayings like "What Is Best for the Family" and "Fine Folks," but she tended to dwell on the negative side of people in most of her conversations. In Alexandra's mind, the Finches ranked at the top of the social scale, and few other families could compare. She directs Atticus to explain to his children about the family's generations of "gentle breeding," and how "you are not from run-of-the-mill people." The Cunninghams, however, were run-of-the-mill people. As Alexandra explained,**

**"... they're good folks. But they're not our kind of folks."**

**The Cunninghams were poor, and they had**

**"a drinking streak in them a mile wide."**

**Scout was still curious about why her aunt specifically disliked the Cunninghams, and Alexandra finally--and angrily--came to the point.**

**"I'll tell you why," she said. "Because--he--is--trash, that's why you can't play with him. I'll not have you around him, picking up his habits and learning Lord-knows-what."**

**They may not have been the same kind of trash as the Ewell family--"the disgrace of Maycomb"--but they were not fit to mix with Finches, at least in Alexandra's mind.**

**Chapter 24**   
1. How does Scout feel about the women (Aunt Alexandra, Miss Rachel, Mrs. Merriweather, Miss Stephanie, and Miss Maudie) and their discussions in this chapter? How do they treat Scout?   
 **Scout is required to be engaged in the discussion with the women, while being more "lady-like". The women tend to condescend to her and through their perspective, Scout is a source of entertainment. Scout knows they are patronizing her and it isn't something she particularly likes. Even so, the ladies treat Scout fairly. The sequence of events in this chapter proves that the women are influencing Scout to be more obedient and polite. "'Stop that shaking', Miss Maudie commanded, and I stopped." (Lee 317)**

**Scout feels on the spot when the discussion is directed at her, and she tries to control her temper. Otherwise, she wants nothing to do with the gathering of the women and strongly wishes to be elsewhere.**

2. What can you learn from the women of Maycomb about proper and improper behavior?   
**You can learn the supposed "Do's" and "Do Not's" of proper etiquette in Maycomb, and proper topics of conversations for example, Tom Robinson's death was not a proper conversation topic for the gathering, so Aunt Alexandra and Miss Maudie composed themselves as not to raise suspicion.**

3. Explain briefly how Tom was killed. What is Atticus’ explanation for Tom’s attempted escape? Do you agree with Atticus?

**Tom ran and tried to jump the prison fence in a failed escape attempt. He did this right in front of several guards and was shot 17 times. Atticus says he had tried to give Tom hope for a successful appeal of the conviction, but that Tom had lost all hope. The escape attempt almost feels like a suicide attempt, as Tom would’ve known he’d be shot for trying to climb the fence. Students’ answers to the last question will vary.**

**Chapter 25**   
1. How is the meaning of the title revealed in this chapter?   
**The meaning of the title *To Kill a Mockingbird* is revealed when Tom Robinson is shot at the prison. The author used this metaphor to show it is a sin to kill an innocent person.**

1. Explain how Scout’s treatment of the roly-poly bug mirrors the way the town of Maycomb treated Tom Robinson.

**Scout is tempted to squash the bug when she’s done toying with it, just as the townspeople flatten Tom with their injustice. Neither Tom nor the bug was causing any harm. Both were in the wrong place at the wrong time.**

3. Why is the court of public opinion sometimes more influential than the court of law? Refer to the novel and an example in real life.   
**The court of public is sometimes more influential than the court of law since there are more people in the public than in any court of law. Also, the public can believe anything they want and in the law all they can believe is what the law presents to them for each case.**

4. What do you think Ewell meant when he said "it made one down and about two more to go"? What can you predict will happen next?

**When Mr. Ewell said “it made one down and about two more to go” I think he meant now that Tom is dead there are only two more people standing in his way. I also think that one of the ‘targets’ is Atticus since Jem told Scout not to worry. Another clue as to Atticus being a ‘target’ happens when Mr. Ewell spat in Atticus’ face.**

**Chapter 26**   
1. Identify at least one example that Scout is growing up and maturing and one example that Jem is growing up and maturing.   
**An example of Scout growing and maturing was when Jem and Scout passed the Radley house everyday, and Scout stopped being scared of him, even though she still wanted to see him. An example of Jem maturing was when he showed his chest hair, and he said he would try out for the football team. He also takes up the responsibility of keeping Scout on the right track**.

1. Why does Scout’s question upset Jem?

**He doesn’t want to think about the trial anymore because it just upsets him. He has tried to make sense of the events of the past summer, but hasn’t been able to reconcile his feelings about the injustice. Atticus knows that Jem just needs time to process everything and sort it out. This will just take some time.**

1. What is Harper Lee's purpose in writing this chapter? Think about the messages she wants to send her readers. **Answers will vary**